

26. Mission Alongside the Poor in the 21st Century

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Resolutions	26/1. The Conference receives the Report. 26/2. The Conference adopts the recommendations contained within the Report. 26/3. The Conference amends Standing Orders as set out in the Report.

Summary of content

Subject and aims	A review of the Mission Alongside the Poor Programme (MAPP).
Main points	<p>The Methodist Church, from its very beginning, has placed a concern for the poor at the heart of its mission and ministry. <i>Our Calling</i> states that “The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need.”</p> <p>Changes to the labour market and the social security system have substantially altered the profile of poverty in the UK. Material poverty is best defined with regard to a person’s ability to access resources. Poverty is easy to recognise, but difficult to describe in a universal definition. No one statistical definition is perfect and all the available definitions leave us with uncomfortable anomalies where people we know to be experiencing poverty may be excluded.</p> <p>Unemployment remains a good marker of poverty in the UK, however being in work is no longer a good marker of not experiencing poverty. It may be counter intuitive but projects that seek to help employed people may now very well be within the aims of MAPP.</p> <p>Proposals include raising the profile of the programme through a launch, a change of name, and setting a target amount for MAPP grants each year.</p> <p>Changes regarding the fund (there is no separate MAPP fund) are not being made, though we intend to increase the normal maximum grant size to £50,000.</p>
Background context and relevant documents	Review of Mission Alongside the Poor Programme MC/16/43.

1.0 Background

1.1 Resolution 32/5 of the 2014 Conference directed the Methodist Council to undertake a review of the Mission Alongside the Poor Programme (MAPP) with the following terms of reference and to report to the Conference no later than 2016:

1. to review the aims and objectives of the MAPP in terms of the Conference's clear commitment to supporting churches across the Connexion in responding to the needs of people and communities experiencing poverty;
2. to review the scope and scale of MAPP to ensure that its aims are in line with the issues being faced by churches across the Connexion;
3. to review the name and nature of the programme;
4. to consider the scale of financial resource available to the Connexional Grants Committee (CGC) for supporting MAP and the sources of funding from which grants to MAP are made;
5. to consider the size and nature of grant support in order to ensure that the programme continues at a meaningful level in relation to the actual and potential demand;
6. to consider the Conference and the Council's previous reports in relation to poverty and inequality in order to ensure that MAP reflects and is congruent with the Conference and the Council's previous commitments

1.2 The Methodist Church, from its very beginning, has placed a concern for the poor at the heart of its mission and ministry. What was to become one of the first Methodist societies met in a building in east London called the Foundry. It quickly responded to the poverty around it by providing small loans to local families in order to release them from usurious and often violent moneylenders. In the more than two and a half centuries since the Foundry was opened the Methodist people have sought to respond to God's love by finding ways to appropriately serve those people most in need within their communities.

1.3 In 1987, a report to the Conference from the President's Council on the future of MAP asked these questions (Agenda 1987 p569):

- *Are our churches places of grace for people who have little choice?*
- *Do we enable the voice of the poor to be heard and then do we listen?*
- *Do we strengthen the arm of the poor in such a way that power is theirs?*
- *Have we redeveloped the resources of the Methodist Church in the interests of the poor?*
- *Have we moved our society in the direction of a Kingdom of justice and peace?*

These are still live concerns, as indicated by *Our Calling* which states that "the Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need". The Mission Alongside the Poor Programme was designed to provide connexional funding to churches who wish to be good neighbours to those experiencing poverty in the communities they serve. The programme was designed in the 1980s and, although it has been revised and refined subsequently, it has in its roots some assumptions about poverty and those who experience poverty that no longer hold true. This report seeks to provide, within an overall review of MAPP, some background to changes in the structure of UK poverty, as well as some insight into how poverty can usefully be defined today.

2.0 Reviewing the Aims and Objectives of MAPP

2.1 In 1988 the Conference noted that the MAP Committee had set out the main aims of MAPP (Agenda 1988 p603):

1. *To focus attention on the Gospel of Jesus and the grace and salvation of God's Kingdom, especially in relation to the poor and disadvantaged;*
2. *To encourage and support financially local initiatives alongside the poor and the disadvantaged;*
3. *To raise money and use resources for this purpose;*
4. *To promote awareness of the issues involved, through publications, conferences, seminars and local action;*
5. *To witness, with others, to society at large and act for justice alongside the poor and the disadvantaged.*

2.2 These aims remain valid and continue to be reflected via MAPP grants and the work of the Joint Public Issues Team. The eligibility criteria for MAPP grants reflect these aims:

(i) there must be evidence of relative poverty whether in an urban or a rural setting;

(ii) there must be a commitment to work alongside the poor and disadvantaged, thereby enabling them better to respond to their own sense of God's calling. (SO 1004(3))

These are described thus in grant application guidelines:

- There must be evidence of relative poverty, whether in a rural or urban area.
- There must be a commitment to work alongside those in need, the vulnerable and disadvantaged.
- The project must be born out of a response to a local point of need, as part of God's mission to build love and better opportunities.

2.3 As for MAPP objectives, other than the overarching criteria that grant funds will be made available to appropriate qualifying projects, there are no specific connexion-wide targets or objectives for MAPP. This 'gap' is addressed by the specific objectives of the individual MAPP-funded projects. There is an opportunity for a financial target to be set for the total value of MAPP funded projects each year but with so many competing factors on its grant funds the CGC would not wish there to be such a specified budget or target for MAPP applications. However, the CGC will be pleased to receive more MAPP applications and would wish to say that, when funds are scarce, MAPP should be the priority. The Council agreed with the CGC's recommendation that this policy is adopted to highlight the Church's commitment to MAPP and encourage more applications.

2.4 The CGC's intention is to continue to have a clearly defined MAPP funding stream, with a tailored application form. The MAPP grants 'stream' is reasonably well known around the Connexion, however, in order to meet the aims and objectives of MAPP more fully the programme's profile should be raised. This would be with the intention of inviting more, including more innovative, applications for MAPP grants. As part of the review the CGC has discussed with the Communications team within the Connexional Team how this might be done. Should the Conference accept the recommendations of the review this 'profile raising' campaign can go ahead. This will be with the aim of inspiring churches and Circuits to get involved in MAPP, make them aware of the possibility of connexional funding and encourage giving to the Mission in Britain Fund (as requested by the 2014 Conference see reply to

Memorials 36 and 37 [Daily Record 5/19]), leading to the availability of increased funding that can then be used for more grant-making.

- 2.5 Alongside this there is scope for closer working with suitable partner organisations that can support Local Churches or deliver greater levels of advocacy.

3.0 Reviewing the scope and scale of MAPP

- 3.1 The scope of MAPP is relatively well understood and defined within the Methodist Church with grants available to churches, Circuits and Districts. The funding of other organisations, outside the Methodist Church but in tune with its mission and working in partnership with it, are neither explicitly included nor excluded. There is no reason why organisations outside the Methodist Church cannot apply for a grant, if it is not preventing grants being awarded to Methodist applicants. CGC should consider whether to highlight this eligibility to apply, exclude it or leave it as at present so that there is no specific encouragement of applications from outside the Methodist Church. All applicants from outside the Methodist Church need to provide the name, and partnership details, of their Methodist partner.

- 3.2 Although there is no longer a discrete fund for MAPP, following recent rationalisation, applications for MAPP funding are able to call upon a wide range of connexional funds as the Mission in Britain Fund (MiBF), Fund for Property and Connexional Priority Fund are all permitted to support MAPP work. There is no specified budget set aside for any of the funding streams within the MiBF, to date MAPP applications have not been denied due to lack of funding.

- 3.3 Currently, the normal maximum grant is £30,000, the grant is also normally limited to 50% of project costs (applicants are required to raise the other 50% themselves). The 50% and £30,000 criteria were introduced by the CGC around 2009; not just to ensure availability was spread as widely as possible but also to reflect that local projects need local buy-in and this is often best achieved by sharing connexional and local funding. These limits have not, in practice, been required for the last two connexional years and are unlikely to be necessary this year. Although the (normal) ceiling and match funding criteria ease pressure on the grants funds the CGC retains the authority to offer a larger grant or require less match funding if there is a persuasive need and sufficient funds available. This offers useful flexibility while also encouraging applicants to make their own commitment to proposed projects. Recognising the passage of time and inflation the CGC intends to raise this to £50,000 in the connexional year 2016/17.

4.0 Poverty and inequality in the light of Conference and Council commitments

Changing characteristics of UK poverty

- 4.1 There are around 13 million people^{1 2} experiencing poverty in the UK today. The characteristics of those in this group have undergone substantial changes over the past two decades. Many commonly held assumptions about poverty which were correct in the 1980s and 1990s no longer hold true. The MAPP must enable the Church to respond to this new reality.

¹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2015) Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2015. (uses 2013/14 data) www.jrf.org.uk/mpse-2015

² All percentages given use the standard relative income measure after housing costs, but unless otherwise stated other income and deprivation measures follow a similar pattern.

- 4.2 *Pensioners*: The rate of poverty experienced by pensioners peaked in 1989 at 41%, when pensioners were the age group *most* likely to experience poverty. Pensioner poverty has subsequently declined steadily and substantially and is now the age group *least* likely to experience poverty with a rate of 14%.

The introduction of Pension Credit and other benefits have increased the poorest pensioner's incomes substantially. Pensions and related benefits are being changed but not reduced overall. Older people are however very vulnerable to the effects of cuts to the adult social care budget, potentially requiring people to pay for expensive services that were previously provided by local authorities.

- 4.3 *Children and young people*: Children are currently the age group most likely to experience poverty with a rate of 28%. Child poverty rates declined slowly in the 2000s, driven by higher benefit rates and higher levels of parental employment especially amongst single parents. Since 2010 the standards of living of children reduced at the same rate as the average family. This means that relative poverty has stayed flat at around 3.5 million although the standard of living of the poorest children fell.

Child poverty is widely predicted to increase. The main drivers for this are the large reductions underway for both out-of-work and in-work benefits. Increasing employment and wage levels have not and are not expected to offset these losses to the poorest families with children.

A growing trend is for young adults to take longer to establish themselves as financially secure relatively protected from poverty. Under 25 year-olds now experience high poverty rates similar to those of children, this is due to factors such as lower minimum wage, benefits and more difficult entry into the high wage parts of the labour market.

- 4.4 *Unemployment and poor quality jobs*: Over half of working age adults experiencing poverty are in working families. Almost two thirds of children are in families where a parent works – half of these where there are two working parents.

Unemployment is widely viewed as the main driver of poverty but, while devastating and able to throw people into poverty, it now affects a small minority of the families who experience poverty. Around 750,000 claim the unemployment benefit JSA and the majority of claimants get a job within 3 months³.

More typical of families experiencing poverty is insecure low paid work with limited or flexible hours. For older higher paid workers employment has become more secure over the past 2 decades, but for younger and/or low paid workers the opposite is the case. This has led to what is referred to as the low pay/no pay cycle⁴ which blurs the distinction between in-work and out-of-work poverty.

- 4.5 *Disability and ill health*: The largest group of what government terms “workless families” especially over the long term are those experiencing disability and ill health. Around 2.5 million people claim out-of-work benefits due to health problems, 1 million of whom have been assessed as unlikely to be able to work in the medium to long term.

³ 60% of JSA claims are closed before 3 months. CESI Labour Market analysis August 2015
cesi.org.uk/statistics/labour/august-2015

⁴Resolution Foundation (2015) A Steady Job? www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/a-steady-job-the-uks-record-on-labour-market-security-and-stability-since-the-millennium/

Over the past 20 years, those with disability have consistently experienced a poverty rate 40-50% higher than the rest of the population.

- 4.6 *Asylum seekers*: Asylum seekers experience high levels of poverty. They are not normally allowed to work and from April 2000 were no longer permitted to claim benefits. Instead those who could demonstrate destitution were entitled to 'Section 95' support from the Home Office at much lower rates. These have consistently been revised downwards and are currently £36.65 per person per week. This can be reduced or removed depending on the progress of the claim for asylum. Housing benefit is not available but some accommodation is allocated to each family⁵.

Language and poverty

- 4.7 Language used to describe poverty and the people who experience poverty evolves quickly. Being in poverty or having traits associated with low-income are often stigmatised. Words describing poverty often evolve from value-judgement free terms to being stigmatising. For example the term "benefit claimant" intended as a neutral descriptive term is today a widely avoided and negative label⁶.

Much language used around issues of poverty intentionally, or unintentionally, implies that those in poverty are an 'other' group different in nature from the rest of society. This other group is often presented by false dichotomies such as "skiver and striver" or even "benefit claimant and taxpayer." In this context it is unsurprising that people with very low incomes certainly fall into the commonly used poverty definitions, do not see themselves within these stories and will rarely describe themselves as 'poor'.

It is unhelpful that many of the people Mission Alongside the Poor is intended to benefit would not recognise themselves, and may even actively resist, being described within the programme's aims. More widely our language can encourage a comfortable view of the poor as an 'other' group whom the church helps, rather than the more challenging and complex view that poverty encompasses a fluid group who are part of the church and partners with the church in building God's Kingdom.

It is therefore *recommended* that the programme's name be changed and that those associated with the grants stream remain sensitive to the changing language used to describe poverty and those affected by it – seeking advice when appropriate.

Effects of Government Policy: Planned changes in government policy are expected to increase the poverty and need for large number of people – families with children and those reliant on local government services especially. There is sometimes unease at providing services for those whose poverty can be attributed to political decisions, as this is viewed as acting as an enabler to injustice. The Big Society report to the 2011 Conference stated: "If new needs emerge, perhaps because of spending cuts, [churches] will often try to respond to help those in greatest need. It is part of our self-understanding that we will stay where the need is, being there and doing what is required, regardless of political agenda."

While encouraging challenge and protest, the church, including through MAPP funding, should be ready to support those in need for whatever reason.

⁵ House of Common Library (2015) Asylum Support [researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01909 - full report](https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01909)

⁶Turn2Us (2013) Benefit Stigma in the UK www.turn2us.org.uk/T2UWebsite/media/Documents/Benefits-Stigma-in-Britain.pdf

- 4.8 The 2011 Conference Report *Poverty and Inequality in the UK* affirmed that concern for the poor was a priority for the Methodist people, rooting this concern in a number of theological reflections (paragraphs 3.14 to 3.18). The idea that because all are made in God's image, all deserve to live with dignity is particularly useful when defining those whom MAPP should be aimed towards. For many people in our society the lack of material resources prevents them from living in dignity.

There are a number of useful technical definitions of poverty, but as a Church we must always recognise that our concerns around poverty are that people should have sufficient material resources to live with dignity and realise their God-given potential. The 1982 Conference Agenda highlights this definition of relative poverty:

Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities. (Poverty in the United Kingdom, Peter Townsend, 1979)

The Methodist Church's partner, Action for Children, uses this definition which is a good reflection of these values:

A child is deprived if he or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining the standards of health, housing, environment, access to services, safety, education and employment enjoyed by those living above 60% of median income.⁷

- 4.9 The Church has strongly resisted using factors such as family breakdown, drug or alcohol use or poor education in definitions of poverty. One simple reason is that the majority of people who have experienced family breakdown, or are addicted to drugs or alcohol, or have no formal qualifications, have incomes *well above* the poverty thresholds described above. Such measures unhelpfully conflate causes, experiences and consequences of poverty and lead to the assumption that poverty is caused by the failings of the poor. In both personal and societal terms this hypothesis does not stand up to scrutiny⁸.

Common poverty measures

- 4.10 Poverty is measured in a number of ways, usually through assessing income. The internationally recognised and most commonly used measure is 60% of median household income. In the UK this is often calculated after housing costs have been taken into account as in the UK rents and mortgages take a very high proportion of income.
- 4.11 A well respected and comprehensive set of poverty measures are set out in the Child Poverty Act and its replacement the Welfare Reform and Work Bill. These are – (i) relative income poverty measured as above; (ii) absolute income poverty using an income cut off based on the up-rating of the relative poverty threshold in line with prices; (iii) material deprivation based on a survey of families' ability to obtain certain goods and (iv) duration of poverty which recognises that a few months of low income perhaps between jobs has less impact than long term poverty.

⁷ *Of Equal Value : Poverty and Inequality in the UK* www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf2011-pc-11-poverty-and-inequality-0812.doc

⁸ Discussed in detail in *Truth and Lies About Poverty* report www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/truthandliesaboutpoverty/

4.12 Indices of Multiple Deprivation are area-based statistics that give an indication of the level of poverty in a given area. The Office of National Statistics produces summary data on poverty indicators by area going down to the smallest statistical unit - the Lower Level Super Output Area – which spans around 200 households.

Definitions and measures - conclusions

4.13 Poverty is easy to recognise, but difficult to describe in a universal definition. No single statistical definition is perfect and all the available definitions leave us with uncomfortable anomalies where people we know to be experiencing poverty may be excluded. The following recommendations seek to address these issues:

- That project proposals are not tied to any one set of available definitions, but they should show, when stating the need for the project, that the group of people they wish to serve are unable to live in dignity because they have difficulty accessing material resources such as, but not limited to food, housing, clothing, transport, services that support work such as childcare.
- That project proposals be required to provide evidence that their project supports those for whom material resources prevent them from living in dignity, using the Action for Children definition (para. 4.8) as a guideline for what that means in practice. This can be evidenced by whatever statistical or qualitative information that is available.
- That the definition of poverty used within MAPP focuses on people having “sufficient resources available to meet their material needs”. This may include supporting people who are affected by issues such as drug or alcohol abuse. However the decision for CGC to support a proposed MAPP project should be based on an assessment of whether those clients have sufficient resources to live with dignity or are excluded from the normal day to day goods and activities needed to take part in society. Often this exclusion is conspicuous but it may also be hidden.

Poverty and geographic area

4.14 Living in a specific area is often used as a proxy for experiencing poverty – as it is well recognised that both poverty and wealth tend to concentrate geographically. The use of this proxy is made easier by the excellent Office of National Statistics (ONS) neighbourhood statistics which allow common poverty markers to be explored within relatively small areas. This is very useful, but it does have some drawbacks. Our rural ministers and chaplains are very clear that poverty in rural areas exists side by side with affluence and that area statistics miss this. Increasingly the same can be said about gentrifying areas of cities – where affluence has increased greatly but with a few deprived families left behind experiencing a very isolated form of poverty.

4.15 Anecdotally, churches have felt that funders are not happy to fund projects based in areas that do not score highly on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. A project in a very affluent area may make the case that it serves the small proportion of people in the community who are experiencing poverty, however the CGC expects that in more prosperous areas churches will be able to fund poverty initiatives *with their own resources* rather than apply for a connexional grant. Likewise, a project based in a very impoverished area may not be serving those who are experiencing poverty within that community.

4.16 MAPP is intended to assist those who are experiencing material poverty. It is therefore recommended that grants assessment should not be based on a project’s geographical

location, but on the people whom the project is intended to serve and that this be made clear in any guidance, so that it is suitably demonstrated in grant applications.

Types of anti-poverty projects

- 4.17 Anti-poverty projects often have one of two foci:
- improving the lives of those who are experiencing poverty by providing encouragement, resources or services directly. Foodbanks are a good example.
 - improving the lives of those who are experiencing poverty by influencing society in general or public policy. Work around changing the benefit sanctions regime so that fewer people need foodbanks would be a good example.
- 4.18 There are a number of projects whose primary purpose is to serve people's needs directly, but which also seek to tell the story of the people they serve to the wider community and policy makers. West Cheshire Foodbank, which recently published a report into why people came to them for support⁹, and invited journalists to hear the stories of their clients, is a particularly successful example. These hybrid projects can be extremely powerful and provide one of the few ways in which the debate around poverty features the voices of people experiencing poverty.

What this means for projects qualifying for MAPP support

- 4.19 *Age* is no longer a good marker for poverty in the UK – although this is not to say that older people are not experiencing poverty. It is also important to note that money cannot completely insulate people from the problems of infirmity and isolation that can come with age. The question of a project being funded by MAPP should be based on evidence that the group of people supported have insufficient resources, such that they are unable to live a dignified life.
- 4.20 *Unemployment* remains a good marker of poverty in the UK, however being in work is no longer a good marker of *not* experiencing poverty. It may be counter intuitive but projects that seek to *help employed people* may now very well be within the aims of MAPP. Many people at the low-income end of the labour market experience difficulties with health problems or caring responsibilities, which makes sustaining a job difficult. Examples of projects that will help people experiencing poverty might do one or more of the following: help people maintain work, increase their hours at work, or move into a better paying or more stable employment. Such working families are the new and growing face of poverty in the UK; MAPP should be ready to fund churches in supporting them.
- 4.21 The CGC is of the view that projects that are focused solely on advocacy, or solely on direct support, should both be funded via the MAPP as all seek to serve the poorest members of society. The 1987 Conference, while discussing the next stage of MAPP, concluded “advocacy must clearly be part of any next stage and conversations must be held ... so that this can be more co-ordinated and therefore more effective” Agenda (p. 571). This was reinforced by the 1988 Conference which concluded that, “advocacy is crucial if the programme is to develop satisfactorily.” (Agenda p. 605) Therefore, local projects which focus on assisting those in poverty to shape attitudes and policy making should be able to access funding via the MAPP stream.
- 4.22 It is also recommended that hybrid projects which combine local service delivery with advocacy are funded and encouraged by MAPP. These have the ability to turn money that is

⁹ westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk/resources/documents/Cheshire_Hunger_March_2015_Full_Report_Final.pdf

providing important local services to people experiencing poverty into money that also has an effect on challenging the causes of poverty. The Church has been very focused on informing the debate about poverty with evidence and, importantly, allowing the experiences of real people to be key to policy making.

It is further recommended that all projects are asked to consider if their project could provide an opportunity for the stories of those facing poverty to be more widely understood – recognising that in many cases this may not be possible.

- 4.23 However, there is value in drawing a distinction between local advocacy projects and connexional advocacy projects as MAPP, unusually for a Connexional Grants Stream, has had a very local focus. The CGC *recommends* that connexional advocacy campaigns do not seek funding via the MAPP criteria but rather apply for a Mission and Ministries grant.
- 4.24 It is further recommended that if these recommendations are agreed the new MAPP has a connexional launch in order to promote the availability of the grants and inspire the Methodist people to be innovative and bold in seeking new ways to serve the communities within which God has placed them. It will also encourage giving to the MiBF as an expression of the connexional distribution of funds to where they are most needed (as requested by Memorial M36 2014).
- 4.25 In conclusion, following various discussions, the CGC regards SO 1004 as still necessary in order to show the commitment of the Conference to those experiencing poverty. Revisions to the wording of this Standing Order are discussed in paragraph 6.3.

5.0 Reviewing the name and nature of MAPP

- 5.1 It was highlighted by the Conference in 1987 (Agenda p. 571) that the name is, for some, “patronising, embarrassing and unacceptable to the poor themselves. For others it has the merit of being stark, simple, accurate and provocative. In practice the name has become generally accepted and no good alternative has emerged”. Almost 30 years later, the Church finds itself in the same position, though the inappropriateness of the title is even more marked now. The CGC therefore *recommends* that, taking into account the issues of language highlighted above, that the ‘Mission Alongside the Poor Programme’ should be renamed, without any change being made, or implied, to the programme itself.

- 5.2 The CGC considered the following examples:

- Tackling poverty and disadvantage
- Poverty and justice Grants
- Social Justice and Poverty Grants
- Action for the Common Good
- Methodist Action on Poverty (MAP)

However the Methodist Council decided to propose the title recommended by the CGC, which is:

- **Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice (MAPJ)**

6.0 Scale of MAPP financial resources and size and nature of grant support

- 6.1 See paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 above for earlier comments on financial resources and grant sizes.

6.2 The existing Standing Orders provide for MAPP grants to be made from the Mission in Britain Fund, Connexional Priority Fund and the Fund for Property (see SOs 362(3)(i) and 974(1A)). This review proposes that this continues, as it provides the widest, and most appropriate, range and scale of resources possible. The review does not recommend a specific 'MAPP' fund, as was the case previously when specific MAPP funds were being raised, as this would be contrary to all recognised current practice in fundraising and financial management, where restricting the use of a fund has the equivalent effect of potentially limiting the work and introducing additional complication into our processes. MAPP work is integral to the Church's mission and should therefore be a fundamental part of the use and advocacy of the Mission in Britain Fund.

6.3 The Council recommends that SO 1004 be modified to reflect this new policy and to achieve the following:

- Reflect the comments above regarding definitions and perceptions attached to language by removing "poor and disadvantaged" from 1004 (2) (i) and replacing it with "those experiencing poverty and inequality of resources".
- Revise the existing SO by removing the now incorrect reference to the "Mission Alongside the Poor Fund".

7.0 Summary of Recommendations

7.1 Noting that there is a continuing and growing need for the MAPP grants it is recommended that

- a. MAPP applications should be welcomed and encouraged and that when funds are scarce MAPP applications would be given priority. (para 2.3)
- b. project proposals are not tied to any one set of available definitions, but they should show, when stating the need for the project, that the group of people they wish to serve are unable to live in dignity because they have difficulty accessing material resources such as, but not limited to food, housing, clothing, transport, services that support work such as childcare. (para 4.13)
- c. project proposals be required to provide evidence that their project supports those for whom material resources prevent them from living in dignity, using the Action for Children definition (para. 4.10) as a guideline for what that means in practice. (para 4.13)
- d. the definition of poverty used within MAPP focuses on people having "sufficient resources available to meet their material needs." (para. 4.13)
- e. grants assessment should not be based on a project's geographical location, but on the people whom the project is intended to serve and that this be made clear in any guidance (para 4.16).
- f. hybrid projects which combine local service delivery with advocacy are funded and encouraged by MAPP (para 4.22)
- g. all projects are asked to consider if their project could provide an opportunity for the stories of those facing poverty to be more widely understood – recognising that in many cases this may not be possible. (para 4.22)
- h. that national advocacy campaigns do not seek funding via the MAPP criteria but via the Mission and Ministry criteria instead (para 4.23)

- i. when these recommendations are agreed and implemented that the new MAPP has a connexional launch in order to promote the availability of the grants and inspire the Methodist people to be innovative and bold in seeking new ways to serve the communities within which God has placed them (para 4.24) as well as advocate for donations to the Mission in Britain fund.
- j. the 'Mission Alongside the Poor Programme' should be renamed Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice (MAPJ) (para 4.7).

Amendments to Standing Orders

Should the Conference agree to the recommendation set out in the report a number of changes to standing orders would be required. The following changes are proposed so as to ensure that immediate effect can be given to the recommendations contain within the report.

361 Methodist Church Fund (4) Provision shall be made for grants from the fund ~~for the Mission Alongside the Poor Programme~~ **to support Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice in accordance with Standing Order 1004.**

362 Specified Funds (3) The purposes of the Methodist Mission in Britain Fund shall be

- (i) the support of work in furtherance of the Church's mission, including grants to Local Churches and Circuits, in the home Districts. Provision shall be made for grants ~~from the fund for the Mission Alongside the Poor Programme~~ **to support Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice in accordance with Standing Order 1004;** and
- (ii) to bear witness to the global character of Christian mission by supporting work with and among ethnically diverse communities in Britain and Ireland which have their origin in other countries.

(5)(a) The purposes of the Methodist Fund for Property shall be:

- (i) the support of work in aid or on behalf of trustees of Methodist property;
- (ii) grants and loans for property purposes to trustees of Methodist property in the home Districts.

(b) Subject to sub-clause (a) above provision shall be made for grants ~~from the fund for the Mission Alongside the Poor Programme~~ **to support Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice in accordance with Standing Order 1004.**

364 Other Restricted Funds. (3) ~~The council shall administer the Mission Alongside the Poor Fund in accordance with Standing Order 1004.~~

974 Purposes. (1A) If the requirements of clause (1) are satisfied a grant may be made for ecumenical work within the purposes of the relevant Local Church, Circuit or District or for ~~the Mission Alongside the Poor Programme~~ **Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice.**

1004 ~~Mission Alongside the Poor Programme~~ Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice. (1) The Conference has declared its commitment that the Methodist Church, in faithfulness to its missionary calling to evangelism, social caring and political justice, will strive to use its resources for all in society, recognising that this will mean especially taking sides with ~~the poor and disadvantaged~~ **those experiencing poverty and inequality of resources**, and has challenged the Methodist people to respond seriously and imaginatively to the issues raised by that commitment. To give expression to its commitment the Conference has instituted and continues ~~the Mission Alongside the Poor Programme~~ **Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice.**

(2) The purposes of ~~the programme~~ **Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice** are:

- (i) advocacy of the Church's commitment to ~~the poor and disadvantaged~~ **those experiencing poverty and inequality of resources;**
- (ii) assistance by way of grants for personnel or property schemes, primarily to Local Churches and Circuits, to assist them in ~~mission alongside the poor~~ **supporting those experiencing poverty and inequality of resources.**
- (iii) ~~the maintenance of the Mission Alongside the Poor Fund as one of the sources from which such grants may be made.~~

(3) Grants from Methodist funds for ~~the Mission Alongside the Poor Programme~~ **Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice**, whether for personnel or property schemes, must be wholly for a purpose or purposes of the Methodist Church, and shall meet the following criteria:

- (i) there must be evidence of ~~relative poverty~~ **insufficient resources to meet the material needs of individuals** whether in an urban or a rural setting;
- (ii) there must be a commitment to work alongside ~~the poor and disadvantaged~~ **those experiencing poverty and inequality of resources**, thereby enabling them better to respond to their own sense of God's calling.

~~(4) Grants may be made under clause (3) for applications within the purposes of the relevant fund which would not otherwise qualify for a grant.~~

***RESOLUTIONS

26/1. The Conference received the Report.

26/2. The Conference adopted the recommendations contained within the Report.

[The following resolution will be moved only if resolution 43/2 is adopted.]

26/3. The Conference amended Standing Orders as set out in the Report.

MAPP grants awarded and ongoing from connexional year 2014/15 onwards

Southwick Matters Volunteer Team Leader, £30,000 – this is an outreach project in one of the most deprived areas of Sunderland. It works with children, teenagers, young adults and young families, to encourage them in their journey of faith and life. The project is soundly Christian based and draws heavily on the ethos of the Eden Network (see eden-network.org/).

MAP, The Welcome Church, £15,372 – the lay employee is in the café on a day-to-day basis, acting as a signposter, a visible presence of the church community, supporting the work of the Welcome Counselling Service and praying for people as appropriate.

Lozells Methodist Community Centre, £50,000 – the community centre has been developed as an officially designated 'Place of Welcome' in Birmingham, which anyone can come into. The facilities and services include groups working with children, ESOL classes, support for Carers, day centre facilities for people with mental health issues, support for Eastern European people, recreational activities in the dance studio and recording studio, training and education. There is also a foodbank and a soup kitchen.

Tackling Isolation in Stocksbridge, £30,000 - This project aims to improve the well-being of vulnerable and isolated people in the Stocksbridge area and help them to integrate into the wider community.

Woodgate Valley Community Worker, £30,000 – providing a job club, and fitness and self-defence groups and other services for a deprived estate.

Renewing the Vision & Mission at Victoria Stafford Road, £30,000 – the church is in a disadvantaged multicultural/multi faith area. The building is used seven days a week and is seen as a safe place for marginalised and vulnerable people across the community. This is a successful incarnational project with a 15 year history of community engagement and Victoria Stafford Road Church is now growing in numbers and deepening faith. Greater sustainability, and outreach, is being achieved by employing a developmental centre manager.

Parson Cross Initiative (Core Worker), £32,400 – this is an attempt to create a Fresh Expression of Church. The grant funds a Community Worker and part-time Community Youth Worker. Significant work has been established in local schools, in terms of social justice (incl food bank), in therapeutic ministries (Quiet Garden ministry) and in supporting community work (based at another Methodist Church).

KEY (Kent Estuary Youth) Project, £28,000 – this is a new ecumenical initiative supported by all the churches around the Kent Estuary seeking to support work with Young People in a predominantly rural area in Cumbria. The project aims to reach out to young people in this area where there are very limited resources in place to support young people's needs.

Blackpool Food Partnership, £21,100 – this project hosts a foodbank which has become a food distribution point for all charities across Blackpool. The grant is enabling the church to expand the available space required and food resources to be distributed.

Huddersfield Mission, £30,000 – supports the work of the Mission Café and other services to vulnerable and disadvantaged people. This is repeat funding following a very positive MELD report.