



# **Flying in Formation**

*Harrow & Hillingdon Circuit*

*September 2023*

# FLYING IN FORMATION

**A leadership role**, whether in church or elsewhere, can seem daunting and superintendency is no exception. However, as I navigate my way through the various dimensions of the role, I am encouraged by the fact that I do not have to do this alone. Not only can I rely on God's help; **we are all in this together!**

In order for us to understand how this works in practice, we decided to offer the thoughts which I shared at the September circuit meeting to everyone in the circuit, along with a presentation by Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of conference, who attended the circuit meeting.



*Readings: Exodus 18:13-26 Acts 6:1-7*

## **Our two Bible readings illustrate what it means to work together.**

When Jethro visited Moses, he soon noticed that things were not as they should be. Moses was trying to do everything on his own. So, Jethro suggested that he surround himself with people to take on some of the jobs. And when the early church grew, it was soon clear that people were needed to perform the service of food distribution; the apostles could not do everything.

As the Methodist church, while churches are to a certain extent autonomous, we are also part of a greater whole, in our case, the circuit. I often hear people say: the circuit must do this or should do that.

## **So, who and what is the Circuit?**

I may be the leader, but I am not the circuit. The administrative staff perform administrative duties and deal with governance issues, but they are not the circuit. The ministerial staff serve in the circuit, but they are not the circuit, nor is the circuit leadership team.

## **The circuit is everyone who is a member of the circuit meeting and every person in every congregation.**

We are both independent and interdependent. But we need to think much broader than our own little corner. So, when people say that when there is a joint service in a church other than their own, they will simply do a local arrangement. This is unfortunate and goes against the spirit of our encouraging people to work together. **Our only way forward is to work together in sections.**

It is a starting point and the only way we can do that is by getting to know one another in relationship - and the best way is a **worship service**. And maybe it is time we thought of worship as being not restricted to Sunday.

If your church is closed on a Sunday because of a joint service in another church, why not think of having a midweek service? And have you ever thought that if your service time changed, it would make a massive difference to working out preaching appointments?

In addition, **it is important to support circuit events and activities in other churches**. The office takes great trouble to advertise lent and advent events in other churches: how many people go beyond their own church? And have you ever considered attending the weekly Zoom prayer meeting which is advertised each week in the Circuit News? It takes place every Thursday at 7 pm for about 20 minutes.

## **Do we take seriously that the world is our parish, or is our parish our world?**

With a shortage of ministers, congregations getting smaller and people growing older, we can no longer work in isolation. The circuit has decided not to go into stationing for 2023-2024. We need to find creative ways to do our work. As a circuit, we are in a better position than many other circuits when it comes to the ratio between members to ministers. The Connexion calculates that 250 members per minister is a manageable figure.

## **I hope and pray that all of us will promote our togetherness and interdependence.**

I offer two acronyms to help us: the first is **TRIM: This Responsibility Is Mine**; the second is **TRIO: This Responsibility Is Ours**.

In other words, we each have both an **individual** and **collective** responsibility: not theirs, not someone else's, but **mine** and **ours**.

# The 7 Life Lessons We Can Learn from Geese

## 1. Geese fly together, they share a common goal and direction.

Geese fly in a perfect V formation. Studies have shown that flying in this way and using this kind of “teamwork” adds 71% more flying range for the geese than if they flew on their own. This is because as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an ‘uplift’ that reduces air friction for the birds that follow.

**The lesson** – people who share a common goal and direction can get where they are going much faster and much more efficiently, because they benefit from the momentum of the group.

## 2. Geese stay in formation.

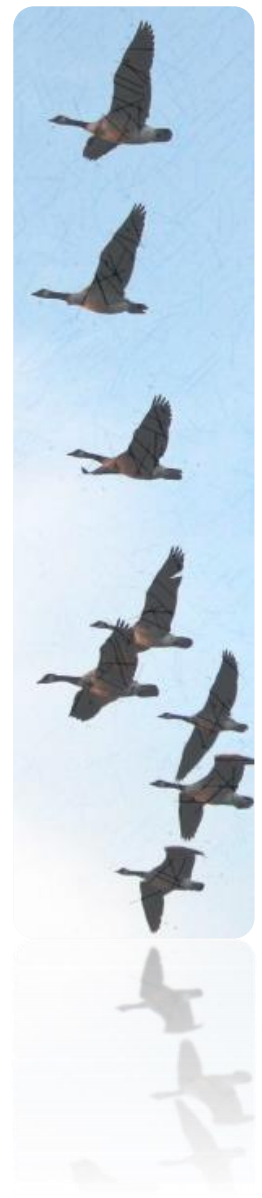
Whenever a goose falls out of formation it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly tries to get back in formation. The formation not only makes it easier for the birds to fly, but it increases a flock’s overall visibility too as well as their power to be seen.

**The lesson** – once you’ve established a good team, stay together, and work together. Synergy cannot be created by a single person working in isolation, so it is important to stick together. A sense of community emerges from a willingness to work together as a team. Not only is it more efficient – but together you have better visibility of your surroundings and common goals.

## 3. Geese rotate roles, they encourage the leader and empower others to lead.

For the lead goose in the formation, ‘drag’ is high. When the lead goose in the formation tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose takes its place. The lead goose then immediately feels the advantage of lifting power from the bird immediately in front of it.

**The lesson** – it is important to share the load amongst team members. We should not only be able to admit when help is needed, but we should also work to empower those around us to take the lead too. Everyone has different skills and capabilities and sharing the load gives others a chance to shine. Expecting one person to take on all the work is unrealistic; people work better when interdependent with one another.



#### **4. Geese are noisy birds; they recognise and support each other.**

There are a number of theories as to why geese honk between them, one is that they honk to encourage each other. Another theory is that the honking is used to communicate where each goose is in the formation.

**The lesson** – in groups where there is encouragement, the productivity is greater. In a fast-paced working environment, remembering to provide recognition and encouragement towards each other (including the leaders) is vital to keep teams motivated and achieving their goals.

#### **5. Leave no Goose behind, they stand by the flock in good times and bad.**

When a goose gets sick or wounded, two other geese drop out of formation and then follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with the goose until it dies or is able to fly again. Then they launch back up with another formation or catch up with their flock.

**The lesson** – stand by each other in difficult times. It's easy to always be part of winning teams, but when things get difficult and people are facing challenges, that is when your relevance as a teammate comes to the fore.

#### **6. Geese maintain priorities, they stay committed to their team, core values, and purpose.**

The geese migration routes do not vary. They use the same route year after year, even when flock members change.

**The lesson** – stay true to your team's core values and purpose. Strategies, tactics, and products may change in order for the organisation to remain agile, but great teams always stick to their core values and preserve them with pride.

#### **7. Geese are disruptive.**

Geese often seem unflustered as they meander along the side of a busy road, however, they are most likely uncomfortable about being surrounded by large and noisy vehicles.

**The lesson** – disruption means getting a bit uncomfortable. Those who disrupt challenge themselves by setting and achieving goals, they come out of their comfort zone and stretch themselves to think differently.

**So**, I look forward to working with all of you in the circuit. This responsibility is mine; this responsibility is ours: TRIM, TRIO, and ***let's fly in formation!***

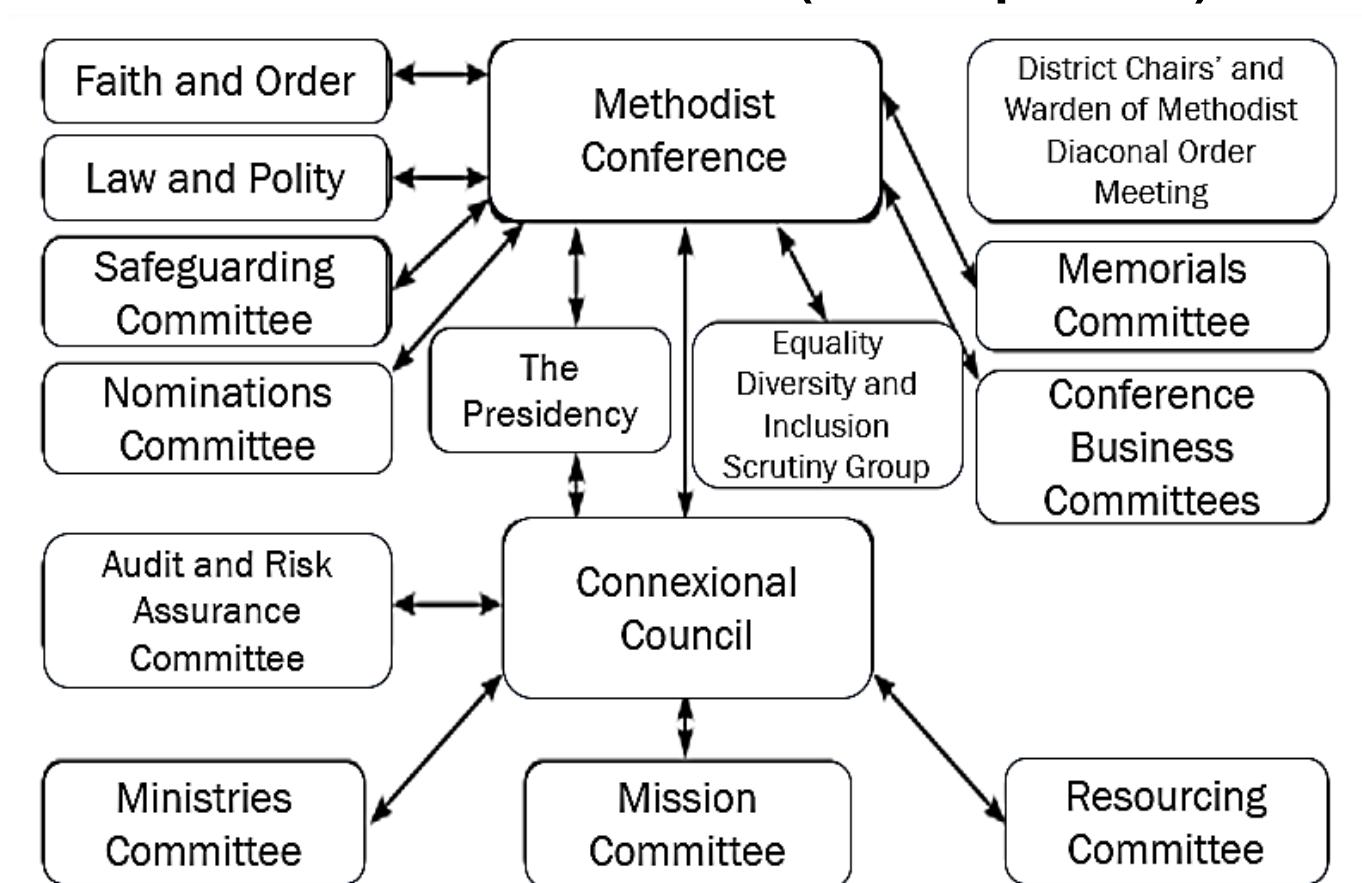
# What is “The Connexion”

- “For Methodists, Connexionalism is not an abstract principle or a piece of historical baggage, but a way of being Christian.”

The Gift of Connexionalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- Belonging
- Mutuality
- Interconnectedness.
- We are “in Connexion” with The Conference
- Ministers are in “Full Connexion”

## The Connexional Structure (from Sept. 2024)





# The Methodist Conference



## A (very) brief history of the Conference

1744 – Mr Wesley’s first Conference

1784 – The Deed of Declaration

1791 – ‘...no more kings in Israel’

1797 – Formation of the Methodist New Connexion

1878 – Lay representation in the Wesleyan Methodist Conference

1932 – The Uniting Conference

## The Three Sessions of the Conference

- The Conference Diaconal Committee (meeting within Convocation)
- The Presbyteral Session (Thursday to Friday)
- The Representative Session (Saturday to Wednesday)

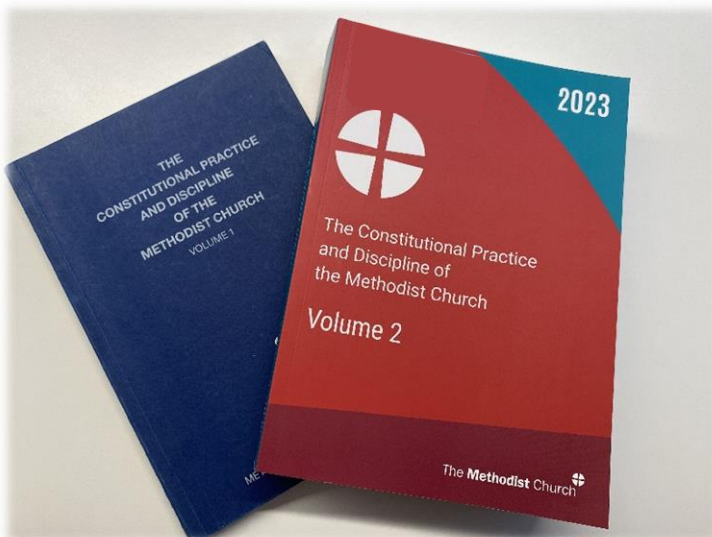
## The Conference has before it:

- a. Addresses of the Presidency
- b. Reports
- c. Memorials
- d. District Resolutions
- e. Notices of Motion
- f. The Stations
- g. Obituaries

## The Conference's Publications

- a. The Reports (as received/ adopted by the Conference)
- b. CPD (updated annually)
- c. Minutes of the Annual Conference and Directory
- d. The Conference Business Digest

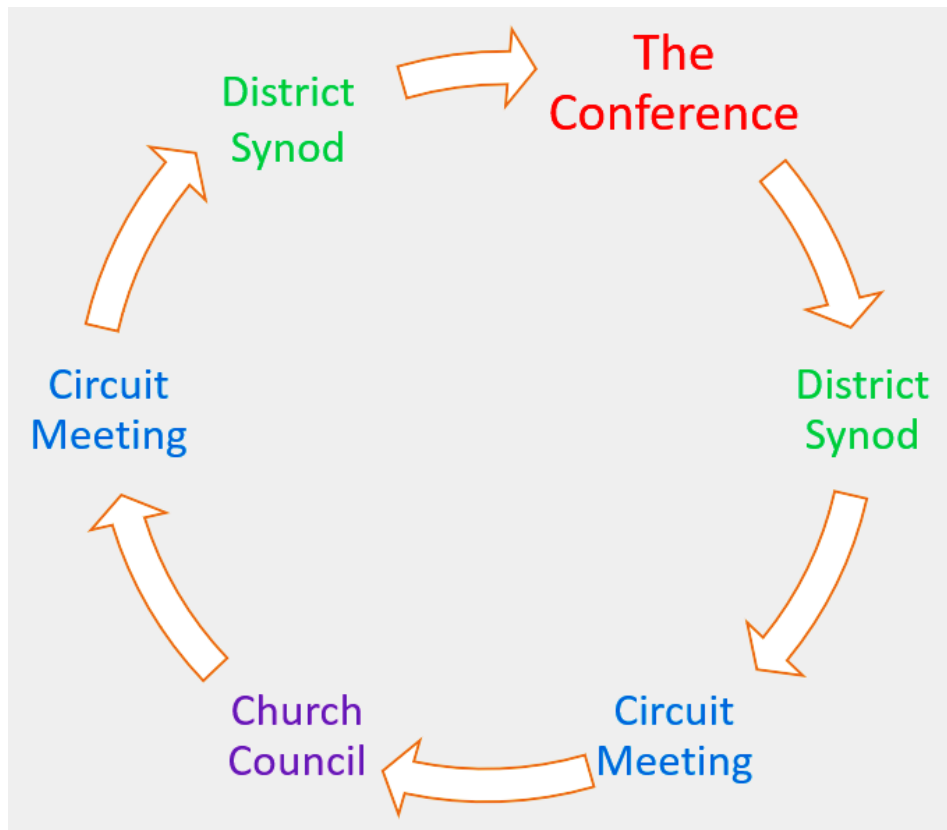
## What is CPD?



- The 1976 Act
- The Deed of Union
- The Model Trusts
- The Standing Orders
- Historic Texts
- Regulations
- Guidance



## A Conferring Connexion



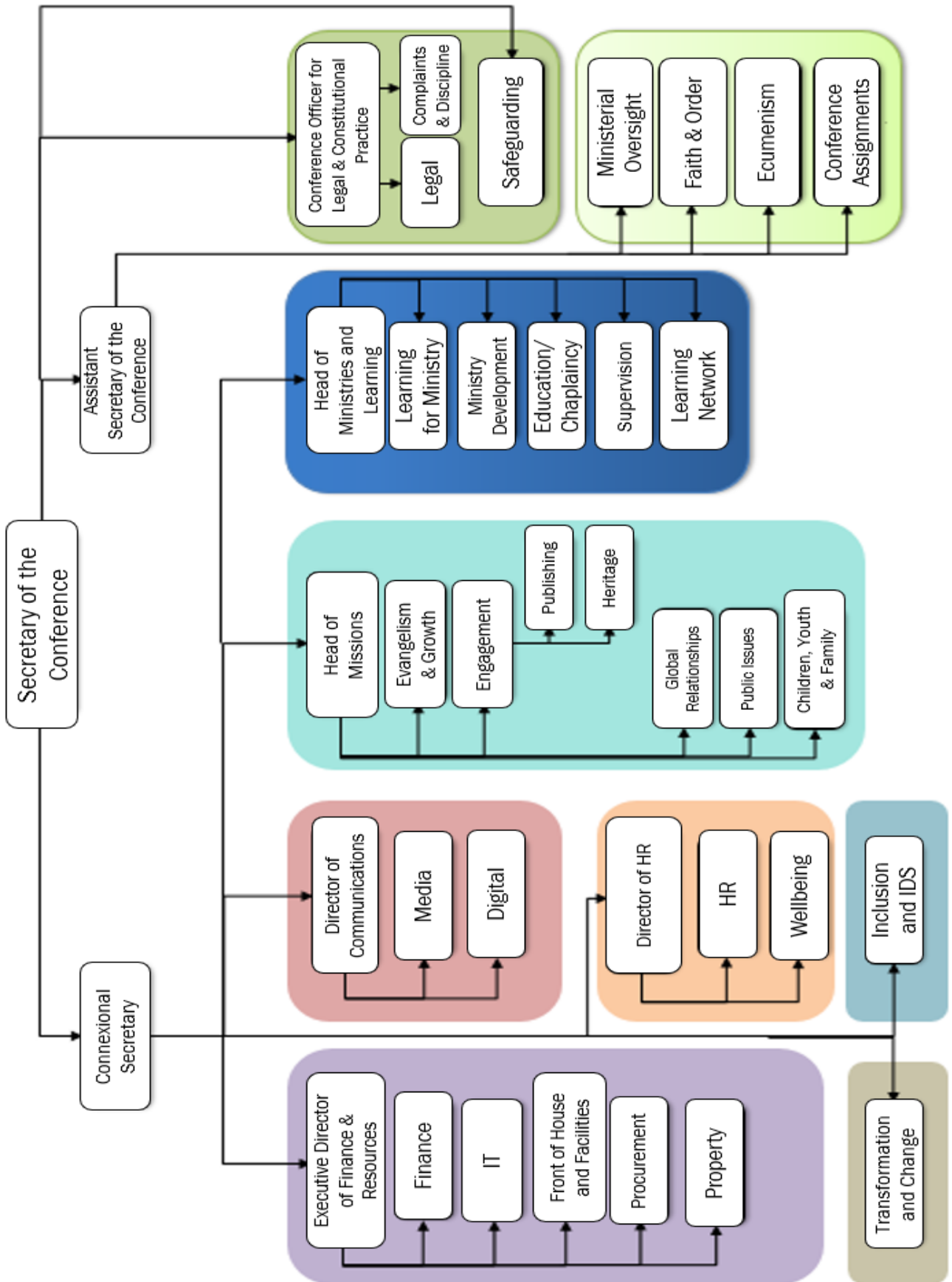
## Conferring as a Means of Grace

It is desired:

- *That all things may be considered as in the immediate presence of God.*
- *That we may meet with a single eye and as little children which have everything to learn.*
- *That every point may be examined from the foundation*
- *That ever person may speak freely whatever is in [their] heart*
- *That every question proposed may be fully debated and bolted to the bran.*

The First Conference as in 'The Large Minutes' (1749)

# The Connexional Team



### **SO 302 The Connexional Team (1)**

There shall be a Connexional Team whose members work collaboratively to provide a coherent and effective service on behalf of the Conference.

### **SO 303 The Purposes of the Connexional Team (1)**

The overall task of the Connexional Team is to assist the Church in furthering the purposes of the Methodist Church, enabling it better to fulfil its calling of responding to God's love in Christ and working out its discipleship in mission and worship.

## **And finally, there's "Manchester"**

Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP)

- Custodian Trustee for all Model Trust Property
- Custodian Trustee of some Methodist Money
- Trustee of some other Methodist properties
- Delegated 'connexional authority' approval on some transactions
- Independent of but appointed by and reporting to the Conference



Foreword: *Revd Dr Lynita Conradie*  
(*Superintendent Minister*)

Presentation: *Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler*  
(*Secretary of Conference*)