



Judging by the general hubbub in the concourse area of our church, or for that matter, any churches, after a Service, most Christians are pretty good at conversation. A whole range of conversations are enjoyed, from one another's' health to news of families, from holidays recently enjoyed or holidays being prepared for, from welcoming newcomers to church or enquiring about members missed, and, of course, conversation about the weather or the results of the previous days football fixtures. There always seems to be plenty for us to talk to each other about.

The finding of the Methodist Church Life Profile published in 2002 and arising from the very large survey of congregations, has given us a statistically reliable account of attitudes of Methodists compared with those of other denominations. The findings suggest, amongst many other things that, whereas we are comfortable with socialising and prioritise being a welcoming church, we are much less comfortable with seeking out or providing contexts of conversation that allow us to talk seriously about our faith and its implications for living. Why is it that whenever it comes to matters of personal faith we find it so difficult to converse with others, to share our doubts and our concerns, our discoveries and our blessings?

This is strongly linked to another finding of the survey, our reluctance to evangelise. But if we never have searching conversations with our fellow Christians about our faith, it is

hardly likely that we shall feel able to express a reason for the hope that is in us to anyone outside the Church.

If only we could converse naturally about our faith – not the jobs we do or the jobs which need to be done in the church – but about the One we worship and whose followers we claim to be, the One who we believe is always with us and whose spirit is in us.

The Methodist Church has just published a report of the Methodist Conference 2005 entitled, 'Time to Talk of God' – Recovering Christian conversation as a way of nurturing discipleship. With questions at the end of each short chapter it is designed for group conversation but can also be of benefit if read individually. It is felt to be such a useful publication addressing a problem which a lot of Christians have, including most members of BMC, that we are ordering a quantity to be purchased by members at half price - £1.75

The Lord be with you,

John Bown
Minister of Bromley
Methodist Church

COMMON
GROUND

In this edition John Bown writes our leading article. It also appears in the magazines of Bromley Methodist Church & Bromley URC