

God in Love Unites Us



This is a report published by the church, looking at marriage and relationships, and asking questions about whether we should change our understanding and position.

It stems from the government's decision to change the definition of marriage to allow same sex marriages. The report is Methodism using its processes to respond. We are a democratic movement, so for significant possible changes there is always a consultative process, which normally results in what is

termed 'provisional legislation', which is what the recommendations at the end of the report are.

It is really important to note that the proposals are not what Methodism wants to do, rather they are something for opinions to be expressed on. In effect, the working group had to proffer something that could be the basis of what could be voted on at Synod and at Conference. The proposals are not fixed; there is the opportunity to amend them by a process that will be advised in November, and which will inform discussions at Synod and Conference level. In real terms, the proposals in the report could be very different by the time they get to Conference. So please do not assume that the proposals in the report are going to become the Methodist position.

The report and a study guide are on the Methodist Church of Great Britain website along with a study guide. In Circuit, there will be a day looking at the report at Stoke Mandeville on January 13th, and there will be an AMC discussion as well at some point. Our legal process does not allow a vote, but a conversation which will inform reflection at Circuit Meeting, where our Synod reps will hear something of the mood of the Circuit

One of the key points made is that we are a people of contradictory convictions; the report does not expect unanimity. Some will see the proposals as a breath of fresh air, others will throw their hands up in horror. However, the real need is to hold together as a community of love; there is much about which we may disagree and we live with that tension

The report is worth reading and I would hope folk would, before deciding their response. I have ordered some paper copies but these have not yet arrived.

PLEASE hear the idea that this is something to allow a vote, not an indication of intent by the church. It is a response to the fact that the understanding of marriage in law has changed. I am sure amendments will flood in; what will come from this it is difficult to predict. Our real responsibility is to look at this but focus on the key calling of being church - a diverse community bound together by the love of Christ.

Any questions, do ask! Richard.