

Wesley Study Centre UPDATE

For All God's People to Serve the Present Age

The Fruitful Field and WSC

Friends and supporters of Wesley Study Centre will be aware of the major report on theological education which was presented to Methodist Conference in the summer.

The report, *The Fruitful Field*, proposed the replacement of our current colleges and theological education resources with a single Connexional Learning Network based around two centres at Cliff College, in Calver, Derbyshire and the Queens Foundation in Edgbaston, near Birmingham and across a number of yet to be defined regions encompassing Scotland England and Wales.

Conference voted by a significant majority to accept the report and all of its proposals, including the withdrawal of support and students from all connexionally supported colleges and institutions by 2015, apart from Cliff College and the Queen's Foundation.

Up to seventy new learning and training posts are to be created across the new training regions, including around sixteen posts across the two Centres and up to five posts in each region.

Work is being undertaken to begin implementation of *The Fruitful Field* proposals in order for the Network to begin to take shape from September 2013. However significant detailed work remains to be done.

Our understanding is that Wesley Study Centre will receive its final intake of students in October 2012 and its operations are to be wound down by the summer of 2014.

The withdrawal of Connexional support from the Study Centre is likely to result in redundancies for some lay colleagues and moving into stationing for ministerial colleagues.

Unsurprisingly, our ecumenical and university partners in Durham have viewed the Conference decision with dismay and disillusionment. At a time when the Church of England is developing stronger

links with Durham University and making a multimillion pound investment in practical theology and ministerial training based around Durham, our Connexion proposes to withdraw from what has been a fruitful partnership for a generation.

We remain cautiously hopeful that a Methodist presence may be maintained in partnership with Durham University beyond 2014. However, it remains unclear precisely what form this might take and precisely the level of Connexional funding such a presence might require.

In the meantime, we look forward to what has been one of WSC's largest intakes in recent years and continue to offer Durham University courses for ministerial formation which are of the highest quality at undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels.

We would be grateful for your prayers over the next couple of years as *The Fruitful Field* proposals are implemented. Specifically, we ask for your prayers for discernment about a continuing Methodist presence in Durham.

Just as importantly we ask for your prayers for those affected by *The Fruitful Field* decisions.

Please pray for:

- **Morale in our Colleges which will continue to train ministers whilst making plans for their own discontinuance**
- **Training Officers (TOs), District Development Enablers (DDEs), and One Participant Programme Managers (OPPs), whose posts are similarly affected by the proposals**
- **New opportunities for colleagues whose appointments will disappear**
- **Those who will take up the challenge of forging the new Learning Network out of the ashes of the existing structures**

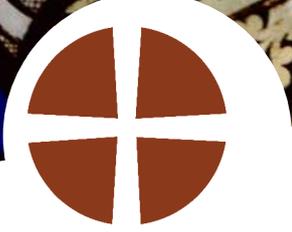
**CT Samuel
WSC Director**

The Methodist Conference 

Plymouth 2012



THE
FRUITFUL
FIELD



Postgraduate Study and Ministerial Development Continues

The withdrawal of Connexional support for the Study Centre means that student ministers will no longer train in Durham in the way they do currently.

However, the partnership with St John's College extends far beyond initial ministerial training, and all of the cutting edge postgraduate courses will continue to be part of the outstanding opportunities for theological education and development offered in Durham.

The well-established MA in Theology and Ministry and the Doctor in Theology and Ministry programmes remain as leading degrees in this field and offer excellent opportunities for ministerial development for both lay and ordained students as well as exciting research opportunities in the full range of ministry. Within the MATM structure, there are a variety of modules which enrich and equip ministry in particular contexts.

The new Postgraduate Study in Missional Leadership programme is particularly appropriate for those leading larger teams, circuits, deaneries or other complex Christian organisations.

Anyone interested in these programmes or any stand-alone MA modules including: *Leadership for Mission; Chaplaincy; Forgiveness; How Mission can Shape the Church; Holiness, Wholeness and Mission; and Spiritual Direction* should contact:

Dr Jocelyn Bryan, Director of Postgraduate Studies
Tel: 0191 334 3853 Email: j.m.bryan@durham.ac.uk

16 South Bailey: New Offices for WSC, Cranmer Hall and CODEC

Later this academic year, WSC and Cranmer Hall will move to occupy new premises at 16 South Bailey, the former residence of Michael Ramsey whilst Bishop of Durham. The property, which has recently been acquired by St John's College on a long-term lease from Durham Cathedral, will become the administrative hub for WSC and Cranmer Hall and provide some teaching space.

The site will also house colleagues from CODEC, the research centre within St John's College, as well as the soon to be created Durham University Centre for Practical Theology (CPT) which will oversee the development of the Church of England Common Awards. In June, it was announced that Durham University has been selected as the national higher education partner which will validate all Church of England Theology and Ministry courses across England and Wales, providing a suite of Common Awards from 2014 onwards.

This relocation is an exciting development as it will offer opportunity for cross fertilisation of ideas and interests across WSC, Cranmer Hall, CODEC and the CPT. It will also mean that for the first time in WSC's history, there will be an easily identifiable space with a separate reception area from the main entrance to St John's College.

If you are worried that you won't be able to find us the next time you visit, don't worry – 16 South Bailey is on the other side of the street from our current location, near to the Chapel. Perhaps you should plan to visit later in the year when the new site has been refurbished!



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Wesley Study Centre, St John's College, Durham University, 3 South Bailey, Durham DH1 3RJ
Email: wsc@durham.ac.uk Tel: 0191 334 3850
www.durham.ac.uk/wsc.online

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