

Glossary of Terms

Connexion/Circuit/Section

Typically, Methodist ministers have oversight of a group of churches within the circuit, known as a 'section', with their work being overseen by a circuit superintendent. Local churches govern their affairs through Church Councils and the wider Circuit through its Circuit Meeting. One of the historic emphases of Methodism is that congregations see themselves as part of a larger, connected community, the 'Connexion'. This is reflected in the structure of the church and in the processes of conferring in which the local church relates to the whole and vice-versa. Aside the Circuit Meeting, at a local level the most obvious way in which connexionalism is demonstrated has been rooted in the practice of ministers working alongside local preachers across a 'circuit' of churches.

Districts

Circuits are grouped together as Districts under the authority of a District Chair. The District gathers as a synod (in two forms; ministerial and representative). Synod serves as a link between the Conference and the central Connexional Team on the one hand and the Circuits and Local Churches on the other. It has oversight of all District affairs, formulates and promotes policies and assists in the mission of the Church, to give inspiration to the leaders in the Circuits and to ensure the interrelation of all aspects of the Church's life throughout the District. It is a forum in which issues of public concern relevant to the witness of the Church may be addressed.¹

¹ The Methodist Church, *Constitution Practice and Discipline* vol. 2 (Methodist Publishing, 2014). http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1341791/2301_conference_2014_cpd_vol_2.pdf
Last Accessed 30th January 2015.

Conference (The Methodist Conference)

The Conference is the governing body of the Methodist Church and meets annually to discuss matters affecting the life of the Church, the nation and the world. Conference is comprised of representatives, both lay and ordained from across the Districts.

Constitution Practice and Discipline (CPD)

The governing documents of the Methodist Church are contained in the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church (CPD), volumes 1 and 2. Volume 1 contains the principal Act, the Methodist Church Act 1976, other statutes (the Methodist Church Act 1939 and the Methodist Church Funds Act 1960) and historic texts. Volume 2, published annually, contains the Deed of Union, the Model Trusts, Standing Orders (amended annually by the Conference) and other material, mainly in the form of Guidance. CPD contains sections dealing with governance at every level of Church life, doctrinal standards (in the Deed of Union), the status, stationing and terms of service of ministers, property and most other matters relating to the life and work of the Methodist Church.²

Ecclesiology

The ecclesiology of the Methodist Church is defined within *Called to Love and Praise* as 'the theological study of the Church'. Methodist ecclesiology is therefore a synthesis of particular theological emphases (belief in the triune God who is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic and at work in mission, the concept of covenant and the conviction that the church should enable diversity within unity), This has given rise to some particular denominational emphases such as Methodist congregations developing from societies to 'Church' with its emphasis on the class meeting (a particular form of gathering for prayer and support), the

² "The Methodist Church of Great Britain," The Methodist Church, <http://www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/networks/Regulation%20M.pdf>.30th January 2015

concept of membership and how individual members relate to both the local church and the wider church (or connexion) and how the Priesthood of All Believers is expressed in Methodism's commitment and dependence on lay leadership. . Within this thesis, the term refers more to the structure and disciplines of the Church that have developed, and continue to develop as Methodists work out their faith in practice.

Presbyters and Deacons

The Methodist Church has two orders of ministry: presbyteral and diaconal. The two orders are equal in status yet with certain differences in focus, style and character. In the Methodist Church, deacons are ordained to assist God's people in worship and prayer, to hold before them the needs and concerns of the world, to minister Christ's love and compassion, to visit and support the sick and the suffering, to seek out the lost and the lonely and to help those served to offer their lives to God. Deacons are particularly oriented towards service and witness. Presbyters are ordained to preach by word and deed the Gospel of God's grace, to declare God's forgiveness of sins to all who are penitent, to baptise, to confirm, and to preside at the celebration of the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, to lead God's people in worship, prayer and service, to minister Christ's love and compassion, to serve others, in whom the Lord himself is served. Presbyteral ministers have a particular focus on Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Responsibility. Within the Methodist Church, presbyters have oversight of local congregations.³

³ "Methodist Diaconal Order," The Methodist Church, <http://www.methodistdiaconalorder.org.uk/>.

Preaching and the Plan

Within the Methodist Church the majority of preaching is carried out by local preachers rather than presbyteral ministers. For example, a minister with four churches in their section might visit each church once a month for communion, with the remaining services being taken by local preachers. Whilst there is likely to be considerable variance from circuit to circuit, through for example churches having more than one service on a Sunday, this pattern of shared ministry is something that characterises Methodism. Local preachers offer the dates on which they are free to preach every quarter. This, taken alongside special services that local churches arrange for themselves, becomes the basis for the quarterly preaching plan. Local preachers may also be assisted by worship leaders who are appointed by and to the local church.

Fresh Expression

A fresh expression is a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. It will come into being through principles of listening, service, contextual mission and making disciples. It will have the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the gospel and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context.⁴ For the purpose of this thesis, a capitalised 'F' and 'E' refers to the broader Fresh Expressions movement that seeks to encourage local development, whilst 'f' and 'e' or 'F' and 'E' refer to individual projects.

Messy Church

A form of Church that has developed in response to Fresh Expressions. Messy Church is for both children and adults that involves creativity, celebration and hospitality. It's a church for

⁴ David Gamble, "The Methodist Church of Great Britain," The Methodist Church, <http://www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/networks/Regulation%20M.pdf>.30th January 2015

people at all stages of their faith journey and of any age. It models and promotes good ways of growing as a family: a nuclear family, an extended family, and a global and local church family. Messy Church is not intended to encourage people to attend traditional Sunday worship but is seen as 'interdependent' on the wider church. Its aim is to introduce Jesus, to give an opportunity to encounter him and to grow closer to him. It is resourced, supported and enabled by BRF, The Bible Reading Fellowship.⁵ In this thesis, where Messy church appears capitalised, I am referring to the wider Messy Church movement, whereas 'Messy church' or 'messy church' refers to a local Messy Church project.

VentureFX

Venture FX (VFX) is a scheme set up by the Methodist conference in 2008 to reach younger people with no Christian heritage. It intends to build on the growing experience in expressions. Rather than beginning with church, VentureFX pioneers begin with communities of people. They are based on pursuing a radical and authentic lifestyle based on the teaching of Jesus, but they are marked by a re-imagination of what church might need to look like for them. There are 13 VentureFX locations around the UK where pioneer mission leaders are working with others to explore Christian discipleship and form new Christian communities where faith can be explored and lived out.⁶

⁵ Lucy Moore, "What Messy Church Is or Isn't," Bible Resource Fellowship, <http://www.messychurch.org.uk/what-messy-church-and-isnt>.

⁶ See Vicky Cosstick, "Venture Fx Scheme Review," The Methodist Church, <http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/ev-venturefx-review-190312.pdf>. & Ian Bell, "Venture Fx," The Methodist Church, <http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/pioneer-ministry/venture-fx>.

