

METHODIST-ANGLICAN PANEL FOR UNITY IN MISSION

Review of 2015

Background

1. The Methodist Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission (MAPUM) is responsible to the Council for Christian Unity and the Methodist Council. It has the dual purpose of promoting and resourcing the Anglican Methodist Covenant relationship at local level and reflecting on and promoting the unity in mission of the whole church at local level. To this end it interprets Church of England and Methodist Conference policy to the local church, and brings the experience of the local church to the attention of the Connexion, Conference, and Council for Christian Unity. In addition to Anglican and Methodist members of MAPUM, the Baptist Union, the Roman Catholic Church and the United Reformed Church are each represented on the Panel.

Activities and developments in the past year

2. We have reviewed the scope of our work in order to prioritise and focus on a small number of projects at any one time. We have also reviewed the way we work, and aim to make more use of the resource of our members between meetings, through task orientated groups, and electronic communication.
3. In 2014, the General Synod and the Methodist Conference passed the resolution ‘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’. This resolution has strengthened the Panel’s mandate to monitor and provide guidance for Anglican – Methodist joint initiatives at diocesan and local level and to be proactive in encouraging such initiatives.
4. The Panel has continued to produce resources to facilitate ecumenical relations and collaborations at local level, including distributing a tool kit for Anglican – Methodist collaboration (Being Real) and assisting the Joint Safeguarding Liaison Group to produce guidance on Safeguarding in Anglican – Methodist single congregation LEPs.
5. The Panel has also engaged with the Churches Together in England (CTE) consultation paper *A New Framework for Local Ecumenism*. CTE set up a small working group (including the national ecumenical officers of the principle churches participating in LEPs) to address the issues which traditional ecumenical partnerships are facing and to make proposals for enabling new sorts of partnership between churches at local level. As a wider range of churches get involved in joint action, prayer and worship at local level the traditional models developed between the main historic denominations do not meet needs. The consultation paper is stimulating debate within and between member churches of CTE, including the new churches and Pentecostal churches, about what, if any, sort of framework is needed at local level. The group has considered the responses received and presented proposals for a new framework for local unity in mission to the Enabling Group in March 2016. The role of the Panel in the process of refreshing the structures of local ecumenism is proving to be vital and in some ways it has been at the forefront of new thinking on the subject. The working group has drawn extensively on recent work of the Panel.
6. It is expected that the recommendations of the working group, as far as the Church of England is concerned, will relate to proposals for simplifying the ecumenical regulations of the Church of England and will lead to a major revision of the Code of Practice. The Panel has given initial consideration to ways in which local ecumenism can be simplified with respect to the

Simplification Agenda of the General Synod and proposals have been sent via the Council for Christian for Christian Unity to the Chair of the Simplification Task Group.

7. The work of reflecting on the new unity movements has continued. The Panel has identified the tasks of
 - i. Making connections between the new ecumenism and other expressions of ecumenism (for example, receptive ecumenism, faith and order, churches together, and more structural forms) in order to change the tone of how ecumenism is perceived within our churches.
 - ii. Articulating a refreshed vision for unity in mission, which is responsive to the changing landscape represented by the new unity movements, with the aim of rooting ecumenical theology in experience, spirituality and practice. The group proposed some initial scoping work on this task to be returned to in the residential next year.
8. The Panel's Terms of Reference state that both churches will review membership every three years (paragraph 6(b)).
 - i. From the Church of England's perspective, Rt Revd John Wraw, Bishop of Bradwell was appointed Anglican co-chair to succeed Rt Revd Paul Bayes after the October 2015 meeting. There are currently two Anglican vacancies, as a result of the General Synod elections in September 2015. When the membership of the CCU has been established for the next quinquennium, new appointments will be made, at least one of which it is hoped will be a member of the CCU.
 - ii. From the Methodist Church's perspective, Mrs Jenny Easson (from the Scotland District) was appointed in October 2014 and Deacon Stephen Roe (from Synod Cymru) with effect from 1 September 2015.