

BRISTOL DISTRICT SPRING SYNOD -2008

The Bristol District Spring Representative Synod met on Saturday April 28th 2008 at the Greenway Centre, Bristol, in the Bristol North Circuit. The Synod opened with a welcome given by the District Chair Revd A. Ward Jones and a further welcome by Revd Peter Grimwood, Superintendent Minister of the host Circuit. **Opening Worship** was led by Revs Steve Ward, Joanne Sherwood and Carol Chaplin, all of whom are going forward for ordination at Conference. Synod then moved to matters of administration. The printed **Synod Reports** were accepted and Synod was asked to affirm and be encouraged by the work being done throughout the District. A healthy discussion followed on the future work of one of the District's projects - **Methodist International House**, and a proposal placed by the District Trustees was endorsed allowing for a full review process of this work to be undertaken. Synod approved the amalgamation of a number of Circuits paving the way for three new Circuits ... North East Somerset & Bath, Bristol & South Gloucestershire, and Gloucestershire. These three new Circuits would replace twelve Circuits that currently serve these geographical areas. Synod subsequently confirmed the closure of the Bristol Forum. The Synod approved two memorials to Conference, the first relating to the practicalities of larger Circuits, and the second relating to internet banking. Rev John Emmett invited members of Synod to be aware of the ecumenical implications and opportunities in respect of larger Circuits. Katherine Leach reminded members of the need to archive records and historical documents.

Moving to matters of outreach and mission Debbie Rainey encouraged members of Synod to support the District Youth Weekend in October and to ensure young people are invited to the District Youth Synod. Margaret Naish drew attention to the forthcoming 65th anniversary of the work of M.H.A. and encouraged Churches to give support. Then prior to lunch Synod heard from Rev Rosemary Fletcher and James Rowley about their work in Sri Lanka. Rosemary and James are the District's Overseas Missions Partners and currently on furlough in the United Kingdom. Offerings on the day were taken for the Methodist Ministers' Children's Relief Association (£285.00) and for the M.R.D.F. Zimbabwe Emergency Appeal. **Fresh Expressions** - The afternoon of Synod was devoted to hearing of examples of Fresh Expressions work around the District. These included Messy Church, Holiday at Home, Late Night Outreach to Night Clubbers and a Film Club. Rev David Bagwell spoke of a Fresh Expression of Church in terms of 'Belonging & Becoming'. Attention was drawn to a one year course being offered at Wesley College. Fresh Expressions of Church are working alongside established patterns of Church. It is not a case of 'either...or...' but 'both...and...' when looking at the work as a whole. Members of Synod were encouraged to see that people who find traditional Church models difficult could yet be touched with the Gospel and find the way of discipleship and faith in Christ. Finally, members of the host Circuit, Bristol West and the Greenway Centre were thanked for their hospitality, and all members who had served the District in the last twelve months. Members returned home with a purpose and determination to move forward in faith, and to rise to the challenge of speaking about God in ways both established and new. **Rev Andrew Prout - Assistant Secretary.**