

## **Resources to Inform Conversations on Marriage and Relationships**

At last year's Methodist Church Conference, the report called, "God in Love Unites Us" was commended to everyone in the Methodist Church for study, and prayerful discussion. In the report, changes to the breadth of the Methodist Church's views and practices were proposed on things including: an understanding of cohabitation; and giving permission for same-sex marriages to take place in Methodist Churches. However, given the diversity of views that we hold, even if the changes are approved, no-one, no Church, no Member, and no Minister, would be required to do anything against their beliefs and conscience.

These proposals will be voted on by District Synods in the spring. Everyone involved in the Methodist Church is invited to pray, meet, listen, discuss, think, and have their say at local Church and Circuit gatherings before then.

The purpose of this two-page electronic document is to give you: (1) a summary of the "God in Love Unites Us" report; and (2) easy access to all the main relevant, official and unofficial, views, full reports and resources. Just left-click on any of the underlined text links, and your computer will show you the document that you want to look at. If that fails, install the free official pdf reader (click [here](#) and follow prompts) and then try again.

Warning: there is A LOT of reading material in the links below. You do NOT have to read everything! But you are invited to read enough so that you know:

- what is being proposed (and what is not)
- what others believe and think, and why
- what you believe and think, and why
- enough to engage with all the discussions and gatherings.

### **[The Current \(1993\) Conference Resolutions on Human Sexuality:](#)**

Click [here](#) for the current resolutions and for more resources.

### **[The New \(2019\) Official Report "God in Love Unites Us":](#)**

A PDF version of the "God in Love Unites Us" report can be found [here](#).

A LARGE PRINT copy of the report can be found [here](#).

#### **A Summary of "God in Love Unites Us":** (from the MET website)

At sixty-five pages long, the report offers a lengthy treatment of various aspects of sexuality and relationships. It is worth reading in full, but this is a brief summary.

Following a short preface, the report begins with an introduction that sets out the history of the task group, a description of the task, and the process through which the task group pursued it. The introduction also reflects on the theological principles guiding the group, and summarises the five sections of the report.

**Section 1**, explores the way God has made us to be in relationship and as 'sexual beings'.

**Section 2** explores how God guides the ways we relate to one another, drawing on key theological themes from the creation narrative to the kingdom announcement of Jesus. Section 2 also explores how the qualities of good relating can be found among cohabiting couples, civil partnerships, and those within LGBTQI+ relationships.

**In section 3**, the task group explores how the qualities of good relating might develop our vision of God's guidance for marriage.

**Section 4** calls Methodists to widen the practice of marriage to include same-sex couples.

**Section 5** proposes next steps for the Methodist Church, including adding a new 'Guidance on the Understanding of Marriage' section in CPD and amending the Standing Order concerning marriage to embrace same-sex couples.

**The conclusion** to the report suggests that it offers a map for the continuing 'pilgrimage of faith' within the Methodist Church. In revising the definition of marriage while also attempting to create space for those who disagree, it contends, the Church has the opportunity to model unity to a conflicted world. It ends with a series of resolutions.

The Methodist Church web page of official resources can be found [here](#).

[Here](#) is the Methodist Publishing web page of official resources, or call 0845 017 8220.

### **[A Lamp to my Feet and a Light to my Path \(1998 Official Report\):](#)**

This report explores the crucial issue of the place of the Bible and the nature of authority in the Methodist Church in the light of our different experiences of hearing God speaking to us through Scripture. The report looks at:

- the different ways in which the Bible has been interpreted and applied
- the authority of the Bible in the Church and its place in our decision-making
- a broad range of different perspectives on biblical authority which are held within the Church and the reasons for holding them.

The full report can be found [here](#).

### **[“Living with Contradictory Convictions in the Church” \(2006 Official Report\):](#)**

This looks at how can people in the Methodist Church can manage to hold irreconcilable views together. The full report is [here](#) and the topics it covers include:

- The kinds of diversity with which the Church has always lived.
- The biblical background to the handling of diversity and difference.
- 'Is what we are examining now an acceptable or an unacceptable form of diversity?'
- Handling the Bible, experience, reason and tradition.
- What does it mean to *be* the Church?

A **Study Guide** can be found [here](#).

A **model statement** on how we can try to live with contradictory convictions is [here](#).

### **[Resources from Methodist Evangelicals Together:](#)**

For the MET website homepage, follow this link <https://methodistevangelicals.org.uk/>

**[Remaining Faithful](#)** is a 20 page study guide to further explore the biblical and theological basis for traditional evangelical views on marriage and relationships. Follow this [link](#).

**[Faithful Listening? A Response to ‘God in Love Unites Us’](#)** is the highly critical response of MET to the “God in Love Unites Us” report. Follow the link [here](#).

### **[Resources from Dignity and Worth:](#)**

For this website of a new group of Methodists committed to the full dignity and worth of every person, whatever their sexuality or gender identity, follow this [link](#).

**[The Case for Change](#)** explains why they believe it is time for change. Follow the link [here](#).

[Here](#) is one of the booklets explaining why a growing number of Christians are changing their minds about what the Bible says about committed same-sex relationships.

### **[Resources from Premier Christianity:](#)**

[www.premierchristianity.com](http://www.premierchristianity.com) contains blogs from David Hull, who chairs MET, and Ian Bell. Both of them are evangelical Methodist Ministers, but they express contrasting responses to the 2019 Conference vote. Here are the blogs:

[Blog/Methodists-are-pushing-ahead-with-gay-marriage.](#)

[Blog/Why-I-m-supporting-same-sex-marriage-in-Methodist-churches](#)

***Why not print a reference copy of all these documents and leave at your church?***