

The Methodist Church

The Revd Gareth J Powell Secretary of the Conference
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Sisters and brothers in Christ,

I write to you from the Methodist Conference in order to act upon a resolution which it passed yesterday afternoon. What follows is the text which the Conference agreed should be read in all our churches this coming Sunday, or as soon as is possible.

The statement is also shared on our website www.methodist.org.uk/nationallife where it can be turned into an email which will be automatically sent to your local Member of Parliament. The Conference also encourages the Methodist people to send this letter to their MP.

The Conference also encouraged the Methodist people to join the campaign to wear an empty safety pin as a badge symbolising solidarity against racism (please see www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36661097 for details).

The 2016 Annual Conference of the Methodist Church passed a resolution containing the following text:

The United Kingdom, as a result of the referendum on 23 June 2016, has voted to leave the European Union. In this time of very significant change and uncertainty there is a need for leadership which seeks the common good and encourages people to work together, to respect one another and to uphold the dignity of all.

The Methodist Conference believes that the British Isles are enriched by diversity and celebrates the contribution made by those who have come from other parts of the world.

The Christian tradition calls for respect, tolerance, love of neighbour and hospitality to the stranger. All bear the responsibility of speaking and acting for healing, reconciliation, and mutual respect.

The Methodist Conference abhors and deeply regrets those actions and words which incite hatred and lead to the victimisation of groups within society and notes with concern that such actions and words have been normalised in recent public discourse. Believing that racism is a denial of the gospel and that to stay silent when others are abused is to collude with those who seek to promote hatred and division, the Methodist Conference calls:

- **on the Methodist people to challenge racism and discrimination**
- **for a political debate which neither demonises any nor leaves the vulnerable (the foreigner, the immigrant and refugee) in danger of victimisation.**
- **on political leaders to work together for the good of the whole community putting the needs of the nation before party politics.**
- **on all those in positions of power and authority to hear the voices of those who have been marginalised and alienated and to respond to them in ways which offer real hope for the future.**

I recognise the you have many demands upon your time, but please do ensure that this important statement is shared as widely as possible.

With gratitude for our continued partnership in the gospel,

The Reverend Gareth J Powell

Secretary of the Methodist Conference

7 July 2016

