

**The United Reformed Church Mission Council meeting with the
Methodist Council at the Ramada Hotel Sutton Coldfield
October 17th-19th 2012.**

Minutes of Joint Sessions on Wednesday Oct 17th.

SESSION 1

Welcome and Introductions

The Revd David Gamble, chair of the Methodist Council, took the chair. He welcomed all present and introduced the leaders of each denomination. He outlined the objectives arising from the previous Joint Council in 2010: fellowship, interaction and worship together; exploring long term vision for both denominations; clarifying and removing blockages to local ecumenical mission and providing updates on joint work and progress already made.

Opening worship was led by the Revd Dr Mark Wakelin, President of the Methodist Conference, Mr Mike King, Vice President of the Methodist Conference, and Mrs Val Morrison and the Revd Dr Michael Jagessar, Moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church.

Mr Gamble introduced the Revd Dr David Cornick, General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and invited him to address the Joint Council. Dr Cornick's talk was entitled: "Fish 'n chips or chalk and cheese: URC and Methodist identity and common understanding".

Dr Cornick gave an informative overview of the very different histories of the two denominations over the centuries, then he invited discussion in buzz groups about the significant events which had shaped the denominations. He continued by considering the differences and similarities between our denominations and concluded with the challenges before us both, as he saw them. Again buzz groups discussed together.

Dr Cornick responded to comments from the floor.

SESSION 2

The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar took the chair and outlined the format of the session.

Speakers from both denominations gave their perspectives on local ecumenism in their part of the country.

The Revd David Grosch-Miller spoke of his experience of local ecumenism in the South West Synod of the URC.

The Revd John Howard reflected on his experience in the West Midlands, where staffing LEPs remained difficult with more diverse staff needing to cover clusters of churches. He said that many good stories could be told but it was too easy to lay the blame at the other denomination when something went wrong.

The Revd Geoffrey Clarke, of the North Western Synod, enjoyed many aspects of Methodism: the annual covenant service; the wider liturgies available; and monthly staff meetings. However the Methodist “brand” proved to be strong and could overtake the other denominations especially numerically; lay preachers did not always understand the make up of an LEP congregation; and, unfortunately, URC people could be left out or overlooked in decision making processes.

The Revd Martyn Evans, from Cumbria, told of an ecumenical county where the importance of relationships, joint training, and solving of problems was paramount.

Ecumenical Officers

The Revd David Tatem (URC) and the Revd Neil Stubbens (Methodist Church) spoke of the work of the Methodist / URC Liaison Group.

The Group helps to resolve difficulties and responds to requests for help. In the differing contexts of England, Scotland and Wales it deals with the implications of denominational policies, financial arrangements, Lay/Local Preachers, traditions out of balance, and fear of loss of identity.

The Methodist Church has other ecumenical discussions on-going with the Church of England. It seeks to use the appropriate ecumenical tools in its dealings with dwindling and closing local churches.

The Joint Council discussed a series of questions in small groups. Groups were asked to present their conclusions to the Revd Neil Stubbens.

SESSION 3

Mrs Val Morrison took the chair and explained the use of consensus cards to give an indication of support to points made by the speakers. Mrs Morrison posed three questions and invited comments from members of the Joint Council.

What do we feel God has been saying to us?

Indicator cards showed considerable support for on-going conversations at all levels of our churches both theological and structural so that obstacles experienced by LEPs and those exploring becoming LEPs might be alleviated.

Would there be support for ‘High Level’ conversations between the Denominations?

This question was responded to in discussion of the previous question. What would constitute ‘High Level’?

What would be the priorities for leadership to put into those conversations?

Considerable support was shown for closer co-operation where ever possible, e.g. questions of safeguarding, equality and diversity, youth and children’s work, and use of buildings; and for Church Staff to share expertise for the benefit of all denominations. Rather than embark on long term talks about talks we should get on with some theological discussion and find ways of supporting LEPs for Mission rather than for mere survival. Some clearly hoped for more organic unity between the two denominations.

The Revd Roberta Rominger, the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins and the Revd Dr David Cornick responded briefly to the many comments made and the General Secretaries explained how co-operation had developed further between the denominations over the past few years.

Papers JM/01 "Work with children and Young People" and JM/02 "Joint Property Strategy Group (First year) Report" were tabled and comments and questions invited through the General Secretary, the Revd Roberta Rominger, and the Youth & Children Staff present.

Closing worship was led by the three chaplains: the Revd Melanie Smith, the Revd Dr James Coleman and the Revd Nigel Hardwicke.

THURSDAY 18th OCTOBER

SESSION 4

Joint worship

Morning worship was led by the chaplains.

URC Mission Council

The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar took the chair.

Welcomes

The Moderator welcomed those who were new to Mission Council or attending in a new capacity:

Revd Dr Michael Jagessar	Moderator 2012-14
Ms Morag McLintock	Synod of Scotland Representative
Revd Prof David Thompson	Chair, URC Trust
Ms Marie Trubic	Joint Public Issues Team
Revd Simon Walkling	Synod of Wales Moderator
Revd David Grosch-Miller	Moderator Elect 2014-2016
Mr John Ellis	Moderator Elect 2013-2016

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mrs Suzanne Adofo	CRCW Development Worker
Revd Lee Batson	Church of England observer
Revd Clare Downing	Wessex Synod Moderator
Mr Lawrence Moore	Director of Windermere Centre
Revd Shelagh Pollard	Synod of Wales Clerk
Miss Katy Unsworth	FURY Representative
Miss Rebecca Whiffen	FURY Moderator Elect

The Moderator explained that the Revd Elizabeth Welch and the Revd Simon Walkling were available if any member felt the need for conversation during the period of the Mission Council meeting.

The principles of "Living Conversations" were displayed for all to read.

The Deputy General Secretary commented on changes to the agenda.

The Communication Protocol was displayed and those present were reminded to abide by it.

12/27

Minutes of the previous Mission Council held 21st - 23rd March 2012

These were accepted as a correct record. Matters arising from them were all incorporated within the agenda for the current meeting.

The minutes of the closed session during the March meeting were available for inspection on application to the Clerk.

The Moderator invited his chaplain to lead an act of worship centring on the continued need for conversation and reconciliation following the events of the previous Mission Council meeting.

12/28

Investigation Group

Mrs Val Morrison presented the report from the Investigation Group which had been looking into employment related issues.

The group (which comprised Mrs Morrison, the Revd James Breslin, the Revd Professor Stephen Orchard and Mrs Tessa Henry-Robinson, with Mr Andrew Middleton in attendance) had identified several areas where more work needed to be undertaken:

1. The strengthening of management expertise. This should include the provision of appropriate training for those charged with managing staff.
2. The production of guidelines for committee conveners to include matters relating to the relationship of conveners, staff secretaries and volunteer workers. Such guidelines might be produced by the Nominations Committee.
3. A review of Human Resources Policies should be undertaken.
4. Consistency was required for all staff wherever they were based regarding Performance Management.
5. Training on the issues of harassment and bullying should be updated.
6. Care should be taken to resolve tensions between volunteers and paid staff. It would be helpful to have guidelines concerning good practice in communications.

The Investigation Group noted that the Assembly Commission was to liaise with the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee to assist with building reconciliation and would refer procedural matters to the Law and Polity Advisory Group.

Mission Council received the report.

12/29

Resolution 38 Assembly Commission

Paper O was tabled.

Questions and comments might be raised following the reading of the minutes. This could necessitate a closed session. It was suggested that the Assembly

Commission might want to see the minutes of the closed session of March 2012.
(Continued in Session 9.)

12/30 Information

The Revd John Smith, Convener of the Education and Learning Committee, informed Mission Council that the Revd Dr Susan Durber had indicated that she would cease to be Principal of Westminster College from the summer of 2013. Mr Smith said that Dr Durber's contribution to the life and work of the College had been immensely valued and wished her every blessing and success as she plans for the future.

The Revd Professor David Thompson, chair of the URC Trust, announced that the Westminster College appeal had reached £6.5m due to the recent receipt of a large grant.

12/31 Re-appointment of Treasurer

The Revd Roberta Rominger noted that the current term of Mr John Ellis as Treasurer would end in July 2013. A resolution had been presented to the General Assembly which sought to re-appoint him to serve until July 2017. However, since the Assembly had also elected Mr Ellis as Moderator for the period 2013 - 2016, the Assembly had asked that consideration be given to the implications of Mr Ellis holding both offices. Mrs Rominger said that the former Clerk had advised that there was no rule to prevent one person serving in both capacities simultaneously.

There were three issues:

- Possible conflict of interest - with vigilance this could be overcome, and the other Moderator could chair when financial matters were to be discussed.
- Possibly too great a work load - Mr Ellis had recently retired from employment and would therefore have more time for this work. It was also proposed that a deputy treasurer be appointed who could assist where necessary and who could also shadow Mr Ellis with a view to succeeding him in due course.
- With all the complexities and change currently being managed in the church finances, this would not be a good time for the Treasurer to stand down.

Mrs Rominger said that she had taken soundings and had concluded that those involved recognised the realities of the situation, that Mr Ellis himself was very aware of the boundary issues and all felt that the concerns could be met.

The General Secretary proposed the following Resolution:

Mission Council resolves that Mr John Ellis be reappointed as Honorary Treasurer from 2013 until 2017.

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

The Finance Committee will be asked to produce a job description for a Deputy Treasurer.

SESSION 5

Mrs Val Morrison took the chair. She welcomed the Revd Ruth Gee, the President Elect of the Methodist Conference, who was the new Methodist representative to Mission Council.

12/32

Medium Term Planning

The General Secretary presented Paper B and stated that much work was required with a care to consider many previous pieces of work undertaken and the need to provide an overview for planning for the future.

The General Secretary proposed:

Mission Council receives the paper “Medium Term Planning in the United Reformed Church” and asks Council members to send their comments to the General Secretary by 30th November 2012.

In response to a question Mrs Rominger said that comments were requested specifically regarding the timetable and content of the paper. She also asked if the starting point was correct.

The General Secretary responded to comments.

Mission Council agreed that the Nominations Committee rather than the Mission Council should agree the names for the Medium Term Planning Group.

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

Mrs Rominger proposed:

Mission Council agrees that a fundamental principle underlying the strategic planning of the United Reformed Church is the primacy of the local church and its mission.

Many comments were received to which the General Secretary responded. Further discussion proved inconclusive and the rest of the business from this paper was remaindered. (Continued in Session 9.)

12/33

Staffing Advisory Group

Review of the General Secretariat within Church House

Paper E was presented by the Revd Rowena Francis. She invited discussion on the questions offered and requested prompt responses to the Staffing Advisory Group; resolutions would be constructed following the receipt of the comments received. Mrs Francis emphasised the need for a clear steer from Mission Council to be given for the sake of those people whose jobs and employment depend upon the outcomes of the review.

The Deputy General Secretary, the Revd Richard Mortimer, made a statement in which he indicated that he personally agreed with what was proposed within Paper E. Furthermore Mr Mortimer informed Mission Council that, for personal

reasons, he intended to leave the post of Deputy General Secretary following the meeting of Mission Council to be held in May 2013. The Moderator thanked Mr Mortimer for his statement, which would assist the Mission Council in its processes.

Mission Council continued discussion in groups. The business of the Staffing Advisory Group was continued in Session 9.

SESSION 6

The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar took the chair.

12/34

Assembly Arrangements Committee

Dr David Robinson, in presenting Paper G, reminded Mission Council of the context of this discussion and explained that two scenarios had been prepared concerning Assembly 2014. He invited the Revd Michael Davies to introduce them as set out in the paper. Mr Davies explained the options.

A number of questions were raised to which Dr Robinson and Mr Davies responded.

Following a brief period of discussion in buzz groups further comments were received. It was suggested that the matter of the numbers of local ecumenical and overseas guests should be discussed with the Mission Committee which might be able to offer some assistance.

Dr Robinson responded that some pain was inevitable, and all would feel the loss of some things we held dear.

Dr Robinson proposed the resolution:

Acting on behalf of the General Assembly, Mission Council resolves that the next ordinary meeting of General Assembly be held in St David's Hall, Cardiff from Thursday 3 July to Sunday 6 July, 2014 and that the criteria laid out in Assembly Budget A (in Paper G) be adopted as the basis for the financial arrangements of the meeting in order to comply with the agreed budget limit of £200,000.

During the discussion a suggestion that Assembly meet from Wednesday to Saturday in preference to Thursday to Sunday was tested and rejected.

The Resolution was passed by majority vote. The Clerk noted that consequential resolutions would be presented to the May 2013 Mission Council.

12/35

Human Sexuality Task Group

The Revd Richard Mortimer presented Paper H and reminded Mission Council that the Revd Elizabeth Caswell had agreed to convene the new group.

Mr Mortimer moved the resolution:

Mission Council agrees the following as Terms of Reference for the successor Human Sexuality Task Group:

- 1.To raise awareness of the 2007 General Assembly Commitment, and to continue dialogue around the sensitive areas where members of the United Reformed Church acknowledge differences of view held in good faith.
- 2.To work together with the Law and Polity Advisory Group to ensure that advice and guidance is offered on the practical complexities that result from the present stance of General Assembly, not least in respect of its 2012 resolution on the registration of civil partnerships on religious premises.
3. To consider the issues arising from government proposals on 'marriage' between persons of the same gender and, in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee and the Law and Polity Advisory Group, to bring a report to Mission Council by May 2013.

Following information that it would probably not be possible to complete the work necessary before producing the report requested in clause 3 before May 2013, it was agreed that this be changed by replacing the words "when appropriate" with "by May 2013".

The amended resolution was proposed:

Mission Council agrees the following as Terms of Reference for the successor Human Sexuality Task Group:

- 1.To raise awareness of the 2007 General Assembly Commitment, and to continue dialogue around the sensitive areas where members of the United Reformed Church acknowledge differences of view held in good faith.**
- 2.To work together with the Law and Polity Advisory Group to ensure that advice and guidance is offered on the practical complexities that result from the present stance of General Assembly, not least in respect of its 2012 resolution on the registration of civil partnerships on religious premises.**
- 3. To consider the issues arising from government proposals on 'marriage' between persons of the same gender and, in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee and the Law and Polity Advisory Group, to bring a report to Mission Council when appropriate.**

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

Mrs Val Morrison took the chair.

12/36

Mission Committee

Zero Intolerance - the fourth option for the way ahead

The Revd Tracey Lewis, Convener, introduced Papers N, N1 and N2. She said that the Education & Learning Committee had renewed the companions "tool kit" in order to provide training materials for use throughout the church. Members of the Mission Team had attended the CWM round table to make a report on the ZI campaign and had reported that the concept of Radical Welcome had been widely taken up across the church. CWM had indicated that they accepted the position.

As noted at General Assembly, some had asked if it would be possible to use the posters, and the issue of copyright had therefore been considered by the Mission Committee. The papers presented options considered; Paper N suggested a way forward which had been formulated following the discussions by the Mission Committee.

Mrs Lewis responded to questions; after further comments and discussion the business was remaindered. (Continued in Session 7.)

12/37

Nominations Committee

The Revd John Durell, Convener of the Committee, presented Paper J and proposed:

Acting on behalf of the General Assembly, Mission Council approves the following appointments:

**Ministries - Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee Convener Elect:
Revd Pamela Ward (with immediate effect);**

Pensions Executive Convener: Dr Chris Evans (from 1st January 2013).

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

South Western Synod Moderator Nominating Group

Mr Durell read a statement from the Nominating Group and then proposed:

**Mission Council appoints the Revd Ruth Whitehead to serve as
Moderator of the South Western Synod from 1st July 2013 - 30th June
2020.**

The Resolution was passed by majority vote and Ms Whitehead was greeted with acclaim.

SESSION 7

12/38

Finance

Budget 2013

Mr John Ellis, Honorary Treasurer, introduced Paper K.

Mr Ellis proposed:

Mission Council notes with gratitude the Pension Support contributions from Synods over the triennium 2010 - 12 and requests Synods to continue this support in 2013 at a reduced level which will yield a total contribution of £600K.

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

Mr Ellis proposed:

Mission Council adopts the budget for 2013 as set out in Appendix 2 of Paper K.

Mr Ellis explained that the apparent rise in General Secretariat costs was due to a transfer of funds from another budget heading rather than an increase.

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

The Synod of Wales expressed gratitude for support received.

Pension Fund Rules

The rules had been revised following instructions of General Assembly and agreed in the appropriate places.

Mr Ellis proposed:

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, agrees that the Deed of Amendment to the Rules of the Ministers' Pension Fund (as attached to Paper K1 before Mission Council in October 2012) should be signed on behalf of the United Reformed Church by the Moderator and Clerk of the Assembly.

The Resolution was passed unanimously.

12/39

Disciplinary Process and Incapacity Procedure

The Clerk introduced Paper A and proposed the following resolution:

Mission Council resolves to:

- a) replace the current Disciplinary Process (Section O) with that contained in Paper A3 of Mission Council in March and October 2012, and**
- b) replace the current Incapacity Procedure (Section P) with that contained in Paper A5 of Mission Council in March and October 2012.**

The Resolution was passed by majority vote.

12/40

Rules of Procedure

The Clerk introduced Paper L and moved the following resolution:

Mission Council resolves to amend the Rules for Procedure for the Conduct of the United Reformed Church by the insertion of a new clause 2.5 as follows:

2.5 When an amendment to the Basis of Union is proposed under Paragraph 3.(1) of the Structure and the General Assembly gives first approval it shall at the same time decide whether or not following reference to the synods (and, where appropriate, to local churches) the change may be approved for a second time by the Mission Council. If

not and providing that notice has not been received from synods (and/or local churches) as defined in clause 3.(1)(f) a motion to agree the proposed amendment shall come before the General Assembly at its next meeting where it shall require a simple majority to be passed.

The Resolution was passed by majority vote.

12/41

Youth and Children's Work Committee

The Revd Rob Weston, Convener of the Committee, introduced Papers F and F1.

He explained that the staff for Youth and Children's Work would be cut in line with budget changes and that a strategy for the next five years had been prepared. (Paper F1)

Mr Weston responded to questions and comments. The new posts would cover the management of Children and Youth Development Officers' (CYDOs') Assembly work but offer less scope for ecumenical work, yet this plan provided a fresh start for work in the future. Consultations with the Staffing Advisory Group were already in process.

Mr Weston proposed:

Mission Council accepts the report of the Youth and Children's Work Committee, (contained in Paper F) and endorses the five year strategy document (contained in Paper F1). Furthermore, Mission Council agrees to restructure the Assembly appointed Youth and Children's Work staffing in the way proposed: reducing from three officer posts to two officer posts, and from three personal assistant posts to two personal assistant posts.

It having been pointed out that it was not normal for support staff posts to be brought to Assembly or Mission Council, it was agreed to delete the words after "two officer posts". The amended resolution was then proposed:

Mission Council accepts the report of the Youth and Children's Work Committee (contained in Paper F), and endorses the five year strategy document (contained in Paper F1). Furthermore, Mission Council agrees to restructure the Assembly appointed Youth and Children's Work staffing in the way proposed: reducing from three officer posts to two officer posts.

The amended resolution was passed by consensus.

The pressure under which staff in Church House are working at present was recognised and Mrs Karen Bulley-Morrison was applauded for carrying the load of all the youth work as currently the sole post-holder. The Moderator asked for this discussion and resolution to remain confidential for the time being out of sensitivity to the staff concerned.

12/36 (Continued from Session 6.)

Z1

The Revd Tracey Lewis asked that the reporting of this matter be held confidential until Mission Committee released the information.

Mrs Lewis responded to additional questions and there was further lengthy discussion. In the light of comments made the Convener withdrew the resolution contained in Paper N and the four options were tested individually. Finally Option 1 of Paper N1 found favour with Mission Council, and the following resolution was proposed:

Mission Council confirms that the decision of March 2012 to discontinue the ZI campaign means that URC involvement with ZI as a campaign shall cease at Assembly and all other levels of the Church. In ceasing to engage with this project we decide that it should not see publication in any way.

The Resolution was passed by agreement.

The Revd Elizabeth Nash, the Revd Peter Meek and the Revd Roy Lowes registered their dissent from the decision.

The chaplain, the Revd Dr James Coleman, led the Mission Council in prayer.

SESSION 8

Mrs Val Morrison took the chair.

The Deputy General Secretary announced that the Revd Pauline Barnes would facilitate a discussion concerning the minutes of the closed session of March 2012 at the close of business.

12/42

Ministries Committee

Special Category Ministries (SCM)

The Revd Ruth Whitehead, Convener of the Committee, presented Paper M. Ms Whitehead gave the background to the questions for the group discussions. She requested groups to bring their findings so that a resolution might be formulated for Mission Council to consider on Friday morning. She responded to questions regarding the numbers of SCM posts at present and whether they may be renewed. The questions related only to new posts.

Mission Council discussed the offered questions in groups. The matter was remaindered and continued in Session 9.

Closing worship was led by the chaplains, the Revd Melanie Smith and the Revd Dr James Coleman.

FRIDAY 19th OCTOBER

SESSION 9

Opening Worship was led by the chaplains.

The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar took the chair.
The Deputy General Secretary gave a series of notices.

12/43

Children And Youth Development Officers (CYDOs)

The General Secretary reported. May 2013 would be a time for wider debate concerning the questions which had been identified relating to one church/thirteen synods. CYDOs continued to be a General Assembly programme, however lack of clarity remained about who was the employer. In due course Mission Council would need to come to a policy decision on the issue. In order to enable this to be an informed decision a paper would be prepared for synods to discuss in advance of the next Mission Council meeting. Any person employed before that meeting should be on a 3 year fixed term contract. The Legal Adviser agreed that this was a proper way forward.

Mission Council agreed with the recommendation of the General Secretary.

Mrs Rominger reminded Mission Council that she would welcome comments on the Joint Property Strategy Group report received on Wednesday. The Group had asked that the URC add a person with a theological background to the Group. The General Secretary suggested the Revd Lucy Brierley. It was noted that the Group should be asked to clarify that it has the authority to add a member, and it was agreed that the matter be passed to the Nominations Committee for action.

12/44

Safeguarding

The United Reformed Church had in place a Safeguarding Policy for children which was in need of updating. There was currently no such policy in place within the URC concerning vulnerable adults. Two major documents, with accompanying appendices, had been prepared as draft Safeguarding policies for children and vulnerable adults respectively. In view of the fact that these documents were very lengthy, a small group comprising Ms Elizabeth Lawson, Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte, Ms Morag McLintock, the Revd Gethin Rhys and the Revd Kevin Watson had been asked to consider them on behalf of Mission Council and advise as to a way forward. Ms Lawson reported that the group believed that the draft policies needed further work. They were too long and complex to be useful to local churches as they stood, and the group suggested that a brief policy document including examples of likely situations and appropriate responses needed to be written. It might be that one document could cover both children and adults. There was discussion concerning possible ecumenical co-operation and it was reported that this had proved to be not possible in the past. It was agreed that the matter be remitted to the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary, and that comments could be passed to them.

The Moderator thanked Ms Lawson and the group for their work.

12/29 (Continued from Session 4)

Resolution 38 Assembly Commission

The Revd Pauline Barnes reported on a conversation held the previous evening. Those concerned would pass any comments they had related to the minutes of

the closed session of March 2012 to the Revd Dr David Peel, convener of the Commission. Mission Council agreed that, should they request to see them, the minutes of the closed session could be sent to both the Assembly Commission and the Law and Polity Advisory Group.

12/42 (Continued from Session 8)

Ministries Committee: Special Category Ministry Posts

The Revd Ruth Whitehead presented a resolution resulting from the comments received following group discussions on the previous evening.

Mission Council instructs the Accreditation Sub-Committee to limit the number of Special Category Ministry full-time equivalent posts to a maximum of 8% of the total number of stipendiary ministers available to be shared between Deployed and Special Category Ministry posts.

Ms Whitehead said that this would be an interim measure, with a new proposal to be brought to Assembly in 2014. Renewal of existing posts would be considered first, allowing approximately 6 new posts to be available in January 2013.

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

Mrs Val Morrison took the chair.

12/33 (Continued from Session 5)

Staffing Advisory Group Papers C and E

The Revd Rowena Francis thanked the groups for the helpful comments received. She responded to questions and comments. Concerns about section 1 of Paper E were expressed, particularly related to the role of governance. It was clear that whilst some found this analysis helpful this was not the case for most. Mrs Francis said that the name "Strategy Development Group" was still under consideration and could well be improved upon.

Mrs Francis proposed the following resolution:

Mission Council, recognising the need to clarify and simplify the lines of accountability and management in church house, resolves to accept:

1. the underlying thinking on the structure of church house with its six functions of embodiment, governance, compliance, management, advice and implementation and where each of these reside in the United Reformed Church as laid out in the review of the Central Secretariat (Paper E) as a helpful interim guide;
2. the three roles of Church House as outlined in Paper E;
3. three teams in church house of Ministries, Mission, and Administration and Resources;
4. the strategy proposals in the paper and specifically agrees to the formation of a General Secretariat of the General Secretary and the three Departmental Staff Secretaries. This group will function as the Strategy Development Group.

Mission Council asks the Staffing Advisory group in consultation with committees, staff and other appropriate groups to oversee the implementation of the above.

Following discussion the resolution was presented in the following amended form:

Mission Council, recognising the need to clarify and simplify the lines of accountability and management in Church House, resolves to explore further:

- 1) the three roles of Church House as outlined in Paper E;**
- 2) three teams in Church House of Ministries, Mission, and Administration and Resources;**
- 3) the strategy proposals in the paper and the formation of a General Secretariat of the General Secretary and the three Departmental Staff Secretaries.**

Mission Council asks the Staffing Advisory Group in consultation with committees, staff and other appropriate groups to explore further the areas identified above.

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

The Staffing Advisory Group assured Mission Council that concerns have been heard and would be taken into consideration during their future work.

Mrs Francis further proposed:

Mission Council agrees to the appointment of a Human Resources Manager as part of the Administration and Resources Department.

Following discussion the resolution was proposed in the following amended form:

Mission Council agrees to the appointment of a Human Resources Manager.

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

Mrs Francis proposed Resolution 2 on Paper C:

Mission Council

- a. agrees the establishment of a Human Resources Advisory Group (HRAG) until July 2015 with the remit contained in Paper C;**
- b. appoints the current Staffing Advisory Group as the interim Human Resources Advisory Group with the addition of those with human resources expertise currently serving on the Church House Management Group;**
- c. agrees that the Church House Management Group shall continue to serve with the revised remit as in Paper C.**

- d. **agrees that further members, up to an additional 4, may be co-opted or nominated to HRAG to do specific pieces of work as part of the implementation of changes in Church House over the coming year.**

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

Mrs Francis proposed Resolution 3 on Paper C:

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, extends the appointment of Michael Jagessar as Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry until August 2015.

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

The Moderator thanked the Staffing Advisory Group for its major piece of work.

12/45

Multicultural Church, Intercultural Habit

The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar presented Paper D and proposed the resolution remaindered from General Assembly at Scarborough:

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly,

- a. **celebrates its bold 2005 multicultural declaration, mindful of the changing landscape and context(s) for mission and ministry, what it means to be 'church' today, and of our need to deepen the ways we live justly as an inclusive Church;**
- b. **adopts a newly named focus, *multicultural church, intercultural habit*, marking the on-going journey we are all on;**
- c. **endorses the *multicultural church, intercultural habit charter* as an intentional way to enable renewal and a refocusing of how we live out our life together;**
- d. **commends the aspirations of the Charter to the whole of the United Reformed Church (synods, local congregations and resource centres) encouraging all to seek relevant and contextual ways to make these real in our life together.**

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

12/32 (Continued from Session 5)

Medium Term Planning

The General Secretary returned to Paper B and reminded Mission Council that Resolution 1 had been passed on the previous day. In the light of comments received Resolution 2 was withdrawn. Mrs Rominger proposed a revised Resolution 3:

Mission Council agrees the terms of reference and membership of a Medium Term Strategy Group, asks Nominations Committee to nominate two members with skill in strategic planning, and authorises the Officers of Assembly to agree their appointment.

The Resolution was passed by consensus.

Mission Council agreed that MCAG should decide on the way forward concerning Resolution 4 of Paper B.

12/46

Thanks and Farewells

The Revd John Humphreys paid tribute to Ms Kay Parris for her work as editor of Reform during the past 5 years. Ms Parris would leave her post on the 1st December 2012. Mr Humphreys informed Mission Council that short and long term plans were being made for the editorship of Reform, and assured members that Reform would continue.

Ms Marie Trubic thanked Mr Frank Kantor for his work in Church & Society, and said that Mr Kantor would be missed by the Joint Public Issues Team.

The Moderator thanked those whose term on Mission Council had ended:

Mr John Brown	Youth Work Development Officer
Mr Frank Kantor	Secretary for Church & Society
Mr Gary Leighton	FURY Co-Moderator
Mrs Jane Leighton	FURY Co-Moderator
Miss Emma Pugh	Mersey Synod Representative
Mr Alan Small	Chair - URC Trust who had resigned due to health reasons
Ms Jo Williams	Children's Work Development Officer
Miss Katie Unsworth	FURY Representative

Mrs Morrison thanked members of Mission Council for their contributions to the business of the Council; she also thanked the Revd Richard Mortimer and Mrs Krystyna Pullen for their work in preparation; Mrs Margaret Carrick Smith for her guidance and Mrs Irene Wren for the minutes.

Closing Worship

The members of the Methodist Council joined Mission Council.

The URC Moderators and the Vice-president of the Methodist Church presided at the sacrament of Holy Communion.

It was noted that Mission Council would meet next from 13th to 15th May 2013 at High Leigh, Hoddesdon.