

Basic Information

Title	Methodist Council Report
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Status of Paper	Final
Resolution/s	See end of the Report

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	Report on the work of the Methodist Council 2009–10.
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key themes and issues• Governance responsibilities• Other business• Annual Report and Financial Statement for year ended 31 August 2009• District Allocations of Assessment and Computers for Ministry Levy 2010–11
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	The full Council Minutes and papers are available on the Church website www.methodist.org.uk

1. The Methodist Council has had a productive and heartening year fulfilling its responsibility of keeping the life of the Methodist Church under review and proposing to the Conference changes which will make the Church's life, work, mission and worship more effective in sharing God's mission and giving glory to God. Led with a light touch by its new Chair, the ex Vice-President David Walton, it has given spiritual leadership to the Church graciously and in good humour, even when under pressure. It has done so in a way that is rooted in worship and prayer as it has sought to discern and articulate a vision of what being a body of followers of Christ who are called to serve the present age might require of us all.
2. Members of the Council are representatives of various officers and bodies in the life of the Church to the Council; and equally representatives of the Council to those bodies. The responsibilities of the Council and what can be expected of its members are summarised in the paper *Expectations of Various Groups* at the start of this Agenda.
3. The full range of papers presented to the Council and the outcomes of the Council's deliberations on them have been available on the Church's website during the year (www.methodist.org.uk). This report mentions some of the key themes and issues that the Council has addressed during the year. It also indicates some other issues which it has addressed that are not presented to the Conference for the Conference to make its own judgement; and outlines the other actions taken by the Council, within the powers allocated to it by the Conference.

*In what follows * indicates that the fruits of the Council's work are presented elsewhere in the Agenda of the Conference.*

Key Themes and Issues

4. Not all the Council's deliberations were directed towards the inward workings of the Church. The Council heard with concern of the situations in Fiji and Haiti. Considerable time was spent during the year considering whether a new Statement on Abortion* was required, and on matters to do with Israel-Palestine*.
5. Within the life of the Church, there were reports on Safer Recruitment*; Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults*; Safeguarding Children; Personnel Files for Presbyters and Deacons*; Early Retirement for Presbyters and Deacons through ill health*; Pension costs and benefits*; and the Review of Committees*.
6. The Council also received reports from a working group looking at the topic of *One Connexion: Many Nations and Jurisdictions*. The group highlighted issues of a lack of clarity about what it means to be "connexional"; a tension over whether the Methodist Church is at heart an institutional church or a movement; questions of subsidiarity (i.e. where power resides); and difficulties over dealing with different statutory regimes, languages and cultures. It pointed to two images that might be helpful in dealing with these issues: the Connexion as a diverse collection of people journeying as pilgrims; and as being members of one family, giving and receiving hospitality. The Council thanked the group for its work; asked the Faith and Order Network to take up the issues of how the nature and mission of the Church are experienced and expressed in Methodism today; asked that workshops be held for members of the Connexional Team to raise awareness of these matters, particularly the jurisdictional ones; and recommended that the *Belonging Together* partnership seeks to address the issues around church fellowships operating in different languages.
7. Following the consolidation of connexional grant-making into a single system of inter-linked processes and the formation of a Connexional Grants Committee, the Council agreed on some strategic guidance for that Committee. These were to the effect that the Council would not dictate how much of the funds available to the Committee from general funds should be spent on the various areas of the Church's work through the various grant-making "streams"; the Committee should give suggested guidance on spending for the various "streams" in

tandem with the Council's budget-making process; special criteria and processes should be developed for dealing with Chaplaincies; and application-based research projects should not be funded by this route.

8. The Council had a long and careful discussion of the Review of the Resourcing Mission Office, currently located in Manchester, which formed the last major part of the Team Focus process. Members of the Council were sensitive to dealing with the feelings of members of the staff and others in the connexion, as well as varying perceptions of the needs of the Church. The Council unanimously expressed its gratitude to the staff of the Resourcing Mission Office for the work they do and the way they had co-operated with the review process. After alternative proposals were considered which failed to reach a majority, the Council voted by a two-thirds majority that specialist areas of property work (conservation; listed building; landfill grants etc.) should remain in Manchester; a new post of Connexional Property Co-ordinator should be established in the Team based in Methodist Church House, together with posts dealing with property grants, finance, governance and database management. Further discussion of these matters can be found in a reply to a Memorial on the subject elsewhere in the Conference Agenda*.
9. There was a similarly long, careful and prayerful discussion about the future of Wesley College, Bristol*. With regret, the Council agreed by over a 75% majority to recommend to the Conference the closure of the College.
10. The Council gave further consideration to the uses of "discipleship" as a focussing theme for the mission of the Church and the work of the Connexional Team and others. The Council also reviewed the work undertaken by the Team in 2008-9, and prioritised the work to be undertaken by the Team in 2009-10. Throughout the year growing unease was expressed about the sheer volume and strain of work coming on all the governance bodies of the Church and also the Connexional Team. The Council asked that this be brought to the attention of the Conference. The officers of the Council and the Strategy and Resources Committee are to consult others and bring recommendations about possible ways forward to the Council in the coming connexional year.

Governance responsibilities

11. In accordance with its governance responsibilities, the Council:
 - 11.1 gave consent for resolutions to be presented to the Conference for the leasehold transfer of Southlands College to Roehampton University and associated changes in governance arrangements*;
 - 11.2 agreed that the Iberian Estate Company and the Primitive Methodist African Missionary Society be wound up;
 - 11.3 approved a Memorandum of Understanding between Christian Aid, MRDF and the Methodist Church;
 - 11.4 delegated responsibility as managing trustees for 4 John Wesley Road, Peterborough to the Strategy and Resources Committee;
 - 11.5 approved interim arrangements for the Epworth Press*;
 - 11.6 appointed a Connexional Reconciliation Panel;
 - 11.7 appointed a group to consider the processes connected with presidential enquiries;
 - 11.8 approved the terms of reference and additional names for the reconfigured Music Resources Group;

- 11.9 noted decisions taken by the Strategy and Resources Committee to improve the governance scrutiny procedures;
- 11.10 co-opted additional members to the Ministerial and Diaconal Candidates Selection Committees;
- 11.11 approved an amendment to the scheme for the Leys and St. Faith's schools;
- 11.12 appointed additional members of the Connexional Grants Committee, its sub-committees and its "streams";
- 11.13 made sundry other appointments in its own right, and nominations and re-nominations to the Conference*;
- 11.14 approved the Special Resolutions from the 2009 Conference;
- 11.15 approved a Homeworking Policy for Methodist Council employees;
- 11.16 approved a Memorandum in respect of the Wesley Study Centre, Durham;
- 11.17 resolved to make an application to become a member of ROOTS for Churches Limited;
- 11.18 recommended to the Conference revised financial reporting procedures*;
- 11.19 received reports from committees and trustee bodies which are accountable to the Conference.

Other Business

12. The Council also considered:

- 12.1a Fundraising Strategy for the Methodist Church;
- 12.2a Communication strategy;
- 12.3 Social Media Guidelines*;
- 12.4 the implementation of a "Living wage" policy throughout the connexion*;
- 12.5 the development of Women's Network into Methodist Women in Britain*;
- 12.6 developing policy, practices and structures in the Church for dealing with matters of equality and diversity*;
- 12.7 its response to a draft of the report Leading and Presiding: developing the Presidency of the Conference*;
- 12.8 the consultation process on Hope in God's Future, and the Carbon Reduction project*;
- 12.9 the size of circuit meetings and managing trusteeship;
- 12.10 the Methodist Heritage report*;
- 12.11 the creation of the new authorised collection of hymns and songs, Singing the Faith, and the rolling resource of additional material*;
- 12.12 work on the missing generation* and youth participation*;
- 12.13 recommendations about appeals to the Conference in discipline cases*.

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR 2008-9

13. Standing Order 360(1) states that:

The Methodist Council shall submit to the Conference annually a unified statement of connexional finances, clearly distinguishing between restricted and unrestricted funds and conforming to the law and accounting regulations, so as to give an overall view of those moneys and other assets for which the council is responsible.

14. The Consolidated Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Methodist Council for the year ended 31 August 2009 fulfils this requirement. The Council at its meeting on 10-12 April 2010 approved the report and authorised that it be signed on its behalf. The full consolidated report is available for viewing or downloading from the Methodist Church website: www.methodistchurch.org. Copies will also be available for inspection at the Conference.

DISTRICT ALLOCATIONS FOR THE YEAR 2010/11

District Number	Name	Number Pres/Deacon 2008-9	Number Lay Emp's 2008-9	Basic Assessment	Computers for Ministry	Total Due from Districts
1	Cymru	10.9	0	57,936	1,950	59,886
2	Wales	60.63	4	391,186	9,750	400,936
5	Birmingham	61	21	473,775	9,600	483,375
6	Bolton and Rochdale	35.67	12	270,525	5,400	275,925
7	Bristol	65.41	19.67	489,423	10,200	499,623
9	Cumbria	24.5	2.67	165,304	3,750	169,054
10	Channel Islands	10.33	4.33	70,179	1,650	71,829
11	Chester and Stoke	46.92	24.33	388,341	7,800	396,141
12	Cornwall	45.5	21.33	319,712	7,200	326,912
13	Darlington	46.25	18.67	324,667	7,650	332,317
14	East Anglia	62.31	3.67	405,603	9,750	415,353
15	Isle of Man	7	1	43,670	1,050	44,720
16	Leeds	54	9	347,223	8,400	355,623
17	Lincoln and Grimsby	37.5	11.33	272,456	5,700	278,156
18	Liverpool	34.25	14.67	296,160	5,250	301,410
19	Manchester and Stockport	59.83	22	428,040	9,600	437,640
20	Newcastle upon Tyne	51	9.33	360,225	7,650	367,875

21	North Lancashire	48.7	14.33	343,218	7,650	350,868
22	Nottingham and Derby	65.25	16.67	464,318	10,200	474,518
23	Northampton	80	13.67	554,684	12,000	566,684
24	Plymouth and Exeter	56.75	22.33	425,661	8,850	434,511
25	Sheffield	57.85	27.33	456,419	9,900	465,569
26	Southampton	69.9	23.33	527,919	10,650	538,569
27	West Yorkshire	51.3	15.33	378,728	7,800	386,528
28	Wolv. and Shrewsbury	57.94	10.67	391,389	9,150	400,539
29	York and Hull	59.11	18	448,164	9,150	457,314
31	Scotland	18	2	123,599	2,700	126,299
32	Shetland	2	0	14,678	300	14,978
34	Bedfordshire, Essex & Herts	66.2	13	488,924	10,350	499,274
35	London	131.16	19.67	968,503	20,250	988,753
36	South East	79.83	19	624,795	12,300	637,095
		1556.99	413.33	11,315,424	242,850	11,558,274

*****RESOLUTIONS**

30/1. The Conference received the Methodist Council Report.

30/2. The Conference received the Report on the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Methodist Council for the year ended 31 August 2009.

30/3. The Conference adopted the allocation to the districts of the Methodist Church Connexional Assessments and Computers for Ministry Levy.