

CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE "J" Social Issues

CONVENER: Lynne Frith

QUESTION 34(a): What are the decisions of Conference on matters relating to Social Issues?

Report pp J1-3

DECISIONS:

1. The report is received.
2. Conference approves the establishment of a Public Questions Network as an entity in the life of the Church.
3. Conference authorises the Public Questions Network core group to implement the proposals in this report and report progress to Conference 2009.
4. Conference requests the budget task group to reinstate a funding stream in the Connexional Budget for social justice activity.
5. Conference encourages Synods / UDCs and Hui Poari to identify a Synod Public Questions coordinator, who will be both the synod contact person on such matters and a member of the network core group.
6. Conference requests that those synods who identify a member of the coordinating group fund the travel for that person to a maximum of two meetings per year.
7. Conference welcomes and gratefully acknowledges the significant financial contribution Wesleycom has offered to enable a Public Question Network desk to be established and sustained as a full time equivalent position.
8. Conference encourages parishes and rohe to consider how they might engage with the Public Questions Network.
9. Conference thanks the implementation group for its work and requests that together with WesleyCom it proceed towards the implementation of this proposal.
10. The Convenor of the Public Questions Network core group be nominated by the Implementation Group / WesleyCom for appointment by the President.
11. After consultation with Synods and Hui Poari, membership of the interim core group to be nominated by the Implementation Group / WesleyCom and appointed by the President.

QUESTION 36(b): What are the decisions of Conference on matters relating to the Interchurch Bioethics Council?

Report p J4

DECISIONS:

1. The report is received.
2. Conference records its deep appreciation and thanks to Audrey Jarvis for her dedicated work on the Bio-ethics Council since its inception.
3. That the following be approved as Methodist members 2008-2009: Barbara Peddie, Bella Ngaha and one further to be appointed by the President.

E. Notice of Motion

That the Conference invite the New Zealand government to provide a source of community funding which is not based on lotteries or other forms of gambling.

Reason: At present Lotteries Board funding is virtually the only form of contestable community funding to community and church organisations. Since some organisations have a specific concern for mitigating the harm done by gambling it places such groups at a disadvantage when seeking community funds for legitimate projects designed for community benefit.

The moral dilemma is that there is no viable alternative for groups who feel it is hypocritical to provide tacit support for lotteries by using the profits while at the same time trying to convince the community that there are good reasons not to become involved with lotteries in the first place.

Decision:

1. To be referred to the Public Questions Network for consideration.