

‘The Unfinished Agenda’ – Progress report

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1. Background

- 1.1 The 2017 Conference received a report from the Council on ‘The Unfinished Agenda – Racial Justice and Inclusion in the Methodist Church’ (see Section N of the *Methodist Council, part 2* report).¹ While commending the Methodist Church’s long-standing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and examples of current good practice, the report noted with deep shame and sorrow that racism is still evident in the Church today. It explored a number of recurring themes over the past 50 years (belonging and exclusion, assimilation, inclusive leadership and participation and tokenism) and demonstrated that significant work is still required in order to give expression to the Church’s belief that ‘racism is a denial of the gospel’ (Standing Order 013B).
- 1.2 The 2018 Conference received a progress report from the EDI Committee which recommended that a symposium be held in the 2018/19 connexional year to consider the key questions outlined below.
- What might we reasonably believe to be God’s design in bringing together in the Methodist Church in Britain today preachers and members of such diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds?
 - What might prevent people from diverse backgrounds from exercising leadership through engagement with the Church’s committees and governance structures?
 - What can be learned from examples of good practice in the life of the Church with regard to inclusion and participation (eg 3Generate)?

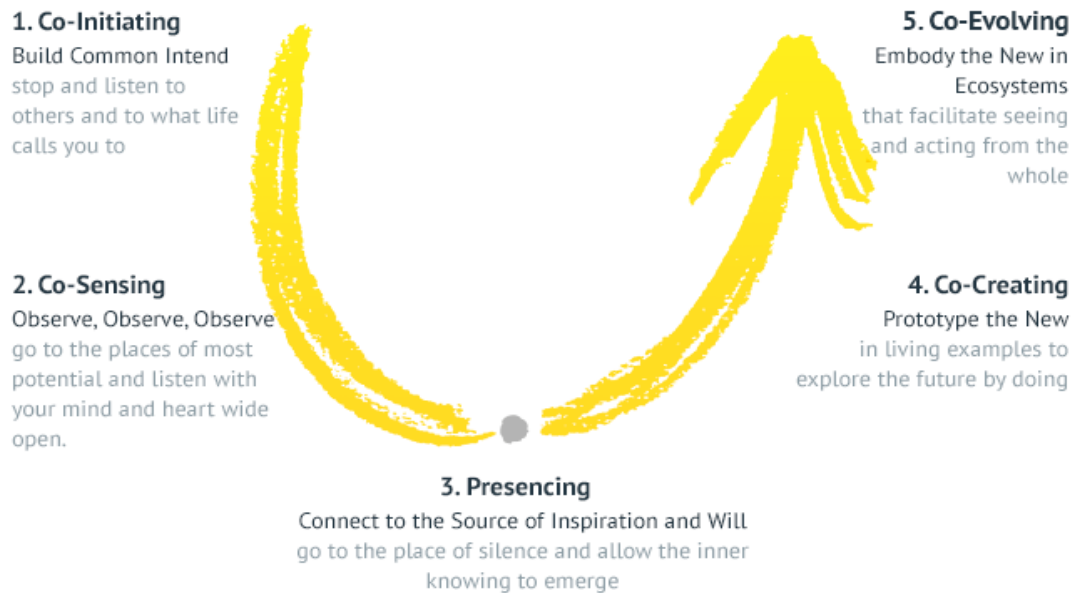
2. Progress

- 2.1 The EDI Symposium, entitled: **Racial Justice: What is our Calling?** was held on 1 – 3 March 2019. There were 80 representatives from across the Connexion, although sadly some Districts were unable to send anyone. The planning group and Committee decided to adopt Theory ‘U’ as the methodology to be used during the symposium.
- 2.2 Theory U is a change management process developed by Otto Scharmer and is based on a concept known as “Presencing.” Theory ‘U’ facilitates the collaboration of individuals, teams and organizations to build the essential leadership capacities needed to address the root causes of today’s social, environmental, and spiritual challenges.

¹ References in this paper are to Section N of the *Methodist Council, part 2* report to the 2017 Conference unless otherwise stated.

- 2.3 The key components of theory 'U' provided the framework for the weekend's agenda, Session One – Co-initiating, Session Two – Co-Sensing, Session Three – Open Heart, Session Four – Presencing, Session Five – Co-creating, Session Six – Co-creating Identifying 'Prototypes' and Session Seven – Co-initiating.

Theory 'U' Diagram:



- 2.4 Those attending the Symposium were encouraged to embrace the concepts presented which led to a more creative approach to examining issues through story-telling, the making of models and social theatre, resulting in the co-creation of prototypes which could potentially tackle the barriers to achieving racial justice and ultimately contribute to the Methodist Church's aspiration of becoming a truly inclusive church.

3. Key questions

The EDI committee is now in the process of examining the information that was collected over the weekend as well as the feedback which has subsequently been submitted. In light of this there will be a verbal update presented at the Council in which the initial responses to the key questions will be shared.

*****RESOLUTION**

44/1. The Council receives the report.