

**World Methodist Committee Report 2012/13****Basic Information**

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<b>Status of Paper</b>	Annual report as required by SO 335
<b>Action Required</b>	To receive the report.
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	76/1. The Council receives the report.

**Summary of Content**

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	This report summaries the on-going agenda and initiatives of the World Methodist Council (WMC) following its meeting in London during September 2013.
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## World Methodist Committee Report 2013/14

### 1. World Methodist Council Meeting.

- 1.1. The World Methodist Council (WMC) met at Wesley's Chapel in London from the 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> September 2013. Welcoming nearly 300 delegates from 36 countries, The Revd Dr Lord Griffiths said "you haven't come to visit us, you have come home" in recognition of the distinctive role that the Chapel plays as the "mother church" for much of World Methodism. The Methodist Church in Britain was represented by 23 members of the World Methodist Committee.
- 1.2. Through small group work, plenary sessions, worship, standing committees and informal conversation the Council continued to work on issues raised at the last Council meeting in Durban 2011 and to extend its agenda as it responds to the needs of the gospel throughout the world. The following matters are of particular note for the Council:

### 2. Resolutions on Social and International Affairs.

- 2.1. The WMC passed two important resolutions which the World Methodist Committee will reflect on with appropriate members of the Connexional Team and others to determine the best way of sharing and acting upon them within the Methodist Church in Britain.
- 2.2. The first resolution was on Syria. It expressed concern about the continued and escalating violence in Syria and the surrounding region, deplored the use of religion as a political wedge to pit peoples against one another and noted with horror the use of chemical weapons. In terms of action, the WMC strongly condemned the use of violence, stands in solidarity with the suffering and urges member churches to use their own governmental channels to bring international pressure to urge all participants to use diplomacy and restraint.
- 2.3. The second resolution was on the arms trade and reads "Believing that the way of Jesus Christ is a way of non-violence and peace and that we are called to live in a way in which "swords are turned into ploughshares, spears into pruning hooks and nations no longer train for war" (Micah 4.3), and as the World Methodist Council meets in London to debate issues of concern to its global body, members are deeply troubled by the Arms Fair being held at the same time in the capital. The World Methodist Council:
  - Condemns the profiteering by governments and companies from the sales of arms
  - Supports those Christians and others engaged in peaceful protest against the fair
  - Urges its member churches to support and encourage organisations working for peace and dialogue
  - Urges its member churches to disinvest from any holdings in organisations involved in the arms trade"

In response to this resolution the WMC also resolved to ensure that its investment policy reflected this commitment.
- 2.4. While originating in the work of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Men (WFMUCM), the WMC also adopted a resolution challenging member churches to undertake a project at the same time as the next World Methodist Conference in 2016 to help address the issue of world hunger. This builds on the work that the WFMUCM undertakes with the *Stop Hunger Now* organisation and further details will follow.

### **3. Ecumenics and Dialogue**

- 3.1. The WMC has a long and distinguished history of dialogues with other worldwide churches and communions. During this quinquennium the dialogues are with the Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Churches and the World Baptist Alliance. The Baptist dialogue is due to begin in 2014 and the Revd Dr Timothy Macquiban, Superintendent of the Cambridge Circuit has been appointed as co-chair.
- 3.2. To ensure that these dialogues represent contemporary theological thought and experience of the WMC member churches work is also in progress on the establishment of a small global Methodist 'faith and unity' commission. As well as resourcing the dialogues it is hoped that this group might also act as a forum for discussion of theological issues within the world Methodist family itself.

### **4. The Work of Other Standing Committees**

- 4.1. The Youth and Young Adults Committee is working on increasing the participation of young people within the WMC.
- 4.2. The Evangelism Committee through the World Evangelism division of the WMC continues to organise a range of training and evangelistic activities throughout the world (see [www.worldmethodist.org](http://www.worldmethodist.org)).
- 4.3. The Education Committee continues to promote exchange and dialogue between Methodist Schools and Higher Education Institutes throughout the world.
- 4.4. The Theological Education Committee is exploring ways of promoting theological education that is distinctively Methodist and is looking to establish a Wesleyan and Ecumenical Leadership Academy.
- 4.5. The Family Life Committee, although small, intends to produce a range of electronic resources including material about children.
- 4.6. The Worship and Liturgy committee committed to placing a range of worship resources, including the material used at Council meetings, on the website and to look at the issue of dance in worship within the Wesleyan and Methodist tradition.
- 4.7. The newly formed Inter-religious committee is exploring what it means to have "loving, generous, open relationships" with people of other faiths and is collecting stories to educate and encourage which will be shared through the WMC website.

### **5. Epworth Old Rectory**

- 5.1. The WMC received a report which;  
Outlined the three fold aim of the Rectory: Inspiring, Conserving, Sustaining.  
Explained the development plan for the Rectory which is in four phases:  
Phase 1 - External conservation and the Hearth Project which will be complete by Nov 2013.  
Phase 2 - Interpretation planning, improving access and visitor facilities.  
Phase 3 - Restoring the house.  
Phase 4 - Building a visitor centre, extending the car park, improving signage and surroundings.

- 5.2. There has been on-going discussion with the WMC over the ownership and responsibility for the Epworth Old Rectory. With considerable help from the (British) Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice, Mrs Louise Wilkins, a definitive position has been established and the WMC adopted the following resolution which reflects this:

“The World Methodist Council notes that Epworth Old Rectory is held on trust by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) for the purposes of the World Methodist Council.

The WMC confirms both the responsibilities and opportunities this ownership gives us.

The WMC confirms that it will continue to offer financial support, administrative support and a connection between Epworth Old Rectory and the World Methodist and Wesleyan family.”

## **6. Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies**

- 6.1. The 13<sup>th</sup> Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies met at Christ Church College Oxford with the theme *Wesleyan Communities and the World Beyond Christianity*. While smaller than in recent meetings, the programme enabled participants to explore “how Methodists from the Wesley age to the present have related to persons of other religious faiths, to persons with no traditional religious faith, and with secular institutions and movements”. Preparations are underway for the next institute in 2016.

## **7. The Methodist Peace Award**

- 7.1. The 2013 World Methodist Council Peace Award was presented to Marion and Anita Way for their “work in mission and bringing dignity and economic empowerment to the poor throughout Angola and Brazil”.

## **8. Achieving the Vision**

- 8.1. Work is continuing on promoting the Achieving the Vision endowment fund within the Council’s member churches. Within MCB this included materials for use on Aldersgate Sunday 2013 (see [www.methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/methodist-special-sundays/aldersgate-sunday](http://www.methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/methodist-special-sundays/aldersgate-sunday)) and the World Methodist Committee is delighted that a number of local churches, Circuits and Synods have taken up the 50p member challenge, although we have some way to go to meet the MCB target.

## **9. World Methodist Conference & Council Meeting in 2016.**

- 9.1. The next World Methodist Conference will be held between the 31<sup>st</sup> August and 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016 in Houston, Texas. The theme will be “*One people, one faith, one table, one Lord Jesus*”.
- 9.2. Following a new pattern the WMC will meet for one and a half days before the Conference and one and a half days after the Conference. The World Methodist Committee will reflect on the implications of this for the appointment of MCB delegates to the WMC and report in due course.

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTION:**

**76/1. The Council receives the report.**