

2nd July 2021

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The Methodist Conference met this week, and after the many conversations, debates and conferring of the last thirty years, came to a significant point of decision making. The report *God in Love Unites Us*, and its recommendations, was agreed. This means:

1. That we agreed that all human relating is founded on the gift of love received from God, and that "all significant relationships should be built on self-giving love, commitment, fidelity, loyalty, honesty, mutual respect, equality and the desire for the mutual flourishing of the people involved."
2. That cohabitation is recognised as a potential place for that quality of relating to be known; although we also recognised that we have more work to do on this.
3. That the Methodist Church has recognised that there are two different understandings of marriage among us: one of which is that marriage should always involve a woman and a man; and another of which sees marriage as possible between any two people.
4. That consequently same-sex marriage should be permitted within Methodist buildings where church councils wish to apply for registration to do so; and Methodist ministers may preside at same-sex marriage services.
5. That ministers and church councils who hold to the traditional view of marriage will be under no compulsion to act in any way which would compromise their convictions.

The final vote agreed on this issue was for the following resolution:

The Conference commends its decisions to the Methodist people asking them earnestly to pray for healing where there has been hurt, for unity where there has been division, and for wisdom where difficult decisions lie ahead.

I hope and pray that you will all be able to continue to journey together, recognising our differences, but celebrating the good and transforming news of Jesus in our mission, witness and service.

Grace and peace be with you all.



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