

Conference & Youth Conference

Once a year the Connexion hosts its Annual Conference. Historically this has been to hold the A.G.M. of the Trustees and of the Sierra Leone Mission (SLM) at which the work of the previous year is reported and Trustees, delegates and ministers seek God's will for the direction and work of the Connexion in the coming year and beyond. In more recent years the Conference has expanded greatly with a growing emphasis on a social gathering of the Connexion to develop our relationships, with worship and teaching and all-age activities. Anyone is welcome and the Trustees encourage churches to promote attendance.

Alongside Conference, the youth of the Connexion run their own weekend 'Youth Conference' and 'Reunion' each year. This is a valuable opportunity for the youth to develop friendships with others like themselves amongst the churches, to discover and grow in faith and learn many of the leadership skills required to play an active part in church life.

The Sierra Leone Mission

In the time of the Countess, preachers were sent to work in America. Amongst their audiences were African slaves. After the American War of Independence, these converted slaves were freed and resettled, first in Nova Scotia and then in Sierra Leone (West Africa); hence the name of the capital city, Freetown. Without us knowing,

they took their faith and the Connexion with them. Some years later the UK Connexion discovered the existence of the Sierra Leonian Connexion and set up the SLM to support them. The main work of the SLM is two-fold. It supports the work of the churches through contributing to ministers' wages, providing funding for ministerial training, and building and maintaining churches, and supports education through the Connexion's schools, helping with teachers' salaries, teacher training and in other miscellaneous ways.

How can I find out more?

More details about the Connexion and the SLM can be found on our websites:

www.cofhconnexion.org.uk

www.sierraleonemission.org.uk

We also publish a regular magazine 'The Voice'.

To find out more about the history of the Countess of Huntingdon and the Connexion, you may be interested in a small book written by Gilbert Kirby, a former Trustee, called 'The Elect Lady'. Copies can be acquired through our churches or via the Trustees.

The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion

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An Introduction to 'The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion'

The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion

Charity Number: 232674



What is the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion?

What is the Connexion?

The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion is a small evangelical Christian denomination. Our churches are predominantly in the South East of England, although they can be found as far as St. Ives in Cornwall and Middleton in Manchester.

...passion for sharing the Gospel

Where does our name come from?

Our denomination bears the name of Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon (b.1707-d.1791). Through her chaplain, the famous preacher George Whitefield, and later other ministers whom she supported and trained, she oversaw outreach to the communities she was associated with and beyond. Where there were sufficient converts to merit it, she paid for chapels to be built. At first this was done from within the Church of England, but eventually she was given the choice to



cease or to continue from the outside. She opted to leave the Church of England because of her passionate belief in sharing the gospel. Like the Countess we are committed to sharing the good news about Jesus to our communities in word and deed. The spelling of Connexion with an 'x' dates to the common spelling at that time.

...called to be 'salt & light'

What is our vision?

The Countess was motivated by her love of Christ and a 'deep concern for the spiritual and social needs of her contemporaries.'¹ We share her concern for the people around us and have a vision that resonates with her deeply held convictions, which is to be 'salt and light'² in our neighbourhoods, sharing God's love of all people through word and deed.

¹ Gilbert W. Kirby, *The Elect Lady [Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion]*, pub. 3rd. Edition, 2003]

² Matthew 5:13-16

What do we believe?

Our beliefs are similar to other mainstream evangelical denominations. Within 'The Scheme' outlining the legal constitution of the Connexion (see below) are outlined the Fifteen Articles of Faith which are held by the Connexion and its ministers. These can also be found on our website. Each church is free to draw up its own statements of faith within that framework.

In more general terms we believe:

- That the Bible is inspired by God.
- The Bible teaches that God created a good

world, giving humanity free will. Sadly we abused that free will, resulting in alienation from him, each other and Creation.

- Driven by love, God has taken the initiative towards putting things right, sending his son Jesus to become one of us and revealing through him his character and will and modelling the love and forgiveness that he would have us show.
- Through his death and resurrection on the Cross, Jesus stood in our place and overcame sin and death. We believe that through this he offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who place their faith in him and gives the Holy Spirit to guide and shape us; enabling us to participate in his work of sharing God's love.
- That one day Jesus will return and complete this work of making all things new.

How is the Connexion run?

The Connexion's constitution was drawn up in 1899 in a document referred to as 'The Scheme'. Under The Scheme and current charity law, the Connexion appoints Trustees who are responsible for overseeing the Connexion's properties and work. They are also responsible for the appointment and ordination of ministers via the recommendation of the local church.

Most matters of the organising and running of church life are delegated by the Trustees to the local churches and their ministers. Individual congregations are free within the bounds of The Scheme and Articles of Faith to organise their life, outreach, services and administration as they wish. Most appoint lay officers (commonly Elders and Deacons) and govern the church through church meetings. Services on the whole are informal and non-liturgical, but their style differs from congregation to congregation.