

METHODIST CONFERENCE 2003 REPORT

Leadership in the Methodist Church

1. The Conference in 2002 adopted a wide range of resolutions which had been prepared by the Methodist Council in the light of the Leadership Task Group Report. (See appendix below.)

2. Since the Conference in 2002, the Methodist Council, assisted by its General Purposes and Finance Committee, has reviewed the many tasks which flow from the 2002 resolutions, and overseen their implementation.

3. During the connexional year 2002-03, the principal actions which have been agreed by the Council, for immediate implementation or for presentation to this Conference, have been as follows:

3.1 The Council established an Appointing Panel, chaired by Mrs Susan Howdle, to bring a recommendation for nomination as Secretary of the Conference/General Secretary of the Methodist Church, for immediate appointment in 2003. The Council subsequently nominated The Revd David G Deeks for this appointment.

3.2 The Council approved recommendations relating to the close working together, in the service of the whole Church, of the two Assistant Secretaries of the Conference and the four Co-ordinating Secretaries, with the General Secretary. In essence these recommendations were:

The integration of the work done by the Conference Office and the work done by the Connexional Team, building on the ever closer working together of the Conference Office and the Connexional Team since restructuring in 1996.

The realignment of roles of the two Assistant Secretaries of the Conference and the four Co-ordinating Secretaries, to create a group of six Co-ordinating Secretaries (one of whom will be the Assistant Secretary of the Conference) who, working collaboratively under the leadership of the General Secretary, will aim to provide a 'seamless service' to the whole Church, and together will advocate a holistic vision of the Church's mission.

The formal titles for the six Co-ordinating Secretaries to be:

- **The Co-ordinating Secretary for Unity in Mission**
- **The Co-ordinating Secretary for Public Life and Social Justice**
- **The Co-ordinating Secretary for Worship and Learning**
- **The Co-ordinating Secretary for Conference and Communication (who will be the Assistant Secretary of the Conference and must therefore be a presbyter)**
- **The Co-ordinating Secretary for Human and Financial Resources**

- **The Co-ordinating Secretary for Legal and Constitutional Practice [this is the additional 'Assistant Secretary of the Conference' referred to in the Conference resolutions]**

The existing Co-ordinating Secretaries will take up responsibilities in the revised leadership pattern of the Connexional Team which resemble as closely as possible their current responsibilities:

- The Co-ordinating Secretary for Unity in Mission: *The Revd Peter Sulston*
- The Co-ordinating Secretary for Worship and Learning: *The Revd Jonathan Kerry*
- The Co-ordinating Secretary for Human and Financial Resources: *Mrs Ruby Beech*

3.3 The Council authorised the Appointing Panel (see 3.1 above) to bring recommendations for three appointments to the Methodist Council: the Co-ordinating Secretary for Legal and Constitutional Practice, for immediate appointment in 2003; the Assistant Secretary of the Conference/Co-ordinating Secretary for Conference and Communication, for designation in 2003, to be appointed in 2004 when The Revd Keith Reed retires; and the Co-ordinating Secretary for Public Life and Social Justice, for immediate appointment in 2003, to replace The Revd David Deeks when he becomes Secretary of the Conference/General Secretary.

The Appointing Panel, on the encouragement of the Methodist Council, worked in three sub-groups, each sub-group being augmented by two persons with relevant experience and expertise.

The Council subsequently endorsed the recommendations of the Appointing Panel and now brings the nominations to the Conference:

- **The Co-ordinating Secretary for Legal and Constitutional Practice: *The Revd David Gamble***
- **The Co-ordinating Secretary for Public Life and Social Justice: *Mrs Anthea Cox***
- **The Assistant Secretary of the Conference/Co-ordinating Secretary for Conference and Communication: *The Revd Kenneth Howcroft***

3.4 The Council noted the change in Employment Law which took place in October 2002 relating to Fixed Term contracts. (This is dealt with in greater detail elsewhere in the Conference agenda). In the case of the role of the Co-ordinating Secretary for Public Life and Social Justice, the Council judged that no objective justification for a fixed term contract applies. It therefore recommends to the Conference an ongoing contract.

3.5 The Council endorsed the view that the advent of a General Secretary and the realignment of Co-ordinating Secretary roles with two new appointees taking up their posts in 2003 will require, in the leadership of the Connexional Team, considerable flexibility and time for adequate induction. The new pattern of roles will be fully operative from September 2004 onwards; the connexional year 2003-04 will be a transitional year.

3.6 The Council approved a recommendation from a working party on the Methodist Diaconal Order that in future the Warden of the Order should relate differently to the Connexional Team. (Currently the Warden is a member of the Connexional Team, within the Formation in Ministry Office.) The proposal is that the Warden should be deemed to be more like a District Chair; and will thereby relate in a variety of ways to the Co-ordinating Secretaries and to the Team as a whole, as do the District Chairs.

3.7 The Council encouraged conversations and consultations with all concerned about the future role of the Connexional Liaison Group and of the Management and Leadership Team (comprising now the District Chairs, the Warden of the MDO, the Co-ordinating Secretaries and the General Secretary). The consultations are ongoing, and their outcome will be brought to the Conference of 2004 (rather than to this Conference as one of the resolutions adopted in 2003 required).

3.8 The Council approved a new name for its principal committee - what in Standing Orders is the Executive and what in the 2002 resolutions became the General Purposes and Finance Committee. In order to recruit suitably qualified people and better to encapsulate its responsibilities, it is recommended to the Conference that it become the Strategy and Resources Committee of the Council.

3.9 The Council approved essential Standing Order changes to enable the new leadership arrangements to commence in September 2003, together with some modest editing of the Standing Orders relating to the Connexional Team which is deemed to be appropriate in the light of developing experience in the relationship between the Team and the Council. In recommending these changes to the Conference, the Council notes that the additional senior post holder approved by the resolutions of the Conference in 2002 will be ex officio a member of the Conference; thus the number of places for District representatives to the Conference is necessarily reduced by one.

3.10 The Council noted work in hand, largely led by the joint business committees of the Conference together with the Conference Secretariat, which is considering evolutionary changes in the way the Conference will function when it is a residential conference at Loughborough in 2004. Consultations about the 2004 Conference are taking place in a variety of ways during Conference 2003.

4. The Conference deferred some work flowing from last year's resolutions on Leadership until next connexional year. This includes the following:

4.1 A review of the Methodist Council itself and how it works. However, arrangements have already been made, in response to the Leadership Task Group Report, for one District Chair from each stationing region to be present at the Council (as an observer if not already a member according to the current rotation of District Chairs). This is a provisional arrangement until the review of the Methodist Council is complete and the review of the current stationing regions, recommended by the District Chairs, has taken place in 2003-04.

4.2 A review of the Strategy and Resources Committee and how it works.

4.3 Consultation on a number of possible Standing Order changes, mainly in Part 3 of CPD, which have been identified.

4.4 The future roles of the Connexional Liaison Group and the Management and Leadership Team, and their relation to the Council and the Conference.

4.5 The development of youth leadership.

4.6 The proposed review of Districts, noting the larger context of devolution and regionalisation.

4.7 Communications.

APPENDIX: Resolutions on Leadership adopted by Conference 2002

1. The Conference adopts Option 3 as its model for the office of President of the Conference. (The President as Ambassador and Policy Contributor, for one year.)

2. The Conference affirms the office of the Vice-President of the Conference as a one-year appointment within the terms laid out in the Leadership Task Group Report.

3. The Conference reappoints the Connexional Liaison Group for a further year and directs the Methodist Council in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee to bring to the 2003 Conference proposals for the Connexional Liaison Group which reflect its growing importance in the establishing of leadership amongst us.

4. The Conference affirms the decision of the Conference of 2001 that an immediate appointment be made by the Conference of 2003 to the office of Secretary of the Conference. The person to be appointed shall be the General Secretary of the Methodist Church, fulfilling the role and functions described in paragraphs 9.1 - 9.8 of the Leadership Task Group Report.

5. The Conference approves the appointment of a second Assistant Secretary of the Conference from the 1st September 2003, the post to be open to presbyters, deacons and lay people. It directs the Methodist Council to bring to the Conference of 2003 a nomination or recommendation for immediate appointment, following as closely as possible the provisions of Standing Order 313 or 314, as the case may be.

6. The Conference adopts the following recommendations in relation to the meeting of the Conference itself:

a) The annual Conference shall be held, if possible, on a residential site with full conference facilities, with the aim of completing the work of the three Sessions within one week.

b) The District Synods shall be directed to review the way in which they recruit nominations for representatives to the Conference to ensure equal opportunity is given to all church members. More publicity should be provided to inform members how they can offer themselves for nomination.

c) [Declined.]

d) The date of the Conference will be revised if necessary when the new pattern for school holidays has been determined and active consideration shall be given to ensure the continued involvement of people

in the host districts and the wider church in the activities of the Conference including the opportunity for fringe meetings in local churches..

7. The Conference directs the Methodist Council to review its size, membership and its ways of working, and to revise the rota for District representatives, so that at least one District Chair from each of the stationing regions is a member of the Council each year.

8. The Conference directs the Methodist Council to review the size and membership of the Methodist Council Executive and the manner of appointment, and renames the Executive as 'The General Purposes and Finance Committee of the Methodist Council'. When vacancies are advertised, the skills and experience required of new members shall be made clear and appointments made on that basis.

9. The Conference refers further work to the Methodist Council, including:

- The development of youth leadership.*
- The proposed review of the Districts, noting the larger context of devolution and regionalisation.*
- Communications.*

The provision of office accommodation at Methodist Church House for the President and the Vice-President.

10. The Conference directs the Methodist Council to bring revised Standing Orders to the Conference of 2003 in respect of:

i) The Secretary of the Conference/General Secretary of the Methodist Church.

ii) The Assistant Secretaries of the Conference.

iii) The Methodist Council Executive.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Conference receives the Report.

2. The Conference makes the immediate appointment of The Revd David G Deeks as Secretary of the Conference and General Secretary of the Methodist Church for a period of six years from the 1st September 2003.

3. The Conference makes the immediate appointment of The Revd David Gamble as Co-ordinating Secretary for Legal and Constitutional Practice for a period of six years from the 1st September 2003.

4. The Conference makes the immediate appointment of Mrs Anthea Cox as Co-ordinating Secretary for Public Life and Social Justice from the 1st September 2003 and authorises an ongoing contract to be drawn up with the Methodist Council.

5. The Conference designates The Revd Kenneth G Howcroft as Assistant Secretary of the Conference and Co-ordinating Secretary for Conference and Communication for a period of six years from the 1st September 2004.

6. The Conference resolves that the committee constituted in Standing Order 213 as the Executive Committee of the Methodist Council and appointed by the Conference, and currently called the General Purposes and Finance Committee, shall be known as the Strategy and Resources Committee of the Council; and amends Standing Orders to that effect, as set out in part 1 of the list below.

7. The Conference re-appoints the Connexional Liaison Group for one further year.

8. The Conference further amends Standing Orders as set out in part 2 of the list below.

STANDING ORDER AMENDMENTS

Part 1

SO 013 Unfitness for office.

(13) For the purposes of clause 31 of the Deed of Union:

(i) any issue whether the President, Vice-President, Secretary or Secretary-Elect of the Conference is incapable of acting or unfit to act on grounds not apt to be the subject of a charge under Section 02 shall be determined by the **Strategy and Resources Committee of the** Methodist Council Executive, in this clause called 'the executive' **'the committee'**.

(ii) he or she shall refer the matter to the executive **committee**;

(iii) may refer the matter to the executive **committee**.

(iv) against any decision by the executive **committee**

(v) the executive **committee** or the council, as the case may be, ...

SO 102 Representatives [to Conference]

(1)(i) Methodist Council:

... (f) The chairman of the Council Executive **council's Strategy and Resources Committee**

Title to Section 21 Methodist Council and Executive

SO 210 The Methodist Council [membership]

(1)(xi) the voting members of the Executive **Strategy and Resources Committee** appointed under

SO 211 [The Methodist Council] General Powers

(3)(iv) consider policies for future connexional work, advise the Executive ***ensure that its Strategy and Resources Committee is aware of*** on their implications for the Methodist Church Fund budget ...

SO 212 [The Methodist Council] Particular Functions

(1) The Council shall be responsible, upon the recommendations of the Executive ***its Strategy and Resources Committee*** and with the advice of the connexional Audit Committee ...

(2) The council shall receive and consider the report of the Executive ***Strategy and Resources Committee*** on the budget for the Methodist Church Fund,On the basis of the Executive's ***committee's*** provisional assessment

SO 213 Methodist Council Executive *Strategy and Resources Committee* (1) The Conference shall each year appoint an Executive ***a Strategy and Resources Committee*** of the Council consisting of :

(3) The Executive ***committee*** shall be responsible ...

(4) The Executive ***committee*** shall propose ...

SO 215 Delegation and Working Parties

(1) The council may delegate to the Executive ***Strategy and Resources Committee*** or to any ***other*** committee any of its own powers

(2) The Executive ***Strategy and Resources Committee*** or any ***other*** committee may appoint ...

SO 316 Curtailment of Appointment

(2)(a) The officer referred to in clause (1) above shall be:

...(ii) in the case of a Co-ordinating Secretary or connexional Treasurer, the chairman of the ***Strategy and Resources Committee of the*** Methodist Council Executive;

...(ivA) in the case of the chairman or an appointed member of the ***Strategy and Resources Committee of the*** Methodist Council Executive, the Vice-President of the Conference;

SO 760 Parenthood ..

(4)(viii) 'responsible officers' means:

... (e) in the case of a Co-ordinating Secretary, the chairman of the ***Strategy and Resources Committee of the*** Methodist Council Executive, ...

Part 2

004 Officers and Members ...

(viii) 'the General Secretary' means the General Secretary of the Methodist Church, as provided for in Standing Order 302;

(ix) 'Co-ordinating Secretary' means a Co-ordinating Secretary appointed as such in accordance with Standing Order 303.

017A Office of the Conference. The office of the Secretary of the Conference shall be the office of the Conference for the purposes of the Methodist Church Act 1976 and any other legislation.

102(1)(i) [Conference representatives]

(a) Four **The** Co-ordinating Secretaries (**other than the assistant secretary of the Conference**).

...

(d) The secretary **A representative** of the Law and Polity Committee

116 Deputy Secretary

(3A) The Secretary may delegate to the assistant secretary **any of the Co-ordinating Secretaries, as appropriate**, or, after consultation with the President, to some other person the exercise, in general or on a particular occasion, of any of the functions assigned to the Secretary by Standing Orders.

210 The Methodist Council

(1) (i) the assistant secretary of the Conference;

(1) (vi) **(v)** the four Co-ordinating Secretaries or their representatives

213 (1) (iii) the Secretary of the Conference and the four Co-ordinating Secretaries as non-voting members;

(iv) the assistant secretary of the Conference as a non-voting member, who shall be the secretary of the Executive.

300 The Connexional Team. (1) There shall be a connexional Team **whose members work**, operating for administrative purposes in four Units together with the Conference Office, with the responsibilities specified in Standing Orders, working collaboratively so as to provide a coherent and effective service on behalf of the Conference.

(2) The work of the Team, the assignment of particular tasks and the co-ordination of the work shall be supervised by the Methodist Council.

(3) Subject to clause (4) below **t** The Team shall consist of:

(i) all persons specified in Standing Orders or stationed under Standing Order 315 as members of the Team; and

(ii) all others persons appointed under Standing Order 313 or employed to carry out, in either case, the work specified in Part 3.

(i) the General Secretary and the Co-ordinating Secretaries;

(ii) all other ministers and deacons appointed under Standing Order 313 or stationed under Standing Order 315 to work as members of the Team;

(iii) all other persons employed by the Methodist Council to work as members of the Team;

(iv) all other persons specified in Standing Orders as members of the Team.

(4) Persons appointed to or employed in the connexional and other institutions which are the subject of Section 34 are not members of the Team, except as specified in that Section.

301 Purposes (1) The overall task of the connexional Team is to further the purposes of the Methodist Church, in particular enabling it better to fulfil its calling ***of responding to God's love in Christ and working out its discipleship in mission and worship.*** to worship, discipleship and mission.

(2) The Team is charged with providing appropriate support for Local Churches, Circuits and Districts in accordance with Standing Orders and any directions of the Conference given from time to time.

(3) The Team shall foster the recognition throughout the Church that the Church's mission includes ***telling the good news of Jesus; calling people to faith in Jesus Christ and to Christian discipleship; caring for individual people in communities; sharing in the task of education and social and spiritual development; struggling for a just world; being alongside the poor; becoming friends with people of different cultures and faiths; caring for the earth; and building partnerships with other churches and other groups who share some of our mission aims*** evangelisation, education, social witness, social caring, the struggle for justice and care for the well-being of the planet.

(4) The Team shall encourage ecumenical collaboration throughout the Church and carry out its work, wherever possible and appropriate, in collaboration with other Christian Churches and other agencies.

(5)(4) The Team is authorised to act on behalf of the Church in relation to national institutions and public issues in harmony with the existing statements and resolutions of the Conference.

(6)(5) The Team is responsible for assisting the Methodist Council in considering and determining future policies.

(7)(6) The Team shall have particular responsibility for the areas of work ***which are prescribed in the Deed of Union, or specified in Standing Orders 302 to 306, or approved from time to time by the Conference and the Methodist Council.***

302 The General Secretary. (1) The person who is for the time being the Secretary of the Conference shall also, by that fact, be the General Secretary of the Methodist Church.

(2) The General Secretary shall be responsible for leading the development of the vision, mission and strategy of the Church, and shall be the executive leader of a management and leadership team, comprising also the Co-ordinating Secretaries, the District Chairs and the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order.

(3) Although the same person is both Secretary of the Conference and General Secretary references in Standing Order 116 and elsewhere to one of those offices relate only to that office and not to the other, unless the context requires otherwise.

303 The Co-ordinating Secretaries. (1) The Team shall include Co-ordinating Secretaries, appointed to that office or being such under clause (2) below, who shall under the leadership of the General Secretary have collective responsibility for the work of the Team and ensure that it is effectively carried out, in accordance with the Deed of Union, Standing Orders and the directions from time to time of the Conference and the Methodist Council.

(2) The assistant secretary of the Conference shall be one of the Co-ordinating Secretaries.

(3) One of the Co-ordinating Secretaries shall act as the ecumenical officer of the Methodist Church.

(4) Subject to clauses (2) and (3) above the number of Co-ordinating Secretaries shall be determined from time to time by the Methodist Council.

Church Life. In the discharge of its responsibility to develop church life the Team shall:

(i) promote the ministry of all God's people in the church and the world, in particular encouraging the contribution of disadvantaged and minority groups;

(ii) foster within the whole Church an awareness of world mission and social responsibility as implications of Christian discipleship;

(iii) support and encourage the Church's work with children, young people and young adults, including uniformed organisations and other church and community programmes for the young;

(iv) identify, develop, present and sustain the Church's witness concerning family and personal relationships;

(v) encourage theological study and reflection and its expression in the worship of the Church and in the Church's engagement with society;

(vi) provide resources for the enrichment of the Church's worship and encourage their use, including the creative arts;

(vii) foster the spiritual life, fellowship and growth of the local church and promote pastoral care;

(viii) offer training and support for the life of the Church, especially at local church and circuit level, including the Wesley Guild and other adult organisations;

(ix) promote and co-ordinate the Church's programme of selection, formation, oversight and training for its various forms of ministry, including ministers, deacons, local preachers, lay workers and other lay leaders;

(x) facilitate the effective use of the Church's resources, through the encouragement of local church and circuit reviews, responsible Christian stewardship, the deployment of personnel, the making of grants and the processing of property schemes;

(xi) allocate funds and submit applications for grants to appropriate external bodies for these purposes.

303 Church and Society. In the discharge of its responsibility to assist the engagement of the Church with society the Team shall:

(i) provide resources for the whole Church to engage in evangelism;

(ii) encourage and oversee all forms of evangelisation under Methodist auspices, including chaplaincies to prisons, the armed forces, industry, hospitals and education, urban, rural and London mission and evangelistic agencies;

(iii) initiate and support new forms of mission and ministry;

(iv) oversee the work of Methodist primary and secondary schools and colleges of higher education;

(v) ensure the effective presentation of Christian social witness in harmony with existing Statements and resolutions of the Conference, with particular reference to political, social and economic issues in a European context and to international affairs;

(vi) oversee the preparation of resources to help the Conference to review its Statements from time to time or come to a considered mind on new topics;

(vii) equip and support the work of Local Churches and Circuits as they engage with the life of society;

(viii) consider the implications for the life and mission of the Church of proposed government legislation and advise the Methodist Council and the Conference as necessary.

304 Inter-Church and Other Relationships. In the discharge of its responsibility concerning inter-church and other relationships the Team shall:

(i) promote and service the Church's relationships with other churches and with ecumenical bodies;

- (ii) act as a channel for the sharing of resources with sister churches and other agencies;
- (iii) develop and collaborate in initiatives in world mission;
- (iv) work in co-operation with Methodist, ecumenical and other agencies for the promotion of justice, the relief of human need, economic and social development and initiatives on ecological issues;
- (v) increase awareness of the worldwide implications of the gospel and challenge the Church to deeper commitment in prayer, study and action;
- (vi) encourage a response to opportunities for service across national boundaries through employment in the Church or in other ways;
- (vii) further the development of relationships with people of other faiths.

305 Central Services. In the discharge of its responsibility to provide administrative services the Team shall:

- (i) assist the whole Church to function efficiently and economically;
- (ii) develop effective communications within the Church and beyond it through the publishing, production and distribution of printed material and other resources and the use of the public media;
- (iii) develop and maintain satisfactory systems of financial accountability and control, prepare budgets and accounts and provide all financial services that may be required by the Conference or the Methodist Council;
- (iv) consider any subject bearing on Methodist finances not within the responsibilities of any other body (including taxation and Parliamentary legislation) and advise the Methodist Council or its Executive thereon;
- (v) provide any administrative or accountancy services required by the Central Finance Board or by the trustees of any connexional fund or other connexional organisation;
- (vi) implement the personnel policies agreed by the Methodist Council for the Team, including terms and conditions of employment, and keep under review all arrangements for the employment of lay persons within the Church;
- (vii) provide for the management of records and technological support services and the care of archives and other historical material;
- (viii) act as agent of the managing trustees of connexional property as may be required by them;

(ix) provide the administrative services required by the Methodist Council in discharging its responsibilities for property affairs.

306 The Conference Office. (1) The Conference Office, under the direction of the Secretary of the Conference, shall be responsible for:

(i) the preparation and conduct of the business of the Conference and the preservation and publication of its records as required by the Deed of Union and Standing Orders, and ensuring that the directions of the Conference are carried out;

(ii) the secretarial services required by the Methodist Council and its Executive;

(iii) the support of the President and Vice-President;

(iv) the preparation of nominations for the designation and appointment of district Chairmen in accordance with Section 42;

(v) the maintenance of effective communication between the district Synods and the Conference;

(vi) the fulfilment of other duties required by legislation, the Deed of Union or Standing Orders.

(2) The address of the Conference Office shall be the office of the Conference for the purposes of the Methodist Church Act 1976 and any other legislation.

310 Co-ordinating Secretaries. (1) There shall be four Co-ordinating Secretaries appointed to the connexional Team in accordance with Standing Orders 313 and 314.

(2) The Co-ordinating Secretaries shall share collective responsibility for the work of the Team and ensure that it is effectively carried out, in accordance with Standing Orders and the directions from time to time of the Conference and the Methodist Council.

(3) Within that collective responsibility each Co-ordinating Secretary shall have responsibility for the area of work specified in one of Standing Orders 302 to 305. The Co-ordinating Secretary responsible for inter-church and other relationships shall also be the ecumenical officer of the Methodist Church.

(4) The Co-ordinating Secretaries shall work under the direction of the Methodist Council and its Executive.

330 Faith and Order

(1A) The secretary of the committee shall be a member of the connexional Team.

345 The United College of the Ascension

(Before the existing Standing Order insert (1))

(2) The Principal shall be a member of the connexional Team.

REASONED STATEMENTS

The Revd David G Deeks

David Deeks brings an outstanding depth and breadth of experience to this appointment. His distinguished academic record and research background in the natural sciences has led into a lasting commitment to grappling with the significant issues for Christian faith in our world today. He has worked in theological education in several different settings: as Assistant Tutor at Richmond College, as Ecumenical Lecturer at Lincoln (Anglican) Theological College, as Methodist tutor (while a circuit minister) to students on the Southwark Ordination Course, and as Tutor at Wesley House, Cambridge. In those contexts he has taught across a wide range of subjects, biblical and theological. He has served as a circuit minister, in the Maidstone Circuit and in the Bristol (Clifton and Redland) Circuit where he was also the Methodist chaplain to Bristol University. He has held connexional office since 1992, as General Secretary of the Division of Social Responsibility and then, since 1995, as Co-ordinating Secretary (Church and Society).

David commands wide respect, in Methodism and far beyond, for his gifts. He brings to every task a sharply analytical and creative mind and a comprehensive understanding of the issues facing the Church today. He is committed to working ecumenically in the widest possible sense. In the many different contexts in which he has been required to work in recent years, he has been regarded by those with whom he has come into contact as an advocate and representative of Methodism at its best. He communicates with great effectiveness, both in the diverse range of books, articles and Conference reports which he has written, and by the spoken word - whether that be in public debate, or committee deliberation, or personal conversation, or in preaching the gospel from the depths of his experience.

He has demonstrated time and again in recent years the ability to think strategically and has offered not only the vision but the capacity to lead the process of turning that into reality, working collaboratively with others. He has done so in his leadership and management of those involved in the part of the work which is primarily his responsibility within the Connexional Team. But on a broader front, his key role in the development of Our Calling, and his effectiveness in addressing the task of identifying the continuing contribution of Methodism in higher education through Westminster College and Southlands, are just two examples of this.

Such achievements do not come without a cost. David has never failed to be courageous in seeing the difficult decisions which require to be taken, in seeking to work with the diversity of people's convictions, whether theological, ethical or political, to achieve solutions - and then in living with the consequences. In his current role he has had the responsibility of representing the mind of the Methodist Church on key public issues. When, as a result of particular controversies, the Methodist

Council was asked to consider the issues involved in seeking to speak for the Church, he was involved in the work which led to the Report "Speaking for the Methodist Church", setting out a policy which has won the support of the Conference and which is working well in practice.

All these qualities were manifest to the Appointing Panel during the selection process. The Panel concluded that he was the outstanding person to fulfil this appointment, both in the significant constitutional functions of the Secretary of the Conference and in all that this new post requires. He has the ability and commitment to work in partnership with others at bringing together a genuinely unified leadership and management team as the Leadership Report envisaged. More importantly, as a Methodist minister of quiet but deep and passionate faith, David will continue to offer challenge and inspiration to the Church as we seek to develop a shared vision of the mission imperatives of the gospel in the 21st century.

The Revd David Gamble

David Gamble graduated in law from Hull University in 1968 and taught law for three years before entering training for the Methodist ministry at Wesley House, Cambridge. Besides his Cambridge degree in theology he took the Postgraduate Certificate in Ecumenical Studies at the Bossey (WCC) Institute, Geneva. He served for seventeen years as a circuit minister in the York and Hull District before being appointed as Children's Secretary in the then Division of Education and Youth. For the final year of the Division's life he was appointed as General Secretary and, since re-structuring, he has served in the Connexional Team as Pastoral Care and Personal Relationships Secretary. During the latter period he has achieved further academic qualifications: a Diploma in Applied Social Sciences and a BSc from the Open University.

From the range of experience just described, it is obvious that David offers not only the technical expertise but also a broad perspective on the types of situation upon which he will be called to advise. He has engaged successfully with difficult strategic developments on a large scale, such as the plans to bring about the new Southlands College. He has convened many groups and working parties, not least that which reported to the 1997 Conference upon Sexual Harassment and Abuse. His ability to handle the detail of our procedures and Standing Orders is clear. But at the same time his sympathetic understanding of the day-to-day impact of our increasingly regulatory society upon circuit life (and particularly upon Superintendents) and his commitment to support those involved was something which came across very strongly through the selection process.

Besides that breadth, he offers also a depth of experience acquired in recent years in developing the Church's policy upon Safeguarding/child protection issues. That work, combining the need to be acutely sensitive to the needs and perspectives of so many people and the ability to handle complex and detailed legal material, has been widely recognised within and outside our own Church. His writings on this subject are extensively drawn upon by others and he is looked to as a leader in the field. His distinguished record in this area does not come without a cost; his commitment to facing the difficult issues has involved him in deeply painful and demanding situations, which he has faced with courage, sensitivity and clarity.

There is an increasing requirement upon bodies such as the Methodist Church to focus on how we exercise our responsibility and accountability with regard to what is entrusted to us. In that regard, David has much to offer through his involvement with many other charitable and public bodies, and most notably in his experience of the governance of a major charity, as the Chair of the Council of Trustees of Barnardo's from 1997 to 2002.

David offered himself for this appointment out of a sense that it provided an opportunity for him, and for the Church, to draw together the various strands of his experience in the next stage of his ministry, and did so with real enthusiasm and commitment. The Appointing Panel shared that sense, and recommends him with great confidence.

Mrs Anthea J Cox

Anthea Cox graduated in Music, Drama and Dance from Birmingham University and is currently studying for an MA in Educational Theatre. She spent a number of years in developing significant work in arts education particularly for learning disabled people, and is currently working for the Workers Educational Association. She is an active campaigner for improved services for people with mental health problems and people with learning difficulties. She has been active in local government for ten years and was a parliamentary candidate in 2001. She became a local councillor in May 1995 and since 2001 has been the leader of the opposition Labour group on Peterborough City Council. She is also currently a non-executive director of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (previously Northwest Anglia Healthcare NHS Trust).

She brings to this appointment an outstanding wealth of experience in public affairs and great enthusiasm for and commitment to social justice. She has developed good working relationships with many local statutory, voluntary and business organisations, and has carried significant responsibilities for budget setting and accountability, senior appointments and corporate development. As chair of Peterborough Community Services Committee from 1996-8 she was responsible for leading the department through the process of the City Council becoming a unitary authority; similarly, in the transition of the former NHS Trust into its current entity she was particularly responsible for the development of its values and vision and for ensuring the participation of staff, users and carers in the process. Through her service with a wide range of other statutory and voluntary bodies she has had serious involvement in many social issues.

She is an effective communicator, with substantial experience of work with the media. This has often involved a representative role, seeking to convey effectively a group's decisions and views, whether or not they are the ones which would otherwise have commanded her personal support. She is a person who enjoys the opportunity to engage creatively with people whose views differ from hers. Within the Christian tradition she recognises and values diversity, and has worked positively with people of different denominations and faiths in establishing the local SACRE. She has the ability to enable people to be heard even when feelings are running high and fundamental disagreement exists, and to build partnerships in seeking mutual ground to work for the good of the community.

A Methodist member for 24 years, she has been a local preacher since 1996. She has a longstanding interest in the creative leadership of worship. She provided the dance and music elements at the 1989 International Methodist Youth Conference, and has been a member of the Methodist Church Music Society Committee, the London Weekend Worship Group and the MAYC London Weekend Review Group.

Her deep faith informs her actions. Her vitality, people skills, collaborative ways of working, clear thinking, excellent communication, capacity for managing change and commitment to working practically and strategically for the Kingdom of God all led the Appointing Panel to the conviction that she is indeed the right person for this post.

The Revd Kenneth G Howcroft

After taking the Classical Tripos and PGCE, Kenneth Howcroft taught at King Edward's School, Edgbaston, for six years before returning to Cambridge for ministerial training at Wesley House, during which he took an MPhil in New Testament Studies. He then had experience of circuit ministry in the West London Mission Circuit, at Hinde Street Methodist Church, before being appointed to Lincoln Theological College as Ecumenical Lecturer, Lecturer in New Testament Studies and Senior Methodist Tutor. From 1995 he served as Secretary for Initial Ministerial Training, and from 2000 he has been Secretary for Presbyteral Ministry and Leader of the Formation in Ministry Office in the Connexional Team.

His experience and gifts fit him well for this appointment. His ability to think strategically and creatively, and to engage others in that process, has borne fruit in a range of papers and Conference reports, including *The Making of Ministry*, *What is a Presbyter?* and *Releasing Ministers for Ministry*. This work arises from his deep concern to lead the Church into theological reflection about the various types of ministry in the Church, and of presbyteral ministry in particular, within the broader context of Christian discipleship.

At the same time he has been engaged in the very significant task of developing new patterns of foundation and pre-ordination training, to reflect the challenges and demands which are and will be laid upon the Church and its ministries, not least that of stabilising and achieving as much as possible within the limits placed upon its training budget. He knows how to set the big picture in front of the Church without losing sight of the practicalities that have to be faced, and his attention to detail and firm grasp of constitutional practice are as impressive as his broad vision.

Through his work in dealing with the discipline, development and deployment of student ministers and probationers he has developed a wide and relevant experience of the Church, in its Circuits and Districts, and commands widespread respect for his sensitivity to those who have difficult decisions to make and acute awareness of the issues that they face. His success in establishing positive relationships, both within the British Methodist context and further afield both ecumenically and internationally, arises from his inclusive and collaborative way of working.

Whether in preaching, teaching or writing, his effectiveness in communication lies in helping people discern and respond to the Kingdom of God. In particular, his contributions in Conference debates have commanded widespread respect, not simply for their content but because of his ability to read and, where he thinks it appropriate, to seek to guide the mind of the Conference. This arises from his deep and passionate concern for the whole Connexion and, within that, for the life of the Conference through which the Methodist people can develop that sense of shared purpose and vision which is connexionalism at its best. The Appointing Panel therefore recommends him as eminently fitted to serve in this key appointment.