

# Review of the Year

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**2017/2018**



# Welcome

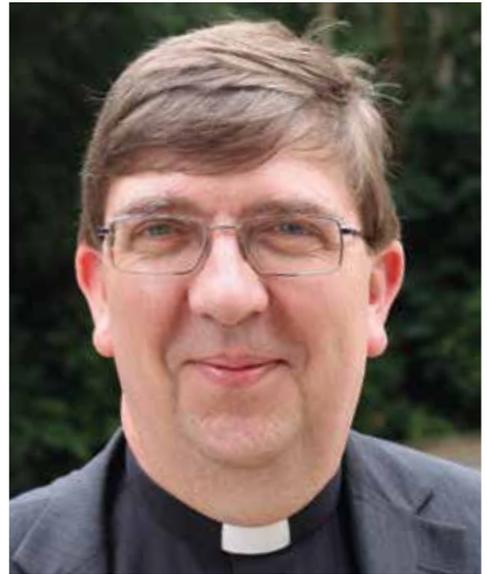
from the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler

## Sisters and brothers in Christ,

**L**ast year's report contained a good deal about the numbers that represent our common life as the people called Methodists. As Methodists, we have something of a reputation for counting, and reports to the Conference in 2017 and 2018 and particularly the triennial statistical returns had drawn our urgent attention to the stark reality of our numerical decline in membership and the challenges posed by our changed and changing contexts.

The Conference responded to these figures with a courageous willingness to acknowledge the realities of the present and to seek the will of God for the future life and work of the Methodist Church. Over the past year, we have continued to reflect, with a growing sense of momentum, on the figures that represent our past and present, and the numbers in this year's report represent some of the ways in which the Church is now seeking to respond and to look to the future.

To that end, a series of discussions at bodies including the Methodist Council and the Connexional Leaders' Forum led to the reaffirmation of 'Our Calling' as the primary strategic driver for the Church. This underpins the priorities and plans represented in this report as described in the section headed: 'Looking ahead: Future plans' and led to a set of Methodist Council Objectives with the aim of 'Reaffirming Our Calling'. The implications of this have led to the reorganisation of some parts of the Connexional Team better to support the work of local churches, circuits and districts in living out 'Our Calling'; in bringing forward strategies for the missional use of property and finance; and in seeking to realign all that we do with the objectives that the Church has agreed. Further details of developments in the connexional process of



'Reaffirming Our Calling' will be shared and celebrated at the 2019 Conference.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to capture in any set of figures the breadth and depth of the mission and ministry of the Methodist Church and the life and work of the Methodist Council. The 2018 Conference also received major reports on our understanding of ministry, on our covenant relationship with the Church of England, and on the Church's understanding of marriage and relationships, areas in which the process of conferring and listening for the promptings of the Spirit continues. The figures in this report represent a small but important portion of the ways in which, as the people called Methodists, we are continuing to seek to fulfil our high calling as servants of Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan".

**The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler**  
*Secretary of the Conference*

# The Methodist Conference 2018

The Methodist Conference is the ultimate governing body of The Methodist Church and meets annually.

**The Conference receives reports covering all aspects of the Church's life and witness. At its meeting in Nottingham in June/July 2018 these included:**

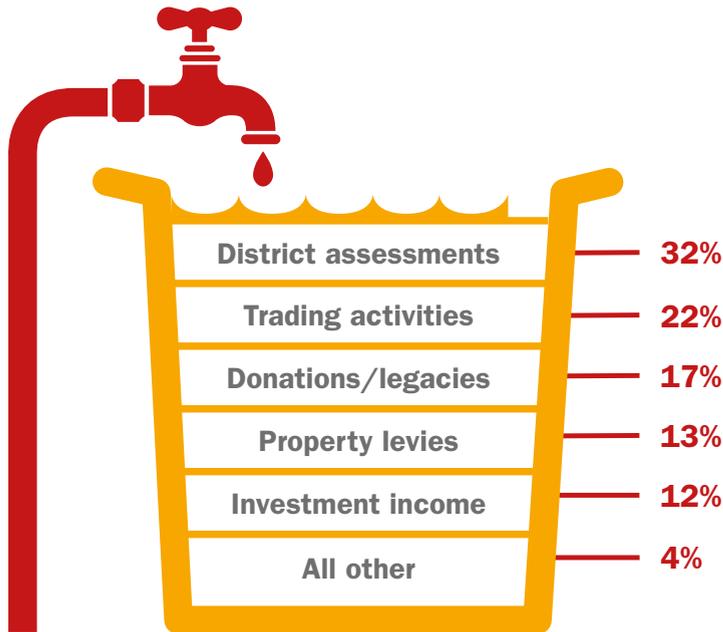
- training and ordination of ministers: 38 new presbyters and five deacons, having completed their training, were received into Full Connexion and subsequently ordained; four presbyters were additionally received into Full Connexion by transfer;
- receipt of the consolidated financial statements of the Church for the previous year (2016/2017);
- a major report considering the nature and understanding of ministry within the Church, with a draft Statement of the Conference which has been made available;
- a report on *Mission and Ministry in Covenant* with the Church of England, including proposals for the interchangeability of ministers and related measures representing a 'profound sign of reconciliation';
- an interim report from the Marriage and Relationships Task Group, tasked with 'revisiting' the Methodist Church's understanding of marriage. Further work will be done on key theological arguments, with an additional report to be brought out in 2019;
- an update on the extensive work of the Methodist Council, which acts on behalf of the Conference when the latter is not sitting. Among the matters on the Council's agenda were the rebuilding or refurbishment of Methodist Church House, ensuring the quality of local preaching, issues of equality, diversity and inclusion, improving legal and property support for managing trustees, the continuing work of safeguarding in the Church, and a response to the training review on which an outline summary had been reported to the 2017 Conference;
- reports from 3Generate, Methodist Children and Youth Assembly 2018 on issues affecting children and young people. 3Generate received agreement from the Conference to encourage all churches, circuits and districts to engage in a 'Year of Testimony' in 2019/2020;
- debate and, in many cases, adoption of Memorials and Notices of Motion submitted by circuits and districts, covering a wide range of issues including alternative approaches to ministerial training, reducing the burden of collecting statistics in the Church, arms sales, inclusion of intersex and transgender people, rough sleeping, human trafficking, refugees and anti-Semitism;
- discussion groups on 'Reaffirming our Calling', as reflected in the Secretary's preface to this report.



# The year at a glance

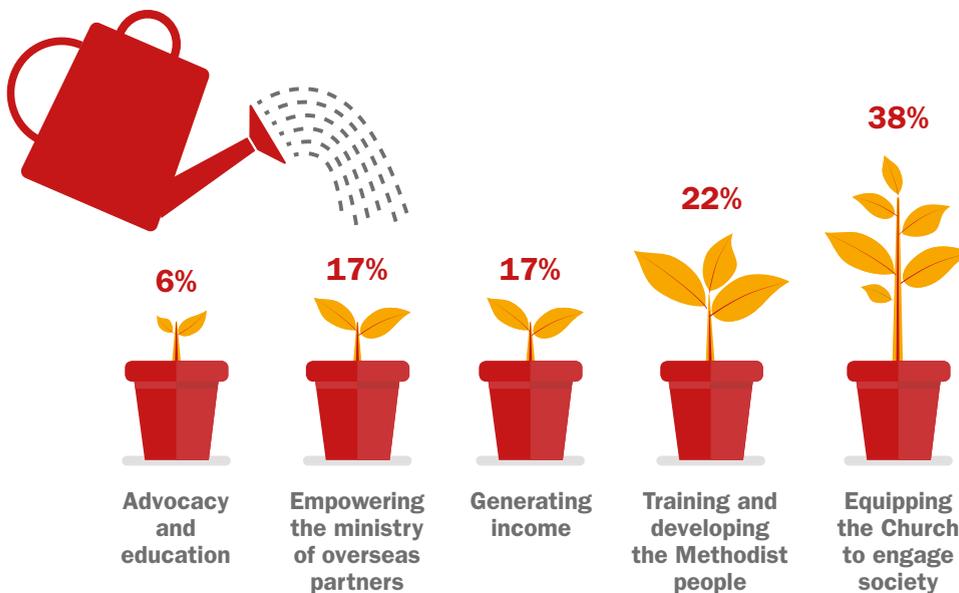
Overview of the connexional work of the Methodist Church in Great Britain

## Our total income: £43m



  
Income decreased by 6% compared to last year; mainly due to a decrease in property levies of 37%

## What we spent: £50m



**£41m** spent on direct charitable activities

Expenditure rose by 4% compared to last year

The figures shown include the activities of related bodies such as Cliff College, All We Can and others. For the full list, please download the Consolidated Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2018 at [www.methodist.org.uk/trusteesreport](http://www.methodist.org.uk/trusteesreport)

## People and places

**474,000 weekly visits**  
to Methodist churches to take part  
in activities, groups, associations,  
projects and events



places of worship, with  
**180,000** members

**192,000** visits to Methodist  
church services each week,



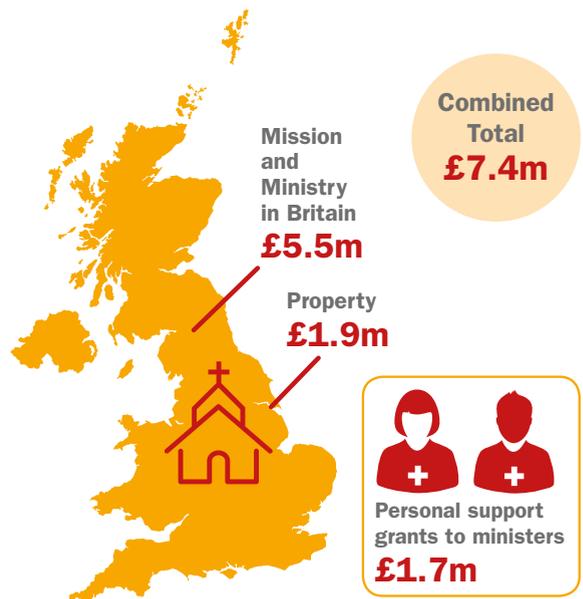
including **27,000** by children  
and young people



**25,000** pupils  
enrolled in 86 Methodist schools

## Total grant payments from all funds

**From Connexional Funds  
and All We Can**



# Thank you!

Thank you for your support and generosity in responding to Our Calling. You helped us raise £5 million for the connexional grant funds in 2017/2018. This allows us to fund projects that can reach out to people in Britain and around the world with the gospel of God's love in Christ, enabling us to live out our discipleship in worship and mission.

## World Mission Fund

Your generosity towards the World Mission Fund (WMF) allows the Methodist Church to support Partner Churches and organisations, Nationals in Mission Appointments (NMA) post holders, scholarship students and mission partners engaged in healthcare, education and advocacy work in more than 65 countries. For example, an annual grant of £36,000 to the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka is supporting their youth and family work, including training workers. The WMF also provides support to overseas partners responding to emergencies, such as floods in South India and an earthquake in Papua New Guinea.

## Mission in Britain Fund

The aim of the Mission in Britain (MiB) Fund is to support Our Calling through reaching those in need and sharing the gospel. During the year, the MiB Fund received an income of £955,000 and payments of £2.5 million were made.

Thirty grants were awarded using the whole of the Connexional Grant Committee's budget from the MiB Fund. We continue to meet the shortfall in income compared to grant expenditure from the Fund's reserves.

For the first time, grants awarded to



Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice (MAPJ) projects totalled over £1 million, including our largest-ever MAPJ grant of £110,000 to the homeless centre at No. 11 Burslem (Swanbank Methodist Church) in Stoke-on-Trent. Just under £500,000 was awarded to three exciting church plant projects around the Connexion.

Thanks to the generosity of the Methodist people, many exciting projects have received funding. The MiB Fund has the greatest need for further donations and legacies

	Movement in Funds					
	World Mission Fund		Mission in Britain Fund		Fund for Property	
	2016/2017 £000s	2017/2018 £000s	2016/2017 £000s	2017/2018 £000s	2016/2017 £000s	2017/2018 £000s
Income	3,486	3,389	881	955	642	632
Investment gains	1,427	1,034	292	226	214	168
Expenditure	(3,804)	(4,824)	(2,089)	(2,481)	(2,147)	(1,815)
Net transfers out	(828)	(902)	(57)	(57)	(28)	(54)
<b>Movement in year</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>(1,303)</b>	<b>(973)</b>	<b>(1,357)</b>	<b>(1,319)</b>	<b>(1,069)</b>



in order to enable grants to continue to be made to innovative missional projects around the Connexion.

### **Fund for Property**

The Fund for Property exists to support various missional property development projects around the Connexion. During the year the Fund received income of £632,000 while payments of £1.8m were made.

As with the previous year, the Connexional Grants Committee awarded the whole of the grants budget, but supported 40 projects, compared to 20 in the previous year.

Due to the high number of grants awarded, no maximum awards of £200,000 were made. The two largest grants awarded were to Beckenham and Bedale churches which received £150,000 each.

### **The Methodist Church Fund**

The Methodist Church Fund (MCF) exists to help resource the Methodist Church to respond to Our Calling: to worship God, to learn and care, to serve and to evangelise. The MCF's total income for the financial year 2017/2018 was £17m. It is largely funded

through the assessment made on circuits via the districts.

The MCF supports the work associated with the decisions of the Methodist Conference, from challenging poverty and injustice to supporting partnerships ecumenically and internationally.

For example, this fund supports the training of ministers, lay people and local preachers. It also funds our work with young people including 3Generate, the Children and Youth Assembly of the Methodist Church. 3Generate 2017 saw 1,234 people take part in exploring the year's theme, entitled 'Wonderfully Prophetic'.

The MCF supports activities as diverse as the publishing of resources (both print and online, including the Methodist Prayer Handbook and *the connexion* magazine), and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults through its safeguarding policies and procedures.

The MCF also supports the work of the Methodist Council, volunteer committees and the Connexional Team, who facilitate the implementation of the decisions made at the Conference.

In the coming year, the Methodist Council plans to continue pursuing the objectives of the Methodist Church, in particular through what is collectively referred to as 'Reaffirming Our Calling'.

# Our Calling

## Looking ahead: Future plans

### Worship

- Supporting local preachers and ministers to deliver high quality worship around the Connexion, through work including refinement of the *Worship: Leading and Preaching* course, introducing mandatory Continuing Development for local preachers, and piloting new developments in ministerial training.
- Encouraging the ministry of the whole people of God, through work on discipleship, increasing vocations, and improvements in the deployment of ordained ministers. The Methodist people will be encouraged to commit to accountable discipleship through development of a Methodist Way of Life.

### Learning and Caring

- Supporting districts, circuits and churches more effectively through cost-effective Connexional specialist services, the availability of financial resources supporting Our Calling and the introduction of finance and property strategies for the Church.
- Reviewing the patterns of oversight, leadership and governance in the Church, including the working of various key committees, to ensure these are fit for purpose.

### Service

- Being an inclusive and diverse Church, developing a strategy for evangelism and discipleship for those less well served by reason of race or class, taking forward work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and maintaining the growth of 3Generate.
- Pursuing social holiness through resourcing transformative work, ensuring that our grants programmes and our work with other partners are all fully aligned to enable work in the hardest-to-reach places.

### Evangelism

- Equipping the Methodist people to confidently share the gospel of Christ in their local communities, through work including providing new resources for growth, evangelism and apologetics, and ensuring that all churches, circuits and districts have Mission Plans in place.
- Seeking to transform the world in line with acting prophetically and in pursuit of the vision of One Mission, continuing to deliver on the Strategy for Global Relationships, encouraging twinning between British districts and overseas partners, and ensuring that Fellowship Groups in the UK are supported.



Worship



Learning and Caring



Service



Evangelism