

Towards One Mission

Engagement with the World Church

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The Centrality of Mission in the MCB

- John Wesley lead an evangelical revival movement; the world was his parish
- Throughout the history of the MCB mission (at home and overseas) has been part of the purpose and life of the Church
- General Secretary's report to Conference 2011 stated the MCB is a “discipleship movement shaped for mission”
- The CPD, recent reports etc. refer to mission leading to a new section “The Church in Mission” (Section 10 page 667 2016)
“there is no essential difference in the mission of God wherever it is exercised, for God’s mission is one.”(Conference 2012)

Our Calling (Conference 2000)

The Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission

The Church exists to

- Increase awareness of God's presence (**Worship**)
- Help people grow and learn as Christians (**Learning/Caring**)
- Be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice (**Service**)
- Make followers of Jesus Christ (**Evangelism**)

Priorities of the Church (Conference 2004)

The Methodist Church will proclaim and affirm its conviction of God's love in Christ, for us and for the whole world.....giving particular attention, in partnership with others wherever possible, to

- Supporting community development and action for justice especially amongst the most deprived and poor in Britain and worldwide
- Developing confidence in evangelism
- Encouraging fresh ways to be Church
- Nurturing a culture that is people centred and flexible

God's Mission: One Mission (Conference 2014)

- Participation in God's Mission and the proclamation of God's Kingdom are at the heart of Jesus's message
- Re-inspire Methodists as a movement of people fulfilling God's mission. "In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself. (SO 1000 (1))"
- God's mission embraces and unites, evangelism, social action, home and overseas mission, community service and advocacy, all as good news for people in every aspect of their being. It is through this mission that God enables the transformation of lives, communities, nations and the world.

The Church in Mission (CPD, Section 10, SO 1000)

(2) The Church is committed actively and intentionally to work towards a world transformed by the love of God, sharing the love of God and celebrating its place within a worldwide family.

(3) Every member of the MCB is expected actively to engage in this mission which lies at the heart of the nature, identity and self understanding of the Church.

(SO 1002) The Conference has declared its commitment to the engagement of the MCB with churches across the world in a spirit of partnership, collaboration and mutuality through the sharing of resources of all kinds including the interchange of personnel.

Partnership, Focus & Evolution:

A strategy for expressing One Mission through 'Global Relations in Mission' (MC/16/8)

This strategy document seeks to “enable the Church to relate to its global partners now and the future and to be a significant player in the global mission scene.” It is an attempt in “rediscovering and redefining partnerships in mission for the twenty-first century.”

“MCB affirms its place in the wider world community of (partner) churches...exploring new ways of giving life and meaning to these relationships beyond the distribution of grants.”

Global Relationships in Mission Strategy

The strategy, amongst other things, will be expressed by

- Embodying the sense of shared history, culture and purpose that binds Methodist & United churches across the world
- Providing a mechanism for the engagement of districts, circuits, local churches and individuals within the MCB to foster overseas relationships, two way encounters and engagement in mission to deepen their understanding and commitment to mission
- Delivering relevant, flexible and sustainable programmes, rooted in true partnerships, which are mutually beneficial for all those involved and supports the mission and service of partner churches

Key Features of Good Global Partnerships

- Mutually beneficial to both; a sense of listening and learning together
- Enable mutual accountability; handle power dynamics sensitively
- Be easy to run...with good leaders/committees on both sides
- Allow intentional encountering, friendships and visits that are genuinely two way; accepting an element of interdependency
- It should be transformational, making a difference in the lives of people, churches and community where possible for both
- Partnerships is about relationships and together establishing good working practices to enable God's mission

Some Possible Pitfalls in Linking

- This could enhance stereotypes of people in the “third world”, particularly of the poor and children
- Can become very patronising in “we are here to help you”
- Money can become a serious problem in different ways; partnership cannot be about money alone
- May create dependency on overseas funds and support
- Challenges of cross cultural communications and understandings
- Are people in the church here prepared to listen to and learn from Christians and churches overseas? It can change us too!

Resources and Support

- World Church Relations Team
- Church related Mission Agencies (CMS and USPG)
- All We Can
- Christian Aid and International Development Agencies
- One Word Linking Association (UKOWLA)
- Local Indian organisations and networks in the area
- Friends of the Church in India (FCI)

The Indian Reality

- India is a complex society and country of contrasts.... it is an emerging global economic power, thriving democracy with disparity, illiteracy, severe poverty, malnutrition and marginalisation in some places . Many are very rich too!
- Poverty, inequality, power dynamics, corruption, place of women, the caste system and begging can upset many who visit
- Christians are a minority in India (about 2.5%) and in the north mostly (up to 80%) people from lower castes/ tribal communities
- Today India is becoming almost a “Hindu state”

Some suggestions for long term success

- Have a group to lead and organise the link here
- Ask people to pray, get involved and to give of their time and skills
- Involve schools, churches etc. in awareness and fund raising functions
- Have some people visit the Diocese and other places in India
- Invite some people to come here and have families host the visitors
- Do not depend on the Bishop alone.....but his support is vital
- Use modern communications technology and personal contacts
- Be patient

Promote One Mission in the District/MCB

- Link the work of global partnership with mission activities here; keep them one (local and overseas) in the District
- Share the experience with others in the Connexion
- Learn from other churches and districts who may be involved in a global partnerships
- Get active in the One Mission Forum of our church
- Study the implications of God's mission as One Mission and the various dimensions of partnerships

Extracts from Strategy Statement (MC/16/8)

“Methodists in these islands must be aware of challenges faced by our partners and the work they do in mission”

Global partnerships will mean “both increasing the face to face engagement of British Methodists with Churches around the world and exploring with partners the most effective route for their intentional mission support of the MCB.”

“Our vision is that the MCB will be a distinctive and highly effective global participant in mission by true partnerships with sister Churches around the world.”