

I think this not ethical.⁷⁵ A District Chair is not entitled to participate in the complaints process in this manner. I rely here on Bellamy⁷⁶:

“A District Chair is not entitled to communicate with members of a connexional complaints team appointed to investigate a complaint.”

However, as noted above, Mr. Kitchin has little regard for Bellamy. I repeat that in his letter of 15th October 2016 he wrote⁷⁷:

“The last edition of the Bellamy Guide was published in 2008 and the world has moved on since then..”

As I have stated above, I regard Bellamy as an important adjunct to the Standing Orders – particularly the opening paragraph⁷⁸ with its call for justice openness and honesty. I replied to Mr. Kitchin to that effect⁷⁹.

I should add here that in apportioning responsibility for this incident, Mr. Kitchin should not shoulder all the blame. It is true that the

⁷⁵ Bellamy 13.14 What are the limits to a District Chair’s entitlements?

Although a District Chair is entitled to be informed of the decision made at each stage of the complaints and discipline process (see 13.13(1) above) he or she is not entitled to participate in the process. In particular:

(a) A District Chair is not entitled to communicate with members of a connexional complaints team appointed to investigate a complaint. Although it is open to a connexional complaints team to decide that it wishes to meet with the District Chair⁶⁵ it is not obliged to do so.

(b) A District Chair is not entitled to communicate with the Chair of a connexional Discipline Committee.

(c) A District Chair is not entitled to attend either the preliminary hearing or the final hearing unless he or she is acting either as the complainant’s or respondent’s friend or representative or he or she is called to give evidence either by the connexional Presenting Officer or by the respondent.

⁷⁶ BELLAMY: 13.14 What are the limits to a District Chair’s entitlements?

Although a District Chair is entitled to be informed of the decision made at each stage of the complaints and discipline process (see 13.13(1) above) he or she is not entitled to participate in the process. In particular:

(a) A District Chair is not entitled to communicate with members of a connexional complaints team appointed to investigate a complaint. Although it is open to a connexional complaints team to decide that it wishes to meet with the District Chair it is not obliged to do so.

(b) A District Chair is not entitled to communicate with the Chair of a connexional Discipline Committee.

(c) A District Chair is not entitled to attend either the preliminary hearing or the final hearing unless he or she is acting either as the complainant’s or respondent’s friend or representative or he or she is called to give evidence either by the connexional Presenting Officer or by the respondent.

⁷⁷ Appendix G page 2 para 4

⁷⁸ BELLAMY: 1.1 What are the overarching principles for dealing with complaints and discipline?

The overarching principles which guided the drafting of the present Standing Orders on complaints and discipline, and which should act as a guiding light to their interpretation, are that:

(1) The need of the Methodist Church for a complaints and discipline process stems from the imperfect nature of human beings. The Church is a fallible community and its members on occasion behave in ways which are damaging to themselves and others and which undermine the credibility of the Church’s witness. A complaints and discipline process is one of the means by which the Church recognises that all human beings are made in the image of God and are entitled to be treated as such, and by which it maintains its witness to the new life to which we are called through Christ.

(2) Through the complaints and discipline process members of the Methodist Church are accountable to the Church in matters of faith and behaviour. The Church seeks to enable healing and reconciliation to take place through that accountability whenever possible. The Church also responds to the call through Christ for justice, openness and honesty, and to the need for each of us to accept responsibility for our own acts.

⁷⁹ Appendix I page 1, para 5 “And to dismiss the over-arching Bellamy principle that reconciliation should at all times in the process be looked for is difficult to comprehend”