

Dear Friends,

Whilst the decisions reached by Conference this past week have been a long time in coming and are no surprise, many evangelicals within the British Methodist Church have, over the past week, been hit by the reality of the situation we now face as a denomination. It is a sobering time and the words of Psalm 130 resonate deeply with many of us: *'Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Lord hear my voice ...'*

Whilst some of our members are content with the decisions, many are greatly saddened. We are all committed to continuing to engage with one another respectfully and courteously. There are still many Methodists who passionately believe that Jesus offers a unique vision for life which is deeply biblical and so much better than anything else the world will ever know. This includes his teaching on human relationships, not least the understanding of marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others and the only appropriate context for sexual intimacy. This is a countercultural message of good news for the whole of society. The decisions the Conference has taken seem to be shaped by a very different vision of what it means to be human. Two thousand years of Christian teaching, still held by the majority of Christians around the world today, has been relegated to a minority position within the denomination, requiring the protection of a conscience clause.

Many evangelical Methodists now face an uncertain future and are discerning the Lord's call as they seek to continue to serve him in mission and ministry. Some have already resigned; some have spoken of a call to remain. Many are pondering their position and waiting on the Lord for further direction. We encourage all to seek the Lord and *'do whatever he tells you'*. Our online **Remaining Faithful: Moving Forward** conference is planned for **Saturday 17 July 2021** and we encourage all who are committed to remaining faithful to the original teaching of the Methodist Church to join us as we explore the various options for the way forward. For further information and to book, please visit www.methodistevangelicals.org.uk/movingforward or contact the Revd Derek Balsdon: development@methodistevangelicals.org.uk | 07958 549146.

We move forward with hope. Jesus is still seated upon the throne; he is still building his church; one day the whole earth will be flooded with his glory. In these troubling days, Methodist Evangelicals Together will seek to support evangelicals within the Methodist Church, however they decide to move forward, and we will continue in our mission to hold out to the world an exciting vision of what it means to live as people made in the image of God and set free through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It has been a great comfort to me to remember the experience of saints of old. 24 May 1738 is a date that lifts the hearts of many Methodists. It was a day that did not begin well for John Wesley. Desperate for a deep assurance of salvation, he went that morning to St Paul's Cathedral where the choir sang a setting of Psalm 130, words which expressed his own longings. He would soon discover, however, that one of the lowest days of his life would also become one of the highest. Later that evening, he wrote in his journal, *'My heart was strangely warmed'*.

Psalm 130 begins in the depths and challenges us to flee to the Lord (in the words of the Book of Common Prayer, known to the Wesleys) and to put our trust in him. We do the same in these days, praying that what many of us feel to be a low moment for the British Methodist Church would, in divine providence, be turned into a high moment for the Kingdom of God.

Rejoicing in our partnership in the gospel,



The Revd Dr David A. Hull
Chair, Methodist Evangelicals Together