

The One Mission Forum

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1. The One Mission Forum held its first meeting on Saturday 3 October 2015.
2. The main task of this first meeting was to explore the remit and purposes of the Forum, and to begin to establish its working practices and create good working relationships between its members.
3. To these ends, the Forum worked in a mixture of plenary sessions and small group discussions. The meeting began with the Chair leading a session on the theology and purpose of the One Mission Forum. Just as we have a tendency to have an understanding of God that is too small, so our understanding of mission can be too small.
4. Members of the Forum then shared one example each of mission in their District or other sphere of activity or interest, which led to interesting questions, discussions and exchanges of stimulating ideas.
5. After lunch, the Forum joined in a live video conference link with representatives of the British Connexion and members of the Italian Methodist Church and its partners who were meeting on the island of Lampedusa, as part of the “Mediterranean Hope” which is run by the latter. It was moving to hear at first hand how the community on the island is coping with an influx of four times as many refugees and migrants as the normal population on the island; and how the churches are responding. One Mission here requires proclamation in word and deed of the gospel of love. It requires both humanitarian aid, and involvement in public issues (including prophetic truth-telling of people’s experiences). It needs the churches (which are the largest trans-national organisations in the world) to work together on these matters, particularly in Europe, but also further afield.
6. Members of the Forum then discussed how the concept of “One Mission” could best be communicated throughout the whole Connexion. The Forum is an opportunity to develop effective ways of communicating and offering mutual support between churches, circuits, districts and connexional bodies. Enthusiasts for mission are very important, but “One Mission” cannot be marginalised as something that is only for enthusiasts. If mission is not to be incidental to the life and worship of the church, its concerns need to be at the heart of the church’s decision-making processes. During discussion it began to emerge that there was a growing lack of uniformity in the way that various parts of the Connexion embodied that in their structures; and that some members of the Forum were unclear about where mission perspectives and concerns of the Forum could be brought to bear on the decision-making in the bodies that they represented. This is a matter to which the Forum will have to return.
7. Finally the Forum discussed how the concept of “One Mission” compared with the statements in the *Our Calling* programme and the *Priorities for the Methodist Church*.
8. The Forum will next meet for a 24 hour residential session on 9-10 April 2016. In preparation for that meeting, discussions are underway about which parts of the Connexional Team need to be represented at and participate in the work of the Forum, and its meetings in particular.

9. Also, since the last meeting and in preparation for the next, work is being undertaken about the recommendations concerning the “Belonging Together” project adopted by the 2015 Conference, the oversight of which was remitted by that Conference to the Forum. The current state of this work is set out in the appendix to this report.

*****RESOLUTION**

31/1. The Council receives the report.

APPENDIX

The 2015 Methodist Conference recommendations pertaining to the Belonging Together project

Under section 30-33 of the General Secretary’s Report to the Conference 2014, the Conference affirmed the setting up of a working group on ‘Fellowship Groups’ (which in this sense meant groups for people whose origins are in particular countries, cultures or languages) to further build on the Belonging Together project. The following recommendations were affirmed by the 2015 Conference and the Conference directed the One Mission Forum to oversee these. The Conference directed the Secretary of the Conference to oversee recommendation 2; and the One Mission Forum to oversee the others.

Since that time work has been done to examine each of these Recommendation and to pass them to the most appropriate part of the Team for action.

The following is an update of where each of these recommendations now belongs.

Recommendations	Conference designated owner	Update and current owner
1. Set up a connexional advisory/support group for Fellowship Groups. The group to comprise a representative of each of the larger Fellowship Group and some smaller groups. The role of the group is to support Fellowship Groups, share good practice, encourage full and healthy integration and encourage members to become full members of the Methodist Church. The group would also act as an advisory group for the Methodist Church, particularly in relation to encouraging vocational discernment and providing orientation for ministers, leaders and churches.	One Mission Forum	Conversations since the Conference have indicated that the need may not be around a support/advisory group as some of this already exists through the London District (although there may still be issues about the need for support and advice about establishing and maintaining ‘Fellowship Groups’ in other parts of the Connexion). Conversations are now being set up with the Chaplains connected to the ‘Fellowship Groups’ to determine if the needs are more centred on oversight and accountability. The results of these conversations will be reported to the Council via the One Mission Forum in due course. Both the Chairs of the One Mission Forums and the EDI Committee are involved in these discussions.
2. Consider whether an agreed number of representatives of ‘fellowship groups’ should be representatives to the Conference as a temporary	The Secretary of the Conference	Remains with the Secretary of the Conference.

measure. (The group is aware of the sensitivity of this recommendation, and the careful way in which the current size and construction of the Conference is determined, but believes that the Secretary of the Conference might oversee consideration of this matter.)		
3. Involve Fellowship Group input to planning <i>3Generate</i> .	One Mission Forum	This work is now with the <i>3Generate</i> planning group and the Youth President Advisory Group and needs no further input from the One Mission Forum. A report will be given to the One Mission Forum in due course.
4. Ensure the needs of Fellowship Groups are fed into the new modules of the new local preacher and worship leader training, as appropriate.	One Mission Forum	This work now belongs to the Local Preacher and Worship Leaders Studies Board. A report will be given to the One Mission Forum in due course.
5. Develop connexional guidelines on 'healthy integration'.	One Mission Forum	The piloting of the Connexional EDI toolkit is now complete and the roll out of this significant resource is starting around the Connexion. The whole toolkit is about integration within the Church on a number of fronts and once this toolkit is being used it is believed that we will have made a start on addressing healthy integration. A report will be given to the One Mission Forum in due course.
6. Address and clarify the issue of funding for Fellowship Group chaplaincies.	One Mission Forum	Issues of funding are being discussed at a round table convened by The Conference Office. Once the issues are documented further work will be done to bring a fuller report to the Council via the One Mission Forum.
7. Continue to provide orientation for ministers from other countries who are coming into the British stations, and expand it to include: ministers who come through different routes, church members, preachers and church communities. The new advisory/support group can assist in developing this and connecting with an appropriate 'reclaiming' of Methodist heritage.	One Mission Forum	This work is being picked up by The Conference Office and will be taken forward in consultation with the Chaplains and utilising the experience represented on the One Mission Forum.