

GENERAL SYNOD**Annual Report on the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group****Summary**

The Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group (JCAMG) recognises that for the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain to move forward in covenant a number of developments are necessary, each of which requires courage and imagination and none of which is sufficient on its own. Some key questions are addressed in the proposals set out in *Mission and Ministry in Covenant* (published by the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England and the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church on 27 June 2017). The passage of these proposals as they are considered by the two churches has dominated the attention of JCAMG over the last year.

JCAMG has met twice in the last year, carrying out its mandate of helping both churches grow deeper into the covenant relationship they share under God. The focus given by the proposals from *Mission and Ministry in the Covenant* (MMIC) has provided a clear shape for its work of making explicit the shared commitment to mission and unity for the sake of God's kingdom. This work has been done in a spirit of honesty and openness, rooted in a spiritual attitude of trust in God that seeks to engage positively with the realities of church life and takes seriously the ecumenical climate abroad in both churches.

The work of the faith and order bodies

1. The joint work of the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England and the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church is much appreciated by JCAMG and JCAMG has both noted and sought to support their efforts to aid understanding of MMIC within both churches. The Faith and Order Commission provided a covering note to introduce the report to the General Synod in February¹ and the Faith and Order Committee has provided an update on the work relating to the *Mission and Ministry in Covenant* report and identification of further work in Section A of its report to the Methodist Conference.

General Synod

2. The General Synod met in February. The debate on MMIC was preceded by addresses by the Revd Ruth Gee (President of the Methodist Conference 2013-2014) and the Revd Gareth Powell (Secretary of the Methodist Conference), which were received with great warmth.
3. A motion was put to Synod to welcome the report and to commend further reflection, and therefore to endorse the direction of travel of the work done in the light of the Covenant. It was passed with two amendments by large majorities in each house. The motion passed was:

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/GS%202086%20-%20Mission%20and%20Ministry%20in%20Covenant.pdf>

That this Synod:

- a. welcome the report Mission and Ministry in Covenant (GS 2086), produced by the faith and order bodies of the Church of England and the Methodist Church in response to resolutions passed by the General Synod and the Methodist Conference in 2014;
- b. call on the Faith and Order Commission to report back to the Synod at the next group of sessions on work carried out jointly with the Methodist Church to address the areas for further reflection outlined at paragraphs 26-29 of the covering note from the Faith and Order Commission to GS 2086;
- c. invite the Faith and Order Commission, in consultation with the Methodist Church, to explore and elucidate further the relationship between episcopal ordination and eucharistic presidency, as this touches on the full visible unity of our two churches; and
- d. affirm its confident hope that any outstanding issues between our churches may be resolved quickly and satisfactorily and look forward to the day when, on the basis of work already completed and accepted, our ministries will be fully reconciled.

The votes cast were:

- House of Bishops: 35 in favour; 2 against; 0 recorded abstentions.
- House of Clergy: 131 in favour; 23 against; 13 recorded abstentions.
- House of Laity: 124 in favour; 34 against; 11 recorded abstentions

Covenant Champions and Website

4. JCAMG is grateful to the Methodist-Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission (MAPUM) for its work and especially in the recruiting of 11 Covenant Champions. They have begun their work and are known to be addressing meetings of interested parties. Their work could be very important in the period of further reflection.
5. One task that needs further attention is the gathering of useful stories that illustrate the benefits of interchangeability of ministry. Plans are afoot to gather them through cooperative work coordinated by the National Ecumenical Officers of the two churches.
6. These stories will be posted on the Covenant Website, which JCAMG notes with pleasure has become active and is an extremely useful resource, as it presents in one place all the relevant information about this stage in relations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

The Revd Neil Stubbens

7. JACMG is extremely grateful for immense work, undertaken with competence and attention to detail, of the Revd Neil Stubbens, who has served as Methodist Co-Secretary to this Group and to MAPUM. In September he will be taking up new ministerial duties, and JCAMG wishes him well and is glad to take this opportunity to record its appreciation of his very significant contribution to developments under the Covenant.

The Revd Dr Callan Slipper (National Ecumenical Officer)
May 2018

GENERAL SYNOD

Appendix 1: The mandate and membership of the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group

1. The 2014 Methodist Conference and the General Synod (in November 2014) approved the three main recommendations of the final report of the Joint Implementation Commission, 'The Challenge of the Covenant', namely:
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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.
2. The membership of the Group is as follows:

Co-Chairs: The Rt Revd Paul Bayes (Bishop of Liverpool)
 Mr David Walton (Vice-President of the
 Conference 2008-09)

Church of England Members: The Revd Dr Mike Booker
 Mrs Margaret Swinson

Methodist Members: The Revd Dr Caroline Wickens
 The Revd Michaela Youngson

Co-Secretaries: The Revd Dr Callan Slipper
 The Revd Neil Stubbens