

## **THE GRANTING OF AUTHORISATIONS TO PRESIDE AT THE LORD'S SUPPER TO LAY PEOPLE IN 'MISSIONARY SITUATIONS' (1985)**

The Conference of 1984 adopted a report from the Faith and Order Committee on Lay Presidency at the Lord's Supper (DR No. 8 Item 23). That report discussed, among other things, the special needs of areas described as 'missionary situations in this country'. The Committee for Authorisations and the Faith and Order Committee were directed to consider ways of recognising such situations so that they could be treated appropriately in the Committee for Authorisations.

Missionary situations were described in the Faith and Order Report of 1984 as 'found in very different cultural areas, such as urban estates, new towns and the inner city, where Christian presence is small'. The Report says later: 'There are some situations where a lay person signally represents the Church in a particular area and has a position of leadership in worship and mission under S.O. 581. Even where there are sufficient ordained ministers in the circuit to maintain frequent communion, that area may have such a sense of identity, and the involvement of the lay person in the area may be so complete, that it may be reasonably said that the worship and witness of the community there would be seriously impeded if the lay person were unable to preside at Holy Communion'. (S.O. 581 concerns lay people employed in pastoral work).

The two committees recommend that the following criteria should be used:

1. The situation should have missionary potential. There is no case for an authorisation simply to maintain an existing, static society. Missionary potential can be identified by such features as: large numbers of unchurched people, absence of denominational rivalry, a Methodist community which is outward looking and organised for mission with progressive leadership, evidence of circuit and District support for such mission, and signs of growth.
2. The area to be served should be isolated, not necessarily by distance, but by planning, traffic, economic, cultural or other factors which prevent that free-flow of ministries which is one of the traditional marks of circuit life.
3. The lay person to whom the authorisation is granted should be a person representative of the church, identified with the 'isolated area', living within it, and having a position of leadership in worship and mission as envisaged under S.O. 581.
4. It should be clearly reflected in the policy of the circuit that no permanence can be given to what is, in our usage, a short term arrangement.

Reference to these criteria should be made in the application coming from the Synod to the Committee for Authorisations and so to the Conference.

## **RESOLUTION**

That Conference adopt this report on the granting of authorisations to preside at the Lord's Supper to lay people in 'missionary situations'.

*(Agenda 1985, pp.627-628)*

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The Conference adopted the above resolution, adding:

'and in case these latest criteria should become regarded as the only ones, directs the Committee to bring all the criteria together and present them to the Conference of 1986.'