

## 76. Memorials to the Conference

### Notes for the Guidance of Members of the Conference

#### 1. Introduction to memorials

Memorials are messages from Circuit Meetings and District Synods to the Conference. They suggest that the Conference takes action or makes a statement on an issue. The memorials received since the last Methodist Conference are listed in this section of the Agenda. These memorials may help members of the Conference judge the main concerns currently felt in the Connexion, and the strength of opinion represented.

The Methodist Council appoints a Memorials Committee made up of representatives from Districts each year to aid the Conference in replying to each memorial. The replies to these memorials have been drafted by members of the Connexional Team and officers of other relevant bodies. They have been scrutinised by the Memorials Committee and amended where the Committee felt it was appropriate.

The Committee recommends to the Conference the replies printed in the Agenda under each memorial. The Conference binds itself either to agree this reply, to amend it, or to agree an alternative reply [see the Rules of Procedure printed at the beginning of Volume One of the Agenda, Standing Order 133(4)].

In some of its responses, the Memorials Committee makes no comment on the

substance of a memorial, but indicates that the reply of the Conference is given in other resolutions of the Conference. This kind of response does not mean that the Memorials Committee has not taken seriously the points made in the memorial. It means that another report deals with the issue more fully. Debate on that report gives the Conference an opportunity to discuss the issues raised by the memorial.

At the end of this report there is a list of memorials referred by previous Conferences to the Methodist Council or to committees, where a report was required to be brought to a subsequent Conference. This list indicates when the report will be brought and provides a reference to those reports before this year's Conference.

#### 2. Consideration of the memorials by the Conference

Any member of the Conference has the right to move an amendment to the reply recommended by the Memorials Committee, or to propose that it is substituted by a totally different reply. Amendments to replies should be submitted in the form of a notice of motion, the deadline for which is lunchtime on the fourth day of the Representative Session, ie Tuesday. However, members are urged to give notice of their intention to move an amendment as early as possible and not to wait until the deadline.

If the Conference rejects a reply, an acceptable alternative must, then or later, be put to and agreed by the Conference.

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In addition, any two members of the Conference may, by notice of motion submitted on the first day of the relevant session, propose that, instead of dealing with the Committee's recommended replies in the ordinary course of business, the Conference shall debate a resolution based on one or more of the memorials.

This year, the Memorials Committee has recommended to the Business Committee that the replies to any memorials which relate to other items of business in the Agenda be taken at the same time as that business; that the replies to memorials M10, M11, M24, M25 and M31 should be debated separately, and that the remaining replies should be provisionally placed in the *en bloc* business of the Conference.

Any recommended reply to a memorial which is the subject of an amending notice of motion will automatically be removed from *en bloc* business [see Standing Order 136(2A)]. In addition, the Business Committee is suggesting to the Conference this year a novel procedure for dealing with some of the memorials – please see the Business Committee's first report to the Conference for details.

Throughout each session, the Memorials Secretary, Martin Harker, is available to members of the Conference for consultation on any matter affecting memorials and the procedures described above. For example, if any member wishes to change the recommended reply of the Committee, the Memorials Secretary is willing to advise on how and when to propose either an amendment or the substitution of a different reply.

The Memorials Secretary will also notify each Synod and Circuit of the reply the Conference has made to its memorial.

### **M1 Leading and Presiding**

The Delamere Forest (11/3) Circuit Meeting (Present: 28. Voting: 22 for, 6 against) welcomes much of the Conference 2010 report *Leading and Presiding: Developing the Presidency of the Conference* but dissents from recommendations 8/3 (wholly) and 8/4 (as it stands) on page 15 of the subsequent Briefing Paper.

We believe that recommendation 8/3, in which two of the three leaders are ordained, is grossly misrepresentative of the Methodist Church's emphasis on the quintessential role of lay people and sends unhelpful signals internally and externally.

We regret that the Conference report (in paragraph 2.1 on pages 79-80) did not pursue the option that follows from its own words '*The office of Vice-President is highly valued as an affirmation of the laity in the Church, but some feel that the fact that it is open also to ordained deacons diminishes that affirmation. Some have suggested that the diaconal calling means that deacons should not aspire to senior office*'. Moreover, we believe that deacons' membership of and commitment to a Role of Life within a Religious Order, coupled with their focus on the servant ministry, is not consonant with aspiration to such office, and therefore that Vice-Presidency is a privilege they should willingly forgo upon entry into the Order.

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Accordingly, we propose that the recommendation 8/4 is amended by deleting the words *'who may either be a lay person or a deacon'* and inserting *'who shall be a lay person'*, and that the Conference of 2011 be invited to express its mind on the matter by voting on this amended resolution.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the Delamere Forest Circuit for the care with which it has considered the report to the 2010 Conference *Leading and Presiding: Developing the Presidency of the Conference*. The issues that the Circuit raises are addressed in the report of the Working Party to the 2011 Conference following the responses from the Synods to the matters referred to them. The response of the Conference is therefore contained in its decisions on the recommendations in that report.

### M2 Leading and Presiding

The Wales Synod (R) (Present: 112. Voting: 62 for, 43 against) accepts the need to re-define the way we express leadership in the Church and to the world. In the light of the overwhelming rejection by the Wales Synod of all but one of the proposals put to Synods by the Conference with regard to the Presidency, Wales Synod wishes to state that this rejection does not imply acceptance or affirmation of the status quo, and asks the Conference to re-examine the re-shaping of the Presidency to fit the 21st Century, and to come forward with further, and different, alternative models of Presidency.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the Wales Synod for its concern for the way we express leadership in the Church and to the world. The report to the 2010 Conference *Leading and Presiding: Developing the Presidency of the Conference* addressed the matter of the nature of such leadership in some depth, and in particular explored how presidential leadership related to other expressions of leadership. The model of presidential leadership proposed in that report was adopted by the Conference, and the Conference judges that it is not opportune to reopen the matter. The Conference therefore declines the memorial.

### M3 Ministers being received into Full Connexion

The Wales Synod (M) (Present: 78. Voting: unanimous) asks the Conference to direct the Connexional Team to amend its current policy whereby ordinands have the right to attend the whole of the Conference and to have their accommodation and travel expenses met by the Connexion, but others being received into Full Connexion at the same Conference do not enjoy that right.

The current policy is unfair and diminishes the position of Reception into Full Connexion as part of our Methodist practice.

We believe that all who are received into Full Connexion at the Conference should have the same rights.

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### Reply

The Conference thanks the Wales Synod for raising the issue of what expenses should be covered by the Connexion for those who are received into Full Connexion at the Conference but who do not later need to be ordained at it. Such people could include those who have been previously ordained in another Church and are transferring into Full Connexion with the Conference, and also those former presbyters and deacons who are being re-instated into Full Connexion with the Conference.

The Conference is pleased to say that when the Connexional Team heard of the particular case raised in the Synod, it was quickly able to correct an anomaly. The travel expenses of all those being received into Full Connexion, whether or not they are also to be ordained, plus overnight accommodation to enable them to attend on the day concerned, are now provided by the Connexion.

The policy whereby it is only those who are to be both received into Full Connexion and ordained at the Conference who are able to attend the whole of the Conference at connexional expense is not a policy of the Connexional Team, but of the Conference itself. The Conference is aware that the proposal made by the Synod raises further questions about how much of the Conference those being ordained and also those being received or re-instated into Full Connexion may attend, and at whose expense. The Conference therefore refers this matter to the Methodist Council for review and report no later than the Conference of 2013.

### M4 Conference working parties

The Plymouth and Exeter District Synod (R) (Present: 116. Voting: 113 for, 1 against) urges Conference to ensure that all working parties are balanced and represent the breadth of views known to be held within the church.

### Reply

The Conference as a general principle seeks to ensure that any working parties that it or the Methodist Council establishes are balanced and consist of members who are capable (a) of contributing both knowledge and insight to the subject concerned; and also (b) of understanding and being able to represent and engage with the range of views held about it in the Church. To this end the names of proposed members of major working parties and reasoned statements about them are provided for the Conference or the Council as appropriate when they are being appointed. The Conference and the Council can and do query both particular names and the overall composition of the groups. The responsibility is ultimately that of the Conference or the Council. The Conference reassures the District that this will continue to be the principle which it seeks to put into practice.

### M5 Location of the Conference

The Birmingham District Synod (R) (Present: 167. Voting: 120 for, 1 against) recognises that we are a connexional Church and that our members are across the length and breadth of Great Britain.

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We rejoice that when the Conference is held in a particular area there is opportunity for local people to attend the Opening, Reception into Full Connexion and Ordination Services, to watch the Conference in action from the public gallery, and to attend the exhibitions and fringe events. There is also a significant opportunity for service by local people in assisting with the arrangements for the Conference.

We note that the report to the Conference in 2007 (Item 58, paragraph 17) recommended that there be four venues, North, South, East and West of England plus Scotland and Wales, and a five year rota be established of the four England venues plus either Scotland or Wales.

The Birmingham District wishes the Conference to affirm the 2007 report and support the Arrangements Team and therefore asks the Conference to amend Standing Orders so that the annual Conference agrees the location for the Conference two years hence.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the Birmingham District for its recognition of the importance of the Conference to all parts of the Connexion, and of the Methodist people being able to engage in its life and activities. The possibility of people around the Connexion being able to connect with the Conference has been greatly enhanced by the live video and audio streaming of the Conference, and the Agenda and daily papers of the Conference being available on the internet. So far as the venue of the Conference is concerned, the policy set in

paragraph 17 of the report *The Review of the Conference* to the 2007 Conference was adopted by that Conference, still stands and directs the work of those responsible for proposing the particular arrangements for each Conference. Recent experience, however, has been that despite a lot of very hard work by those responsible it has proved extremely difficult to identify venues that meet the requirements of the rota whilst providing the facilities that the Conference now needs in a price-range that the Conference is able and prepared to afford. A Conference Planning Executive has been established to oversee those arrangements, and its report can be found elsewhere in the Conference Agenda. The Planning Executive is in the process of reviewing the matter of identifying venues and will report to the Conference in due course.

The Planning Executive intends to return to the former practice of each year proposing to the Conference venues for the following two years. In the light of that commitment and the fact that there is a body that can be held accountable for fulfilling it, the Conference does not judge that a change to Standing Orders is required.

### M6 Timing of the Conference

The Birmingham District Synod (R) (Present: 171. Voting: 87 for, 14 against) asks the Conference Business Committee not to repeat the decision to start the Representative Session of the Conference on the Saturday morning. This is another detrimental step regarding encouraging lay people in employment to attend the Conference as representatives, as they

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would need to take further time off work as holiday in order to travel on the Friday. If there is a need to extend Conference working hours, an extension to say 3:00pm on the final Thursday would avoid this need, and would avoid lay representatives travelling to the Conference on the initial Friday with all the additional travel and accommodation costs.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the Birmingham District for raising its concerns. It notes that the Business Committee has initiated an experiment this year. Before any decision is made about whether to repeat the experiment or not, the issue will be fully reviewed in the light of this year's experience, analysis of specific feedback of Conference members to questions about it on response forms, and any submissions made by Districts or other connexional bodies.

The Conference notes that the Business Committee is constantly seeking to make it possible for all members of the Methodist Church, including lay people who are in employment, to attend the Conference as representatives. It initiated the experiment in the light of information it received that in 2010 almost all lay members of the Conference had arrived by the Friday night or early on the Saturday morning. The Committee is also concerned to 'redeem the time', in other words get the greatest use and value out of the time that is available, whilst working within ever more tightly controlled budgets. There have been strong representations in the past that the Conference not go on past lunchtime on the

final day. There are also questions of cost in finishing later that day in that it takes several hours after the Conference has finished to pack up and leave the premises. In the light of all these considerations and in an attempt to make possible some of the new ways of working recommended by the *Review of the Conference*, the Business Committee decided to experiment with a start to the Representative Session on the Saturday morning.

The Conference directs that this review process continue.

### M7 Stationing

The South Molton (24/22) Circuit Meeting (Present: 39. Voting: unanimous) urges the Conference to re-examine the stationing procedure with particular regard to the potential disadvantage it places on the South Western Districts and Circuits, when the number of ministers willing to be stationed in the region is low and the lottery systems in stationing rounds may prejudice their outcome.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the South Molton Circuit for its memorial and notes with concern the difficulty experienced by the Circuit in matching a minister with the Circuit in successive years.

The Stationing Matching Group and the Stationing Committee recognise the issue raised by the Circuit as one which in recent years has affected the ability of Circuits in a number of areas to station ministers.

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The Stationing Matching Group works hard to ensure that as far as possible all Districts are represented fairly in the matches which are made and always conducts a review of how each District has fared throughout the matching process.

The Matching Group and the Stationing Committee have already agreed to look at the lessons learned from the stationing processes in 2010-11, including this issue in their deliberations, and to consider whether a change needs to be made to any of the current processes. A report of the outcome will be made to the Conference of 2012.

### **M8 Stationing**

The Plymouth and Exeter District Synod (R) (Present: 116. Voting: unanimous) urges the Conference to re-examine the stationing procedure with particular regard to the potential disadvantage it places on some Districts and Circuits, bearing in mind the number of ministers willing to be stationed in those regions may be low and the current system in stationing rounds may prejudice the outcome.

#### **Reply**

The Conference adopts the same reply as M7.

### **M9 Ministry in local appointment**

The Mid-Lincolnshire (17/4) Circuit Meeting (Present: 28. Voting: unanimous) having considered:

1. the likely reduction in the number of presbyters available for stationing in Circuits;
2. the need to maintain sacramental ministry to small congregations in rural areas;
3. the desire of those involved in fresh expressions to receive sacramental ministry;
4. the benefit to local Anglican congregations of non-stipendiary or locally ordained ministers; and
5. the possibility that some Methodists may feel themselves to be called to ordained ministry but not to itinerancy

asks the Conference to consider reintroducing some form of ministry in local appointment.

#### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the Mid-Lincolnshire Circuit for its memorial.

Over the last year the work of the Shadow Ministries Committee has started to touch on the issues raised here. The essence of the discussion has been 'What kind of ministry will we need in the next twenty years?' as we continue to rediscover what it means to be a discipleship movement shaped for mission. These discussions link with ongoing work flowing from the Stationing Review Group, whose recommendations continue to underpin work in this area.

The General Secretary's report to the Conference highlights the need for the Church to consider the use of Circuit ministry teams, to look again at local

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pastoral appointments and to ensure that the ministries of local preachers, worship leaders and the whole people of God are directed towards discipleship and mission.

The stationing cycle during the current connexional year saw a significant reduction in the gap between the number of presbyters available for stationing and the number of circuit appointments, thus it is not yet possible to say whether or not we are now moving into a time of overall oversupply or undersupply of ordained ministers (presbyters and deacons). However this does not remove the need to reconsider how both lay and ordained ministry is used throughout the Connexion.

All this work will be carried forward through the new Ministries Committee referred to elsewhere in the Conference Agenda.

However, it should be noted that, even though the category of 'Minister in Local Appointment' has been removed, responding to a call to exercise ordained ministry in a local context is to be encouraged from those candidates offering for stipendiary or self-supporting ordained ministry. Current guidelines ask that during the initial candidating process, a preliminary assessment is made of what might be reasonably expected of the candidate's future availability for stationing and the terms and conditions of service under which she or he might serve, and this information is available for discussion with the candidate at later stages of the candidating process. Current publicity such as *Is God Calling you?* seeks to encourage

all those who feel a call to consider pursuing it and further work will continue in this way.

As such, the Conference declines the specific request made in the memorial, but refers the wider issues raised in the memorial and this reply for further consideration by the Ministries Committee and reply to the Conference in due course.

### **M10 Ministerial Development Review**

The Cannock Chase (28/8) Circuit Meeting (Present: 49. Voting: 48 for, 1 against) views with concern the proposal that Superintendent ministers should be responsible for conducting Annual Development Reviews.

To add this further responsibility to the role of Superintendents who are already overstretched by the weighty commitment of administration and pastoral oversight would be unreasonable and excessively burdensome. This additional workload further minimises the time that they have available to respond to their calling.

The proposed untested new scheme of ADRs fails to build on the experience of the previous and current schemes (including pilots) which have been successfully run in the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District and found to be a positive and affirming experience. It casts aside the training and expertise of the accompanists, facilitators and reviewers and ignores the invaluable contribution of the laity and those outside the local situation in the review process.

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It will require all ministers to undertake yet more training to implement the new scheme and fundamentally alters the role of the Superintendent and his/her relationship with ministerial colleagues, including the Chair of District.

We believe it would be a retrograde step and hinder rather than assist professional development.

We reject the proposal and ask the Conference to refer it back to the relevant connexional committee.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the Cannock Chase Circuit for its memorial and notes that the 2007 Conference, by Resolution 22/1 (2007), adopted the report *Annual Development Review – an appraisal scheme for presbyters and deacons*. This report outlined an Annual Development Review (ADR) process and recommended that ADR should be piloted during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 connexional years in five Districts: Bristol, Manchester and Stockport, Sheffield, Southampton, and Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury. The pilot was evaluated and findings from the evaluation were fed back to the Conference in 2009 in the report *Annual Development Review*.

While the evaluation emphasised the positive experience which some ministers received, it also identified some substantive concerns which it was felt needed to be addressed before the model could be implemented. The 2009 Conference consequently affirmed, by

Resolution 42/3 (2009), the principle of a connexional ministerial review process, but, in light of the concerns identified during the pilot, it directed that the Methodist Council oversee ongoing work to develop a connexional ministerial review process for implementation from September 2011.

This work began with a research project. It was recognised in the report to the 2009 Conference that some Districts outside the pilot were successfully implementing ADR-like processes, and other Districts were successfully fostering reflective learning and development activity. In order to capture relevant experience from across the Connexion, District Chairs and officers were invited to complete a research questionnaire. The research identified significant overlap in the principles underpinning ministerial review processes across the Connexion. There was also consistency in those principles which were identified as important by ministers through district evaluations. However, the research identified a variety of models in use across the Connexion, differing in aims, structure, resources and outcomes.

Findings from the research provided the themes for a consultation document circulated at the beginning of the current connexional year. The consultation document included proposed principles and a proposed model for a revised ADR scheme. District Chairs, Superintendent ministers, the Warden of the Diaconal Order, Training Officers (along with their Welsh and Scottish equivalents) and Annual Development Review Officers

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were among those who received invitations to participate in the consultation.

Superintendents were invited to share the document with participants at circuit leadership team meetings. Over a hundred responses were received, some of which represented the collective views of a group of respondents.

The results of the consultation were presented to the Connexional Leaders' Forum in early January. In mid-January, a commended version of the revised ADR scheme, consisting of seven principles and a skeleton model of six core components, was presented to a specially-convened residential meeting of district representatives. In response to submissions and after further consultation, the revised scheme is termed *Ministerial Development Review – a developmental process and annual review meeting for presbyters and deacons*.

The following is the basis of that scheme as accepted by the Methodist Council in April 2011:

The principles of Ministerial Development Review are as follows:

1. Ministerial Development Review is a development review scheme that supports ministers both to grow in their ministry and to contribute to Circuits and Districts in their mission.
2. Ministerial Development Review provides a framework for ministers to engage in reflective practice in the context of their current appointment. Ministerial Development Review is not

spiritual direction or mentoring, nor is it line management.

3. Ministerial Development Review is a light-touch and flexible scheme. Ministerial Development Review is a tool to support ministers in their ministry and to support Circuits and Districts in their mission. It is not an end in itself and should not be an onerous or burdensome exercise for ministers or Circuits.
4. Ministerial Development Review is a connexional scheme. Ministerial Development Review should be consistently employed across the Connexion, allowing for familiarity and parity. As a light-touch and flexible scheme, there is room for a degree of flexibility in implementation at district level.
5. The Ministerial Development Review process should be transparent. Clarity is required during the process, especially regarding which information is being shared, and with whom it is being shared. Some of the information shared during the Ministerial Development Review process will be confidential, and the boundaries of confidentiality should be carefully observed.
6. All who are involved should be committed to ensuring that the Ministerial Development Review scheme is a successful process for the minister concerned. All involved in the Ministerial Development Review scheme have rights and duties within the process. All will share responsibility for its success. All involved in the Ministerial Development Review scheme should

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- recognise the differing levels of power held by participants within the process. Trust in the Ministerial Development Review scheme and in the relationships within the Ministerial Development Review process will be crucial to the success of the process.
7. Each component of the Ministerial Development Review process should be rooted in prayer and reflection.

The skeleton model of the Ministerial Development Review scheme is as follows:

1. Three participants are closely involved in each Ministerial Development Review process.
  - For circuit ministers: the minister herself/himself, the Superintendent minister and a lay representative agreed by both.
  - For Superintendent ministers: the superintendent herself/himself, the District Chair, and a lay representative agreed by both.
  - For District Chairs: the Chair herself/himself, the General Secretary and Secretary of the Conference, and a lay representative agreed by both.
2. The Ministerial Development Review process should take place once each connexional year, and at an interval of approximately 12 months. The process should be structured around at least one face-to-face meeting. Responsibility for convening and chairing the meeting rests, in the case of Ministerial Development Review processes for circuit ministers, with the superintendent minister or the lay representative. All

correspondence in preparation for and following the meeting could be undertaken electronically.

3. The meeting should enable the participants:
  - prayerfully and reflectively to review together the minister's work over the past year, in the context of their current appointment, and against the hopes and goals set at the previous meeting – noting successes, challenges, changes in circumstances and learning;
  - prayerfully and reflectively to identify together new hopes and goals for the coming year in the context of the Circuit's priorities;
  - prayerfully and reflectively to identify together areas for learning and development to support the minister during the coming year.
4. The minister should be invited to nominate individuals who have knowledge of their ministry to feed into the process by responding to feedback questions. The other participants may suggest other individuals to feed into the process by responding to feedback questions, should they wish to do so. The final list of those to be invited to feed into the process, and the feedback questions to be asked of them, should be agreed by all three participants.
5. After the meeting, a report of the outcomes of the meeting should be written and agreed to by all three participants. In the case of Ministerial Development Review processes for

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circuit ministers, the minister herself/himself and the Superintendent should each retain a copy.

6. While recognising that all participants should be committed to the success of the process, there may be occasions when disagreements occur. If these disagreements cannot be resolved between the parties concerned, the matter should be referred to another party for investigation and mediation. In the case of Ministerial Development Review processes for circuit ministers, the matter should be referred to the District Chair. In the case of deacons in circuit appointments, the matter should also be referred to the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order. In the case of Ministerial Development Review processes for Superintendents and District Chairs, the matter should be referred to another party acceptable to all three participants.

Time was set aside at the meeting of district representatives to identify further areas of work which could profitably be undertaken over coming months to assist with the implementation of the scheme. The further areas of work identified include (a) the production of accessible guidance on theological reflection and reflective practice, and (b) the production of accessible guidance to assist in structuring and conducting an effective Ministerial Development Review meeting. This work is being undertaken by the Connexional Team, working in collaboration with district nominees. This work will culminate in the publication of resources

on 25 July 2011, to enable induction activities to take place during the first part of the 2011-2012 connexional year.

The Methodist Council, at its April 2011 meeting, noted the work which had been undertaken, and adopted the revised scheme for implementation from September 2011.

In adopting the revised scheme, the Methodist Council noted that a number of the lessons learned in the Methodist context are not dissimilar from those found in other organisations when attempting to design a workable and effective scheme of this nature. The key determinants of success include clarity of purpose and focus (avoiding the temptation to achieve multiple objectives through a single vehicle), simplicity (avoiding the tendency to create a great deal of paperwork and complex processes) and sound communication.

The Methodist Council also noted that, though the scheme is designed to be light-touch and flexible, it will inevitably have an impact on ministers, including Superintendents and District Chairs, in terms of the time commitment required. However, the Council expressed their hope that the benefits of enhanced understanding and relationships, together with some identification of ministers' desired development opportunities, will outweigh the 'costs'. In the same vein it also recognised that undertaking development reviews within a Circuit should be seen as being part of the calling of a Superintendent and would hopefully be seen as an opportunity rather than a burden.

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The Methodist Council further noted that circumstances and relationships will inevitably play a part in the implementation of the scheme. These are integral to any 'people process', and trust and mutual understanding are vital to success. Inevitably, there will be issues here which may impede success in some contexts. On the other hand, the process may provide an opportunity to begin to resolve some problematic issues: handling difficult conversations can, on occasions, be helped by a process which requires participants to engage in dialogue and gives them permission to be open and honest in their communication. Clear communications about the scheme, its principles and purposes, and ongoing support and guidance, will, meanwhile, endeavour to promote positive outcomes.

Finally, the Methodist Council noted that the commended scheme is a connexional scheme, enabling ordained ministers to be confident that they will have comparable experiences, wherever they serve. However, the Council also noted that local situations inevitably provide different contexts, and it is hoped that the simplicity of the scheme allows for some flexibility in its implementation while meeting the agreed requirements.

The Conference acknowledges the work undertaken at its direction by the Methodist Council and declines the request in the memorial.

### **M11 Ministerial Development Review**

The Nottingham and Derby District Synod (R) (Present 173. Voting: 165 for, 2

against) requests the Conference to direct that the details of the scheme for ADR be brought to the Conference for debate and approval before being implemented connexionally.

### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the Nottingham and Derby District for its memorial.

The Conference notes that the 2009 Conference affirmed the principle of a connexional ministerial review process (Resolution 42/3 (2009)), and directed that the Methodist Council oversee ongoing work to develop a connexional ministerial review process for implementation from September 2011.

The Methodist Council, at its April 2011 meeting, noted the work which had been undertaken since the 2009 Conference, and adopted a revised scheme for implementation from September 2011. The work undertaken and details of the revised scheme are outlined in the Conference's response to memorial M10.

The Conference hence acknowledges the work undertaken at its direction by the Methodist Council and judges that further approval is not required.

### **M12 Ministerial supervision**

The Leeds District Synod (R) (Present 132. Voting: 109 for, 3 against) recognises the need for pastoral support for all involved in the ministry of the Methodist Church and

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recommends that the Church encourages all those ordained as presbyters or deacons to receive regular supervision.

The Synod asks that the Methodist Church provides the resources to train suitable people to fulfil this role, and encourages circuit leadership teams to support this development as good practice for all ministers.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the Leeds District for its memorial.

The Conference welcomes the acknowledgement of the need for pastoral support for those who exercise ministries within the life of the Methodist Church, and is supportive of the desire to ensure that access to appropriate guidance, affirmation and support should be encouraged and enabled.

The importance of apt pastoral support for presbyters, for example, is emphasised within the Service of Ordination, when the ordinands are charged 'to watch over one another in love'. Similarly, during the Service of Ordination of Deacons, the ordinands are encouraged to 'give counsel and encouragement to all whom Christ entrusts to your care', and the Methodist Diaconal Order's Rule of Life emphasises the complementary activity of 'regularly [setting] aside time for self-examination [...] to look back and see where we have failed in loving God and our neighbours, and to give thanks for blessings received'. The Conference report *With Integrity and Skill* acknowledges more generally

that a 'healthy Christian community is a safe place of mutual care, where those within the Body of Christ and those in the neighbourhood and world beyond feel valued, loved and respected. Such valuing contributes to individual well-being, which in turn builds strong communities and is a witness to Christ'. Sharing in providing and receiving pastoral support is an important component of Methodism's lay and ordained ministries.

Within many caring professions, 'supervision' is seen as an important specialist source of guidance, affirmation and support. Encouraging ordained ministers to receive regular supervision and providing resources to train suitable people to fulfil supervisory roles may be a positive development and expansion of the Church's commitment to the importance of pastoral support. Indeed, encouraging and enabling of all those (both lay and ordained) who exercise commissioned ministries of pastoral care to receive supervision is worthy of exploration.

However, there are several preparatory steps which are necessary before the Conference can, with confidence, provide such encouragement and earmark appropriate resources. Within the context of pastoral support, there are a range of understandings of the term 'supervision'. It is consequently necessary to clarify expectations and available methods. It will also be advantageous to explore the different ways in which some ministers are already supported in order to determine how all might best be supported in the future. Evaluating the impact of

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existing supervision courses and of the arrangements for the supervision of probationers and those in training will help to identify existing strengths and challenges in this area. Such evaluation will also highlight the learning needs which would flow from a wider affirmation of the importance of supervision for all ordained ministers. A consideration of ways of addressing the learning needs which emerge from this analysis would usefully form part of the Fruitful Field project.

In the light of the need for this preparatory work, the Conference refers the memorial to the Ministries Committee and directs that a report of progress be made to the Conference in 2013.

### **M13 Communion mediated through social media**

The South East District Synod (M) (Present: 80. Voting: 72 for, 8 against) requests the Conference to instruct the Faith and Order Committee to form a policy regarding the practice of celebrating Holy Communion with dispersed communities via live, interactive media such as the Internet or video-conferencing. In this form of remote communion, a minister in one location would be permitted to preside over a celebration of Holy Communion with a gathered group of fellowshiping believers consisting of groups or individuals residing in disparate locations who provide their own elements to be blessed by the person presiding. Synod asks that clarity be given by the Faith and Order Committee as to whether such a form of Holy Communion is acceptable within our discipline and practice.

### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the South East District for its memorial, and notes that the Faith and Order Committee was asked to explore the theological and liturgical basis for a celebration of the Lord's Supper through the use of social media in the summer of 2010. In its advice to those members of the Connexional Team dealing with the enquiry, the Committee pointed to the previous statements of the Methodist Church on the celebration of the Lord's Supper which emphasise the corporate nature of this celebration. The Committee discussed the suitability of a Lovefeast as an appropriate alternative to a celebration of the Lord's Supper remotely using social media. The Committee raised considerable concerns about the concept of 'remote' sacraments.

It is clear, however, from the initial and subsequent discussions at the Faith and Order Committee and from the comments made in the memorial that further consideration should be given and a formal response or clarification given on the issue of Remote Communion or, more preferably, Communion mediated through social media.

Although the Conference notes the specific nature of the memorial in outlining a particular liturgical practice, the Conference instructs the Faith and Order Committee to establish an appropriate group to discuss the issues related to this memorial and to report back to a future Conference at the earliest opportunity. This group should include members of the Faith and Order Worship and

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Liturgy Resource Group, CODEC\*, and appropriate members of the Connexional Team (eg Discipleship and Ministries, Youth and Children/Youth Assembly, Communications, Evangelism Spirituality and Discipleship). If possible, the group should have representation from the Joint Implementation Commission or the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England, from Fresh Expressions, and from the United Reformed Church, in order to assist in the ecumenical exploration of the issue and any potential impact on the Anglican-Methodist Covenant of any potential outcomes proposed, as well as drawing on the experience of other Churches currently exploring this issue.

\*CODEC is a research initiative at St John's College, Durham University which is exploring Christian Communication and Identity in a Digital Age

### **M14 Authorisation to preside at Communion**

The Kidsgrove (11/16) Circuit Meeting (Present: 38. Voting: 37 for, 0 against) believes that the partnership or priesthood of all believers before Christ expresses the heart of our understanding of Christian Ministry, and that the presbyteral and diaconal ministry is no different in form and function from any other ministry. The Deed of Union Clause 4 states 'Christ's ministers [...] hold no priesthood differing in kind from that which is common to all the Lord's people'. The Kidsgrove Circuit therefore invites the Methodist Conference to consider enabling, after training and examination, all fully accredited Local Preachers, if they should so desire, under the authority of the Superintendent, to have the right and privilege of officiating at

Holy Communion and Baptism.

### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the Kidsgrove Circuit for its affirmation of the priesthood of all believers, and notes that Clause 4 of the Deed of Union states:

*'The Methodist Church holds the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and consequently believes that no priesthood exists which belongs exclusively to a particular order or class of persons but in the exercise of its corporate life and worship special qualifications for the discharge of special duties are required and thus the principle of representative selection is recognised.'*

This passage is grounded on the distinction within the Methodist Church between a ministry of the word and a ministry of the word and sacraments. The ministry of the word, sometimes referred to as the ministry of preaching, is exercised by Methodist preachers and a ministry of the word and sacraments is exercised by ministers, namely, in this instance, by presbyters.

As the Kidsgrove Circuit correctly points out, that distinction is predicated on the priesthood of all believers, namely that there is no "priestly virtue inherent in the office of minister" and "that no priesthood exists which belongs exclusively to a particular order or class of persons". However, the paragraph concerning the priesthood of all believers makes it clear that "in the exercise of its corporate life and worship special qualifications for the

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discharge of special duties are required and thus the principle of representative selection is recognised". Moreover, the Deed of Union continues: "For the sake of church order and not because of any priestly virtue inherent in the office the ministers of the Methodist Church are set apart by ordination to the ministry of the word and sacraments." As such, the Deed of Union sets out the basis upon which it normally assigns presidency at the Lord's Supper to presbyters. This point was further outlined in the draft report on Eucharistic Presidency found in the Faith and Order Committee's report to the 2010 Conference, paragraph 2.5. SO 011 ("Conduct of the Lord's Supper") and CPD Book VI Part 8 (Criteria for Authorising Persons other than Ministers to preside at the Lord's Supper) outline the basis on which persons other than presbyters may be appointed, after appropriate training, to preside. It is clear from these documents that the primary basis for appointing such people is on the grounds of Eucharistic deprivation. The Faith and Order Committee is currently consulting with the Authorisations Committee and the Methodist Diaconal Order prior to reporting to the 2012 Conference on whether these Guidelines need to be extended or adapted, particularly in the light of the Fresh Expressions movement.

However, the memorial implies a removal of a fundamental distinction between Methodist preachers and Methodist ministers which would contravene Clause 4 of the Deed of Union. As such, the Conference declines the memorial.

### **M15 Local Preachers' training**

The Conwy and Prestatyn (2/12) Circuit Meeting (Present: 45. Voting: 41 for, 0 against) acknowledges with gratitude the way that, since its introduction, the Faith and Worship Course has provided a solid foundation for the training of Local Preachers, and has produced many fine preachers for the Church. However, the meeting is concerned at the considerable disquiet expressed by many Local Preachers in training over the heavy workload placed on them by the course and the consequences for their availability for preaching.

Whilst recognising that a course for preachers should place certain demands on those in training, and should endeavour to maintain high standards of preaching and worship leading, accordingly the Circuit Meeting requests that the Conference instigate a wide ranging review of the training of Local Preachers.

### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the Conwy and Prestatyn Circuit for its memorial.

As reported elsewhere in the Conference Agenda, work is underway to develop refined aims and outcomes for Local Preacher and Worship Leader learning as part of the Fruitful Field project.

Since 2010 the Connexional Team has been working on the outcomes from the connexional consultation on Local Preacher initial and continuing learning, and a full report of recommendations for

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the Conference to discuss will be made in 2012.

As part of this process the burden of training on many individuals has been recognised and the intention is therefore to ensure that we encourage rather than overload training for these ministries as well as acknowledging that standards can only be kept up through a lifelong commitment to learning and development.

The Conference therefore assures the Conwy and Prestatyn Circuit that the work it has requested is already underway.

### **M16 Preaching at Local Arrangement services**

The Kidsgrove (11/16) Circuit Meeting (Present: 38. Voting: unanimous) asks the Conference to remove the words “and shall not normally include a preaching element” from SO 569(1). The Circuit believes that the value gained by people discovering a call to preach by beginning to do so and the fact that a Local Preacher is to provide guidance for such a service more than outweighs the concern that such preachers will be unaccountable.

### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the Kidsgrove Circuit for its memorial.

The Methodist Church holds the ministry of its preachers in high regard. It has sought, since the beginning of the Methodist movement, to provide appropriate training and support for all its preachers. Work to provide enhanced and more flexible

training and support for Local Preachers is currently being undertaken as part of the Fruitful Field project, as outlined elsewhere in the Conference Agenda. Moreover, as an indication of the importance which the Methodist Church attaches to the ministry of its Local Preachers, the Conference continues to monitor the standards of worship and preaching in our pulpits in a number of ways – not least through the Superintendent’s oversight of the plan, the fellowship of the Local Preachers’ Meeting and the process of Continuing Local Preacher Development.

The restriction noted in SO 569(1), to which the memorial refers, seeks to respect the role of preachers and, implicitly, to acknowledge the proper degree of training and support which the Conference would seek to offer to those who exercise a preaching ministry within the life of the Church. As such, the restriction is proportionate and reasonable.

However, the Conference notes the continuing need for Local Arrangements, as well as the need to enable, support and encourage a range of ministries to serve the needs of all our local churches and Circuits. This has led to some confusion about what is meant by ‘preaching element’ and how best to support local arrangements. The Conference therefore believes that guidelines around this subject as well as a review of the relevant Standing Orders is required.

Consequently, the Conference declines this memorial but requests that the Worship and Liturgy Resource Group

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of the Faith and Order Committee look at producing guidelines with a view to clarifying the Standing Orders as required.

### **M17 National youth weekend**

The Leicester (West) (23/9) Circuit Meeting (Present: 47. Voting: unanimous) requests the re-instatement of a national youth weekend enabling young people to come together to see that they are part of a larger movement and to meet other young Christians.

#### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the Leicester (West) Circuit for its memorial and assures the Circuit that the Methodist Church is committed to encouraging both young people and children in their discipleship. One of the ways this is done is through holding the annual Methodist Youth Assembly which is a connexional gathering of children and young people. This year the Youth Assembly is going through some exciting changes in response to feedback from the first two years of Youth Assemblies and consultation with young people across the Connexion. These changes can be found elsewhere in the Conference Agenda.

The main result of this work is the ongoing growth of the work of the Youth Assembly and the enlarging of the numbers of both children and young people it can reach and enable to come together for fellowship.

The Conference hence believes that the Methodist Church offers a very innovative and broad-ranging weekend

of events for children and young people. The Conference therefore declines the memorial.

### **M18 World Mission Fund**

The Birmingham District Synod (R) (Present: 171. Voting: 120 for, 0 against) asks the Conference to direct that the World Mission Fund shall in future be used in accordance with the purposes as set out in SO 362(2), thereby avoiding a limitation on the use of funds which appears to have developed inadvertently in recent years. This will give the Methodist Church of Great Britain more flexibility to respond to the wider concerns of our ecumenical or Church partners and enable us to benefit our Partner Churches and their mission more effectively, within the context of a genuinely global understanding of mission.

#### **Reply**

The Conference is grateful to the Birmingham District for its memorial and for highlighting the importance of clarity about the purposes and use of its connexionally-held funds, such as the World Mission Fund (WMF).

Within the *Team Focus* report to the Conference in 2007 it was clarified that the World Mission Fund should only be used to resource grants for work outside Britain. In response to that report the Conference adopted the following as Resolution 41/6 (2007):

*The Conference directs the Council to review the formal statements of the*

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*purposes of the major restricted and designated funds which it manages, in the light of this report, and to report to the 2008 Conference, along with any consequential changes in Standing Orders.*

It was intended that this work would be undertaken within the context of the creation of the Connexional Grants Committee (CGC), which is responsible for all connexional grants, including the formulation and implementation of a grants policy in line with the decisions of the Council and the Conference.

This resolution has not yet been implemented. That reflects the fact that in order to ensure that the Church supports a wide range of mission work in the UK and with Partner Churches, the use of all of the main funds needs to be considered collectively. It does not make sense to consider the use of the WMF in isolation from the use of the Mission in Britain Fund. The Conference also notes that its working party reviewing the role and purposes of the Methodist Missionary Society will be reporting to the 2012 Conference. Its work includes rewriting the Standing Orders of MMS which are currently coterminous with SO 362 relating to the World Mission Fund.

The Conference therefore directs the Methodist Council to ensure that Resolution 41/6 (2007) is now implemented and that it reports back to the 2012 Conference accordingly.

### **M19 Circuit assessments**

The Epworth and Scunthorpe (17/1) Circuit Meeting (Present: 73. Voting: 72 for, 0 against) registers concern at the increasing level of district assessment required of Circuits, which when this assessment is compared to those ministerial budget headings only, which are related to district and connexional support, is at a level of a 'management cost' surcharge of 25%. This Circuit requests that the attention of the Conference and the connexional leadership team be subject to a reality check as to what level is sustainable by way of assessment level.

### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the Epworth and Scunthorpe Circuit for highlighting the challenges facing many Circuits in meeting their connexional responsibilities in paying the assessment.

The Conference notes that the actual assessment paid by each Circuit is set by the relevant District. Districts are empowered to use whichever policy they find to be most appropriate for dividing up their portion of the connexional assessment. This is in keeping with the policy of devolving decision making as close as possible to the point of impact. The Conference therefore encourages Districts to re-evaluate the method used for apportioning the assessment between its Circuits each year, in order to ensure that it is based on the relevant local factors.

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The Conference in 2010 established the method for determining the total assessment to the Methodist Church Fund for the three connexional years up to 31 August 2014. It does not plan to re-visit this methodology within the three years, but the Methodist Council has initiated a Budget Stakeholders' Forum which includes connexional and district representatives. This Forum is in particular considering ways in which the total assessment is apportioned between the Districts, and will bring recommendations to the Strategy and Resources Committee in due course.

The memorial is therefore accepted.

### **M20 Circuit contributions to district Advance Funds**

The Ryedale (29/19) Circuit Meeting (Present: 21. Voting: unanimous) recognises the value of an annual contribution from Circuit Model Trust Funds to the relevant district Advance Fund but requests that the rate at which this contribution is made should vary according to economic circumstances.

In the 2009/10 connexional year the rate of contribution far exceeded the level of interest received. It is inappropriate that the levy applied in any one year is greater than the income received by the Circuit.

The Ryedale Circuit Meeting requests that the Conference recognises the disadvantage and potential handicap this creates for Circuits, and further requests that SO 955(6)(a) (Model Trust Money) be

reviewed and that a report be brought to the Conference of 2012.

### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the Ryedale Circuit for reminding the Church of the importance of the use of circuit model trust money. However, it does not recognise the link that is being made here between the levy into district Advance Funds (DAFs) and interest rates. This levy is an expression of the connexional nature of the Methodist Church and by feeding into DAFs it enables Districts to fund local mission, ministry and building projects at local level. It also reflects the fact that Circuits are to find ways of utilising their model trust moneys in innovative and missional ways, rather than save them indefinitely.

In cases where some capital money is being held for long-term investment to yield income used for the work and mission of the Circuit, the Circuit can apply under clause (6)(b) of SO 955 to its district Synod for permission to designate that money so that it is not subject to the annual levy.

The Conference therefore declines the memorial.

### **M21 Disbursal of connexional funds**

The Epworth and Scunthorpe (17/1) Circuit Meeting (Present: 73. Voting: unanimous) requests that when the Conference has already approved a budget (as with core funding for Heritage sites at the 2010 Conference) the agreed sum be disbursed at the start of the following connexional

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year, without the need to complete time-consuming grant application forms.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the Epworth and Scunthorpe Circuit for its memorial.

In receiving the report of the Heritage Committee, the Conference in 2010 noted that £80,000 had been accommodated within the Connexional Central Services Budget for heritage grants in the 2010-11 year. The same report made it clear that from 2010-11, applications for Connexional 'Heritage and Mission' grants would be made to the Connexional Grants Committee. It stated that the Methodist Heritage Committee had collaborated with the Connexional Grants Committee in developing appropriate grants criteria.

Although the amount of £80,000 had been agreed within the budget, it was clear that the distribution of that money would be made via the normal processes of the Connexional Grants Committee. This had appointed a Heritage Grants Stream, comprising individuals with a wealth of heritage expertise and experience. The stream's role is to evaluate specific grant requests in order to ensure that connexional funds are deployed effectively. These requests had to be submitted on the appropriate application forms in order to ensure that each of the heritage sites demonstrated a clear plan for the use of the money, to which it could be held accountable. The same methodology exists for all grants from connexional funds. If the Conference agrees to allocate specific sums for grants from

the Connexional Central Services Budget, it does not do so on the basis that recipient bodies can avoid the established processes for applying for grants or for appropriate monitoring and evaluation to be performed. In the case of grants, this is the Connexional Grants Committee acting under SO 213B.

The memorial is therefore declined.

### **M22 Assistance to Circuits where a minister is under suspension**

The London Mission (North West) (35/12) Circuit Meeting (Present: 17. Voting: 16 for, 1 against) thanks the Conference for its reply to the Circuit's memorial (M21) last year on this subject. However, the Circuit Meeting feels that assistance should be available to Circuits who suffer the suspension of a minister, not only to help with the cost of cover whilst the minister is unavailable, but also to give some recompense for the money paid for the minister's stipend and living costs during the suspension. It seems unjust that the Circuit should have no assistance in paying these sums when the Circuit is in no way responsible for the minister's suspension.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the London Mission (North West) Circuit for its memorial. However, it does not believe that the situation has in any way changed since the Circuit submitted its memorial on the same subject last year. It is therefore content to adopt the same reply and the memorial is declined.

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### M23 Listed buildings

The Lincoln and Grimsby District Synod (R) (Present: 111. Voting: 102 for, 8 against) notes that churches with limitations on their buildings, such as listed building status, are finding their desire for mission is hampered by restrictions placed upon how they develop their use. Churches need to be free to alter their buildings as they see fit in order that the buildings can be suitable for mission in the twenty first century.

We ask the Conference to review the current listed building status of all Methodist Church buildings, with a view to getting the English Heritage listings removed, in order to allow individual societies to alter and use their premises to serve the purpose of mission according to their context.

#### Reply

The Conference thanks the Lincoln and Grimsby District for its memorial. It notes that listing is the domain of government and therefore outside of Conference's authority. The purpose is to protect Britain's national heritage and is an indication of a building's historic and architectural importance, which the Methodist Church understands should be valued and celebrated. Most listed buildings become listed as the result of a comprehensive survey of an area. Some are listed as a result of a request by a body or interested individual. In such cases where a Methodist chapel in England is involved, English Heritage consults the Connexional Team to allow representations to be made on behalf of

the Church. To be included on the list, buildings must be of special architectural or historic interest. They are selected on the basis of strict criteria which are intended to promote a sound and sustainable national standard.

Approximately 590 Methodist chapels are listed. This equates to about 10%, compared with 18% of United Reformed Church and 19% of Baptist chapels.

There is no formal process for the delisting of a building. Trustees who believe that a listing should be reconsidered due to it being wrongly identified or inaccurately described need to send evidence of this to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. There is no established process for requesting the delisting of a group of buildings, each individual case being considered by the Department on its merits. Past experience shows that requests for delisting buildings are only successful on very rare occasions, although listing does not ultimately preclude the sale of a building for another use.

The Methodist Church, together with the other main Christian denominations, enjoys the benefits of Ecclesiastical Exemption. This allows it to determine within its own procedures all applications for alterations. Since 1994, over 800 such applications have been approved, indicating clearly that ordered change is possible. Very many congregations have successfully reordered their buildings in a way which has retained their best architectural features but allowed a sufficient degree of change to enable the

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continued use of the building for worship and mission.

It was acknowledged by the Conference in 2008 that the Methodist Church should offer more support across the Connexion to help managing trustees exploit the opportunities offered by historic Methodist buildings for mission; this was a key driver in establishing the Methodist Heritage Committee.

Listing indicates buildings are considered important enough to protect and conserve for future generations, so alterations to any listed church building need to be considered in the context of a long-term mission vision. Detailed mission planning should come first. Prayerful leading and inspiration, and wide internal and external consultation, should be the guiding principles before the potential challenges of a listing are allowed to impose constraints on that church's calling. The mission planning audit should take into account a church's history and heritage, and consider the unique opportunities they can open up for outreach and community engagement, relationship building and fundraising.

The Methodist Heritage Committee's three-year strategy, presented elsewhere in the Conference Agenda, proposes that historic churches should be part of the Conference's 'Heritage and Mission' agenda. Initial work is underway by the Heritage Officer to develop partnerships (including with the heritage bodies in each jurisdiction) to increase knowledge and build capacity to support congregations to use their heritage for

mission. The first step towards this is proposed to be an extension of the Methodist Heritage website to allow historic chapels to promote themselves as visitor destinations based on their stories and architecture. This is an important opportunity for historically-important Methodist churches to develop discipleship by telling the stories of Methodism and thereby creating opportunities to speak about the church's twenty first-century ministry and relevance.

The Conference notes that within the above context, local managing trustees do have various options regarding the place and use of listed buildings within their mission strategy. The listing of a building does not preclude it from being altered for mission purposes, and in some cases opens up the possibility of funding that is not available for non-listed buildings. It encourages local trustees to approach the relevant connexional staff at an early stage in planning, so that the expertise available can inform their ideas and plans.

The Conference therefore declines the memorial.

### **M24 Classification of replacement projects**

The St Helens and Prescot (18/13) Circuit Meeting (Present: 32. Voting: unanimous) notes that SO 931(1)(ix) provides that the consent of the appropriate connexional authority shall be required for the classification of a project as a replacement project for the purposes of SO 973(1), and that SO 973(1) provides for the possibility of one or more

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dispositions being employed towards a replacement project. However,

1. we understand that, currently, the appropriate connexional authority is prepared to waive the levy for the Connexional Priority Fund on only one manse being sold to fund the purchase of a replacement manse; and
2. similarly, we understand that, currently, the appropriate connexional authority is prepared to waive the levy for the Connexional Priority Fund on only one of the churches being sold to fund a replacement project for two or more churches.

Whilst we understand the need there has been to widen the purposes of the Connexional Priority Fund and to enable greater flexibility in support of *Our Calling* and the *Priorities of the Methodist Church*, we believe this policy may limit some very creative responses to mission reviews, and is contrary to SO 973.

We are grateful that our District Representative on the Methodist Council has raised this matter in the Council but, given the timetable for the submission of memorials and the date of the next meeting of the Council, we are sending this memorial to ask the Conference to amend the current policy so that the total net proceeds of more than one disposition may be employed in or towards a replacement project for both manses and churches, in line with SO 973.

*The following memorial was also received with the same text as above. The Conference adopts the same reply:*

### **M25 Warrington (18/15) Circuit Meeting (Present: 28. Voting: unanimous)**

#### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the St Helens and Prescott Circuit for its memorial. As it states, this question has been raised within the Methodist Council during this connexional year. The meetings of the Council in January and April 2011 considered papers MC/11/20 and MC/11/45 asking it to consider the interpretation of SO 973 with respect to replacement projects.

The Council heard that the situation had been debated and the existing policy confirmed by the Conference in 1999 and by both the former Resourcing Mission Grants Committee and Connexional Property Committee in 2004. In addition, the Connexional Grants Committee (CGC), which now has oversight of the Connexional Priority Fund (CPF) had revisited the policy in 2009. It made no changes to the policy, but it did relax the rules for connexional property grants. Previously a replacement project was not eligible for a property grant from the CPF, but the CGC decided to change this so that replacement projects could now obtain a connexional property grant from the CPF.

The Council was reminded that the CPF exists as an expression of the connexional nature of the Church. Income from the levies on property sales is used in four main connexional ways:

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1. To contribute to the Pension Reserve Fund that has been established as part of the Conference's employer covenant with respect to the Methodist Ministers Pension Scheme and the Pension and Assurance Scheme for Lay Employees of the Methodist Church. This money is being held to offset the impact of future pension funding shortfalls.
2. To be redistributed annually to district Advance Funds in order to be used for mission and ministry (including local property projects) across the connexion.
3. To pay for major connexional programmes including VentureFX, the Youth Participation Strategy and the District Development Enabler programme.
4. For general mission and ministry grants awarded by the CGC.

Any change to the policy regarding replacement projects would significantly reduce the money available for these purposes. There is a distinct possibility that the funds of the CPF could be severely eroded given the number of replacement projects which are agreed, and which are often supported by the sale proceeds from two or more properties. Forty-six levy refunds on the sale of single churches were made for the connexional year 2009–10, amounting to £1.3m including interest. Around 30% of these were part of multiple sales of up to three sales per replacement project, which on a worst case scenario, based on the average refund, could increase refunds by up to £2.5m. The net income to the CPF over the same year was £4.7m, so if that was

reduced by £2.5m the amounts which could be disbursed to the four purposes referred to above would halve. Such a change would radically alter the use of the CPF.

Having debated the matter, the Council decided to affirm the existing policy. The Conference therefore declines the memorial.

### **M26 Releasing resources for mission**

The Leeds (South) (16/5) Circuit Meeting (Present: 16. Voting: unanimous) notes that the Conference of 2004 received a report entitled *Releasing Resources for Mission*. That report referred to the 2002 Conference report *Resourcing Circuits and Districts* which stated that "A key theme in the discussions around resourcing Circuits and Districts has been the inequality of resources across Circuits and Districts which has been felt at times to stifle new initiatives for mission in the places where these are most needed."

The aim of the 2004 report was to reflect the principles and policy of the Methodist Church in the ways in which circuit Advance Funds and other funds may be used. In particular the report aimed

*"to improve the way the use of such funds reflects the principle of connexionalism and the priority of mission as they are contained in the report adopted by the 1999 Conference on the nature of the Christian Church in Methodist experience and practice, Called to Love and Praise.*

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*Connexionalism reflects the interconnectedness of the Methodist Church (see “The Connexional Principle”, section 4.6 in Called to Love and Praise). It is a principle by which we are responsible to and for each other in the Body of Christ. It is evident in our Circuit system, the role of Districts and the co-ordinating and oversight role of connexional officers. It is a principle that is more than “the strong helping the weak”, though it includes that. It recognises that our use of resources needs to be seen in a wider context and to be accountable within the whole Church. Churches are accountable to Circuits and Circuits to churches; Circuits are accountable to Districts and Districts to the Circuits and so on.*

*For too long it has been thought that saving all we can meant hanging on to savings and investments – often in preparation for a mythical “rainy day”. The priority of mission ought to mean that the focus of the use of our resources is an outward movement, more in tune with John Wesley’s “give all you can.” The priority for the use of our resources is not the maintenance of what we have, but the support of work in the service of God’s mission in the world. (See “The Triune God: God’s Reign and Mission”, section 2.1 in Called to Love and Praise).”*

The Leeds (South) Circuit Meeting also notes that the revision of Part 9 of CPD has given trustees greater flexibility in the use of their funds and enabled the transfer of monies from one Circuit to another. SO 955 now encourages District Policy

Committees to “review the state of circuit model trust funds and their distribution throughout the District and may propose to the relevant Circuit Meeting projects for the application or use anywhere within the District of the capital money of or income from any such fund”.

The Leeds (South) Circuit Meeting therefore respectfully requests that the Conference directs the Methodist Council to consider the practical implications that the application of the principle of connexionality reveals and therefore to:

1. define the Circuits and churches where mission is needed and whose work must continue but who will cease to exist without support from elsewhere in the Methodist Church;
2. encourage Districts to apply SO 955 more rigorously and thereby release the people called Methodists across the Connexion, regardless of socio-economic conditions, from endless fundraising to maintain properties and so give them renewed energy for Mission and Evangelism; and
3. enable support for the Church in the Margins as well as the Church in Suburbia.

### Reply

The Conference is grateful to the Leeds (South) Circuit for its timely reminder of the need for the Methodist people to ensure that they make the most effective use in mission of the resources that God has so generously provided.

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Across the Connexion the Regrouping for Mission programme is being used to facilitate an analysis of the situation described in the first point, and to enable a reshaping of Circuits and Districts that places appropriate resources where they can be used most effectively for mission.

The ability to pool resources and for churches and Circuits that have more resources than they can effectively use to spread them to more needy parts of the Church, is an essential characteristic of the Methodist Church's connexional structure. SO 955 was specifically drafted in order to facilitate such a movement of financial resources and it is important that district Policy Committees fulfil the responsibilities that it places upon them. It also challenges Circuits with significant financial reserves to be proactive in seeking ways of donating money to areas where it can be most effectively used.

The General Secretary's report to the Conference explores the relationship between property and mission, asking some challenging questions about the approach the Church takes to its buildings and how these resources are best used. The Conference will also be considering, amongst its business, papers that inform the Church's response to the Government's Big Society agenda and the growing issues of poverty and inequality within the country. Within these, the Church is challenged to use its resources connexionally in order to demonstrate Christian love in areas suffering from hardship and deprivation.

The Conference agrees that locally-held resources should be used for mission and ministry purposes. It therefore directs the Connexional Team to draw attention to SO 955 and to encourage the relevant district bodies, such as Policy Committees, to make use of it.

### **M27 Managing trusteeship of local property**

The Darlington District Synod (R)  
(Present 127. Voting: 76 for, 19 against)  
recognising that:

- (a) under Model Trust 2(a) the managing trusteeship of local property is vested in the local church council;
- (b) under Model Trust 19, the Conference has the power to introduce Standing Orders governing the exercise of the powers of managing trustees;
- (c) under Standing Order 910, the proceedings of Church Councils whilst acting as managing trustees are governed by Standing Orders; and
- (d) it is expedient for the implementation of a strategic vision for the mission purposes of the Church at a level wider than the merely local;

requests the Conference to investigate ways of giving Circuit Meetings (with District permission) and District Synods the authority to transfer managing trusteeship of local property to the Circuit Meeting or District.

### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the Darlington District for its concern about the most appropriate use of Model Trust property.

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What the District asks the Conference to explore represents a significant departure from the current model of managing trusteeship which contains no provision for any trustee body to request the transfer of managing trusteeship from a duly constituted body of trustees. However, the Conference recognises the need to keep models of trusteeship under review, especially in light of Regrouping for Mission. Both the Methodist Council and the Law and Polity Committee, together with relevant members of the Connexional Team are aware of this matter and the sentiment expressed in the memorial. It is not then surprising that questions about the use of buildings and appropriate models of trusteeship are already before the Conference as a result of comments made by the General Secretary in his report. In response to his concerns the Conference is asked to direct the Council to appoint a working group to explore issues not dissimilar to those raised in the memorial. An equally explicit link to this is to be found in the report on Modified Circuit Constitutions where the Conference is asked to direct the Council to consider whether criteria can be devised by which a Circuit Meeting can identify when a Church Council can no longer fulfil its duties of managing trusteeship and require that the trusteeship and oversight be passed to another body.

The Conference therefore believes that the reply to the memorial is contained within the resolutions of the Conference.

### **M28 Disposal of church buildings**

The East Anglia District Synod (R) (Present 141. Voting: 119 for, 19 against) urges the

Conference to begin to identify how it can enable circuit and district trustees to empower the release of church buildings for sale or lease to best serve the local community, both where the relevant parties are in agreement, and also where those buildings are no longer able to be fully maintained and developed by the local church trustees but such a decision is being resisted by the latter.

### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the East Anglia District for drawing its attention to some of the challenges faced by managing trustees regarding the use and maintenance of church buildings.

It reminds the District that in certain circumstances Model Trust 20 specifically permits the sale of Methodist buildings at a value below that which may be available on the open market. In response to memorial M31 (2009) the Conference instructed the Connexional Team to review the policy in this area, which it has done in collaboration with the Law and Polity Committee. As a result, in January 2011 the Methodist Council considered paper MC/11/7 and adopted guidelines which clarify the potential new uses for which such a sale may be permitted.

The Conference encourages local trustees to contact connexional officers and the staff of the custodian trustee at an early stage of any such plan, noting that applications for building sales under this Model Trust are extremely rare.

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Within his report to this Conference, the General Secretary picks up the theme of church buildings and encourages the Church to be more proactive in their use and/or disposal so that future mission can be enhanced. The Regrouping for Mission programme provides a connexional framework within which such planning and decision-making can take place.

The Methodist Council and the Mission Council of the United Reformed Church have also agreed to establish a joint group to explore the more flexible use of buildings for the furtherance of mission within local partnerships.

The Conference therefore believes that it has already responded as fully as possible to the memorial within the review of Model Trust 20 policy, other papers which have been considered as part of its business this year, and in its reply to memorial M27.

### **M29 Complaints and discipline procedure**

The Newcastle-upon-Tyne District Synod (R) (Present 157. Voting: 134 for, 15 against) expresses concern that the principles of the complaints system, as set out in SO 1100, are not always being upheld and this failure of process has caused hurt. The Synod therefore expresses its concern at the lack of transparent accountability of those involved in the Complaints and Discipline Procedure at every level and requests the Conference to:

1. redress the inadequacy of SO 1103(6) inasmuch as no complaint may be made against those involved

in the complaints procedure on the grounds of incompetence or failure to follow Standing Orders; and

2. to set up a process of recourse to an independent Ombudsman who will have the power to enquire into the actions of all those involved in the complaints process.

### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the Newcastle-upon-Tyne District for the concern it expresses about this important and sensitive area of the Church's life.

The concern articulated about SO 1103(6) appears to be based on a misunderstanding of sub clauses (i) and (ii) of that Standing Order, both of which set out very clearly the way in which complaints can be made against a person carrying out the responsibilities of a local complaints officer, a member of the complaints team, a person chairing or otherwise serving on a discipline or appeal committee, the Secretary of the Conference, or a member of the Connexional Team. Any complaint made under the provisions of this Standing Order (and there has been only one since the current procedure was introduced in 2008) has to be treated with considerable care and with attention to the hurt and lack of trust that can so easily be felt by the complainant and respondent. The Conference is satisfied that the provisions of SO 1103(6)(i) and (ii) are sufficiently robust to ensure that complaints can be brought against those who have acted improperly in the discharge of their duties.

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In addition to the provisions of SO 1103(6), further provision is made in SO 1155 for the connexional Reconciliation Panel to deal with complaints about the manner in which the process has been carried out. The Reconciliation Panel has the power to make such enquiries as it sees fit and similarly to make recommendations for the improvement of the process.

Whilst the Conference is always concerned to hear of any hurt which the complaints and discipline procedure causes, it is satisfied that the existing provisions for dealing with complaints about individuals, as well as concerns about the processes, are appropriate. Therefore, the Conference declines the memorial.

### **M30 Constitution of Church Councils**

The Sheffield (West) (25/1) Circuit Meeting (Present: 34. Voting: unanimous) notes that Standing Orders stipulate that the membership of Church Councils shall normally include the Superintendent, ministers and ministerial probationers appointed to the Circuit, those authorised to serve with pastoral charge in the Circuit and deacons and diaconal probationers appointed to the Circuit (SO 610).

It observes that the consequence of this is that:

1. as larger Circuits are created, smaller churches may find that the majority of the voting membership of the church council consists of circuit staff;
2. ministers who have no pastoral charge in the local church are

required to receive excessive documentation, and to attend or present apologies;

3. secretaries or others responsible for registrations with the Charity Commission are obliged to obtain and process an excessive number of trustee declarations.

Sheffield West Circuit Meeting invites the Conference to refer this matter to an appropriate committee to review this element of Standing Orders.

### **Reply**

The Conference is grateful to the Sheffield West Circuit for this memorial and notes that the issue it raises is already being addressed by the Law and Polity Committee. The Committee's response and proposed amendments to Standing Orders are contained elsewhere in the Conference Agenda and will be reported to this year's Conference. The reply to the memorial is therefore contained in the resolutions of the Conference.

### **M31 Titles of District Chairs**

The London District Synod (R) (Present 165. Voting: 161 for, 4 against) requests that the Conference reconsider the titles used regarding Chairs in Districts where there are two or more Chairs.

Until 2006, clause 42 of the Deed of Union, which relates to Chairs of Districts, was in terms which did not allow for the possibility of a District having more than one Chair. The Conference of 2006 confirmed amendments to clause 42 (and,

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consequentially, to clause 14, which sets out the membership of the Representative Session of the Conference) which enabled Districts to have two or more Chairs. Those amendments were originally brought to the Conference of 2005 as part of the report of the connexional Law and Polity Committee.

By those amendments, the Conference was given power to determine whether a District should have a single Chair or two or more co-Chairs and, where a District had co-Chairs, was required to designate one of the co-Chairs as the Lead Chair. Under clause 42 as it now stands, the identification of a co-Chair as the Lead Chair serves two principal purposes: (i) it identifies the particular co-Chair who is entitled, *ex officio*, to preside over the Synod; and (ii) it enables references elsewhere in the Deed of Union and in Standing Orders to a Chair which must necessarily refer to a single person to be read as references to the Lead Chair.

The experience of the London District has been that the terminology of co-Chair and Lead Chair has led to misunderstanding. It is not always appreciated that the Lead Chair is one of the co-Chairs. When the term 'co-Chair' is misunderstood as applying only to Chairs who are not the Lead Chair, it appears to lead to the belief that the co-Chairs are not all of equal standing or, in particular, that the co-Chairs who are not the Lead Chair have a standing different from that of other Chairs of District. There is nothing in the report of the Law and Polity Committee to the 2005 Conference to support such a view.

As part of a review of the District, set up after its first three years of operation, the London District has looked again at the roles of its co-Chairs and proposes changes to the descriptions of their responsibilities and ways of working. The London District believes that changing the co-Chair and Lead Chair terminology would assist in establishing the changes it wishes to make. Given that clause 42 of the Deed of Union was also amended in 2006 to make entirely separate provision for permanent deputy Chairs of District, the London District further believes that a change in terminology would not involve any departure from the principles endorsed by the Conference when the 2006 amendments were made. On the contrary, a change would underline the position that all the co-Chairs are Chairs of District. The removal of any doubts that may exist would be of assistance to any other District which may now or at a later date consider seeking a determination of the Conference that it should have more than one Chair.

The London District is now in the process of designating a new Chair in place of the Revd Ermal Kirby to become a Chair of the London District with effect from 1 September 2012. If the Conference agrees in principle with the changes sought by the London District, it would therefore be most helpful if the necessary changes to the Deed of Union are made by the Conference of 2011, so that they can be confirmed by the Conference of 2012 (which can also consider any necessary consequential amendments to Standing Orders), and can take effect from 1 September 2012.

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The London District therefore requests the Conference:

1. to affirm the principle that if a District has more than one Chair, all the Chairs are of equal standing to each other and to the other Chairs of District;
2. to amend clause 42 of the Deed of Union so that:
  - (1) if a District has more than one Chair of District, each Chair shall be described as a Chair of District and the term 'co-Chair' shall no longer be used;
  - (2) the term 'Lead Chair' shall no longer be used and alternative provisions shall be adopted for identifying, in a District where there is more than one Chair of District, who is to preside at the Synod and to whom references to the Chair elsewhere in the Deed of Union and Standing Orders which of their nature must be references to a single person are to be taken to apply;
3. to make any consequential amendments to the Deed of Union;
4. to direct the connexional Law and Polity Committee to bring to the Conference of 2012 any necessary or desirable consequential amendments to Standing Orders, for adoption with effect from 1 September 2012 if the Conference of 2012 confirms the amendments to the Deed of Union referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 above.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the London District for its memorial and for its reflections on its experience of operating as a District with co-Chairs.

The view of the Conference is that clause 42(a) of the Deed of Union, in referring to a single Chair of District as the 'Chair' and to the Chairs of District where there are two or more Chairs as 'co-Chairs', expresses the principle that the office of Chair is held by each Chair of District, whether a single Chair or a co-Chair. The identification of a particular co-Chair as the Lead Chair is not intended to imply any difference of standing between the Lead Chair and the other co-Chairs of a particular District or between any co-Chair and the single Chair of any other District. The Conference therefore affirms the principle set out in paragraph 1 above.

The Conference accepts, however, that the experience of the London District shows that the terminology of co-Chairs and Lead Chair may lead to misunderstanding and that such misunderstanding may be unhelpful both within any District which has co-Chairs and in the wider Connexion. The Conference therefore amends the Deed of Union as follows:

*[Amendments to be set out on the Order Paper after consultation with representatives of the Law and Polity Committee.]*

The Conference further directs the Law and Polity Committee to bring any necessary or desirable consequential

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amendments to the Conference of 2012 as set out in paragraph 4 above.

### M32 Anti-Semitism

The Barnet and Queensbury (35/35) Circuit Meeting (Present: 33. Voting: 33 for, 0 against) notes that:

1. The London Borough of Barnet has the highest percentage of Jewish residents of any local authority in the United Kingdom.
2. In 2010 anti-Semitic incidents in Britain reached the second highest level since records began.
3. The Conference in 1983 passed the following notice of motion on anti-Semitism:

*'The Conference records its distress in recent times of anti-Semitic actions against the homes and places of worship of Jewish people in Britain and elsewhere, notably Western Europe and the Soviet Union. It confesses that Christian history and belief have been gravely disfigured by sinful prejudice against Jews and urges Methodists and local Methodist churches to resist and condemn expressions of anti-Semitism, and encourage relations of love, respect and dialogue with Judaism and Jewish people.'*

The Circuit Meeting therefore asks the Conference, after 28 years, to reaffirm the sentiments expressed in this notice of motion by agreeing an updated version relevant to the present time. The Conference's attention is respectfully directed to the following resources.

- For circuit ministers: The European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, 'Working Definition of Anti-Semitism' ([www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/material/pub/AS/AS-WorkingDefinition-draft.pdf](http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/material/pub/AS/AS-WorkingDefinition-draft.pdf))
- For circuit ministers: The Community Security Trust *Antisemitic Incidents Report 2010* ([www.thecst.org.uk](http://www.thecst.org.uk))
- For circuit ministers: The work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group against Anti-Semitism including the report of the All-Party Inquiry into Antisemitism published in 2006, with the Government's responses published in 2007, 2008 and 2010 ([www.antisemitism.org.uk](http://www.antisemitism.org.uk)).

### Reply

The Conference thanks the Barnet and Queensbury Circuit for its memorial and welcomes the opportunity to reaffirm its unequivocal opposition to anti-Semitism in all its forms, a position it has expressed since 1943 when the Conference agreed "that anti-Semitism is utterly incompatible with the Christian doctrine of man [sic] and is a denial of the Christian Gospel. Malicious gossip and irresponsible charges against Jews, no less than active persecution, are incompatible with Christian standards of behaviour". This position was restated in the notice of motion accepted by the 1983 Conference and quoted in this memorial.

Subsequent Conferences have reiterated this abhorrence of anti-Semitism. The Faith and Order report *Called to Love and Praise*, adopted by the 1999 Conference, recognised "the failure of many churches

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to condemn anti-Semitism' and that there is 'much of which the Church needs to repent'. Subsequently, in response to memorial M35 (2006), the Conference affirmed that it:

"identifies itself with the Charta Oecumenica, adopted in 2000 by the Conference of European Churches, of which the Methodist Church is a member:

*'We deplore and condemn all manifestations of anti-Semitism, all outbreaks of hatred and persecutions. We ask God for forgiveness for anti-Jewish attitudes among Christians, and we ask our Jewish sisters and brothers for reconciliation.*

*It is urgently necessary, in the worship and teaching, doctrine and life of our churches, to raise awareness of the deep bond existing between the Christian faith and Judaism, and to support Christian-Jewish co-operation.*

### **We commit ourselves**

- to oppose all forms of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in the church and in society;
- to seek and intensify dialogue with our Jewish sisters and brothers at all levels."

The Conference notes that in 2006 it directed the Methodist Council to consider, firstly, whether additional work needs to be done to make clear its abhorrence of anti-Semitism and/or, secondly, to enable Methodists to respond appropriately in local situations. The Conference directs

the Methodist Council, in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee, to review these two questions and to instruct the Connexional Team to undertake additional work if that is necessary.

### **M33 Christian Jewish relationships**

The Taunton Deane and South Sedgemoor (24/15) Circuit Meeting (Present: 23. Voting: unanimous) noting that the Circuit has for some years been instrumental in raising awareness across the wider community of other faiths and has recently played a significant role in helping local Jews establish a Jewish Cultural Society for Somerset, calls on the Conference to:

1. set up a working party to examine the historic and contemporary relationship between the Christian and Jewish communities in the UK, reporting back to the 2013 Conference; and
2. confirm its regret that Christian history and belief have been gravely disfigured by sinful prejudice against Jews.

### **Reply**

The Conference thanks the Taunton Deane and South Sedgemoor Circuit for its memorial.

The Methodist Church is engaged with the Jewish community in a variety of different ways. At national level members of the leadership meet regularly both formally and informally. Locally, engagement takes place at circuit and local church level, both through personal relationship and facilitated by local inter faith groups and

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faith forums. The Conference of 2010 directed the Faith and Order Committee to explore the theological implications of the report *Justice for Palestine and Israel*, and the Committee has established a working party to complete this task. As such, the Conference does not consider that establishing another working party as requested in the memorial would facilitate further Christian Jewish relations and consequently does not accept the first part of the memorial.

On the second part of the memorial, the Conference refers the Circuit to its reply to memorial M32 from the Barnet and Queensbury Circuit, and welcomes the opportunity to reaffirm unequivocally its opposition to all forms of anti-Semitism, including anti-Judaism, and to encourage Methodists and local Methodist churches to engage in relations of love and respect with Jewish people.

### **M34 Boycott of goods from illegal Israeli settlements**

The Alfreton (Watchorn) (22/10) Circuit Meeting (Present: 11. Voting: unanimous) requests that the Conference reconsiders and revokes its decision to boycott Israeli goods. This memorial reflects our deep unease with this decision especially in view of the admitted bias of the report and its failure to take into consideration the threat to Israeli citizens from Islamic militants who have sworn to wipe out Israel. Therefore no territorial concessions will bring the longed for peace, indeed past experience shows that concessions give new impetus to the militants as they are seen as weakness.

This is illustrated by the resulting attacks on Israelis from within Gaza almost immediately on its withdrawal in 2005. The Methodist Church should not be siding with anti-Semitic forces bent on Israel's destruction.

### **Reply**

The Conference unequivocally reaffirms that the deliberate targeting of civilians can never be justified and shares with the Alfreton (Watchorn) Circuit the desire to support actions that might help bring about a longed-for peace in the region. The Conference recalls the position it outlined in 2003 that "a return to the borders of 1967 and a status for Jerusalem as a place for two nations and three faiths, with parity of esteem, is the real basis upon which trust could be built up among the different communities".

It furthermore believes that the complex realities in the Holy Land resist interpretations that imply that the conflict is based on an animosity between two opposing entities and acknowledges a desire on the part of many in the region for tangible progress towards a lasting political resolution. The memorial refers to a boycott of Israel goods whereas the Conference Resolution 14/9 (2010) called for a limited boycott of goods originating from illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories only. The Conference sees no compelling grounds for reconsidering this resolution and consequently declines the memorial.

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### M35 Christian Aid

The Epworth and Crowle (17/1) Circuit Meeting (Present: 38. Voting: 34 for, 3 against) records its disquiet at the lack of transparency with the policy of Christian Aid in directing a portion of its donated funds through Islamic Relief, as one of its partner organisations. Recognising that the majority of donors give to Christian Aid believing that the money is used for specific named Christian work, and the unease at suggestions that Islamic Relief use their work for political purposes, and not least what we understand to be the primary intent of charitable giving through Christian Aid we request that the Methodist Church use its influence to ensure that there is the fullest transparency by Christian Aid in the use of its funds, to enable donors to make informed choice.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the Epworth and Crowle Circuit for its memorial. It notes that Christian Aid works with a wide range of local and international partners in delivering relief and development aid including on occasions with Islamic and Jewish partners. Christian Aid's priority is to work with partners that are best able to ensure that vital aid is well-managed and accountable and delivered promptly and effectively in full consultation with communities. Christian Aid and its international partners subscribe to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and do not use aid projects for the purpose of proselytisation.

After the Kashmir earthquake, in which around 79,000 people were killed and many more left homeless, Christian Aid provided financial support for a project of Islamic Relief because of their presence in the most affected areas prior to the earthquake. This enabled the building of temporary insulated shelters to enable people to withstand the harsh winter weather, as well as providing essential household items such as food, blankets and clothes. Such collaborations demonstrate that Christian Aid is committed to working with those who can make the most difference in a particular situation regardless of religion. Inter faith collaboration in the delivery of aid offers a further opportunity to build understanding and acceptance between faiths. In the One World Trust *Global Accountability Report* in 2007, Christian Aid was rated as a 'top performer' among 30 of the world's most influential global organisations. Christian Aid takes very seriously its accountability to supporters and the Conference is happy to encourage Christian Aid in its striving to realise high standards of accountability and transparency.

### M36 Use of Methodist Orb and Cross

The South Essex (34/11) Circuit Meeting (Present: 31. Voting: unanimous) asks the Conference to change the rule governing display of the Orb and Cross on Methodist websites and other documents.

At present, the Orb and Cross device (part of the logo) must not be displayed separately from the words 'The Methodist Church'. This rule is widely ignored and many Methodist websites display

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a homemade device of poor quality alongside different text.

We propose that the rule is relaxed to allow the Orb and Cross to be displayed separately and we suggest that the Methodist website provides examples that conform to design guidelines which can be copied and used elsewhere within Methodism.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the South Essex Circuit for its memorial.

The Circuit is correct in pointing out that the guidelines for the use of the Methodist logo need revision. The Creative Resources team in the Connexional Team, which holds responsibility for the visual identity of the Church, has begun work on a revised set of guidelines which will include the use of the Orb and Cross device on its own. This work is due to be completed before the Conference of 2012. Once complete, the revised guidelines will be available on the connexional website and news of this will be sent to all Districts.

The Conference therefore accepts the memorial.

### **M37 Capitalisation of pronouns relating to God**

The Nottingham Central Mission (22/5) Circuit Meeting (Present: 23. Voting:

unanimous) notes that God is honoured by the use of upper case letters when writing the pronoun when referring to God (eg His, Him, Your) in the *New King James Version* of the Bible (2006). For example, in Matthew 6:9 it reads: "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name." Elsewhere in the same version, upper case letters are also used for pronouns relating to God.

Similarly, *Songs of Fellowship* has for many years used upper case letters for pronouns relating to God in His honour. *Our Daily Bread*, a Radio Class production, also does.

The Conference is urged to approve the use of upper case letters for pronouns relating to God, in His honour, in all future Methodist publications.

### Reply

The Conference thanks the Nottingham Central Mission Circuit for its memorial, and shares the Circuit's desire to ensure that God is glorified and honoured as much as possible. It is not convinced, however, that the capitalisation of pronouns referring to God is the most appropriate, still less a necessary, way of ensuring that God is honoured. Capital letters are normally used for names and titles, not for pronouns or other purposes. The Methodist Church's style guide reflects that common usage. The Conference therefore declines the memorial.