

WORKING PARTY ON THE ROLES OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

The report of the Working Party follows this introductory note for the Council.

The Working Party reports directly to the Conference, but is making its report available more widely at this stage, and in particular submitting it to the Council, the Faith and Order Committee and the Law and Polity Committee.

Members of the Council therefore have the opportunity to discuss the report at the February meeting of the Council, and also to discuss it with others and, if they wish, submit further comments after the Council. Any such comments should be sent to the Revd. Kenneth G. Howcroft asc@methodistchurch.org.uk 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR by 28th February 2010. The Working Party will consider these comments alongside the responses from the Faith and Order and the Law and Polity Committee, and will inform the April Meeting of the Council should it make any major changes in its report as a result.

The Working Party is unanimous in presenting this report. It would be grateful if the Council would look in particular at three aspects of the report.

1. The model of presidential leadership which is articulated in the report (i.e. a form of "ambassadorial" leadership which complements the "executive" leadership of others).
2. The proposal to create a Presidium consisting of a presbyteral President and two Co-Presidents, one a deacon and the other a lay person.
3. The alternatives of each President and Co-President holding office for three years in a 'rolling' process (i.e. with one being elected each year); or each holding office for one year. *[Does the Council wish to express a preference for one of these?]*

The Working Party is aware that it has not yet addressed the other parts of its remit (e.g. recommending ways of instigating a general review of representative lay leadership; the titles of other senior officers in the connexion), and will report on these in due course.

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Leading and presiding: developing the presidency of the Conference

Summary

This report discusses the nature of the leadership required for the Church to fulfil its calling, and proposes the replacement of the current offices of President and Vice-President by a presbyteral President and two Co-Presidents, one a deacon the other a lay person, to form a Presidium and serve collaboratively as the representative embodiment of the Conference's authority, working alongside the General Secretary to inspire and energise the Church, but without the General Secretary's responsibilities for management. Alternatives of a three-year Presidium with one member being elected each year, or a one-year Presidium in which all the members are elected simultaneously, are offered.

1. The Council's remit and what led to it

1.1 In 2007 the Methodist Council was directed by the Conference

to appoint a working party to examine and report to the Conference of 2009 upon all aspects of the roles of President and Vice-President and how they work together and relate to the senior leadership of the Church. This was to include:

- i) how the roles might be further developed;
- ii) how they might work more closely with the General Secretary of the Church/Secretary of the Conference to present a shared vision and to energise the Church;
- iii) the length of office of each;
- iv) the title of Vice-President. (2007 Daily Record 7/20/3)

1.2 In 2009 the Council was permitted to delay its report to 2010 (2009 Daily Record 8/38)

1.3 The Council appointed a working party whose membership is listed in Appendix 4. The working party met seven times, including four residential meetings. It invited submissions via the *Methodist Recorder* and the Church's website, and in addition to responses to that invitation and other submissions offered to it, considered a memorandum prepared in 2005 by a group of recent Presidents and another prepared in 2006 by some recent Vice-Presidents. It also received a submission prepared on behalf of the Methodist Diaconal Order, and asked the most recent past Presidents and Vice-Presidents for their estimates of the amount of time involved in various aspects of their work. The text of its report follows.

1.4 The 2007 resolutions represent the latest stage in a long debate, punctuated in recent years by a series of reports to the Conference:

Senior Officers of the Conference (1997) reviewed the offices of President, Vice-President and Secretary. Its recommendations included that President and Vice-President should continue to be annual appointments, and the Vice-Presidency continue to be open to deacons.

Leadership in the Methodist Church (2002) reviewed the role of the President and offered three options; the first two involved a five-year term with the President either as an ambassador and strategic leader for the Church or as an ambassador and policy contributor; the third option, which the Council supported, was for a one-year term as ambassador and policy contributor. The report also recommended the introduction of the post of General Secretary, to be combined with the office of Secretary of the Conference. It made no new recommendations about the Vice-Presidency.

The Nature of Oversight (2005) spelled out an understanding of oversight as including governance, management and leadership but being broader than these, and explored the application of these concepts to the offices of President, Vice-President and Secretary/General Secretary.

Senior Leadership in the Methodist Church (2007) was primarily concerned with the role of General Secretary. It again reviewed the term of office of the President and recommended that it should continue to be annual. No serious attention was given to the Vice-Presidency. It was in the context of this report that the Council's current remit was adopted. In adopting the report the Conference affirmed that 'the President of the Conference is the leader of the whole Church' (2007 Daily Record 7/20/1), and amended Standing Orders 110, 114 and 300 to reflect this and clarify the role of the Secretary of the Conference/General Secretary. It is clear however that the Conference was not satisfied that the last word had been spoken.

2. The issues

2.1 The debate is a complex one. One issue is the relationship of the office of President to the relatively new office of General Secretary. Another is whether the term for which the President holds office should be extended so as to give it a higher profile both in the Church and in the media. Behind this are calls for stronger leadership in the Connexion, although the precise nature of the leadership desired is often unclear. Another group of issues, less often addressed but equally important, concerns the office of Vice-President. The title is now often felt to be misleading and to imply that the holder will progress as a matter of course to becoming President. The office is highly valued as an affirmation of the laity in the Church, but some feel that the fact that it is open also to ordained deacons diminishes that affirmation. Some have suggested that the diaconal calling means that deacons should not aspire to senior office. Others insist that the diaconate also needs to be affirmed by a deacon being elected to a high office of the Conference. In any case the affirmation given to lay ministry in the Vice-Presidency can seem half-hearted. Constitutionally the Vice-President presides over the Conference when the President is present only with the President's permission, and throughout the year the official responsibilities laid upon the President in relation to stationing, discipline and other matters devolve in the President's absence, not upon the Vice-President, who may not even be informed of them, but upon the Ex-President. There is a good case for the kind of review for which the 2007 Conference called.

2.2 The office of President of the Conference was created upon John Wesley's death in 1791 as an annual appointment, on the basis of not having 'another king in Israel'. The pattern was followed by all the subsequent branches of Methodism, although with important variations. The Wesleyans, the Methodist New Connexion and the Bible Christians restricted it to travelling preachers (ministers). In the Primitive Methodist and other traditions the office was open to laymen. In 1872 the

Primitive Methodist Conference introduced the office of Vice-President, open to both ministers and laymen. This office was continued at Methodist Union in 1932 but restricted to lay persons. The Vice-President addressed the Conference on election and was an ex officio member of many connexional committees, but could preside over the Conference only in the absence of the President and did not significantly work in partnership with the President during the year. That was a development of the 1980s, as was the provision made in 1985 for the Vice-President to preside with the President's permission even when the President was present. In practice both offices have always been restricted to one year, although there is no constitutional barrier to the same person being designated or elected in successive years.

2.3 It is clear that all these issues must be considered together. An extension of the office of President, for example, has repercussions for both that of Vice-President and that of Secretary of the Conference/General Secretary. It is also clear that any solution must have regard, not only to historical precedent and practical effectiveness, but to theological principle. Proposals must be consistent with the Doctrinal Standards in the Deed of Union, with the theological statements the Conference has adopted from time to time, and with the account we have given of ourselves to our ecumenical partners, particularly those churches with whom we are in a covenant relationship. Those considerations may help us to move toward constructive proposals that are in keeping with our traditions but enable us to adapt to changing times.

2.4 The working party is aware that the Conference of 2010 will be invited to consider a report on the proposal made by the Joint Implementation Commission for the creation of a Methodist Presiding Bishop, but it was not part of our remit to consider that proposal, and our recommendations are made independently and offered on their own merits.

3. Theological considerations

3.1 The nature of the Church

The nature and purpose of the Church has been well explored in statements and reports adopted or received by the Conference in the last twenty-five years, including *Sharing in God's Mission* (1985), *The Ministry of the People of God* (1988), *The Ministry of the People of God in the World* (1990), *Called to Love and Praise* (1999) and the summary *Our Calling* (2000). In the context of our report two aspects need to be highlighted:

3.1.1 The Church is the People of God, the Body of Christ, called by grace to holiness in the image of God, to witness to God's kingdom and to be an agent of its realisation in the world. The holiness to which the Church is called is both corporate, in the ordering of its common life and its activity in the world, and individual, as each member is called to share in the Church's life and calling. The Church's various ministries, lay and ordained, formal and informal, are given by God to build up the Church in holiness and to equip it for mission. But no member is thereby excluded; all are called by their baptism to share in responsibility for what the Church is and does. It is noticeable how many of the New Testament epistles, with their mixture of praise, exhortation and rebuke, are addressed, not to specific leaders (although sometimes they are mentioned) but to a church as a whole. All together are accountable.

3.1.2 Oversight in the Church is exercised corporately, shared between ordained and lay persons, in the Conference which has overall oversight, and in district synods, circuit meetings and church councils with their respective committees, and by individuals, ordained or lay, who exercise delegated authority on the Conference's behalf. As Methodists we have inherited from our tradition, as have other Free Churches and the Church of Scotland, a distrust of the concentration of power in any one individual. Instinctively we believe that the insights and gifts which come from the Holy Spirit are distributed generously and widely in the Church. We have seen examples of autocratic leadership, in our own history and in the history of sister churches, which have been abrasive and divisive. Autocratic leadership tends to create dependency rather than enabling the gifts of others to flourish. From the beginning of Methodism oversight in local churches has been shared between ministers and lay persons, although not always on equal terms. Throughout our history leaders' and local preachers' meetings, district synods and the Conference itself have provided a structure of accountability and mutual support for individuals in leadership. We have welcomed the current ecumenical consensus that ministry in the Church has personal, collegial and communal dimensions.

3.2 The nature of the Conference

In the light of this it is important to be clear about the nature and purpose of the Conference. Although from one perspective it is a business meeting, the body charged with the governance of a national charity, in fact it is more than this. It is a representative gathering of the people of God, charged with the oversight of the Church, assembled to confer together in the presence of God about the work of God and to discern God's will. Its worship is not incidental to its meetings but constitutive of them. Presidency of the Conference is consequently more than a matter of chairing debates. Although President and Vice-President are elected by the Conference to minister in its name to the wider Church during the year, they are also called to minister to the Conference itself, leading its worship, calling attention to vital aspects of the gospel and ensuring that business is conducted in a spirit that befits the people of God.

3.3 The nature of leadership: some Biblical characteristics

What may we learn from Scripture that will help us to define the leadership God requires in the Church? There is no straightforward way of reading off from the pages of the Bible a model for leadership today. It offers many examples of men and women called by God to exercise leadership in various ways and used by him in spite of their inadequacies and failings, including Moses, Deborah, Samuel, David, Elijah, Josiah, Peter and Paul. All served in different historical and cultural contexts and accordingly different demands were made of them. Some examples are clearly monarchical, yet within the Old Testament itself there are misgivings about such a pattern; kingship is not seen as an undiluted blessing. Even when we turn to the New Testament we have to recognise the considerable differences between the small and scattered Christian communities of the Roman Empire and the close-knit connexion which is the Methodist Church in Britain today, and between what is required in a first-generation church in any age, where traditions of faith and worship and patterns of behaviour are still being established, and our own, which can draw on centuries of such formative tradition. We must acknowledge also cultural differences which shape expectations and define possibilities.

Nevertheless we may be helped in articulating the kind of leadership the Church needs by reflecting on some characteristics exemplified by St Paul and other New Testament writers and what they have to say to the leaders of the churches they address. Such characteristics serve both to inform and sometimes to rebuke the Church in every age. The following may be noted:

3.3.1 *All leadership is service.* The key texts in this respect are the words of Jesus in Mark 10:41-45 (parallel, Matthew 20:24-28), Luke 22:24-27, and John 13:12-17. It is service, modelled on the example of Jesus himself, which, at its extreme, may require the laying-down of life. This is echoed in such passages as I Peter 5:3. There is no place in leadership for self-aggrandisement.

3.3.2 *Leaders are not self-appointed.* Paul insists that he is an apostle by divine calling, and the image of the body and its members in Romans 12:3-8 and I Corinthians 12:1-31 makes the point that, whatever the method by which in practice individuals were selected, or offered themselves, for service (a process of which we have no knowledge), their ministries are exercised by God's appointment; they are gifts of the risen Lord for the purpose of building up the body (Ephesians 4:7-16), grace-gifts (*charismata*) of the Holy Spirit at work in the Church (Romans, I Corinthians). As such, leaders are accountable, primarily to the Lord who has appointed them (I Corinthians 4:3-4), but also, notably in the case of Peter (Acts 11:2-3, 18) and Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:1-29), to the wider Church (compare Galatians 2:1-2).

3.3.3 *Leadership is frequently shared.* No doubt part of the reason for our Lord's sending out disciples two by two was the status in Jewish law of the testimony of two witnesses (e.g. Deuteronomy 19:15-16), but it would have been unworkable if they had not collaborated. The pattern is regularly followed by Paul, with Barnabas and later Silas, but there is also a wider collaborative team including from time to time Mark, Timothy, Titus and others. In I Corinthians 1-4 Paul is keen to stress his collaboration with other leaders against those in Corinth who would pit them against each other. Clearly at times relationships came under strain (as in Galatians 2:11-14) but the New Testament does not encourage the model of the autonomous leader.

3.3.4 *Leaders are called to hold before the Church the nature of its calling and stimulate it to be faithful to it.* All the New Testament epistles have this purpose, whatever the specific occasion for their being written, and are thus examples of leadership in action. They rehearse aspects of the gospel, celebrate in thanksgiving the grace of God evident in the communities addressed, urge them to correct faults and offer encouragement in what is being done well. Revelation 2-3 is but one example.

3.3.5 In that context *leaders are not afraid to say unpalatable things.* I Corinthians, Galatians and the letters to the seven Asian churches in Revelation 2-3 are prime examples. Leadership calls for courage, grounded in God's calling and discernment of his will for the time.

3.3.6 *Leaders are to have a particular concern for the vulnerable.* Matthew 18 lays particular emphasis on care for the 'little ones'. The parable of the lost sheep is used in that chapter to emphasise God's will that no little one should be lost. When I Corinthians is read in the context of the Hellenistic culture of the time it is clear that

Paul is defending the dignity of those members of the church who were considered socially inferior by others (e.g. in 11:17-22).

3.3.7 *Leaders help the local community to see itself in a wider church context.* Paul frequently reminds his hearers what is happening in other places (e.g. Romans 15:26-29, I Corinthians 4:17, 7:17, II Corinthians 9:1-5, I Thessalonians 1:7-10). The circular letters such as I Peter and Revelation 2-3 inescapably have this effect.

3.3.8 *Leaders are role models.* Not only is this enjoined on local leaders (e.g. I Timothy 4:12, I Peter 5:3) but the writers offer their own experience of discipleship and ministry as a pattern for their churches to follow. Paul's experience of apostolic ministry becomes the pattern for the Corinthians in II 1-6 and for the Philippians in 3:1-17. It goes without saying that they do not determine for themselves the pattern they set, but are themselves in obedience to Christ, whose example is set for all (I Corinthians 11:1, I Thessalonians 1:6).

3.3.9 Leadership is not concerned only with the internal life of the Church and the lives of its members. *It is leadership in mission.* This is evident in the apostolic commission at the end of Matthew 28, where mission and teaching are linked, and in the parting words of Jesus in Luke 24:46-49 and Acts 1:8, as well as in the example of Paul and those missionary figures of whom less is known, such as Epaphras (Colossians 1:7), Silas and Timothy (II Corinthians 1:19), and Andronicus, Junia, Tryphoena, Tryphosa and others named in Romans 16. The supreme paradigm is provided by Jesus himself, whose 'heart went out' to the crowds who appeared as sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36).

3.3.10 The *image of shepherd* is often used in the New Testament, with particular reference to Jesus (John 10) but also of local church leaders (as in Acts 20:28, I Peter 5:2). Because of its association in the Old Testament with political leadership it was taken by the early nineteenth-century Wesleyans (as it still is in some Christian traditions) to imply that the pastor rules a passive and obedient flock, and so it was the source of much conflict and division. It is important to see all paradigms of leadership within the context of the calling of all members of the Body of Christ to be accountable for their common life. Nevertheless the language of shepherding is important. On the one hand it points to key activities of leadership: guiding (pointing the direction for the people of God to go), feeding (offering resources of mind and spirit for the journey), protecting (warning against the influence of false ideologies and distortions of the gospel) and supporting (moral support under pressure). On the other hand it underlines the qualities demanded of such leadership, above all a sense of responsibility for the well-being of the Church and a willingness to deny oneself in its service. In John 10 Jesus draws a sharp distinction between those who care for the sheep at risk to themselves and those who are only interested in personal advantage. Above all, the language of shepherding is a constant reminder that all leaders are to model themselves on, and be answerable to, Jesus the Chief Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11, I Peter 5:4).

3.3.11 Finally it is worth noting that *the grammar of leadership, as suggested by the New Testament epistles, is one of invitation, exhortation, warning or rebuke.* Even though used occasionally of Jesus in the gospels and in various contexts in Acts, the standard military term for 'give orders' is absent from the epistles. Although the Church, nationally and locally, is often an employer and in that context follows the principles of line management, it operates those principles within an

overarching recognition that the Church itself is not modelled on an army or corporation where orders can be given and implicitly obeyed. It is a community of those who in their baptism have declared Jesus to be their Lord, and as they listen to the epistles they are being called to recognise his will in what is read to them.

3.3.12 Such characteristics serve as an inspiration and challenge for all leadership in the Church, wherever it is exercised. They are as relevant to the service of church stewards and class leaders, circuit stewards and district officers, as they are to presbyters and deacons. They suggest the qualities for which we should look in selecting those who are to serve as the Church's senior officers, whatever the particular focus of their responsibilities.

4. Leadership in the Methodist Church

4.1 There have been frequent calls for stronger leadership in the Church and it is important to consider why this is the case. In the working-party's judgement there are two principal reasons:

4.1.1 There is anxiety over continuing reports of the loss of membership and the closure of churches across the Connexion, often reinforced by observation locally. In fact, as reported to the Conference of 2008, the latest returns show an increase in membership in nearly a quarter of churches, and 27% of Methodist members belong to growing churches. But in many places the age profile, the lack of children and losses by death and removal generate an anxiety about the future, reinforced by rose-tinted memories of the past. It is hard for a church which has historically defined itself as a movement for mission to avoid a sense of frustration and failure in such a context. Dynamic leadership, it is often felt, would lead us to better days.

Growth, however, is only one measure of the health of the Church. Faithfulness in difficult times is another. If we attend to the New Testament we note that both welcome for the gospel and opposition to it were the experience of the first churches. Growth in membership, or the lack of it, is not to be accounted for simply by the amount of energy, prayerfulness and strategic planning the church exhibits, but by many other factors in society. This is not to deny, however, that more of our churches need to capture a vision, and realise their God-given potential for mission in their situation. There is evidence that this is beginning to happen.

4.1.2 The second reason relates to the sense of frustration some feel over the connexional system. There now are fewer life-long Methodists who might be disposed to accept the system as a given. Many have come to Methodism from other Christian traditions or from none. They may feel constricted by 'the rules' when they seek to implement some new initiative in their local situation in obedience to the gospel, and look for a dynamic leader who will 'sort things out' and set the local church free.

Some constraints, of course, are not of Methodism's making but are imposed by the law of the land. There are limits to what can be done with money and property held in trust. And it has to be noted that in recent years the Conference has relaxed much of the imposed uniformity of earlier times. Local churches and circuits do not always realise the liberty they already have. Nevertheless there is an issue about how the Church can be sensitive to local needs as they emerge and react appropriately with reasonable speed. Enabling leadership is required at all levels of the Church.

4.2 It needs to be remembered that the Methodist Church is not a single-issue movement in which the goal and the tactics can be dictated from the top/centre, or indeed from any other point. It is a connexion, dispersed in local churches held together in circuits and wider relationships which gives them their fuller identity as the one Methodist Church. They are not independent, but need to receive from one another and give to one another in order to be fully members of the one people of God. To be in connexion is to be accountable to one another. This means that, although there are areas where connexional initiatives are called for and should be delivered, most of the action is 'on the ground', in local churches and circuits, and the relevant decisions need to be taken there. Leadership in the Church is therefore a complex matter, which has more to do with sharing a vision and exciting others to see it and act upon it than with giving orders. Clearly there are particular areas where connexional controls are called for: government legislation calls for accountability in particular areas, such as finance and property, employment and the protection of children and vulnerable adults. In such areas the Conference is authorised, even required, to issue directives and apply sanctions. More generally in the life of the Church we are called to be accountable to God and to one another, and may need to call one another to account, but in worship, pastoral care and mission the key words are not, 'go and do this' but 'come, follow me', or 'let us go together'.

4.3 The 2007 report on senior leadership referred to above helpfully identified and distinguished a number of terms frequently used:

Oversight – the process of ensuring that the Church remains true to the gospel, Christian (particularly the Methodist) tradition and the promptings of the Spirit. It includes as major aspects:

Leadership – discerning, articulating and inspiring vision; encouraging and sustaining people in appropriate and measured action; and providing models of giving guidance and exercising power with authority, justice and love;

Governance – exercising formal authority in formulating the policies and ordering the practices of the Church in the local church, Circuit, District or for the whole Connexion;

Management – implementing strategies to enact the vision and policies, deploying people and other resources to that end and monitoring the results.

It acknowledged these distinctions are often blurred in practice (para.6).

In para.7 it referred back (para.7) to the distinction drawn in the 2002 report *Leadership in the Methodist Church* between 'the church as a faith community (where the emphasis is on core beliefs, experience and worship) and the church as a mission organisation (where the emphasis is on core tasks).' It drew attention (para.8) to the Conference's overriding responsibility for leadership, its delegation of leadership responsibility to a range of bodies and individuals and the expectation that individuals would behave collegially, be accountable and enable others to participate fully.

In paragraph 11 it identified the next few years as a crucial time of change in the life of the Church requiring 'inspired leadership' in:

- articulating the vision (and its consequences) to the whole Church and being aware of the opportunities (and the dangers) to which it gives rise;
- helping the whole Church to understand the potential of the intended changes in the life of the Church – particularly at district and circuit levels;
- modelling in decision-making and practice the new methods of working to which the Church aspires;
- articulating the vision to ecumenical partners and seeking improved methods of working with other churches (and faiths);
- managing the changes in the refocused connexional team and dealing with the complex inter-personal and organisational issues which will emerge;
- releasing and relocating within the Connexion the financial and personal resources necessary to ensure that the programme *Our Calling* and the *Priorities for the Methodist Church* can be delivered.

4.4 It was in that context that the report proposed some refocusing of the General Secretary's remit so as to relate to all areas of senior leadership in the Church (para.54), 'holding together strategic management skills with the traditional pastoral and prophetic skills of the presbyter' (para.60). In so doing, however, it left open the question of the role of the President and Vice-President, beyond saying that their leadership 'is best expressed in such terms as the representative embodiment of the authority of the Conference', and that they do not exercise executive leadership, but have an ambassadorial capacity, to affirm and encourage (para.32). At the same time it recommended that their roles be reviewed and developed 'so that they work together more closely with the General Secretary/Secretary of the Conference to present a shared vision and energise the Church' (para.33). The Conference, however, in receiving the report, and adopting the remit for the current working-party, also affirmed that 'the President of the Conference is the leader of the whole church' (2007 Daily Record 7/20/1). That however has left the nature of Presidential leadership unclear.

4.5 However, the distinction drawn by the 2002 report and quoted in the 2007 report between leadership in a faith community and leadership in a mission organisation needs to be revisited. Although it affirms that the Methodist Church is both, it could be taken to imply that they are to some extent separable elements, requiring different kinds of leadership, spiritual and moral on the one hand and the management of resources on the other. The reality is that even within its ongoing life as a faith community, in its worship, pastoral care, house groups, support of ministry and maintenance of premises, resources, both personal and material, have to be organised, managed and delivered. In its mission outreach, plans and activities have to be inspired and monitored by gospel criteria. Both aspects of leadership are required across the board. Yet the two aspects are distinguishable. Preachers, teachers and pastoral carers do not necessarily have to be managers. Moreover there are significant insights and skills to be gained from the wider world of the management of institutions, but their deployment will be subject to the nature and purpose of the Church as an organisation. All leadership in the Church is leadership in the service of the gospel.

5. Presidential leadership

5.1 It is in the light of those considerations that we have sought to address the issues in developing our proposals. We asked ourselves whether the office of President should be combined with that of General Secretary. We quickly concluded,

not only that such a possibility was beyond our remit, which treats the General Secretaryship as given and directs us to consider the relationship of both Presidency and Vice-Presidency to it, but that we should deplore it as a retrograde step. Whatever might be the case during the year, the Conference itself would still need a neutral person to preside over its sittings, rather than the Church's General Secretary. More importantly in recent years our Church has been developing a growing insight into the importance of there being two complementary and inter-dependent emphases in the leadership offered through its structures and by its senior officers. Both are vital if the Church is to become the faithful and obedient body of Christ as it responds to the love and grace of God in worship and mission. One emphasis is on executive leadership which, amongst other things, both co-ordinates work and manages resources. The second is on ambassadorial leadership which, amongst other things, acts as the representative embodiment of the authority of the Conference. The former emphasis is increasingly expressed through the office of General Secretary. The latter is found in the office of President, but needs to be more clearly articulated.

5.2 We therefore endorse the recommendations of the 2007 report that the office of General Secretary should focus both on strategic management skills and on pastoral and prophetic leadership and should relate to all areas of senior leadership in the Church, and return to it in Section 11 below. But we consider that alongside that ministry there is also a place and need for a complementary ministry of leadership which

- embodies the collaborative nature of leadership in the Church, affirming the significance and value of both ordained (presbyteral and diaconal) and lay ministry,
- presides over the Conference and by virtue of that fact represents its authority throughout the year,
- can therefore formally represent the Conference and the wider Connexion on public occasions,
- stands at some distance from the executive machinery of the Church and is able in consequence to serve as pastor and consultant, and when required, can assist in the resolution of misunderstanding and conflict,
- is available to visit widely in the Church, affirming and cementing the link between the 'centre' and the 'periphery' and can feed back insights gained thereby,
- is able to offer personal insights, experience and prophetic vision which may in time become Conference-endorsed policy but have not yet acquired that status,
- is thus able to energise the Church in its worship and mission.

It is this ministry which we believe to be the proper role of the Presidency of the Conference.

5.3 The reference to the Conference needs to be emphasised. Although we often abbreviate the current titles, the full form is 'President/Vice-President of the Conference' (although in 1955 the then General Purposes Committee recognised 'President of the Methodist Church' as a 'somewhat loose description' for the benefit of 'those unfamiliar with our procedure'). Because of their presidency of the Conference those officers represent its authority in the wider Church. That is why they are nominated, designated and elected by members of the Conference. They are not 'President/Vice-President of the Methodist Church' and in that capacity

presiding over the Conference as over everything else. That would require a different method of election involving a wider constituency of church members. It is in this sense that the 2007 resolution that 'the President of the Conference is the leader of the whole Church' must be understood. The case is otherwise with the General Secretary, who is General Secretary of the Methodist Church (not just of the Connexional Team), because the office carries a connexion-wide co-ordinating remit, and consequently a different method of appointment applies.

5.4 There have been frequent calls over the years, by some former Presidents and by others, for a longer term of office for the President. It is often combined with a call for stronger leadership in general. The issue has often been examined in reports to the Conference, but the Conference has consistently retained a one-year term. It is clear that the Church does not have a common mind over the issue. We shall return to the question in our proposals below, but at this stage we need to note why the call continues to be made. In a culture in which individuals are given a high profile in television and other media, it is asked why the Methodist President is not in the news. If the President were in office for, say, five years, would not he or she be better known and feature more prominently when the views of the churches are being reported? Reporters would know who to turn to. Put at its simplest, Methodists would be able to look at their TV screens with pride and say 'That is our President'.

In the view of the working-party this aspiration is misplaced and misunderstands the nature of modern news reporting. Professionals who work in the media endorse the experience of those in connexional office over many years: the media have their own criteria for what is newsworthy. They will take notice when we have something to say which they judge worth reporting and will then report it regardless of who says it on our behalf. What is required is a message relevant to public concerns, effectively and concisely expressed. We no longer live in the days when the churches were a powerful voice in British politics. We can be grateful for the influence that can still be exercised by the churches, including the Methodist Church, but we should not succumb to envy if one or other of our partner churches succeeds in being heard in the public arena expressing views we all in fact share. We need as churches to speak for one another. We do not believe it to be the case that if we had a five-year President the media would take more notice, although clearly a longer term would enable the Methodist people to become more familiar with the identity of the person holding the office.

5.5 If the Church needs the Presidential office does that mean that it is essentially a role for a (presbyteral) President to undertake on his or her own? There is evidence that in some parts of the Church the office of Vice-President has a much lower profile than that of President, and is less highly valued. The frequent calls for a five-year President without any reference to its impact upon the Vice-Presidency is an example of this. We have therefore asked ourselves whether the office of Vice-President should be discontinued. But our tradition emphatically affirms the importance of shared ministry in which the distinctive gifts and callings of presbyters, deacons and lay people are combined. That understanding is expressed in all aspects of our Church's life. It is particularly embodied in the Conference in which presbyters, deacons and lay people participate and together exercise shared oversight. It should therefore be reflected in the personal leadership that is exercised in the Conference and on behalf of the Conference in the wider Connexion. That personal leadership needs to have presbyteral, diaconal and lay expressions.

6. Principal recommendations

Our principal recommendations can be summarised as follows:

6.1 We propose a continuation of the office of President, and the replacement of the office of Vice-President by two Co-Presidents, one a deacon and one a lay person, to form a Presidium, working in collaboration and exercising the sort of leadership set out in 5.2 above.

6.2 We recommend that as many of the Presidential duties as possible, both within the Conference and during the year, should be shared by all three members of the Presidium on a mutually agreed basis.

6.3 We recommend an emphasis upon collaborative ministry, not only among the members of the Presidium but in their working with the General Secretary/Secretary of the Conference and other connexional officers, so as to secure coherence in the leadership offered to the Connexion.

6.4 We invite the Conference to choose between a pattern in which the President and Co-Presidents each serve for a period of three years, with one successor being elected and inducted in rotation each year, or a pattern in which all three serve for one year only, with an annual induction of all three officers.

6.5 We recommend that the practice of election by ballot within the Conference after prior nomination, as at present, should be retained.

We develop our arguments for these recommendations in what follows.

7. A Presidium

7.1 We have chosen the term 'Presidium' as the formal title for the shared offices we are proposing. It is used by both the World Methodist Council and the World Council of Churches for those elected to share the presidency of those Councils, although in neither case, because of their global scale, is the close collaboration possible that we are recommending for the Conference. A formal title is required for the Deed of Union and other references, but no doubt in everyday usage people will simply refer to 'the President and Co-Presidents'.

7.2 We propose a Presidium of three members because we do not think it is an adequate acknowledgement of the distinctive ministries of either deacons or lay people to retain the current Vice-Presidency open to both, but held by a deacon only infrequently and then at the displacement of a lay person.

7.3 Nor, in general, do we think it appropriate that when a President is unavailable during the year the duties should devolve upon the ex-President. Rather, we believe that it is important to have lay, diaconal and presbyteral expressions of a single model of Presidency, working collaboratively and inter-dependently and sharing as fully as possible in the responsibilities currently carried by the President.

7.4 We believe that the title 'Co-President of the Conference' most accurately represents the roles we propose for the lay and diaconal members of the Presidium.

It avoids the ambiguities of the current 'Vice-President' or the alternative 'Deputy President' which is open to similar objections. We have considered the often-advocated 'Lay President', but have not recommended it, for the reason that it could imply that the holder is the lay president of the Church, or the president of the laity of the Church with authority restricted to the laity (the title 'Youth President' is used in this way). The Vice-President represents the whole Conference, although it is of course true that a lay Vice-President does in a secondary sense represent the laity. Similar considerations would apply to 'Diaconal President', which might imply its limitation to presidency of the Diaconal Order.

7.5 We wish to underline the role of the proposed Presidium in relation to the Conference itself. Although elected by the Conference, and representative of the Conference during the year, its members would also have a ministry to the Conference, as at present, not simply in presiding over its sessions, but in offering insight and challenge through preaching and formal addresses.

7.6 The over-riding responsibility of the President and Co-Presidents would be to exemplify collaborative ministry and thereby affirm its importance for the whole Church, making it a pattern for every circuit. As we observe in 3.1.2 above, Methodism has a long history of shared ministry, although in the past we must admit that the distinctive contributions lay people and deacons can bring to that sharing has not always been adequately recognised. In recent years greater emphasis has been given in such reports as *What is a Presbyter?* (2002) to recognising that each partner brings particular gifts, experience and insights to the sharing. The creation of a Presidium gives the Church an opportunity of demonstrating what collaboration can mean in practice.

7.7 The President and Co-Presidents would all share the following tasks, and it would be up to them to determine precisely how they were shared:

A In the Conference:

- to preside over the Conference sessions on a rota jointly agreed,
- to share in overseeing arrangements for Conference worship, and take part in the Sunday worship and the Conference Holy Communion,
- to address the Conference on a major topic,
- to take an appropriate part in ordinations,
- to share in welcoming official visitors,

B Between Conferences:

- to be a personal embodiment of the authority of the Conference,
- to be an embodiment of the connexional character of the Church in local situations,
- to visit widely in the Connexion, as circumstances allow, and to reflect back what is learned from such visits, thereby strengthening the bonds of the Connexion,
- to take an appropriate part in public worship on such occasions, including preaching in the case of a presbyter or local preacher,
- by public speaking and writing to help the Church to 'read the signs of the times' and respond to them,

- to be a public voice of the Methodist Church on issues of concern, and to be sufficiently familiar with, and adequately briefed on, the Church's stance on such issues to do this with confidence,
- to be a senior representative of the Church in relations with other churches, in Britain and overseas,
- to represent the Methodist Church on public occasions,
- to encourage the Methodist people locally and nationally in their worship, mission and service.

We present further details on shared responsibilities below in Section 17.

7.8 Except where specifically authorised to act, the President and Co-Presidents should not be actively involved in administrative matters or decision-making or the setting of policy (although advice may be offered and opinions expressed in policy discussions), but should maintain a stance of neutrality in contentious issues, so as to be available as an arbiter. In the Conference the tradition of neutrality in voting should be maintained, broken only when a ballot is used or a casting vote is required.

7.9 It has long been one of the strengths of our tradition that it has been possible to elect to the office of President or Vice-President men and women who have brought distinctive gifts and particular emphases to the office, as testimony to the diversity embraced within the Methodist Church. We wish to see this tradition upheld. At the same time, at the risk of stating the obvious, it may be helpful to identify the expectations we have long held of every candidate for election to the Presidium, ordained or lay.

- some knowledge and experience of wider Methodism,
- evident commitment and contribution to the Church,
- ability to bring appropriate experience and expertise to the counsels of the Church,
- ability to communicate effectively in public,
- ability to chair a meeting,
- experience of Conference membership,
- the likelihood that, if elected, they would carry the confidence and respect of the Methodist people.

There is no reason why church employees should be excluded.

7.10 We believe that there is benefit to the Church in the present practice by which both President and Vice-President continue during their year of office to be rooted in the everyday life of the Church, in the case of the Vice-President by keeping contact with his or her local church and circuit and everyday employment or other activities. For the President day to day contact is generally less possible and most of the duties of his or her normal station are covered, either by the appointment of a President's Assistant or by colleagues between them sharing the coverage. We are keen to see this rootage preserved in the future, although we recognise that if a three-year term of office is adopted for the Presidium it will be more difficult, particularly for the presbyteral President. We resist the notion that any of these offices should become by definition 'separated' or set apart full-time to the exclusion of previous responsibilities. Any potential conflict of interest between local and connexional responsibilities should be dealt with by delegation.

7.11 Traditionally the President, and to a lesser extent the Vice-President, have been expected to travel widely in the Connexion, sometimes together, and this has proved to be a major demand upon the available time. From time to time attempts have been made to reduce the number of district visits and to encourage their being focused upon in-depth review of the Church's mission in the local context (in the style of a 'visitation'), but the traditional pattern tends to reassert itself. We think that the appointment of a Presidium gives another opportunity for revision of the pattern. While we would not wish to rule out joint visits by two or all three Presidium members on special occasions (it would be a clear expression of collaboration), the sharing of responsibilities could mean fewer demands upon any one member for district and similar visits, leaving more time for study and reflection. As a general rule invitations for such visits should be addressed to the Presidium, with the members agreeing between them who should respond to each, although there may be occasions when a named invitation will be appropriate.

8. The President

8.1 We recommend that the title of 'President' be retained. Even within a Presidium there will be need for one member to be identified as the lead figure for legal and practical reasons. The Methodist Church Act 1976 and other legislation refers to the President, and there is a practical necessity to ensure that the person upon whom responsibility ultimately falls should be identified. In addition the title has a long history, deriving originally from John Wesley's Deed of Declaration in 1784, was used by all the branches of Methodism that eventually reunited in 1932 and is known in ecumenical and wider public circles.

8.2 We recommend that the President, as the lead figure, should continue to be a presbyter. There are both practical and theological reasons for this. Practically, we have argued in 7.10 above against making Presidency or Co-Presidency in principle a 'separated' appointment, but we recognise that the lead figure in the Presidium will have to be virtually full-time, as it is important that there should always be one member of the Presidium who is 'on call'. This makes it difficult for a deacon or lay person to be the lead figure. For reasons given in 10.3 below, it is unrealistic to expect full-time service of a deacon. A lay person similarly, unless retired, is unlikely to be available full-time because of other commitments. In the case of a presbyter there can be greater flexibility, and there is already provision for the appointment of a President's Assistant if the responsibilities of the President's regular appointment cannot be covered otherwise, which enables the President to remain rooted in a continuing appointment rather than being separated.

8.3 More important, however, are the theological considerations. Our doctrinal standards in the Deed of Union, while affirming that there is no exclusive priesthood pertaining to the presbyterate and that Christ's ministries are shared by both ordained and lay, nevertheless assign a 'principal and directing part' to those who are ordained as presbyters. This principle is observed in local church, circuit and district alike, and should be the case with the Conference also. In the report *What is a Presbyter?* adopted by the Conference of 2002 it is made clear that the particular calling of a presbyter (as of a deacon) can only be understood within the general calling of the People of God to worship, mission and service, and serves to focus, express and enable it. To this end presbyters are ordained to a ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care, and to elect a presbyter to the Presidium would be an authorisation to exercise that ministry in the context of the Conference and the Connexion at large.

8.4 As a presbyter the President's particular ministry should therefore be essentially presbyteral. It should focus on a ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care. In the Conference that would include presiding over the reception into full connexion and at an ordination and at the Conference service of Holy Communion. During the year also it is desirable that the President should be given opportunities to preside at Holy Communion, and to share in baptisms and confirmations. It is appropriate too that the President should be available as a pastor, especially to presbyters and deacons, and to have time for those who seek help and advice.

9. The lay Co-President

9.1 By having a lay member of the Presidium the Church affirms the calling of lay people to be Christians in the world and in the Church. The principal responsibility of a lay Co-President is to exemplify that calling. The gifts he or she brings to the office are personal experience of discipleship in the world of work and voluntary service and an understanding of and love for the Church from the perspective of a lay person, which can be shared with the Church in a variety of ways. For that reason the office should not be full time, enabling the holder to continue as far as possible with his or her regular occupation.

9.2 The lay Co-President would be more than a representative of the laity of Methodism. He or she would be a lay representative and embodiment of the authority of the Conference, and would share in all the responsibilities enumerated in 7.7 above. In the Conference he or she would be able to share insights acquired as an active lay Christian in the world and a member of the Methodist Church, and offer particular encouragement to lay representatives to play their full part, especially those who are new to the Conference or unaccustomed to public speaking. Throughout the year there would be the opportunity, by writing and speaking, to encourage reflection on the implications of Christian discipleship for the particular area of life in which he or she is normally engaged, e.g. by meetings of professionals in his or her field of expertise.

9.3 The Vice-President is named in the Methodist Church Act 1976 and the Methodist Church Funds Act 1960, and possibly in other legal documents. Legislation can only be amended by Parliament, so that the formal title cannot be abolished. But it will be possible for the Conference to make a declaration that an officer by some other name shall be the Vice-President for the purposes of such legislation and any other legal instrument without continuing to use the title in the Deed of Union or Standing Orders or in general usage. It would maintain continuity for that person to be the lay Co-President.

10. The diaconal Co-President

10.1 A deacon would bring to the Presidium all the gifts, insights and commitment of a deacon, and the appointment of a diaconal Co-President is an affirmation by the Church of that ministry. As a Co-President he or she would primarily be a representative of the Conference, not just of the Methodist Diaconal Order, and it would be important to ensure that that is recognised. The diaconal Co-President would share in all the duties listed in 7.7 above and would have the opportunity, in the Conference and throughout the year, to advocate diaconal ministry, so as to enhance awareness of the importance and possibilities of such ministry and to

encourage local churches and individual members to see their own lives and ministries in diaconal terms. She or he should be available as a pastor, especially to deacons, and to have time for those who seek help and advice.

10.2 We have considered whether the diaconal Co-President should preside at the Conference reception of deacons into full connexion, take over the presidential authority for resignation or emergency supernumeraryship of deacons, or assume the role currently assigned to the President at Convocation. But while there is an obvious parallel with the President who acts in these regards with presbyters, there would be the danger of a public perception that these functions were domestic activities relating to the Diaconal Order and not functions of the whole Church. The Convocation is a gathering of the members of a religious order of which the Warden is the head. In the context of Convocation a diaconal Co-President of the Conference does not displace the Warden.

10.3 Diaconal appointments are very diverse in nature and care is taken to ensure that charisms and skills of individual deacons are matched to the particular needs of the appointment a circuit has identified as specifically diaconal. As a result, it is not an easy matter to offer the kind of support that could be expected from a President's Assistant in the case of a presbyter, should the deacon involved be appointed as Co-President. For this reason as well as for the reason advocated in 7.10, we do not recommend that the office should be full time, but should be held alongside either a diaconal station if a deacon was in active circuit ministry, or retirement if a deacon was a supernumerary, thus allowing the deacon to remain rooted in circuit life whilst at the same time, raising the profile of diaconal ministry.

10.4 It was noted that a possible objection might be brought against the appointment of a diaconal Co-President that it would place an unbearable strain on the relatively small membership of the Diaconal Order. However, the Order is growing consistently year on year and in particular the numbers of deacons in active circuit appointments are considerably greater than its supernumerary membership, and of those members who are supernumerary, many are still very active in their local circuits. Given the proposal that the diaconal Co-President becomes a part-time role, combined with the fact that there is no bar on re-election to the office it was felt that numerical size of the Order would not present any real difficulties.

11. Relation of the Presidium to the General Secretary

11.1 The office of General Secretary was begun in 2003 following the 2002 report *Leadership in the Methodist Church*. In 2007 the description of the role was expanded to ensure that it was seen to relate to all areas of senior leadership in the Church, while being released from day to day management of the Connexional Team, although retaining overall responsibility for it. The office thus combines inspirational leadership in developing a shared vision of the Church's calling with executive responsibility for developing leadership structures, co-ordinating initiatives and giving oversight to their implementation. This is clearly stated in Standing Order 300:

he or she 'shall be the executive officer responsible for leading the mission and strategy of the Church. He or she shall play a part in the oversight and leadership of the Church, and in particular shall be responsible for developing strategic management and the Church's vision of unity, mission, evangelism and worship.'

In that capacity the General Secretary is to 'lead and direct the Connexional Leaders' Forum'. It is an office which offers great potential for the Church, but inevitably in the exercise of such responsibilities the General Secretary will be identified from time to time with controversial issues, as unpalatable measures are taken to implement necessary but painful change.

11.2 The responsibilities we have sketched for the Presidium, which reflect expectations Methodism has long held for the presidency, have a different emphasis. It has no management responsibilities. The emphasis is upon sharing a vision of God's calling, and inspiring the Church, locally as well as nationally, to embrace it, and upon the Presidium as the representative embodiment of the Conference's authority between its annual meetings being available as an impartial reference point when difficulties arise in local situations or connexionally.

11.3 At the same time there are similarities between what is to be expected of the President and Co-Presidents and what is to be expected of the General Secretary. Both need to visit widely to strengthen the bonds of the Connexion. Both need to be available as listeners, learning both about good practice and about difficulties and disappointments. Both need to share what is learned, so that others may profit from what works well and difficulties may be addressed. Both may share in discussion about possible solutions to problems and the development of policy in times of change. But it will be the responsibility of the General Secretary, not of the Presidium, to develop the mechanisms for the delivery of change and for ensuring that policies are carried through.

11.4 These responsibilities need to be spelled out, however briefly, in Standing Orders, and we offer a draft of a Standing Order for the Presidium and an addition to Standing Order 300 relating to the General Secretary in Appendix 3. If our recommendations are adopted these will be presented to the Conference of 2010. Their effect is to identify the distinctive ministry of the President and Co-Presidents and stress the importance of their working in conjunction with the General Secretary and he or she with them. In addition the General Secretary's relation to districts and circuits as well as to connexional structures is made clear.

11.5 By Standing Order the offices of General Secretary and Secretary of the Conference are to be held by the same person. The two offices are technically distinct and carry different responsibilities. Those of the Secretary of the Conference are nowhere comprehensively stated, although specific duties are identified in various contexts. Essentially it is an office in the service of the Conference and in support of the President and Vice-President. The relationship to the President and Vice-President of the person appointed is thus subtly different when he or she is acting in the capacity of Secretary of the Conference than when acting as General Secretary. But we are convinced that the arrangement, which was confirmed when it was reviewed in the 2007 report on senior leadership, is fruitful and we make no recommendation to change it.

12. Term of office

In addressing this question we have been governed by two convictions:

12.1 The first is that the President and Co-Presidents should all serve for the same length of time. It would undercut the emphasis on shared ministry if one member had an extended term while the others were annual and would create an imbalance in relationships.

12.2 The second conviction is that a term of five years is too long. It needs to be remembered that at present a President or Vice-President, although in office for only one year, effectively serves for three, one year as designate, when plans for the year of office are being developed and induction involves attendance at a number of committees, and one as 'Ex-', when experience gained is drawn upon in committees and elsewhere and some formal duties are carried out. With a five-year term of office this would mean seven years overall. It is doubtful if any lay person, unless retired, would be free to serve for so long. For the presbyter concerned a five-year Presidency would inevitably become a station, requiring stipend and manse. For a deacon in the active work, serving part-time, a shared appointment would be required, but, as noted above, each such appointment in different ways is specialised, and finding a second person would be difficult, if not impossible.

12.3 Moreover there is a danger that the distinction we have sought to draw between presidential leadership and that of the General Secretary would become blurred. It is the General Secretary upon whom rests the responsibility for developing and co-ordinating the Church's shared vision. The leadership to be expected of the President and Co-Presidents has a different emphasis. It is already evident that this distinction is not everywhere appreciated (although we believe it will become clearer as the arrangements adopted by the 2007 Conference continue to be implemented). Many of those calling for a five-year President may not have realised that what they are essentially asking for is already provided in the office of General Secretary.

12.4 Appointing officers for such an extended period is bound to have an effect in time on the process of appointment. It is highly likely that an interview process would be introduced, and the element of choice left to Conference members would be reduced. Appointment of the Presidium would become assimilated to the process for the appointment of District Chairs and senior members of the Connexional Team.

12.5 Nevertheless there remains a case for a longer term of office. We therefore offer to the Conference two alternatives: a three-year Presidium with the election of one member in rotation each year, or a one-year Presidium with an election of all three annually. We set out the arguments relating to each option in what follows, but express no preference. We consider that it is for the Conference itself to choose. The resolutions with this report are designed to enable the Conference to make that choice. We present the option involving the more extensive change to our tradition first.

13. Three-year Presidium

13.1 We are recommending that if a three-year pattern is adopted, one member should be elected in turn each year. It would of course be possible to have a three-year Presidium in which all three members were elected in the same year and there was no election in the intervening two years. We do not recommend this however for the following reasons:

- Electing one member each year would bring fresh insights and vigour to the Presidium. If all members began and ended at the same time a team which is intended to offer inspiration and insight to the Connexion might, over three years together, lose some of its edge. With an annual election of one member the Presidium would be regularly refreshed by the changing dynamic of new membership.
- The transition from one Presidium to the next would be greater with a complete break in membership every three years. Continuity would be more difficult to sustain.
- By electing one member each year the Conference would be better able to consider issues of complementarity and inclusiveness in the composition of the Presidium.
- An induction of one member each year, with just one keynote address to the Conference, would give greater prominence to the contribution of each member in turn. A triple induction in the same Conference every three years, with three addresses, would be more difficult to arrange.

13.2 To initiate a three-year 'rolling' pattern of election it would be necessary for it to be phased in: for example, in year one a President elected for three years and a Vice-President elected for one year, in year two the President and a lay Co-President elected for three years, and in year three the addition of a diaconal Co-President elected for three years. In the fourth year a successor to the President would be elected (in every case with designation in the year preceding election).

13.3 The advantages of a three-year Presidium include the following:

13.3.1 There would be greater continuity in the leadership offered. Experience gained in the first year could be built upon and shared in the following two. There would not be a total change of personnel each year. At present there is little or no opportunity for an ex- President or ex-Vice-President to make use of the experience they have gained in office.

13.3.2 There would be greater opportunity for collaboration and mutual understanding to develop between the members of the Presidium and the General Secretary.

13.3.3 District visits and similar events could be spread over the three years, allowing greater space for reflection upon the Church's calling and greater opportunity for engagement with outside bodies. There is evidence that the involvement of senior representative figures in such outside contacts is welcome support for the staff members assigned to such work.

13.3.4 There is evidence that some lay Co-Presidents might find it easier to set aside time for commitments spread over three years than coping with an intensive commitment over one year.

13.3.5 Three years would enable stronger ecumenical and other contacts to be built up.

13.3.6 A three-year term would respond to the frequent calls for a longer Presidency.

14. One-year Presidium

14.1 The disadvantages of three years and arguments in favour of one year include the following:

14.2 While at present districts and circuits are able to make arrangements for one year to cover the work the President or Vice-President does, this would be extremely difficult, if not impossible over three years, even if with a reduced work load Presidium members were able to continue with some of their regular commitments. For the presbyter involved at least, presidency would effectively become a separate station, with consequent stipend and manse costs, and would no longer be 'rooted' in the way advocated in 7.10 above. The difficulties for the diaconal Co-President would if anything be greater than in the case of one year.

14.3 The point made in the previous paragraph is reinforced by the experience of many ex-Presidents who find that at the end of the year of office it is difficult to return to normal duties and pick up the threads, as things have inevitably moved on. The difficulty would be greater over three years.

14.4 A three-year Presidium with one member serving virtually full-time and the others part-time would inevitably change the dynamics of their relationship.

14.5 While, as noted in 13.3.4, some lay Co-Presidents might find a three-year commitment easier to manage, other recent Vice-Presidents have stated clearly that they could not sustain a commitment for longer than one year in combination with their regular employment.

14.6 The danger noted in 12.3 of the distinction between the leadership of the Presidium and that of the General Secretary becoming blurred over five years also exists over a three-year term.

14.7 Although we recommend below that the Presidium should be elected by the Conference, more or less as at present, there might well be a tendency over time with a three-year Presidium to move to an appointment process with interview, thereby removing the effective choice from the Conference.

14.8 In the past the Conference has often elected a President or Vice-President for their particular emphasis, style or theological position, so that over a period of years the diversity of Methodism is honoured and each emphasis can be balanced or complemented by an alternative in another year. With a three-year term of office the Conference might be less willing to do this, so that President and Co-Presidents would regularly represent a 'safer', more 'middle-of-the-road' position.

14.9 The year of office under present arrangements, with its combination of travel, high profile events and committee work, can be very tiring. Would a three-year term be too exhausting or would it lighten the load?

14.10 Since the death of John Wesley in 1791 Methodism has held the conviction, shared by other Free Churches and the Church of Scotland, that the office of

President (and Vice-President) should not be held for long periods by any one individual, underlining the belief that oversight in the Church should rest collectively in the Conference.

15. The 'Presidency'

15.1 At present Standing Order 110 (2) and (3) identifies the President and Vice-President, together with the ex-President, ex-Vice-President, President-Designate and Vice-President-Designate as a group, to be known as 'the Presidency', charged with oversight, leadership and developing prophetic vision. With a one-year Presidium this group would be enlarged by three but could continue to provide for the sharing of experience by those who have already held office. With a one-year Presidium it should be retained. If however the Presidium were for three years the 'ex' members would need to serve for three years beyond their three in office as well as their designate year, a total of seven, which would make the arrangement extremely demanding. It would need to be discontinued, although there would still be value in those designated meeting with those in office. In either case, however, the title 'the Presidency' will be too confusing alongside 'the Presidium', and will have to be abandoned. There is only one other reference to it in Standing Orders.

15.2 At present it is a convention in the Conference that the ex-President and ex-Vice-President do not take part in debate. This aggravates the sense that once a person has ended their year of office they have nothing to contribute. Whatever the origin of this custom we recommend that it be abandoned, and offer a resolution to that effect. We do not believe the Conference would allow the privilege to be abused.

16. Election

16.1 As has been emphasised in 5.3, the President and Vice-President represent the authority of the Conference between its sessions and for that reason are elected by Conference members. We believe it is important to retain this principle, whether the proposed Presidium is for a one- or a three-year term. With a three-year term however the need for Conference members to be in a position to make informed choices, already felt to be important, would be accentuated. We understand that this matter is already under consideration by the Methodist Council in response to a Notice of Motion of 2008 (Agenda 2009 page 614) and that the Council proposes to introduce trial procedures in 2010. We offer the following suggestions as a contribution to the discussion, without offering any resolutions to implement them. We do however invite the Conference to confirm that the Presidium should be chosen by election.

16.1.1 Nominations should be made in advance of the Conference, sent in by a specified date just after the Spring Synods. Nominations should be accepted both from members of the incoming Conference and from members of the preceding Conference (whose membership technically continues until the next Conference convenes), who might well have valuable experience of those who had participated in debate.

16.1.2 In addition, the Conference is mainly composed of representatives of the Synods. We see no reason why nominations should not be made by the Synods themselves.

16.1.3 If that suggestion were to prove acceptable, however, we do not think it should be extended to the Youth Conference or the Convocation of the Methodist Diaconal Order, although both have the right to present resolutions to the Conference. They represent particular constituencies, whereas the Synods in principle represent the wide spectrum of Methodist membership in the circuits. In addition we would resist offering any temptation to regard the nomination of a Diaconal Co-President as 'something to be left to the deacons'. These elections are a matter for the whole Conference.

16.2 At present there is nothing in our constitution to prevent a President or Vice-President being elected for two years in succession. It has never happened, although Presidents have occasionally been elected for a second term after an interval. An obvious factor, apart from long-standing tradition, is the likelihood that the Conference would wish to test a person's conduct in office before making a decision, rather than designating them for the next year in the same Conference at which they are first elected. With a three-year Presidium however members of the Conference might be moved to nominate a person after two years in office to be designated for a further three-year term in the light of that person's proved ability. We do not think this would be in the best interests of the church. Not only would it create an imbalance in relations within the Presidium but what would effectively be a six-year term would encounter all the objections we have recited against one of five years. The distinction between the leadership offered by the Presidium and that of the General Secretary would be harder to sustain. We therefore recommend that there should be an interval of at least three years before a person can be re-elected as President or Co-President and see no reason why it should not apply equally in the case of a one-year Presidium.

17. Sharing of responsibilities

17.1 We have recommended above (7.7) that in general the formal duties assigned to the President in the Deed of Union and Standing Orders should be shared on a mutually agreed basis by all three members of the Presidium, and propose amendments to the Deed of Union and draft amendments to Standing Orders to that effect. There are over a hundred references in the Deed and Standing Orders which are relevant. In many instances the President is the named officer in formal processes (e.g. in giving formal notification of decisions or being the addressee for applicants seeking to transfer to the ministry from another church). In some the President may be called on to exercise judgement, but mostly, by Standing Order or simply by established custom, this is on the basis of advice. We see no reason why most of these duties should not be fulfilled by any one of the Presidium members.

17.2 We therefore recommend that it should be the responsibility of the Secretary of the Conference to convene a meeting of the Presidium before each Conference, so that a division of responsibilities for the coming year can be agreed, reported to the Conference and formally entered in the Journal for future reference in any disputed case.

17.3 The exceptions to the recommendation in 17.1 are:

- Deed of Union clause 33(b) and Standing Orders 160-163, which empower the President 'in case of great emergency', after consultation with Vice-President and Secretary, to summon an additional meeting of the

Conference. In such serious circumstances we consider it right that the President should continue to be person finally responsible for the decision after consultation.

- The President, as a presbyter, and failing him or her, the Ex-President, should continue to have responsibility for all matters where the final decision lies with the Ministerial Session of the Conference, that is, ministerial discipline on appeal and the oversight of ministerial students and probationers.
- In 10.2 we have recommended the diaconal Co-President should not take over the duties currently assigned to the President in relation to the Diaconal Order. In line with this we recommend that the President should normally preside at the Conference Diaconal Committee, although the diaconal Co-President cannot be excluded from this, since at present in the absence of the President and Vice-President or any other substitute appointed by the President, the Warden or any other deacon can be elected by the Committee to preside. The lay Co-President should become ex-officio a member of the Committee. The Warden should continue to preside at Convocation.

17.4 We do not think it appropriate to propose any change to the constitution of the Ministerial Session of the Conference, which consists exclusively of presbyters, so as to include the Co-Presidents in its voting membership, but we note that that session in 1990 adopted the principle that lay persons with relevant expertise could be present to assist its deliberations, and we recommend that the Co-Presidents should be included in the annual resolution passed by the session regarding those without vote who are permitted to attend.

18. Collaboration and Accountability

18.1 No Presidium can work effectively as a collaborative ministry unless there is regular face to face meeting and consultation between the members. Moreover it is essential that they maintain close contact with the General Secretary and he or she with them, as their respective leadership ministries to some extent overlap. We believe that it falls within the general co-ordinating remit of the General Secretary to arrange for such meetings, which can be prescribed in Standing Orders.

18.2 All authority in the Methodist Church is exercised in the last analysis by the Conference, which, under God, is responsible for the oversight of the Church. Our system includes a variety of provisions, both individual and corporate, by which we render account to one another in the exercise of the responsibilities entrusted to us. While not all these provisions are clearly spelled out in Standing Orders, we take the opportunity to state our understanding of accountability in relation to the Church's senior officers as it would operate under our proposals. In general the Connexional Team is under the supervision of the Methodist Council through its Strategy and Resources Committee. The Team's senior secretaries, who are appointed by the Conference, work under the direction of the General Secretary.

Our understanding of collaborative ministry implies that the President and Co-Presidents are accountable to one another, that they are collectively and individually accountable to the Conference through the Secretary of the Conference, and that, conversely, the Secretary is accountable to the Conference through them. As the

person appointed as Secretary of the Conference is thereby also the General Secretary, the office of General Secretary is also covered by this pattern of mutual personal accountability.

18.3 If the Conference decides to adopt the alternative of a three-year Presidium, we can foresee the possibility, although we hope it would never arise, where either a member of the Presidium, or the Church itself, would see it to be desirable that their appointment should come to an end before the completion of the three years. Someone's personal circumstances may change over such a length of time. The Church will need procedures for curtailment, and we lay the ground for dealing with this in the amendments proposed to the Deed of Union in Appendix 1 (clause 31(aB)). If they are adopted and subsequently confirmed appropriate Standing Orders will be brought to the Conference of 2011.

19. Consequential issues

19.1 If our recommendations are adopted amendments to the Deed of Union will be required, and these are presented in alternative forms in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 below. Numerous amendments will also be required to Standing Orders. Many are matters of detail; an indication of the more substantial amendments is given in Appendix 3. All will be brought to the Conference of 2011, if the amendments to the Deed of Union are adopted and confirmed. There will be other details to consider, such as the wording of the induction service used at the Conference, and the symbolic insignia of office to be handed over.

19.2 There are however two matters which have come to our attention in the course of our discussion and which we believe the Conference needs to address. One is the role of the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order if the proposal for a diaconal Co-President is carried. The other concerns the expenses incurred at present by the President and Vice-President in the course of their duties. We are not sure that at present these are adequately or fairly covered, and with the introduction of a Presidium it will be important to see that adequate provision is made for all three members. We include resolutions on both these points below.

Resolutions

- /1 The Conference receives the report
- /2 The Conference endorses the model of Presidential leadership set out in section 5 of the report.
- /3 The Conference adopts the recommendation that the current offices of President and Vice-President be replaced by a Presidium consisting of a presbyteral President, a lay Co-President and a diaconal Co-President.
- /4 The Conference resolves that the current practice by which the President and Vice-President are elected by the Conference after prior designation by ballot in the preceding Conference shall be continued for the Presidium.
- /5 The Conference resolves that each member of the Presidium shall hold office for three years, with one member being elected each year.
- /6 *[To be moved if resolution -/5 is not adopted]* The Conference resolves that the members of the Presidium shall each hold office for one year.
- /7 *[To be moved if resolution -/5 is adopted]* The Conference amends the Deed of Union as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
- /8 *[To be moved if resolution -/6 is adopted]* The Conference amends the Deed of Union as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.
- /9 The Conference resolves that the ex-President and ex-Vice-President need no longer feel bound by the convention that they do not contribute to Conference debates in the year that they cease to hold office.
- /10 The Conference directs the Methodist Council in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee to bring a further report, including amendments to Standing Orders, to the Conference of 2011.
- /11 The Conference directs the Methodist Council to review the responsibilities of the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order in the light of this report and after consultation with the Convocation of the Order bring recommendations to the Conference of 2011.
- /12 The Conference refers the matter of financial provision for the President and Co-Presidents to the Methodist Council for consideration and report.

APPENDIX 1
Changes to the Deed of Union if resolution -/5 is adopted
(Three-year Presidium)

14 (2) Membership. The Conference in its Representative Session shall comprise:

- (i) the persons who when it commences its sitting hold office as the President, **the lay Co-President (or, until such Co-President has held office, the Vice-President), the diaconal Co-President** and the Secretary of the Conference;
- (ii) the persons who last held office as the President and , **the lay Co-President (or, until such Co-President has held office, the Vice-President) and the diaconal Co-President;**
- (iii) the President-Designate, the ~~Vice-President-Designate~~ **Co-Presidents-Designate** and (if any) the Secretary-Designate nominated by the last preceding Conference **in accordance with the provisions of clause 31.** [*other heads not amended*]

25A [Diaconal Committee]

(b) [membership] (i) The President **and Co-Presidents** of the Conference;

(d) At every meeting of the committee the President **or the lay Co-President, or if both are absent the diaconal Co-President** if present shall preside. ~~If the President is absent from any meeting, he or she shall appoint the Vice-President or a former President or Vice-President to preside, failing which the Warden, or such other person as the committee may choose, shall during the absence of the President preside.~~

~~**26 The President.** The President of the Conference shall be a minister and shall be elected by the Conference by a clear majority of the votes cast. He or she shall be designated at the preceding Conference by ballot and by a clear majority of the votes cast.~~

The Presidium. (a) There shall be a Presidium of the Conference consisting of three persons, one of whom shall be a minister, one a lay member of the Methodist Church and one a deacon.

(b) The ministerial member of the Presidium shall be the President. He or she shall be the lead member and shall have all the powers rights and duties accorded to the President in the 1976 Act or any other Act or legal instrument or in this Deed.

(c) The lay and diaconal members of the Presidium shall be known as the lay Co-President and diaconal Co-President respectively.

(d) The lay Co-President shall be the Vice-President of the Conference for the purposes of the 1976 Act or any other Act or legal instrument.

(e) The Conference may provide by Standing Order for any of the powers rights and duties of the President specified in clauses 23 and 29 and sub-clauses (b),(c) and (i) of clause 25A of this Deed or in Standing Orders to be delegated to one of the Co-Presidents.

~~**27 The Vice-President. Election of the Presidium. The members of the Presidium** There shall be a Vice-President of the Conference who shall be a lay member of the Methodist Church or deacon and shall **each** be elected by the Conference by a clear majority of the votes cast. He or she **They** shall be designated at the preceding Conference by ballot and by a clear majority of the votes cast. **They shall be eligible for re-election after holding office only after an interval of three years.**~~

28 Who presides at the Conference. (a) At every meeting of the Conference the President or one of the Co-Presidents if present shall preside, **as shall be mutually agreed between**

them. save that the President may at his or her absolute discretion, without leaving the Conference, invite the Vice-President to preside for such period as the President may determine.

(b) If the President **and both Co-Presidents are** is absent from any meeting of the Representative Session **then the person who shall during such absence preside and act as President of the Conference shall be determined as follows:**

(i) the ex-President, ex-Co-President or ex-Vice-President the Vice-President shall during the absence of the President preside and if both are absent the ex-President, failing whom the ex-Vice-President, who has most recently held the substantive office and who is present and willing to act **(and if more than one such person is equally qualified, the one upon whom they are mutually agreed),** and

(ii) failing any such person then such other member of the Conference as the Conference may choose, shall during the absence of the President preside and act as President of the Conference and in each such case with all the powers rights and duties of the President.

(c) If the President is absent from any meeting of the Ministerial Session the ex-President who has most recently held the substantive office and who is present and willing to act, and failing any such person then such other member of the Conference (being a minister) as the Conference may choose shall during the absence of the President preside and act as President of the Conference and in each such case with all the powers rights and duties of the President.

((d) now deleted)

(e) The person who presides over the Conference under the provisions of sub-clauses (a) to (c) of this clause shall during the period of such presidency act as the President with all the powers rights and duties of the President.

31 Duration of Office. (a) The President, and Vice-President **lay Co-President and diaconal Co-President** of the Conference shall take office upon election, and subject to the provisions of this clause shall continue in office **for a period of three years** until the election of their respective successors **at the Conference next but two following.**

(aA) The Conference shall declare by resolution in respect of each member of the Presidium the date at which sub-clause (a) shall first take effect.

(aB) The Conference shall prescribe by Standing Order the procedure by which in any particular case the period of office may be terminated before its completion.

(b) The Secretary of the Conference shall take office on the first day of September next following appointment and in the interval is the Secretary-Elect, except that if during that interval there is a casual vacancy in the office of Secretary then the Secretary-Elect shall take office as Secretary forthwith.

(c) A casual vacancy arises in the office of President, Vice-President **lay Co-President, diaconal Co-President** or Secretary of the Conference if the holder of the office dies or becomes incapable of acting or unfit to act or ceases to be a minister, **deacon** or member (as the case may be) of the Methodist Church and a prospective casual vacancy arises in the office of Secretary of the Conference if the Secretary-Elect dies or becomes incapable of acting or unfit to act or ceases to be such a minister.

(d) If such a casual vacancy or prospective casual vacancy arises during a meeting of the Conference in its Representative Session it shall be filled by the Conference, which shall for that purpose determine its own procedures.

(e) Subject to sub-clause (d) any such casual vacancy shall be filled **until the next meeting of the Conference** by the substitution as President, Vice-President **lay Co-President, diaconal Co-President** or Secretary of the Conference (as the case may be) of the person who has most recently held the relevant office and is qualified, able and willing to act.

(eA) Subject to sub-clauses (b) and (d) any such casual vacancy in the office of Secretary of the Conference shall be filled by the substitution as Secretary of the person who has most recently held the relevant office and is qualified, able and willing to act.

(eB) In filling a casual vacancy in the office of President, lay Co-President or diaconal Co-President in accordance with sub-clause (c) or (d) or as a consequence of the operation of sub-clause (e) the Conference shall elect a person to complete the period of office in

respect of which the casual vacancy arose, and for that purpose shall determine its own procedures. Any person so elected shall be eligible for immediate re-election.

(f) Subject to sub-clause (d) any such prospective casual vacancy shall be filled by the continuance in office of the Secretary of the Conference, if able and willing to act.

(g) Failing any person to fill a casual vacancy or prospective casual vacancy in accordance with sub-clause (b), (e) or (f) the vacancy shall be filled (until the taking effect of an appointment by the Conference) by the appointment of a qualified person by such committee as may be specified by the Conference.

(h) Upon the occurrence of a casual vacancy in the office of Secretary of the Conference the President of the Conference shall act as and be the Secretary of the Conference for all purposes until it has been ascertained who has filled that vacancy in accordance with the above sub-clauses.

(i) If the President-Designate or ~~Vice-President-Designate~~ **,lay Co-President-Designate or diaconal Co-President-Designate** has died or is for any reason not appointed President or ~~Vice- Co-President~~ respectively the Conference shall determine its own procedure for the purpose of making the relevant appointments.

(j) In relation to the provisions in sub-clause (c) concerning the incapacity or unfitness of the President, ~~Vice-President~~ **lay Co-President or diaconal Co-President**, Secretary or Secretary-Elect of the Conference:

(i) any issue whether such a person is unfit to act on grounds apt to be the subject of a charge involving his or her standing as a minister or member shall be determined in accordance with the regulations of the Conference for the time being in force in relation to disciplinary proceedings;

(ii) any issue whether such a person is incapable of acting or unfit to act on any other grounds shall be determined in accordance with regulations from time to time made by the Conference for that purpose;

(iii) pending determination of any such issue there shall be power to suspend such a person from all or any of his or her functions in accordance with the relevant regulations.

33 Meetings. (b) In the case of great emergency, so judged by the President of the Conference, the Conference shall notwithstanding sub-clause (a) meet at such place and shall commence its sittings on such date in the year beginning on the 1st September next following the last preceding ordinary meeting of the Conference as the President of the Conference may, after consulting the ~~Vice-President~~ **Co-Presidents** and Secretary of the Conference, direct.

36 (c) [Journal to be signed] ...shall be subscribed by the President, ~~Vice-President~~ **Co-Presidents** and Secretary ...

37 Publications. All Standing Orders adopted or amended and all other general resolutions passed by the Conference held in any year and such other parts of its proceedings as the Conference or its President, Secretary and (with respect to the Representative Session only) ~~Vice-President~~ **Co-Presidents** may direct shall as soon as may be after its close be printed and published.

APPENDIX 2
Changes to the Deed of Union if Resolution -/6 is adopted
(One-year Presidium)

14 (2) Membership. The Conference in its Representative Session shall comprise:

- (i) the persons who when it commences its sitting hold office as the President, **the lay Co-President, the diaconal Co-President (or, until such Co-Presidents have held office,** the Vice-President) and the Secretary of the Conference;
- (ii) the persons who last held office as the President and , **the lay Co-President and the diaconal Co-President (or, until such Co-Presidents have held office,** the Vice-President);
- (iii) the President-Designate, the ~~Vice-President-Designate~~ **Co-Presidents-Designate** and (if any) the Secretary-Designate nominated by the last preceding Conference. [*other heads not amended*]

25A [Diaconal Committee]

(b) [membership] (i) The President **and Co-Presidents** of the Conference;

(d) At every meeting of the committee the President **or the lay Co-President, or if both are absent the diaconal Co-President** if present shall preside. ~~If the President is absent from any meeting, he or she shall appoint the Vice-President or a former President or Vice-President to preside, failing which the Warden, or such other person as the committee may choose, shall during the absence of the President preside.~~

~~**26 The President.** The President of the Conference shall be a minister and shall be elected by the Conference by a clear majority of the votes cast. He or she shall be designated at the preceding Conference by ballot and by a clear majority of the votes cast.~~

The Presidium. (a) There shall be a Presidium of the Conference consisting of three persons, one of whom shall be a minister, one a lay member of the Methodist Church and one a deacon.

(b) The ministerial member of the Presidium shall be the President. He or she shall be the lead member and shall have all the powers rights and duties accorded to the President in the 1976 Act or any other Act or legal instrument or in this Deed.

(c) The lay and diaconal members of the Presidium shall be known as the lay Co-President and diaconal Co-President respectively.

(d) The lay Co-President shall be the Vice-President of the Conference for the purposes of the 1976 Act or any other Act or legal instrument.

(e) The Conference may provide by Standing Order for any of the powers rights and duties of the President specified in clauses 23 and 29 and sub-clauses (b),(c) and (i) of clause 25A of this Deed or in Standing Orders to be delegated to one of the Co-Presidents.

~~**27 The Vice-President. Election of the Presidium. The members of the Presidium** There shall be a Vice-President of the Conference who shall be a lay member of the Methodist Church or deacon and shall **each** be elected by the Conference by a clear majority of the votes cast. He or she **They** shall be designated at the preceding Conference by ballot and by a clear majority of the votes cast. **They shall be eligible for re-election after holding office only after an interval of three years.**~~

28 Who presides at the Conference. (a) At every meeting of the Conference the President or one of the Co-Presidents if present shall preside, **as shall be mutually agreed between**

them. save that the President may at his or her absolute discretion, without leaving the Conference, invite the Vice-President to preside for such period as the President may determine.

(b) If the President **and both Co-Presidents are** is absent from any meeting of the Representative Session **then the person who shall during such absence preside and act as President of the Conference shall be determined as follows:**

(i) the ex-President, ex-Co-President or ex-Vice-President the Vice-President shall during the absence of the President preside and if both are absent the ex-President, failing whom the ex-Vice-President, who has most recently held the substantive office and who is present and willing to act **(and if more than one such person is equally qualified, the one upon whom they are mutually agreed)**, and

(ii) failing any such person then such other member of the Conference as the Conference may choose, shall during the absence of the President preside and act as President of the Conference and in each such case with all the powers rights and duties of the President.

(c) If the President is absent from any meeting of the Ministerial Session the ex-President who has most recently held the substantive office and who is present and willing to act, and failing any such person then such other member of the Conference (being a minister) as the Conference may choose shall during the absence of the President preside and act as President of the Conference and in each such case with all the powers rights and duties of the President.

((d) now deleted)

(e) The person who presides over the Conference under the provisions of sub-clauses (a) to (c) of this clause shall during the period of such presidency act as the President with all the powers rights and duties of the President.

31 Duration of Office. (a) The President, and Vice-President **lay Co-President and diaconal Co-President** of the Conference shall take office upon election, and subject to the provisions of this clause shall continue in office until the election of their respective successors.

(b) The Secretary of the Conference shall take office on the first day of September next following appointment and in the interval is the Secretary-Elect, except that if during that interval there is a casual vacancy in the office of Secretary then the Secretary-Elect shall take office as Secretary forthwith.

(c) A casual vacancy arises in the office of President, Vice-President **lay Co-President, diaconal Co-President** or Secretary of the Conference if the holder of the office dies or becomes incapable of acting or unfit to act or ceases to be a minister, **deacon** or member (as the case may be) of the Methodist Church and a prospective casual vacancy arises in the office of Secretary of the Conference if the Secretary-Elect dies or becomes incapable of acting or unfit to act or ceases to be such a minister.

(d) If such a casual vacancy or prospective casual vacancy arises during a meeting of the Conference in its Representative Session it shall be filled by the Conference, which shall for that purpose determine its own procedures.

(e) Subject to sub-clauses (b) and (d) any such casual vacancy shall be filled by the substitution as President, Vice-President **lay Co-President, diaconal Co-President** or Secretary of the Conference (as the case may be) of the person who has most recently held the relevant office and is qualified, able and willing to act.

(f) Subject to sub-clause (d) any such prospective casual vacancy shall be filled by the continuance in office of the Secretary of the Conference, if able and willing to act.

(g) Failing any person to fill a casual vacancy or prospective casual vacancy in accordance with sub-clause (b), (e) or (f) the vacancy shall be filled (until the taking effect of an appointment by the Conference) by the appointment of a qualified person by such committee as may be specified by the Conference.

(h) Upon the occurrence of a casual vacancy in the office of Secretary of the Conference the President of the Conference shall act as and be the Secretary of the Conference for all purposes until it has been ascertained who has filled that vacancy in accordance with the above sub-clauses.

(i) If the President-Designate or ~~Vice-President-Designate~~ **,lay Co-President-Designate or diaconal Co-President-Designate** has died or is for any reason not appointed President or ~~Vice-~~ **Co-President** respectively the Conference shall determine its own procedure for the purpose of making the relevant appointments.

(j) In relation to the provisions in sub-clause (c) concerning the incapacity or unfitness of the President, ~~Vice-President~~ **lay Co-President or diaconal Co-President**, Secretary or Secretary-Elect of the Conference:

(i) any issue whether such a person is unfit to act on grounds apt to be the subject of a charge involving his or her standing as a minister or member shall be determined in accordance with the regulations of the Conference for the time being in force in relation to disciplinary proceedings;

(ii) any issue whether such a person is incapable of acting or unfit to act on any other grounds shall be determined in accordance with regulations from time to time made by the Conference for that purpose;

(iii) pending determination of any such issue there shall be power to suspend such a person from all or any of his or her functions in accordance with the relevant regulations.

33 Meetings. (b) In the case of great emergency, so judged by the President of the Conference, the Conference shall notwithstanding sub-clause (a) meet at such place and shall commence its sittings on such date in the year beginning on the 1st September next following the last preceding ordinary meeting of the Conference as the President of the Conference may, after consulting the ~~Vice-President~~ **Co-Presidents** and Secretary of the Conference, direct.

36 (c) [Journal to be signed] ...shall be subscribed by the President, ~~Vice-President-~~ **Co-Presidents** and Secretary ...

37 Publications. All Standing Orders adopted or amended and all other general resolutions passed by the Conference held in any year and such other parts of its proceedings as the Conference or its President, Secretary and (with respect to the Representative Session only) ~~Vice-President~~ **Co-Presidents** may direct shall as soon as may be after its close be printed and published.

APPENDIX 3 Draft Standing Orders

If the Conference of 2010 adopts either version of the report's recommendations for a Presidium and amends the Deed of Union to give effect to its decision, it will be necessary to bring to the Conference of 2011 numerous amendments to Standing Orders to be adopted when the amendments to the Deed of Union are confirmed. Very many of these will be routine adjustments, but some are of greater substance. They are included here in draft form to enable members of the Conference to see how the reports main proposals will be spelled out.

SO 004 [definitions] *add: (x) 'the Presidium' means the collaborative team comprising the President, the lay Co-President and the diaconal Co-President.*

SO 110 [President and Vice-President] *replace by the following:*

The Presidium. (1) The President and the lay and diaconal Co-Presidents shall preside at the Conference and act as the representative embodiment of its authority as prescribed by the Deed of Union and in accordance with Standing Orders.

(2) They shall play a significant part in the oversight and leadership of the Church in responding to God's Spirit and developing prophetic vision, offering to the Church a pattern of collaborative ministry in which the distinctive gifts and callings of presbyters, deacons and lay persons are combined.

(3) They are to strengthen the bonds of the Connexion by a ministry of visitation to Districts and Circuits, to connexional committees and institutions and to the Connexional Team, offering encouragement and support and sharing insights gained by such visits.

(4) They shall work in conjunction with the General Secretary and support his or her ministry of strategic management and the development of the Church's vision. Through their membership of the Connexional Leaders' Forum they shall offer support and encouragement to its members in the exercise of their responsibilities and contribute to its discussions concerning the well-being and calling of the Church.

(5) Pursuant to clause 26(e) of the Deed of Union any or all of the powers, rights and duties assigned to the President in clauses 23, 25A (b), (c) and (i) and 29 of the Deed of Union and in Standing Orders, with the exception of those listed in clause (6) below, may be assigned by delegation to one or other of the Co-Presidents.

(6) The Standing Orders referred to in clause (5) above are as follows:

Sections 03 and 04

Standing Order 111 (1) in its application to the Ministerial Session of a Synod.

Standing Order 1145 in its application to ministers, ministerial probationers and ministerial students.

(7) The Secretary of the Conference shall compile and maintain a list of those Standing Orders which assign powers, rights or duties to the President which may be delegated in accordance with clause (5) above.

(8) Before each meeting of the Conference a meeting shall be convened by the Secretary of the Conference of the members of the Presidium who are to hold office in the following year, at which they shall agree upon their respective responsibilities for the coming year, and in particular shall determine in each case which of them shall be responsible for

exercising the powers and rights and carrying out the duties referred to in clause (5) above, including, where appropriate, who shall act as substitute in the absence or unavailability of the member specified. A record of their decisions shall be reported to the Conference and included in the Journal. Until such a record has been compiled for the coming year the record agreed in the previous year shall apply.

(9) The record compiled in accordance with clause (8) above shall be for all purposes conclusive evidence of the entitlement of a member of the Presidium to exercise any of the powers and rights and to carry out any of the duties assigned to the President in the clauses of the Deed of Union and Standing Orders specified in clauses (4) and (5) above.

(10) [If the office is for three years]

The General Secretary shall from time to time convene a meeting of those who have recently been members of the Presidium together with the current members for mutual encouragement and support.

[If the office is for one year]

The ex-President and ex-Co-Presidents shall meet together with the President, the Co-Presidents, the President-designate and the Co-Presidents-designate for mutual support and encouragement. Through their membership of the Connexional Leaders' Forum and in other ways they shall contribute to the Church's reflection upon its calling, drawing upon the experience gained during their time in office.

SO 230 (2) (ii) [membership of the Connexional Leaders' Forum] ~~The Presidency as defined in Standing Order 110(2)~~

[If the office is for three years]

The ex-President or ex-Co-President who held office in the preceding year and the President- or Co-President-designate.

[If the office is for one year]

The ex-President and ex-Co-Presidents and the President-designate and Co-Presidents-designate.

SO 300 [The General Secretary] *add at the end of (2): To that end he or she shall be available for consultation in districts and circuits in order that insights may be shared and difficulties addressed.*

add: (2C) The General Secretary shall work in conjunction with the President and Co-Presidents and be responsible for advising them of developments in connexional policy, and ensuring that they are adequately briefed for the exercise of their public role and in general receive adequate support for the fulfilment of their duties. To that end he or she shall meet with them at regular intervals in order to share information, to co-ordinate activities and to develop a shared vision of the Church's calling.

APPENDIX 4
Members of the working party

The Revd Dr Martyn D Atkins
The Revd Dr Brian E Beck (*Chair*)
Deacon Susan Culver
The Revd Kenneth G Howcroft (*Convener*)
Mrs Judy M Jarvis
Professor Esther D Reed
The Revd Dr Calvin T D Samuel
The Revd Alison Tomlin
Mr J Kenvyn Wales