

PRESS RELEASE

16th May 2010

Over 300 Methodists celebrate in Birmingham

***“Building Vision” event held at King Edward VI School Handsworth, Birmingham.
on Saturday 14th May 2010.***

The Birmingham and the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Methodist Districts came together last Saturday in a thought-provoking event celebrating the work of the Methodist Church. Over 300 people packed into the splendid surroundings of King Edward VI School where there were marketplace stalls, many ways of worship and prayer (Puppets, drama, Pulse) and 26 free seminars – representing all aspects of the Church – and keynote speeches from members of the Connexion, to energise and inform people from throughout the Midlands.

Mark Wakelin, Connexional Secretary for Internal Relationships, opened the day with inspirational and amusing reflections on leadership, encouraging us to work alongside each other, with “the courage to live in the here and now in the light of the “not yet””.

Dr Anthony Reddie echoed the theme of working together. He explained that only 3 out of our 30,000 genes determine our racial difference, so we are essentially all the same - but just as all cars are cars, we are all different. And there’s danger in sameness: individuality is precious. We need to explore our sameness and our difference – in this country, our challenge may not be people of other faiths, but people of no faith at all.

Chris Elliott, Connexional Secretary for External Relationships, ended the day by emphasising the joy of diversity, as we each bring our gifts to God, in a church which is open to all. She told us of the way that Maoris greet each other – by pressing noses and breathing the same breath, and hoped that we can believe that we can make a difference in our world. The final act of worship was supported by the exuberant Zimbabwean choir, who gave us an uplifting and spectacular end to a great day.

“It was the biggest event we’ve ever held,” said Bill Anderson and John Howard, Chairs of the Methodist Districts of Birmingham and Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury, “and in itself it was an act of faith – we were delighted and relieved to see so many people coming in. The whole day was an absolute pleasure, with a really lively atmosphere. The feedback has been fantastic, and we are already thinking about when we can do this again. This is the sort of event we would recommend to other Districts.”

“We would of course like to thank everyone who came, and especially our keynote speakers who gave us some powerful ideas to take away with us and explore. “