

# THE COMMISSIONING OF EVANGELISTS

## Revision for The Faith and Order Committee Executive

January 2003

The Preface to the 1999 **Methodist Worship Book** indicates that since the publication of **The Methodist Service Book** in 1975 there had been many requests for the provision of a wider range of services and other worship material. As rich and comprehensive as **The Methodist Worship Book** is, the life and needs of the Church continue to evolve and so the Conference has now authorized the following order of service for use in the Methodist Church.

The 1999 Preface says this about the forms of service authorized by the Conference:

These are not intended to curb creative freedom, but rather to provide norms for its guidance. Within our heritage, both fixed forms and freer expressions of worship have been, and should continue to be, valued.

It also observes that worship is the work of the whole people of God:

A congregation is not an audience or a group of spectators. Those who lead worship are called to encourage and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to enable the whole Body of Christ to participate fully. Such participation may include personal testimony and the use of the creative arts.

The following service, like the services in **The Methodist Worship Book**, is intended to be used to the honour and praise of God.

# THE COMMISSIONING OF EVANGELISTS

## INTRODUCTION

Evangelists are appointed with differing responsibilities in a variety of situations by local churches, Circuits, Districts, and ecumenical bodies.

This Commissioning Service is intended to be sufficiently adaptable for use in these varying circumstances. It provides an outline that can be shaped in the light of particular needs, and may be enriched creatively with other material.

## NOTES

1. *The Commissioning of Evangelists* should normally take place during a celebration of *Holy Communion*.
2. If candles are to be given to the newly-commissioned evangelists, they may be lit from the Easter Candle (see **The Methodist Worship Book**, page 265) or some other candle lit at the beginning of the service. Each member of the congregation may be provided with a small candle.

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## THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

- 1 *A sentence of scripture may be read.*
- 2 *Hymn or song*
- 3 *A prayer of confession and declaration of forgiveness may be said.*
- 4 *This collect, which may be preceded or followed by the collect of the day:*

Eternal God, in your love  
you pour out upon us gifts of your Spirit  
for the service of the Gospel:  
look now on your *servants, N and N (N)*,  
whom we are to commission in your Name,  
that *they* and all your people  
may make your grace and glory known in all the world;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

- 5 *One or more readings from scripture. If this is a service of Holy Communion, the final reading is the Gospel.*

*There may be psalms, canticles, hymns, songs or periods of silence between the readings.*

6 *Sermon*

7 *A hymn or song may be sung.*

## **THE COMMISSIONING**

8 *The presiding minister says:*

Scripture reminds us that we are all called to share in God's mission. This mission includes evangelism, social caring and the struggle for justice.

*Each of the following is read by a member of the congregation standing in her/his place.*

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation.

*Isaiah 52:7*

Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

*Mark 1:14b-15*

We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

*2 Corinthians 4:5*

Jesus said: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

*Luke 4:18-19*

Proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable. ... Do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

*2 Timothy 4:2a, 5b*

Jesus said: "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

*John 4:37b-38*

Jesus said, 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

*John 20:21b*

9 *All stand.*

*The presiding minister says:*

Sisters and brothers,  
God so loved the world that he gave his only Son  
to reconcile to himself all things,  
by making peace through the blood of the cross.  
Sent by the risen Christ,  
in the power of the Spirit,

the Church shares in God's mission in the world.

We are the Body of Christ:

**each of us is a member of it.**

There is one ministry of Christ:

**in this ministry we all share.**

There are different ways of serving God:

**it is the same Lord whom we serve.**

Today we commission *those* who offer *themselves* for service as *evangelists*.

10 **Those** to be commissioned **move** to the front of the church. **Each** may be accompanied by one or two persons, such as a mentor or representative of the appointing body.

The presiding minister reads the **names** of **those** to be commissioned. After each name is read, the person to be commissioned steps forward. A brief description of the appointment is then read by an appropriate person.

11 The presiding minister says to those to be commissioned:

*N* and *N (N)*,

do you believe that God has called you to be *evangelists*?

Answer: I do.

Will you, relying on the Holy Spirit,  
continue to equip *yourselves* for this ministry?

Answer: I will.

Will you accept the discipline of the Church  
as, with your sisters and brothers, you bear witness to Christ?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

12 The presiding minister says:

Let us pray.

Faithful God, we thank you  
that *N* and *N (N)* have responded to your call  
and offered *themselves* to be *evangelists*.

Uphold *them* by your grace  
and enable *them* by your Spirit,  
that through *their* ministry  
others may know your love,  
and your people may be strengthened.  
In all things may your purposes be fulfilled  
and your name be glorified;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

13 *An appropriate person says to the people:*

Sisters and brothers, will you welcome *N and N (N)*?  
Will you pray for them and walk with them  
in the work of spreading the Good News?

**With God's help, we will.**

14 *The presiding minister may give the hand of fellowship to each evangelist.*

15 *Lighted candles may be given to the newly-commissioned **evangelists**, with the words:*

Christ is the Light of the world.

**The light shines in the darkness  
and the darkness has not overcome it.**

*The presiding minister says:*

Receive this light.  
Be faithful *disciples* of Jesus Christ.  
Do the work of an evangelist.  
Through your *lives*, words and actions  
announce the Good News,  
proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord,  
declare God's salvation for all people  
in every time and place,  
and encourage others to be faithful witnesses to Christ.

16 *The **evangelists** kneel and the presiding minister says:*

*EITHER:*

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face to shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord look on you with kindness  
and give you peace. **Amen.**

*OR:*

May almighty God bless you,  
pour out his Spirit upon you  
and equip you for the work of an evangelist.

*This blessing may be accompanied by the laying on of hands.*

17 *The **evangelists stand** and the light may be passed throughout the congregation from the **evangelists' candles**, with the words:*

The light of Christ.

18 *A hymn or song may be sung.*

19     *The people sit and may extinguish their candles.*

*The newly-commissioned evangelists may be invited to speak.*

20     *When the Lord's Supper follows, the service continues from the prayers of intercession (as provided or in some other form) in **Holy Communion for the Day of Pentecost and Times of Renewal in the Life of the Church** (The Methodist Worship Book, page 1764) or from the same point in the appropriate seasonal service of **Holy Communion**. Otherwise, the service continues with prayers of thanksgiving and intercession.*

*In either case the dismissal may take the following form:*

Jesus said:

'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,

baptising them in the name of the Father

and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

**We go into the world  
to walk in God's light,  
to rejoice in God's love  
and to reflect God's glory. Amen.**