

## Connexional Allowances Committee

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<b>Resolutions</b>	60/1. The Council receives the report and commends it to the Conference.

## Proposed Report to the Conference Connexional Allowances Committee

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<b>Status of paper</b>	Final report to the Conference
<b>Action required</b>	The Conference's approval of the resolutions and recommendations therein.
<b>Resolutions</b>	N/1. The Conference receives the Report. N/2. The Conference adopts the report and recommendations in sections 1, 2 and 3, with the exception of those in paragraphs 1.17 to 1.21. N/3. The Conference adopts the report and recommendations in paragraphs 1.17 to 1.21 with effect from 1 September 2017. N/4. The Conference adopts the amendments to Standing Orders and the Guidelines for inclusion in Book VII of CPD, as set out in section 4. N/5. The Conference receives the report of the Faith and Order Committee, as in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.8.3, and adopts the further recommendations of the Connexional Allowances Committee in paragraph 5.9.3.

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aims</b>	The report covers the Committee's customary portfolio of topics related to stipends, allowances and other financial provisions, grants made and its other activities. It adds a section on incorporating certain policies and guidelines into CPD and presents the report of the Faith and Order Committee's reflections on allowances above stipend and other payments to ministers.
<b>Main points</b>	Section 1 covers stipends, allowances above stipend and other allowances, fees, rates and expenses for 2017-18.  Section 2 reports on the funds and trusts managed by the Committee.

	<p>Section 3 summarises other work and activities in which the Committee has been and will be involved.</p> <p>Section 4 recommends that certain policies and guidelines followed by the Committee be codified in CPD Standing Orders and Guidance.</p> <p>Section 5 covers the Faith and Order Committee’s report on its reflections on matters of ministerial remuneration, including allowances above stipend and other payments to ministers and the Connexional Allowances Committee’s response.</p>
Background context and relevant documents	The Committee’s report to the 2015 Conference (Agenda pp 446-474) on allowances above stipend and other ministerial payments relate to section 5.

### Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	[from section 4]
Financial	<p>Paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4: the increase in standard stipend and allowances above stipend – the recommended standard increase was published in October 2016 to enable all 2017-18 budgets to be prepared accordingly.</p> <p>Paragraph 1.19 on the replacement of the Computers in Ministry scheme has a small impact on circuit costs from September 2017.</p> <p>Paragraph 1.20: the recommendations are funded from the balance in the scheme.</p> <p>Paragraph 1.22 on the Living Wage, may impact the finances in some local churches, circuits and districts.</p>

The Connexional Allowances Committee’s general report to the 2017 Conference covers the customary update on stipends and allowances, includes progress reports on other work and activities in which the Committee has engaged, and is presented with the approval of the Methodist Council.

The report is divided into three sections, as follows.

1. Recommendations for stipends and allowances 2017-18
2. Report on Funds and Trusts within the Committee’s remit
3. Other work undertaken and planned and by the Committee

The Committee’s new recommendations this year are **highlighted** in the text.

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STIPENDS AND ALLOWANCES 2017-18

- 1.1 The Committee makes the following recommendations, taking into account past resolutions of the Conference on Stipends and Allowances and data available from HM Government.

### Standard Stipend

- 1.2 The resolutions of the 2012 Conference fixed the stipend increase formula for the period until 31 August 2015 and the 2015 Conference affirmed that this formula should continue to be used for a further three years until 31 August 2018.
- 1.3 Using the index numbers published in October 2016, the CPI movement for the period September 2015 to September 2016 was +1.0% and the AWEI movement for the period July 2015 to July 2016 was +2.2%: the average of these is 1.6%. **In accordance with the recommendation on the stipend review formula affirmed by the 2015 Conference, the annual standard stipend for the year beginning 1 September 2017 is therefore increased by 1.6% to £23,556** (rounding up to the next highest figure divisible by 12, to give a monthly stipend of exactly £1963). **However, the Conference is asked to note the recommendation in paragraph 1.19, relating to the Computers in Ministry grant: if this is agreed, then the standard stipend as from 1 September 2017 will be £23,712.**

### Additional Allowances

- 1.4 The following allowances are applied for ministers:

The President of the Conference	Any existing allowance, or 25% of standard stipend, whichever is the greater
Secretary of the Conference	30% of standard stipend
Separated District Chair	25% of standard stipend
Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order	25% of standard stipend
Synod Secretary (where applicable)	5% of standard stipend
Superintendent	7 ½ % of standard stipend
Principal of a Training Institution	25% of standard stipend
Staff member of a Training Institution	20% of standard stipend
Connexional Team Secretary <sup>1</sup>	30% of standard stipend
Other ministers serving in the Connexional Team or stationed to appointments within the control of the Methodist Council	20% of standard stipend

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<sup>1</sup> This category currently comprises the Assistant Secretary of the Conference and the Connexional Secretary (when the post is held by a minister).

**The above result in the following allowances for 2017-2018 as in the 1<sup>st</sup> column, or if the recommendation in paragraph 1.19 is adopted for 2017-2018, as in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column:**

	£
The President of the Conference	5,889 or 5,928
The Secretary of the Conference	7,067 or 7,114
Separated District Chair	5,889 or 5,928
Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order	5,889 or 5,928
Synod Secretary (where applicable)	1,178 or 1,186
Superintendent	1,767 or 1,778
Principal of a Training Institution	5,889 or 5,928
Staff member of a Training Institution	4,711 or 4,742
Connexional Team Secretary	7,067 or 7,114
Other ministers serving the Connexional Team or stationed to appointments within the control of the Methodist Council	4,711 or 4,742

- 1.5 The 2016 Conference agreed that the Synod Secretary's allowance be gradually withdrawn. It is retained by existing incumbents until their appointment ceases but does not apply to new appointments.
- 1.6 In addition to the above allowances related to roles, the Committee affirms that the allowances and other financial provisions agreed by the 2016 Conference based on location now apply. These include an additional allowance of 16% of stipend for all ministers stationed in the Shetland Islands, the Scilly Isles, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.
- 1.7 The Committee advises that the provision made in its report to the 2016 Conference (page 50, paragraph 20) in respect of the Malta appointment was invoked during the year, following the Brexit referendum and consequent fall in the £ sterling against the euro. The minister's stipend, paid in £ sterling, was adjusted accordingly and will be kept under review.

### **Relocation Allowance**

- 1.8 The Committee recommends that the maximum allowance payable by the receiving circuit (or other responsible body) to ministers upon moving manse remains at £600 and, in the case of two ministers sharing the same manse, it is one payment of £800. It is clarified that this payment is in addition to the full cost of travel and removals, as defined in SO 528.
- 1.9 The Committee affirms the decision of the 2015 Conference, through Notice of Motion 103, to the effect that this relocation allowance shall also apply to ministers (in appointments in the control of the Church) upon becoming supernumeraries. The costs shall be met from the Fund for the Support of Presbyters and Deacons (FSPD), as are their removal costs already. It is affirmed that this provision made be invoked once only, in situations (increasingly) where supernumerary ministers move and continue in active work before final retirement.
- 1.10 The Committee affirms that this provision applies to the widows or widowers of ministers who die in service upon their removal to their new home, in addition to the payment of their removal costs.

### **Travel Allowances**

- 1.11 The Committee continues to recommend that the maximum rates as prescribed by HMRC's 'approved mileage allowance payment scheme' (AMAP) be observed. If alternative mileage rates exceeding those allowed by the appropriate tax authority are paid locally then it is necessary for this income to be declared to the tax authority and it will give rise to a tax liability on the individual concerned. It is emphasised that this should be regarded as a personal liability – involving the individual and HMRC – and not require handling by the Church's officers, centrally or locally. Any changes to HMRC approved rates will be considered by the Committee and presented to Conference for approval before implementation, so as to avoid unexpected cost increases mid-year.
- 1.12 The Committee continues to remind the Methodist Church of our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, and wishes to encourage people to use public transport and share cars wherever possible.
- 1.13 The following travel expense rates will apply to ministers, supernumeraries, lay employees in churches, circuits and districts and lay volunteers:
- |                           |              |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Car: up to 10,000 miles   | 45p per mile |
| over 10,000 miles         | 25p per mile |
| Motor-cycle               | 24p per mile |
| Bicycle                   | 20p per mile |
| Additional passenger rate | 5p per mile  |
- 1.14 The Committee recommends that the travel allowance (taxable) for ministers during a time of sickness remains at £315 for each complete period of three months. It is further clarified that this grant applies during periods of recuperation from ill-health for up to one year.

### **Sabbatical Expenses and Levy**

- 1.15 It is recommended that the maximum amount that may be claimed to cover expenses during a sabbatical continues to be £1000 as from 1 September 2017, noting that the 2015 Conference approved the Committee's indication that it remains at this level until 2018.
- 1.16 Following the review of the Sabbatical Fund in 2014, the 2015 Conference approved the reinstatement of the sabbatical levy at the level of £50 per minister for the year 2016-17 reverting to the original level of £60 for 2017-18 until further notice. The Committee continues to monitor the income, expenditures and balance of the Fund and will make any further recommendations as necessary in the light of adjustments to the pattern of sabbaticals and the impact of the increased maximum expense amount.

### **Computers in Ministry scheme**

- 1.17 Following a Memorial (M12) to the 2005 Conference regarding the provision of computers for ministers, dealt with in the Connexional Allowances Committee's report to the 2006 Conference, a scheme was launched in October 2007 whereby circuits pay £150 per year into a central fund (via the districts as part of their payments to the Connexion) and ministers may claim £600 every 4 years to renew computer equipment. The £600 payment to ministers is made through the payroll and is subject to tax and NI. A contract was arranged with a prominent nationwide supplier to enable suitable computers to be purchased at discounted prices which the supplier was unfortunately unable to fulfil: ministers therefore purchased their own equipment and made a claim. It has been observed that if ministers delayed

drawing down their £600 every fourth year, circuits contributed more than ministers benefited.

- 1.18 It is evident that computing and associated technology (eg mobile telephones) has advanced beyond recognition since 2007, and the Committee now recommends that the scheme be discontinued. Prices of computers etc have fallen significantly in relative terms (£600 in 2017 buys rather more computing facility than it did in 2007) and ministers now make their own choices of IT equipment to suit their needs.
- 1.19 **As a consequence, it is recommended that the annual stipend be increased by £156 (the £150 rounded up to be divisible by 12 to give a rounded monthly figure) as from 1 September 2017 and the circuit payments to the fund discontinued from that date.** This has a neutral overall effect on the ministers' income and tax and NI position, though they will make pensions contributions (of £14.51 per year) on the increase and benefit from a slightly higher pension when the time comes. It is also recognised that there will be a small cost increase for circuits of pension and NI contributions amounting to £64 per minister per year<sup>2</sup>. The Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme Board is content with the recommendation as part of the 2017 stipend increase.
- 1.20 In order not to disadvantage ministers who were planning to renew their IT equipment in 2017-18 and 2018-19 by making a claim in those years, and in view of the amount of the expected balance in the Computers in Ministry scheme fund at the end of August 2017, a phased implementation is proposed. **It is recommended that £600 be available to ministers wishing to replace IT equipment and eligible<sup>3</sup> to make a claim in 2017-18 and up to £450 to those eligible and planning to do so in 2018-19 (they can save the £156 stipend increase made in 2017-18 towards the £600), and that the 2018-19 claims can be brought forward to a date in 2017-18 so that the scheme can closed down at the end of August 2018<sup>4</sup>.** It is noted that 2018-19 is the fourth (ie final) year of the four-yearly cycle, that the Methodist Church Fund provided the initial deposit for the fund in 2007 and therefore that circuits are not owed any repayment as such: this is, thus, an appropriate cut-off point to discontinue the scheme.
- 1.21 **It is recommended that any balance outstanding in the Computers in Ministry scheme fund when it is closed, if the above recommendation is adopted, be transferred to the Sabbatical Fund.** As the balance has been accumulated from payments from circuits proportional to the number of ministers, the Committee suggests that it is an appropriate use of the funds in support of ministers fulfilling their ministry effectively.

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<sup>2</sup> The Committee indicates that if this small cost increase has an unacceptable impact on circuit budgets already agreed for 2017-18, then it will accept the deferred implementation until September 2018. In that event, the implementation pattern will need to be re-assessed in the light of the expected financial position of the fund at the end of August 2018.

<sup>3</sup> The Finance office in MCH has a record of all claims and payments made to ministers within the scheme.

<sup>4</sup> It is important that the balance in this fund does not fall below zero, therefore it is recommended that claims for the year 2017-18 be made before March 31<sup>st</sup> 2018, thereby enabling the balance available for 2018-19 to be known and the exact figure up to a maximum of £450 to be confirmed so that the 2018-19 claims can be made between April and August 2018.

## Initial grants and loans to ministers

- 1.22 In accordance with SO 804(2) in respect of loans and grants to ministers appointed 'for the first time to a station in the home work' the Committee recommends that the maximum loan available amount continues to be set at £6000, interest-free, repayable over a maximum of 5 years (ie £100 per month).
- 1.23 The 2015 Conference agreed to the Committee's recommendation that, as from September 2016, a maximum flat-rate means-tested initial grant be set at the level of £3000. It is further clarified that this is instead of, and not additional to, the relocation allowance which applies to subsequent moves (as per section 1.7). Therefore, receiving circuits do not pay the relocation allowance to ministers in their initial appointment (though they do pay the travel and removal costs as per SO 528(2)).
- 1.24 During their active ministry, loans may be made to ministers but only in the most extreme and exceptional personal and financial circumstances. It is recommended that the same policy is used, ie a maximum of £6000 repayable interest-free over a maximum of 5 years, unless there are specific reasons to offer a greater amount for a short period of time.
- 1.25 All loans and grants under this heading are means-tested and made from the Methodist Church Fund and loan repayments are deducted from monthly stipend at source.

## Preaching Fees and Expenses for Supernumeraries

- 1.26 In accordance with the decisions of the Conference, supernumerary presbyters should be offered a minimum preaching fee and travel expenses. **The Committee recommends that the fee remain at £25 until 31 August 2018** and that the standard travel expenses, summarised above, apply. Circuits are reminded that it is their responsibility to pay these fees and expenses, even if and when churches assist with the preaching plan preparation: the church is only responsible for payment when the supernumerary presbyter preaches at the church by specific invitation, typically for a special occasion. **The Committee also reports that the matter of the preaching fee has been included in a wider survey of the ministry of supernumeraries being conducted by the Ministries Committee and will review future policy in the light of that report, to be presented to the 2018 Conference.**

## Marriage Registration Fees

- 1.27 The Committee reported to the Conference in 2011 that there are moves in Marriage Registration Districts to reduce the administrative costs of paying fees to ministers conducting marriages<sup>5</sup>. Currently all ministers who do so receive a fee of £2 per marriage and thousands of cheques for very small amounts of money (all for £2 or multiples thereof) are prepared and posted. In the event that Registration Districts request the Churches to nominate a central point for collection of payments, the Committee continues to recommend that (1) all local marriage fees be increased by a modest amount to cover the £2 payment to the minister and (2) that the Fund for the Support of Presbyters and Deacons (FSPD) be the nominated recipient of the aggregated fee payments from the Registration Districts.

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<sup>5</sup> It is understood that this arrangement does not apply in Scotland, but the substance of the proposal is not thereby invalidated.

## **Lay Employees Recommended Hourly Rates**

- 1.28 The Committee advises that the latest Living Wage rates, published in November 2016 by the Living Wage Foundation (LWF), are **£9.75 per hour for London and £8.45 for all other regions**. The LWF figures will always be adopted as the Methodist Church's recommendations. Methodist employing bodies are reminded of the resolutions of the 2010 Conference (Agenda pp 153-154) regarding the mandatory implementation of these rates.
- 1.29 The Committee reminds the whole Church of the resolution of the 2015 Conference that the implementation of the Living Wage is now mandatory in all but the most extreme and exceptional circumstances, and that all outstanding exceptions be reviewed by the appropriate District Policy Committee.
- 1.30 Further updated figures, expected to be announced by LWF in November 2017, will be published on the Methodist Church website, and can also be accessed on the LWF website: guidance on implementation timing was given in the Committee's Report to the 2012 Conference (Agenda p 130).

## **2. REPORT ON FUNDS AND TRUSTS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE'S REMIT**

- 2.1 For many years the Committee has acted as the Trustees for six funds or trusts which are available to ministers, and may, in some cases, be used to give financial assistance to dependent close family members as well as themselves. They are:
- The Fund for the Support of Presbyters and Deacons (FSPD), previously known as the Auxiliary Fund (of the Ministers' Retirement Fund)
  - The Methodist Ministers' Children's Relief Association (MM CRA)
  - The Methodist Ministers' Children's Fund (MMCF, otherwise known as the Trinity Hall Trust – THT)
  - The Methodist Medical Benevolent Fund (MMBF)
  - The Benevolent Fund – Deaconesses (BFD)
  - The Aspinall Robinson Trust (ART)
- 2.2 In 2015-16 the Committee has assumed oversight of the two funds specifically related to the financial needs of deacons and hitherto managed by the Methodist Diaconal Order (MDO), viz the Aspinall Robinson Trust and the Benevolent Fund - Deaconesses. The objects of the Aspinall Robinson Trust were modified, and agreed by the Charity Commission, so that they mirror those of the FSPD and the Methodist Medical Benevolent Fund together, thus enabling the Trust to be used for more or less all benevolent purposes relating to deacons and their dependants. The second Trust has limited funds, to be used to meet diaconal needs wherever possible. Provision was made in the administrative arrangements for the Warden of the MDO to be consulted and advised as appropriate on the disbursement of these funds.

### **The Fund for the Support of Presbyters and Deacons**

- 2.3 The objects of the FSPD, ie the purposes for which its resources may be used, were widened by the decision of the 2011 Conference to amend SO 364(1). This has continued to prove a helpful move in enabling the Committee to offer financial support to those in need in a variety of circumstances.
- 2.4 While the Church continues to be immensely grateful for the generosity of donations to the FSPD, for some years there has been less emphasis on advocacy as its resources were regarded as more than adequate for its purposes. However, in the light of demands and the

widening of its objects, the Committee continues the active advocacy of the fund within the Church and is always grateful to receive donations.

### Methodist Ministers' Children's Fund (Trinity Hall Trust)

2.5 From September 2016, the maximum grant has been £300 per child per year.

### Analysis of Grants from Funds and Trusts

2.6 The Committee promised, in response to a question at the 2010 Conference, to give summary information on the pattern of grant-making in its report to the Conference each year. We are pleased to do this, as below, for 2015-16<sup>6</sup>.

2.7 Fund for the Support of Presbyters and Deacons

The FSPD is by far the largest of the four funds and receives substantial income from donations and legacies as well as investments. It is used in a wide variety of ways in pursuit of its objects and in 2015-16 made grants amounting to £. In summary, these were distributed as follows, giving the number of grants in each category in brackets:

Nature of grants	Total amount (£)
<i>Grants to active ministers and following death in service</i>	
Grants to ministers with impairment and manse adaptations (11)	32,959
Grants to ministers for acute financial emergencies (24)	26,986
Grants to widows and widowers following a minister's death in service (2)	11,430
<i>Grants to retired ministers, widows and widowers</i>	
Grants to owner-occupiers for repairs and improvement (29)	55,795
Grants for nursing and residential care (13)	55,174
Removal costs and relocation grants on retirement (68)	115,568
Assistance mainly with gardening and small maintenance costs (68)	7,628
Various other requests (35) and Christmas gifts to widows and widowers (719)	77,480
Grants to MMHS for property acquisitions and special adaptations	135,350
<b>Total</b>	<b>518,370</b>

It should be noted that the amounts related to ministers with impairment (which can involve major alterations to manses), emergency requests and property can vary significantly from year to year. The increase in the amount of grants to active ministers reflects the widened scope of the FSPD's remit, as in SO 364(1), and mentioned above.

<sup>6</sup> Any minor differences between the grant expenditure totals given in this Report and the audited accounts of the funds arise from exceptional cases when grants are refunded when they are no longer needed or small retrospective transfers are made between funds when grants are incorrectly allocated.

## **Trinity Hall Trust**

- 2.9 In 2015-16, £13,198 was paid in grants to 31 ministers to help fund costs of educational activities for their children, an average of £426 per grant. The table below shows the pattern of grant amounts, noting that most were for £500 or less, but remembering that the maximum was £250 per child. The increase in the maximum grant from September 2016 will probably result in more applications for £600 from ministers with two or more children.

Grant amount in £s	Number of ministers
Less than 250	8
251 to 500	20
501 to 750	2
Over 750	1
Total	31

## **Methodist Ministers Children's Relief Association**

- 2.10 In 2015-16 the MMCRA made grants amounting to £2001 to 3 ministers and dependants to give financial help mainly to support the care of adult dependent children. However, it must be noted that the bulk of the grants made from the fund were not paid until September 2016 and will therefore be recorded in the 2016-17 accounts. The actual annual level of support remains at around £15,000 per year to over 20 ministers and their children. This fund manages to provide limited support from its income which relies wholly on the collections made at District Synods and the Committee continues to encourage Synods to remember the fund's need and to be generous. The Committee advises that the income from Synods of £8100 in 2015-16 was rather less than the £11,700 in 2014-15.

## **Methodist Medical Benevolent Fund**

- 2.11 The MMBF made 20 grants of varying amounts totalling £31,659, an average of £1583 (though this is skewed by two large grants made under very exceptional circumstances), and paid a further £33,800 to the Churches Ministerial Counselling Service and other service providers to offer 85 ministers support through various forms of counselling, an average of £398 per minister. Again, this fund provides support from within its income, derived mainly from investment, and it is used wherever the need is related to physical and mental health conditions. The Committee wishes the Conference to note again the sustained level of expenditure on counselling and related support for an increasing number of ministers, including while they are students and probationers.

## **Benevolent Fund – Deaconesses**

- 2.12 In 2015-16, several small grants were made for benevolent purposes, amounting to £1600 in total.

## **Aspinall Robinson Trust**

- 2.13 In 2015-16 4 grants were made, for various purposes, amounting to £2550 in total. It is noted that, unlike the other funds, the amount paid out was significantly less than the income in the year.

## **3. OTHER WORK UNDERTAKEN AND PLANNED BY THE COMMITTEE**

- 3.1 The Committee continues to engage in reviews of several topics for which it has responsibility, and is grateful for the support of the Connexional Team staff, especially in the Finance, Development and Personnel, Discipleship and Ministries and Conference offices, in all that they do.
- 3.2 During the year 2016-17, discussions have been held with HMRC and the Church's advisors on taxation to ensure that policies and procedures related to allowances and grants are properly aligned with current HMRC regulations and guidelines. It is imperative that the Church is fully compliant in these matters and that their implementation is consistently achieved throughout the Connexion. Any changes or clarifications required will be communicated through the channel of the Quarterly Letter to ministers and circuit stewards and the standard grant application form will be amended as necessary. It is noted that this does not affect decisions to offer allowances or grants, but will apply only to their treatment for tax purposes.
- 3.3 The Committee keeps a record, for its own guidance and purposes, setting out the policies and precedents for dealing with the wide variety of these special requests for financial assistance. This enables the Committee always to be consistent and fair in the application of criteria for assessing need. The Committee is also called upon from time to time to advise on the interpretation of Standing Orders related to circuits' financial obligations and provisions for ministers in a rich variety of circumstances. However, in order to achieve greater transparency, the Committee recommends amendments to Standing Orders and the introduction of some Guidelines (to be published in Book VII of CPD) as set out in section 4 of this report.
- 3.4 During the year, the Committee has reviewed the Reserves positions on the funds for which it is responsible and confirmed that they comply with the guidance and policy set out by the Connexion.
- 3.5 The 2016 Conference agreed (1) in resolution 6/7, to review the matter of university funding for children of ministers stationed in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, Gibraltar and Malta, (2) in resolution 6/8, to direct the Methodist Council to report on the reciprocal state contribution and benefit arrangements between the UK and the same jurisdictions and (3) in resolution 6/9, to direct the Methodist Council to review the matter of public sector employment arrangements, as they affect ministers' spouses, in the same jurisdictions. These projects are underway: recommendations and guidance will be brought to the 2018 Conference.
- 3.6 The Committee recognises that the Computers in Ministry scheme mentioned earlier is a component of the wider provision and funding of telephone, broadband, email and similar IT facilities for ministers. A review of this whole subject has been requested by the Committee and awaits the assignment of resources by the Connexional Team to undertake it.
- 3.7 The Committee continues to work with the Methodist Ministers Housing Society (MMHS) to ensure that our respective policies on common matters are aligned as far as possible and we continue to be grateful to participate in discussions with MMHS on matters of common interest. These discussions have now been widened, as reported below.
- 3.8 The Committee was grateful for and has responded to Memorial 2016/M9 (Conference 2016, from the York and Hull District Synod) in respect of discussions with other bodies about the long-term challenges facing the whole Church in making financial (ie pensions and grants), housing and care provisions for ministers and their dependants into increasingly older age. This is a prominent and nationwide issue from which the Church is not immune. Those invited to share in discussion with the Committee, each with its own role, contribution and view, are

the Methodist Ministers Pension Scheme (MMPS), the Methodist Ministers Housing Society (MMHS) and the Conference Office: the Committee will also welcome input from Methodist Homes (MHA), the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) and the Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust (LWPT). As directed, the Committee will report to the 2018 Conference.

- 3.9 Finally, the Committee wishes to place on record before the Conference its gratitude and indebtedness to the Revd Anne Brown and Deacon Ian Murray who step down from the Committee at the end of this year. Their insight, experience and wisdom, not least from the perspective of District Chairs and the Methodist Diaconal Order, have always been much valued and appreciated. We are pleased to report that the Methodist Council has approved the nominations of the Revd Stephen Lindridge, Chair of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne District, and Deacon Jennifer Jones, currently stationed in the Leeds (South and West) Circuit, to serve on the Committee with immediate effect.

#### **4. STANDING ORDERS AND CPD GUIDELINES**

*[To be inserted]*

#### **5. ALLOWANCES ABOVE STIPEND AND OTHER PAYMENTS**

The Committee is most grateful for the work undertaken by the Faith and Order Committee, presented in full in this section in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.8.3. The Committee's own observations and recommendations are brought in paragraphs 5.9.1 to 5.9.3.

- 5.1 The Faith and Order Committee, on behalf of the Connexional Allowances Committee, has undertaken work to identify some theological principles that might inform decision making in relation to ministerial remuneration – particularly concerning stipends, allowances above stipends for specific roles and circumstances, and fees for additional services (such as funerals and weddings), part-time chaplaincy and other paid functions undertaken by ministers. In the light of earlier consultations, discussions and recommendations, it is evident that the Connexional Allowances Committee's review of these payments above standard stipend cannot proceed further until the Conference (and the Church) has considered underlying principles.
- 5.2 The 2015 Conference directed the Faith and Order Committee to “undertake a major review of the theological foundation of all matters of ministerial remuneration and to report to the Conference of 2017” (Resolution 46/4). It is not necessarily the case that all current practice is underpinned by an appropriate theological rationale or that theological principles can be adduced to underpin current practice. The focus of the Faith and Order Committee's work therefore has been to articulate theological principles. These are specifically intended to assist with reflection on the narrow question of stipends and additional payments (allowances, fees and gifts). They should also be useful for reflection on other related matters, such as the provision of accommodation or pension arrangements, inequalities in costs of living, and other ways in which the Church resources ordained ministers (including training, education and support).
- 5.3 This report is concerned only with the Methodist Church in Britain. Radically different circumstances and principles pertain in other Methodist churches. The Faith and Order Committee's priority has been to establish a framework for discussion in a British context, and to assist those dealing with specific circumstances within it.

#### **5.4 Clarification of Terms**

5.4.1 *The stipend* was formerly termed ‘the allowance’ and is given to ‘circuit ministers, other ministers in the active work and probationers appointed to stations within the control of the Church’ (SO 801). A stipend is neither earned, nor is it a remittance for services rendered.<sup>7</sup> A stipend is intended to release ministers from the burden of seeking financial provision for themselves and their dependents, in order that they may live modestly whilst devoting time, attention and energy to the ministry of the church. As one of the early Methodist records puts it (somewhat quaintly):

“every Travelling Preacher solemnly professes to have nothing else to do [besides reading, exhortation, teaching]; and receives his little allowance [ie stipend] for this very end, that he may not be entangled in the things of this life, but may give himself wholly to these things.”<sup>8</sup>

5.4.2 The 2002 *Connexional Allowances Committee Report* to the Conference lists the purposes and nature of stipends as being: to free ministers from basic financial concerns in order to concentrate on their vocation; to maintain the freedom of the Connexion to station its ministers; to make appropriate provision for retirement; and to be compatible across the Connexion and broadly comparable with other denominations.<sup>9</sup> A recent Supreme Court ruling stated that the Methodist Church regards stipends “as a method of providing the material support to the minister without which he or she could not serve God.”<sup>10</sup> The bald statement raises poignant theological questions, but stands as a fixed reference for this report. There are, of course, other means of supporting ministers which are not explored within this report, or relate to matters of remuneration at all, and these need to be borne in mind to avoid equating the concept of stipend as the only means of resourcing ordained ministry. Matters such as housing, education, training, supervision and ministerial development are examples of these.

5.4.3 *Allowances* (formerly ‘additional allowances’) is the term used to refer to connexionally approved discretionary payments to a minister made by arrangement with circuit stewards or officers of a relevant responsible body, as described in SO 801(1)(b) and (c).

5.4.4 *Expenses* are financial costs “incurred by ministers and probationers in the discharge of the responsibilities of their appointments,” as described in SO 801(2), and shall normally “be defrayed in full by the Circuits or other bodies responsible for provision of stipends”. HMRC policy that certain kinds of expenses constitute taxable benefits is worth noting, particularly those related to the provision of accommodation. This has implications not only for expense claims procedures but how full reimbursement might be achieved. The definition of expenses as “expenditure committed by or on behalf of the Church which has been approved and agreed as essential”<sup>11</sup> emphasises the accountability required.

5.4.5 *Fees* are, for the purposes of this paper, payment to stipendiary circuit ministers or probationers for “part-time chaplaincy, teaching or other work not within their circuit responsibilities” or “fees received for weddings and funerals” (SO 802(3)). Arrangements agreed by the Conference for reception of fees are currently set out in SO 802(3)-(9).

5.4.6 *Gifts* are not clearly defined in Standing Orders, and there is no formal guidance on this matter. This is problematic, and out of line with other organisations, including charities such as MHA, whose policy makes clear the potential for abuse where gifts are concerned. There are modest and appropriate gifts expressing appreciation, and there are larger gifts, financial

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<sup>7</sup> S.O. 801(4) states that ministers in the active work continue to receive a stipend during a period of incapacity such as illness or injury.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of Conference 1768, Answer to Question 22

<sup>9</sup> Conference Agenda (2002) p. 521

<sup>10</sup> The Supreme Court: *The President of the Methodist Conference v Preston* (2013) paragraph 19

<sup>11</sup> Report of the Connexional Allowances Committee, Conference Agenda (2002) p. 540

or otherwise, which may look compromisingly like payment. Gifts can modify relationships and perceptions. This paper says no more about the giving and receiving of gifts, noting only that gift exchange is a profoundly theological matter.<sup>12</sup>

## 5.5 Theological methodology

5.5.1 All economic relations express social values and carry implicit ideological or theological meanings. Whilst the immediate question that has stimulated this report concerns ministerial remuneration, it is important to consider this specific question in the light of the general question of how financial arrangements and transactions express our relationships with God and with one another.

5.5.2 Whilst the first instinct may be to appeal to the Bible there is no straightforward way of deriving clear guiding principles from Scripture that are directly translatable into the particular circumstances of stipendiary ministers. There are, of course, many references (not least in the teaching of Jesus) to money and its uses, to God's abundance and inclusive provision, and to wealth and poverty. Recognizing that the questions asked of Scripture can predetermine what we find there, we have not focused on interpretation of particular biblical passages, as a fair presentation of biblical material would require a report of much greater length.

5.5.3 An alternative place to start is by considering Methodist thought and practice on ministerial remuneration in earlier generations. A brief historical survey has revealed, however, that Methodist approaches to stipends have been, overall, pragmatic and responsive to cultural and social changes. Theological reflection has not been absent, but discussion has tended to proceed from practical necessity or social climate rather than from overtly theological principles. John Wesley was initially against any formal provision for his itinerant preachers; indeed, they were expected to accept only food and shelter. As Methodist structures developed, however, this proved impractical and a system of carefully calculated allowances was instituted, covering only basic necessities.

5.5.4 In approaching this task therefore the Faith and Order Committee has taken two steps. First, we considered some historical practices of the Methodist Church and its antecedent churches in order to see whether there were any enduring principles underlying those practices that could be articulated (5.6); second, we interrogated those principles in the light of Scripture and other theological sources so as to uncover some ways in which the principles we have articulated might inform decision-making around ministerial remuneration in the current social, economic and political context (5.7).

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<sup>12</sup> It is discussed, for example, in the first three chapters of Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), and in Lewis Hyde, *The Gift* (New York: Vintage, 1983) chapter seven.

## 5.6 Historical Practices and Themes

- 5.6.1 As noted above, Methodist thought and practice on stipends has been, overall, pragmatic and responsive to cultural and social changes resulting in a system that now combines stipends and allowances.
- 5.6.2 As with other aspects of Methodist practice, the first allowances (stipends) for preachers were a development that, even once agreed by the Conference, was not always implemented across the Connexion. Preachers not infrequently found it hard to collect such allowances as were granted to them from the societies they served.<sup>13</sup> There were some preachers who, until 1768, followed trades. John Nelson, for example, seems to have continued his work as a stone mason, probably picking up work as he itinerated as a preacher.<sup>14</sup> In 1752, the Conference recommended an annual clothing allowance of £8 – 10, for Ireland, and later in the same year, the Conference at Bristol recommended a clothing allowance of £12 with an additional £10 for wives. Payment for board was by local arrangement. As late as 1784, 84 out of the 116 circuits could not pay the allowances without support from the central funds of the Connexion.<sup>15</sup>
- 5.6.3 The practice of preachers having other employment to supplement their income was prohibited by the Conference in 1768, which subsequently reinforced this by demanding the resignation of any itinerant preacher engaged in specific trades, notably the sale of medicinal goods.<sup>16</sup> The issue before the Conference in 1768 was “not whether they may occasionally work with their hands” but “whether it be proper for them to keep shop and follow merchandise”. The Conference was divided on the issue. The distinction seems to have been made between undertaking work for pay which could “occasionally” be undertaken without disrupting the work of preaching, and those business activities requiring the man to be at given place in order to ply the trade (such as keeping a shop).
- 5.6.4 The Conference debates of the period reveal three key arguments against earning by trade. The first was the prohibition was to prevent a distraction from what Wesley saw as the primary calling to be a preacher. Time taken in trade was time that was not devoted to the work in the societies and circuits and that was the primary and overriding focus of the work of the preachers. Secondly, that engaging in trade could cause an inequality of opportunity among the preachers. There were those preachers who, for example, had a private income derived from family or business interests; for example, Peter Dean left off travelling to marry money,<sup>17</sup> Thomas Olivers inherited the family estate<sup>18</sup> and John Pawson was the son of a prosperous builder<sup>19</sup>. Thirdly, there seemed to have been a concern that a preacher engaged

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<sup>13</sup> Henry D. Rack (ed.) *The Works of John Wesley - the Methodist societies and the minutes of Conference* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011) Bicentennial edition of Wesley's works, Vol.10, 50.

<sup>14</sup> James S. Wilder Jr., 'The early Methodist lay preachers and their contribution to the eighteenth century revival in England', (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, New College, University of Edinburgh, 1948), 162 – 186.

<sup>15</sup> Rack, *ibid.* 51.

<sup>16</sup> Report of the Connexional Allowances Committee, Conference Agenda (2002), p. 540; Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast* (Epworth, 1989) p.245; Frank Baker. 'The People Called Methodists – 3. Polity' in Rupert Davies & Gordon Rupp, *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain volume 1* (Epworth, 1965) p. 236

<sup>17</sup> Charles Atmore, *The Methodist Memorial...* (Bristol, 1801), 101.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Atmore, *op.cit.*, 302f

<sup>19</sup> George Stamp, 'John Pawson', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* Vol. IX, Part 7 (1914), 163-4.

in trade could do so in competition with members of the society with potential damaging impact on relationships within the society.

5.6.5 It is impossible to determine from the contemporary sources what, if any, theological consideration lay behind these concerns. Examination of the discussions recorded in the *Minutes of Conference* in the late 1760s suggests, however, that a number of principles can be identified that underlie the narrative of the discussions:

- i. The first was that the work of the preacher could only be fulfilled by being wholly devoted to the call of God. Thus, this obedience was a mark of the discipline for a preacher in devoting himself wholly to the work of God.
- ii. The second was the recognition of the way that the relationships between preachers in Connexion with John Wesley required a cohesive and collegiate quality. The inequality that was potentially caused by some preachers having an income derived from trade whilst others did not may well have caused unrest among the body of the preachers and impaired relationships between them. This concern was also reflected in the risk to the relationship between the itinerant preachers and the societies they served which could result from the competition between preachers and members plying the same trade.
- iii. The third principle was the protection of the reputation of the Connexion. The description of the narrative in the *Minutes of Conference* in 1768 paid particular attention to those preachers who traded in patent medicines or 'drops'. The *Minutes* make it clear that it is one thing for the preachers' wives to undertake this trade from their home, and quite another for the preacher to "hawk them about". This was probably because John Wesley and, on the evidence of the wording of the reply, his preachers with him, wanted to protect the Connexion from the kind of reputation that surrounded what amounted largely to 'quack' cures.

5.6.6 It is significant that the minute of 1768 was included in *The Form of Discipline or Code of Laws* issued by the Wesleyan Conference in 1797 and re-printed as an appendix to the *Constitution and Polity of the Wesleyan Methodist Church* as late as 1905.<sup>20</sup> The note in the preface to the appendix makes clear that the text is published as it appeared in 1797. Changes in the work of Methodism had occurred, but it is clear that the editors felt the polity expressed at the end of the eighteenth century stood restating at the turn of the twentieth.

5.6.7 It is important to note the context of the prohibition on trade among the preachers. The system of connexional allowances in the 1760s and 1770s, particularly for the support of wives, was unreliable, to say the least. The general financial state of the Connexion in the period was not stable, with the outstanding debt owed to connexional funds in respect the monies loaned for the construction of preaching houses across the country almost spiralling out of control. Financial liability on local societies in respect of preachers, who were meant to be paid an allowance (and, where appropriate, for their wives), was increased by the obligation to provide a horse, livery, saddles and bridles. There was also board and lodging to find. In this context, it would be unwise to assume that the body of the preachers sought some kind of equality of pay for its own sake, but that the resolutions of 1768 and 1770 were an expression of John Wesley's desire to maintain discipline among the preachers and to prevent outbreaks of jealousy or complaint. In other words, the prohibition on trade was a matter of discipline, rather than theological or philosophical principle.

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<sup>20</sup> David J Waller *The Constitution and Polity of the Wesleyan Methodist Church* (London: The Methodist Publishing House 3rd edition 1905), 539 – 40.

- 5.6.8 Payment to ministers continued to vary considerably partly because much of this was in the form of gifts in kind: the stipend to probationers, for instance, was considerably less than the 'minimum' stipend for ordained ministers into the 1970s.<sup>21</sup> The reason for this disparity was that probationer ministers would not, unless married, be provided with a manse but with alternative "furnished accommodation"; accommodation that was unfurnished entitled them to a "Soft Furnishing Grant".<sup>22</sup>
- 5.6.9 Since Methodist Union in 1932, various measures have been introduced in attempts to minimise differentials and to tackle disparities due to other circumstances. Ministers had, since Union, been remunerated according to a scale of minimum stipend levels affording (slightly) higher amounts to those having served a greater number of years. This ceased in 1991 when a flat-rate figure was introduced for both "ministers" and "deacon/deaconesses", and which also replaced a separate diaconal allowance significantly lower than that of a "minister" within their first ten years of travel.<sup>23</sup> (In addition, at one time ministers in the Welsh work were given slightly less than their counterparts elsewhere.<sup>24</sup>) Yet as the 1985 *Report of the General Purposes Committee* indicates, Methodism "has expressed dissatisfaction with inequalities, but has found it extraordinarily difficult to deal with them."<sup>25</sup>
- 5.6.10 That report thus reiterated a recurrent theme of previous attempts to deal with imbalances in stipendiary support, namely the notion of *equality* in respect of ministerial stipends. The report assumed a generalised 'equality' to be a moral good but did not elaborate on what it meant, theologically or otherwise. Neither did it argue the grounds on which the principle is justified, but proposed that the best way to achieve such equality is through the stewardship of its ministers. In other words, those with disproportionately larger income or accumulated wealth are in positions to offer more in absolute, monetary terms to the work of the Church and the work of the kingdom. This continues to be reflected, for instance, in the provision that a minister or probationer is entitled to decline a stipend under SO 801(6)(a).
- 5.6.11 The 1999 *Connexional Allowances Committee Report to the Conference*<sup>26</sup> acknowledged that the historical concept of equality had been eroded by external factors. Nonetheless, the same Committee's report in 2002 revealed that 66% of the ministers surveyed believed that the principle of equality of stipend was important to them.<sup>27</sup> This suggests that, whilst equality of circumstances may in real terms have become more difficult to establish or maintain (as, for example, ministerial household income and wealth has become more difficult to ascertain or manage), the principle that ministers ought to be treated similarly by the Church is held by a majority of ministers. The 2002 report was also concerned with the apparent disparity between ministers offering a lifetime of service (and who may never have opportunity to save) and those entering the ministry in later years, possibly in markedly different financial circumstances. Assuming, perhaps questionably, that those serving for longer may be more likely to be economically disadvantaged, it urged the Conference to consider means by which "those who render a lifetime of service should be adequately remunerated throughout that service and have an adequate pension for their retirement."<sup>28</sup> The proposal seems to be

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<sup>21</sup> A separate, higher amount was introduced for married probationers sometime between 1966 and 1971

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of the Conference, 1965 p.15

<sup>23</sup> This needs verifying for dates prior to 1939. In 1985 the diaconal allowance was £4,112 compared to that of a probationer minister: £5620. In 1990 the comparative figures were £7408 and £8216. By contrast, the Irish Methodist Conference has continued with stratified stipendiary levels dependent on years of service (Minutes of the Irish Conference 2016, p55).

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, the tables for minimum 'allowances' in Minutes of Conference 1939 (p.47), 1946 (pp.30-31). By 1952 this disparity had been abolished.

<sup>25</sup> General Purposes Committee Report on Ministers' Additional Remuneration, Conference Agenda (1985) pp 441-452

<sup>26</sup> Connexional Allowances Committee Report to the Conference, Conference Agenda (1999) p.418

<sup>27</sup> Connexional Allowances Committee Report to the Conference, Conference Agenda (2002) p.529

<sup>28</sup> Connexional Allowances Committee Report to the Conference, Conference Agenda (2002) p.522

couched in terms of equalising or compensation, with no explicit theological element. This is however an instance where faith-based discussion of the support of ministers needs to take account of housing and other factors beyond the remit of this paper.

## 5.7 Current Theological Considerations

5.7.1 Arising from the historical account above, a number of themes emerge that merit some further reflection in order to ensure that our decisions about our economic arrangements communicate our beliefs about God and about Christian living. These themes include:

- i. the grace of God and our response in faith and gratitude as God's people;
- ii. mutuality and trust within a connexional church;
- iii. covenant relationship with those freed for mission and service;
- iv. modesty of lifestyle and the sharing of God's gifts;
- v. responsibility and accountability;
- vi. dignity and equality.

5.7.2 Our economic arrangements have a symbolic value both inside the church and in relation to the world. Everything that the whole Church has (institutionally and held by its members) comes from God and is held in stewardship. All discussion of the Church's use of money and resources, including that concerning stipends and allowances, should be conducted with the recognition of the symbolic potential of economic arrangements and transactions, even if the actual practice only approximates to faith-based aspirations.

5.7.3 It is helpful in the Methodist Church to consider our economic arrangements in relation to the connexional principle. To consider the nature of connexionalism may help in discussing disparities, injustices and anomalies in payment of stipends and allowances. It is as a connexion of mutually dependent societies and disciples that the Methodist Church is best able to offer the means through which all may grow in faith and holiness through our fellowship with one another. Ministers are selected, trained and affirmed through ordination as representative people within a connexion bound by a commonality of calling, and common accountability to each other and to the Conference. Our economic interactions are one expression of that common calling, accountability and trust. Ordained ministers and probationers are privileged to receive expression of that trust in the form of a stipend, and may in turn be expressing their own commitment to commonality and modest living by foregoing alternative economic arrangements

5.7.4 The Methodist Church describes the relationship between ministers and the Conference as constituting a "covenanting relationship".<sup>29</sup> Deacons and presbyters (now) receive the same basic stipend, for although their ministries are separate and distinctive, each complements the other. Ordained ministry represents the commissioning by the Church in response to a calling that is understood to be life-long: it is not comparable with employment. A covenanting relationship reflects well the framework for thinking about stipends, a framework into which our consideration of allowances needs to fit if it is to be coherent. Indeed, the stipend (and other benefits) are given to ministers irrespective of the nature of the particular tasks they undertake; the sole criterion is, according to the Supreme Court ruling, "by virtue only of his or her admission into full connexion and ordination"<sup>30</sup>. Since ministers receive a stipend rather than a wage, then the covenantal relationship between them and the Conference is itself a foundation for a robust theological approach to the matter. The payment of ministers is based upon a covenantal relationship with the Conference, and properly embraces the minister's responsibility for their household, while that household is not formally committed to the covenantal relationship in the same way.

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<sup>29</sup> *Releasing Ministers for Ministry* (2002) 4.2

<sup>30</sup> The Supreme Court: *The President of the Methodist Conference v Preston* (2013) paragraph 20

- 5.7.5 Stipends are, in our present time and place, counter-cultural. They represent and bear witness to a way of relating to one another as members of the Church. Economic exchanges are fundamental to our ways of relating, so they symbolise and communicate something of what we believe. Thus it should not be surprising that our ways of organising financial exchanges as a Church contrast with other models of economic interaction. In practice, we inevitably have to deal with a variety of practical financial details, but these are secondary to basic theological intentions undergirding the stipend. Stipends mark a reversal of the normal economic model of work undertaken and remunerated. The establishment of a stipend as a way of freeing ministers for service in the circuits and mission of the Methodist Church rests on a conviction about the primacy of grace: rather than direct reward to a person for work done, stipends are an expression of an economy in which money is given in order that a recipient is freed for others in the community and in mission. The value of stipendiary ministers rests in God's economy: they have innate value in their ministry as an exercise of the calling God has placed upon their lives, and the stipend is a means of freeing a minister to fulfil that calling for the sake of the church. The value of a minister is not indexed to the stipend they receive, as the stipend is not an expression of remuneration based on perceived value, but a freeing of people in order that they may fulfil their particular vocation for the church.
- 5.7.6 Since economic interactions exist in a social context and community, their effects on the community and its self-understanding is important. Cohesiveness, mutuality and collegiality are ways of talking about experiences of working together at the ministry of the one church. We note that economic arrangements can either enhance or erode mutuality, community, cohesion, collegiality, generosity and morale. Consideration of these issues is necessary in consideration of stipends and allowances.
- 5.7.7 The notion of 'privacy' may sit in tension with a stipendiary system which highlights and nurtures an ethos of mutuality, modesty and shared concern for economically vulnerable people. This requires reflection, and is especially relevant given the differing circumstances and needs of ministers: access to discretionary funds in cases of hardship or particular need may be deemed necessary. A difficulty with this is that the minister's sense of dependency may be accompanied by feelings of embarrassment or humiliation, or a distortion of power relations – all of which are theological considerations which call for thoughtful implementation of additional supportive arrangements.
- 5.7.8 It is not simply receipt of money which should be considered in discussions, but the way in which one's use of money also has signifying power and speaks of the way in which one's life is ordered. Consideration of these issues in relation to stipends and allowances is of importance. Like anyone else, ministers have practicalities to consider, and are moved by complex motives. A stipend that is adequate for ministers to live modestly should neither deter nor attract candidates for the ministry, but should facilitate a wise, gracious and ordered relationship to one's own financial interactions and decisions.
- 5.7.9 The meaningfulness of all economies rests on the existence of community and how people relate to each other and understand their life together, and this requires that careful attention be paid to context. Whilst the indication in the 2002 *Connexional Allowances Committee Report* of majority support for equal treatment of stipendiary ministers may seem encouraging, an over-simple notion of equality has little practical or overtly theological meaning. The apparently simple solution risks disregarding the meaning and purpose of a stipend as intended to provide the means for ministers in very different financial circumstances to live modestly whilst remaining available for movement from one context to a contrasting one. Previous Church reports connect notions of equality with general notions of,

for example, natural justice, fairness and equal treatment, rather than of outcome.<sup>31</sup> These are not aims that are necessarily questioned; it is simply to be noted that they do not derive explicitly from theological foundations in the way that, say, a principle of distribution according to need would. It needs to be acknowledged that equality can be understood in contrasting ways.<sup>32</sup> The impact of ministers being stationed in widely different social and economic environments inevitably presents contrasting outcomes: costs of living, insurances, travel costs and access to health care are examples. Some circuits, not least those in inner cities, argue for allowances above basic stipend to offset such costs, on the grounds of equality. Others argue that such practices are essentially inequitable. The circumstances and needs of ministers will always differ from one another, and fluctuate for any particular minister, and practical complications militate against a more complex system, so the principle of equal payment may be a best compromise.

## 5.8 Concluding Remarks

5.8.1 The Faith and Order Committee has sought to provide some theological reflection on themes related to the matter of ministerial remuneration, not policy recommendations. When making decisions about stipends, allowances and fees, we begin from a place where there is already a structure of allowances in place and where there have been previous decisions and debates on all of these issues. Policy decisions will take these things into consideration as well as the impact and consequences of any further decisions made. However, it is hoped that the report may prove helpful to those who formulate the Church's policy and polity on such matters.

5.8.2 It is impossible to consider stipends, fees and allowances without considering important theological and ecclesial principles such as the virtue of modest living, the complexity of issues such as equality, and the need for pastoral care, and the importance of collegiality and morale. In the church's work, we cannot hold that value rests in relation to the level of remuneration one receives, but we must instead seek to understand what it is to be freed in grace for mission, and to engage in appropriate support in order that those receiving stipends feel they have that freedom to live and work for God's kingdom.

5.8.3 The undergirding principle of all the above is the acknowledgement that our economic relations communicate what we believe, and are, in themselves, an opportunity to express faith in the God to whom Jesus taught us to pray for daily sustenance.

## 5.9 Connexional Allowances Committee's observations and recommendations

5.9.1 The Committee recognises the considerable amount of work undertaken by the Faith and Order Committee in preparing their report and well understands that the challenges and tensions faced and the potential diversity of views held rendered their task far from easy. The report does explore some theological principles underlying ministerial stipends, gives a thorough history of their evolution, from early days, within the Methodist Church and points in several places to the difficulties encountered in aspiring to achieve equitable remuneration amongst ministers and in their relationships within the wider Church. However, it would be disingenuous if the Committee did not express its disappointment with the outcome. Whilst we appreciate that the Faith and Order Committee did not wish to trespass into areas of policy-making which are the responsibilities of other bodies (the Connexional Allowances

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<sup>31</sup> For example, the General Purposes Committee Report on Ministers' Additional Remuneration, Conference Agenda (1985) pp 441-452 and the Report of the Connexional Allowances Committee to the Methodist Council 'Consultation on ministerial allowances above stipends and fees' MC/14/85. The 1985 report stated that the purpose of the minimum stipend was to ensure a standard of living reasonable and comparable with many in the minister's congregations.

<sup>32</sup> For a thorough theological discussion on equality see Duncan Forrester, *On Human Worth* (SCM, 2001)

Committee and the Methodist Council), nevertheless, we believe that the report falls far short of what was intended by Resolution 46/4 of the Conference of 2015 and expected of a full response.

- 5.9.2 From its reading of the report, the Committee does not believe that the two specific contentious issues, which it has raised in its previous reports to the Conference, have been properly or adequately addressed. First, allowances above stipend: the occasional references to these fail to offer any substantive reasoning or insight which takes the Church beyond the observations already made in a previous report of this Committee to the Conference<sup>33</sup>. The tentative inference the Committee draws, reading between the lines as well as on them, is that need (paragraph 5.7.9) should be a stronger determinant of any allowance above stipend than greater accountability, though the practical starting point is that there is an established structure of such allowances (as acknowledged in paragraph 5.8.1). Secondly, fees for special services and other payments to ministers: the lack of any further reference to these issues, after a definition in paragraph 5.4.5, is an extraordinary omission for which no explanation is offered.
- 5.9.3 The Committee is therefore not in a position to bring recommendations to the Conference of 2017 on the policy direction of allowances above stipend and fees as it had hoped might be possible. Having undertaken the major consultative review of these matters, as reported to the Conference of 2015, the Committee therefore brings the recommendations that the Conference (1) receives the report of the Faith and Order Committee as in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.8.3, (2) directs that any responses to the report and its consequences for ministerial remuneration to be forwarded to the Chair of the Connexional Allowances Committee by 30 November 2017 and (3) directs the Committee to bring any revised policy recommendations on ministerial remuneration to the Conference of 2018.

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

- N/1. The Conference receives the report.**
- N/2. The Conference adopts the report and recommendations in sections 1, 2 and 3, with the exception of those in paragraphs 1.17 to 1.21.**
- N/3. The Conference adopts the report and recommendations in paragraphs 1.17 to 1.21 with effect from 1 September 2017.**
- N/4. The Conference adopts the amendments to Standing Orders and the Guidelines for inclusion in Book VII of CPD, as set out in section 4.**
- N/5. The Conference receives the report of the Faith and Order Committee (as in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.8.3) and adopts the further recommendations of the Connexional Allowances Committee in paragraph 5.9.3.**

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<sup>33</sup> See 2015 Conference Agenda section 46, pages 446 to 474.

