



*For the Church Council Secretary/Treasurer*

March 2004

# ACHIEVING THE VISION

## An Appeal to all Methodists

The World Methodist Council, founded in 1881, links the family of Methodists and related United Churches in 135 countries. Through the Council, churches in the Wesleyan tradition connect by listening to and learning from one another, finding mutual support, and ways to engage in united witness. The WMC endeavours to strengthen international ties, promote understanding, clarify theological and moral standards, and identify priorities for the Methodist movement.

### **World Methodist Council programmes include**

- World Wide Evangelism Programmes including training for indigenous evangelism, multiple witnesses, founding new churches and developing new resources for Christian mission.
- An annual programme of world exchange of ministers and laity.
- Gathering of youth across national lines by the International Christian Youth Conferences.
- Strengthening family life in the various world cultures.
- Supporting Methodist education and sponsoring the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies.
- Encouraging a number of international Methodist Publications.
- Developing worship and liturgical life in the churches.
- The World Methodist Museum at the International Headquarters Building at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. Oversight of the Old Rectory, in Epworth, England in cooperation with the British Committee.
- Supporting human reconciliation and creating conditions that foster world peace recognizing those who make exceptional contributions to the cause of reconciliation and peace with the World Methodist Peace Award.
- Working for unity in the Faith through engagement and bilateral dialogue with other Christian World Communion. The Council's Geneva, Switzerland Office develops and maintains important relationships with Christian World Communion and the World Council of Churches based in Geneva.
- World Methodists join in efforts to respect human rights, to uphold justice and to stand alongside persecuted or needy Christian minorities who suffer because of injustice, want, or tyranny.

Dear fellow Methodists

John Wesley urged the first Methodists to “do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all times you can, to all people you can, as long as ever you can.”

Worldwide, the Methodist community has now grown to over 39 million members, with nearly double that number on the community roll. There are approximately eighty separate and autonomous Methodist churches spread over the world, and the body that links them all together is called the World Methodist Council.

What a mighty army for good this world community could and should be! But its collective witness is handicapped by lack of resources.

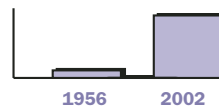
Under the title ACHIEVING THE VISION, the World Methodist Council recently launched an appeal to set up a \$20 million endowment, to provide a regular flow of income to support its work. That requires an average contribution of about 35p from every member – not a large sum for Europeans and North Americans, but a considerable amount for Methodists in some parts of the world. Our hope is that we can send a significant contribution from British Methodism.



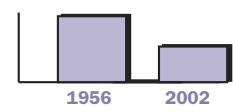
The Methodist Council has agreed to an appeal to the whole Connexion on or around Aldersgate Sunday. I commend this appeal to you, and urge you to support it as generously as you can.

**Neil Richardson**  
President of the Conference

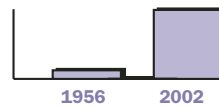
Methodist Membership Growth by Continent



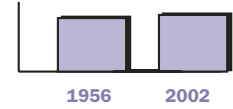
**AFRICA**  
1956: 1085500  
2002: 8967484  
Growth: 7881984  
Percentage Growth: 726%



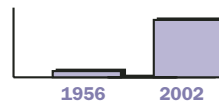
**EUROPE**  
1956: 946000  
2002: 511570  
Growth: -434430  
Percentage Growth: -45%



**ASIA**  
1956: 1230820  
2002: 9898336  
Growth: 8667516  
Percentage Growth: 704%



**NORTH AMERICA**  
1956: 15357365  
2002: 16263862  
Growth: 906497  
Percentage Growth: 5%



**SOUTH AMERICA**  
1956: 178600  
2002: 1647680  
Growth: 1469080  
Percentage Growth: 822%

*Taken from the World Methodist Handbook of information*

The **amazing growth** of the World Methodist family over the past four decades compels us to move forward in faith. Statistical evidence reveals that the Wesleyan family of faith has grown from 19.2 million members in 1956 to almost 39 million members in 2002. During these decades the Methodist community worldwide increased from 42.4 million to 74 million.

**Our urgent mandate is to create a financial foundation for the work of the Council.** Currently, the Council is forced to pursue its worldwide programme on an operating budget of only \$850,000 each year. The Council is dependent on year-to-year support from its member churches, each contributing voluntarily according to its ability. This dependency makes funding for vital World Methodist Council programmes uncertain at best, and severely restricted at worst. As a result, programme support often comes at the expense of barely adequate funding for essential administrative support, thus seriously compromising the council's ability to provide the programmes and leadership that member churches have rightly come to expect. Emergency appeals to member churches and to individuals have proven necessary to fulfil the Council's core commitments.

A \$20 million endowment will generate an income of approximately \$1million per year, and more than double the World Methodist Council's annual resources. The impact of this will be profound. Methodist Churches throughout the Connexion are asked to publicise the work of the World Methodist Council, and to consider holding a collection on or around Aldersgate Sunday for this appeal. Alternatively, churches may wish to give a direct donation for Achieving the Vision.

Individuals and Churches are asked to make donations to 'Achieving the Vision', the World Methodist Council Endowment Fund Appeal, by sending contributions **made payable to The Methodist Church Fund** c/o Ruby Beech at Methodist Church House, and clearly marked for this appeal by (for example) including the form opposite.

The World Methodist Council Endowment



Your Partnership Is Vital To Our Mission

YES! I/we desire to help the World Methodist Council 'Achieve The Vision' with...

- An INITIAL gift to help launch the WMC - ATV Endowment. £ .....
- An ANNUAL pledge to help 'Achieve the Vision', in the amount of £ .....  
During each calendar year (2004 - 2008)

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

Postal Code .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Donations to be sent c/o Ruby Beech at Methodist Church House with this slip clearly marked 'ACHIEVING THE VISION'. Donations may be gift aided either through the local church before being sent or through MCH if details are provided



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Tel: 01733 325002 Fax: 01733 384180 E-mail: sales@mph.org.uk