

46. District Resolution

The Manchester and Stockport District (voting in the Synod as follows: Present: 72; For: 47; Against: 15) invites the Methodist Conference of 2023 to direct that further work be done to explore and propose radical ways in which the Methodist Church of Great Britain might re-order itself as it seeks to be effective in mission and ministry in the years ahead.

As a result of the Methodist Conference of 2022 declining to receive section F of the *Oversight and Trusteeship* report, work has continued in many districts to reflect on the boundaries and structures of districts in the particular geographical regions of which they are a part. The Manchester and Stockport Synod of September 2022 was asked to consider whether it wished to be part of a new North West District which would include, the *Liverpool* district, the *Lancashire* district, the *Bolton and Rochdale* district, the *Cumbria* district and the *Manchester and Stockport* district. The Synod received a presentation and after debate declined the proposal. There were several reasons for this which included: the geographical size of the proposed district, the challenges of connexionalism in such a district, a concern about whether the proposals would create an extra layer of structure, and a desire to see a radical reshaping of our structures rather than a more functional 'regrouping' process.

Following the Methodist Conference, online consultations with Conference representatives were held, in which it was asked if a more radical approach across the Methodist Connexion would be welcomed. We understand that there are presently no plans for further work to be undertaken connexionally on this area of our shared life. The Manchester and Stockport Synod suggests that this work at a connexional level is essential to the future of the Methodist Church. In an attempt, therefore, to define 'radical', further conversations took place in the Manchester and Stockport District. Possible areas of exploration might include the reshaping of districts in terms other than geographical, the removal of a level of governance structure, ways of working with particular areas of ministry or specialisms of practitioners which would require more flexible boundaries, or a redrawing of the map (not based on current boundaries), as well as the intentional development of a mixed economy of church governance.

The Manchester and Stockport District recognises that this is a substantial piece of work which would require time to achieve, including consultation with the Methodist Council, the Faith and Order and Law and Polity committees among others. It would also have financial and other resource implications for the Church as a whole. However, the Manchester and Stockport District feels there is value to the Methodist Church in this approach which could not be considered in the Districts alone, and so a connexional perspective is sought. Therefore, the Manchester and Stockport District asks the Methodist Conference of 2023 to consider this request carefully.

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*****RESOLUTION**

- 46/1. The Conference directs that work be undertaken as a matter of urgency to explore and propose radical ways in which the Methodist Church of Great Britain might reorder itself as it seeks to be effective in mission and ministry.**