

## **Methodist City Centre Network Update**

Dear Colleague

I am writing as the MCCN Co-ordinator to give you an update on matters following our recent Network meeting at St John's Methodist Church in Gloucester on the 14<sup>th</sup> November.

It was great to welcome those who were able to attend and a big thanks goes to the Church at Gloucester for their hospitality. Thanks too to all who sent their apologies. Please get the dates in your diaries for the Network events for 2008.

### **MCCN NETWORK AND CONFERENCE 2008**

**4<sup>th</sup> March 2008 (10.30am -3.30pm)** is our next network meeting to be held at the Crossing Church and Centre, Worksop. Please see website link for directions to the Church. [www.thecrossing.co.uk/welcome/location](http://www.thecrossing.co.uk/welcome/location)

We shall have the opportunity to hear the exciting work of this new Church and all the recent developments with regard to work from the new building. We shall have a presentation on the significant changes in Charity Law and the impact that will have upon our city centre churches and projects. We shall also have a presentation by a development consultant who has a wide experience in negotiating city centre developments and will highlight the issues and pitfalls we need to be aware of in such schemes.

### **MCCN Conference 2008 26-28 November Hayes Conference Centre Swanwick Spirituality of the Centre**

The conference fee is £100.

This covers the cost of accommodation, meals and tea/coffee mid-morning and mid afternoon.

The conference begins with an afternoon session on 26th November and finishes with lunch on 28th November.

All bookings must be accompanied by a deposit of £25 for each place reserved. A discount of £10 will be allowed if the remainder of the fee is received by 31st December 2007.

A discount of £5 will be allowed if the remainder of the fee is received by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008.

The booking form is on the MCCN Website:

[www.methodistcitycentrenetwork.org.uk](http://www.methodistcitycentrenetwork.org.uk)

10 people have booked so far, and there are only 30 places, so please book as soon as possible to avoid disappointment and make the most of the discount!

### **DATABASE**

The database is a work in progress and we would be grateful to hear of any amendments, deletions or additions.

We are becoming a more self sufficient Network and so we require contributions from Churches and projects to meet the budget. We suggest a minimum of £50 per year and this would be more helpful as a Standing Order. The relevant form is available on the MCCN Website.

### **METHODIST STATIONING REVIEW**

The Methodist Church is currently reviewing the whole stationing process for ministers. The review includes a radical look at circuits, training and how we understand itinerancy. The latest draft of this significant review is available on the Methodist Church website. [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

We had a lively discussion on matters on this review at the Gloucester meeting.

### **METHODIST CENTRAL HALL RESEARCH PROJECT**

We had a very useful presentation by Angela Connelly regarding a new research project. Below is an outline from Angela of the project. She would love to hear from you if you have information to share on this project.

Email: [Angela.Connelly-2@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Angela.Connelly-2@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk)

Prof. Michael Hebbert and Dr. Andrew Crompton have secured a three year £70K collaborative award with the Methodist Church. The project is a study of the history, design and role of Methodist Central Halls and falls under the AHRC/ ESRC Religion and Society Programme.

The Halls were built between 1885 and 1934 in British cities as a response to the secularisation of the working class. Deliberately non-sacred in design, they represent an attempt to respond to modern society in providing outreach missions to the urban poor. Many of them occupy entire city blocks complete with worship space, offices, meeting rooms and shops. As urban multifunctional spaces they embody characteristics of great interest to urban designers.

Very little literature exists on the architecture and function of Central Halls. This project provides an opportunity to address this considerable gap. It is hoped that this may hold wider lessons for the design and use of religious space in the modern city.

The project is based on a PhD studentship for the researcher Angela Connelly. Angela has previously studied political science at Manchester University and is interested in the theory and application of social capital. It is hoped that this project will offer a unique opportunity to observe the way in which space and architecture contribute to the quality and durability of social networks and ties.

The specific focus is on the Central Hall as a building type. The Methodist archives of the John Ryland University Library provide the basis for a narrative of the architectural history of the Halls. Research into the social and religious significance of the Central Halls will involve interviews and oral history as well as press and archival sources.

The 1<sup>st</sup> year of the project is preparatory, consisting of the literature review, research training and the preparation of fieldwork planning. Year Two shall see data collection in the national archives and interview based research to create profiles on specific case studies. During the final year, data shall be analysed and the findings written-up and published.

*May God richly bless you during this season of Advent and Christmas.*

**Phil Mason**  
**MCCN Co-ordinator.**