

13. Methodist Youth Conference Report

The Methodist Youth Conference (MYC) 2008 was held in Kings Park Conference Centre in Northampton from 21 to 23rd November 2008. The Theme for this year was 'Got Soul?', taking us on a journey that began with our relationship with God and leading to an exploration of God's future plans for you, for others and for the church.

Attending MYC as specially invited guests were Mark Wakelin (Secretary for Internal Relationships), Stephen Poxon (President of the Conference), David Walton (Vice-President of the Conference) and Martyn Atkins (General Secretary of the Methodist Church and Secretary of the Conference).

Workshops included one on 'Creating your own Labyrinth' which encouraged young people to think about different methods of prayer and speaking to God. This left many searching for new ideas and concepts for church worship. Sporting activities such as 5 a-side football and unihockey allowed the delegates to play and socialise and have lots of fun. 'Too young to serve? You called?' was a workshop which focused on vocation and greatly inspired many of the delegates. A space was also created where the delegates could ask some of our church leaders any questions they wanted. This allowed them to explore topics freely and to firm up their own opinions.

The debates this year allowed the delegates to have their say on a wide range of differing topics. Many passions were stirred and questions asked. Many of the delegates who attended felt that MYC effectively led to their voices being heard,

although questions were asked about whether a new way of doing this would be beneficial.

Worship explored different ways of worship ranging from multimedia videos with popular music to traditional prayer and modern worship songs. The worship band comprised different people from different generations and different parts of the country. The main resounding song from the weekend was a song by the Killers with lyrics of 'I wanna shine on in the hearts of men, I want meaning from the back of my broken hand . . . I got soul, but I'm not a soldier'

David Wigley (Wales) and Emma Parker (Southampton) had been elected last year to be the MYC representatives on the Conference's Music Resource Group. They gave a report to MYC about the new hymn book which got many young people excited that the church was responding to a need that they felt.

Cat Pratt (Manchester) and Rob Redpath (Manchester) who had attended the European Methodist Youth Council last year gave a report about what they learnt.

Youth Conference business

1. Youth Conference discussed the difficulties faced by some young people in engaging with forms and expressions of worship that they felt did not recognise their needs. It was felt that things would be improved if all Local Preachers had to spend time learning about the needs and worship styles of young people, and that this

needed to happen for both those in training and those already preaching in Circuits.

See resolution 13/2.

2. Youth Conference entered into an in-depth discussion about the Church's position on sexuality. Although a variety of views was expressed, when a vote was held Youth Conference voted to accept that they believed that the Methodist Church should welcome all people regardless of their sexuality and requested that working groups be established to discuss the Methodist Church's position on same-sex relationships.

See resolution 13/3.

3. Youth Conference noted that it is only possible to be a member of the Church in one District at a time. This led to members feeling a lack of belonging and stopped them from being able to take up posts with the Districts they spend the majority of the year living in if they did not want to move their membership from their 'home' District. It requested that the Conference should allow members of the Methodist Church to hold membership in multiple Districts.

See resolution 13/4.

4. Youth Conference discussed the difficulties young people have in taking up roles within the Church that enable them to exercise the ministries to which they believe they are called.

All believed that the ordained, authorised and lay ministries of the Methodist Church should span a wide age range and be diverse in many ways. It requested that young people be encouraged to explore their vocation and the options open for them in ministry.

See resolution 13/5.

5. Youth Conference noted that the whole body of Christ must stand up, unite and be counted in bearing witness in the modern world, but that communication between people of different ages is becoming more difficult. Youth Conference desires that the experiences of people of all ages are utilised for the Church. It requested that all people of the Methodist Church be encouraged to promote better communication throughout the Church.
6. Youth Conference discussed the importance of the ongoing work on Youth Violence which had been approved at the 2008 Conference. The Youth Conference requested that interested delegates become contactable through email to provide a resource for the Youth Violence working group and also that Youth Assembly delegates continue to include the issue in their personal prayers.
7. Youth Conference noted that MAYC Sports events had not happened for many years. Many young people missed them and requested that this

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be looked at by the Youth President and the Connexional Team.

8. Youth Conference noted that everyone should feel comfortable when taking on local preacher training and should not feel restricted. It was felt that the current training does not enable this. They requested that *Faith & Worship* be revised to be more accessible for everyone and include more creative approaches.

See resolution 13/6.

9. Youth Conference believed that the Methodist Church should be more vocal on public issues and major international events. The delegates acknowledged that much was being done already but felt that pressure needed to be kept up. This was referred to the Youth President to take steps to ensure that young people

hear of the work that is already happening.

Elections

Sarah Malik (Sheffield) was elected to be Youth President from December 2008 until December 2009.

There were no candidates for Youth President for Connexional Year 2009/10 and this would be voted on at the next Youth Assembly.

Matt Collins (Wales), Iain Dover (Cambridge), Fiona Holmes (Newcastle) and Rachel Parkes (Sheffield) were elected to sit on the Youth Participation Strategy reference group to ensure that the wider voice of young people was heard. Louise Kuteyi (London) and David Davies (Manchester and Stockport) were elected as representatives to the Youth Violence working group to add the wider voice of young people and diversity to the group.

***RESOLUTIONS

13/1. The Conference received the Report.

Under Standing Order 250(5), the Youth Conference may adopt and submit to the Methodist Conference if it so wishes resolutions on any connexional issue. Although that Standing Order was suspended for the connexional year 2008-2009, pending the establishment of arrangements for the Youth Participation Strategy, the Conference is invited to consider the five such resolutions set out below.

13/2. Training for Local Preachers

The Conference directed the Methodist Council:

(a) to explore the possibility of:

- (i) including training on the effective leading of worship at services intended primarily for young people or at which young people are expected to form a significant part of the congregation as a mandatory module in the initial training of Local Preachers (*Faith & Worship*),
- (ii) making funding available specifically for courses on such services as part of Continuing Local Preacher Development; and

(b) to report to the Conference of 2011.

13/3. Sexuality

The Conference directed the Methodist Council to establish a working group to develop materials which will assist local churches and circuits to discuss and make clear the 1993 sexuality resolutions and encourage them to be more open to the discussion of all issues relating to sexuality.

13/4. Dual Membership

Resolution 13/4 was not accepted, but referred to the Faith and Order Committee.

The Conference directs that Standing Orders be brought to the Conference of 2010 to allow members of the Methodist Church to hold membership in more than one Local Church (including cases where the Churches are in separate Circuits and Districts) for the purpose of satisfying membership requirements related to the holding of office.

13/5. You called? Too young to serve?

The Conference directed the Methodist Council to produce proposals that will open the programmes for *Extending Discipleship Exploring Vocation* to young people and equip them for ordained and lay ministry, and to report to the Conference of 2010.

13/6. Revised *Faith & Worship*

The Conference directed the Methodist Council to revise the *Faith & Worship* course for Local Preachers so that it is accessible to everyone and includes more creative and varied approaches to training, and to report to the Conference of 2011.