

Impact Work

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Action Required	Discussion

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To return to the conversation regarding how to take forward Notice of Motion 2121/112
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	MC/21/74
Consultations	Email exchanges with Council members who spoke to the previous paper on this subject

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The paper Impact Measurement MC/21/74 was shared with the Council in October 2021. The purpose of that paper was to try to respond to Notice of Motion 2021/112 (see appendix), adopted by the Conference, which amended resolution 62/2 of the report 'Looking to the Future'.
- 1.2 The Council was asked to discuss and consider the questions in the paper MC/21/74 and to share feedback. Amongst a range of responses, including ensuring that any impact assessment included all leaders in the life of the Church not only ordained colleagues, key to the discussion was a concern that the questions put in the paper were not necessarily the correct ones to have in response to NoM 2021/112. There was a sense that the starting point needed to be the priority of different pieces of work, rather than the details of the impact the work will create.
- 1.3 Reflecting after the Council meeting it was noted that there were perhaps two main thrusts to the conversation which asked related but distinct questions. The first, and perhaps not contained in the wording of the original Notice of Motion, is the macro question of 'should we be doing this work at all?' This question should be asked before a decision is made by either the Council or Conference and the work done on *Our Calling* and the Council Priorities were intended to help shape that decision making. The second thrust (and contained in the Notice of Motion text) was that when work is agreed by the Council and then passed to the Conference there needs to be some indication of where the impact of this work will be felt – not only in terms of finance but on the lay and ordained members of the Church. There would then be the opportunity to look at all that is being proposed cumulatively by the Council to estimate if it is indeed possible for the Church to undertake that work outlined.
- 1.4 The small group from within the Connexional Team taking this work forward have received further feedback from Council members (Nick Oborski, Ermal Kirby and Paul Booth) since the discussion in October. Taking those into account this paper now offers further and hopefully wider reflections for the Council to consider, recognising that after this discussion session there will need to be more work done and a further paper brought back to the Council to gain clarity on next steps.

2 Reflections

- 2.1 Reflecting on the feedback received, it appears that the cumulative impact of work is what is most difficult to deal with. The capacity of those picking up the pieces of work is exhausted. In light of this

it is felt that there needs to be a way of creating space prior to starting new things. There is a need to complete some of the work already underway before taking on new initiatives.

- 2.2 In 2010 NoM 201: Year of Jubilee went to the Conference. Within the text of the NoM it was suggested how the year may be used to offer “refreshment, release and restoration to our whole church.” This shows that eleven years on, heavy workloads and full capacity are not a new issue for the Church.
- 2.3 The sense of being overwhelmed with initiatives is being reported in many places, meetings, conversations, as well as on social media. As the Council we need to stop and listen to what is being said and decide how to respond and manage the capacity to avoid the Church feeling overloaded.
- 2.4 It was noted in the feedback from the last Council that many times it has been heard, “if we do this piece of work, what do you want us to stop?” People feel they are working at full capacity already and then a new initiative is introduced. The NoM 2021/112 addresses that work is being generated for good intentions but that the cumulative effect has a negative impact.
- 2.5 It was noted in the intervening conversations that a number of years ago all Notices of Motion had to change to include the financial impact. With this being acknowledged as a useful addition, it was wondered whether there is a need to have a resources/impact indicator as well. New ideas that are presented to the Conference are good, but the question needs to be asked, is the work critical for the Church to do now and are they really the thing God wants us to do. Calculating how much time something will take and whom it will impact is needed in some form as it is not possible to keep adding to the strain on resources in all parts of the Church.
- 2.6 There needs to be a way of assessing the critical need of pieces of work to ensure they will be achievable. Future work needs to be proportional and pragmatic for the Church.

3 For Discussion

- 3.1 The purpose of this paper is provide the space for the Council to discuss various options that are available to manage this process.
- 3.2 This is by no means an exhaustive list but a starting point for the Council to consider:
 - i. Update the front covers for Notice of Motion/ Memorials to include the impact of the work being requested, including the personnel (both lay/ordained and paid/volunteer) who will be impacted by the work.
 - ii. Add a year onto the deadline of pieces of work already in progress to create some of the capacity that is needed.
 - iii. Revisiting the process of Memorials and how work is agreed from them.
 - iv. Revisiting the process of Notice of Motions including the previously discussed number of signatories they require prior to debate.
 - v. Look into how the Council approves items of work.
 - vi. A moratorium on Notices of Motion/ Memorials for a period of time.
 - vii. Limiting the number of pieces of work the Conference can agree to.
 - viii. Debating how to curtail items on the more detailed workplan with the Council to provide information of work coming to the Conference over the next three years (the full workplan is available on a confidential basis from Jane Bates at batesj@methodistchurch.org.uk)
- 3.3 The Council is invited to have an open and searching conversation about how the issue of capacity within the Church can be managed.

Appendix 1 - Notice of Motion 2021/112: Looking to the Future

Mindful of the many valuable, exciting and necessary initiatives that the Conference has endorsed over recent years, the Conference nevertheless expresses concern that many of its people at every level of Church life are over-burdened.

The Changing Patterns of Ministry report documents that 'the experience of feeling overwhelmed by having too much to do was something frequently noted within conversations about ministerial workloads' (2.2.1) and this has significant effect on wellbeing (2.2.2). It is noted that the issues are systemic and institutional as well as personal. As an institution we must do our part in alleviating burden and not adding to it.

The decline in church members who have the time, energy, expertise or inclination (2.3.2) to administer many of the responsibilities for local societies further exacerbates our inability to action all the Conference resolutions that require a degree of local implementation.

At this Conference alone we are being asked to adopt resolutions that will considerably increase the workload of many who are already working beyond capacity.

This Notice of Motion in no way insinuates that any of the resolutions being presented are not worthy. Rather it recognises that we simply cannot implement all we would want to do at this time.

None of this is new but as the Secretary of the Conference states in his report, 'the last year has changed us...and periods of pandemic often serve to accelerate changes that were already in train' (5.1). The Conference can presume therefore that it is not going to get any easier to find the people, time and resources to implement resolutions they adopt. The Conference should be mindful of this when making decisions this week.

Therefore, in light of this increasingly limited capacity this notice of motion seeks to amend resolution 62/2 to:

The Conference commends the report and a record of its conversation about it to the Council for further deliberation and action. The Conference directs the Council to establish a framework to analyse the cumulative impact of all resolutions brought to the Conference with regard to resources, time and potential benefits. The Conference also appeals to the Council to recognise the reduced capacity at every level and therefore to apply the existing mandate the Council has to evaluate the number and cumulative time impact of resolutions presented to all future Conferences.