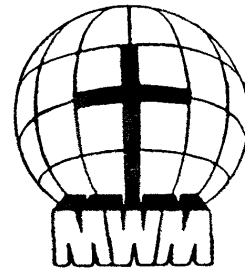


Methodists for World Mission



from the MWM President

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January 29th 2010

Dear Friends,

A short quiz. What is the link between a Nobel Prize winner and MWM? There are no prizes but the slightly tortuous answer will be found at the end of the letter. There is however a connection with the theme of this years MWM Swanwick Conference. **“SEE WHAT THE LORD IS DOING!”** “God’s changing story of Mission 1910, today, and tomorrow...”

The flyer makes it clear that our conference is linked to “Edinburgh 2010 - Witnessing to Christ Today” (*the celebration of the centenary of the ecumenical missionary conference held in 1910*). Our conference overlaps this centenary and so we have had the problem that some of our potential speakers also had commitments in Edinburgh. Peter Sulston, our conference organiser, is in contact with Valentin Dedji from Benin, Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi from St.Philip’s Centre in Leicester. However Leao Neto from Brazil (currently minister at Hinde Street), Diane Clutterbuck and Jenni Sweet are confirmed as taking part. Steve Pearce with Evie Vernon (principal of SOCMS) with SOCMS students will organise worship and music, and there will be three Bible studies as a core activity. When the Edinburgh programme is finalised in March we will know who is going to be with us to lead us in what promises to be an exhilarating programme.

To be complete as a conference we do need **help to run and organise our young people’s programme** – always an exciting part of the conference – if you (or anyone you know) is interested, available, experienced in children’s work, and is CRB cleared we would like to hear from you. Contact Angela Macquiban (37 Maids Causway, Cambridge. CB5 8DE Tel: 01223 3611862 email: amacquiban@btinternet.com)

We also believe it is an exciting conference for another reason. This year, following work done by the committee we have big decisions to make which will map out with practical propositions the future of MWM. It is here we will need your advice and participation.

During January 2010 the MWM Committee met for two days to focus in depth on the issues which surround us as a movement. The meeting was facilitated by Kit Harbottle, one of the committee, who, applying her professional experience as a member of the Audit Commission, enabled us to explore the purpose and role of MWM in today’s world. The meeting resulted in a number of proposals which will come to the AGM at Swanwick for your assessment.

At the meeting we looked at the following five key questions

1. What is the Vision/Mission/Role for MWM in the context of the present age. Since we began as a movement, much has changed in the World; in Britain; in Methodism and the wider

church; and in our understanding of mission – What is the challenge to us from the Holy Spirit now ?

2. Who are the people with whom we should be engaging to fulfil that vision ?

3. What practical programme do we need to fulfil the vision ?

4. How should we exercise our stewardship of the resources we have (particularly financial) to support the vision.

5. What management structure do we need to use resources wisely and fulfil the vision ?

In this letter there isn't room to include everything that was discussed and proposed but some of the key conclusions and consequences were as follows.

First, we recognised again, that as a movement we are small in numbers, our age profile is 'mature' but we have a wide range of experience of mission.

Second, particularly through our annual conferences working with other partners, we provide a dynamic opportunity for mission education which remains of interest to a wider range of people than our existing membership.

Third, with the changes in the structure of the Methodist Church, there is a challenge to develop this role further - avoiding duplication with others organisations, to provide our particular 'facilitating link' between 'people in the pew' and the world church.

To do this small groups within the committee are

Looking at the role and appointment of the members of the committee.

Preparing a plan for improved communication through the magazine and the website which will provide better tools for linking MWM members and the world church.

Scrutinising how we use the money (and might better use the money) we receive in income from bequests.

Examining a proposal to develop within MWM a 'Prayer Link' based on, but extending beyond the Prayer Handbook and other current Methodist resources, which will keep us in contact with mission partners, EEP's volunteers and others working in the World Church - recognising that some of our membership are unable to join us at conferences but nevertheless have a vital role to play in the movement.

Developing new activities, for example, a Photo Journalism Competition, in conjunction with World Church Relationships at Methodist Church House, to encourage churches, circuits to share and develop their personal links with the World Church.

Methodists for World Mission is a 'Movement' and your committee believes there are new opportunities for us, together with our partners, to promote God's Mission through the church and in the world in this Edinburgh Centenary Year and beyond.

Finally a very practical note. The management meeting occurred shortly after the earthquake in Haiti. We decided to make an immediate emergency grant of £1,000 to the Fund for World Mission but clearly there are big issues about the recovery of people in Haiti which could involve us further and there will be room for discussion about grant making at Swanwick. We know from letters received from other recipients of MWM grants that although they are small amounts they are often vital in filling gaps in funding.

With our prayers and good wishes - hoping to see you at Swanwick!



Dr. Peter T Fox

PS The answer to the question at the beginning of the letter. John Mott, an American Methodist played a leading part in the planning and leadership of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference – the spark which fired up Wesleyan laymen to start the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Laymen's Movement which became MWM. The 1910 Edinburgh Conference also in due course led on to the birth of the World Council of Churches. John Mott played a leading part in encouraging student Christian movements at colleges in America, was involved in developing the YMCA, and in 1946 was given the Nobel Peace Prize for his work promoting reconciliation and ecumenical relations.