

35. Training

A. FOUNDATION TRAINING

(i) Report of the Working Group on Foundation Training

In response to concerns expressed very soon after the commencement of Foundation Training in September 1999, the Methodist Council set up a Working Group to monitor Foundation Training. The membership was:

Deacon Pat Aitchison
Miss Dorothy Blenkinsop
Mr John Connor
Mrs Kate Dobson

The Conference approved the scheme of training in principle in June 1998 and agreed to its implementation in June 1999. The Group found that many of the problems had arisen as a result of the short timescale between the Conference decision to introduce Foundation Training and its commencement. There was insufficient time adequately to inform all involved in the application process, for training institutions to prepare programmes, and for practical placements to be arranged.

Foundation Training is complex, in that there are three main elements to the programme, ie theological study to a minimum specified level, practical placement and vocational discernment. It can be undertaken full-time or part-time and may last twelve or eighteen months, two or three years. It is offered in 22 centres, and 40 different programmes are available.

The Working Group sent questionnaires to all Foundation Training students, to the head of each training institution offering a programme and to District Vocations Secretaries. The major problems revealed were related to communication and vocational discernment. Other issues were related to procedures for application and structure of courses.

The Working Group worked closely with staff in the Formation in Ministry Office and many of the problems have been overcome. A Foundation Training Handbook is now available to those interested and an occasional newsletter is sent to all involved in Foundation Training. From September, there will be only one District Vocations major committee meeting. Students will commence practical placements and/or guided study the following April before commencing the course at a training institution in September. The interviewing process has been revised and the size of committees will be reduced to relieve the workload on secretaries and committee members.

Districts and circuits are invited to offer local, mentored, pastoral and service placements with ordained and lay people. There is a particular need for placement and/or guidance in relation to the Diaconate.

The Methodist Council recognised the considerable pressure which the Conference decision had placed on the staff in the Formation in Ministry Office and apologised for this, thanking them for all their work. The two

35. Training

reports to the Council have been widely circulated to all who assisted in the monitoring work.

*****RESOLUTION**

35/1. The Conference adopts the Report.

(ii) Responses to Memorials (Conference 2000)

Two memorials submitted to the Conference of 2000 were referred to the Working Group.

A. M39 Fund for Training

The Oldham and Saddleworth (19/11) Circuit Meeting (Present: 47. Vote: Unanimous) wishes to express its real concern at the way in which matters relating to training are at present being handled by the Connexion.

It is their opinion that the requests made by the President of Conference in his letter to all ministers and local preachers for additional money for training was an attempt to prop up a system which is failing to meet the needs of the Connexion.

Training, both pre- and post-ordination, and of the many lay people who exercise important ministries on behalf of the church is a very important part of the function of the church.

Our concerns lie particularly in the following areas:

1. That the new system relating to Foundation Training is not working, and is proving wasteful of people's time and energy, as well as of the Connexion's finances. In this Circuit we have had one candidate for the ministry and two who have offered for foundation training in the last two years. The experience of each one of them is that because of poor planning and lack of communication, their problems at a particularly vulnerable time in their lives have been considerably increased.
2. Surely we are doing things the wrong way round to introduce this new system of offering for ministry and training prior to the consideration of the report on "*Flexible Patterns of Ministry*".
3. We are still too reliant on what we happen to have available through our colleges, rather than using the expertise that is available elsewhere, ie buying in appropriate packages of training.
4. In a slightly different area, we are also concerned that large sums of money are being invested in District Training and Development Officers without any clear assessment of how they could be effectively used.

The Circuit therefore requests the Conference to direct that the Methodist Council carry out an urgent review of the situation to ensure that in future the necessary training is provided in both a user-friendly and cost-effective manner.

35. Training

Reply to the Conference 2000

The Conference recognises the concern of the Oldham and Saddleworth Circuit in relation to the handling of training. The Methodist Council has set up a group to review Foundation Training and the Conference refers items 1 and 2 to it. It also refers items 3 and 4 to the Methodist Council for consideration and report.

Report to the Conference 2001

The two problems highlighted are recognised. As with any new system, there were difficulties in changing the culture to an awareness of what is offered and the reasons for it, as well as having in place, in an inadequate time-scale, all the necessary resources. Some of the problems encountered by the first group of Foundation Training students have already been addressed and others will be. The openness of students and tutors in advising us of difficulties has greatly assisted this process.

It is too early to judge the effectiveness of Foundation Training, and to attempt to revert to a previous system will create more difficulties as training institutions would have to introduce yet another change at short notice. The number of applicants for Foundation Training is an indication of the existing interest in the opportunity for discerning vocation which the programme offers. The focus of Foundation Training is on vocational discernment, and this supports the basic premise of *Flexible Patterns of Ministry* that 'Christ has many services to be done', and enables students to consider with guidance and support what their specific calling may be.

***RESOLUTION

35/2. The Conference adopts the Report in response to M39(2000) 1 and 2.

B. M95 Candidates for Ordained Ministry

The Southampton Synod (R) (Present: 227. Vote: 213 for, 2 against) invites the Conference to consider amending the procedures for candidates for presbyteral and diaconal ministry so that those candidates who sense a clear calling to such a ministry may appear before the District Candidates' Committee without first being required to undertake vocational exploration within Foundation Training.

Reply to the Conference 2000

The Conference thanks the Southampton Synod for raising its concern but asks it to note that Foundation Training is not intended to be so much a period of open-ended vocational exploration for those who are not sure of the nature of their calling as a time of vocational education and discernment undertaken by an individual and by the Church in respect of that individual in the light of the agreed programme of training.

The general principles of Foundation Training were contained in the *Connexional Training Strategies* report adopted by the 1998 Conference and the detailed Standing Orders to enact those principles in the report of the same name were adopted by the 1999 Conference. It is too soon to make instant

35. Training

and fundamental changes to a scheme which is in its first year of implementation, but right and proper that issues raised during that implementation be reviewed. The Methodist Council has established a Working Party to undertake such a review, and the Conference, therefore, refers this Memorial to it for consideration and report to the Conference of 2001.

Report to the Conference 2001

In 1999, approximately 72% of recommended applicants for Foundation Training indicated (in response to a questionnaire) that they were called to ordained ministry. It is not yet known how many of them will be accepted as candidates in due course, but in Foundation Training they will all have had the opportunity to explore a variety of ministries. This exploration will help them, with guidance and support, to discern that ministry to which they are called. If all who consider they are called into ordained ministry go direct to Candidates' Committee, they, and the Church, will be denied the opportunity, which Foundation Training offers, to ensure that they have adequately discerned their calling. It is becoming clear in the current round of District Candidate Committees that this process of discernment is much more than just 'exploration'. Its purpose also includes helping each individual either to confirm and clarify an existing sense of direction, or to learn more about another form of service or ministry and choose a new direction. This is proving valuable. On the one hand, individuals are being helped to consider their calling and its implications and, on the other, much better quality evidence of this calling is emerging in the reports produced, thanks to the improved information being made available to circuits and training institutions.

As Foundation Training becomes established, it will provide a facility to a wide range of people who believe they have a vocation, which will be of benefit to the ministry and witness of the Church in a way not previously available.

In the light of these developments, the proposal for direct entry to presbyteral and diaconal ministry is rejected.

*****RESOLUTION**

35/3. The Conference adopts the Report.

35. Training

B. CONNEXIONAL TRAINING STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared by the Training Strategy and Resources Executive (TSRE).

- Section 1 presents proposals which the Conference is invited to adopt concerning the learning and development of the whole people of God.
- Section 2 reports on the consultation process about a proposed new category of 'Community Preacher', explains why proposals to create such a category are not being presented at the moment, and presents a proposal which the Conference is invited to adopt to make resources for Local Preacher training available in languages other than English and Welsh.
- Section 3 reports on work being undertaken to develop the regional training networks. The Conference is invited to receive it.

SECTION 1. LEARNING AND DEVELOPING AS THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD

Section 1.1 of this Report proposes that a set of Principles and Recommendations for Practice be adopted for the learning and development of the whole people of God as they seek to respond to 'Our Calling'. Section 1.2 makes recommendations for action in three particular areas of concern about training (access; quality; continuity of information). An appendix describes how the Report has come into being.

1.1 Principles and Recommendations for Practice

1.1.1 The following principles and recommendations are already being embodied in the best of our current practice. It is envisaged that they will be of use to those who are involved in the delivery of training and development, eg connexional staff, including training and development officers, circuit and district training teams, strategic management committees, district evangelism enablers, lay workers, and other officers appointed in districts, circuits and local churches who have significant responsibility for training. They may:

- assist in defining local training policies
- provide a checklist for monitoring current practice
- provide evidence of commitment to best practice when funds are sought from potential external bodies, whether at national, regional or local level.

1.1.2 Principles

The Church expects that each one of us, young and old, will grow and develop in our Christian discipleship. The Methodist Church believes that we are able to do this when:

- we feel valued as individuals

35. Training

- our real learning needs are recognised and addressed
- we have our experience acknowledged and are enabled to reflect critically on it
- we have the opportunity to learn from each other
- we nurture a learning community that is both valuing and challenging
- we are asked to question our current assumptions and practice
- we are expected to take responsibility for our own learning
- we are able to use our existing gifts and talents

The Church is committed to providing an ethos and opportunities which enable the above to happen. The Church seeks to include, where appropriate, those who are not members or Christian.

1.1.3 Recommendations for Practice

Valuing the individual

- Recognising and valuing history, experience, context, authority and responsibility by:
 - seeking to respond to individual needs
 - providing space and support for growth
 - facilitating personal growth
 - enabling the use of our existing skills

Fostering a culture of life-long learning

- Recognising and celebrating our growth, achievement and diversity
- Nurturing a community of learners
- Providing appropriate opportunities for learning
- Acknowledging variety, structured/academic learning and also informal group work
- Providing a variety of appropriate learning styles/methods
- Using a variety of creative and imaginative methods
- Recognising that trainers learn from those they are training
- Identifying internal/external funding
- Providing adequate resources
- Encouraging individuals to demonstrate some personal investment
- Reviewing and evaluating

Enabling the Church to fulfil its mission and engage with the world by:

- Enabling us as congregations to offer wholehearted and accessible worship of God
- Enabling us as individuals to embody and express the values of the kingdom of God
- Encouraging theological reflection that is grounded in our local context

35. Training

- Recognising global context and issues
- Developing effective ecumenical partnerships and making use of them

Promoting equality of opportunity to participate in learning by:

- Providing appropriate opportunities across the range of race, gender, educational background, sexual orientation, age and abilities
- Recognising that different learning styles and settings are equally valid
- Using role models, trainers, educators that reflect the variety of people whom the Church serves

1.1.4 **Background information: the principles and practice of training in the Methodist Church**

We live in an age which recognises the value of learning. Society, in a variety of ways, is embracing the concept of 'life-long learning' and a commitment to learning for all, which the Church supports. Through the fields of formal and informal education there have been innovations which enable the process to be more accessible to a wider part of society.

Christian formation is a process of life-long learning, as individuals and as a corporate body. The Connexional Training Strategies report to the Conference in 1998 stated: 'The report 'The Making of Ministry' is founded on the conviction that the broad process of training is a vital tool in the Church's task of nurturing, equipping and sustaining both the Church corporately to be the Church in worship and mission, and also individuals to deepen their discipleship and develop their particular roles and vocations within that worship and mission. The context for this is the world, and the Church insofar as it serves God's purposes in creation.' The Methodist Church, therefore, regards training as a tool which supports all of its major priorities identified in 'Our Calling': worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism.

The Methodist Church today often takes the lead in training and development work, for example, in our approach to preparing and supporting youth and children's workers, in distance education, in our high standards for preachers' training, in nurturing pastoral care skills, in developing self-appraisal for ministers, in racism awareness training, in our action-learning World Action campaigns, and our engagement with some of the key issues of our day. Training and development is not new to Methodism; it is central to its origins and core to its identity.

The Methodist Church advocates an understanding of training as 'the preparation for and reflection on action'. This avoids the 'skills only' idea often associated with the word and makes a definition broad enough to apply to a range of activities undertaken in church. This phrase encompasses all forms of learning and development. Hence we may train disciples, pastoral visitors, community workers, church

35. Training

secretaries or preachers not simply to do the task, but to be reflective practitioners learning as they go about their calling in their daily roles, church roles, personal development and everyday living.

It is essential to the fulfilment of the mission of the Methodist Church that high quality training is maintained and developed. This policy outlines the underlying principles and practices to support practitioners, whatever their context, in continuing to develop and deliver training.

1.2 Particular Recommendations for Action

1.2.1 Following a survey of current training offered within the Connexion and a review of the findings in the Connexional Training Strategy and Resources Executive, three areas of concern have been identified.

1.2.2 Access

The Conference has frequently urged that we should be as inclusive as possible in our appeal. The desire to be so appears in the replies to the survey. However, very few people responsible for offering learning opportunities keep statistics concerning age, ethnicity, etc. It is a general rule that equal opportunities commitment requires monitoring and 'counting' in order to bring about change in practice. There is a general feeling that tutors are not representative enough, being predominantly over 40 and white and weighted towards males. There was rather more satisfaction at the mix in the student body, but there are still clearly major issues about access.

Recommendation for action to ensure more inclusive access to training:

- (a) **demographic data concerning students and tutors should be kept and analysed so that Methodism's commitment to being inclusive can be measured.**
- (b) **careful consideration needs to be given to what might be the barriers to access, whether academic, financial, practical, or cultural (concerning expectations and perceptions), and positive action taken to overcome these.**
- (c) **special attention should be given to the improving of promotion of learning opportunities, to widen participation.**

1.2.3 Quality

Methodism rejoices in a great many paid and voluntary tutors who enable learning in a whole variety of ways, but the amount of initial or continuing training they receive is very varied, and the degree to which they see themselves as a 'team' available to the districts is limited. In many cases, tutors are appointed or identified to serve within specific courses only. Generic skills in adult education, knowledge and understanding are not necessarily in place.

35. Training

Recommendations for action to develop greater quality in training:

- (a) **place a greater emphasis on developing and demonstrating quality in the area of generic adult education skills throughout the areas surveyed.**
- (b) **encourage increased efforts to build a sense of connection between different groups of tutors within districts, including the Methodist tutors in theological resource centres and networks.**

1.2.4 *Continuity of information*

Although this exercise demanded a considerable amount of time overall, from officers in filling in the questionnaires, and especially from staff in Pastoral Care and Christian Education in presenting and analysing the data, it is arguably a very useful piece of research which could be built on, year on year:

- We would be able to answer questions about training provision specifically, and be accountable for money spent, especially in relation to any external funding
- It would assist us in promoting learning opportunities more widely
- It could show the impact of the Training and Development Officer scheme over time
- It would prompt people to set in hand the monitoring processes to ensure greater access
- It could assist in the process of opening up the resource centres to more lay people, as they can pick up ideas from each other's development
- It could assist in gaining a picture of people's responses to 'Our Calling'.

Recommendations for action to ensure continuity of information:

- (a) **send survey questionnaires, revised as necessary, each year for updating purposes to a list of appropriate respondents agreed by the Training Strategy and Resources Executive.**
- (b) **send the findings to all respondents to enable their planning.**

1.2.5 *Background information: a mapping exercise on current training*

1.2.5.1 *At the request of the Training Strategy and Resources Executive, staff in the Pastoral Care and Christian Education Office undertook a survey of current training offered within the Connexion.*

Three questionnaires were devised, addressed to:

- *theological resource centres and networks where Methodism has a stake (21 replies)*
- *those with a Connexion-wide responsibility for some area of training, both formal and informal (31 replies)*
- *Training and Development Officers in post, for a District perspective (15 replies, representing 23 Districts)*

35. Training

Questionnaires covered areas such as: national and local training courses and events, numbers and demography of participants or students, numbers and demography of tutors, for the connexional year 1999-2000. The full reports and tables were made available to Council members, Chairs of Districts and respondents. Although in many cases the information was an estimate rather than a strict count, since data is not necessarily held or analysed, a reasonable picture of current practice was achieved. This did not include any data on locally generated initiatives as there was no feasible way of collecting this information.

1.2.5.2 The findings

Everyone who has studied the detailed findings (reports and tables are available from the Pastoral Care and Christian Education Office) is struck by the sheer amount of structured or informal training that is currently going on within Methodism. The following list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

Training for particular roles

Foundation training (also training for selection committees etc)
Pre-ordination training
Introduction to those entering: Circuit ministry, Urban ministry, Superintendency
5, 12, 20, 30 years in ministry
Chairs' induction
Preparation for retirement
Training of officers and trainers for accompanied self-appraisal
Higher Education and Further Education chaplains
Local preacher formation (Faith & Worship)
Mentor training
Lay Ministry Formation
Workers with children and young people (Preparation for Service, Kaleidoscope, Spectrum, BITE workshops etc)
Worship leaders
Church Stewards (Don't Panic)
Pastoral Visitors (Prepared to Care)
District Property Officers

Training in awareness and good practice

Safeguarding/child protection
Racism awareness
Black Empowerment
Supervising volunteers
Inter-faith issues
Disability awareness

Specific discipleship programmes

Disciple Bible Study Programme
Walk to Emmaus
Developing Discipleship
Alpha

35. Training

Courses in theology and Christian studies

Courses which are either open access or open to anyone with appropriate qualifications were available in the majority of the resource centres surveyed, in some cases from access level up to PhD level, including:

- Biblical and Evangelistic ministry
- Children's Evangelism and nurture
- Mission Studies/Consultancy
- Counselling
- Christian Studies (including by distance learning)
- Applied Theological Studies
- Theology, Philosophy and Religion
- Practical and Contextual Theology
- Theology and Ministry
- Pastoral Studies/Pastoral Theology
- Church-related community work
- Trainers' Diploma

Skills relating to personal or Church life

- Listening
- Parenting
- Group work
- Team development
- Creative arts/music
- Bereavement counselling

In addition there are many conferences and consultations (which include training workshops) aimed at various groups, enthusiasts, or ordinary Church members, eg: women (Network), youth workers, young people, Black Methodists, world mission enthusiasts, evangelists, mission officers, etc.

1.2.5.3 **Particular points from the findings included:**

Resource Centres and Networks

- There were over 700 active Methodist students in the 21 theological resource centres and networks. This represented about 30% of the student body of these institutions.
- The student body was mainly between the ages of 40-60. Most were in training for an accredited ministry, and they were very predominantly white.
- More than 80 tutors who are Methodists were reported, representing about 10% of the tutor body of these institutions. Only just over 10% of the tutor body were employed full-time and, in about 50% of institutions, part-time tutors were voluntary.
- The tutor body in the institutions was very predominantly male, between the ages of 40-60, with a very high predominance of ordained people. It was almost exclusively white, except where posts in Black Theology have been explicitly established. Centres

35. Training

and networks expressed dissatisfaction at the unrepresentativeness of their tutor body.

- Tutors were normally appointed for their academic qualifications with regard to the subjects they teach and their expertise in practical ministry. Adult education skills were seldom mentioned.

Connexion-wide training work

- We found that there were just under 3,500 participants in national training courses. Of these, about 2,000 were students on the Faith & Worship course.
- At events which had a training element within them, we found that there were between 30 – 35,000 participants (including Easter People, Derwent Week, Breakout).
- The gender mix of participants showed reasonable parity, with some notable exceptions eg Kaleidoscope Training for those working with children (95% female), and the biennial conference for those officers with responsibility for property (more than 80% male).
- Participants were very predominantly white, except on the Black Empowerment Programme.
- Tutors are almost wholly voluntary. (A 'tutor' includes anyone facilitating learning or development, eg local preacher tutors, workshop leaders, accompanists for self-appraisal, etc.) A substantial majority are lay people. Many are appointed on the basis of their experience and existing skills. Training offered for tutors ranges from the provision of a handbook only, to training days or occasionally courses.

District work as reported by Training and Development Officers

- At the time of the survey, thirteen TDOs indicated that they and their strategic management committees had designed a process for auditing training needs within their District/s. Five had completed a report. It is expected that all TDOs will, with their Strategic Management Committees, be working to a development plan based on their audit by 2002.
- Some were able to report District priorities identified so far. Priorities that received more than one mention were:
 - difficulties with identifying local leadership
 - safeguarding
 - tutor training and development
 - continuing local preacher development
 - support for work with children and young people
 - skills for leaders of small groups
 - faith formation
 - listening/pastoral skills
- Taking Care teams or Child Protection Officers were reported in seventeen Districts. Teams are planned in a further eight Districts by the end of this connexional year.

35. Training

- Tutors were predominantly in the 40-60 age range, with under 10% below 40 and more than 20% 60+. There was a good gender balance overall. Again, they were very predominantly white. Nearly 75% were lay, and virtually all were Methodist.
- The TDOs have found that there are not currently 'tutor teams' within Districts. Rather, tutors have been appointed usually to serve within specific courses only. Generic adult education skills are not necessarily in place.

1.3 Appendix: the origins of this report

In the report Connexional Training Strategies 2000, it was stated 'It is planned to develop a report to the Conference 2001 on the education, training and formation of the whole people of God, including guidelines on policy and good practice.'

This piece of work owes its origin to the Conference resolution 12/5 in the Making of Ministry Report 1997:

'The Conference affirms the principles of life-long training and of sharing resources between lay and ordained, and authorises further work to be done by the relevant members of the Connexional Team (particularly those involved in Formation in Ministry, Pastoral Care and Christian Education and Resourcing Mission) to implement them.'

In 1997 the Pastoral Care and Christian Education Committee appointed the Methodist Connexional Training Forum, with the following remit:

- *To develop and maintain an overview of all training in the Methodist Church*
- *To monitor work and practice in relation to specific areas of work*
- *To support the Connexional Team members in prioritising and planning training*
- *To discuss, consider and communicate a sound philosophical and educational base to training within Methodism*
- *To keep abreast of training developments in the wider context*
- *To develop policy and strategy for training within the Methodist Church*

The Forum included those with experience in training in industry, formal and informal education and local authority, as well as in church contexts, meeting regularly with external input.

In 2000, the draft policy was discussed in the newly formed Training Strategy and Resources Executive, whose remit encompasses that of the Training Forum. The TSRE made some revisions and requested a mapping exercise to be done of training currently offered across the Connexion.

35. Training

***RESOLUTIONS

- 35/4. The Conference receives the report, *Learning and Developing as the Whole People of God*.
- 35/5. The Conference adopts the *Principles and Recommendations for Practice* in section 1.1 of the Report, and instructs the Connexional Training Strategy and Resources Executive to ensure that they are promoted throughout the Connexion.
- 35/6. The Conference adopts the *Particular Recommendations for Action* in section 1.2 of the Report and instructs the Connexional Training Strategy and Resources Executive to ensure that they are implemented.

SECTION 2. LOCAL PREACHER TRAINING IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH OR WELSH

- 2.1 In October 2000, the Methodist Council discussed a paper which proposed that a new category of *Community Preacher* be established in order to meet the needs of:
- Congregations where the language used in worship and for preaching is not English or Welsh
 - Congregations in highly specific cultural settings (often determined by ethnicity)
 - Situations (eg Rave Worship, Alternative Worship, Seeker Services, Worship in Residential Homes, All-Age Worship) requiring leaders whose gifts do not necessarily relate to the task of leading worship and preaching in more general settings.
- 2.2 Since the October Council responses to the paper have been received from Circuit Preachers' Meetings and Circuit Leadership Teams. These have been discussed at a consultation day for District Local Preachers' Secretaries and Tutors.

Some of the responses asked whether the needs outlined in the discussion document indicate the inadequacy of the Faith & Worship course. There is no evidence that this is the case. The F&W course meets the needs of the vast majority of those who feel a call to become preachers within the life of the Methodist Church. The F&W course is undergoing a major content review in the light of a process of extensive consultation open to all circuits, Local Preachers' Meetings, Faith & Worship tutors and students, and individual preachers. The response to those units which have been revised and the overall reduction in the total length of the course has been widely welcomed. The Local Preachers' Studies and Examination Board, the Connexional Local Preachers' Committee, the Standing Joint Committee between the LP Office and LPMA, and the District LP Officers' consultation all endorse the Faith & Worship course as the appropriate resource for the training and formation of local preachers.

35. Training

Provision has been made for the validation of alternative courses and three applications are being considered.

The responses indicate that there is a general welcome of the attempt to listen to and address the needs of the Church, particularly in some of the mission situations. Some confusion and concern was expressed that the proposed category of 'Community Preacher' covers too many disparate needs and that the title itself is unclear, but viable alternatives were noticeably absent in the responses. There were a small number of responses that were totally against the suggestions within the discussion document.

- 2.3 The Connexional Local Preachers' Committee reviewed the responses and submitted revised proposals to the Connexional Training Strategy and Resources Executive. These involved separating the issues of training people to lead worship and preach in languages other than English or Welsh from those of providing people to lead and help shape new forms and expressions of worship in highly specific contexts. The TSRE discussed and amended those proposals as follows:

2.4 **Leadership of worship and exhortation in specific situations or cultural settings**

It has been decided not to proceed at present with the concept of 'Community Preachers' as originally proposed. Instead, the Connexional Training Strategy and Resources Executive has asked representatives to work with members of the Connexional Local Preachers' Committee and to consult others as appropriate in order to establish whether a new category (be it known as Community Preacher, Enabler, Exhorter or some other title) needs to be established to meet the needs which have now been identified, or whether the existing categories of Local Preacher and Worship Leader can be extended to meet them.

2.5 **Local Preacher training in languages other than English or Welsh**

In order to respond to the exciting opportunities presented by the growth and multiplication of non-English-speaking Churches and congregation plants, the following proposals are made concerning the Local Preacher training scheme *Faith & Worship*:

- (a) Investigations should be made as to whether alternative courses to *Faith & Worship* in the other community languages present within the British Isles are available which can be validated for use under our existing procedures set out in Standing Order 566(9).
- (b) Resources should be provided to enable the translation and culturalisation of the *Faith & Worship* course into the other community languages found within the Methodist Church in the British Isles, in order to facilitate further the development of those community groups and affirm and celebrate the growth

35. Training

already achieved. This has already been done for the Welsh language. The current work of professionally translating the course into Welsh will cost between £13,000 and £15,000 over a two-year period. This is underwritten in the budgets for 00-01 and 01-02, and grant aid is being sought. If the costs are similar, or slightly higher, for translation into other community languages then £25,000 each year, beginning in 02-03, will enable the Faith & Worship course to be translated into at least five or six other languages by the Conference of 2006.

*****RESOLUTION**

35/7. The Conference adopts the Report.

SECTION 3 REGIONAL TRAINING NETWORKS

- 3.1 The *Connexional Training Strategies* report to the 1999 Conference described the attempts that had been made to identify and delineate the natural boundaries of regional networks of training resources. In the light of this it made proposals for connexional and regional structures for the management of those training resources.
- 3.2 The report to the 2000 Conference described the work which had been undertaken to clarify and co-ordinate the management across the Connexion of the Training and Development Officer Scheme.
- 3.3 In the light of the above and parallel concerns about how Methodist responsibilities in the governance and management of training institutions are fulfilled, a process of consultation is now under way with a view to making definitive proposals about the extent of the various regional training networks and to establishing appropriate Regional Training Strategies Committees for each of them. In each case, these consultations will involve the Connexional Training Strategy and Resources Executive, Chairs of District and District Officers, and representatives of the relevant Training and Development Officer schemes and training institutions. The definitive proposals will be reported to the Council in the coming year.

*****RESOLUTION**

35/8. The Conference receives the Report.