

RECOGNITION, RECEPTION AND CONFIRMATION (1993)

The following resolutions were adopted by the Conference of 1992:

1. The Conference adopts the following amendments to the Deed of Union :
 - (i) for the existing clause 1 (xviii) substitute:

‘member of the Methodist Church’ means a person recognised as a member of the Methodist Church under the provisions of this Deed and of Standing Orders;
 - (ii) for the existing clause 8 substitute:

8 Admission to Membership

 - (a) All those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and accept the obligation to serve him in the life of the Church and the world are welcome as members of the Methodist Church.
 - (b) After a probation of not less than three months those approved by the Church Council on the recommendation of the Pastoral Committee shall at the earliest opportunity be publicly received as members of the Methodist Church and confirmed at a service conducted by the minister in the presence of the Local Church and including the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.
 - (c) If any have not received Christian baptism that sacrament should be administered either before or in connection with the service of reception and confirmation.
 - (d) Provision may be made by Standing Order for the reception into membership and confirmation of persons approved by the Church Council in accordance with sub-clause (b) above but unavoidably absent from the service provided for by that sub-clause.
 - (iii) In clause 10, delete the word ‘full’.
2. The Conference directs the Faith and Order Committee to bring to the Conference of 1993 proposals for such further amendments to Standing Orders as may be required if the amendments to Clause 8 of the Deed of Union are confirmed by that Conference.

The amendments to the Deed of Union are Provisional Legislation. If they are confirmed by the Conference of 1993, further changes need to be made to Standing Orders. The Faith and Order Committee recommends that the amendments incorporated in resolution B2 be adopted.

The attention of the Committee has recently been drawn to the fact that difficulties now arise about Direction 4 on page A43 of *The Methodist Service Book*, which concerns persons being received from other Christian communions from which straightforward transfer is not possible. The Committee believes that it would be more consistent with the amended version of the Deed of Union if Direction 4 were interpreted as if it read “the Church Council shall approve their admission into membership” instead of “the Church Council shall admit them into full

membership” and “they shall” instead of “then, if pastoral reasons so require, they may”.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Conference adopts the Report.
- 2 The Conference adopts the following amendments to Standing Orders:
 - (i) for the existing Standing Order 803(2) substitute:
 - (2) Being thus satisfied the committee shall recommend such candidates, after not less than three months in training, to the Church Council for approval.
 - (ii) for the existing Standing Order 804 substitute:

804 Public Service. (1) A public service of reception into membership and confirmation should be held at least once a year either for a Local Church or for a group of Local Churches.

(2) If any candidate approved by the Church Council is unavoidably absent from the public service of reception and confirmation the Minister shall arrange for his or her reception and confirmation at a suitable time and place in the presence of members of the Local Church.

(Agenda 1993, pp.245-246)

The amendments to the Deed of Union were confirmed by the 1993 Conference. The Conference dealt with the above resolutions as follows:

The Conference adopted Resolution 1, adding as additional paragraphs of the Report:

‘The adoption by the Conference of the proposed amendments to the Deed of Union and to Standing Orders will cause inconsistency between the Deed and Standing Orders on the one hand and many of the directions in *The Methodist Service Book* and *Entry into the Church 1991* on the other. Since these liturgical texts are unlikely to be reprinted it seems inappropriate for the Faith and Order Committee to propose a detailed list of amendments to them. A resolution (3) is therefore proposed which, if adopted, will make it clear that the provisions of the Deed of Union and Standing Orders must prevail wherever the directions in *The Methodist Service Book* and *Entry into the Church 1991* are inconsistent with those provisions.

Because the procedures for persons being received from other Christians communions from which straightforward transfer is not possible need particularly to be clarified, a further resolution (4) is proposed.’

The Conference adopted Resolution 2 in the following form:

- (i) for the existing Standing Order 803(2) substitute:
 - (2) Being thus satisfied the committee shall recommend such candidates, after not less than three months in training, to the Church Council for approval.
- (ii) for the existing Standing Order 804 substitute:
 - 804 Public Service.** (1) A public service of reception into membership and confirmation should be held at least once a year either for a Local Church or for a group of Local Churches.
 - (2) If any candidate approved by the Church Council is unavoidably absent from the public service of reception and confirmation the minister or other person in pastoral charge of the Local Church shall arrange for his or her reception and confirmation at a suitable time and place in the presence of members of the Local Church.

The Conference adopted as additional Resolution 3:

‘The Conference resolves that where the Directions in *The Methodist Service Book* and *Entry into the Church 1991* are inconsistent with the Deed of Union and Standing Orders as to membership of the Methodist Church and admission thereto, the provisions of the Deed of Union and of Standing Orders shall prevail.’

The Conference adopted as additional Resolution 4:

‘The Conference amends Direction 4 (*Methodist Service Book*, page A43) and Direction 28 (*Entry into the Church 1991*, page 4) as follows:

For the words ‘the Church Council shall admit them into full membership; and then, if pastoral reasons so require, they may’ substitute ‘the Church Council shall approve their admission into membership and they shall’.