

Memorandum of Understanding between the Methodist Church, Christian Aid and the Methodist Relief and Development Fund

Basic Information

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	That Council approve the paper
Draft Resolution	n/a
Alternative Options to Consider, if Any	n/a

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To set-out an agreement between the Methodist Church, Christian Aid and MRDF which outlines the principles under which they will work together.
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Methodists should not receive conflicting messages about international development. • That all will work together on campaigns and emergency appeals where appropriate. • That the roles and particular focuses of Christian Aid and MRDF will remain distinct.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	Bi-partite MOU between the Methodist Church and Christian Aid, within the International Relief and Development Policy. (MC/08/52)
Consultations	Senior Staff within MRDF and Christian Aid.

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	n/a
Faith and Order	n/a
Financial	n/a
Personnel	n/a
Legal	n/a
Wider Connexional	n/a
External (e.g. ecumenical)	n/a
Risk	n/a

The Methodist Conference in 2008 affirmed both MRDF and Christian Aid as its principal relief and development agencies.¹

In developing its policy on international relief and development, the Methodist Church seeks to ensure synergy with each of its partner organisations. Both Christian Aid and MRDF have structural links to the Methodist Church,² but there is a significant contrast between their size and approach. Christian Aid is among the largest of international relief and development agencies in the UK. It strives for a new world transformed by an end to poverty and campaigns to change the rules that keep people poor. MRDF specialises in smaller projects, making “small miracles” possible for those living in the world's poorest communities through long-term development, emergency relief, and campaigning against the causes of poverty.³

In order to enable local churches and individuals to make informed decisions about support for these agencies, the Methodist Church seeks to continue in its work with Christian Aid and MRDF to explore their complementary roles, improve coordination and increase transparency.

Bipartite agreements exist separately between the Methodist Church and these two charities. These set out the particular responsibilities of Christian Aid and MRDF to the Methodist Church and of the Methodist Church to these partner organisations. The purpose of this document is not to transplant or amend these documents. Rather, it is to augment those agreements by ensuring a framework of understanding and working between all three bodies which ensures the synergy and clarity of a coherent approach.

Principles of Working

The Methodist Church, Christian Aid and MRDF agree that Methodists should not receive conflicting messages about international development. They will seek to create an atmosphere of cooperation and pursue ways in which work in aid and development might be undertaken in partnership where appropriate. They should encourage collaboration, where possible, and prevent competition where this damages the common aim of tackling global poverty.

The Methodist Church, MRDF and Christian Aid agree:

- a. They will work together on campaigns, where appropriate. In such cases, the Methodist Church and MRDF will usually take a lead from campaign coalitions of which all three are a part, or from Christian Aid. In formulating their campaigns, Christian Aid will consult thoroughly with the Methodist Church (as a member church) and also will find ways to consult with MRDF.
- b. They will, where possible seek to find appropriate ways to work together on emergency appeals.

¹ Council April 2008, paper MC/08/52

² MRDF is linked both to Conference and the Methodist Council by its trust deed; The Methodist Church is one of the sponsoring churches and a founding member of Christian Aid.

³ Council April 2008, paper MC/08/52

- c. They will communicate and demonstrate partnership, wherever possible, in word and deed, actively seeking out opportunities to do this.
- d. That the roles and particular focuses of Christian Aid and MRDF remain distinct and thus that both will continue to be sensitive to MRDF's harvest appeals, and Christian Aid Week. At harvest, the Methodist Church's primary focus will be MRDF's appeal.

The Methodist Church will make independent statements on issues relating to international relief and development. Likewise, both Christian Aid and MRDF will do the same. None of these will lay claim to the authority or support of the other organisations without prior agreement, although seeking that agreement and delivering mutual support for the statements and campaigns of the other organisations is encouraged and should be sought out wherever applicable.

To ensure a coherent approach is achieved:

- There will be at minimum an annual meeting between the relevant senior staff members of The Methodist Church, Christian Aid and MRDF to assess the effectiveness of this agreement and discuss opportunities to develop the continuing relationship of collaboration and cooperation.
- In their reports to the Methodist Council, both Christian Aid and MRDF will include details on the working relationship between the three organisations.