

A message from David Hull:

Dear Friends,

I write with news of the latest developments in our Remaining Faithful work: the launch of the **Remaining Faithful Network** and our inaugural conference, **Liverpool 200: Renewing the Wesleyan Vision**.

As you will be aware, in 2017, our AGM resolved unanimously that MET would continue to remain faithful to the biblical and apostolic understanding of marriage as the life-long union of one man and one woman and the only appropriate context for sexual intimacy. Following the Methodist Conference last year at which a Notice of Motion was passed indicating a direction of travel away from that understanding, I invited all MET partners who shared serious concerns about that direction of travel to contact me. Since then, two Remaining Faithful gatherings have been held, to which all those who had made contact were invited, one in London in March and the other at Conference last month. Clearly a momentum is gathering amongst those who wish to stand together in remaining faithful to the teaching of the Bible and to call upon the Methodist Church in Britain to do the same. To continue to facilitate this work, we are launching the Remaining Faithful Network.

THE REMAINING FAITHFUL NETWORK

A network of Methodists committed to remaining faithful to the original Wesleyan evangelical vision, and to the biblical and apostolic understanding of marriage as the life-long union of one man and one woman and the only appropriate context for sexual intimacy.

The three-fold purposes of the network emerge from the letter of Jude, who wrote at a time when unfaithful teaching was slipping into the Church and called the early Christians to keep themselves in God's love (v. 21) in three ways: 'contend for the faith ... building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit' (vv. 3, 20).

Contending for the faith

Although Jude would have preferred to write 'about the salvation we share, I felt compelled,' he stated, 'to urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.' None of us wants to be spending so much time, energy and resources in these current debates; there are more wonderful things by far to be focussing on; yet others have initiated the debates and we are compelled to contend for the faith entrusted to us. At this moment in time, that includes standing for the biblical and apostolic understanding of marriage and relationships. Therefore, we urge all evangelicals to contribute to the consultations which will shortly be held across the Connexion, calling the Church to preserve its present position on marriage and relationships, and we commend our Remaining Faithful Study Guide which has been widely distributed across the Church. As soon as the Connexional guidelines for the consultation are published, we will prepare a briefing document as a further resource. Over the past couple of years, we have been in discussion with other evangelical churches within the UK and Methodist Churches around the globe in order to support one another and stand together, and are now continuing these conversations with strengthened urgency.

Renewing the Wesleyan vision

It is not a narrow focus on the Bible's teaching on sexual ethics that unites us, but a shared and joyful commitment to the whole Gospel presented throughout the whole Bible, and that is the reason these current debates are so important. Jude called the early Christians not only to contend for the faith but also to build themselves up in their most holy faith. The growing momentum amongst those committed to remaining faithful presents us with a wonderful opportunity to renew the Wesleyan vision. Whilst we contend for the faith, let's also clarify our vision and get on with the work to which the Lord has called us! Our first major focus for this is our inaugural conference, Liverpool 200: Renewing the Wesleyan Vision. See below for further details. Please put the dates in your diary now: Thursday 28 – Friday 29 May 2020. A sub group of theologians and practitioners has already begun the exciting work of preparing material for the gathering.

Praying hopefully

Finally, Jude called the early Christians, in the midst of the troubles they faced, to pray, and he encouraged them to do so hopefully, 'as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life' (v. 21). By joining the Renewing Faithful Network, let's commit to praying regularly for the Methodist Church and for one another, and let's encourage one another to remain hopeful. Whatever happens, our God reigns! To enable us to pray and confer together, we are organising a number of **Remaining Faithful Gatherings** across the Connexion in the Autumn and the Spring. We are preparing materials for these, meaning that each of the gatherings will have a clear and consistent focus. Please look out for further details and, if at all possible, prioritise coming along to one at both times of year. If you can't make it to your local gathering, please travel further to one on another day!

Please join the network

A website will go live soon: www.remainingfaithful.network along with a social media platform accessible only to members of the network. As well as individuals, we also encourage churches and circuits to affiliate. Whilst we prepare the website, please email Marian to join the Remaining Faithful Network: admin@methodistevangelicals.org.uk. All those who have already asked to join our current Remaining Faithful distribution list will be transferred to the Remaining Faithful Network. As always, anyone is free to unsubscribe at any time. As with all our work, this new project will entail additional expenditure, so **any donations will be gratefully received**. Donations can be made by card through the MET website (in the notes, please state 'Remaining Faithful' – www.methodistevangelicals.org.uk/donate), or by post to MET Administrator, 50a Castle Road, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1DP.

LIVERPOOL 200: RENEWING THE WESLEYAN VISION

In 1820, the Wesleyan Methodist Conference met in Liverpool to launch a turnaround plan for the denomination. The Minutes of the Conference have become one of the few official historical texts of the Methodist Church in Britain printed in Volume 1 of CPD. Two hundred years later, we are desperately in need of a new turnaround plan! As we gather in Liverpool in 2020, we will renew the Wesleyan vision and begin to develop a fresh strategy, asking the same questions John Wesley asked at the first ever Methodist Conference in 1744: What to teach? How to teach? What to do? Please do everything you can to join us!

(For an excellent article on the original 1820 turnaround plan, written by Chris Ritter, a Methodist pastor in the USA, visit www.peopleneedjesus.net/seven-ways-early-methodists-sparked-a-turn-

[around/](#) and for the original Liverpool Minutes of 1820 visit www.methodist.org.uk/media/1364/cpd-vol-1-0709.pdf and scroll to p. 71)

Liverpool 200: Renewing the Wesleyan Vision

The Inaugural Remaining Faithful Conference

Thursday 28 – Friday 29 May 2020

The Chapel of Liverpool Hope University

(Please make your own accommodation arrangements)

THE ONGOING WORK OF MET

Even if you choose not to join the Remaining Faithful Network, don't forget that the ongoing work of MET continues and further details are available on the website. I do hope our paths will cross at a MET event over the coming months.

Rejoicing in our partnership in the Gospel,

David Hull

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The Revd David A Hull

Chair, Methodist Evangelicals Together