

moter clinic points of which there was 400 all across the whole of PNG. PNG is a mainly Christian country, but underneath lies a fabric of traditional religious beliefs. This workshop gave a flavour of the diverse cultures in this country of over 800 distinct languages (not dialects), their rituals, environmental challenges and livelihoods.

During the conference we also heard about as a church, how we have been woefully slow to respond to the Biblical mandate to care for God's world, and yet we are increasingly being called on by those outside to step up to the plate on this issue and how can we do this? We explored how we can practically help our churches become good news for God's world, looking particularly at the Eco-Congregation programme and how we change the culture of the UK Church and wake the sleeping giant!

As well as being a steep learning curve as to how our brothers and sisters live and work in the Pacific there was fun and laughter. We experienced how to share Tongan dancing and singing as means of informing and teaching Tongan Cultures and as creative ways of worship as well.

I would encourage others to attend next year's conference as I came home richly blessed. I am grateful to the Circuit for allowing me this time. I will share more with you during our mission activities throughout the year.

CIRCUIT DIARY

more at www.bbbcircuit.org.uk

Sep	1	Tue	7.00pm	Welcome to Revd Steve Mann at Bicester
	9	Wed	7.30pm	Circuit Local Preachers meet at Bicester
	23	Wed	7.30pm	Circuit Meeting at Thornborough
Nov	18	Wed	7.30pm	Circuit Property Committee at Brackley

Information for the next "Bulletin" to Malcolm Wainwright by Monday 9 Nov 2015:
35 Cartwright Crescent, Brackley, NN13 6HA, malcolm-w@talktalk.net

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The Methodist Church
Buckingham, Bicester & Brackley Circuit

BULLETIN

Voice still small?

Revd Pat Olivent-Hayes was present at this year's **Methodist World Mission Conference** held during the last 3 days of May and focussed on the Islands of the Pacific. She shares her reflections on the experience as follows...

We were given an introduction to the Methodist Partner Churches in the Pacific, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and New Zealand, including the United Churches of Australia, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. We looked at the partnerships we have, some of the issues faced by those churches and the things that we do together.

One of the workshops explored "Mountains, Rivers and Rainforests:" and how they are providing healthcare to remote communities in Papua New Guinea. This was led by Dr Peter & Jean Rookes who spent 8 years working for the Church health service in Papua New Guinea, where 50% of all health services, particularly in rural areas, are provided by churches, principally the Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and United Churches. Peter works as National Health Secretary and Jean as National Co-ordinator for the Village Health Volunteer programme for the Anglican Church, this took them on regular patrols to their 30 health facilities, mostly in remote areas and even re-



Methodists for
World Mission

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Dear Friends

Having previously served in circuits that radiated around one principal town, I have reflected that their identity was readily set by the clear focus of their work, rest and play. Gathered around BBB (+ Towcester!), but looking out to the principal towns of neighbouring circuits, it is harder to define the identity of our circuit. I have wondered to what extent this can be encouraged, knowing that drawing people together will be at the expense of our carbon footprint and time, time that must include attention to our growing ecumenical partnerships and the involvement of each church in their community.

A circuit remains a peculiar Methodist device that enables the appointment of ministers, the planning of preachers, oversight of our material resources and the promotion of mission opportunities. There is an element of the strong helping the weak as the circuit enables small chapels that on their own would not seem to be viable. However we should not be content to limit this to material matters. We can all learn from each other, we can all be inspired by the witness of a 'small' chapel 'punching well above its weight' and we can all benefit from praying for each other. Be encouraged then, in whatever way you can, to learn more about each other and then to offer informed prayers that will release resources of the Spirit.

As I leave the circuit I wish to thank you all, especially those officers of the church who may feel that their labours are often unseen. We go to the Colchester circuit certain that in his providence God has a task for us. May it be evident that the clear focus for us all is to seek first His Kingdom. A final instruction from St Paul: 'encourage one another and build each other up' (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

BBB be encouraged!

With love from

Paul Howes

Dear Friends

I have been asked to share a few details about myself... so here goes. I grew up in the London Borough of Bexley where my mother still lives. My parents were Anglican and I was brought up and confirmed in the local Anglican Church.

I mention this because I am more and more convinced that God is 'rubbing out the lines of division' between denominations. I remember a preacher once drawing out the fact that very few of us actually choose our denominational allegiance. We are usually what we are by quirks of upbringing or fate. So it was with me. As a late teenager I decided that church was boring and that I'd stop going. About a year later a friend invited me along to the local Methodist youth club. It was there in 1981 that I was challenged to recommit my life to God and that was the beginning of a long journey that now leads me to you.

On the way I have studied for a Maths degree at the University of Oxford. I have spent three years doing lay work for the Methodist Church in the diverse settings of Dartmoor and the East End of London. I have worked for seven years as a chartered accountant in the middle of Birmingham. I have been back to university in Birmingham as part of my ministerial training to study for a Bachelor of Divinity. And, for the last nineteen years, my ministry has been in East Northamptonshire and in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Whilst at Oxford I met Karen who has been my wife since 1988 and we have two sons - Tim (21) who has just graduated from Durham University and Euan (11). My interests are varied and range from antiquarian books to football and pop music. Anything more that you want to know you will have to ask. We're looking forward to getting to know you!

All of us are on our journeys. I firmly believe that since that day in 1981 my journey has been in God's hands. He has guided and shaped me. Sometimes the future may be unclear or different to what I expected but I can say that God has never let me down. I pray that may be true for you as well and look forward to joining you on your journey.

With love from

Steve Mann