

## 21. The Challenge of the Covenant: Uniting In Mission and Holiness

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<b>Action Required</b>	Deliberation, Discernment, Decision
<b>Resolutions</b>	<p>21/1. The Conference receives the Report.</p> <p>21/2. The Conference expresses its gratitude to the members of the Joint Implementation Commission for their work in this second phase.</p> <p>21/3. The Conference endorses Recommendation 1, and directs the Faith and Order Committee to undertake the necessary work to bring forward the stated proposals.</p> <p>21/4. The Conference endorses Recommendation 2, strongly encourages Methodist churches, circuits and districts to put it into effect, and directs the Methodist members of the Methodist Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission to ensure that appropriate support and advice is provided by that body.</p> <p>21/5. The Conference adopts Recommendation 3.</p> <p>21/6. The Conference directs the Methodist Council to appoint the Methodist members of the group proposed in Recommendation 3 following the adoption of that Recommendation by the General Synod of the Church of England.</p>

### Summary of Content and Impact

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	Review of progress since the Covenant was signed in 2003. Recommendations for the future.
<b>Main Points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of developments under the Covenant, particularly in the last five years</li> <li>Identification of significant challenges for both the Methodist Church and the Church of England</li> <li>Proposals for the next phase of development.</li> </ul>
<b>Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)</b>	The full Second Quinquennial Report (2013) of the Joint Implementation Commission (JIC) was published in September 2013 and can be found under the same title as this report at <a href="http://www.methodist.org.uk/who-we-are/anglican-methodist-covenant">http://www.methodist.org.uk/who-we-are/anglican-methodist-covenant</a> along with all the previous JIC reports.
<b>Consultations</b>	A draft of this report to the Conference and the General Synod was also published in September 2013 for the purposes of consultation. The present report was prepared in the light of the responses. A list of those consultations can be found in Annex 2.
<b>Impact</b>	Potentially far-reaching in terms of effectiveness in mission and growth in holiness, if the challenges are addressed seriously by both churches.

# THE CHALLENGE OF THE COVENANT: UNITING IN MISSION AND HOLINESS

## Report of the Joint Implementation Commission under *An Anglican-Methodist Covenant* to the Methodist Conference and the General Synod of the Church of England in 2014

1. *An Anglican Methodist Covenant* between the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain was signed in November 2003.<sup>1</sup> It established a new relationship between those churches, based on mutual affirmations and commitments to grow together in mission and holiness and make the unity of Christ's Church visible between them. Ten years on it is important to ask what difference the Covenant has made to the way our churches work together in mission, to the interchangeability of ministry and to the greater visible unity of our two churches. What challenges do our churches face as we begin the next phase of our Covenant journey?
2. These are the questions which the Joint Implementation Commission has kept before it as it completes its second phase of work (JIC2). The Commission was established following the signing of the Covenant in 2003 to carry forward the implementation of the Covenant Commitments. In 2008 the General Synod and the Methodist Conference commissioned it to continue that work and to report back at the end of the quinquennium. To that end, in September 2013, we published our work in full in the Quinquennial Report *The Challenge of the Covenant: Uniting in Mission and Holiness*.<sup>2</sup> In the six month period following, we consulted with official bodies in the two churches, and invited other individuals and groups to comment on our work.<sup>3</sup> This much shorter report relates closely to the full Quinquennial Report but has also been shaped by the comments we have received from official bodies and others.
3. There are three main messages that we heard from the bodies of our churches and from individuals.
  - The first is that there is an increasingly serious questioning about the goal of visible, organic unity between our churches, as a step towards the full visible unity of the whole Church of Christ. The picture many seem to have of visible unity is of an institutional merger, with a burgeoning bureaucracy. Since such a goal would be detrimental for both our churches' growth and mission it is right to question it. It is not, though, the only possible understanding of visible unity. There is another sense in which visible unity can be the tool or catalyst for releasing energy and enabling the growth of the kingdom of God within, between and through both our churches. That vision is attractive and compelling, and much needed.
  - The second is that while some people feel frustration and even boredom with the Covenant, with no progress on the fundamental issue of the interchangeability of lay, diaconal, presbyteral and episcopal ministries,<sup>4</sup> there is now a real sense of urgency that our churches do need to take action on these issues. The question being asked is

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<sup>1</sup> An Anglican Methodist Covenant (2003). <http://www.anglican-methodist.org.uk/text.htm> The text is printed as Annex 1 of this report.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Challenge of the Covenant: Uniting in Mission and Holiness* (2013). <http://www.anglican-methodist.org.uk/cotc.doc>

<sup>3</sup> A list of bodies which commented on the Quinquennial Report is given in Annex 2 of this report.

<sup>4</sup> 'Interchangeability of Ministries' refers to a situation in relations between churches whereby the ordained ministries of one church are eligible to be appointed to ministerial offices in the other without undergoing re-ordination. See *In the Spirit of the Covenant: First Interim Report of the JIC* (2005) p 90.

whether our churches are committed to bring about change. If not, they are not being fair to each other.

- The third is thankfulness for the areas in which the Covenant has made a difference, especially in working together in mission and ministry at national/connexional, regional and local level. There is evidence that our churches are beginning to make the most of the opportunities for working together in mission already afforded by our churches' rules and structures. We are under no illusion that, however much progress has been made in this respect, major challenges remain.
4. Elaborating on these three challenges which our churches face in embodying the Covenant, we:
    - i. offer a vision of visible unity as a means to a greater participation in the dynamic unity of the triune God and, thereby, as a means of growth in holiness and release of energy for mission (see: **The next step towards visible unity paras 6-13**);
    - ii. challenge our churches to make two bold initiatives which would lead to deeper communion between them (see: **Two bold initiatives paras 14-24**); and
    - iii. contend that advocacy for and promotion of the Covenant at all levels of our churches' lives is necessary for the sake of mission in our communities and in the nation at large. One of the successes of the Covenant has been to embed its implementation into the institutions of the churches working together. We want to celebrate this success, and we make some concrete proposals to encourage it further (see: **Embedding the Covenant paras 25-44**).
  5. In the final section of this Report, **The challenge of the Covenant (paras 45-50)**, we present the priorities and recommendations to take our churches into the next stage of our Covenant journey. As St Paul might have said "We have been entrusted with the gospel of reconciliation. But how can we be reconcilers if we are not ourselves reconciled? And how can we be reconciled to each other if we do not relate to each other?"<sup>5</sup>

### **The next step towards visible unity<sup>6</sup>**

6. When we speak of 'organic' or 'visible' unity what exactly do we mean? The JIC has previously refrained from being too specific about the form which the visible unity of our two churches may take, not wanting to force one model as has happened in the past, but allow for growth and development. One of the premises of the Covenant process has been that we are taking a step by step approach to fuller visible unity. We acknowledge that the lack of clarity about what sort of visible unity is envisaged has made the Covenant process susceptible to a lack of direction and intentionality.
7. In our Quinquennial Report (2013), we stress that an institutional merger or absorption of one church by the other is unacceptable and in any case unrealistic. We see our visible unity more as growing into a deeper relationship of communion through a series of stages.<sup>7</sup> To speak of 'unity' here is not to use an architectural metaphor but a biological and relational one.
8. In that Report we therefore use botanical images of the vine and the branches (John 15), and the grafting of the wild and cultivated olive (Romans 11:17ff). We use the physiological image of

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<sup>5</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:16ff; Romans 10:14ff

<sup>6</sup> See the full report, chapter entitled *Overseeing the Way of Uniting in Mission*. <http://www.anglican-methodist.org.uk/cotc8.doc>

<sup>7</sup> See the full report, chapter entitled *Overseeing the Way of Uniting in Mission* paras 29 to 34.

several members of the one body (1 Corinthians 12). We also use the relational image of the marriage of Christ and the Church (Revelation 19:7 and 21:2) to describe our growing together as a participation in the dynamic unity of the triune God and the loving relationships between the persons of that Holy Trinity. As the Church is drawn deeper into that dynamic of divine life it reflects the glory of God to the world as it offers glory to God in its worship and mission. It offers the love of God to the world in witness and service as it allows itself to be formed and reformed by that same love, a love that is expressed in fellowship, *koinonia*, with others. It spreads holiness in the world as it allows itself to be made holy, a holiness that is inseparable from sharing together in the life of Christ. As St Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 1:2, Christians in each place are made holy in Christ *and* called to live out that holiness through their connection to and in communion with those who call upon Christ in every place. Mission and holiness are inextricably linked with the visible unity of the Church.

9. As our two churches are drawn deeper into the dynamic of divine life, they will therefore inevitably be drawn into a deeper communion with each other. We envisage this deeper communion developing through the mutual recognition by our two churches of our common theology and a greater sharing in worship, mission and a holy life together. We look to our becoming two churches believing, worshipping and engaging in mission as one wherever possible.
10. In the next stage of the Covenant journey, we therefore believe it is time for our churches to take some particular, practical steps towards realising this vision. These practical steps are in four areas of agreement between our two churches, which are described in the *Common Statement* (2003)<sup>8</sup>, and which relate closely, in Anglican terms, to the Lambeth Quadrilateral. We envisage our churches expressing and making visible in their structures and life:
  - a common profession of the one apostolic faith grounded in Holy Scripture and in the historic Creeds, but with each church retaining responsibility for its doctrinal standards, discipline and polity;
  - the sharing of one baptism and the celebrating of one eucharist so that each church would welcome the members of the other as its own members, enabling the deeper sharing of spiritual gifts and the life of discipleship;
  - the reconciliation and interchangeability of ministries, which could more effectively be deployed for the building up of the local church, for service in local communities and for evangelistic endeavour;
  - the mutual recognition of oversight as expressed in personal, communal and collegial forms, making possible a deeper sharing of our mission priorities and deployment of resources.
11. Growing into deeper communion in these ways will increase the visibility of our unity in Christ but it is imperative that we do not see this unity as an end in itself. First, it is a means to a greater participation in the mutual indwelling in love of the persons of the Trinity. Second, and following from the first, it is a means of being energised for mission and growth in holiness. As a *vision* of visible unity it must be outward looking and imbued with the mission imperative and call to holiness.

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<sup>8</sup> An Anglican-Methodist Covenant: *Common Statement of the Formal Conversations between the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the Church of England* (MHP: Peterborough) 2001, p 34 ff. [http://www.anglican-methodist.org.uk/common\\_statement0506.pdf](http://www.anglican-methodist.org.uk/common_statement0506.pdf)

12. Our thinking about what form visible unity may take has developed as we have engaged with the reality of the Methodist Church as a connexion in three nations relating to the three national Anglican churches, which in turn has raised questions about how the three Anglican churches relate to each other. We have been helped in this by the participation of Methodist and Anglican representatives from Scotland and Wales. Going into the next phase of the Covenant journey, we think it is important for the churches in England, Wales and Scotland, and also in Ireland, to communicate about developments in Anglican – Methodist relations within the four nations.
13. The Methodist Church Faith and Order Committee, in its response to the Quinquennial Report (2013), suggests that

*'The present method of seeking to combine elements of Anglican and Methodist polity and structures has exhausted the potential for convergence without any realistic prospect of achieving a complete integration.'*

It goes on to suggest that

*'... one of the most pressing tasks now facing the Covenant is to develop an ecumenical ecclesiology as the foundation for an integrated structure of oversight and the reconciliation of ministries.'*

We hope that what we are suggesting here will help our churches to move into a new relationship in which the call to worship, mission and holiness reshapes the ecclesial structures of both our churches.

### **Two bold initiatives**

14. We are convinced that now is the time for both our churches to make bold initiatives which will break the logjam which is preventing the flourishing of our Covenant relationship into this deeper communion. The two initiatives are closely connected and, ideally, would be made together.
15. One initiative is in the hands of the Church of England.

**The Church of England needs to address the question of reconciling, with integrity, the existing presbyteral and diaconal ministries of our two churches, which would lead to the interchangeability of ministries.**

16. Addressing this question would take the affirmations of the Covenant concerning the ministries of our churches out of the realm of abstract theory and embody it in structures and practice. The interchangeability of presbyteral and diaconal ministries is bound up for the Church of England with how the ministry of oversight (episcopate) may be exercised personally through episcopal ministry (episcopacy). An initiative for reconciling existing presbyteral and diaconal ministries would be taken with the expectation of the Methodist Church taking a bold initiative in relation to personal episcopal ministry as described below.
17. We encourage the Church of England to learn from the experience of Anglican churches elsewhere in the Anglican Communion which have taken this route, for example the United Churches of South India, North India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Anglican–Lutheran relations in

North America, especially under the Waterloo Declaration,<sup>9</sup> and proposals being considered by the Church of Ireland and the Anglican Church in New Zealand.

18. We also encourage the Church of England to take account of the existing theological agreement in essential doctrine with the Methodist Church and the affirmations about the Methodist Church and its ministries it has made in the Covenant Statement. It is important to recognise that proposals made previously for an act of reconciliation of ministries, which bears a resemblance to ordination, have been problematical not only for Methodists, but also to many in the Church of England. The key point is that the integrity of the existing Methodist ordained ministries should be honoured in the period of transition into deeper communion. This has varying implications for the different orders of ministry. The question of reconciling the diaconal ministries of our churches raises particular issues which the JIC has begun to explore in previous reports, and about which we encourage continuing work.
19. The question of reconciling existing presbyteral ministries challenges the Church of England to develop arrangements for an interim period in order to embrace fully the ministry of those presbyterally-ordained in the Methodist Church. In practice, making such arrangements would mean that Methodist presbyters could be appointed to Church of England posts, that they could be given pastoral charge in parishes and chaplaincies and preside at Holy Communion according to the use of the Church of England. Likewise, Church of England clergy could serve in the Methodist Church by making full use of the provisions that the Methodist Church already has for recognising and regarding ordained ministers as being in full connexion with the Conference and accountable in the first instance to it, while still continuing to be under canonical obedience to the bishop. No progress has been made on this issue since the Covenant was signed, despite the JIC being asked to make this a priority in 2003 and despite it having made several proposals concerning it.
20. The other initiative is in the hands of the Methodist Church.

**The Methodist Church needs to address the question of expressing the Conference's ministry of oversight in a personal form of connexional, episcopal ministry (such as a President Bishop) in such a way that it could be recognised by the Church of England as a sign of continuity in faith, worship and mission in a church that is in the apostolic succession.**

21. Such a move would be on the basis of the Church of England making a bold initiative in relation to reconciling existing presbyteral and diaconal ministries, as described above. It would also be in recognition of the fact that our churches do not stand still. Since our Quinquennial Report was published in September 2013, substantial progress has been made in the Church of England concerning admitting women to the episcopate. If the Church of England does reach a point when women may become bishops, this will change substantially the context in which this issue can be addressed. The responses we have received from the Methodist Church in particular raise the question of whether, at such time as this substantial development in the episcopate of the Church of England takes place, the Methodist Church will consider this question afresh.
22. The interim report *Moving Forward in Covenant (2011)* stated that:

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<sup>9</sup> Called to Full Communion (The Waterloo Declaration) as approved by the National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. Waterloo, Ontario, 2001. <http://elcic.ca/What-We-Believe/Waterloo-Declaration.cfm>

*The Covenant was premised on agreement in principle about the historic episcopate. The many Conference statements about the Methodist Church being willing to receive the historic episcopate from the wider Church were accepted at face value.*

23. The JIC's suggestion, made in the first Quinquennial Report *Embracing the Covenant* (2008), that the Methodist Church could take 'episcopacy into its system' in the form of a succession of Presidents of Conference being ordained bishop is still on the table. In its response to this proposal, referred to in *Moving Forward in Covenant* (2011), the Methodist Faith and Order Committee concluded that:

*it is possible to state unequivocally that this proposal neither contradicts nor is inconsistent with the teaching of the Methodist Church concerning the nature of episcopate (oversight) and the ordained ministry.*

We comment here that it would make sense for an existing form of personal oversight within the Connexion to be the vehicle for this to happen. Such a ministry of oversight would need to be a recognisable sign of the apostolic succession which, we maintain, already exists within the Methodist Church, and which is focused in a corporate way in the Conference.

24. As we have said, ideally our two churches would each make such bold offerings together and each offering would resonate with the other. It is as if we face a locked door, which can only be opened with two keys: each of our churches holds one of the keys which will open the way to a new stage of our Covenant journey. The challenges to both our churches of moving towards unity of oversight and the interchangeability of lay, presbyteral and diaconal ministries underlines the importance of both churches recognising that growing together in Covenant involves the transformation of both churches.

### **Embedding the Covenant**

25. As we describe below, the JIC has been encouraged by the evidence of growth in the areas in which our two churches work together at national/connexional level and in dioceses and districts and circuits. This joint working is mutually beneficial to our churches and to those we are able to serve together. However, in order to flourish, this joint work needs to be energised and sustained by progress in resolving continuing ecclesiological issues. Without such progress, many initiatives will lose momentum and direction, and the Covenant itself will atrophy. This point has been emphasised to us through the consultation process over this document.

#### ***a) Sharing ministry within the current regulations of our churches***

26. In the light of the continuing challenges facing our churches in moving towards the interchangeability of ministry, the opportunities for shared ministry within current ecclesiological and legal frameworks is significant. Work done by the JIC on developing the understanding of the difference between interchangeable ministry and shared ministry and our churches' eucharistic practice has laid the theological foundations for the practical initiatives which the JIC and the Methodist Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission (MAPUM) have promoted.
27. The greater experience of shared eucharistic worship and of shared lay and ordained ministry in our churches has been made possible because of the context of agreement, affirmation and commitment created by the Covenant.<sup>10</sup> The Methodist Church has increasingly authorised

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<sup>10</sup> Covenant Affirmation 2. *We affirm that in both our churches the word of God is authentically preached, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist are duly administered and celebrated.* Commitment 4. *We*

Church of England clergy as associate presbyters and the Church of England has made increasing use of Canon B 43 for approving joint eucharistic worship at which a Methodist presbyter presides. It is apparent, however, that full use of existing rules of our churches to enable shared ministry is made only in some areas and is dependent to a great extent on the good will, mutual acceptance and good relationships between individual Methodists and Anglicans.

28. The sharing of lay ministry is particularly important. It is significant that local training of lay ministry has recently been delivered jointly in an increasing number of places. Under the Church of England's Ecumenical Canons and Methodist Standing Orders, a high level of sharing of the ministries of licensed readers and local preachers may take place between our churches (see chapter 4 of the 2007 JIC report and appendix III of the 2008 JIC report). Anecdotal evidence from Diocesan and District Ecumenical Officers suggests that this is an important and growing area of sharing between our two churches.
29. The Covenant Affirmations have provided the all-important context in which the sharing of presbyteral and diaconal ministries may take place. One of the most effective pieces of work produced in this area has been to show how Canon B 43 can be applied in the context of the Covenant,<sup>11</sup> to allow for joint eucharistic worship at which a Methodist presbyter presides to take place on a regular basis in Church of England churches. In response to this work, 14 diocesan bishops have indicated that they give general approval for invitations to be made by incumbents and PCCs for such joint services to take place. Joint eucharistic worship midweek and in some places as part of the Sunday pattern of worship is now well established in these dioceses.
30. We urge both our churches to make full use of the opportunities that the existing rules of our churches provide in the sharing of lay, diaconal and presbyteral ministries.

***b) Working together in mission, unity and holiness at local, diocesan and circuit/district level***

31. The proposal made in the interim JIC report *Moving Forward in Covenant* (2011) for a form of Covenant Partnership in Extended Areas (CPEAs) (areas comprising a number of parishes and a number of circuits or parts of circuits) has fired imaginations both locally and nationally/connexionally.<sup>12</sup> Using the existing legal frameworks of our churches, this proposal is intended to stimulate strategic planning and joint mission in dioceses and parishes, districts and circuits. As experience is already showing, it has the potential to raise co-operation between our churches to a new level.
32. In the Quinquennial Report (2013) we present an example of an area which has established and one which is working towards establishing this enhanced way of working.
  - In Leeds a 'permission-giving' culture has been established in order to encourage local joint working which is at the heart of the Area Partnership. There is some anxiety here about how the new arrangements will be translated into the new, enlarged Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales, of which the previous Diocese of Ripon and Leeds is part.

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*commit ourselves to encourage forms of eucharistic sharing, including eucharistic hospitality, in accordance with the rules of our respective churches.*

<sup>11</sup> *In the Spirit of the Covenant: First Interim Report of the JIC* (2005), Appendix A: Applying Canon B 43 in the context of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant. <http://www.anglican-methodist.org.uk/JICreport.doc> Appendix A was produced by the Local Unity Panel of the Council for Christian Unity in 2003.

<sup>12</sup> *Moving Forward in Covenant: Interim Report of the JIC in its second phase* (2011), Part 2: A major development in shared ministry. <http://www.anglican-methodist.org.uk/conf2011-pc-moving-forward-in-covenant-0511.pdf>



- In Cumbria, three joint task groups are developing county-wide strategies for mission, ministry deployment and the use of church buildings involving the Anglican Diocese, Methodist District and the United Reformed Church Synod. As the strategic planning develops so structures for consultation and decision-making are being worked out.
33. Since the report was published, two more areas – Cornwall and north Nottinghamshire – need to be mentioned. The Cornwall area is based on the Cumbria model of working towards establishing the partnership in stages, whereas the Nottinghamshire one has been established from an existing local ecumenical partnership by adding more parishes and local Methodist churches to build up the area. These examples demonstrate the contextual and flexible nature of the proposal. What is emerging is in each place appropriate for the particular area concerned.
34. In a number of other places, the proposal for CPEAs has acted as a catalyst for dioceses and districts/circuits to discern new opportunities for working together in mission, even if that does not lead to the establishment of CPEAs. The motivation behind CPEAs is to reap the advantages of joint strategic planning for mission. However, it has to be said that the take up of this proposal is patchy. In some areas of the country each of our churches has other priorities in its ecumenical relations, such as with Black and Minority Ethnic Churches. The disparity between the strength of our churches on the ground in some areas makes a reasonable balance in a partnership difficult to establish.
35. The asymmetry of the decision-making bodies of our two churches<sup>13</sup> and the incompatibility of diocesan/deanery and district/circuit boundaries<sup>14</sup> are two obstacles to developing structures of joint oversight and decision-making at intermediate and local level. It is remarkable, in view of these obstacles, how much progress is being made in some dioceses, districts and circuits towards genuine partnership in the key areas of joint mission, the sharing of resources (including transforming buildings as centres for community) and the sharing of ministry and worship. Care needs to be taken by both churches to work with the bodies in each of our churches that have similar functions. This means that bishops and dioceses need to relate as much to circuits as well as to districts.
36. This proposal is built on other key pieces of work done by the JIC, for example concerning the difference between interchangeable and shared ministry, the sharing of lay ministries, the analysis of decision-making and oversight bodies in each church and guidelines on the sharing of the eucharist. The detailed work of the JIC and MAPUM is offered as a tool for use by our churches, but it is only when these tools are imaginatively applied that their full capabilities are revealed. We urge more dioceses and parishes, districts, circuits and local churches to explore the potential of this proposal for their parishes and circuits.

***c) Working together in mission, unity and holiness at national/connexional level***

37. Much of the joint working which has developed between our churches at national/connexional level has happened because the Covenant provides a framework of understanding and commitment: there is consistency across most of the national and connexional bodies.<sup>15</sup> There are examples of good practice, in the joint work on safeguarding, local unity in mission,

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<sup>13</sup> *Embracing the Covenant*: Quinquennial Report of the JIC (2008), Chapter 4: How Can Decision-Making Be Shared? <http://www.anglican-methodist.org.uk/ec-embr-covenant-ch4-250609.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> For an interactive map superimposing diocesan, district, deanery and circuit boundaries, see: [www.methodist.org.uk/links/church-webmap-advanced-version](http://www.methodist.org.uk/links/church-webmap-advanced-version)

<sup>15</sup> See the full report, chapter entitled *Joint Consultation and Decision Making*. <http://www.anglican-methodist.org.uk/cotc6.doc>

education, ethical investment, fresh expressions and faith and order. Effective consultation and collaboration have emerged in each of these areas of work. However, there have been instances where our churches have made decisions on matters which affect the Covenant partner without consulting at an early stage. We discuss this issue in the Quinquennial Report (2013).<sup>16</sup>

38. Where progress has been made in some collaborative projects at national and connexional level, there is strong evidence of real benefits to both our churches. We commend especially three areas of collaboration.

- The first is the collaboration of our two churches on safeguarding, particularly in the joint appointment of a national and connexional Safeguarding Officer and joint safeguarding team, encouraging close working between advisors in dioceses and districts and in developing converging safeguarding policies. Crucial to this work has been the bringing together of the management of this work into the Joint Safeguarding Liaison Group.
- The second is the work of MAPUM, which works in a totally integrated way not only to promote unity in mission between our churches but also to engage together with new ecumenical initiatives for mission with a range of other ecumenical partners.
- The third is the continuing joint enterprise of the Fresh Expressions National Team. From its inception in 2004, the Fresh Expressions organisation has been a partnership between the Church of England and the Methodist Church. A range of other partners has joined the organisation as this work has developed. The Fresh Expressions organisation has promoted Fresh Expressions through Vision Days and the Mission Shaped Ministry Course, which have been delivered regionally and locally, and through the Fresh Expressions website. The organisation has also helped to resource Fresh Expressions Area Strategy Teams, which include a range of regional partners.

39. We also affirm the growing practice of our churches' boards, committees and groups of inviting the Covenant partner to appoint an observer on that group. Mutual observership is more than simply 'observing'. It means having representatives embedded in the structures of the other church, empowered with knowledge of their own church, and carrying the responsibility of reporting back and assisting in developing ideas and strategy.<sup>17</sup>

40. One issue that will test how well we are able to work together under the Covenant will be the way our two churches respond to the coming into effect of the *Marriage (Same-Sex) Couples Act 2013*. This is an extremely sensitive area for both our churches and they need to take very seriously the implications of being in Covenant for how they engage in their different processes. Any decision to change the teaching, practice or discipline of either church will have an impact on the other, so communication, consultation and where appropriate joint decision-making at every stage of the process will be vital.

41. These examples of joint working, and that being done in other areas such as education and faith and order, demonstrate that it is possible to establish effective joint structures and processes for specific areas of joint working. Joint decision-making relies not only on good communication and collaboration, but also on good processes and structures. As a key priority in the next phase of the Covenant journey, the development of structures of joint decision-making, to which we have already committed ourselves in the Covenant Commitments, is crucial.

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<sup>16</sup> See the full report, chapter entitled *Joint Consultation and Decision Making*: paras 27-33.

<sup>17</sup> For further discussion on this, see full report, chapter entitled *Joint Consultation and Decision Making* paras 45 and 46.

42. We ask both our churches to make concrete steps to achieve this. Examples of measures that could be taken, in appropriate circumstances, are:

- writing the need to work with counterparts in the Covenant partner into staff job descriptions;
- including, in the terms of reference of committees, a requirement for consulting and where possible collaborating with the appropriate body in our Covenant partner; and
- extending the practice of mutual observership in the work of boards, committees and panels, since it is the most effective and efficient way of consulting with each other.

43. We are also convinced that modelling good practice at the centre of our churches' structures will be instrumental in releasing energy. The informal joint meetings of senior staff and the annual meeting between the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference provide a useful reference and steer for joint concerns and working. The question of formal contact between the Methodist Council and Archbishops' Council should be considered in the next phase of implementation.

44. We propose that in the next phase of the Covenant journey, the Covenant should be promoted in our national and connexional institutions, to encourage better consultation, the discernment of joint working and the development of structures for joint decision-making. The motivation and energy for moving from joint consultation to joint decision-making and action will flow from whether the work we do together more effectively furthers God's mission and, in so doing, leads us closer to the visible unity of our two churches.

### **The challenge of the Covenant<sup>18</sup>**

45. The Anglican-Methodist Covenant is at a decisive moment. As a Commission charged with the task of facilitating the Covenant's implementation, we ask our churches to address the challenges of moving towards a relationship of deeper communion mindful of the solemn promises that we have made to God and each other in the Covenant, to be obedient to God's call to work and to pray for the unity of his Church. We are mindful that addressing these challenges will require generosity, reciprocity and trust on the part of each church. We encourage both churches to recognise that growing together in Covenant involves the transformation of both.

46. Over the last ten years, the JIC has focused very much on the theological priorities given right at the beginning in 2003, especially those of removing obstacles to interchangeability of lay, diaconal, presbyteral and episcopal ministries, and has discussed these issues in successive reports. The lack of progress in this area over ten years seriously questions the integrity of the commitments which our churches have made in the Covenant. We believe it is time to test our churches' readiness to address these issues. In this Report we encourage our churches to take one bold initiative each<sup>19</sup> in order to open the locked door which blocks the way forward together. These initiatives cannot be made in isolation and so we encourage that work on these initiatives should be done jointly.

To this end we make *Recommendation 1*:

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<sup>18</sup> See the chapter in the full report entitled *Let it be according to your will: the Challenge to our Churches*.  
<http://www.anglican-methodist.org.uk/cotc13.doc>

<sup>19</sup> See paras 15 and 20.

**We recommend that the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England and the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church work together to bring forward proposals for:**

- i. the Methodist Church to consider afresh expressing the Conference's ministry of oversight in a personal form of connexional, episcopal ministry and the Church of England to recognise that ministry in the Methodist Church as a sign of continuity in faith, worship and mission in a church that is in the apostolic succession;**
- ii. the Church of England and the Methodist Church to address the question of reconciling, with integrity, the existing presbyteral and diaconal ministries of our two churches, which would lead to the interchangeability of ministries.**

47. The JIC has kept in sight the crucial question as to whether there is evidence that the Covenant is making a difference in terms of the way our two churches are working together in mission both at national/connexional level and in dioceses, circuits and districts. There are some encouraging signs in this respect and a growing number of good examples. There is much that still could be done. The immediate challenge is to motivate people to use the opportunities for working together in mission already available within the existing rules and structures of our churches. In the next phase of the Covenant, we maintain that there is a need for advocacy in order to encourage joint working.

48. It is important then to enthuse people at the grass roots by the release of imagination and energy which comes through realising the magnitude of what is possible. The place where this work is already being done is MAPUM. We therefore commend the work of MAPUM to:

- i. give advice on the full use of current regulations to support joint working;
- ii. monitor and support the development of CPEAs on the ground as they are established;
- iii. draw out examples of good practice in working strategically together at diocesan and circuit/district level; and
- iv. act as a bridge between developments on the ground and the theological and ecclesiological reflection which undergirds them.

To this end we make *Recommendation 2*:

**We recommend that our churches at local and regional level, supported and advised by the Methodist Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission, give priority to making full use of what is already possible for them to do together, and especially to plan together for mission and worship, deployment of ministry and the use of resources.**

49. Furthermore we urge the bodies and institutions of our churches at national and connexional level to give priority to the Covenant commitment 'to develop structures of joint or shared communal, collegial and personal oversight, including shared consultation and decision-making, on the way to a fully united ministry of oversight.' As noted in paragraph 12 above, we have been helped in our task over the last quinquennium by the participation of Methodist and Anglican representatives from Scotland and Wales. The Methodist Church is a church in three nations and has close relations with each of the three Anglican churches. Developments taking place in one nation illuminate and may have an impact on the relations in the other two. We

therefore believe that it is important to facilitate the exchange of experience and ideas between these three relationships.

To this end, we make *Recommendation 3*:

**We recommend that a Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group, co-chaired by a President or Vice-President of the Methodist Conference and a Diocesan Bishop and including two other Methodist and two other Anglican members should be established, with access to the key policy making bodies of our churches, to replace the Joint Implementation Commission in the next quinquennium. This body will monitor progress of faith and order conversations and other on-going work under the Covenant and advocate new initiatives; facilitate communication of Anglican–Methodist developments in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland; and report annually to the General Synod and Methodist Conference.**

50. We have stressed throughout this Report that growing into visible unity means participating more fully in the dynamic unity of the triune God. This happens as we each encounter the other in Christ and receive each other's gifts. In this encounter our churches must expect to be changed. Growing into visible unity is thus a transformative process of dying and rising again; it is an integral part of the Christian calling to live a life of discipleship in which we lose our lives to gain eternal life (Mark 8:35-36). As Christ the Good Shepherd laid down his life to give abundant life to his sheep and to unite his flock (John 10:10-11; 15-17), so our churches are called to die in order to live, and in living fully to God we grow into a deeper unity. The challenge we put to both our churches is to place confidence and trust in God and each other, and take the serious steps into a more visible unity which we have recommended in this report. We are challenged to do this, not for the sake of our unity alone, but so that we may be more energised in God's mission and grow in holiness.

PROFESSOR PETER HOWDLE  
Methodist Co Chair

✠ CHRISTOPHER COCKSWORTH  
Anglican Co Chair

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

- 21/1. The Conference received the Report.**
- 21/2. The Conference expressed its gratitude to the members of the Joint Implementation Commission for their work in this second phase.**
- 21/3. The Conference endorsed Recommendation 1, and directed the Faith and Order Committee to undertake the necessary work to bring forward the stated proposals.**
- 21/4. The Conference endorsed Recommendation 2, strongly encouraged Methodist churches, circuits and districts to put it into effect, and directed the Methodist members of the Methodist Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission to ensure that appropriate support and advice is provided by that body.**
- 21/5. The Conference adopted Recommendation 3.**
- 21/6. The Conference directed the Methodist Council to appoint the Methodist members of the group proposed in Recommendation 3 following the adoption of that Recommendation by the General Synod of the Church of England.**

## ANNEX 1

### AN ANGLICAN-METHODIST COVENANT (2003)

We, the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the Church of England, on the basis of our shared history, our full agreement in the apostolic faith, our shared theological understandings of the nature and mission of the Church and of its ministry and oversight, and our agreement on the goal of full visible unity, as set out in the previous sections of our Common Statement, hereby make the following Covenant in the form of interdependent Affirmations and Commitments. We do so both in a spirit of penitence for all that human sinfulness and narrowness of vision have contributed to our past divisions, believing that we have been impoverished through our separation and that our witness to the gospel has been weakened accordingly, and in a spirit of thanksgiving and joy for the convergence in faith and collaboration in mission that we have experienced in recent years.

#### AFFIRMATIONS

1. We affirm one another's churches as true churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and as truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God.
2. We affirm that in both our churches the word of God is authentically preached, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist are duly administered and celebrated.
3. We affirm that both our churches confess in word and life the apostolic faith revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the ecumenical Creeds.
4. We affirm that one another's ordained and lay ministries are given by God as instruments of God's grace, to build up the people of God in faith, hope and love, for the ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care and to share in God's mission in the world.
5. We affirm that one another's ordained ministries possess both the inward call of the Holy Spirit and Christ's commission given through the Church.
6. We affirm that both our churches embody the conciliar, connexional nature of the Church and that communal, collegial and personal oversight (*episkope*) is exercised within them in various forms.
7. We affirm that there already exists a basis for agreement on the principles of episcopal oversight as a visible sign and instrument of the communion of the Church in time and space.

#### COMMITMENTS

1. We commit ourselves, as a priority, to work to overcome the remaining obstacles to the organic unity of our two churches, on the way to the full visible unity of Christ's Church. In particular, we look forward to the time when the fuller visible unity of our churches makes possible a united, interchangeable ministry.
2. We commit ourselves to realise more deeply our common life and mission and to share the distinctive contributions of our traditions, taking steps to bring about closer collaboration in all areas of witness and service in our needy world.
3. We commit ourselves to continue to welcome each other's baptised members to participate in the fellowship, worship and mission of our churches.
4. We commit ourselves to encourage forms of eucharistic sharing, including eucharistic hospitality, in accordance with the rules of our respective churches.

5. We commit ourselves to listen to each other and to take account of each other's concerns, especially in areas that affect our relationship as churches.
6. We commit ourselves to continue to develop structures of joint or shared communal, collegial and personal oversight, including shared consultation and decision-making, on the way to a fully united ministry of oversight.

## **ANNEX 2**

Responses to the Quinquennial Report (2013) and Draft Report to the Methodist Conference and General Synod July 2014 were received from the following bodies:

### **Official Anglican bodies:**

<i>Church of England</i>	House of Bishops Council for Christian Unity Faith and Order Commission
<i>Church in Wales</i>	Bench of Bishops
<i>Scottish Episcopal Church</i>	Inter Church Relations Committee
<i>Anglican Communion</i>	Inter Anglican Standing Committee for Unity Faith and Order

### **Official Methodist Church bodies:**

<i>Connexional Bodies</i>	Methodist Council Faith and Order Committee Connexional Leaders' Forum Ecumenical Stakeholders' Forum
<i>Districts</i>	Leeds District Plymouth and Exeter District

<b>Joint Anglican-Methodist Churches Together in England</b>	Methodist Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission Churches Theology and Unity Group
<b>United Reformed Church</b>	National Ecumenical Officer

In addition we received a number of responses from individuals.

The Joint Implementation Commission wishes to thank all those who responded and engaged so fully with the Reports.

## **ANNEX 3**

### **THE MEMBERSHIP OF JIC2 (2008 to date)**

#### **Anglican**

The Right Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth, Bishop of Coventry (Co-Chair)  
The Venerable Janet Henderson [until October 2011]  
The Revd Venerable Dr Jane Steen [from November 2011]  
The Revd Dr Will Adam  
Dr Philip Giddings  
The Right Revd Jonathan Baker  
The Revd Canon William Croft (Consultant)  
The Revd Dr Bernard Sixtus (Church in Wales) [until February 2013]  
The Revd Canon Prof John Richardson (Scottish Episcopal Church)  
The Revd Canon Dr Paul Avis (Co-Convenor) [until November 2011]  
The Revd Dr Roger Paul (Co-Convenor) [from November 2011]

#### **Methodist**

Professor Peter Howdle, Vice-President of the Conference 2002/03 (Co-Chair)  
Mr Steven Cooper  
The Revd Catherine Gale (Wales)  
Mrs Jenny Easson (Scotland)  
The Revd Ruth Gee  
Deacon Sue Culver  
The Revd Neil Stubbens  
The Revd Dr Peter Phillips (Consultant) [until August 2013]  
The Revd Nicola Price-Tebbutt (Consultant) [from September 2013]  
The Revd Kenneth Howcroft (Co-Convenor)

#### **United Reformed Church**

The Revd David Tatem (Observer-Participant)