

Methodists believe that Jesus Christ showed, by his teaching and his example, that God's love is available to everyone.

We try to reflect this in our worship and life together by being a church community where everyone, whatever their age, background or circumstances, is welcome and able to share fully in a fellowship that is warm, genuine and inclusive.

Methodism stands within the mainstream of historic Christianity, working with other Churches locally, nationally and internationally. We share a faith based on the Bible and we value the wisdom of the Christian past. At the same time we respect human experience and the ability to use our reason in working out our Christian faith.

HOW DID METHODISM BEGIN?

The Methodist movement has its origins in Britain in the eighteenth century as an initiative for spiritual renewal within the Church of England. One of the most important founding elements was a group here in Oxford. A small band of students and graduates gathered for study, prayer and Christian service. Critics called them the 'Holy Club', or, because of their methodical approach to spirituality and practical Christian living, 'methodists'.

The Oxford Methodists coalesced around two brothers, John and Charles Wesley. The brothers' quest for peace with God took them from Oxford University to work as missionaries in North America. A decisive change happened when they realised that the Christian life rests on what God has done for us through Jesus Christ, not on what we do for God. The Wesleys worked to communicate this message through preaching and writing, through hymns, and by gathering local groups which met regularly for worship and to help one another learn and grow as Christians.

After the death of the Wesley brothers Methodism gradually evolved into an independent Church.

WHAT DOES METHODISM PARTICULARLY EMPHASISE?

The message of Jesus is for everyone, no one is excluded from God's unconditional love.

Faith in God touches and transforms the whole person, both head and heart.

Faith is expressed in daily life, in practical care for the needy and vulnerable, and in working for justice and peace in God's world.

Faith is expressed in belonging to God's family, the Church, where we worship, grow and serve together, and where we find and give support.

Local churches work together, sharing resources.

Leadership in church life and worship has always been and remains collaborative, involving lay people as well as ordained ministers.

ARE THERE METHODISTS OUTSIDE BRITAIN?

Yes! In fact the largest single Methodist Church today is in South Korea. Initially British and Irish settlers, soldiers and preachers took Methodism to North America. The Methodist Episcopal Church was formally constituted in 1784 and this gave rise to several denominations, of which the United Methodist Church is the largest.

British and American missions planted churches all over the world, many of which are now independent, although linked through the World Methodist Council. Today there are some seventy million Methodists worldwide.

Consumerism, alcohol abuse, healthy living, what makes a fair and just society, tolerance and diversity, the impact of secular thinking, family values, the importance of education and the scourge of slavery: these are contemporary global concerns, but they are also issues that Methodist men and women have been tackling since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, because Jesus said 'I have come that they may have life, and may have it in all its fullness.'