

GENERAL SYNOD

THE ANGLICAN-METHODIST COVENANT

A report by the Council for Christian Unity, to which is appended

***MOVING FORWARD IN COVENANT:
INTERIM REPORT (2011) OF
THE JOINT IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION (PHASE 2)
UNDER THE COVENANT BETWEEN THE METHODIST CHURCH OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND***

1. The Council for Christian Unity (CCU) is bringing forward for general consideration by the Synod, as part of a wider process of consultation, the Interim Report of the Joint Implementation Commission established under the Anglican-Methodist Covenant. The CCU is grateful to the Methodist Church for producing the report in the format that has been used by both churches for several years and for making it available to the Synod for no more than the cost of photocopying the material in house.
2. The Joint Implementation Commission (JIC) was set up by the Synod and the Methodist Conference when they endorsed the Covenant proposals in 2003. The first phase of the JIC came to an end in July 2008 when the JIC delivered its quinquennial report *Embracing the Covenant*. JIC2 was set up by Conference and Synod in July 2008. JIC2 is required to make its quinquennial report in July 2013. As in the previous quinquennium, the JIC is making an interim report to both bodies.
3. *Moving Forward in Covenant* looks back to the origins of the Methodist movement within the Church of England, as an aspect of the Evangelical Revival. It recapitulates why the Covenant was needed and what it has achieved. It notes some causes for concern in the implementation of the Covenant, including ecumenical inertia in some parts of both churches. The report summarises the proposals in *Embracing the Covenant* for a President-Bishop, within the historic episcopate, in the Methodist Church. The report then majors on two constructive areas of mutual engagement: the Diaconate and local unity in mission. It summarises the results of a joint consultation, sponsored by the JIC, on diaconal ministry, noting areas of convergence.
4. Finally, it sets out proposals under Canon B 44 – Covenanted Partnerships in Extended Areas – to facilitate shared ministry and mission in an extended area, wider than the parish, where that is desired and diocesan bishops and the relevant authorities in the Methodist Church give permission. In principle, the extended area could be as wide as a diocese, though the report recognises that not all parishes may wish to participate at a given time.
5. The canonical norm for the Church of England is that the sacraments are celebrated and the cure of souls exercised by an episcopally ordained priest. That norm is upheld in all the CCU's ecumenical work. However, the Ecumenical Canons and certain ecumenical agreements (in this case the Anglican-Methodist Covenant) that the Church of England has made with churches that are not episcopally ordered provide

exceptionally for shared (not interchangeable) ordained ministry in the context of achieved theological convergence and the journey that we are making together towards full visible communion. The proposals in the JIC report build on this provision.

6. The JIC is putting forward this initiative under its mandate from the General Synod and the Methodist Conference 'to monitor and promote the implementation of the Covenant'. It now offers its proposals for consultation with appropriate bodies in both churches, as part of a process of discernment and reception.
7. The Interim Report will be debated by the Methodist Conference (which meets annually) in July and it is appropriate for the Synod to debate it in the same month. The Faith and Order Commission has not yet had an opportunity to consider the proposals in the Interim Report but will do so in the autumn. Its views, and those expressed in the Synod debate, will inform the JIC's further reflection on the subject in preparing its quinquennial report.
8. The Interim Report will be introduced by the Bishop of Coventry, the Right Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth, Co-Chair of the JIC. The Synod will be invited to take note of this covering report and of the JIC's interim report, which is appended to it.

On behalf of the Council

✠ CHRISTOPHER GUILDFORD
Chairman

10 June 2011

**Published by the General Synod of the Church of England
and on sale at the Church House Bookshop**

31 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BN

Copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2011

£1

