

46. *Joint Implementation Committee*

2. The JIC first met in December 2003 and for the last time in its present form in April 2008. Its terms of reference were to monitor and promote the implementation of the Covenant. It was made clear that its responsibility would be 'oversight of the work needed following on the signing of the Covenant. It would not itself be responsible for doing the work but for identifying the work to be done, finding ways of doing it and ensuring that it was done.'
3. The JIC is required to report directly to the Conference and the General Synod. It made substantial interim reports in 2005 (as originally directed) and in 2007. In the first five years it has responded to a number of issues placed on its agenda by either the Conference or the General Synod, or both, as well as producing material on various matters identified as requiring further work in the reports that led to the signing of the Covenant. The 2008 report summarises that work in the course of giving an overview of the first five years of the Covenant, and can be found in a separate publication, *Embracing the Covenant*, submitted to the Conference and the General Synod.
4. The Covenant is a living relationship between our two Churches. Its signing was sometimes spoken of as a betrothal. It therefore represents a developing commitment to each other as part of our shared response and commitment to God. Over the first five years, the JIC has done much to identify and seek to resolve many of the issues that affect the development of that relationship. The fruits of that work can be found in its two interim reports and in its final report. Yet some Methodists feel that the implementation of the Covenant is yet to have much impact on their worship, mission or ministry, and any future work will have to take account of this perception. The Covenant relationship will therefore need nurturing. Some of this will happen in local initiatives; some through the senior officers who exercise oversight and leadership in our Churches sharing their vision; and some through a body like the JIC working to solve the theological and constitutional problems and blocks to progress that emerge in those local initiatives and conversations between leaders.
5. The 2008 report of the JIC also makes it clear that there is unfinished business from the mandate originally given to the JIC. This includes the following (for fuller details, see *Embracing the Covenant*):
 - a) There will be a continuing need to engage with the Churches as they in turn engage with the recommendations in the 2008 report of the JIC, particularly on the nature of the unity we seek under the Covenant. From a Methodist point of view, any future work on the Covenant will also have to take account of the 2008 report to the Methodist Council of the Review of Ecumenical Relationships, and the further work which the Council has commissioned on restating the Methodist Church's ecumenical vision.
 - b) There will also be a need to engage with the Churches' responses to the other recommendations of the 2008 report, particularly those on joint decision making, and the proposals for development in the areas of *episkope* and episcopacy.

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- c) There is scope for the enlargement of the Covenant relationship to include representatives of Methodism in Scotland and Wales and of the Church in Wales and the Scottish Episcopal Church, together with closer links with the Irish Methodist Conference and with the Church of Ireland.
 - d) Work that is just beginning on the understanding in the two Churches of the nature of *diakonia* and the ordained diaconate needs to be brought to fruition.
 - e) There are important missiological implications of our understanding of participation, initiation and membership. In general, work is required on the rather different understandings of membership in our two churches. The Formal Conversations which led to the signing of the Covenant established that there was broad agreement between our churches on Christian initiation (with the focus mainly on baptism and confirmation). However, there is more work to do here, including following up the JIC's formal request to the Church of England that it should consider whether it needs to maintain the current canonical requirement of episcopal (re-)confirmation for Methodists seeking a ministry (e.g. as a Reader) in the Church of England.
 - f) There will be a need to engage with issues arising from the setting up of a joint working group to study the way in which both our churches might respond to the challenge of discerning the implications of Fresh Expressions for our doctrine of the Church and its mission.
 - g) Similarly there will be a need to deal with issues arising from the work of the new Methodist–Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission (MAPUM) which is about to be formed out of the Church of England Council for Christian Unity's Local Unity Panel and the Methodist Committee for Local Ecumenical Development to oversee the local implementation of the Covenant.
6. Something like the JIC will therefore be required to keep an overview of developments in the Covenant relationship, and to deal with the theological and constitutional issues that arise in undertaking the above tasks and any others remitted by the Conference and the General Synod. In doing so it will need to draw on and co-ordinate the work of others, particularly those dealing with matters relating to local practice or strategic relationships between districts and dioceses.

Proposals

7. The Council therefore makes the following recommendations.
- a) There should be a **successor body to the JIC** for a further five-year period from 2008-13.
 - b) The name of the body should continue to be **Joint Implementation Commission**. *There has been some discussion, in the JIC and elsewhere, about the name itself. "Joint Commission" is fine: there are tasks that need to be undertaken together. The word "Implementation" led some initially to believe that only the JIC could or should "implement" the Covenant. While this was never the intention (the JIC was to monitor and promote the implementation) the considered view*

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after consultation is that the name should remain as it is. People are now used to it, and the debates in the General Synod and Conference on the second interim report suggested that there is now more understanding of the role of the JIC. 'The use of the word 'Commission' signals that there is an agenda to be tackled and unfinished business to be brought to fruition.' (Living God's Covenant 2nd Interim Report of the JIC 2007, para 21)

- c) The **Terms of Reference** of the body should be as for the first five years (summarised in paragraph 2 above).
- d) The **tasks** for the next five years should include those set out in *Embracing the Covenant*, the main report of JIC to the Conference and the General Synod in 2008 (and summarised in paragraph 5 above), and should be undertaken, from a Methodist point of view, in the light of the vision of unity that is developed in response to the review of Ecumenical relationships.
- e) The **scope** of the body should be extended to include participation by the Church in Wales and the Scottish Episcopal Church together with representatives from the Methodist Church in Scotland and Wales, with a view also to forming closer links with the Irish Methodist Conference and with the Church of Ireland.

One of the issues raised in the process of consultation prior to entering into the Covenant concerned the importance of recognising that the Methodist Church is a church in three nations (as well as a number of other jurisdictions). JIC itself has become increasingly aware that it needed to take seriously the fact that the Methodist Church extended into three nations and believes that in the second phase of Covenant implementation this would need to be addressed. The Methodist Conference 2007, in encouraging the JIC to bring forward proposals regarding episcopate and episcopacy, also asked that the models of episcopacy found in the other nations should be taken into account.

- f) The **membership** of the body should be extended from 6 representatives of the Church of England and 6 Methodists to
 - 6 representatives of the Church of England
 - 1 representative appointed by the Church in Wales
 - 1 representative appointed by the Scottish Episcopal Church
 - 8 representatives of the Methodist Church (including at least one from Scotland and one from Wales)

This extended membership is therefore a way of addressing one of the concerns the Conference has expressed about the Covenant. There would need to be sensitivity to the existing ecumenical relationships within Britain and Ireland and a way should be found to bring that awareness to the heart of the work of the JIC.

The United Reformed Church should be invited to continue to be a participant in the JIC.

- g) The **Methodist membership** of the body must ensure that there is an element of continuity as well as introducing fresh blood. It must be as representative of Methodist approaches to the Covenant as is reasonable. It must, however, also ensure that there is adequate Faith & Order input

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(in consultation with the Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee) so that the JIC is adequately equipped to deliver its remit from the Methodist point of view. In other words, the first concern should be competence and breadth of expertise, while representative/inclusive issues should be secondary.

One issue that needs to be addressed is the lack of symmetry there has been between the Anglican and Methodist memberships. The Conference appointed a team of six whose members carried some of the concerns that had been expressed in the Conference debates on the Covenant in 2002 and 2003. It also struck some balance between lay and ordained and female and male. The Appointments Committee of the Church of England gave most attention to experience and expertise and sought also to have some expression of the breadth of attitudes towards ministry in the Church of England. The gaps in expertise on both sides have been addressed to some extent by making use of consultants both on a semi-permanent basis and to undertake particular pieces of work.

For the next phase of JIC, the Conference will want to appoint a group that is as representative as possible of the connexion and has the capacity, because of the experience and expertise of those appointed, to be able to engage constructively with the substantial volume and complexity of the work already identified for the coming five years. (During this quinquennium, the Conference and the General Synod may refer further matters to the JIC, or issues may emerge from local developments within the Covenant, through MAPUM.) It should be noted that it would be characteristic of Methodist ways of operating in such a multi-levelled task not to expect all the knowledge and experience to be found among the small number of Methodists appointed by the Conference to the JIC. It would be typical for us, in such circumstances, to draw on the wide-ranging resources available in the groupings which operate under the oversight of the Faith and Order Committee, as well as the Committee itself; and from the experience in the Connexional Team and the Districts.

In addition, the strategic implications for the Methodist Church of the JIC's work, and the implications of the Methodist Church's strategy for JIC, would most naturally be shared with JIC by an occasional visit and contribution to JIC from the Team Secretary for External Relationships or the General Secretary of the Methodist Church, rather than through the membership of the latter officers on JIC itself.

8. In the light of the above, the Council proposes that the names presented on the Order Paper be appointed by the Conference to represent the Methodist Church on the JIC, 2008-13.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

- 46/6.** The Conference receives the Report.
- 46/7.** The Conference appoints the names on the Order Paper to represent the Methodist Church on the Joint Implementation Commission, 2008-2013.