

Cross

Winter 2023 Issue
Sharing Our Stories

Currents



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Find the solution to the animal-themed crossword puzzle/bible study challenge featured in the last edition of Cross Currents.

EDITORIAL

Last spring, Crosscurrents explored the theme of Peace in the light of the invasion of Ukraine. In January this year, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina J. Mohammed, stated that peace – the United Nations’ *raison d’être* – “is now under grave threat”, observing that people’s sense of safety and security is at an all-time low in almost every country. Six out of seven worldwide are plagued by feelings of insecurity, the world is facing the highest number of violent conflicts since the Second World War and two billion people – a quarter of humanity – live in places affected by such conflict. Recalling the Secretary-General’s words that “the world is at a key inflection point in history,” she underscored the need to rethink efforts to achieve sustainable peace. Since then, thousands more people have been killed in Israel, Gaza, Sudan, and other places where news cameras seldom or ever visit.

The most poignant aspect of the war against Gaza has been the personal stories told to the BBC by fathers who have lost their children, and the stories of the hostages, many of whom were peacemakers.

This edition has taken as its theme “Our Stories”. In the last year, we have said goodbye to Miriam Kennedy and Belinda Letby and we remember them by quoting their Blessings.

We have also welcomed our new Deacon Ruth Yorke, who has introduced herself with a revealing and fascinating insight into her faith, her life, and her interests. The original questionnaire was used in the 1990s but has fallen into disuse but we hope to use the format for more stories next time.

We also have tributes to Alan Swindells, a member of Hinde Street for many years who contributed to the circuit, to the church, and to his class as a leader and friend.

Cathy Slater

Alan Brooks has provided us with the story of the Hatter of Hinde Street, and recommended one about a regular guest at the Wednesday Club. Sam Walker has told a story which will be new to most of us, and Robert Mitchell has stories and pictures from Belfast.

This edition of Crosscurrents is going to be hybrid, the term adapted from animal breeding for something digital and non-digital, but a better metaphor might be intermarriage, bouquet garni, pot pourri, or Kaleidoscope, or even duet. In terms of digital content, we are launching a gallery of work by artists from Hinde Street and beyond on our website. Our next edition will be out in the New Year - we look forward to telling you more stories, and we hope for some peace to begin to appear in the world.

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CROSSPIECE

**Reverend Peter Cornick
reflects on our split from the
West London Mission.**



MY STORY

If I am telling my story, I will include my student days at Hinde Street attending a university Christian group (MethSoc). I will then recall that I worked as a volunteer for the West London Day Centre for Homeless People (now called and operating as WLM – Seymour Place). You could say I have worked for the West London Mission and worshipped at Hinde Street for nearly 40 years – albeit with a significant gap!

At the Day Centre, I served tea, cooked breakfast, talked to the guests and accompanied people to appointments or to view new accommodation. It was a formative time – the guests and staff of that Centre taught me much I have relied on throughout my life.

The Day Centre, as it was then, was part of the Professional Services but it was by no means the only Service. Over the years, there have been a number of projects; those assisting people with alcohol dependency; accommodation for people leaving prison and counselling services to name a few. All have been an expression of the Circuit's Christian mission and outreach dating back to Hugh Price Hughes in 1887, later Lord Soper and

others less famous. How many people have found their lives transformed or supported, by God's grace, through the West London Mission? I count myself amongst them.

A CHANGE OF STORY

In January 2022, an external report to the Circuit recommended an immediate change to the governance structure of the Professional Services. Simply, the Circuit Meeting was no longer seen to be a suitable body to govern such Services, some of which are high risk. The Circuit trustees were therefore holding an inappropriate amount of risk. (This view has been confirmed by other independent Methodists and consultants who have been brought in to help us.) Regulations for charities have changed dramatically in recent years; the professional experience of those governing should reflect the nature of the services run; a charitable governance body of this nature should be focused on the specific work – whereas the Circuit Meeting is a wide ranging body designed to run churches. The Circuit Meeting took on board the feedback and acted responsibly and courageously. After reflection, it voted, unanimously, in February 2022 to find a way of placing the Services into a new body outside of the Circuit.

Whilst I am sure the Circuit Meeting at one time could offer such expertise, we are all aware that in the Circuit, we do not have the human resources we once had. The operations of the Services have always been managed by the professional executives and the governance of the Services has always been delegated to a sub-committee of the Circuit with some additional independent (Methodist) persons from the sector. In the last five years, even this sub-committee became reliant on a few people to carry the work. In my view, the governance of the Services by the Circuit had become unsustainable; the report only confirmed this.

The last 18 months have been a process of un-coupling the Professional Services from the governance of the Circuit, consulting lawyers and wider Methodist bodies. It has been complex and challenging. The Circuit officers have worked with the Services' executives, two external Methodists and other consultants to achieve the goal and we all feel considerable progress has been made.

FUTURE METHODIST INVOLVEMENT IN THE NEW CHARITY

Seven individuals with a variety of gifts to provide future governance have been identified, giving us confidence that the work started in the past and happening now, may continue to flourish. We are hopeful that a further two board members of the new charity will be Circuit nominations, to offer a continuing Methodist presence and maintain the Circuit's ongoing interest. Churches and individuals may wish to contribute to fundraising as before. The new charity will be aware of the historic legacy and the investment of time and resources by the Circuit over many years.

But, and this is an important part of the story, as a Circuit, we have to accept that the Professional Services as we have known them, have developed and grown. The Circuit will no longer be the governing body (the actual separation date still to be confirmed). In the central Christian story, there is death and resurrection. Stories develop.

A CONTINUING STORY

Like me, some of you will have a story to tell about your work with the Professional Services over the years. Perhaps you raised funds; served tea; got to know individuals helping them to shop or cook; supported a worker; served on the governing board or – by no means the least of these – prayed. You may feel a sense of sadness at the changes; a feeling that an important part of mission has moved on. This is understandable. But never diminish the work you and others have done just because it has now changed – it wrote a chapter of a story in people's lives; was Spirit led; of God.

I invite you to see this change as part of a continuing story. The work of the pioneers, Hugh Price Hughes, Lord Soper and others, achieved this missional work for more than 130 years. Many lives – including mine – have been transformed.

The launch of the new charity and its website will be coming soon so watch this space in the New Year. I pray that it will continue the story and by God's grace, enable more people to write their own stories.

Reverend Peter Cornick

WILLIAM JOHNSON, THE HATTER OF HINDE STREET

The visitor to Hinde Street will notice that there is one memorial in the chapel, on the right hand side, that contains a portrait of the person commemorated; that of William Johnson. Johnson was a principal benefactor of the church, and one of the main forces behind its rebuilding in 1887. His inspiring story is one that should be more widely known. The fact that today we sit in such a magnificent building is largely due to William Johnson and a small band of similarly devoted Methodists.

We were contacted recently by Mr Martin of a company called Swaine, which had incorporated the company owned by William Johnson's son. He enquired about William's role at Hinde Street, and so we were pleased and able to provide some information, and thus to re-establish a connection to one of our original benefactors.

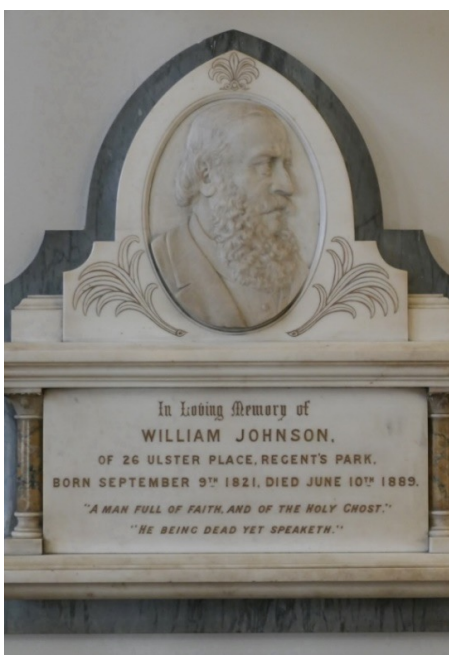
William Johnson (1821-89) was a Newcastle man, son of a Methodist, connected to the old Brunswick Chapel. He had been a scholar in the Orphan House Institution which was established by John Wesley himself. He left Newcastle in his youth and went with his father to Skipton in Yorkshire, then to

Exeter, then to London where he was at first employed in the lace trade. When living in Newington in London in 1850, he married Sarah Spriggs (1830-69) of the Spriggs family of hatters. By 1851 he had become a clerk in the hat trade, earning enough to afford a servant. He joined the firm of Lincoln, Bennett & Co., a high-class maker of men's hats, where he ultimately achieved high office, becoming a partner. It was said of the firm, who were hatters to the Prince and Princess of Wales, that they covered 'more aristocratic crowned heads in their time than any other firm in the world'.

In 1861, William Johnson was living at 1 Sackville St. in Mayfair, just off Piccadilly, with his wife, three young sons and two servants. By that stage he was a manager in the hat trade; his company, Lincoln, Bennett & Co, were next door at 2 Sackville St.

His house was fairly close to Hinde Street, where he must have become a member around this time. In 1866 he was appointed junior circuit steward (then serving as circuit steward for the next 23 years).

His wife Sarah sadly died in 1869 aged only 39, but in



1870 he married again, to Lucy, aged 34.

In the late 1860s he moved nearer to Hinde Street, to a larger house at 20 Ulster Place by Regent's Park. By 1871 he was there with his wife Lucy, three sons, a governess, a cook and a housemaid. He lived there until 1880, at which point he moved the short distance to 20 Marylebone Road, then shortly after to 26 Ulster Place where he lived for the rest of his life. In 1881 he was living with his wife, three sons plus young daughter Mabel, plus two nurses, a parlour maid and a cook. At Hinde Street, he became a trustee in 1880 and became passionate about the rebuilding of the Hinde Street Chapel.

He seconded the Trustees' resolution to consider its rebuilding, and from 1883 he was a member of the subcommittee on the rebuilding. With WT Eastman, he was a joint treasurer of the scheme (the Hinde Street Wesleyan Chapel and Sunday School Rebuilding Fund), as well as being a generous benefactor personally to the new chapel.

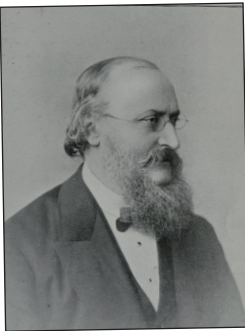
At the laying of the foundation stones in August 1886, William Johnson represented the trustees. He himself laid a stone; he had contributed £1000 (in today's money, £106,000) and added to it another £50 (£5,000). Leslie, his youngest son, took the place of his mother who was prevented by illness from performing the ceremony, and who laid a stone on behalf of Joseph Peters.

When the new chapel opened in September 1887, Mrs Johnson was presented with the Silver Key and formally opened the church.

In the new building William paid for extra embellishments. In April 1887 he paid for 'a more elegant pew-end designed by Mr Weir (the architect) at a cost of £35'. In October he paid for the gilding of the six capitals by the rostrum. In the last redecoration, the gilding on the columns was unfortunately painted over in white.

Having lived to see the chapel rebuilt, William sadly died in 1889 after a short illness, aged 68. The funeral service was held at Hinde Street, and then a memorial service, also at Hinde Street, in July. Curnock says that 'for twenty years he had served the circuit with a generous purse and with rare administrative quality'. A tablet was placed to his memory in the church (made by the sculptor Dottridge), and it still holds a prominent place.

The mourners at the funeral were Mrs Johnson, the four sons Herbert Johnson,



Alfred Johnson, Percy Johnson, Leslie B. Johnson, the daughter Mabel Johnson, and Miss Dick. Among the wreaths were ones from the factory at 24 Nelson Square in SE1, and from Sackville St. in Piccadilly.

As well as his work for Hinde St, William also contributed to Connexional branches including the Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Worn-Out Ministers Fund and Metropolitan Chapel Building Fund. William bequeathed £500 to his eldest son Herbert, who continued the family tradition by working for his father's firm from 1872 and then setting up his own successful hat business in the year of his father's death, 1889. Herbert was married at Hinde Street, in the previous chapel on the site, in 1884. The firm of Herbert Johnson made hats for many famous people: for example John Steed's bowler hat in The Avengers, Capt. Mainwaring's peaked cap in Dad's Army, Tom Baker's fedora in Doctor Who, Peter Sellers with a trilby as Clouseau, Jack Nicholson as the Joker with a fedora, and Harrison Ford with a broad-brimmed felt hat in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Alan Brooks

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A WEDNESDAY CLUB STORY

When we encounter people who attend our Wednesday and Thursday Clubs, we don't ask questions of them, and consequently we rarely get a good overall picture of what their life is like. Sometimes, if people look quite presentable, we wonder whether or not they are actually homeless. Actually, appearances are deceptive. Some who do not look homeless in fact turn out to be, and others who look homeless do have somewhere to live, albeit of poor quality. We cannot really imagine what it's like to be homeless. We continue to be surprised that in general, all our guests are very good-natured despite the stresses in their lives.

The story of one of our guests who has attended on and off for a couple of years, has been written up by Comelia Krause of the Swiss Church, and is quite illuminating. It shows the complexity of the lives of homeless people, and the drive of some of them to overcome difficulties most of us will never experience. The following is Comelia's account, with minor editing.

David Fussell has been living in London without a roof over his head for some years. There is a documentary about him on the internet. In 30 minutes, the film tells an almost unbelievable success story: How Fussell, who has been homeless in London for years, produced his own horror film. Four years ago, actors, friends and relatives of him attended the premiere in a London cinema. And at the cinema, "Mystic Demon Killer by David Henry Fussell" was emblazoned in big letters.

Fussell's eyes still sparkle today when he talks about it. He is sitting in a community café at King's Cross Church at a round table, behind him in the corner are his backpack, two large bags and his guitar.

The production of the horror film was a tour de force without any equipment. Fussell made the editing and post-processing on the computer of an aid organization. The premiere was

organized by the producers of the documentary. The 60-year-old is actually a trained car mechanic and spent most of his childhood in Wales. He lost his house over ten years ago. It was damaged during road works, he says. When he was also fired from his job at a retailer, he was drawn to London.

For several years he managed an unusual balancing act: at night he slept on the street, during the day he cleared the shelves in a clothes shop. "I've always made sure that I don't look homeless," he says. That's how he keeps it now: he wears a dark blue checked shirt and black jeans, his hair is neatly cut.

Fussell attributes the fact that he ultimately lost his job to a chain of unfortunate circumstances: young rioters kicked him in the head at night when he was lying on his sleeping place with a bottle and stole his mobile phone. As a result, he was unable to inform his employer in good time about his injury and his absence. Fussell stayed away that day. And never came back.

Since then he has been struggling with odd jobs. He does not receive social assistance because it is linked to strict conditions; for example, the obligation to look for a job. "Without a permanent home, that's almost impossible," says Fussell. And in winter there is no time to look for a job anyway. It's about existential issues: keeping warm, eating enough, staying healthy.

Fussell bases his daily routine on the free support services for the homeless. This early Monday evening he makes his way to the Order of Malta at the Church of St James, Spanish Place. The Catholic aid organization offers a dinner for

the homeless twice a week in the large basement room. Over a dozen volunteers help with the catering. There's chicken casserole, muffins for dessert. The head of the volunteer team, welcomes around 60 guests who have sat down at the tables.

After the pandemic, many contact points would not have opened at all, says Fussell. Now inflation is making his life even more difficult. If he has to buy a warm meal in a café or pub, it quickly costs £20. "First the pandemic and now the high cost of living: It's like a hurricane." He learned to play the guitar as a child, and he loves singing. Soon he wants to try it as a street musician, but the permits for the London Underground and train stations cost a lot of money.

Around nine o'clock in the evening, the room empties, Fussell also takes his rucksack, his bags and the instrument case and sets off on the ten-minute walk to his sleeping place. He has slept in front of churches and department stores, and is currently seeking protection from a furniture store at night. "It's crazy that I'm sleeping in front of a shop that sells luxury furniture that I can never afford," he says, shaking his head.

But the sleeping places have to be well chosen: expensive shops are usually under video surveillance, so rioters stay away. Canopies offer protection from rain, which also benefits him in the evening. Business owners tolerated the homeless, Fussell says. "As long as you leave early enough and leave the place clean." He needs about ten minutes to set up his green tent. Then he stows his bags and guitar away. Around nine-thirty he's in his sleeping bag.

On Tuesday morning before seven o'clock he was in the Covent Garden district of the Swiss Church in London. Preparations are underway for the "Breakfast on the Steps", a free breakfast for local residents. The offer is coordinated by Andreas Feller. The 32-year-old from Switzerland organizes it on a voluntary basis, supported this morning by four other volunteers. The breakfast is exceptionally good, with decent portions, says Fussell. But he can only eat himself on the side, because he is employed by the Swiss Church on an hourly basis as a bouncer. If there are problems between the visitors, he should mediate, he knows the life story of many regular guests. "There are rarely difficulties, but if I have to intervene, the guests know that I am fair."



As soon as Fussell opens the door at half past seven, the room fills with people in thick winter jackets. You help yourself to the long buffet with sandwiches, yoghurt, tea and coffee and take a seat at the tables in the whitewashed church room. Men in particular have come, many of whom can have their hair cut for free by the hairdressers once a month.

Then he's on his way to another job - in a fancy London office building. Next to the reception, his colleague Allan (who has also visited Wednesday Club many times) has already set up a large stand with postcards and photo calendars. It is a special kind of social art project; the motifs were photographed by homeless people with disposable Fuji cameras. Once a year, 100 cameras are given to the participants, after which they have a week to capture "their London". A jury selects the calendar motifs, and the Royal Photographic Society is also involved. The homeless earn money from the sale of calendars and cards, and those who make it into the calendar receive an additional bonus. Fussell had a photo in the 2020 calendar: a man photographed through a red London telephone booth (another Wednesday Club guest had a photo in the 2022 calendar).

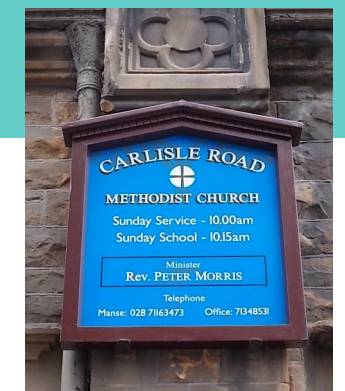
The pictures in the "My London" calendars show less the misery on the streets than colourful, happy city life, often from an unusual perspective. Fussell and his colleague stay at the stand all day, hoping that the office staff will buy calendars and maps during their lunch break. Business has been worse since the pandemic because more people are working from home. "Either way it's a good place because we're protected from snow and rain," says Fussell.



In recent years, Fussell has been able to save part of the income from calendar sales and has fulfilled another dream in addition to film production. He bought a cheap used sailing boat with a cabin. It is still stored outside of London on land, it needs repairs. But in the long term, the boat should free Fussell from homelessness. He dreams of a berth on the canal, a life on board. "I want something of my own and I want to be independent." Life on the boat would be right up his alley.

Since the writing of this article, David Fussell has been admitted to Falmouth University and has started a course in film-making.

*Text by Comelia Krause.
Photo by Natalia Krezel.*



Derry is the Irish name for the town, going back hundreds of years. Londonderry is the town after the plantation from the City of London around the year 1600. Today on the platforms of the main station of Belfast, Lanyon Place, you hear over the loudspeakers "This train is for Derry-Londonderry".

Derry is good to tourists with a whole circuit of walls - the first thing I did was walk 'round the wall. The walls were built by the plantation from London.

St Columba, C.o.I., Cathedral was built inside the walls. I went twice to the cathedral for the Sunday service. Most cathedrals don't mind wandering strangers dropping in for a few weeks. St Eugene (Eoghain) RC cathedral is outside the walls but not far away. It is at the top of a hill - steep for walkers!

At Cafe Mona in the bus-station I had quite a few "small breakfasts" - small by Irish standards! Cafe Mona opens early and made a good start to a day's sightseeing.

St Columba founded a monastery in Derry around 543AD. Around 563AD he left for Iona in Scotland.

Robert Mitchell

A BLESSING FOR MIRIAM

May the Maker's blessing be yours
encircling you round
above you
within you

May the angel's blessing be yours
and the joy of the saints
to inspire you
to cherish you

May the Son's blessing be yours
the wine and the water
the bread and the stories
to feed you
to remind you

May the Spirit's blessing be yours
the wind, the fire
the still small voice
to comfort you
to disturb you

And may our own blessing be yours
a blessing rooted in our common pilgrimage
the blessing of friends.

Amen.



A BLESSING FOR BELINDA & ANDREW

As you journey forward into the next steps of your callings
May the Lord of all good things guide you on your way.
As you journey from London to your new home,
May you lookout for Scottish thistles and the English roses,
And when you see them may they remind you of the places you were sent to.
Belinda from Edinburgh to London and all the meandering in between,
You have blessed the world around you.
May you be blessed with the knowingness that your goodness, is a direct stencil
of God's goodness.
Thank you for your goodness.
May God offer you blessings as you move from this place,
May you be blessed with courage to stand the storms,
May you be blessed with zest to keep you energised,
May you be blessed with belly laughs and humour that makes your cheeks sore,
when with family, old friends and new friends.
May you be blessed with stillness, to embrace a new way of being.
May you be blessed with creativity to learn new skills and meet with God in new
ways.
Belinda, may you be blessed with the wonderful audacity to truly believe and
know you are wholly,
and perfectly loved by the one who inspired you into being.
We send you on your way with grateful hearts.
Amen.



WELCOME DEACON RUTH YORKE

We asked Ruth Yorke a few questions.
Here are her answers...

After you left school what did you do- college, job, something else?

I went to Bible college for a year after A-levels, then found work. I've done all sorts of jobs, including working in a shoe shop, helping out on a milk round (very early starts!), working with toddlers, work in a nursing home, working at Woolies, Spar and as different jobs as a nurse.

What leisure activities do you enjoy?

I love going for walks, especially if there's some nature around - as I'm a long way from the sea here, I appreciate London's parks and any river or lake or stretch of water, and any little bit of green or even a road with trees on! I have various arts and crafts interests that I dip in and out of and I like playing the guitar. In some appointments, I have wowed under-5s with my amazing repertoire of toddlers songs... (they can mostly be played on 3 chords!)

What sustains you in your faith? Have you always been a practicing Christian?

Faith is all about relationship. Whilst we can read about Jesus, and study and so on, for me it's the encounter with God that gives me faith for the stuff I'll never see or understand. Sometimes things suddenly 'click together' and I realise what God has been up to. Sometimes I know I'll never get that 'click together' and may never know. But what I know of God helps me trust for the stuff I'll never know.

The gospels give us a picture of a beautiful, passionate, very real Jesus who cared deeply for people, challenged injustice and hypocrisy, lifted up and welcomed people who were ignored or excluded... this resonates with my experience of God and makes me passionate about sharing that Jesus. It's transformational once we realise how very deeply we are loved. Jesus spoke up,



challenged, didn't let innocent people take the blame for the behaviour of bullies or users. Jesus is my inspiration and my dearest heart-friend.

I have amazing people in my life who remind me of what God's love is like when I lose focus. I'm very blessed with amazing friends and family, for whom I'm grateful.

I grew up in faith, but not in an easy way particularly. I saw very different examples of people who all claimed to be Christian, rather than a consistent witness. As an adult, I realise they were probably all trying, but as a child it's confusing, and difficult to square those things in your head - when people say one thing and live another. I'm grateful to people throughout my life who have shown me that consistency - sometimes people who didn't seem that influential at the time, but who I still remember fondly as the people who nurtured my faith and my trust in people. I don't necessarily remember what they said, but I remember how they lived, and that was the real influence on me.

What public figure do you most admire?

I rarely get starstruck by an MP, but in Birmingham, my MP was Jess Philips and I have a lot of respect for her. I wrote to her quite often, and she always responded with passionate support for vulnerable people. I wrote to her most often about the NHS, people who are currently refugees, and the rights and safety of people who are transgender. She always replied with real compassion and understanding. Last year when she deliberately listed Brianna Ghey in the list of women killed in violence, she was rightly applauded, but also predictably got some criticism. She knew that and she did it anyway, because she supports all women, including trans women. I'm not into party politics, but I am a big fan of her integrity and the way she speaks up for vulnerable people and isn't afraid to be unpopular if it means speaking up for justice. She's very brave.

What are your favourite pieces of music?

My tastes are quite eclectic. I love 'in paradisum' (Faure's Requiem), 'Be thou my vision' (hymn), 'should I stay or should I go now?' (the Clash), many of John Rutter's pieces, and pretty much everything from the Bee Gees! I also love to listen to Handel's Messiah when it's being performed live, especially somewhere with amazing acoustics, such as a cathedral. Now that mix tapes are a thing

of the past, I like making my own USB sticks of favourite songs to play in the car for long journeys!

What book have you enjoyed reading the most?

I am a big reader and that would be a long list! I started keeping a note of the books I read and I've read over 80 books this year so far. I read a lot of ebooks from the library, which is brilliant as it stops me filling the house with yet more books (I struggle to give them away once bought). I do buy some books in hard copy. My recent purchases have included books by Ann Lamott, Richard Osman, Jarel Robinson-Brown, Ibram X Kendi, and Jay Hume.

What is your favourite building/place?

My favourite place is with my feet in the sea, walking along - preferably at high tide but on a quiet day so that I don't have to dodge other people at the shore, but can immerse myself in the experience. I find it a deeply spiritual experience, to walk along the sea shore, and have some of my best times of communion with God as I paddle in the sea. Of course I live nowhere near the sea, so I have a practice of 'grabbing moments of joy' and looking out for beauty wherever I am - be that a pretty leaf, an interesting patch of sky, a smile on a stranger's face, a cute dog walking by...

Ruth Yorke



Photo by Graham Lacdao

ALISON GOWMAN: LAY CANON

I am delighted and truly honoured to have been appointed as a member of a Chapter of St. Paul's Cathedral and as a Lay Canon. This may raise many questions in your mind. But she is a Methodist? And what does a Canon do anyway?

Yes, I am still a Methodist, but in the true spirit of ecumenism the role is open to all Christians and, from my point of view, this is an excellent way to build bridges.

Whilst the Dean and Chapter have historically been the ruling body in Cathedrals, a recent change in the legislation means that Cathedrals now need to be set up as standalone charities

and the Chapter has become the formal Charity Trustee and governing body, needing more than 50% of the members to be non-clergy. I hope to bring my prior experience as a trustee to help me in shaping the new governance and strategic direction for St Paul's Cathedral. There are exciting changes already planned including the first girl probationer choristers who have arrived and will grow to a full choir of girls' voices in the next few years.

There are many events scheduled that consider the important questions of today - not least the fact that the Cathedral is in the heart of the financial and professional business City, but

it is also a national icon and focus of many important commemorations. And don't worry, I have not forgotten the need to put sustainability and the response to climate change into the operations and purpose of the Cathedral's work.

As a member of Chapter I am also a Lay Canon. I will be taking part in services from time to time - there is an amazingly complicated rota! It does indeed also come with a formal robe in reversible red and black that I will wear whilst in the Cathedral. I hope to welcome all from Hinde Street to visit and enjoy St Paul's. There is, of course, a special link with John Wesley who worshipped at St Paul's and recounts the day of his conversion on 24th May 1738 as starting with evensong at St. Paul's Cathedral. There is a statue of John Wesley in the gardens and an annual service is held to commemorate both John and Charles Wesley on 24th May each year.



Alison Gowman



ART AT HINDE STREET

Hinde Street Collage

The purpose of this article is to celebrate the many talents of the congregation at Hinde Street. Along with this article, we are also launching a gallery page on our website (more on that later!) and hopefully in 2024 we will host an art exhibition at Hinde Street.

I am going to cover four examples when artists have had a chance to produce work - these are Church Weekends, The Cross Project, Holy Week Art, and Art & Soul, a zoom arts and crafts class run by our previous Community Worker Miriam Kennedy. In addition, art has been produced by Junior Church, and at events like Quiet Days.



Faith in Everyday Life: clay artwork by Hinde Street members, 2005



Hospitality, Healing and Hope: art from the seaside in Herne Bay, 2005



Children's artwork, Hinde Street, 2005



Artists at work, Hinde Street, 2005

1 Church Weekends:

Church Weekends have traditionally been Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, and the Saturday afternoons and evenings have been devoted to leisure activities supplementing the more serious activities on Friday night, Saturday morning and the Sunday service. In May 2005 the theme was Faith in Everyday Life - Treasures, and one of the Saturday activity sessions was clay making.

Meanwhile, the children had great fun painting their hands and making a picture. The following year the children produced a wonderful collage of Hinde Street church showing then Ministers Geoff Cornell and Leao Neto, as well as portraits of other Hinde Street notables, such as Miriam Cantor. The weekend based on the theme of Hospitality, Healing and Hope took place at the seaside in Herne Bay, Kent where some of the boys caught a fish - see above a drawing of the occasion.

2 The Cross Project:

In 2015, Daniel van Allmen created two plain wooden crosses and invited each of the classes to decorate it for a month. The project continued over three years. There was usually one cross on display and another being decorated. People were very imaginative and used cloth, paper, paint, glue and much more to make a series of unique crosses. One from May 2015 was made by Emerson Rizzi's class and represents Pentecost.

The following month, a cross was displayed made by Margaret Swarbrick's class. This showed a knitted sea with a fish, a Methodist Cross in the centre, and Adam and Eve on top. In July the Junior Church produced a wonderful depiction of Jesus the Good Shepherd and proudly showed it off in the service.

In 2008, more pottery was made.

In 2009, we visited in Autumn, and one project was to make art from nature. The theme was carried onto 2011 when even more elaborate nature pieces were produced by the young members of Hinde Street.

In 2012, Daniel van Allmen, a talented wood carver, brought some of his work to the church weekend.



Pottery, 2008



Woodworks, Daniel van Allmen



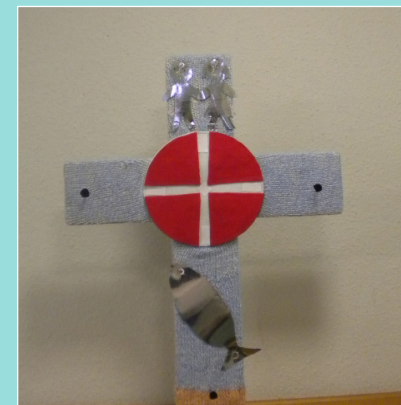
Art from Nature, 2011



Art from Nature, 2009



Margaret Swarbrick's Class, 2015



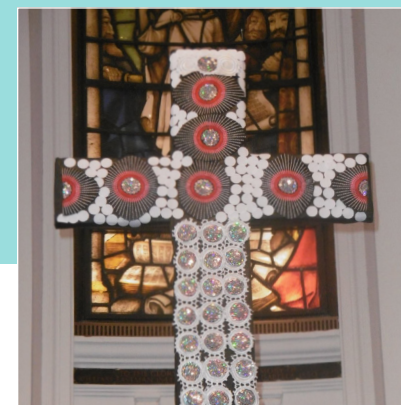
Emerson Rizzi's Class, 2015



Junior Church, 2015



North London Class, 2015



Grace Osibogun, 2016



Cross of Redemption, 2016

In September 2015, the North London class chose the theme of Rainbow. The rainbow is the division by the prism of light into several colours, but it is also a universal symbol of peace and carries many other meanings.

For Christians, the rainbow represents Peace between God and creation (Genesis). It also represents Iris, Greek goddess of the rainbow, as well as the bridge between Heaven and Earth in Japan and Scandinavia both. In China, the rainbow - a union of five colours - is a symbol of the union of yang and yin.

The North London class cross was also made to celebrate Hinde Street as an inclusive church, and the unity of men and women, young and old, East and West, North and South, and the riches given by our diversity.

In September 2016, Grace Osibogun made another gorgeous cross.

In November, another class produced "The Cross of Redemption" for Remembrance Sunday with the following statement:

"The cross we present today reflects the evergreen pastures which God has in his mercy and grace given to us for our use and sustenance. It is also a reflection of the seasons and the great events which have shaped the world today. We also see the colours of the Seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. We also remember all those souls who laid down their lives to prevent a greater disaster. Can you imagine what the world would be like if the Nazis had achieved their ambition? To all those who lost their lives we say 'May God be with you eternally.'"

3 Holy Week Art

Meanwhile, over several years, Hinde Street held art exhibitions in Lent and Holy Week. Sometimes the subject was scenes from the story from Palm Sunday to Easter. In other years, the themes have included *the Seven Last Words on the Cross* and *the Stations of the Cross*.

Here is a collage of Palm Sunday, showing the crowds, the palms and the donkey:



Palm Sunday



The Road to Jerusalem

The piece on the left here is the Road to Jerusalem made over a series of Sunday, with teardrops marking significant events. Later on in the article, you will see this collage transformed.

The next picture on the right is the Garden of Gethsemane, followed by several scenes from the 14 Stations of the Cross - an unMethodist idea. People were invited to choose their scene from the journey from condemnation to entombment.

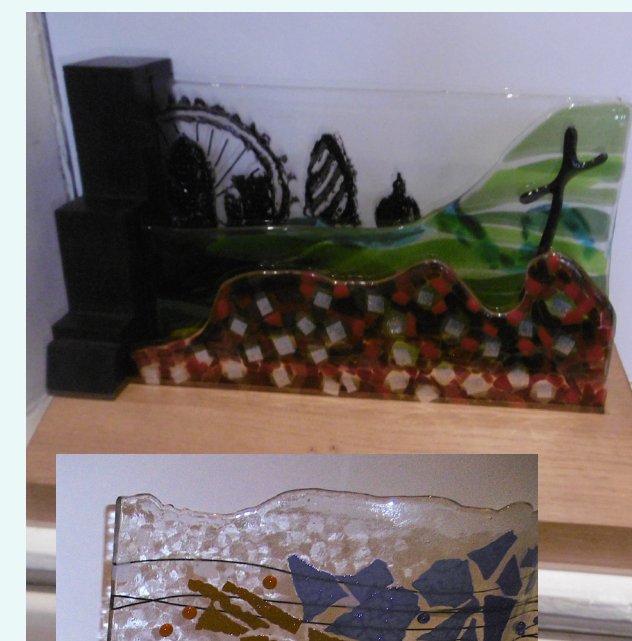
The next picture is Jesus betrayed by Judas - after the arrest in Gethsemane, Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate. The last piece is a textile work by Katherine Fox that depicts Simon of Cyrene taking up the cross.

The Jerusalem Post



Crucifix, Jane Leach

Crucifixion, Michaela Youngson

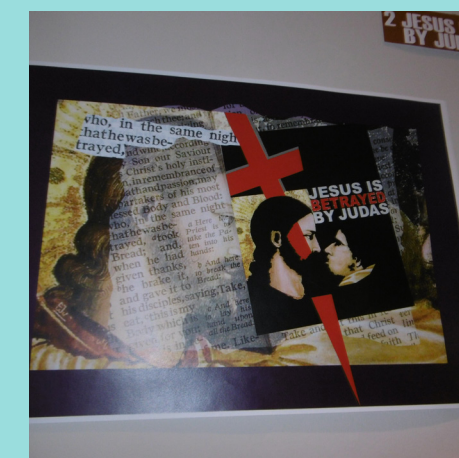


Pieta, Michaela Youngson

The first picture above depicts the women of Jerusalem meeting Jesus in a faux-news article. Then we have some interpretations of the crucifixion. One of these was made in glass by Michaela Youngson, who set the scene in modern London. Michaela also produced another art piece - simply called *Pieta* - for an art exhibition at Hinde Street that was publicised beyond the church itself. Michaela is a Methodist presbyter, currently serving as a Chair in the London District of the Methodist Church. Michaela was President of the Methodist Conference 2018-19 and will take up a new role as Assistant Secretary of the Methodist Conference and Connexional Ecumenical Officer for the Methodist Church. The Crucifix on the red background was made by Jane Leach, Principal of Wesley College in Cambridge.



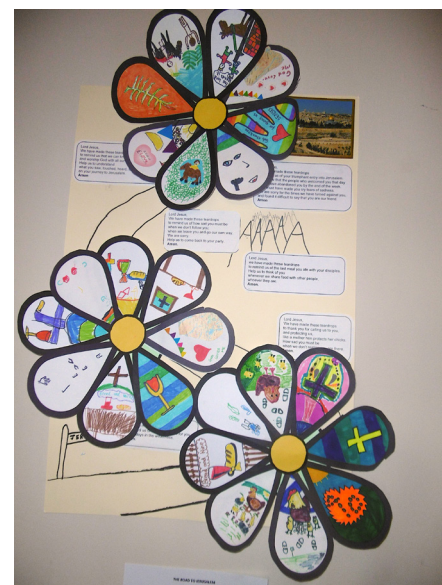
The Garden of Gethsemane



Jesus betrayed by Judas



Simon of Cyrene, Katherine Fox

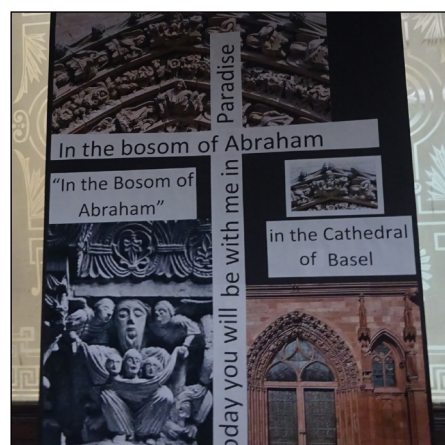


*The Road to Jerusalem,
Junior Church*

Finally, there are three pictures that illustrate the Resurrection. The first is “Angel” in fabric by Katherine Fox.

The next piece is *The Road to Jerusalem* by Junior Church featured earlier in the article - this time with the tears reassembled as a flower for Easter Day.

The final picture is of the *Resurrection* itself.



*Today Thou Shall Be With Me in
Paradise, Daniel von Allmen*



*Father Forgive Them,
Daniel von Allmen*



*Father into thy hands I commend
my spirit, Laura Head*



Angel, Katherine Fox

During lockdown, Miriam collected the art that was made in class, but never was able to find the time to make a webpage of the artworks. With this edition of Cross Currents, however, we have created an online gallery where you can view all the art we have featured in this article, and more. You can check it out on our website at hindestreet.co.uk/art-at-hinde-street/.

As was said at the beginning of this article, I hope there will be opportunities in 2024 to see more art from Hinde Street both from the present and future. The art can be in any medium, including painting and drawing, or knitting and crochet, like the purple for Advent crochet and cardboard decorations for the church’s “Welcome Space” in 2017, or the knitted angels which were blessed and shared with the community in 2020.

If you are happy to share your art in our online gallery, please feel welcome to send it to our Digital Officer at elina.paivinen@wlm.org.

Catherine Slater

4 (Remote) Art & Soul

During Covid, many members of the church took advantage of lockdown to create art. Peter Cornick, our minister, worked on several pieces which have not yet been displayed; Miriam Kennedy, our Community Worker, led a monthly art session called Art & Soul on Zoom.

Like the Stations of the Cross, Art & Soul was not attended by Hinde Street members alone - the Deacon from our sister church at King’s Cross was able to join the group on some evenings. See below Karen Slater’s portrait of Reverend Peter Cornick, created in class.



Resurrection

BRITISH BLACK-LED CHURCHES

In 1994, I presented a paper entitled 'Religion in Museums at Bar Convent in York.'

This is a brief and updated revision of that presentation, and it also represents a part of my personal story.

British Black-led churches were formed due to the overt and covert rejection of Black people from mainstream churches in the 1940s through to the 1950s.

During the enslavement of Africans, the Bible was used both as a form of control and for the exploitation and subjugation of the enslaved. Missionaries were said to 'convert' Africans from 'paganism'. Today, however, the methods of these missionaries, whose objectives were to convert Africans, have been questioned, especially their connivance at the brutality meted out to Africans during the 15-18th century. There is a standing joke that the missionaries' so-called conversion of Africans to Christianity resulted in the Europeans owning African land in exchange for the Bible. Sadly, religion was used to destroy the history, culture and religion of Africa. Thank God that today, Africa and the Caribbean produce evangelists for the reverse conversion of Europe.

During the period of mass migration from Africa and the Caribbean in the 1940s to 1960s, Black people were not welcomed into the congregations of host churches, much like in other institutions. The oral documentation and written history of that time reveal that (a) Church ministers did not want Black people to worship alongside White members, fearing that the White congregants would leave the church, (b) on the few instances where Ministers allowed Black people to worship there was anxiety and upset within the White congregation, and (c) Ministers openly refused entry to Black worshipers and directed them to other places where "other Black people" worshipped. Despite this discrimination, Black people have demonstrated remarkable resilience and faith and continue to worship in large numbers in mainstream churches to this day. They play a pivotal role in the administration and religious activities of these churches.

'The Christian landscape in Britain now has a definitive imprint of African and Caribbean Christianity and is best described using the metaphor of Joseph's 'coat of many colours.'

- Babatunde Adedibu, 'Origin, Mission, Globalisation, and the Mission Encounter of Britain's Black Majority Churches'



In the 1940s and 1950s, many Black people from the British Commonwealth were drawn to the Pentecostal Churches established during this time. These individuals were devout Christians who had been active in their respective home countries. However, upon arriving in Britain, they found that British churches were unwelcoming and often hostile, even if they belonged to the same denomination as the churches they were familiar with back home. Despite the challenges posed by race and racism, they remained determined to overcome these obstacles and achieve their goals.

These individuals were devout churchgoers, some of whom had held high positions in their local congregations. It was disheartening for them to be rejected and unwelcome. However, looking back, their rejection may have been a blessing in disguise, as it put their faith to the test and allowed them to demonstrate their resilience that testifies to Paul's exhortation in Romans 8:28:

'All things work together for good, for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.'

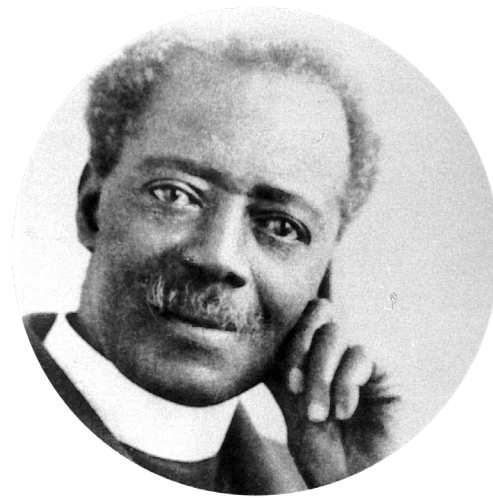
Although they did not initially plan on establishing churches upon arriving in Britain, they were compelled to do so due to being shunned by the churches they previously attended in their home country.

At first, the migrants held prayer meetings in their homes with their families and friends. As their numbers grew, they started meeting in their front rooms. When the group continued to expand, they pooled their money to rent community and school halls for Sunday gatherings. Now, many of these churches have their own premises. It's a reason to say Alleluia and thank God. If there were an accreditation or accolade for the first Pentecostal Church in Britain, the accolade would go to a Methodist Minister from Nigeria, John Jea, in the early 19th century. John was kidnapped in Calabar in Eastern Nigeria by Dutch enslavers who kidnapped him and his whole family. He suffered immensely from the enslavers. He was illiterate, but after some years, he was able to read the Gospel of John. After his freedom, he preached in many parts of Southern USA, where he encountered many forms of racism and humiliation. But he persevered. He travelled to Britain on several occasions, where he met Mr Christopher Hooper, who was travelling with John Wesley and Mr Cooper, a Methodist preacher.

During one of his missionary work missions in Ireland, he met Mary from Limerick, who he married. He started the first Black Church, possibly in his house, around 1805.

...the first place I arrived at was Baudley Mores, about fourteen miles from Liverpool, where I met with Mr. Christopher Hooper, who had travelled in the time of Mr. Wesley. I also met with Mr. Cooper, a Methodist preacher. These were the first brothers in Christ that gave me liberty to preach in the country. Here much good was done in the name of the holy child Jesus, for many were convinced and converted to God, whenever there was preaching.'

- John Jea, 'Read Life, History and Unparalleled Sufferings of John Jea the African Preacher'



Rev Thomas Kwame Brem-Wilson

In 1901, a Ghanaian Reverend Minister named Thomas Kwame Brem-Wilson travelled to London and founded the first Pentecostal Church in 1906. He established the Sumner Road Chapel in Peckham, Southeast London, now known as Sureway International Christian Ministries. Rev. Brem-Wilson was born in Dixcove, Ghana, in 1855.

In the 1980s, a Ghanaian Mother from Saltpond in Accra arrived in London and established a church in Kilburn. The late Mother Florence Charway founded the Divine Healing Church of Christ (DHCC), which initially operated as a 'house church' in Saltram Crescent, Kilburn. As attendees grew, Mother Charway sought permission from the Superintendent Minister at Quex Road Methodist Church, who kindly and graciously allowed her to use the church premises. The DHCC held its church services and other events from Quex Road until recently when it acquired its own building.

It was my girlfriend at the time, Norma, who subsequently became my wife, who took me to this Church. I paused my Methodist membership at Central Hall, Westminster, where I was a chorister and, after ten or more years at DHCC, returned to Methodism and started attending Hinde Street. Mother Charway was also a Methodist, and when I joined the church, I took along my Methodist credentials. I was a local preacher On-Note from Sierra Leone before I came to London. Mama Charway encouraged me to play a leading role in DHCC, and I was subsequently ordained a Pastor by a Nigerian Bishop, Awusu Akuffo. Divine Healing Church is a thriving Church with many youngsters of Caribbean ancestry, unlike in the 1980s when it was dominated by people from Africa, mainly from Ghana.

During the 1980s, there was a significant increase in the number of West Africans who migrated to London. The network and foundation that had been built by Caribbean Pastors after the arrival of Windrush played a crucial role in establishing stronger African-led Churches. African Pastors have now established Mega churches capable of attracting over 40,000 people during conventions and over a thousand people during a regular Sunday service. Two examples of such Mega churches are Kingsway International Christian Centre and The Redeemed Christian Church of God.

The trend of multicultural and evangelical churches is on the rise, and Jesus House is leading the way. Jesus House is a part of The Redeemed Christian Church of God, which is considered one of the fastest-growing Pentecostal churches in the UK. There is a significant amount of anecdotal evidence that suggests that older African and Caribbean people who are members of mainstream churches also attend Pentecostal churches on Sunday afternoons, following their morning services at their base mainstream churches. The reasons for this phenomenon are not entirely clear and have been a topic of discussion, but it appears that attending both churches helps to fulfil their spiritual needs.

Despite any theological flaws that outsiders may perceive of Pentecostal Churches, people who attend undoubtedly receive spiritual benefits that they do not get from their mainstream churches.

The young African and Caribbean group has increasingly abandoned mainstream churches and enthusiastically turned to Pentecostal churches, much to the disappointment of their parents, who attend mainstream churches. However, their parents find solace in knowing that their children are in a place of worship and not involved in any unlawful activities.

Seventy-five years ago, British Africans and Caribbeans were struggling to find places of worship in the same way they were denied the rudiments of basic life's necessities, but today, in the year of our Lord 2023, the Pentecostal Churches are flourishing with multicultural congregations. The diversity is not solely based on membership but also on Theology, Ecclesiology and Missiology. Interestingly, and in my view, very welcome and uplifting, is that some of these churches have embraced liberation theology - empowerment through social and political change.

It is incredible that in just over 75 years since the arrival of Windrush, African and Caribbean people and the younger generation of British Africans and British Caribbeans have had such a significant impact on the social and religious life of Britain.

A special mention of the unassimilated cultural & religious practices of the indigenous Aladura Church of God of the Yoruba ethnic group of Nigeria

Excerpts of an interview with Father Abiola of the Aladura Church of God of Great Britain:

Aladura is a Yoruba word for the language of the natives in the Western part of Nigeria. Adura means prayer, and Aladura means one who prays and believes in the efficacy of prayer. Aladura was used in the late 1920s by the members of the established churches in Nigeria to describe growing numbers of groups who lived a life of prayer and fasting because of the great task they believed was committed

to them by God to save humankind from the powers of evil. They undertake to help those who are in need of spiritual help due to illness, family problems or in fear of being haunted by witches and demons. The Aladuras, because of their cultural background, believe that God, through prayer, fasting, and obedience to God's commandments, can do all things. There is salvation here and now as well as the afterlife. They believe in the active manifestation of the Holy Spirit, evident in prophesying and healing, and have been able to help many of those who have asked for their help. Aladura is an umbrella name for most of the Nigerian independent churches, among which are the Cherubim and Seraphim, Christ Apostolic, Church of the Lord Aladura, Celestial Church of Christ etc. All Aladura churches are Trinitarian, and celebrate the Holy Communion, and baptise by immersion.

Religion is at the centre of the life of a Yoruba. Religion forms the foundation and the all-governing principle of life. As far as the Aladuras are concerned, the full responsibility of all the affairs of life belongs to the Deity; their own part in the matter is to do as they are ordered through the priests and diviners whom they believe to be interpreters of the will of the Deity. Through all the circumstances of life, through all its changing scenes, its joys and troubles, it is the Deity who is in control. Before a child is born, the oracle is consulted and due rites observed; when the child is born, the oracle gives directions about it; at every stage of life - puberty, betrothal, marriage, taking up a career, building a house, going on a journey, and everything which make up human existence here on earth - man is in the hands of the Deity whose dictate is law, and who is waiting on the other side of this life to render to him/her as he/she deserves.

Aladura believes that the Deity is not distant from humanity but is present in the business of daily living. To the Yoruba, the Deity is of a Personage, venerable and majestic, aged but not ageing, with a greyness that commands awe and reverence. He speaks; He commands; He acts; He rules; He judges. He does all that a Person of the highest authority does, in whose control everything is.

He is the ‘Eleda’ (Creator), ‘Olorum’ (the Head or Lord of heaven), ‘Elemi’ (the Owner of the spirit), ‘Olodumare’ (King, mighty with unique and incomparable majesty), ‘oba Orum’ (the King Who dwells in heaven), ‘Oga Ogo’ (The Master in repentance, His majesty is unique and surpasses all others), ‘Oba ti dandan reki sele’ (The King whose behests never return void), etc, etc.

The Deity is Ominpotent – ‘Alewilese’ (He who alone can speak and accomplish), ‘Alabara julo’ (the all powerful); All-wise, All-knowing, All-seeing – ‘Arinu r’ode, Olumo okan’ (He who sees both the inside and the outside of man, the Discerner of hearts), Immortal – ‘Oyigiyigi Oba aiku’ (The mighty, Immovable Rock that never dies).

This is a brief background of the belief of the Deity of an average Yoruba man or woman. It was because of this belief that Christianity took root in Yorubaland. Aladuraism its teachings and beliefs are in affinity with the understanding of God and are not contrary to the Christian God that the missionaries preached. Aladuraism is a practical Christian religion and not a cult or sect as some people believe.

Aladuraism can neither be classified with the present day Pentecostalism, nor has anything to do with or in common with Western Spiritualism. Aladuraism is in a class of its own with the visible and active manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

The first Aladura Church in Britain was inaugurated in 1970, and to date, there are over seventy congregations in Britain. There are many more in France, Italy, Germany, United States of America and other European countries.

The Ecumenical Relations:

Pentecostal churches are now an integral part of the ecumenical movement in Britain. They are represented in the local Council of Churches. They have established places of worship in quick time.

The Council of Churches includes:

Churches Together in England
Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland
Free Churches Federal Council
International Ministerial Council of Great Britain
Conference of European Churches, and more...

- 1948: The Calvary Church of God (London)
- 1953: The Church of God of Prophecy (Wolverhampton)
- 1954: The Church of God of Prophecy (Bedford)
- 1958: The Wesleyan Holiness Church
- 1961: New Testament Assembly
- 1988: The Church of Pentecost (London)
- 1988: The Redeemed Christian Church of God (London)
- 1988: Trinity Baptist (London)
- 1992: Kingsway International (London)
- 1994: Ruach Ministries founded in London
- 1996: Christian Life City (London), and many more throughout

The current ministers in the Black Pentecostal Church have mostly studied theology or attended Bible school and thus possess academic qualifications.

Some of these churches now have Bible schools of their own.

However, the men and women who initiated the movement back in the 50s and 60s may not have had the same educational background. They worked during the week in factories, buses, railways, or in low-skilled jobs, and on Sundays, they became clergymen and women, leading their congregation to Christ and affirming their faith even in a hostile environment. Many people have been amazed by the humility and simplicity of these men and women, whose knowledge, exposition, and commentary of the Bible can surpass even those with higher educational qualifications.

In the past, black churches were often seen as insular, with members’ lives revolving around the church. Today, however, these churches interact more with society at large. There have been numerous criticisms raised against Pentecostal churches, much like any other religious organisation. Critics have claimed that the churches are insular, cult-like, or excessively focused on the prosperity gospel. Additionally, some have argued that these churches overlook vital Christian principles while providing a platform for immoral or unscrupulous preachers or leaders. Despite these criticisms, Pentecostal Churches have and are continuing to make a positive impact on their communities that far outweighs any negative aspects. They work tirelessly to serve those in need and transform lives through preaching the gospel.

To address the issue of a shortage of affordable housing, the Nehemiah and United Churches Housing Association was established in 1989. Its objective was to provide homes for low-income individuals, Black elders, and single people in Birmingham and Wolverhampton. Over time, it has grown to become one of the biggest Housing Associations in the West Midlands, catering to the broader community.

The New Testament Church of God was founded by African-Caribbean Christians in 1953. Initially, the Sunday morning worship services were held in a school hall on Boulton Road, while the evening services took place in a church located on George Street in Handsworth. In 1962, the Methodist Church vacated the building, and the New Testament Church of God took over its ownership. Nowadays, the church has become a vital part of the Handsworth community’s social fabric, providing additional education to children to support their mainstream education, along with a nursery and childcare support service.

Pentecostal churches have struggled to come off age, and they have done so spectacularly within an incredibly short period of time. They are now an integral part of society, contending with society’s ills and sadness as well as celebrating its joys and gladness. They are recognised for their contributions to society by Royalty and senior politicians, including Prime Ministers; they have performed in national celebrations, taken part in TV documentaries, given support to the recent Covid pandemic and encouraged Black people to take the COVID jab and even taken part in Radio 4’s Thought For Today or Daily Worship or BBC’s Songs of Praise. They have really come of age!

Alleluia. Amen. Thank God.

Sam Walker

CHURCH AWAY DAY IN GREENWICH

Our recent church trip to Greenwich was a great experience filled with exploration and togetherness. Me and Michelle travelled in from Hinde Street via the DLR, whilst others took the much more exciting Uber Boat experience. The day kicked off with a gathering at a quaint café near the Cutty Sark, where we enjoyed catching up over a coffee together and getting to know one another a bit better. The group then divided into several smaller clusters, each with its own unique adventure. Some delved into the vibrant market, while others opted for a walking tour led by Ruth. The remaining members, including myself, headed over to the National Maritime Museum - definitely one of the best museums I've been to in London so far. I thought it was great to have a few different options which meant there was something for everyone. We all then reconvened for Cream Tea, kindly organised by Margaret, to finish off the day.



Beyond the different activities, what made the trip truly special was the opportunity to make stronger connections within our church community. Spending time together outside the usual church context allowed us to engage in casual conversations, share laughter, and deepen our bonds. It was heartening to witness the diverse interests and personalities within our congregation, fostering a sense of unity and friendship. The shared experiences of the day not only strengthened our spiritual connection but also created lasting memories that will undoubtedly contribute to the warmth and inclusivity of our church family.

Thanks again to Margaret for organising!

Max Whittome

This October, the President and Vice-President of Conference released a prayer for peace in Israel-Palestine - you can read it on our website by navigating to *News & Events*. In solidarity with the call for prayer, Hinde Street organised a prayer vigil on Tuesday 17th October. Some passers-by called in, church members were invited to pray wherever they were, and our Meditation group reflected on the Universal Prayer for Peace. Following this vigil, we have continued to keep those affected by the conflict in our prayers.

The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem have also released statements on the unfolding situation - you can read one of these on the right-hand side.

A letter to this effect has also been sent to the Prime Minister, signed by 69 of leaders of faith groups and involved organisations - you can find a link to it on our website. We add our prayers to theirs.

Thank you to Leao Neto for his suggestion to address this current conflict in Cross Currents.

*The Editorial Team &
Leao Neto*

ADDRESSING ISRAEL-PALESTINE



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

THE PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM UNITE IN A CALL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE AMIDST UNFOLDING VIOLENCE

JERUSALEM, October 7, 2023

The Holy Land, a place sacred to countless millions around the world, is currently mired in violence and suffering due to the prolonged political conflict and the lamentable absence of justice and respect for human rights. We, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, have time and again appealed for the importance of respecting the historic and legal Status Quo of the holy shrines. In these trying times, we come together to raise our voices in unity, echoing the divine message of peace and love for all humanity.

As custodians of the Christian faith, deeply rooted in the Holy Land, we stand in solidarity with the people of this region, who are enduring the devastating consequences of continued strife. Our faith, which is founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ, compels us to advocate for the cessation of all violent and military activities that bring harm to both Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

We unequivocally condemn any acts that target civilians, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or faith. Such actions go against the fundamental principles of humanity and the teachings of Christ, who implored us to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31).

It is our fervent hope and prayer that all parties involved will heed this call for an immediate cessation of violence. We implore political leaders and authorities to engage in sincere dialogue, seeking lasting solutions that promote justice, peace, and reconciliation for the people of this land, who have endured the burdens of conflict for far too long.

In our capacity as spiritual leaders, we extend our hands to all those who suffer, and we pray that the Almighty may grant comfort to the afflicted, strength to the weary, and wisdom to those in positions of authority. We call upon the international community to redouble its efforts to mediate a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land, based on equal rights for all and on international legitimacy.

Let us remember the words of the Apostle Paul: "For God is not a God of disorder but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33). In the spirit of this divine message, we implore all to work tirelessly towards an end to violence and the establishment of a just and lasting peace that will allow the Holy Land to be a beacon of hope, faith, and love for all.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all during these challenging times.

—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem

OBITUARIES FOR ALAN SWINDELLS (1924 - 2023)



I first met Alan in the early 1980s soon after I started coming to Hinde Street. Initially I was in Sunday Night Group, but there came a time to move on and I was approached by Alan to become a member of his class. I joined and have been in that class as it has evolved ever since.

Class meetings were important to Alan as they were to John Wesley - not only as a means of exercising pastoral care over members but also as a relaxed forum to explore the intellectual challenge of faith. Alan greatly enjoyed these sessions and would often continue to pursue a theological argument with the ministers of the day or through an article in Grapevine.

To Alan, Hinde Street was a mix of very different individuals, some of whom thought they would not 'fit in' at a conventional local church and this diversity was attractive to Alan and he felt 'at home'.

Alan, helped by his wife Sally, took the pastoral side of his class-leading seriously. He was always on the lookout for new members who lived in north or west London. He and Sally were very aware of new people on their own in the church and invited new members of the congregation to Sunday lunch over many years, and more latterly members of the Communities. The Class picnics held in their garden at Harrow-on-the Hill were delightful occasions.

I got the impression that Alan also kept a pastoral eye on people he had worked with at Kodak and kept in touch with, or members of the Institute of Physics, an institution which Alan was involved with for much of his life.

Alan was strongly committed to the social work of the Circuit. He was Circuit Steward for a while, and also served on the Circuit Property Committee at a time when it had direct responsibility for looking after the social work properties. He also served at times as the Secretary of the Housing Association and the Chair of the Church Finance Committee and as a member of the Investments Sub-Committee, always happy to put his managerial and analytical skills to good use. I have recently found some of his reports from the 1990 perceptively analysing the state of the church and Circuit and suggesting a future path to travel.

For many years Alan compiled and updated the Circuit Directory, a very useful list of the contact details for all Church and Circuit office-holders. Sadly, this was killed off by data protection legislation!

Alan loved the outdoors. He was brought up near Manchester, not too far away from the Lake District where he could enjoy hill-walking. Subsequently he became a keen sailor either on the Solent or in the Lake District and he introduced Sally to this pursuit.

I occasionally visited Alan after he moved to Pinner. He was fascinated to discover the course of the River Pinn and we did several local walks to establish this. We also enjoyed meals, either cooked by Alan or sometimes at a favoured fish and chip restaurant in Hatch End. He often mentioned that he had almost had to learn to cook from first principles after Sally's death!

Alan devoted his life to many passions, high amongst which was his faith.

Martin Single

Alan Swindells, aged almost 100, died in February 2023. He had been a member of Hinde Street since 1975 and over the years he made a huge contribution to the life and running of the Church.

He was born in Manchester and was proud to have won a place first at Manchester Grammar school and then at Cambridge University. There he read Physics. He continued to be an active member of the Institute of Physics for the rest of his life. His career as a manager was spent largely at Kodak but he had a patch at Pilkington Brothers, the glass manufacturer in the Wirral.

Here at Hinde Street he quickly took on leadership roles. In the mid-90s, he was Treasurer of the Social Work, and he at other times was Chairman of the Finance Committee and also a Circuit Steward. He was a Class leader for a time, too. In 1999 he was part of the Stewardship Campaign Team. I remember him coming to talk to me at home - the first person from Hinde Street to visit me at home.

He was a stalwart member of his class and in more recent years I, as his Class leader, got to know him well. He took his faith very seriously and he loved to engage people like his class leader, or say, John Hicks, and of course the ministers, especially the Reverend David Cruise in whatever theological issue he was concerned about. He was also very concerned about the future flourishing of Methodism. He and his second wife, Sally liked to entertain people and the young people in the two communities to lunch at their home in Harrow. They were very generous in their entertaining which they enjoyed. Our class also had our summer class lunch with them there. Both of them loved gardening and we always had a tour of the beautiful garden.

Earlier when he had lived in Amersham he had been superintendant of the large Sunday School at the Methodist Church there. He was always sad that Hinde Street had so few children in the congregation. He also loved sailing and persuaded Sally to join him on his boat on both the Solent and the lakes of the Lake District.

Before Sally died they moved to a bungalow in Pinner and it was there that Alan lived out the rest of his days. For some time he continued to entertain people there, and class members visited him there as he became frailer. However he came to Hinde Street with his carer almost to the last.

Our class miss him and so do those who knew him. I asked David and Sarah Thompson to write a memory and they said: We didn't know Alan for long, as we only joined the Hinde Street family in 2017 but were fortunate to be in his class. Alan was a link to an old generation in which we were so honoured to share with. It was always so interesting to listen to his stories from his long life. One of our favourite memories was when Alan opened up to us about his time in the war, in which he worked on radar - "of course I signed Official Secrets Act" he said "But I don't think they'll bother with me now at my age." It was a real privilege to know Alan.

Edna Wijeratna

I got to know Alan by eating lunch. I like eating lunch and hoped Alan would too. So, soon after Sally died, I suggested we 'did' lunch. We did and the habit continued. For the next few years the restaurants of Pinner were graced periodically with the custom of two elderly widowers putting the world to rights, sometimes at high volume if Alan's hearing aid was playing up.

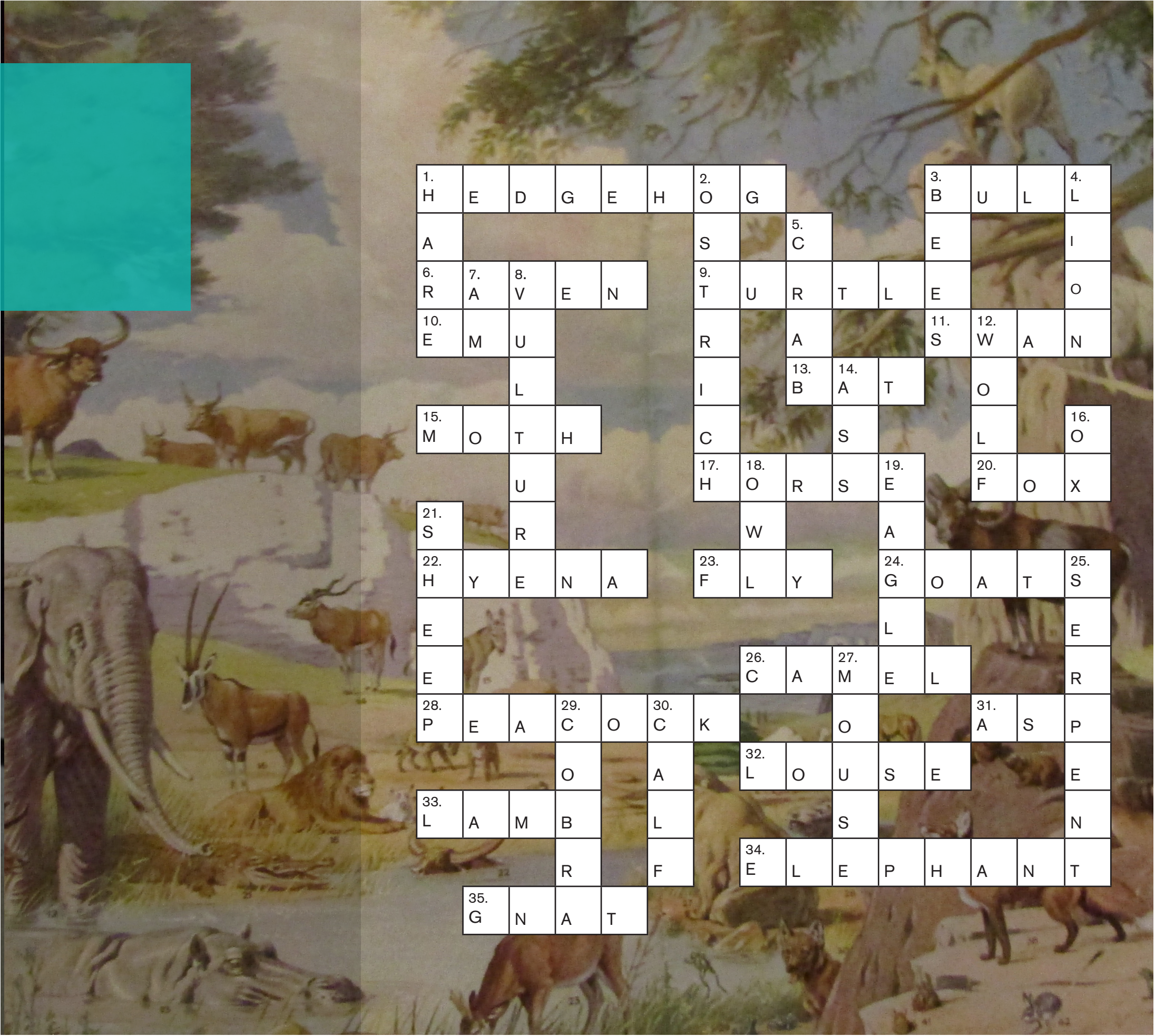
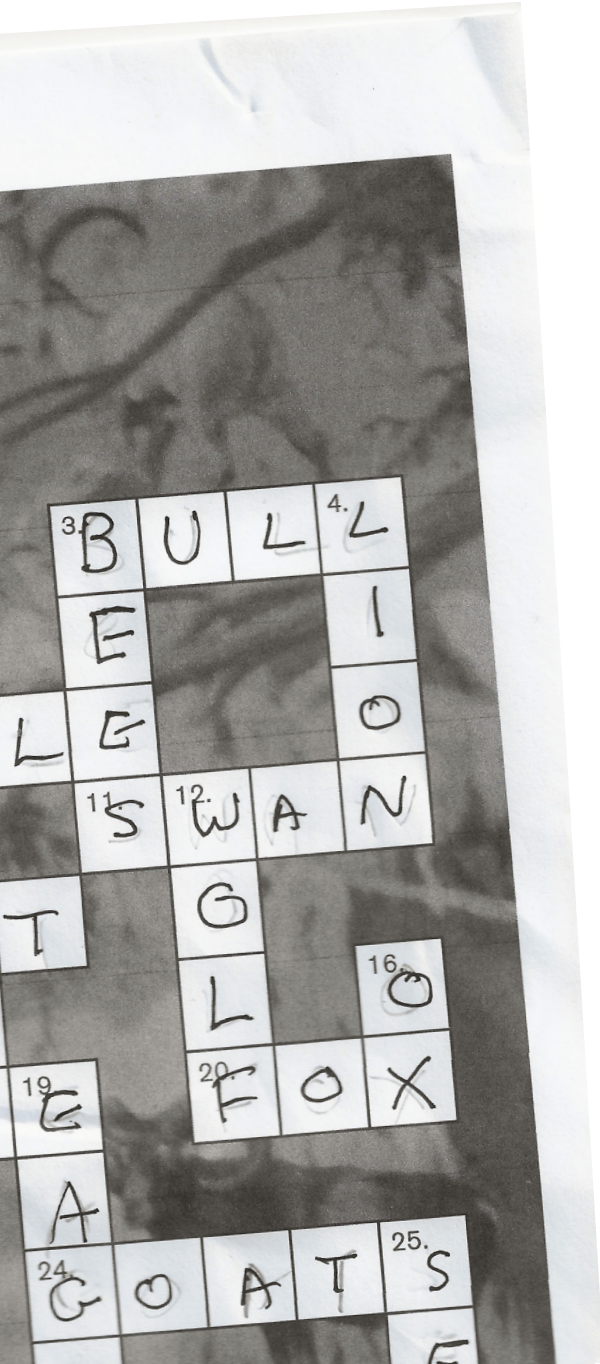
Alan was intelligent, logical, and systematic as is appropriate for a good scientist. He was educated at Manchester Grammar School, read Physics at Cambridge, went into industry and ended up running a large industrial research department. He was a member of Hinde Street since the 1980's. His energy and intelligence meant he was in demand and he served on countless committees and held a host of offices during that time. Alan was not afraid of conflict and if he thought you were wrong he would say so. I suspect he may have ruffled a few feathers in his time. However he served the church well and, when the business was done, he was charm itself.

Alan's health gradually deteriorated before he died and he was able to visit Hinde Street less and less. I admired the way he coped both with his bereavement and his failing health. Fiercely independent, he welcomed company but never sympathy. He arranged his own care the way he wanted it. He even learnt to cook.

The church has lost a loyal and enthusiastic supporter. In his prime he was at the centre of managing the church. We are grateful for him and we will miss him.

John Brierley

CROSSWORD
SOLUTION



DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR: WINTER 23 - 24

Sunday 17/12 CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE AT 5:30PM NO 11AM SERVICE	Sunday 24/12 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE NO 6:30-PM SERVICE	Sunday 25/12 CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE AT 10:30AM	Friday 5/1 BBC'S ANY QUESTIONS? AT HINDE STREET	Sunday 7/1 COVENANT SUNDAY
Sunday 21/1 SUNDAY SERVICE WITH ST. MARYLEBONE	Sunday 28/1 SOPER SERVICE	Sunday 11/2 CAFE CHURCH & RACIAL JUSTICE SERVICE	Tuesday 13/2 SHROVE TUESDAY	Wednesday 14/2 ASH WEDNESDAY
Sunday 10/3 MOTHERING SUNDAY	Sunday 24/4 PALM SUNDAY	Thursday 28/4 MAUNDY THURSDAY	Friday 29/4 GOOD FRIDAY	Sunday 31/3 EASTER SUNDAY

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Subscribe and easily add events to your own digital calendar.

