

## VISION STATEMENT

(as received by the 2009 Conference Agenda Item 45, Daily Record 7/17 and 7/18)

### **Our Ecumenical Calling: *Making a difference together in the twenty-first century***

The Methodist Church affirms its commitment to its covenant relationship with the Church of England and Churches in Wales, and beyond that to work with ecumenical partners wherever possible.

### **Living in Ecumenical Partnership: *Practical Steps***

In all that it does, the Methodist Church will commit itself whenever possible to:

#### **∞ Worshipping with other Christians**

We will seek opportunities to pray and worship with people from other Churches regularly and invite them to pray and worship with us, looking to develop more opportunities for ecumenical expressions of worship and prayer.

#### **∞ Learning and Caring with other Christians**

We will seek opportunities to learn with other Christians about our common faith and heritage to support our growth as Christians, through mutual support and care.

#### **∞ Serving with other Christians**

We will seek opportunities to work in partnership with other denominations to be good neighbours to those in need and to challenge injustice, upholding the integrity of creation.

#### **∞ Evangelism with other Christians**

We will seek opportunities to join with other Christians in sharing the Good News of the Gospel and to make more followers of Jesus Christ through together bearing witness to the unity of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

### **Living in Ecumenical Partnership: *Supporting one Another***

We will support our ecumenical partners in our common mission by:

- ∞ working and campaigning with other Christians to remove stumbling blocks which currently inhibit ecumenical partnerships;
- ∞ participating in ministries that extend beyond the boundaries and possibilities of any single church;
- ∞ support in all ways possible those in united and uniting churches, and ecumenical projects;
- ∞ supporting our ecumenical partners in their needs and struggles, celebrating their hopes and joy.

### **Living in Ecumenical Partnership: *Celebrating our Unique Identity***

Successful ecumenical working does not ignore the differences between Christians and between Christian denominations. Its success comes when we embody a Christian love and discipleship that instils the desire to live a common life that welcomes and embraces difference as enrichment and possibility.

Recognising this, we will nurture our own Methodist identity within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. We will offer the distinctive charisms of Methodism as a gift to the whole Church and in turn cherish the distinctive charisms of other Christian traditions.

To cherish the charism of another Christian tradition is to acknowledge its importance in that tradition and to engage with it prayerfully, respecting those who offer it as a gift to the whole church.

## Appendix 1

### POSITION STATEMENT:

*"I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17:23)*

In seeking to be faithful to Christ's prayer we work to be united in witness and mission to further God's kingdom.

The 1996 *Statement of Purpose, Our Calling and Priorities for the Methodist Church* express a vision of Methodist identity and discipleship and a commitment to working in partnership – 'building partnerships with other churches and other groups who share some of our mission aims' (*Statement of Purpose*), 'with others wherever possible' (*Priorities*).

#### *Our Ecumenical Position*

The Methodist Church in Britain, in heritage, practice and persuasion, is a mission-orientated, outward-looking movement. It seeks to continue to strengthen and enrich its pilgrimage of faith and witness.

We do not make this pilgrimage alone. We cherish our place within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church as part of the worldwide body of Jesus Christ. We believe that we are called with the whole Church to share in God's mission of caring for the world, with a passion for justice and peace.

The Methodist Church already shares its pilgrimage with a number of other churches, especially through the Covenant relationship with the Church of England, but also through local ecumenical agreements and international accords. We rejoice in holding continued conversations with many of the major denominations, both nationally and also internationally.

Therefore, we pledge ourselves to work ecumenically with our traditional church partners and with new pilgrim partners, with all that would seek to follow Christ and proclaim his Good News throughout our nation and beyond. We acknowledge that we must journey together in the power of the Spirit, proclaiming God's gracious love until all of creation is transformed into the fullness of what God would have it be.

We believe that we are called to work towards unity in mission. We will seek to talk and act, wherever possible, with our partners on matters of faith, order, life and witness, joining in common discipleship and taking every opportunity to share in worship, prayer and fellowship.

#### *What part can we play in embodying this?*

By what we do and say, by who we are, we embrace in joy and hope Christ's promise of life in all its fullness. We become a living expression of that promise for the rest of the world. Through the body of Christ, we share together in the worship, prayer, work and mission of the whole Church of Christ.

#### *How will we do this?*

We will engage wholeheartedly with other Christians wherever and whenever we can, in large things and small, through conversation, hospitality, worship, and mission, guided by the creative imagination of God's transforming Spirit.