

31. Youth Conference

1 Methodist Youth Conference 2007

1.1 The Methodist Youth Conference (MYC) 2007 was held in Cardiff Bay on 16th-18th November. Business was conducted in the Urdd City Sleepover centre, within the Wales Millennium Building. Everything including the conference room, meals and beds (!) were in the same building; many thanks must go to the planning team for finding such a fantastic venue and for the huge effort they put in across the weekend. There were fewer business sessions than in previous years to allow delegates to explore the attractions of Cardiff Bay, such as the Doctor Who exhibition and the Senedd (the Welsh Assembly building). The theme for this year was “Gadawch fy mhobl yn rydd!” or “Let my people go!” It provoked thought and discussion of issues relating to freedom in the context of the 200 year anniversary of the passing of the Slave Trade Act. The freedom of people in the 21st century was discussed, particularly in the context of the abhorrent people trafficking and exploitation which continues across the world. The final worship focused around various figures throughout history that fought to abolish slavery and reflections on the freedom we can experience through Christ in our everyday lives.

2. Youth Conference Business

2.1 Youth Conference requested that Methodist churches across the country pray regularly and raise awareness about the plight of the people of Burma. They asked that delegates encourage people to write to their MPs to request action against the Burmese regime through trade sanctions and the UN. The Youth Conference requested that The Methodist Youth Executive (MYE) campaign in an appropriate manner to increase awareness of this situation.

*See resolution 31/2.

2.2 Youth Conference noted that not everyone has access to a bible and that the Word of God should be available to all. Delegates believed that all Methodist Churches should have bibles to give to new Christians or those seeking to know more about the Christian faith.

*See resolution 31/3.

2.3 Youth Conference noted that there are few ecumenical links between young people in British churches, while other European countries have well developed ecumenical youth networks. It requested that MYE and its successors participate in establishing a network between denominations. This work has been discussed with the Youth Participation Strategy working group.

2.4 Youth Conference noted the work of ‘Hope 08’ as a fantastic piece of mission within the Church. Youth Conference requested that MYE incorporate the vision of the initiative and that its delegates look into the work of Hope 08 as a resource to be used in their own churches. MYE have added the mission statement of Hope 08 to their stationery and have encouraged the members of Youth Conference to attend Hope 08 events.

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- 2.5 The Youth Conference spent a whole business session focused on the work of the Youth Participation Strategy. Feedback was provided from last year's Methodist Conference and delegates were introduced to the members of the YPS working group. Delegates were asked to provide feedback across the weekend on the strategy and proposed changes that are brought by the YPS working group to Methodist Conference 2008. Delegates also spent 45 minutes debating the theology of youth participation and suggesting ideas which might be incorporated into the strategy. Support for the strategy was overwhelming as delegates voted unanimously in favour of the Methodist Church continuing with the development of the strategy.
- 2.6 Youth Conference recognised that rising levels of violence among young people were abhorrent to God. They requested that Methodist Conference be asked to consider a project to investigate the roles that local churches can play in addressing the issues which create and result in youth violence.
*See resolution 31/4.
- 2.7 Youth Conference requested that a group be set up to research and create a report into how the investments that the Methodist Church makes could be better used to influence major companies towards a more ethical business approach. A working group has been set up to look into this.
- 2.8 Youth Conference raised concern over the ageing population of many church congregations. MYC requested that these concerns be fed into the work being done by the Youth Participation Strategy (YPS) working group.
- 2.9 Youth Conference noted that cultural issues were not being taken into account on Sunday morning worship and that this was affecting youth attendance. They requested that letters be sent to churches to encourage church leaders to be sensitive towards cultural issues when preparing and conducting worship.
- 2.10 Youth Conference noted the pressures placed upon young people undertaking local preacher training and requested that the Methodist Conference look into ways of better supporting young preachers.
*See resolution 31/5.
- 2.11 Youth Conference requested that songs used in Christian festivals be used in future musical worship resources. This request has been passed on to the representatives of MYC on the working group for the new musical resource to replace *Hymns & Psalms*.
- 2.12 Youth Conference requested that the Youth Executive produce an online report on recycling in order to inform churches about climate issues and how they can combat them. This will be released simultaneously with the online release of the MYExpress.
- 2.13 Youth Conference referred to the Youth Executive a resolution asking that as part of the YPS a magazine be produced compiling information relevant to young people across the Connexion. This was subsequently passed onto the YPS working group.

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2.14 Youth Conference noted that the total number of Youth Conference representatives to Methodist Conference has been reduced to 4, therefore the Methodist Youth President no longer has an automatic place at Methodist Conference. The Youth Conference voted that under current circumstances the Youth President, Chair of the Executive and two other elected representatives should attend Methodist Conference as representatives of MYC. It was noted that should the YPS be adopted by Methodist Conference 2008 this would cease to be the case.

3. Youth Executive Officers

3.1 Due to uncertainties surrounding the adoption of the YPS and subsequent changes to format of Methodist Youth Conference, new executive members have been elected to stand for one year only.

3.2 The following people were elected to form the Methodist Youth Executive 2007-08:

Chair – Sarah Tomes – Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District
Secretary – Cat Pratt – Beds, Essex and Herts District
Youth President – Brian Caveney – Beds, Essex and Herts District

General Executive members –
Rachel Coates – Nottingham and Derby District
Reuben Collings – Plymouth and Exeter District
Matt Collins – Wales Synod
Matt Hassman – Wales Synod
Fiona Holmes – Newcastle District
Emma Johnson – South East District
Andrew McLoughlin – Liverpool District
Simon Pillinger – Lincoln and Grimsby District
Phil Sisson – York and Hull District

*****RESOLUTIONS**

31/1. The Conference receives the Report.

Under Standing Order 250(5) the Youth Conference may adopt and submit to the Methodist Conference if it so wishes resolutions on any connexional issue. Four such resolutions are submitted below:

31/2. The Conference encourages the Methodist Youth Executive to work with the appropriate World Church Officers in campaigning to highlight the plight of the people of Burma.

31/3. The Conference calls upon churches across the connexion to have bibles available to give to new Christians or those seeking to know more about the Christian faith.

31/4. The Conference directs the Methodist Council to establish and support a new project led by young people to investigate the roles that Local Churches can play in addressing the issues which create and result in youth violence

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- 31/5.** The Conference recognises the pressures placed upon young people undertaking local preacher training especially when combining this with ongoing education commitments. The Conference directs the Methodist Council to look into ways of better supporting young preachers in their calling and to report to the Conference of 2009.