



General Assembly Resolutions [1978 ----]

1978

Resolution 4 (Church and Society Department)

- The Assembly endorses the **Affirmation in the British Council of Churches Statement on Racism** and urges all members to make a public stand against racism in all its forms and in support of the reconciliation which is so integral a part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Affirmation of the BCC Statement is as follows:

1. *The Gospel of Jesus Christ sets forth the unity of the human race: the acceptance and love of all within the human family.*
2. *We assert again the claims of love and justice: to seek the good of others and to work for the human rights of all.*
3. *We recognise that Britain is now a pluralist society of varied races, cultures and religions; we must respect those who practice different religions and adhere to different styles of life; a more varied society offers new opportunities to us all.*
4. *We believe that racial policies and racial activities of the National Front, and other similar bodies, are entirely contrary to the truth of the Gospel and contrary to the true integrity of this nation.*
5. *We believe that racial attitudes will not be defeated by violence on our streets, but by open and unyielding commitment to freedom and justice for all.*
6. *We therefore urge Christians and non-Christians to act in ways which are free from racial discrimination and to support those values which are the foundations of our democratic society.*

A Commitment

1. *As a witness to this stand against racism we sign this statement as a clear commitment to a tolerant and just society, freed from racism of all kinds.*

1980

Resolution 1 (Church and Society Department)

- *The Assembly urges all churches to study the question of racism, both locally and nationally, using the publications of the British Council of Churches' Community and Race Relations Unit, and commends to all Churches the CRRU Project Fund as a practical way of contributing to the creation of a truly multi-racial society in Britain.*

1981

Resolution 3 (Church and Society Department)

- The Assembly expresses its opposition to the British Nationality Bill and urges Her Majesty's Government to withdraw it, and it calls upon Churches to make their views known to their members of Parliament; to work actively to combat racism; to contribute to the project fund of the Community and Race Relations Unit of the British Council of Churches.

1987

Resolution 4 (Church and Society Department)

- The Assembly adopts the **Declaration on Racism** and commends it for study and action and as a future point of reference throughout the Church.

The Declaration on Racism:

Creed.	The United Reformed Church believes that all people are created in God's image, free and equal in his sight.
Definition.	Racism results where prejudiced attitudes of superiority over others are combined with the power to shape society.
History.	Western civilisation is, and has long been, seriously flawed by racism.
Acknowledgment.	British society nurtures racism through assumptions, stereotypes and organisational barriers which deny black people a just share of power and decision-making.
Confession.	The Church displays racism by failing to adapt so that black people can share fully in its life, its outreach and its decision-making.
Affirmation.	There is cause for celebration in church and society when black and white people learn to cooperate, share power and make decisions together and where new forms of community life are thus discovered.
Commitment.	The United Reformed Church commits itself to challenge and equip all its people to resist racism within themselves, within the church and within society as a whole and to train people and devoted resources to this task.
Pledge.	The United Reformed Church pledges itself, as it shares in action against racism, to monitor and review at regular intervals what progress is being made in church and society.

1990

Resolution 7 (Ministries Department)

- The Assembly adopts the statement **A Declaration of Equal Opportunities** policy (in relation to ministers).
 - Par. 4: The Church is aware of possible barriers for example to women and to black people within the structures of the Church in ministry and others posts; this has to do with expectations, position, role and status.
 - Par. 5: *The Church will therefore establish appropriate methods of monitoring the appointment, call and position of women and black people in the ministry and of considering appropriate action where necessary.*

1994

Resolution 7 (Ministries Department)

The Assembly adopts an **Equal Opportunity Policy** (by unanimous vote) as follows:

- a. The Church affirms its Basis of Union that 'all ministries shall be open to both men and women.' At Assembly 1987 it adopted a Declaration on Racism and in 1990 adopted a Declaration of Equal Opportunities Policy in relation to ministers.
- b. This policy is not a statement of what the Church has already achieved; it is a declaration of the way it intends to move forward at all levels and in all aspects of its life within the limitations of its resources. In particular, it is an aid to appointing the most suitable people to all positions of responsibility within the church disregarding irrelevant considerations; it does not oblige the church as employer or otherwise to make appointments of people other than those most capable of fulfilling the responsibilities.

Assembly declares:-

- The Church will behave as an 'equal opportunity organisation'; and not discriminate on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- The Church works to combat racism, sexism and prejudice against people with disabilities and is committed to positive action rather than containing the issues.
- The Church is aware of possible barriers, for example to women, black people and people with disabilities, within the structures of the Church in ministry and other posts; this has to do with expectations, position, role and status.
- The Church will therefore establish appropriate methods of monitoring the appointment, call, representation and position of women, black people and people with disabilities in the Church and take appropriate action where necessary.

1994

Resolution 19

- Assembly welcomes and adopts the document '**Charter for the Church**' and encourages those responsible for the appointment or nomination of members of all the councils of the church to become more aware of the issues and to follow its recommendations. (Appendix A i)

Resolution 20a

- URC General Assembly calls the URC to prayer and action so that ways are found to listen to people of different cultural backgrounds in our churches.

Resolution 20b

URC General Assembly instructs the Mission Council

- (1) to consider the motion from Thames North Synod on the allocation of a special multi-racial ministry;
- (2) to make proposals to the General Assembly of 1995 in consultation with the new Standing Committee on Equal Opportunities and the Finance Committee as to what post, if any, is needed and how it should be funded.

1996

Resolution 22

Assembly, noting the concern of the Churches Commission for Racial Justice and in support of their statement, gives its full support to those in local churches and communities who feel constrained by conscience to offer sanctuary to individuals and families facing deportation, providing they are satisfied that sanctuary is a last resort and that at least one of the following applies:

- a) there is a well-founded fear of persecution;
- b) there is a serious threat to family life;
- c) there would be a basic denial of justice and compassion.

1996

Resolution 7

- Assembly instructs the Overseas Exchange Sub-Committee, on consultation with the Equal Opportunities Committee, to use one of its 5 special ministry posts for the appointment of a multi-racial and multi-cultural development worker with the United Reformed Church for an initial period of three years.

2000

Resolution 49

- General Assembly resolves to urge Mission Council as a matter of high priority to secure funding and urgently to make an appropriate appointment to continue the work begun by the Revd Marjorie Lewis-Cooper.

2001

Resolution 40 Refugees and Asylum Seekers

General Assembly urges Her Majesty's Government to accord greater dignity and respect to those seeking asylum in the United Kingdom by:

1. Adopting a positive attitude to refugees and asylum seekers.
2. Accurately informing and educating the public, thereby dispelling myths that give rise to resentment and racism.
3. Simplifying and expediting the asylum seeker procedure.
4. Ending the voucher system forthwith and introducing a workable cash benefit system.
5. Ensuring that where detention is deemed to be necessary, it is caring and supportive to which end prisons should not be used.
6. Liaising with local statutory and voluntary bodies and churches in dispersal areas to ensure adequate resourcing and human support.

General Assembly encourages all United Reformed Churches, with their ecumenical and inter-faith partners, to develop and sustain a positive approach by:

1. Welcoming refugees and asylum seekers irrespective of faith or ethnicity and valuing the contributions they have to offer.
2. Encouraging congregations to befriend, advise and support.
3. Offering material assistance as appropriate.
4. Lobbying constituency MPs.

2003

Resolution 27 Refugees & Asylum Seekers

General Assembly, noting the strength of feeling on the issue of refugees and asylum seekers in our society today, urges all members of the United Reformed Church to:

- a) acknowledge the unequivocal call of the Bible to care for the stranger in our midst and to respond to the needs of strangers in our own neighbourhoods with compassion and practical friendship;
- b) seek to address our own attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers with honesty and in ways that reflect the quality of our faith and commitment to our caring God;
- c) seek to live out the gospel in relation to refugees and asylum seekers through challenging the selfishness and racism that their presence has exposed, and by resisting any attempts to make this racism socially acceptable, whilst being aware that honest attempts to do so may lead to ridicule by many in British society.
- d) To join with other Non-Government organizations in active local and national campaigning to further the above aims.

2004

Mission Council Resolution on the British National Party (BNP)

Mission Council at its January 2004 meeting declared that:

- ‘membership or any form of support for organizations such as the BNP is in compatible with Christian discipleship...’

Resolution 8 Racial Justice & Multicultural Ministry

General Assembly agrees that:

- a) The Racial Justice Committee be renamed the Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry Committee;
- b) There should be cross representation between the Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry Committee and other General Assembly committees, together with the opportunity for an occasional inter-committee forum, to ensure its work is effectively integrated with the whole work of the United Reformed Church, and in particular with its work in developing relations with new migrant churches

2005

Resolution 52 Catch the Vision

The United Reformed Church declares itself to be a Multicultural Church welcoming all cultures and ethnicities in worship witness and service, and celebrating the diverse gifts of the whole people of God for the mission and ministry God calls us

Resolution 34 Developing Multicultural Ministry

The Committee asks that General Assembly commits to the following practical steps to enable the United Reformed Church to further develop as a multicultural church:

- a) General Assembly requires racial awareness training to be included in the induction of future Assembly staff, employees and committee members, and instructs that provision be made for training all existing staff and committee members at least once every two years.
- b) General Assembly affirms its support for the Racial Justice Advocacy Network, strongly urges each synod or region to appoint a Racial Justice Advocate Co-ordinator and encourages congregations to support the advocacy by encouraging members to join the network.
- c) General Assembly instructs the Secretaries for Training, Ministries and Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry to evaluate the accessibility to minority ethnic people of the systems of candidacy and training for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Church Related Community Workers, lay preachers and lay leaders, and to report with recommendations to Mission Council no later than March 2006.
- d) General Assembly authorises the Committee for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry to conduct an audit of church structures, policies, procedures and practices for the presence of barriers to full participation of minority ethnic people, and to report with recommendations to Mission Council no later than October 2006.

e) General Assembly endorses the 'Guidelines for welcoming and Receiving Migrant Churches' (Assembly Reports 2005 Appendix 5) and commends them to the United Reformed Church

Resolution 16 Target Representation on Panels and Boards

General Assembly instructs the Nominations Committee to monitor appointments to the Assessment Board, the Commission Panel for the Disciplinary Process and the Panel for the appointment and review of Synod Moderators in order to further its Equal Opportunities objectives and sets the following targets for the lists of nominations to each of these bodies presented in the annual report to Assembly:

- a) An equal number of men and women.
- b) At least 10% representation from minority ethnic groups.

Resolution 36

General Assembly instructs the Nominations Committee to monitor the appointments of Synod Moderators, Assembly Appointed Staff, Westminster College Staff and the conveners of Assembly Committees for equal opportunities purposes. It further instructs Nominations, Equal Opportunities and Racial Justice and Multi-cultural Committees to work together to devise a strategy for all appointment procedures which insure a balance in those groupings which matches the balance in other nominations of:

- a) An equal number of men and women.
- b) At least 10% representation from minority ethnic groups.

2007

Resolution 34 Representation at General Assembly

General Assembly agree, in principle, to apply to black and minority ethnic people a similar arrangement to that made for youth representation at the new and reduced General Assembly.

Resolution 35 Anniversary of the abolition of the British Slave Trade

In commemorating the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in British territories General Assembly adopts the following statement of regret and commitment and calls upon all members of the United Reformed Church to do the same:

- We recognise the inhuman treatment of Africans transported across the Atlantic as slaves and forced to work in degrading conditions.
- We are sorry for the legacy of that oppression which still distorts our relations with one another.
- We rejoice in the courage of those, black and white, who challenged the values of their day that allowed the slave trade to happen, and we pledge ourselves to recognise the dignity of all God's people and to build our society on that principle.
- We commit ourselves to the continuing struggle for justice for all the oppressed, including the many who are held in bondage today.

Resolution 58

As from 2010 among the representatives of Synods shall be included not less than one and preferably two from each Synod from its black and minority ethnic constituencies. Should a Synod prove unable to make such an appointment it may appoint from another Synod, but those persons must be from the black and ethnic minority community.

- The Revd Dr Andrew Prasad, on behalf of the Racial Justice Committee, sought Assembly's permission to withdraw Resolution 58. The Assembly agreed.

2008

We recognise and give thanks to God for the multicultural composition of the United Reformed Church and British Society. The opportunities afforded by the richness in diversity, are manifold.

- Our understanding of mission challenges us as a church to become more embracing and inclusive as we engage with an increasing ethnic and cultural diversity within the United Reformed Church. This is the focus of our newly worded Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry resolution being presented to Assembly 2008. The ethnic monitoring forms which have been collated this year have been very helpful in gaining a clear idea of how multicultural we are as a Church, ie the composition of our congregations. The Skills Audit forms which have been returned have also given us more information about minority ethnic people in leadership roles and those who are willing to be considered for membership on committees and councils of the wider Church.
- During the past 10 years, the most rapid numerical growth in the United Reformed Church has been among people of Caribbean, African, Asian and Oriental descent. In some areas of the United Reformed Church they comprise the majority in church congregations, in other areas they are in a minority and in many churches there are not yet any minority ethnic members.
- Recognising the contribution made by people of Caribbean, African, Asian and Oriental communities to the life and witness of the United Reformed Church, we regret that their contribution to church life is not reflected in the governance and structures of the United Reformed Church. Many continue to experience marginalisation and inequality.
- We aim to value and celebrate the contribution made by all minority ethnic groups and majority ethnic groups in the United Reformed Church. In using the term 'black minority ethnic' in the resolution, we are referring to people described in paragraphs 28 and 29 above, because of reasons explained in paragraph 29.

Resolution 32

- a) General Assembly requests each synod to include at least one black minority ethnic member in their group of representatives to General Assembly as from Assembly 2010.
- b) General Assembly instructs Mission Council to monitor and review the representation of black minority ethnic members in General Assembly in relation to the growth trends of the United Reformed Church and report back to the 2012 Assembly.

From the Education and Learning Report

- The following was noted: "the importance of developing a strategy with regard to learning in the areas of racial justice and multicultural issues and ensuring that not only are the issues addressed in and through its Resource Centres for Learning but that attention is paid to the ethnic balance of staff. The committee has a group working on this which has cross representation with the Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry programme (Mission committee).

2010

Resolution I

Vision 2020

General Assembly celebrates God's calling to each and every member, local church, synod, council and committee to join in God's transformational journey of good news for all creation.

- a) General Assembly gives thanks for the mission journey of the United Reformed Church in years gone by but recognizes the significant challenges ahead in our denomination and in our world.
- b) General Assembly adopts *vision2020* as the framework of mission planning and church growth for the United Reformed Church in the coming decade.

[The work of RJMM now falls with the mission department. RJMM's contribution is reflected in all ten statements, but especially those on Identity, Christian Ecumenical Partnerships, Community, Hospitality and Diversity, Evangelism]

Resolution 13

Church Changes

- General Assembly welcomes the Bournemouth International Church and the West London Asian Christian Fellowship as Mission Projects of the United Reformed Church.

2012

Resolution 27

multicultural church, intercultural habit

- a) General Assembly 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) General Assembly, adopts a newly named focus: multicultural church, intercultural habit , marking the ongoing journey we are all on.
- c) General Assembly 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) General Assembly 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. [see charter]

Secretary for RJMM - Revd Dr Michaael N. Jagessar
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