



## News release

4/7/2016

# Methodist Young People Heard at Conference

**Young people have had their views heard at the Methodist Conference being held at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster with a call for the Church to help them explore issues of faith and society.**

Children and young Methodists have used this year's Methodist Conference to highlight the issues they would like the Church to help them think about. The topics include the environment, poverty, bullying, accessibility and the refugee crisis. The young people's views were the result of discussion and debate at last November's 3Generate event, where close to 600 young Methodists aged 8-23 gathered together to worship, learn and make decisions about how the Church should represent them.

On Monday 4 July, the Methodist Conference, the Church's governing body, directed the Connexional Leaders Forum and Methodist Council to take forward the themes highlighted by the report and monitor progress, requesting a report on the work by April 2017.

The subjects highlighted by the report are to be explored under the theme of **Wonderfully Made** with the topics of **Wonderful Me, Wonderful Church, Wonderful World** and **Wonderfully Prophetic**. Over the coming years these themes will be reflected in the programmes for 3Generate.

**Wonderful Me** focuses on the individual, ensuring young people are welcomed into their Church, are engaged in the life of the Church and that they are supported in times of need; emotionally, physically and spiritually.

**Wonderful Church** encourages the Church to discuss challenging topics around sex and relationships, death and politics and to ensure that churches are positive places where all can love and be loved.

**Wonderful World** asks the Church to look outwards and provide a prayerful and missional response to issues such as war, homelessness and climate change.

**Wonderfully Prophetic** requests that the Church seeks a prophetic voice to its work, internally and externally.

Discussions were streamed between three age groups, 8 - 11, 11 - 18 and 18 - 23 to ensure that the event was accessible for all children and young people with discussions tailored for each age group.

The 8 - 11 group focused their thoughts around the Church, community and world, expressing their desire to play an active role in Church activities and to explore their faith, to help others and to care for the environment. The children wanted support to consider where God can be found in an increasingly complex world.

The 11 - 18 stream produced a manifesto that encouraged discussions around same sex marriage, war, bullying, refugees and ensuring that churches and worship are accessible for all.

The oldest group, between 18 and 23, considered that the Church should explore questions around loving their enemies, speaking out on behalf of marginalised groups and to use the language of love to challenge poverty. The group also wanted to highlight integration and participation of younger people in Church life.

The current Youth President, Craig Gaffney, was appointed at the 3Generate event in November and commented: "The Methodist Church has a great tradition of listening to its young people. It is great to see that what we think is being taken seriously by the Church and that we are given the freedom to reach our own conclusions on what our priorities should be.

"The topics we discussed will ensure that the Church responds to the issues that are concerning young people and supports us in what our responses should be as young Christians.

"The support of the Conference will ensure that the wider Church takes our concerns and priorities into account in its work and mission."