

Methodism

1. What courts, tribunals or other adjudicative structures exist within your religion?

We have a complaints and discipline system that deals with complaints against any member of office holder. The aim is, where possible, to seek local informal resolution. Where this is not possible or appropriate the matter is investigated by a team of 3 drawn from the Connexional Complaints Panel. If it is decided to bring a charge, this will be dealt with by a Connexional Discipline Committee of 5 members, chaired by one of 10 lawyers with experience as judge or chair of tribunal. There is a right of appeal to an Appeal Committee and a further right of appeal to the Conference.

2. What matters are dealt with?

Doctrinal or behavioural matters. In general it is about breach of the discipline of the church or behaviour seen to be incompatible with the office held, or which does harm to the mission of the Church.

3. Is legal representation permitted/encouraged?

It is permitted. We have a team of connexional advocates, who act for either side in dealing with a charge. If a party chooses to seek representation in another way, if appropriate, some contribution may be made towards their costs.

4. How are the decision makers selected?

Appointed by the Conference. In the case of Chairs of Committee, this follows a process of advert and interview.

5. How detailed are rules of practice or procedure?

Very – 60 pages of Standing Orders and a Guidance booklet of around 130 pages.

6. What provisions exist for appeal and enforcement?

Appeal is mentioned above under 1. Enforcement is more difficult, though the Committee dealing with the case is expected to name an officer responsible for ensuring the implementation of any decision.

7. To what extent have these processes been subject to review or examination by the secular courts?

They haven't.

David Gamble

