

Update on work from the Conference

Contact Name and Details	Doug Swanney, Connexional Secretary swanneyd@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolution	<p>78/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>78/2. The Council approves the proposals for implementing Notice of Motion 2015/208 as outlined in the report.</p> <p>78/3. The Council confirms that work relating to the following Notices of Motion can be considered completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Notice of Motion 214 (2015) (b) Notice of Motion 216 (2015) (c) Notice of Motion 220 (2015) (d) Memorial M12 (2015) (e) Memorial M17 (2015) (f) Memorial M23 (2015) (g) Memorial M48 (2014) (h) Notice of Motion 204 (2014) (i) Notice of Motion 206 (2014)

Update on work from the Conference

1. The Council is asked to note the following updates on work from the Conference (and make a decision where specified).

From the 2015 Conference:

NM 2015/208 - Conscientious Objection

2. The notice of motion requests the setting up of a group to create an act of web-streamed worship, working in collaboration with Christian Peace Organisations. Indications were made at the Conference that the proposer of this Notice of Motion (Mr John Cooper, Birmingham District) was willing to undertake the co-ordination of this act of worship in collaboration with others. Mr Cooper is still willing to do this and the Council is asked to indicate if it is content with this way forward. This Notice of Motion will still require input from the Connexional Team and so will increase the workload for a number of staff in the year ahead.

NM 2015/214 - Home for Good

3. The work requested around the importance of fostering and adoption will be taken forward as part of the focus on Family Ministries and will feature at the Connecting Disciples conference in 2016. A weblink to appropriate material will be placed on the website and conversations will continue with Action for Children. Once the event and the weblinks are in place the work arising from this Notice of Motion will be considered completed.

NM 2015/216 - Fossil Fuels and Climate Change

4. The requested letter has been sent to HM Government and the issues will continue to be raised in ongoing conversations. Links with the various organisations identified in the Notice of Motion are contained on the highly informative Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) webpages which address these issues: <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/issues/environment/>. The Notice of Motion is therefore considered completed.

NM 2015/220 - Migrating People and Sanctuary

5. The requested letter has been sent to HM Government raising the issues brought to the attention of the Conference. Further work is being done to address the question of the most effective way to ensure the 'Sanctuary for All' material may be published. The work arising from this Notice of Motion is therefore considered completed once the most effective method of publishing the material is chosen.

M12 (2015) - Pastoral care of supernumerary ministers

6. Part of this Memorial will be enacted by members of the Team within their responsibilities of running the Superintendents Conferences and the Retirement courses. The other issues will be addressed by the Connexional Allowances Committee. From the perspective of the Team the work arising from this Memorial is considered completed.

M17 (2015) - Retaining mission opportunities in rural areas

7. Part (c) - Work is underway which seeks to re-examine how the Church continues to focus on rural ministries, including the work of rural chaplaincy which will form part of an updated development of the 'Presence' material. This is being discussed by the Rural Strategy Group and be taken forward in the year to come. Once this resource is updated and released the work arising from this part of the Notice of Motion will be considered completed.

M23(2015) - Induction of Youth Presidents [DR 5/22/2]

8. Following conversations with relevant stakeholders (including the Youth Presidents Advisory Group and the Youth President himself) the following arrangements were set up for this year.
9. Working with the Youth President's Chair of District, a Commissioning Service was organised in the Youth President's circuit on the evening of Sunday 27 September 2015, at Rugby Methodist Church Centre to welcome him into his role. The service combined not only a local feel but also included a connexional dimension. The Assistant Secretary of the Conference wrote a liturgy for the service which can be reused in subsequent years. Invitations were sent out widely, and included young people within the District and across the whole Connexion. The Vice-President of the Conference took part to ensure this was a connexional event marking this important moment.
10. This pattern is intended to be used in future years allowing for changes to be made as each year builds on the previous. The work arising from this Memorial is therefore considered completed with continuing reflection year to year.

From the 2014 Conference:

M48 (2014) - Advertising of gambling and payday loans

The Conference agreed that encouraging gambling and high interest loans can have harmful social consequences, including unmanageable debt.... and directed that representations are made to the appropriate government departments and regulatory bodies to express the Conference's concerns.

11. Advertising of gambling was raised with the Gambling Commission and its Community Liaison Group, in conversations with Department of Culture, Media and Sport officials, and in a meeting with the then gambling minister Helen Grant.
12. To date JPIT have not, however, focused on issues of advertising of payday loans in the same way as their engagements on our behalf with government and regulators, as these have primarily been about the extortionate levels of interest charged. These concerns have resulted in a significant overhaul of the system of payday loans, and partly as result of this, the advertising of payday loans is currently under review: CAP and BCAP (Committees of Advertising Practice responsible for administering the advertising codes) have recently produced new guidance to bolster rules to prevent the trivialisation of taking out short term high cost loans, and will shortly be launching a public consultation on the scheduling of TV advertisements for payday loans. Given that both of the main issues raised through this Notice of Motion have been taken as far as they can within the remit of the Team it is considered that the work arising from this Notice of Motion is completed.

NM 204 (2014) - Caste Discrimination

The Conference directed the Secretary of the Conference to write to Her Majesty's Government concerning the ongoing delay in implementing the law, passed in April 2013, which would include caste as an aspect of race.

The Conference encouraged the Methodist people to:

- a) take similar action in writing to their Member of Parliament;*
 - b) raise awareness of caste discrimination;*
 - c) pray for justice;*
 - d) express solidarity with victims of discrimination in whatever ways they can.*
13. A letter was written to Nicky Morgan MP, the minister for Equalities, in October 2014 to bring to her attention the concerns expressed by the Methodist Conference. Work was done by the Team supported the Methodist Women in Britain at an event on caste discrimination held in the West Midlands on 18 October 2014. The Easter Offering 2016 will have a focus on Caste Discrimination. JPIT continue to liaise closely with overseas church partners on the issue. The work arising from this Notice of Motion is therefore considered completed.

From the 2010 Conference:

NM 206 (2010) - Supporting Christians against discrimination in the workplace

The Conference notes with concern several recent cases of Christians who have suffered discrimination in the workplace, including disciplinary action and dismissal, because unreasonable secular demands have been made on them that conflict with their Christian convictions: they have not been allowed to do their jobs in accordance with those conviction or, in some cases, even to express their convictions openly in their workplace at all. Often such demands have been made with no attempt at compromise, forcing Christians into conflict with their employers.

Recalling resolution 50/5 passed at the 2008 Conference (2008 Daily Record 7/19/4), which recognizes "that there may very occasionally be instances when a conflict might arise between legal obligations and Christian convictions", and pledging the Church's support when such conflicts arise, the Conference directs the General Secretary or other appropriate Connexional Team member to issue a public statement in support of ending such discrimination against Christians in the workplace.

This notice of motion was referred to the Council without the Conference expressing its mind but no further discussion has taken place at the Council.

14. With regards to the issue itself, there has not been a change of legislation since the Equality Act 2010, though more guidance has been issued, and there has been a development in case law.
15. Christians in Parliament, together with the Evangelical Alliance, wrote "Clearing the Ground" looking at Christian marginalisation in the UK. This made certain recommendations, which were limited and reasonable - <http://www.eauk.org/current-affairs/publications/upload/Executive-summary.pdf> This report would probably form the basis of a sensible conversation on the subject today. The Methodist Church gave written and oral evidence to the MPs and Peers who made up the inquiry, and we also gave a statement to the *Methodist Recorder* when it was produced.
16. The Council can, of course, give any direction with regard to this Notice of Motion it wishes, but the recommendation from the Team is that having taken part in the inquiry and also

publicised the material mentioned above, that the work arising from this Notice of Motion be considered completed.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

78/1. The Council receives the report.

78/2. The Council approves the proposals for implementing Notice of Motion 2015/208 as outlined in the report

78/3. The Council confirms that work relating to the following Notices of Motion can be considered completed:

- (a) Notice of Motion 214 (2015)**
- (b) Notice of Motion 216 (2015)**
- (c) Notice of Motion 220 (2015)**
- (d) Memorial M12 (2015)**
- (e) Memorial M17 (2015)**
- (f) Memorial M23 (2015)**
- (g) Memorial M48 (2014)**
- (h) Notice of Motion 204 (2014)**
- (i) Notice of Motion 206 (2014)**