

## Deliverance Ministry

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<b>Resolutions</b>	50/1. The Council receives the report. 50/2. The Council recommends to the Conference that it adopts the contents of paragraph 6 as interim guidance for deliverance ministry, and invites feedback to be sent to the Conference Office by 31 January 2022. 50/3. The Council recommends to the Conference that it appoint an Interim Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry. 50/4. The Council directs the Ministries Committee to establish Terms of Reference and criteria for members of a Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry and report to the Council in October 2021. 50/5. The Council directs the Secretary of the Conference to oversee a discernment and selection process for membership of the Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry and report to the Council in April 2022. 50/6. The Council recommends to the Conference that Resolution 63/3 of the 2020 Conference be rescinded.

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	Guidelines for the authorisation, training and supervision of those seeking to engage in deliverance ministry
<b>Main Points</b>	Faith and Order Committee report Part 2, 2020: Revision of Guidelines on Exorcism
<b>Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)</b>	The Faith and Order Committee reports to the Methodist Conference, and annually provides a briefer report to the Council. <a href="https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/19211/conf-2020-63-faith-and-order-committee-2.pdf">https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/19211/conf-2020-63-faith-and-order-committee-2.pdf</a>

### 1. Introduction and purpose of the report

- 1.1. The 2020 Conference directed the Methodist Council “to oversee the process of producing guidelines for the authorisation, training and supervision of those seeking to engage in deliverance ministry and report to the 2021 Conference” (Resolution 63/2). This work is required because, due to concerns about safe practice, no member of the Methodist Church currently has the authorisation of the Methodist Church to participate in any act that reasonably might be interpreted as constituting the exorcism of a person or persons. (A small number of Methodist members may be engaged in this ministry where there is an external and acceptable system of support, consultation and accountability in place (such as, for example, hospital or forces

chaplains.)

- 1.2. At the same time the Faith and Order Committee is undertaking some theological reflection on deliverance ministry. The theological issues involved are complex and there are different perspectives on how we understand the various aspects of deliverance ministry and at its October 2020 meeting the Methodist Council supported the Faith and Order Committee's intention to bring its report on this to the 2022 Conference. The priority is to ensure that deliverance ministry can resume within the Methodist Church as soon as possible. The Methodist Council and the Faith and Order Committee therefore appointed a joint task group to produce guidelines for deliverance ministry.
- 1.3. This report therefore outlines some provisional guidelines for deliverance ministry. It is intended that these shall be brought to the 2021 Conference in order to enable deliverance ministry to happen where appropriate and in accordance with these guidelines. Feedback will be invited and the guidelines reviewed in the light of the feedback and the Faith and Order Committee's theological work. Final guidelines and the theological reflection will be brought to the 2022 Conference.

## **2. Oversight of Deliverance Ministry**

- 2.1. The provisional guidelines for deliverance ministry state that there will be a Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry that will have oversight of this ministry, including oversight of training materials, responsibility for the appointment of practitioners and keeping a record of all who are so authorised, responsibility for the network of deliverance ministry practitioners, and responsibility for the appointment of supervisors. It will also act as an advisory body for deliverance ministry in the Methodist Church, particularly for District Chairs.
- 2.2. It is proposed that the Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry is appointed by the Conference and reports to the Ministries Committee. There will be a robust discernment and appointment procedure before nominations to the Conference are made, not only for reasons of good practice but also because the Panel will require specific gifts and experience. For deliverance ministry to be practised in the Methodist Church there needs to be people suitably gifted and equipped to oversee it. It is therefore recommended that the Ministries Committee first establish some Terms of Reference and criteria for membership of the Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry, and then that the Assistant/ Secretary of the Conference oversees the recruitment process and reports to the April 2022 Council for nominations to be made to the 2022 Conference.
- 2.3. In the interim, and for the connexional year 2021-2022, it is suggested that an appropriate Interim Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry is appointed and nominations will be brought to the 2021 Conference.

## **3. Training and Supervision**

- 3.1. The working party has considered what kind of training will need to be in place for those who wish to become deliverance ministry practitioners. Work is underway on the content of this training and it will be made available through the Connexional Team. Once the training is established then it will be made available to those who are recommended by their District Chair (or their representative). It is intended that the training will not be restricted to those who feel called to be practitioners of deliverance ministry but can also be available to those who have an interest in the area. It will, however, be appropriate for a pastoral conversation with the District Chair to take place and for those who feel called to be practitioners, this will be part of the discernment process.

- 3.2. The Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry will regularly review the content of the training and include any recommendations in its report to the Ministries Committee.
- 3.3. All practitioners will be members of a network of deliverance ministry practitioners through which ongoing training and support will be offered and peer support groups established. In addition it is recommended that a supervisor is appointed for each practitioner. This would be in addition to any other supervision offered and would be comparable with 'clinical supervision' in other disciplines i.e. it will focus specifically on the practice of deliverance ministry.

#### **4. The Appointment of Practitioners**

- 4.1. It is recommended that discernment of suitability for this ministry takes place initially within the relevant district. District Chairs (or their representative) will be responsible for recommending a person for training and affirming their suitability for deliverance ministry, and they may consult with the relevant Superintendent, circuit ministers or others in the person's circuit. Whilst such responsibility would usually more appropriately lie with the Superintendent within Methodist theology and ecclesiology, it is recognised that the numbers of people offering for this ministry are likely to be small and that expertise need to be effectively shared throughout the Connexion. In this instance it is therefore practicable for District Chairs (or their representative) to have this particular role in the oversight of deliverance ministry. In some Districts, Chairs may wish to appoint another suitable person (lay or ordained) to take on this responsibility.
- 4.2. Appointment as a practitioner in deliverance ministry will be made by the Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry who will consider both the recommendation from the District Chair (or their representative) and a report from those leading the training course. It is recommended that there is a review of practitioner status every three years.

#### **5. Theological Foundations**

The Faith and Order Committee will bring some theological reflection in relation to deliverance ministry to the 2022 Conference. Existing theological comment can be found in the 1976 Statement on Exorcism which outlines three differing views on exorcism held by Christians. Whilst the views outlined do not adequately now convey the range of approaches to deliverance ministry, nor the complexities and nuances of different perspectives on evil, the Faith and Order Committee affirms the underlying assumption that there are different theological understandings of deliverance ministry and many of these views can be found within the Methodist Church in Britain.

#### **6. Further matters**

Due to the timing of processes, some further points have been considered but there has not yet been opportunity for discussion about whether these should be included in the provisional guidelines. It is intended that these matters will be given further attention and help inform the final report and guidance in 2022:

- a. Further consideration of deliverance ministry with respect to place as well as people;
- b. Further reflection on where the boundaries lie for different areas of ministry and encouraging awareness of this. For example, what may begin as a routine pastoral conversation may become a conversation about deliverance ministry. It would be helpful to consider whether safeguarding training could include some awareness of this ministry to raise awareness of the need to be alert to such boundaries;
- c. Exploration of different cultural understandings including the recognition that what may be called deliverance ministry is different in different cultures;
- d. Further consideration of the role of the Chair, including in recommending for training and where oversight of the ministry also lies elsewhere (e.g. forces chaplains).

## 7. The Provisional Guidelines for Deliverance Ministry Including Exorcism

### DELIVERANCE MINISTRY INCLUDING EXORCISM

#### Interim Guidelines for Good Practice in the Methodist Church in Britain

##### 1. Introduction

###### 1.1. The nature of deliverance ministry

It is an important and cherished part of the Methodist tradition continually to hold in prayer any who may be going through times of suffering or anxiety. This may take place in gatherings for public worship, as well as in situations of individual pastoral care.

Some people, though, may seek specific help when they become aware of what seem to be continuing experiences of evil within them or around them. For these people, it may be appropriate to offer help through the Church's deliverance ministry.

The Church regularly prays for deliverance from evil in the words of the Lord's Prayer; deliverance ministry may be seen as part of this intention.

Persons seeking deliverance ministry are very vulnerable. It should be given with due caution, and in a context of continuing pastoral care.

The following guidelines should therefore be followed.

###### 1.2. Theological basis

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the report on the theology of deliverance ministry which the Faith and Order Committee will bring to the 2022 Conference.

###### 1.3. Definitions

- i. Healing – The Church's healing ministry is a ministry which may include elements such as appropriate Christian prayer, sacrament or rituals/procedures with the intention of relieving suffering: mental, physical or emotional.
- ii. Deliverance – The Church's deliverance ministry is a ministry which may include elements such as appropriate Christian prayer, sacrament or rituals/procedures with the intention of freeing individuals from the apparent influence of evil within them or around them.
- iii. Exorcism – exorcism is an aspect of deliverance ministry, but is more specifically concerned with freeing individuals or places from apparent demonic possession.  
NB Guidance offered in this document applies to both deliverance and exorcism ministries.
- iv. Terminology – For the purposes of this report

the word **recipient** denotes someone who is seeking, requesting and receiving deliverance ministry;

the word **practitioner** denotes an approved person authorised to administer it;

the word **supporter** denotes a person who assists a practitioner.

## 2. Context

Deliverance ministry is an extension of the prayer life of the whole Church; recipients should therefore be able to have confidence that words, rites and intentions offered express the faith of the whole Church.

It is recommended therefore that:

- i. Deliverance ministry should only be offered when authorised, in each and every instance, by the Chair of the District in which it is to be given, or their appointed representative(s).
- ii. It is never undertaken by one person alone. Each practitioner should be assisted by up to two suitable supporters, at least one of whom is involved in the ongoing pastoral care of the recipient.

Their ministry should also be simultaneously supported by a prayer team in a separate location.

- iii. An approved liturgy is used. The service may also include Holy Communion or anointing with oil. A liturgical framework will be made available.
- iv. It is not appropriate for deliverance ministry to take place online.
- v. Deliverance ministry must not be used to attempt to change a recipient's sexual orientation or gender identity

## 3. Safeguarding

Deliverance ministry is an integral part of Church life and the Guidelines for Good Practice in the Methodist Church in Britain should be read alongside these safeguarding considerations. Good safeguarding practice must be adhered to at all times and includes addressing the following areas:

- i. Deliverance ministry may only be conducted by qualified practitioners as set out in the Guidelines for Good Practice in the Methodist Church in Britain [*Hyperlink to be added when available*] and must ensure the safeguarding of recipients, practitioners and supporters
- ii. Practitioners must have undertaken up to date Methodist Advanced Module safeguarding training and their supporters must have undertaken up to date Methodist Foundation Module safeguarding training.
- iii. Informed consent (including the limits to confidentiality) must be obtained from the recipient of deliverance ministry and any sacramental acts and rituals/procedures that may be used must be explained to the recipient in advance.
- iv. Information shared by a recipient should not be passed to others unless they give consent in advance for specific information to be shared or, the information indicates that they or another may be at risk of harm, or the recipient indicates that they are involved in or likely to become involved in a significant criminal offence, or the practitioner believes that another party is involved or likely to become involved in a criminal offence.
- v. Practitioners' language and body language should always be considerate and courteous, and touch and the anointing with oil may only be used with prior consent.

- vi. Practitioners must have regard to the mental capacity and mental health of an adult recipient and seek advice from a mental health professional if their capacity and/or judgement is in doubt. The District Safeguarding Officer must be informed where the recipient is an adult who may be vulnerable or is under the age of 18 years.
- vii. Practitioners must consider whether there are safeguarding concerns and inform the District Safeguarding Officer of any identified.
- viii. Deliverance must be conducted with the minimum of publicity, in a safe space and by more than one person.
- ix. Practitioners must make a written record of deliverance ministry and issue privacy notices to the recipient and supporters.

#### 4. Personnel

##### 4.1. Authorisation and accountability

- i. Deliverance ministry may be given by ordained or lay persons, however anyone considering offering it, including both practitioners and supporters, must make themselves known to the Chair of the District in which the ministry is to take place.
- ii. Anyone wishing to be authorised as a practitioner must undergo the Connexional Training Course, after recommendation by their Chair of District or the Chair's appointed representative.
- iii. Authorisation to practice will be granted by the Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry after receiving feedback from those operating the Training Course and the recommendation from the relevant District Chair (or their appointed representative).

The Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry will comprise people with comprehensive experience and knowledge of deliverance ministry.

- iv. The District Chair or their appointed representative must ensure that the authorised practitioner's ministry is monitored by appropriate supervision.

##### 4.2. Training

###### 4.2.1. The Connexional Training course in deliverance ministry will:

- i. be open to all (lay and ordained) who feel called by God to carry out this ministry;
- ii. take place over one day.
- iii. Components to include:
  - a) The Church's understanding of deliverance ministry;
  - b) Key skills, including intentional listening, allowing people to express themselves subjectively and objectively;
  - c) Different perspectives in terms of theological understanding, use of the Bible, and personal awareness;

- d) Mental health awareness;
- e) When and how to ask for help;
- f) Liturgy, prayer and ritual.

#### 4.2.2. After initial training has taken place

- i. Practitioners must be offered ongoing training and support including active membership of a peer support group.
- ii. Practitioners will be invited to attend and contribute to subsequent training days.

#### 4.3. Supervision

- i. The Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry will appoint a supervisor for each authorised practitioner.
- ii. Formal supervision will include an account and discussion on any deliverance ministry that has taken place. A report on the case should be sent to the District Chair.
- iii. Formal supervision is required in addition to peer/group support.
- iv. Supervisors will be invited to attend and contribute to training days.

#### 4.4. Multidisciplinary team

Practitioners should always work alongside others to ensure the best possible response to the needs of the recipient. These may include the District Safeguarding Officer, psychiatric healthcare professionals, hospital/mental health chaplains, counsellors and the local pastoral team.

#### 5. Continuing care

Every effort should be made to continue contact with the recipients of deliverance ministry, to ensure that they continue to be offered the support, prayer and care of the Church.

#### **\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

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