

Basic Information

Title	2011 Year of the Bible: Response to Biblefresh
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Status of Paper	Final
Resolution/s	The Conference receives the Report

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To outline and inform the Conference about the Connexional Team response to supporting Biblefresh as the starting point for engaging with our roots as a disciple making movement.
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction – background and overview of Biblefresh.• The Bible and Discipleship – our year long communications strategy to promote resources for engaging with the Bible.• Biblefresh Festivals – summary of the aims.• Co-sponsor The Big Read – summary• Summary – how Biblefresh fits into our discipleship emphasis
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	Following up the 2009 Conference decision to designate 2011 as the Year of the Bible in response to Biblefresh.
Impact	Aim to generate Connexion-wide engagement and support for the Methodist response to the Biblefresh opportunity.
Risk	

1. Introduction

1.1 The 2009 Methodist Conference designated 2011 as the Year of the Bible, as part of its commitment to Biblefresh. This particular year marks the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible which brought the Scripture to people, and, when read aloud, had a dramatic effect on church attendance and people's lives. Four hundred years later we want to use the anniversary to celebrate Scripture as a gift from God, taking up the challenge of encouraging people to read and engage with it in fresh, life-changing ways and to grow in confidence in finding ways to make it accessible to our contemporary cultures.

1.2 This designation of 2011 as Year of the Bible is the Methodist response to the Biblefresh initiative. Biblefresh is a movement of churches and agencies (similar to Hope 08) seeking to inspire churches to a greater confidence in the Word of God. The Methodist Church is one of the churches sponsoring Biblefresh and part of the movement. The centrepiece is a call to local churches to make four pledges to encourage everyone to:

- READ the Bible;
- Be TRAINED in handling the Bible effectively;
- Give to TRANSLATE the Bible in Burkina Faso;
- Provide the opportunity for people to EXPERIENCE the Bible in new and creative ways.

2. The Bible and Discipleship

2.1 John Wesley said we were raised up by God to bring 'Scriptural Holiness' to the land. We want to learn how to do this in ways that deepen our love of God and neighbour and make the Bible accessible to others.

2.2 The focus on the Bible is a starting point for becoming more serious about discipleship, and our roots as a disciple making movement. To undergird this we would like to build on the energy that was generated by the *Pray Without Ceasing* initiative and use a similar model. Namely:

- If possible, identify a contact person in every District, to encourage a two way dissemination of information and stories and to be an active advocate for Biblefresh as a means of deepening discipleship;
- Create a website for discipleship (www.deepeningdiscipleship.org.uk) from 1ST September 2010 which will be inter-active and promote resources and stories about ways of engaging with the Bible, to enable people to love God and neighbour more deeply; Give people an opportunity to sign up for regular news updates;
- Disseminate a leaflet to invite people to 'Deepen Discipleship' by freshly engaging with the Bible;
- promote 'The Big Read' (see further below);
- suggest ideas for how to engage in a 'Marathon Read' of the Bible.

3. Biblefresh Festivals

3.1 It is planned to encourage, inspire and work in partnership with Districts to resource a number of Biblefresh Festivals throughout the Connexion in the spring of 2011. We hope that the five to ten Festivals will act as beacons to inspire local churches to adapt the format to their own contexts. Further details about how to get involved in a Festival will be available on the new website from September: www.deepeningdiscipleship.org.uk or are presently available from the Evangelism, Spirituality and Discipleship team at esdadmin@methodistchurch.org.uk

4. Co – Sponsor The Big Read

- 4.1 As the Methodist Church we are sponsoring a third of the cost of an ecumenical post dedicated to promoting 'The Big Read'. 'The Big Read' is based on Tom Wright's book *Matthew for Lent*. Summer and Autumn 'reads' are also planned. It plans to provide:
- a downloadable/online introductory talk for five sessions during Lent – by the author of the book;
 - online facilitator training and support – e.g. blog forum;
 - house groups/Bible Study group materials aimed at different ages/micro-cultures;
 - downloadable teaching materials/publicity materials available'
 - central liaison and co-ordination for people looking for a group in their area.

5. Summary

- 5.1 The Year of the Bible and Biblefresh is a timely opportunity for the Methodist people, as we begin to re-engage with our roots as a disciple making movement: an imaginative re-engagement with scripture at every level of church life has the potential to deepen our spirituality, challenge our discipleship, and sharpen our witness.

5.2 *"Come then, divine Interpreter, the scriptures to our hearts apply"* (Charles Wesley H&P 480)

*****RESOLUTION**

27/1. The Conference received the Report.