

Policy for engaging with culturally diverse congregations and refugee and asylum seekers for the Wales Synod of the Methodist Church (reviewed February 2016)

1) This policy seeks to build on the Priorities of the Methodist Church (adopted at Conference 2005) in particular those of:

- Supporting community development and action for justice, especially among the most deprived and poor
- Developing confidence in evangelism and in the capacity to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to all involved

2) It recognises the increasingly culturally diverse nation of Wales and seeks to enable the circuits and churches of the Wales Synod of the Methodist Church to engage with this changing reality and to learn from the experience of the connexional 'Belonging together' project.

3) It acknowledges that the Wales Synod does not have unlimited resources, but that there is a growing network of Christian and other agencies which are engaged in this work and that in particular locations there are links with the local Methodist community.

4) It suggests that the best way to focus our response is to concentrate on two aspects of work where we already have some experience in Wales, namely

- Providing practical support and advice for refugee and asylum seekers and
- Offering ministry and new possibilities for worship among culturally diverse groups

5) It envisages that the best way to approach this work is to appoint a Synod Enabler (culturally diverse congregations) who will work alongside a Strategy and Envisioning Group.

6) The intention is not that the Synod Enabler is appointed to undertake the work alone on behalf of Synod, (although it is recognised that there may be particular instances where the Synod Enabler will take a lead role); rather that the Enabler will bring specific experience and insights which will enable local churches and circuits to carry out their mission to their neighbourhoods more effectively.

7) Working together with the Strategy and Envisioning Group, the Synod Enabler will look to undertake the following key tasks

a) In terms of work with asylum seekers and refugees to

- to identify where there are networks of Christian and other agencies already engaged in this work
- to identify resources (in terms of people, finance or premises) within the Methodist Church in Wales which can be used to support this work
- to develop a realistic series of aims and objectives for the work

b) In terms of ministry and worship among culturally diverse groups

- to identify where there are ecumenical partners already engaged in this work
- to identify resources (in terms of people, finance or premises) within the Methodist Church in Wales which can be used to support this work
- to develop a realistic series of aims and objectives for the work
- in particular to focus on the continuing support and development of a worshipping community in Urdu

8) For the period of the current appointment, it is proposed that the Synod Enabler will focus on those areas of Wales where there is already significant involvement in this work, namely Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham, and that the Strategy and Envisioning Group will include representation from these circuits.

9) It is also recognised that there will also be an advocacy role involved in drawing attention to the importance of this work across the whole of Wales, and seeking to engage support and resourcing from other circuits. This may involve the Synod Enabler in leading worship and making presentations to local churches and circuits as well as other representative bodies.

10) This policy was first prepared for a new area of ministry and mission and so has been kept under regular review in the light of emerging experience, the learning shared from engagement in the connexional 'Belonging together' project, and the development of related projects such as the Trinity Centre in Cardiff. Accordingly it is proposed that the policy be further reviewed in conjunction with review of the current Synod Enabler post which runs through to 2019.