



Youth and Children's News Update

To: All Ministers, Children's and Youth Workers, Safeguarding Co-ordinators September 2010 Issue 14

WELCOME

This Summer I had the privilege of visiting Zambia as part of our 3 Way Exchange Programme between the UCZ (Zambia), L'Eglise Reforme (France), the URC Wessex Synod (England) and the Methodist Church, Southampton District (England). I found it fascinating to see the similarities and differences in Zambia in relation to ministry with children and young people.

Perhaps of greatest impact was seeing a Church which was made up of large numbers of younger people. 75% are under the age of 35! Admittedly the proportion of children and young people is greater because of shorter life expectancy caused by a variety of reasons. The children and young people I met exhibited a vibrant faith and a willingness to play an active part in the life of their churches.

It was also interesting to see the popularity of the Boys Brigade and the Girls Brigade, organisations, which, in this country sometimes struggle to attract children and young people.

Some UCZ Churches experience a struggle to find enough volunteers to run their children's and youth ministries as many churches in our District do. As I talked to some of the leaders I met they were also keen to do more training to support and encourage their efforts. Perhaps we should have run a CORE course whilst we were there!

There was so much to see and experience and members of the Exchange group would be pleased to visit your church or circuit along to share more. Please contact me if you would like to take up this offer.

One overriding feeling I came home with is that children and young people can still be

captivated, enthused, motivated and challenged by Jesus, and be agents of change for God in this world and a sign of his Kingdom.

Nicola Briggs

Youth & Children's Strategy

Since 2002 our District has "given weight to work which focuses on outreach and work with younger people". In 2007 The Methodist Conference set up the Youth Participation Strategy. Last November we held an open meeting to look at a District strategy for Children's and Youth Work which provided a lot of food for thought. The District Policy Executive (DPE) and the Youth Officer's Management Panel are looking at ways of addressing the issues raised at that meeting.

The DPE felt strongly that we need to find ways of increasing the participation of children and young people at church, circuit and district level. To this end we successfully applied for an OPP (One Programme Participant) to take a lead in this area.

Introduction to our OPP

Hello, my name is Christy-Anna Errington. This year I will be your District OPP (One Programme Participant), as part of the Methodist Church Youth Participation Strategy (YPS).

My aim for the year is to work with local churches to develop participation of all ages. I will be liaising with a variety of people including youth and children's workers and ministers to research the needs of children and young people and the existing work already being done in this area.

Part of this will involve putting together a team to organise both a district youth weekend and at least one children's activity day. I will also be investigating the use of

social networking sites (within appropriate safeguards) as a way of linking up young people across the district.

I am also the Methodist National Youth President 2010/11. This post involves a similar focus to the work I will be doing in the district, but at a national level. As Youth President my role is to be a voice for young people and a bridge between them and the wider church. My responsibilities include: helping to organise and run Youth Assembly, sitting on the Methodist council and YPS steering group, representing young people at Methodist Conference and working with the other OPPs around the connexion to find ways of enabling young people to participate more in the life of their churches and communities.

If you would like any more information on either of these posts please feel free to contact me. I am waiting for my phone contact details but in the meantime you can email me at:

youthpresident@methodistchurch.org.uk

I will be writing a blog for each of my roles. These will be found at www.southamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/ and at www.methodistyouthpres.blogspot.com. I look forward to meeting many of you as I travel around the Connexion and would ask that you hold me in your prayers and the work that I seek to do during this year.

Christy-Anna Errington

METHODIST YOUTH ASSEMBLY

Friday 19th (6pm) – Sunday 21st (2pm) November at the PGL Centre, Liddington, nr Swindon. The cost is £60 including food, accommodation and all activities. More info at: www.methodistyouthassembly.org.uk

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

Creating Safer Space This major Safeguarding training initiative, authorised by the Methodist Conference in 2008, is due to be rolled out in 2011 across our District. The training of Circuit trainers will take place during October.

CRB Applications At the moment CRB applications are only being processed for new workers. These must be made using the new style application form obtainable from Methodist Publishing – please take care to follow the completion instructions carefully. Renewals for existing workers are not being accepted at the present time. The anticipated date for the resumption of this requirement is April 2011.

District Safeguarding Officer We are in the early stages of setting up a part-time paid Safeguarding Officer post to oversee all aspects of safeguarding. Advertisements will appear shortly.

District Safeguarding Group Revd Jackie Case (Convenor) and Marilyn Pack (former District Administrator) have now left the group. However, both are continuing to provide interim cover for their respective areas of expertise – Jackie should still be contacted about sex offenders' contracts and cases (023 9237 6057 revjackie@casehome.plus.com and Marilyn should be contacted about procedures and general enquiries (01794 512022 mjpack@renpack.co.uk).

Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy This year's Methodist Conference agreed an updated Safeguarding policy relating to children and young people and new policies relating to safer recruitment and vulnerable adults. A new Safeguarding policy book (to replace the one produced in 2003) is expected to be published soon. In the meantime, the recently approved policies can be viewed on the Methodist Conference website as no's 35 and 36 in the list of Conference reports.

Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) The full implementation of this scheme is 'on hold' pending a government review.

Further information about any of the above can be obtained from Marilyn Pack.

CORE SKILLS

CORE courses continue around the District covering: **Child development, Leadership skills, Programme Planning, Children & Community, Pastoral Awareness, Spirituality & the bible.** Additional optional modules can be used as one-off training sessions: **Transitions, Special Needs, Challenging Behaviour, Young Leaders, Global Issues.** If you would like to be notified of a CORE course near you then please contact Nicola Briggs.



Mobilising young people to speak up for justice and religious freedom

Take a stand for justice by joining **Outcry**, Christian Solidarity Worldwide's youth and student programme. We are a passionate movement of young people who speak up for those who are persecuted for their faith, making a difference through prayer and by campaigning for religious liberty and human rights. Download our free 2010 Clamour pack, and get your group involved in; protesting on behalf of a Christian in China who has been imprisoned for distributing Bibles; taking part in our 'Church Cancelled' fundraising event focusing on young Christians who face challenges in meeting together; and praying for Christians in Eritrea who put their freedom on the line when they share the Gospel. Visit www.outcry-uk.org today to get involved!

Lewis Pearson has been involved in youth and community work for 10 years and is the Parish Community Worker in Alderholt. Alongside this he is launching Youth Work Support which aims to resource, train and support churches working with and seeking to work with young people. He's developed a course called 'More ready than you realise: An introduction to Youth Work' which is particularly geared towards volunteer youth workers. For more information contact Lewis on 07922 137348, lnpearson@yahoo.co.uk or see <http://youthworksupport.wordpress.com/>.

Tearfund have new resources available which you can sign up for at www.tearfund.org/youth. They will send you regular emails, with practical things that you and your young people can do to take action against injustice as well as ways you can connect with others. Their aim is to resource you as thoroughly as possible for the vital work you are doing; to enable you to empower and inspire a new generation of activists who will change the world for Jesus.

Get their free termly Network magazine at www.tearfund.org/network which includes an Easy 2 Use session plan as well as thoughts, tips and information about pursuing God's passion for justice in your youth work.

Email Nicola to receive this newsletter as a Word document