

The Peter Timms affair

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE NATIONAL CASE
AND THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE DECISION TO TAKE THE CASE
TO A WIDER AUDIENCE BY THE WRITING OF THE INTERNET
REPORT AND THE MAKING OF THE FILM

1. In September 2016 Rev Alan Bolton chose a connexional complaints panel headed by Mr. Chris Kitchin, with Rev Val Reid and Rev Chris Jones, to consider three complaints submitted by Rev Peter Timms against three ministers in the Hastings Bexhill and Rye District, subsequent to actions and decisions at a circuit meeting which had taken place in September 2014 when Rev Timms had tried, unsuccessfully, to promote his interpretation of SO 545.

2. In the first week in September 2016, Rev Timms received a letter from Mr Kitchin which contained what Rev Timms believed to be a “false confession” to an accusation of breach of confidence. This read:

“1. I am the respondent in a complaint made against me.

2. I understand the Connexional Complaints Team has reviewed the evidence it holds and has determined, in accordance with Standing Order 1157, that there have been several breaches of confidentiality by me.

3 I understand that I was told in writing and orally that any breach of confidentiality could result in disciplinary action being brought against me.

4. I am familiar with the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church with particular reference to Part 11 which deals with Complaints and Discipline.

5 I accept that if I fail to sign this undertaking or refuse to do so and return it by 14 October 2016 I will lose the opportunity to receive further documents and information relating to the complaint

6. I therefore agree to provide this written acknowledgement that all documents and information already received or hereafter received in connection with this complaint or other complaints or charge are confidential and I give this undertaking to comply with Standing Order 1104 (7) at all times, I acknowledge that if I breach this undertaking disciplinary action will be taken against me.

There was a box at the bottom of this in which Rev Timms was expected to sign.

In particular, Rev Timms did not wish to sign his name to item 2 -

“I understand the Connexional Complaints Team has reviewed the evidence it holds and has determined, in accordance with Standing Order 1157, that there have been several breaches of confidentiality by me.”

This statement was completely untrue. He had no idea that the panel had “reviewed evidence”. He had no idea what the evidence for such might be. Further, he had taken no part in any determination that he had committed several breaches of Standing Orders. To characterise this as something that he “understood” was a complete fabrication.

3. Rev Timms explained, by reply, that he knew nothing of this accusation. It had never been put to him. Further, there was no evidence attached to the Kitchin letter which might explain what the charge was.

He thought there had been a mix up of cases. He was the complainant, not the respondent as in item (1) above. Privately, he considered the sending of this letter to be unfair procedure, particularly under S.O. 1123, a lack of justice (SO 1100) and a breach of SO 1133 (8c) in that the decision was taken without the use of the system of the balance of probabilities – since no defence against the accusation had been heard.

4. After an exchange of letters and emails, Rev Timms, having received no answers to his questions rising from the above, nevertheless affirmed in a letter of 11th October that he had complied, and would comply, with the rules on confidentiality as required by SO 1104.

5. At no time during the subsequent dealing of the Connexional panel was the demand that Rev Timms sign the document withdrawn. Each letter that Rev Timms received included the demand - until mid-November when the document was no longer mentioned in correspondence.

6. In early November Rev Timms was taken into hospital on two occasions for trouble with his heart. He asked his friend Peter Hill to undertake certain tasks on his behalf – and this report is, in part a product of the collaboration on this matter that followed.

7. Peter Hill subsequently attended two meetings with Rev Alan Bolton, the first on 29th November, the second on January 18th 2017. Peter Hill informed Rev Bolton of the dispute over the false confession. He told Rev Bolton the detail of it, but Rev Bolton demurred from attributing the term “false confession” to it. However, this may be why Mr Kitchin’s demands for a signature were no longer mentioned in correspondence.

When Peter Hill subsequently mentioned that, in an email dated 16th November, Mr. Kitchin had demanded that Rev Timms restrict his evidence to two A4 sheets of paper. Rev Bolton's reply was that such a practice or restriction was not in Standing Orders.

8. Rev Timms and Peter Hill then began to examine Standing Orders in order to find a way forward. In particular they studied SO 1155 which is entitled "Complaints against the process".

9. They noted that, according to SO 1155 (3) a complainant could not make a complaint about the process during the course of the complaints inquiry. This meant that *at that stage of the inquiry* SO 1155 was not applicable, for the inquiry was still going on.

Further, they noted some lack of definition in the Standing Order. It seemed that the "relevant Connexional Team member" mentioned in SO 1155 (2) was probably Mr Kitchin – against whose actions Rev Timms was objecting. Who exactly the "relevant Connexional Team member" might be, was not defined – but Rev Bolton had stated that he had no power to intervene, so it could not be him. It seemed that the only alternative was Mr Kitchin.

Mr Kitchin knew of the objections to the "false confession" (and other aspects of the inquiry) but had not offered to make a reference to a Connexion reconciliation group as mentioned in SO 1155 (2). Nor, in the conversations with Peter Hill, did Rev Bolton make such a suggestion.

Rev Timms had also been informed by Mr Kitchin that there would be no appeal against the panel's decision. This was based on SO 1126 :

"Appeals and Reconsiderations.

(2) No appeal may be brought against a decision that a complaint should be dismissed if the complaint was referred to the connexional Complaints Panel by the complainant rather than the local complaints officer.

Rev Timms' complaints had not been referred to the connexional Complaints panel by the local complaints officer, so he would not be able to appeal any decision of the panel.

10. Considering that Rev Timms would not be able to use SO 1155 *during the course of the inquiry*, and that, because of SO 1126 (2), *he had no right of appeal* when the inquiry was ended (presumably against both fact and process, though such was not clear) it was thought unlikely that SO 1155 could be used *at any time* in order to object to the procedure of the connexional Complaints panel. In short, there was no appeals process available.

11. Rev Timms began to write an analysis of the process used by the connexional inquiry panel. This was centred on the “false confession” but it also detailed other examples of bad procedure – the telling of a lie, the failure to explain whether the three grievances would be considered as one, or if they were to be treated separately. There was also lengthy correspondence about how witnesses were to be handled. Some forty to fifty witnesses were available.

Rev Timms gained the impression that Mr Kitchin wished to choose the witnesses who might testify to actions taken against Rev Timms at the Circuit meeting of September 2014.

There was also an allegation of covert surveillance having taken place on Rev Timms – and further examples of attempts to coerce him into signing the “false confession” or admitting to other breaches of Standing Orders.

This analysis was finished on December 14th 2016 and sent to Rev Alan Bolton. It was entitled “Set Aside Motion”

12. Meanwhile, the connexional inquiry panel had met in early December without Rev Timms being present – its report was sent to Rev Alan Bolton in January 2017.

13. After the panel’s report was sent to him on January 18th 2017, Rev Timms sent a letter, dated 27th January, to Rev Gareth Powell, Secretary to the Conference which read:

“I have been in contact with Alan Bolton concerning three complaints which I have been pursuing in my District.

May I now submit to Conference, through you, the enclosed petition to set aside the decision of the complaints panel in this matter?

The “petition” was the “set-aside motion” previously sent to Rev Bolton.

14. When Rev Timms later received a copy of the connexional inquiry panel’s report, he added more detail to the document he had sent to Rev Powell. During the weeks after he received the report, he submitted, almost weekly, a total of seven addenda to the document, all fully researched and documented.

15. The title of the document sent by Rev Timms was chosen carefully. It was thought that SO 1155 had insufficient remedy – for reasons mentioned above. And yet, S.O 1100 (3 vii) was not being complied with:

“there should be a means of correcting any errors which may be made;”

SO 1100 (3 vii) comes under the heading “Principles” in the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church. As such it is a *fundamental principle* and takes precedence over other Standing Orders.

The objective of the request by Rev Timms was to cause the proceedings and the report of the connexional Complaints panel to be simply ignored – as if they had never taken place.

A mistake had been made in procedure *at the very beginning* of the inquiry which effectively negated all the subsequent actions of the panel. This had occurred even before Rev Timms had become involved in the panel’s inquiry.

If there was no means of correcting the error, as Rev Timms thought, (a view that was supported later by the chief legal officer in Methodist Church House) then this initial mistake - and all later actions of the panel - could be ignored.

The process could then begin again with another connexional Complaints panel without any recriminations about the first inquiry..

16. In fact Rev Timms alleged that – in addition to the “false confession” - there were two further examples of incorrect procedure being followed *at the very beginning* of the panel’s inquiry.

He claimed that the initial investigation of the case had not been conducted using the system of the balance of probabilities (SO 1133, 8c).

He further claimed that he himself had been investigated during the initial investigation – contrary to SO 1123. Any investigation of the complainant could only take place *after* the initial assessment had been completed – yet the leader of the panel had ignored this. His first action had been to investigate the complainant.

On the basis that these three incorrect actions in procedure, all of which had occurred before he, as the complainant, had even begun to take part in the complaints process, Rev Timms was suggesting that the whole process be simply stopped – and for it to be begun again on a proper basis, using correct procedure as laid down in Standing Orders.

He considered that, as there is nothing in the Standing Orders which covers this, the matter would have to go to Conference, the body that is in charge of Standing Orders.

17. The document was specifically named a “Set-Aside Motion” for Conference to consider.

The ultimate intention of the document was that it would suggest to Conference that Standing Orders needed to be expanded. The wording of SO 1155 needed re-consideration, and the balance between various Standing Orders might need consideration and amendment, in the light of the manner in which the connexional Complaints panel in the Timms case had used them. In particular the Standing Orders concerning “initial investigation” needed clarification.

He also considered that there needed to be clarification that the fundamental principles of Standing Orders – SO 1100 - took precedence over the wording, and usage, of other Standing Orders.

He had earlier relied on Bellamy’s “Guide to the Standing Orders” in order to establish this distinction within Standing Orders, but he had been told both by Rev Bolton and Mr. Kitchin, that Bellamy’s Guide was out of date. Rev Timms could find nothing in Methodist publications that had announced this.

18. The “set-aside motion” was *not a complaint* in the sense of being a complaint *within the complaints procedure*. It was *a procedural motion* – designed to change procedures of the Church in order to better enforce the fundamental principles of the Complaints procedures as defined in SO 1100.

This distinction does not appear to have been recognised by anyone in Methodist Church House.

In particular the set aside motion pointed to the principle laid down in SO 1100 (3 vii) : “*there should be a means of correcting any errors which may be made;*”

Errors had been made at the very beginning of the connexional Complaints panel’s work, yet there was no means of correcting them.

19. The term “set-aside motion” is used in our courts, in parliament and local government.

The use in our courts of a “set-aside motion” usually concerns a case when a superior court considers the actions of a lower court - and finds that something has gone wrong with the lower court’s actions or decisions. The superior court has the power to simply ignore the fact that the lower court had already made a decision. It sets the decision aside and judges the case as if the lower court had never sat.

An alternative is the term “motion to vacate”. This is sometimes applied elsewhere in such circumstances, though this is now normally confined to motions for the chairman of some group to vacate the chair. This term might, however, have been used in the Timms case. If Mr. Kitchin had been told to step down in the light of the alleged errors, the same outcome would have been achieved as the motion to set his report aside. However, the tri-partite composition of the panel of inquiry made this alternative problematic – after all, who had written the “false confession”? Who had sent it? None of this was clear, even though Mr Kitchin’s signature was on the document.

The rules on committee procedure follow the general rules of debate in Parliament. Procedural motions take precedence over others.

A procedural motion can stop any particular action being taken, or contemplated, by a committee - before it progresses further towards completion. A procedural motion can further stop any execution of any decision taken by a committee.

20. When Rev Timms submitted his “set-aside motion” to Rev Bolton in December 2016, the final report of the connexional Complaints panel had not been issued. Procedural motions take precedence, so when Rev Timms sent his “set-aside motion” to Rev Bolton in mid-December 2016, Rev Bolton should have halted the report of the connexional inquiry panel until the matter of procedure, contained in Rev Timms’ motion, had been settled.

Rev Bolton failed to do that – even though he had been warned in November that such might occur. Further, when Rev Timms made his purpose absolutely clear in his letter to Rev Powell of 27th January 2017, Rev Powell also did nothing about it.

Rev Powell should have noticed that Rev Bolton had acted incorrectly in not pausing the inquiry’s report – and returning the situation to the position that it had been when the set aside motion had been received. Rev Powell’s actions was incorrect procedure.

21. The response from the officials in Methodist Church stemmed from an incorrect view of the situation. Rev Bolton was of the view that SO 1155 could be used – and Rev Timms went along with that idea, though, as mentioned above, he foresaw the pitfalls involved in the procedures.

22. As Rev Bolton considered the possible use of SO 1155, Rev Timms continued to press his case. However, Rev Powell wrote in a letter dated 26th April 2017:

“As I have made very clear to you in earlier correspondence , beyond the process outlined in SO 1155, there is no further mechanism I can

offer you in respect of the matters you raise. Contrary to your assertion and in accordance with Methodist practice and discipline, It is not within my power to set aside the decision of the Complaints Panel and neither is it within the power of the Conference to do so.”

Considering the wording of SO 1100 (3 vii), Rev Timms thought that the statement, that Conference had no power to set aside the decision, was incorrect.

He also considered that the use of SO 1155, if it were deemed possible, would reduce the “set aside motion” to a ‘complaint’ – but against whom would it be complaining? It was a procedural motion.

He had also written to Rev Hellyer, his District Chair, concerning the interpretation of Standing Orders – in particular of SO 1104 (7) The District Chair wrote in an email of 24th May 2017:

“Your comments on the way in which SO 1104 (7) can be interpreted and applied are not matters that I feel qualified to comment on.”

It seemed that even his District Chair had no interest in exploring this aspect of the matter. Yet Rev Hellyer had sanctioned the sending of an email to Alan Bolton, that Rev Timms had written in August 2016, and which was actually the source of the “false confession” which asserted that it was a breach of SO 1104. He had felt qualified to interpret SO 1104 on that occasion.

Rev Timms considered Rev Hellyer’s reaction to his request for help to be as breach of SO 700 (10) in that, by his inaction in this, Rev Hellyer did not show leadership, nor did he appear to care for the life of the Church in the Bexhill area, nor for one of his ministers. Surely a District Chair should feel qualified to comment on interpretations of Standing Orders?

Rev Timms also recalled that it was Rev Hellyer’s interpretation of SO 545 that had caused the fuss at the Circuit meeting of September 2014 - which had sparked off the whole controversy.

However, there were other considerations emanating from Methodist Church House.

23. By June 2017 Rev Bolton had finally decided that SO 1155 was not applicable. On June 9th Ms Louise Wilkins, the Conference Office for Legal and Constitutional Practice, wrote:

“ I note that Alan has mentioned to you Standing Order 1155, but upon careful reflection I am not sure that this offers you a way forward that will address the points you are making.”

and

“I do not believe that there is any further mechanism that can be offered to you as the process under Part II has run to completion.”

Her letter ended:

“Obviously if you write making further complaints, then these shall be responded to in accordance with the Part II process. All other correspondence shall be place on the file, but not responded to.”

By this letter, Ms Wilkins revealed what Rev Timms had suspected for the seven months since he had first sent the set aside motion in to Rev Bolton – his objection were being treated not as the motion it purported to be, but as simply “a complaint”.

That “complaint” was dismissed because the complaint process had “run to completion” and it was not to be discussed or even considered further.

This was a basic misunderstanding of the situation. The set aside motion had *never* been, technically, a ‘complaint’ within the complaints system.

The note that his letters (presumably those about the process as in the set aside motion) would not be responded to, meant that he was now technically “*a persistent complainant*” as detailed in SO 1155 - for she wrote that it was “*in accordance with the Part II process.*”

And yet SO 1155 was, apparently, not being applied, for it details the manner of dealing with persistent complainants as:

“Any future complaint by him or her should in all cases be dealt with immediately by a team convened from the connexional Complaints Panel which would be required before taking any further steps to consider whether in all the circumstances of the case” (SO 1155, 1ii)

She clearly did not class the set aside motion as a “future complaint”. Yet was the set aside motion a ‘complaint’ from the past? If it was, then that ‘complaint’ from the past had not been processed under SO 1155.

If it was *not* a complaint from the past, that should perhaps have been processed under SO 1155, then Ms Wilkins was clearly classing the “set aside” motion as not being a ‘complaint’ at all - and, in some fashion, *separate* to a complaint. The fact that it had received no process at all indicated such.

The confusion of Louise Wilkin's thought, as demonstrated by this letter, indicated one certainty – the officials in Methodist House did not recognise that the "set aside motion" was a procedural motion and not a 'complaint'.

Such, of course, was Rev Timms' own interpretation of the standing of his set aside motion.

Methodist Church House had no coherent approach to this. They acted as if they had never heard of a procedural motion.

24. At a meeting on 1st June 2017, Rev Timms and Peter Hill discussed the implications of this. There was clearly confidentiality involved – and yet there was also a clear breach of Standing Orders – in that breaches of standing orders had occurred during the inquiry and further, Louise Wilkins had not complied with SO 1100 (3 vii) – for errors had been made and there were, according to her, no means of correcting them.

Peter Hill suggested that, if neither Methodist Church House, nor Conference, would find a way to intervene to uphold SO 1100 (3vii), then the only way forward to correct the errors in compliance with SO 1100 (3vii), must be to present the evidence to the wider Methodist Church – the ordinary churchgoers. That seemed the logical thing to do, for the Church is composed of its members, it is financed by them, and they have ultimate control over what is done in its name.

He suggested a website be constructed at his expense.

Rev Timms objected to this and initially refused to cooperate with Hill on the plan. However, the letter from Louise Wilkins persuaded him to re-consider the idea.

Rev Timms determined that there should be a more moderate plan for such a website. If a website were to be set up, it should be under a special internet address to which only certain persons would have access. The address should first be sent to persons of great importance and influence in the Church who had connections, in one way or another, with the complaints system. An example Rev Timms quoted was Judge Clifford Bellamy, who had chaired the committee which compiled the "Guidelines to Standing Orders", he would be one of the first to see the evidence.

Only when there was no response to this first set of addressees, about a dozen in all, would a further group of persons of such importance be contacted. A later set would be all District Chairs - and so on.

The website would essentially be simply a means of avoiding the waste of a lot of paper and postage stamps.

The important principle would be that any damage done to the Church by such a website would be *limited as much as was possible*.

It was hoped, of course, that influential persons in the church would consider the decision coming out of Methodist Church House and recognise the injustice of it and its incompatibility with SO 1100.

Peter Hill was handed the set aside motion and its addenda and he wrote a report based upon them. A decision was taken on whether such a motion came under the restrictions on confidentiality as in SO 1104 (7) or SO 1155.

It was decided that, since both Rev Powell and Louise Wilkins had ruled out SO 1155 as being applicable to the motion, the document was not a “complaint” and could not come under the term “complaint” as in SO 1104. It therefore would not be breaching confidentiality to publish it.

The circulation of the special internet address began in late June 2017, some two weeks after the letter from Ms Wilkins that stated that all further correspondence would not be read.

Further, as it was essentially a petition to Conference, it could not breach confidentiality.

25. In the first week of June 2017 Rev Timms received an email from District Chair Rev John Hellyer which suspended him. This was before the internet website was up and running. The special internet address had not been issued to anyone.

There were no details of exactly what this suspension constituted, and subsequent enquiries did not clarify the terms of the suspension until a year later – in June 2018.

26. Although the website was being promoted, Rev Timms did not give up on the more usual methods of putting his case forward. He continued to send letters to Methodist Church House. This was in spite of the fact that Ms. Wilkins had ruled out SO 1155 and had also ruled out further discussion; furthermore, Rev Powell had ruled out taking anything of this nature to Conference and further stated that neither he, nor Conference had any power to intervene.

However, chance gave him an opportunity to take the matter further. The President of Conference, Rev Loraine Mellor, visited Bexhill. Rev Timms contacted her and requested a brief confidential chat. She turned his request down. Rev Timms subsequently wrote to her.

She replied in a letter dated 19th October 2017:

“It is clear to me that the process which you initiated was followed within the parameters set down by the Conference.”

Rev Timms replied in a letter dated 24th October:

“The Church cannot survive if false confessions can be sent to ministers, with threats designed to persuade them to sign them. The Church cannot survive if panels of inquiry can lie to complainants. The Church cannot survive if anyone who complains is immediately investigated, even spied upon, without being even able to defend themselves, before being found at fault.

The Church cannot survive if such things are hushed up.”

Rev. Mellor did not reply to this.

27. By mid-October there had been no response from the eminent members of the Church to whom the address of the internet site had been sent.

Rev Timms realised that he was now in a classic quandary. He had approached the church hierarchy in a methodical and proper manner, only to be turned down by every office.

Was the Church wrong to consider the “false confession”, and all the other problems he had encountered, as “within the parameters set down by the Conference.”? Was everything really within the bounds of, and sanctioned by, Standing Orders?

He thought not – and was appalled by the treatment he had encountered. Never mind the wording of the document, the very manner in which the false confession had been prepared and presented to him was neither just, open nor honest. He had been judged and found guilty before he was even aware of the accusation.

On the other hand, he realised that if he did not cease his actions, the matter might cause the Methodist Church harm in the eyes of the general public. The list of people seeing the website was getting dangerously near to being complete national exposure. Local supporters had published the site address in emails that now began circulating.

And yet, if he did nothing – and kept quiet about this affair - he would become complicit in the wrongdoing that he considered was going on. He would become a part of the cover up. That, he realised,

would mean that he would be deliberately breaking Standing Orders – SO 1100 in particular. More importantly, it would also mean that he would be committing a moral sin in the eyes of the Lord.

He considered the quotation from Edmund Burke: *“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”*

It was a question of conscience – and he began to look for another way forward.

28. On October 25th 2017, in response to requests for an interview about the suspension of Rev Timms, a meeting was arranged at the Crawley District Headquarters. Those present were Rev Hellyer, Rev Cornish, Rev Timms and Peter Hill.

The meeting did not go well. Rev Hellyer criticised the website, saying it was inaccurate and contained false assumptions. He was asked to detail such inaccuracies, but could not present anything that either Rev Timms or Peter Hill considered gave cause to change the wording of the site.

Rev Hellyer was handed the documentary proof of the “false confession” but he refused to accept it.

Nothing was achieved at the meeting.

29. After the meeting, Rev Timms raised a matter which he and Peter Hill had discussed some months before, but rejected. This was the question of whether it might be more effective to make a short film about the problem which could be circulated in similar fashion to the internet address. This was agreed. In early November, Peter Hill filmed an interview with Rev Timms - around which he constructed a short film entitled “A Question of Conscience.”

For legal reasons (primarily defamation) it was agreed that the publisher of this film was Peter Hill and he bore all responsibility for its accuracy, not only of the commentary but of the editing of the interview done by Rev Timms. It was also agreed that he was solely responsible for the distribution of the film – which would be done along the lines of the distribution of the internet address.

Beginning at Christmas 2017, some two hundred copies of the film were distributed over the next four months.

30. In late January 2018 John Troughton Chief circuit steward in the Hastings Bexhill and Rye Circuit issued the first of four lengthy grievances against Peter Timms. The first contained four charges of a criminal nature. These were quickly withdrawn when challenged.

31. On 20th March Rev Timms and John Troughton agreed a reconciliation document. Troughton agreed that Rev Timms' email of August 2016, which had caused the false confession to be sent, was in line with standing orders.

32. Because of this, Peter Hill immediately took down the internet site. He further ceased distribution of DVDs of the film "The Disciples of John Wesley". He destroyed his remaining copies.

33.

Rev Timms contacted persons who had circulated emails around Bexhill, requesting them to cease their activities. They did so.

34. In spite of this, three weeks later, on 23rd May 2018, District Chair Rev Hellyer wrote to Rev Timms about the detail of his suspension - stating:

"Since you were suspended, matters have escalated further in a way that continues to undermine the good order of the Church."

At about the same time, John Troughton re-neged on this agreement of March 20th and issued a further grievance against Rev Timms.

35. Summer 2018 – the fourth grievance against Rev Timms was considered by a connexional complaints panel and sent to the Connexional Advocate for consideration of disciplinary charges. In October 2018 Disciplinary charges were laid against Rev Timms. Consideration of these charges was still talking place in October 2020.

36. 28th June 2020 . Peter Hill is summoned to the Hatfield police station to answer a charge of harassment against various members of the Methodist Timms. After several weeks of investigation, the police drop all charges.

37. 2021. Timms is subject to disciplinary proceedings in the Church, charged with harming the reputation of the Church. Found guilty, he is removed from the ministry

SUMMARY

Rev Timms considers that it is, in truth, the manner in which he has been treated by the Timms which undermines the good order of the Timms – not what he has done to bring the matter within the bounds and control of Standing Orders.

In the view of Rev Timms, the escalation of the matter is solely due to the attitudes taken, sometimes in ignorance, by the officers of the Timms both in Crawley and in London.

32. The above states the rationale which led Rev Timms to object and for Peter Hill to publish details of the affair to persons outside the range of the complaints inquiry into his grievances. Please note however, that the persons contacted have all been within the Timms. No member of the general public has been involved.

This was the full extent of the “publicity campaign” with which Rev Timms is now accused of undermining the good order of the Timms. The underlying principle for those two actions – the internet report and the film – lies in SO 1100:

“The Timms 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.”

Rev Timms believes that there is an attempt to silence him concerning the misdemeanours of the panel of inquiry which investigated his three complaints about the conduct of three ministers in his District.

One of the fundamental principles of the system of complaints was ignored, for there were errors made - and there was, according to Methodist Timms House, no remedy to correct them.

Rev Timms is willing to believe that much of this is rooted in an ignorance of the detail of Standing Orders – and indeed, in the confusion caused by the wording of some Standing Orders.

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