



Moving Stories | London District Focus on Migration 2017 – 2019

London is a diverse, vibrant and energetic city. Its excitement, complexity and challenges are exceptional. The mission of the Methodist Church in London is shaped by this exciting and challenging context. As disciples of Jesus Christ we work together to respond creatively to the opportunities and needs of this unique city.

London is a global city with a rich diversity of peoples, cultures and faith communities. It is home for people from all parts of the world.

- 37% per cent of London's population were born outside the UK – the highest foreign born population of any city in the world
- Over 300 languages are spoken throughout the city
- Large communities represent each of the world's major religions
- Almost 103,000 international students live and learn across the city each year
- Over 15 million tourists visit every year, soaking up the culture and history
- 32 boroughs offering unique cultures, characteristics and stories.

Within this context migration is a key part of the story and a theme with which the churches, circuits and District wish actively to engage so that we might 'change the story' so that migration is celebrated rather than feared, and engage with the challenges of issues linked to migration.

Aims of Moving Stories:

- To recognise and celebrate that migration is very much part of the Methodist story
- To release creative energy by encouraging the District to work together on a common theme
- To enable all Circuits within the District to engage with the theme
- To learn how church communities have been affected by migration and how they have involved themselves in the issues related to migration
- To celebrate, tell and share stories of migration as we celebrate 'Moving Stories'
- To challenge those in power to tell the good news stories of migration and to better support migrants and the communities in which they come to live.

Ways and Means of Moving Stories:

1. **Challenge** each Circuit and each District body (e.g. Commissions, Youth Board, DAF committee) to respond to the theme in some way. For example:

- A circuit gathers stories of migration within the life of the churches and hosts a photo exhibition and story-telling event.
- A church involved in supporting refugees is supported in telling its story to the local media.
- A group across the District meet to hear the stories of those who were hurt when they faced racism and prejudice when they attended church in the UK.
- A church wants some seed-funding for a project to help teach English to people in its community.
- The Youth Board organises opportunities for young people to meet with refugees and learn of their stories.
- A group visit refugee projects in Europe (e.g. Italy) to research how the Methodist Church is responding and what we might learn.
- The District Chairs and others to challenge those in power in London, MPs, Assembly Members, the Mayor and the media to take the issues that affect migrants seriously. To do more about housing, support, opportunities and to tell the positive story of migration in the UK.

2. Celebrate the contribution of migrants in the life of the Methodist Church, historically and today. For example:

- The District to host a major Conference in summer 2018, to bring together London Methodists and others to be led in a programme of studies, lectures, activities and worship, focussing on the theme. This will include a youth and children's programme, international speakers and opportunities for networking and continuing ministerial and local preacher development.
- Resources to be made available (online and as DVDs) for special services and Bible Studies on the theme and reflecting on the migrant nature of God's people who have always been travellers, exiles, refugees, movers of God's Word.
- An art exhibition featuring work by and about migrants in London.
- Invite Wesley's Chapel Museum to consider curating an exhibition focussing on the historical contribution of migrants within the Methodist story.
- The District to host a celebration in summer 2019 to bring together the fruits of learning in the project and to give thanks to God for our common humanity as we travel together in faith.

Desired Result of Moving Stories:

This exciting new initiative aims to enable The Methodist Church in London to engage with migration, the opportunities and challenges and ultimately to change the story so that migration in all its forms, for all ages, might be seen as a positive part of our faith and social action engagement.

To this end, findings exploring and experiences arising from the Moving Stories project will be collected, analysed and a missional vision will be developed from that work by the Chairs. This, it is hoped, will help us in the District to develop a long term vision that takes seriously our 'story' as a District and offers direction and resources to enable and equip God's people for works of service.

Therefore, it is important to see the Moving Stories project as a pivotal vehicle towards enabling the London Methodist District to discover our collective voice as we act to fulfil God's will for us into the future.