

## 22. Ecumenical Report

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<b>Subject and aims</b>	To provide a report on some areas of ecumenical engagement.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Methodist Church is committed to working in partnership with others wherever possible as we respond to *Our Calling*. Among those with whom we work are ecumenical partners from a wide variety of Christian traditions. It is no coincidence that we work with others in local mission initiatives as unity and mission are inseparable. To seek unity is a gospel imperative for the followers of Jesus who are sent to make disciples of all the earth.
- 1.2. This report includes updates on the work of some of the ecumenical bodies and accounts of some significant developments in other areas. We are grateful to all those who represent the Methodist Church on a wide variety of committees, commissions and working groups thus enabling connexional, district, circuit and local initiatives.
- 1.3. In the context of challenging and changing international relationships our ecumenical relationships in Europe and through the World Council of Churches are opportunities for continuing meaningful engagement. The United Methodist Church and the Methodist Church in Britain have renewed their Concordat and work is continuing to find ways in which we can develop our work together beyond national borders and in very challenging and uncertain times.

### 2. The World Council of Churches (WCC)

- 2.1. The WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, on which the Methodist Church is represented by the Revd Dr Janet Corlett, met in Helsinki in May 2019. The meeting included the launch of the Arusha Report, Devotional Resource Book and the Digital Edition from the 2018 World Mission Conference.
- 2.2. The Faith and Order Commission met in Nanjing in June and expects to release the document *Come and See* and to work on a statement on religious pluralism. This work has had significant oversight from Professor Tom Greggs, a representative of the Methodist Church.

### 3. The Conference of European Churches (CEC)

- 3.1. The 15th General Assembly of CEC took place from 31 May to 6 June 2018 in Novi Sad, Serbia. Three thematic policy areas emerged from the assembly: hospitality, justice and hope. A strategy is being developed based on these policy areas, which includes continuing development of its work with the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), strengthening youth participation in the ecumenical movement, and challenging and inspiring member churches for local and national engagement with politics, economics and cultures. Further information is available on the CEC website<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ceceurope.org/>

#### **4. The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE)**

- 4.1. In September 2018, the CPCE held its 8th General Assembly in Basel/Basle, Switzerland with the theme 'liberated – connected – committed'. The Revd Dr Richard Clutterbuck represented the Methodist Church and his report is available on the Methodist Church website<sup>2</sup>.

#### **5. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)**

- 5.1. This past year, CTBI has provided, as usual, resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity ('Only Justice', which was adapted from material prepared by churches in the Indonesia) and Lent ('The Mystery of God'). Other issues significant to the work of CTBI have been serious youth violence, racial justice and engagement with other faiths. CTBI has worked with partners including the Corrymeela Community to encourage the building of a shared understanding of our future together at a time of political turmoil.

#### **6. Scotland**

- 6.1. The Scotland District has, once again, been represented at many of the Assemblies or Synods of partner churches in Scotland.
- 6.2. Following the review of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), the Trustees and Members' Meeting continue to engage with the report as they discern possible ways forward.

#### **7. England**

- 7.1. Churches Together in England (CTE) now has 49 member churches. The Revd Dr David Cornick retired from the post of General Secretary at the end of August 2018 and is succeeded by the Revd Dr Paul Goodliff. The emphasis of CTE on mission is reflected in the recent appointments of staff members for mission and evangelism, and media and communications.
- 7.2. The model constitutions for single congregation Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) are being revised and a new model constitution for LEPs that are constituted as Charitable Incorporated Institutions (CIOs) is being produced. It is important to remember that governance bodies of the Methodist Church cannot be incorporated although individual Methodists can be appointed as trustees of CIOs. It is hoped that the revised constitutions will be available before the end of the year.

#### **8. Wales**

- 8.1. The Commission of the Covenanted Churches in Wales (together with Cytûn) have appointed a new Faith, Order and Witness Enabler, Mr Peredur Owen Griffiths. The Commission continues its research into the past, present and future of the Covenant relationship, including through the interview of denominational leaders, to try to understand the current commitment to the Covenant ideals.

#### **9. The Free Churches Group (FCG)**

- 9.1. The work of the Free Churches Group continues to be focused on supporting the churches' work in education, and healthcare and prison chaplaincy.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/10755/cpce-assembly-report-2018.docx>

## **10. The Methodist-Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission (MAPUM)**

- 10.1. MAPUM has continued to consider items relating to the covenant with the Church of England including the role of the Covenant Champions, effective communication and ecumenical hospitality.
- 10.2. MAPUM expressed thanks to the Revd John Hellyer who completed his term as Co-Chair in November 2018. His commitment to ecumenism and his wisdom have been greatly appreciated. He is succeeded by the Revd Dr Jonathan Pye.

## **11. The Methodist-United Reformed Church Liaison Group (MURCLG)**

- 11.1. The Liaison Group has made available a model constitution for ecumenical areas involving the two churches. This can be found on the Methodist Church website.

## **12. The British Methodist-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission**

- 12.1. The Commission published the report of the 2013-2018 quinquennium in the autumn of 2018. It has been agreed that the following challenging issues will be the focus for discussion over the next quinquennium:
  - the Eucharist
  - the hierarchy of truths
  - Mary and the saints
  - authority and ordained ministry
  - ethical issues.

## **13. Methodist Ecumenical Office, Rome (MEOR)**

- 13.1. The varied work of the Office has continued to develop under the leadership of the Revd Dr Tim Macquiban. Dr Macquiban is leaving Rome at the end of the year and we thank him for his commitment, for the ecumenical relationships he has nurtured and for serving in this role with such distinction.
- 13.2. The Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome is a presence for the World Methodist Council:
  - to be a channel of dialogue with other churches in the search for a deeper unity
  - to foster relationships with other agencies and faith communities in order to promote better understanding and joint action for justice and peace
  - to offer a ministry of prayer and reflection, of learning and growth
  - to be a place of open hospitality to Methodists and all visitors to Rome.
- 13.3. The work of MEOR is overseen by a Forum, the members of which are the World Methodist Council, the Methodist Church, the European Methodist Council, the United Methodist Church Office of Christian Unity and Inter-Religious Relationships, OPCEMI (The Methodist Churches in Italy) and The Wesley Rome.

The Methodist Church is the lead agency in this work and is committed to the appointment and oversight of the Director of MEOR and financial support for MEOR in partnership with the other members of the Forum.

The MEOR Forum has agreed a process for the appointment of a full-time Director of MEOR from September 2020. The Revd Dr Daniel Pratt-Morris Chapman has been appointed as Interim Director from September 2019 to September 2020.

13.4. In the course of the year a number of groups have been hosted by MEOR. In order to support this aspect of the work of MEOR an administrative assistant has been appointed from September 2019.

**14. District Ecumenical Officers (DEOs)**

14.1. The DEOs have met with Anglican colleagues in October and at Methodist Church House in May. The focus of the meeting in May was Ecumenism and Mission.

**15. *The Gifts We Receive***

*The Gifts We Receive* is a consultation over two days in June and October 2019 which has been organised by the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group. Participants will use the methodology of Receptive Ecumenism, to identify and focus on gifts received from the other church, consider how the gifts received can help each church in its life and mission to flourish. Thought will then be given to ways of sharing this with others.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

**22/1. The Conference received the Report.**

**Additional Report** (Daily Record 8/28/2)

The World Council of Churches 11th Assembly is due to take place in Germany in September 2021, and the Methodist Church is invited to appoint its representatives to that assembly. The Conference is asked to delegate this responsibility to the Methodist Council.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

**22/2. The Conference delegated responsibility for the appointment of representatives to the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches to be held in 2021 to the Methodist Council.**