

## AIPM at Littleover, Derby – 2005 – 2006

AIPM began at Littleover in Derby in 2005. This followed inquiries by their leadership team with AIPM and an invitation to Barbara Mazzetti to visit and tell them about Thornaby Baptist Church's experience with AIPM. Thornaby had had AIPM volunteer pastors for 4-years from 2001 to 2005. The inquiry at a church where AIPM has served seems a very good idea to us at AIPM. Littleover leaders were pleased with the information they received and recommended to the church meeting that they pursue help from AIPM. We sent information on a small handful of candidates that were in our system and available to serve in 2005. Since the beginning of AIPM, we send UK churches the following on each candidate: Profiles/resume's for the pastor and spouse, a video of an interview with the couple and a video of a sermon. Littleover invited Rev. Ernest Weedon (wife Ann) from Deer Park, Texas to serve and they were there the last half of 2005. In those days, we used the visa waiver agreement between the UK and USA which allowed a stay of up to 6-months, so the Weedon's were there for only 6-months.



Also, since the beginning of AIPM, I have tried diligently to keep the Baptist Association leadership team aware of our activities in their patch with the strong conviction that people generally do not like surprises. I had notified Littleover's association of additional candidates for that church. Following is an excerpt from an email from Rev. Steve Mantle, Regional Minister – East Midlands Baptist Association: "Many thanks for keeping me in the loop with the new candidates for Littleover. Having spent some time with Ernest and Ann last week I have to say send us more of their caliber! I was deeply impressed how they have not only settled but have made such a good impression, not just in the church but neighborhood

where the manse is situated."

One example of the wide acceptance of the Weedon's was the community's response to Ann's invitation to Ernest's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday party. There were more than 70 in attendance with half being from the church and half from the neighborhood! Littleover was well blessed with a lovely manse which the 3 American interim pastor couples thoroughly enjoyed. The church was also gracious in furnishing a nice and reliable car for the Americans to use. One of the great blessings from this ministry is the long-lasting friendships that are formed. These often result in visits in both

directions across the Atlantic Ocean. Below is a photo of Stan and Rita Walker visiting the Weedon's in Deer Park, Texas. We have exchanged Christmas cards with the Walkers for almost 20-years despite having never served directly in their church.



At the end of the Weedon's service at Littleover, they called Rev. O. D. Oliver (wife Jean) to serve as their second American interim pastor from January to July 2006. Sadly, in mid-January 2006, O. D. became very sick somewhere over the Atlantic on the overseas leg of their flight to England. The airlines crew told them that policy allowed them to immediately re-route to the nearest coastal airport with a hospital. Jean felt that O. D. would be able to continue to the UK, so they continued. Immediately upon arriving at Littleover, O. D. checked in at a Derby hospital. Doctors there treated him and promised to follow his case closely. They did and after a few days, the Derby doctors recommended that they return to the USA where the doctors had his medical records and would likely be able to give the care O. D. needed. They returned to their home in East Texas. The good people of Littleover Baptist church were 100% supportive of the Oliver's and were most gracious. Within a few weeks, O. D. went to his reward in heaven.



We told the Littleover leadership team that we had recently learned of a new candidate that they might wish to consider in addition to those they had already considered. They asked to receive information on the new candidate. He was Rev. Claude Jacks (wife Delma) from Beeville, TX. At that stage, we had not collected any of the information for the Jacks that we needed to send to the UK church. We told them of the urgency to collect their profiles and videos. They sent their profiles immediately but had no videos. Cecil Williams, Treasurer of AIPM in those days – now at home with the Lord, had a solution for the videos. Cecil arranged

for the use of the media equipment at his home church, First Baptist Needville, TX. We met the Jacks on a weekday morning. Claude preached to a “crowd” of 6 of us and I interviewed him and Delma. We sent the profiles and VHS tapes to Littleover and within a week, they had invited the Jacks, and the Jacks accepted the invitation. The Jacks arrived at Littleover on 6 April 2006 which is outstanding timing considering all the preparations required for a 6-months stay away from home.



When the Jacks completed their assignment near the end of 2006, Littleover Baptist Church called a British Baptist Pastor. We concluded that our goal had been achieved having helped a British church prepare and call a local pastor which should be able to provide much needed continuity of ministry.