



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

**Minutes of the Mission Council
meeting at Ushaw College, Durham**

Friday 15th May

Session 1

The Moderator, the Rev John Marsh, constituted the meeting. In the absence of the Chaplain, he invited the Rev Fiona Thomas to lead opening worship, in which he gave an address.

Present: 64 members and 13 staff and visitors. New members were welcomed: Rev Christopher Parker (Southern Synod), Rev Zamantha Walker (Southern Synod) and Rev Rob Weston (Convenor, Youth and Children's Work Committee). New members who had given their apologies were noted: Rev Kay Alberg (Yorkshire Synod) and Mr Josh Thomas (FURY Moderator). Welcomes were also given to two deputies: Mr Rod Morrison for Rev Kay Alberg and Mrs Anthea Coates for Rev Roz Harrison. Apologies were received from Ms Suzanne Adofo, Rev Kay Alberg, Rev Adrian Bulley, Rev Ed Cox, Mr Andrew Grimwade, Rev Roz Harrison, Prof Malcolm Johnson, Mr Graham Jones, Ms Morag McLintock and Mr Justice Semuli. The Moderator ruled that all staff members might speak and participate in all discussions.

Mr John Knott, husband of the former Legal Advisor, thanked Mission Council for cards, condolences and prayers during his wife's illness and after her death.

The Deputy General Secretary gave an overview of the agenda.

01/09 Minutes

The minutes of Mission Council held on December 2nd – 4th 2008, were agreed and signed. The Moderator reported the thanks of Rev Ray Adams for the gift and good wishes presented to him at the end of the previous Mission Council.

02/09 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The General Secretary gave up-to-date information

- 08/48 Methodist Council/URC Mission Council cooperation
- 08/71 God is still speaking/Vision for Life
- 08/86 Section O Advisory Group is to take over the responsibility for the Section P Incapacity Procedure. The General Secretary offered a prize for the best title which might be applied to the Ministerial Discipline and Incapacity Procedure Advisory Group.

03/09 Review of Mission Council

The subject was introduced by the Deputy General Secretary. Mr Patrick Smyth then introduced paper A1 which was a final draft of the paper following its discussion at the December meeting. The Moderator invited questions to which Mr Smyth responded.

The General Secretary then introduced Paper A2 on behalf of the officers of the Assembly. This paper likened the relationship between General Assembly and Mission Council to the relationship of the elders and church meetings, which are regarded as a single council of the church. She suggested that the functions of Mission Council should be listed in the Manual. The General Secretary proposed Resolution 1 (A2) and it was seconded by Dr David Robinson.

1. Mission Council resolves to recommend to General Assembly that Mission Council be renamed, "The Assembly Commission"

The Moderator invited comments and questions. Many contributions were made. The need for change was clearly recognised as was the need to clarify the status and functions of Mission Council and its relationship to the General Assembly. Some felt that our ecclesiology would be changed by the proposals. Rev Rachel Poolman, Mr Smyth, and the General Secretary responded. The moderator asked for a card response to Resolution 1 (A2). There was warmth towards the general thrust of the resolution omitting the question of a new name, (8/9 blue cards shown).

Session 2

Review of Mission Council – continued

The Clerk proposed that Resolution 1, (A2) be withdrawn. Mission Council agreed by consensus. Further discussion followed focussed on paper A1 and the recommendations of the Task Group.

Recommendations

- 1.1. Mission Council be renamed Assembly Executive and Mission Council Advisory Group renamed Assembly Executive Advisory Group (AEAG).
- 1.2. Each Synod to appoint three members to Mission Council for up to two terms of three years. These members and their Moderator to be as balanced as possible in terms of lay and ordained and the full range of our equal opportunities policy.
- 1.3. Two representatives from our ecumenical partners with full speaking and voting rights be appointed to Mission Council on the advice of the Mission Committee.
- 1.4. URC Representatives to wider ecumenical meetings to report to Mission Committee.
- 1.5. Assembly Appointed Staff to have full speaking rights on any subject on Mission Council and General Assembly.
- 1.6. When a Committee Convenor is unable to attend Mission Council or General Assembly, another member of the committee may attend in their place.
- 1.7. Mission Council agrees to the changes in responsibility of Mission Council and General Assembly.

- 1.8. Mission Council agrees to the changes to the remit and membership of Mission Council Advisory Group
- 1.9. Mission Council agrees to the changes to its Advisory and Task Groups.
- 1.10. A Consensus Adviser be nominated by Nominations to both General Assembly and Mission Council, and four consensus facilitators be nominated by Nominations to General Assembly

Again, many points were made. It was felt necessary that a clear relationship needed to be established between General Assembly and Mission Council (by whatever name). Members of the church might feel even further removed from the decision making of the Church. Moving to a biennial assembly was posing more difficulties than at first envisaged. There were decisions to be taken between Assemblies, else the General Assembly agenda would be severely overburdened. Continuity of personnel was important. The remit of the Nominations Committee might need to be changed if all Task and Working Groups became the Committee's responsibility.

In the light of the contributions made in discussion the recommendations were resolved by consensus: 1.1 withdrawn; 1.2 agreed as a recommendation to the synods; 1.3 agreed, with one partner to be from the Methodist church for the time being; 1.4 withdrawn; 1.5 agreed; 1.6 agreed; 1.7 withdrawn; 1.8 referred back.

The membership of the Mission Council Advisory Group was agreed as follows:

Two Assembly Moderators

Two immediate past Moderators

Two Moderators-elect

Treasurer

General Secretary

Deputy General Secretary in attendance

4 members of Mission Council, at least one of whom should be a Committee Convener and one a member, with Conveners serving for 4 years from year of appointment or until they cease to be conveners, whichever is the shorter, and members serving for 4 years from year of appointment or until they cease to be members of Mission Council, whichever is the shorter

Rev John Humphreys suggested that discussion might continue in small groups. This was agreed, with the focus on paragraph 16.1 (A1) and paragraph 18 (A2).

Paragraph 16.1(A1)

Mission Council be authorised to act on behalf of and with the authority of General Assembly when necessary. Mission Council will have discretion as to when to use this authority bearing in mind that General Assembly can still overturn a Mission Council decision.

Para 18 (A2)

The Assembly Commission will not act as a Committee in itself. While Mission Council can act on behalf of the General Assembly only in matters of urgency or where specifically charged by Assembly so to do, the Assembly Commission will act at all times with the full powers of the Assembly except where the Basis and Structure, a Resolution of Assembly or the Assembly Commission itself prevents. It will continue to act as a broker between committees but it will receive and decide upon committee Reports and Resolutions, rather than as at present confining itself to determining whether work is ready to go to the Assembly.

Mission Council broke into small groups to consider paragraphs 16.1 (A1) and (A2) and to give their vision for the Mission Council. Feedback comments reflected much of what had already been said from the floor. Further consideration needed to be given to the way forward and decisions could not be rushed.

The Moderator invited Mission Council to agree **“that the General Secretariat be asked to produce a follow up paper for the next Mission Council meeting in the light of the day’s discussion”**. Thanks were offered to the Review Group for their work in producing paper A1. Mission Council agreed this by consensus.

04/09 Disciplinary Process Paper B

The Clerk asked if the Legal Advisor could speak to the paper B1, replacing Paper B. Mr Andrew Middleton explained that the changes referred to amendments which had been proposed to the outworking of the recommendations of the Assembly Commissions’ reports. He felt more work was required and that the amendments should be withdrawn. It agreed to return to the matter later in Mission Council. The Clerk suggested that if anyone with concerns or questions to speak to Mr Middleton directly before his departure on Saturday night.

05/09 Charity Registration (regulations applying to England and Wales)

It was reported that Registration was proceeding and deadline should be met, although there was still some uncertainty about the advice given by the Charity Commission.

Session 3

The Moderator welcomed Mr Andy Littlejohns, assisting Rev Martin Hazell with the audio-visual resources.

06/09 General Assembly 2008 Resolution 12

Paper C was introduced by the Revs Rachel Poolman and Terry Oakley. Mission Council was reminded of the Resolution 12 from General Assembly 2008. Ms Poolman gave a progress report and drew attention to further work to be completed before Mission Council meets in November.

07/09 General Assembly 2008 Resolution 49

The General Secretary reported that no dissent had been received from the Synods. This resolution would therefore return to Assembly for confirmation.

08/09 Synod of Wales Ecumenical matter - The Free Church Council of Wales

Rev Peter Noble, Moderator of the National Synod of Wales, explained that the URC had been working ecumenically satisfactorily through CYTUN linking with the Welsh Assembly, and that the National Synod of Wales would therefore be withdrawing from the Free Church Council for Wales. Mission Council affirmed the decision.

09/09 Synod of Scotland - Episcopal-Methodist-United Reformed Church Talks

Rev John Humphreys, Moderator of the National Synod of Scotland, spoke of a new initiative being explored by the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and

the United Reformed Church. A statement of Partnership had been drawn up and this would be discussed at the Autumn Synod.

10/09 Equal Opportunities updated Policy General Assembly Resolution 19:

The Deputy General Secretary introduced Paper D in place of the Committee Convenor, Ms Morag McLintock.

General Assembly urges all churches, synods and United Reformed Church committees to embrace the General Assembly updated Equal Opportunities policy (as adopted on General Assembly's behalf by Mission Council in October 2006) by 31st January 2010 and thereafter to implement said updated policy.

Comments were invited from the floor. A number of members related incidents wherein people had felt excluded and others gave examples of good practice. The Deputy General Secretary undertook to relay the comments to Ms. McLintock.

11/09 Racial Justice, Multicultural Ministries

Rev Dr Michael Jagessar addressed Mission Council. He confirmed that the Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministries Committee sought to adhere to the Equal Opportunities Policy in all its work. He indicated that leaflets would be distributed for Racial Justice Sunday on Sept 13th. Offerings from services on Racial Justice Sunday should be forwarded to Synods or Church House, rather than to CTBI. On Saturday 5th December a Multicultural Event was planned at Carrs Lane in Birmingham. Tickets were available. The 2009 Multicultural Stories Competition would be judged.

The General Secretary awarded her prize to Rev Rowena Francis for the suggestion of 'MIND' as the new title for the Ministerial Incapacity and Disciplinary Procedures Advisory Group. The session closed with prayers led by the Rev Fiona Thomas.

Saturday May 16th

Session 4

Morning prayers were led by the Rev David Lawrence.

12/09 Nominations Committee Papers E and E1

The report was introduced by the Rev Malcolm Hanson.

12/09/01 INTRODUCTION

Work on the reshaping of committees following the Catch the Vision process had continued through the past year. During this time three new committees have come into existence – the Windermere Management Committee, the Investment Committee and the Stewardship Sub-Committee. Efforts continue to make our committee structures and lines of responsibility as transparent and clear as possible. The Nominations Committee had continued to try to make committee and other vacancies widely known as early as possible. Information about Assembly 2010 vacancies was sent out in March 2009 and should now be available throughout the

church. The Committee sought suggestions of suitable nominees from Synods, FURY, central staff and committees.

A major piece of work on Monitoring, which was presented at the December meeting of Mission Council, showed how committees and other leadership positions had been filled 2005 – 2008. Partly as a result of this, and at the request of Mission Council Advisory Group, a special group was set up to review the procedures for appointing synod moderators. The search for more Black and Minority Ethnic people for committees has been facilitated by the use of the Skills Survey and the efforts of Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry colleagues. However nearly half of those so invited to serve were not able to accept the invitation.

The Committee tried to have an overview of how the United Reformed Church uses its resources of personnel. It also strove for transparency, so that the Committee's report to Assembly or Mission Council gave a true picture of how the work of the Church was being carried out. Recently it had been concerned about the number of special groups and sub-committees which had been appointed by committees and councils without any overall co-ordination or consultation, potentially leading to the overburdening of willing people and a great deal of the work of the Church being done "invisibly", sometimes without clear lines of accountability. The Committee was seeking to co-operate with other committees in order to find ways of working together in making such appointments, so that the whole picture became clear to all and the church's resources of people and time could be used better.

12/09/02 ASSEMBLY STAFF APPOINTMENTS

2.1 The Nominating Group for the post of **Secretary for World Church Relations** convened by the Rev Elizabeth Welch nominated the Rev Jane Rowell to serve from 1st July 2009 until 30th June 2014, subject to review before the end of this period. Mission Council had agreed that in view of a potentially early appointment to this post MCAG might authorise this appointment on the recommendation of the nominating group and it duly did so at its April 2009 meeting.

2.2 The Nominating Group for the post of **Secretary for Ecumenical Relations** convened by the Rev John Humphreys nominated the Rev David Tatem to serve from 1st July 2009 until 30th June 2014, subject to review before the end of this period.

12/09/03 ASSEMBLY BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES (see appendix 3)

12/09/04 RESOLUTIONS

1. Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints committees and representatives of the Church as set out in the Nominations Committee report subject to additions and corrections contained in the Supplementary Report. Agreed by Majority Vote.
2. Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints the Rev David Tatem to the post of Secretary for Ecumenical Relations from 1st July 2009 until 30th June 2014, subject to review before the end of this period. Agreed by Majority Vote.

Mr Hanson expressed the thanks of the Committee and of the Church to all those who had served the church on committees and as representatives, especially to

those whose terms were ending. He paid tribute to the work done by the committee secretary Rev Liz Brown, noting that as a volunteer committee secretary she was not included in the membership or in attendance at Mission Council and General Assembly and hoping that this would be facilitated under new structures. Discussion followed relating to the refusal rate of those invited to serve on committees, in particular those from the BME community. Mr Hanson agreed with the Clerk that more research could be done from the data already collected. The actual problem, which might not be the perceived problem, needed to be ascertained. The question of publication of the report was discussed. The list of appointments would be contained within the Mission Council Minutes and also posted on the URC website. The Clerk stated that the report would be contained in the Reports to Assembly for 2010 to ensure a permanent record.

13/09 Ministries Committee

Rev Peter Poulter introduced the report contained in Paper F and proposed

Mission Council adopts the Ministerial Standards of Conduct and the Elders' Standards of Conduct and commends them to the church.

- a) The Ministerial Standards of Conduct should be included as part of the Terms of Settlement signed by a minister and the pastorate when a minister moves or a new pastorate is formed.
- b) The Elders' Standards of Conduct should be shared with prospective elders and its implications understood as part of the preparation for ordination.

The Moderator invited discussion which followed. The Convenor responded to points made concerning the intended meanings of a number of phrases. He hoped that guidelines for CRCW's would be ready in November. He said that this was not legislation but a raising of issues and boundaries which should not be overstepped.

Session 5

The Moderator ruled that the resolution on paper F [Ministerial Standards of Conduct] needed to be forwarded to General Assembly. Mr Middleton reflected that if paper F became a mandatory document there would be conflict with the Section O process, yet he believed that the bullet points reflected issues that are live within the URC at the present time. The Elders' section was remaindered until Session 8. He said that a revised paper to include CRCWs would return to the November Mission Council. Those with particular concerns about Paper F were invited to meet the Convenor and the General Secretary over lunch.

14/09 United Reformed Church Trust (URCT)

The Legal Advisor spoke to paper G: The report on Progress being made by Local Churches, Synods And The URC towards Charity Registration (in England and Wales). Mr Middleton reported that the Memorandum and Articles of the United Reformed Church Trust was currently under amendment and that it would return to the Charity Commissioners for further scrutiny. He hoped that registration would be completed within the expected timescale. Several Local churches had completed registration and others were in process. No major difficulties were envisaged. In response to questions, Mr Middleton did not have the information how many Synods had registered. LEPs over the threshold were registering, and a model constitution

was being prepared by Churches Together in England. Help should be available through County or Synod Ecumenical Officers.

15/09 “Hope in God’s Future”

The Moderator welcomed Rev Dr Rosalind Selby to Mission Council. Ms Francis Brienen introduced Paper H and she invited Rosalind to speak.

She invited the groups to discuss their responses to the questions:

1. What are your general views of the report? Are there any issues in the report, which stood out, raised concern, challenged you, etc?
2. What do you consider to be the practical implications, for your local church, synods and the URC as a whole, of adopting this report?
3. What are your views on points b) and e) of the draft resolution?

In response to a question Mr Kantor explained that the Ministries Committee budget could fund a one day a week appointment for six months. Group work followed.

Session 6

Groups reported back on their discussions of Paper H. There was widespread praise for the content of the paper, but concern that it would need to be disseminated in a rather simpler form, including examples of good practice, if it were to have the desired impact in the local churches. Some felt that the emphasis on guilt and repentance was over-stated. It was recognised that radical changes in lifestyle would be necessary both for individuals and for the whole church and that it might well be for Christians to set the example to the rest of society in the coming years. Somehow this had to be incorporated into the programmes of the church. Concerning the post suggested, there was lack of unanimity. Some felt that it was unnecessary, others that it was too short a period for really positive outcomes.

Dr Selby responded saying the document was produced foremost as a theological reflection upon the subject of Climate Change, the group had not been asked for a list of practicalities; that was for others to work out. Mr Kantor responded on behalf of Church and Society. He reminded Mission Council of Resolution from Assembly 2007 which encouraged the reduction of our carbon footprints. He reported an energy audit had been undertaken at Church House and commended a pilot scheme as a positive way forward. He asked if every Synod could have a ‘Green Apostle’ to highlight the issues within each

Resolution

Mission Council:

a) Adopts *Hope in God’s Future*

Resolved by agreement

- #### **b) Commends the report for further consideration by mission committee with a view to making it more accessible to synods and local churches and linking it with practical suggestions for study and action, including integrating present and future programmes of the church.**

Resolved by consensus

- c) **Acknowledges the action taken by many individuals across our churches with respect to their personal lifestyles and affirms members of congregations as they continue to make adjustments in their carbon emissions.**

Resolved by consensus

- d) **Recognising the action already taken in response to Resolution 49 of the 2007 General Assembly, commits to implementing the recommendations of the *Hope in God's Future* Report.**

Resolved by consensus

- e) **Notes the intention of Mission Committee to appointment of a climate change consultant to help integrate the recommendations of this report into the mission focus and priorities of the URC. and instructs Mission Committee to agree the conditions, output and outcomes of the post.**

Resolved by consensus.

16/09 Wessex Synod Item

Mr Peter Pay, on behalf of the Wessex Synod, asked Mission Council to consider adding the agenda, papers for discussion, and papers approved to the website in addition to the minutes. Following constructive discussion the Item was **resolved by consensus**. (i.e.the next agenda, minutes when ready, and papers approved at this Mission Council.)

Session 7

17/09 The report of Human Sexuality Task Group

The Moderator welcomed the Rev John Waller and invited him to introduce paper J. The Task Group asked for guidance about their way forward. It had taken time to build trust between the members and Mr Waller believed that the best way to deal with the eleven points of their remit was by unhurried discussions. He recognized that talks could not on indefinitely and that eventually closure must come. They could not provide a final report for Assembly 2010 as requested. Others understood the Task Group's difficulty, and affirmed that the work was needed, using material that is already available as much as possible. The need to value all for who they were was underlined. The Commitment, agreed at the 2008 Assembly, was very much the group's starting point. It had been available since the last assembly but had had patchy coverage in the Synods.

Mission Council was requested by the Task Group:

- 1 **To release the Group from the remit to disseminate the Commitment, at least in the immediate term**

Resolved by consensus

- 2 **To release the Group from the requirement to produce a major report for Assembly 2010, whilst leaving the option for some report to be made at that stage**

Resolved by consensus

3 To encourage the Group to work on alternative ways of continuing the human sexuality discussion

Resolved by consensus

4 To provide the Group with an indication of the financial budget within which it should work

Resolved by consensus

5 To support the Group in its intention to focus the next part of its work on the three areas listed in paragraph 8

Resolved by consensus

6 To accept the Group's plans for progressing the eleven points listed in section 9 of the 2007 Assembly report

Resolved by consensus.

18/09 Finance

The report was presented by the Treasurer, Mr John Ellis. He reported that the accounts were not yet ready for Mission Council, but once audited would be posted on the website. They showed the outcome of 2008 was positive. The income from investments had increased by £200,000, although the value of investments had gone down. Minister's stipends cost £400,000 less than expected. General Assembly ran over budget but the year ended with a surplus of £700,000. Mr Ellis gave much credit to the staff in the finance office.

The Ethical Investment Group wished to address the issue of tax avoidance.

The Yardley Hastings buildings remained an asset of the URC. The URC Trust had asked the Finance Committee to negotiate with East Midlands re: the length of lease, and level of rent. Possible grants to East Midlands to assist with the upkeep of the property might come from the Legacy Fund. East Midlands thanked Mr Ellis for his support for the mission at Yardley Hastings.

Mr Ellis spoke about the Ministers' Pension Fund. See appendix 1 for his statement.

Mission Council was asked for a view on options for the next steps.

1. Each Synod should provide a target amount of money
2. Each Synod should pay a lump sum – Synods have more investments than the central church
3. Local churches be levied through the M&M for the pension fund (5%-10%)
4. Squeeze the money from the annual budget each year.

Discussion followed. A number of points and suggestions were offered from the floor and Mr Ellis replied. Contributions from synods could be requested as we were covenanted together, we had to ask how many ministers we wanted as many were soon to retire, Retired Ministers' Housing was the largest asset, but it was not easy to put a charge over houses, the Lay pension fund was all right at present, an appeal would not necessary bring in money quickly enough, raising the retiring age would not affect the immediate figures, money had to be readily accessible, Synods could pledge assets and would know where the growth points were. Also it was not entirely technical as ministers were living longer, the economic climate might not improve quickly and investments might not rise in value quickly.

Mission Council would make decisions in November. Mr Ellis said that there was a danger of losing sight of the technical problem before us. We had to look for solutions in the technical areas, except that ministers might have to pay more. He added that we did not want to panic our ministers into feeling that their pension was not safe. We should probably employ a combination of the options, ideally not asking local churches for more money. The Moderator offered thanks to the Finance Committee and to Mr Ellis, for the quality of the debate.

Session 8

19/09 Youth & Children's Work Committee: Report of CYDO Task Group Paper M

The report was presented by Rev Rob Weston. He reported on the progress of the follow-up to the CYDO programme review. Strong Synod management continued to be very important. There was no overall manager for the Assembly-allocated part of the CYDO's work, as it was shared by the three youth development officers who took this responsibility in rotation and together allocated the work with an aim to involve all CYDOs equally. This work included the website, the Pilots 'grand event' at Warwick, the Children's Assembly and Fury Assembly. Currently one Synod was without a CYDO but the team and staff were still available to communicate with and support this Synod.

20/09 Good Practice

The Deputy General Secretary gave a statement of intent. Excellent resources had been or were being prepared by the Church on safeguarding issues, care of vulnerable adults, the future of CAS/CRB checking and pastoral response teams, but all those individual pieces of work did not cohere into a unified whole. In November a cohesive framework would be brought to Mission Council, to include all the appropriate policies.

21/09 Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee

Rev Peter Poulter introduced Paper K on behalf of Ministries Committee: Fixed Motor Bike Allowance. He moved the resolution, noting that in order to claim the motor-cycle allowance, it should be the minister's only mode of transport for Church business.

Resolution:

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, agrees to the following change in the Plan for Partnership: *Add the following words to 6.3.4.2 after "a fixed car allowance should be paid."*:

A fixed allowance may be claimed for motor bicycles if this is the only mode of transport used by the minister for church business. The amount paid shall be 25% of the fixed car allowance.

[6.3.4.2 then continues: "The rate of fixed car allowance will be advised by the MoM Sub-Committee (see Appendix A)." Currently the recommended rate is £1,200 pa.]

Resolved by consensus

Rev Steven Newell explained a Cycle Scheme stating that a new bicycle would be useful to him or others. Under the Cycle Scheme, the employer buys the cycle and the employee leases it back. Mr Poulter undertook to speak with Maintenance of the Ministry sub committee about the place of bicycles within the Plan for Partnership.

22/09 Special resolution

Presented by Mr Frank Kantor.

Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly on a matter of immediate importance:

- Urges members of the United Reformed Church not to be seduced into voting for candidates representing extremist parties in the forthcoming European and county Council elections, even though they may have concerns about mainstream parties, as a result of recent publicity about MP's expense claims.
- Reminds members of the Church's long held conviction that the policies of extremist and racist political parties are incompatible with an understanding of God's love for all people.
- Calls on Christians to work actively to counter those who stir up hatred, and reject racist and intolerant political parties.
- Commends to the Church a 'toolkit' produced by the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church to help equip and affirm local church leaders in this task. Available online at: www.jointpublicissues/org.uk/jpitpolitics

There was considerable sympathy with the resolution but a number of amendments were suggested. It was agreed that a reworded resolution would return to the Sunday morning session.

23/09 Disciplinary Process

The Clerk proposed that the contents of paper B (replacement) be adopted (see appendix 4). These were agreed by consensus.

Resolved by consensus.

24/09 Paper F revisited

Mission Council was invited to express views on the paper relating to the Standard of Conduct for Elders. Mr Poulter said that this paper would return to Mission Council in November prior to being forwarded to General Assembly.

Evening prayers were led by Mrs Janet Gray.

Sunday May 17th

Mission Council gathered to celebrate Holy Communion. This was led by the Moderator, assisted by the Rev Fiona Thomas.

Session 9

Uncompleted business

The Deputy General Secretary gave 'housekeeping notices'. He then offered a reflection on Friday's session of Mission Council and his understanding of the present position of Mission Council in relationship to General Assembly. Full text in Appendix 2.

The Moderator invited comments and some suggestions were made:

- That the new paper be available well before the next Mission Council meeting
- Might we have a forum on the website

22/09 Emergency Resolution

Following further amendment the wording was agreed as:

Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly on a matter of immediate importance:

- Reminds members of the importance of voting in the European and County Council elections on 4th June despite the recent bad publicity about MPs' expenses
- Urges members of the United Reformed Church to cast their vote in order counter the threat of the BNP

(For information in 2004 the URC declared that support for organisations such as the BNP, to be incompatible with Christian discipleship. A 'toolkit' produced by the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church is available for local churches @ www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/jtpolitics

Proposed by Mr Peter Pay, seconded by Rev Gordon Smith

Resolved by consensus

23/09 Thanks and Farewells

The Moderator thanked all those who had help to make Mission Council run smoothly; those who had led worship in place of the chaplain; his colleagues; the office staff and the Ushaw staff. He thanked all those who were attending for the last time: Graham Campling, Margaret Gateley Patrick Smyth, and Donald Swift

Ms Elaine Colechin led the closing worship.

Mission Council next convenes at The Hayes, Swanwick, Monday 16th – Wednesday 18th November 2009.

Appendix 1

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION FUND Statement by the Treasurer after Mission Council May 2009

1 At Mission Council on 16 May, I explained the position we have reached in reviewing the recent Valuation of the Ministers' Pension Fund. Mission Council requested that a statement be provided which Council members and others could draw on in answering questions about this topic around the Church. This statement is being sent to all Council members and Synod Treasurers.

The Fund

2 The Ministers' Pension Fund (URCMPF) is a defined benefit scheme which provides pensions for stipendiary ministers and Church Related Community Workers. It is a strong, well-managed Fund with assets of around £80m. It is well able to meet all its current obligations and there is no threat whatever to pension payments in the immediate or medium term.

3 The URCMPF income comes from the income on its investments, the contributions of ministers and CRCWs who are members of the Fund (currently 5.75% of stipend) and the contributions of the Church through Ministry and Mission Fund giving (currently 17.25% of stipend).

The Valuation

4 Every three years the law requires a formal Valuation of the Fund. This took place as at 1 January 2009.

5 The Valuation is a highly complex set of calculations. Essentially it compares an estimate of the likely payments due from the Fund into the far distant future with an estimate of the likely income from (a) the Fund's assets and (b) the contributions being paid into the Fund. These estimates are all highly approximate, but using very cautious assumptions, it currently looks as if the Fund may have a shortfall as high as £25m relative to its possible expenditures.

6 The main reasons for this deficit are:

- (i) ministers are living longer; the higher likely expenditure this causes accounts for at least £5m of the gap;
- (ii) the general economic situation looks much more bleak than at the time of the last Valuation so we have reduced our estimates of the likely income from our assets;
- (iii) the Government's Pensions Regulator requires much more cautious assumptions on a variety of technical points than previously, partly because we are a Church and not structured like a company pension scheme.

Our Response

7 The Finance Committee and the Pension Fund Board are working on our response to this deficit and will be consulting in detail with the Pension Regulator. We hope to bring a firm set of proposals to the November Mission Council. Some of the likely building blocks are as follows.

- (i) As a community of Hope, we shall address this issue as a problem we expect to solve and shall solve together, with all parts of the Church playing their part.

- (ii) As a Church expecting to be around for the long term, we shall spread the costs over a lengthy period to minimise the disruption to other key mission work.
- (iii) To demonstrate to the Pensions Regulator that we are resolutely committed to the care of our retired ministers, we shall put a legally enforceable charge over some of the Church's assets so that in the most unlikely event that the URCMPF one day did run out of money, it could take over those assets.
- (iv) The central reserves of the Church might make a one-off contribution to the Fund.
- (v) The members of the Fund will be asked to increase their contributions to a higher percentage of stipend, perhaps around 7.5%.
- (vi) A review of the benefits provided by the Fund should be undertaken before the 2012 Valuation.

8 Even if all these proposals were to come to fruition, there would still be a gap of at least £10m to cover, which is equivalent to at least an extra £1m per year being required if we seek to cover the deficit over 10 years. Options for raising this additional money include:

- (i) Giving each Synod a target amount to raise and leaving each Synod to decide how to raise it;
- (ii) Asking Synods to provide money from their own resources;
- (iii) Asking local churches to pay a Pensions Levy on top of their regular M&M contributions;
- (iv) Reducing the number of stipendiary ministers in order to release funds to divert into the URCMPF.

9 Mission Council recognised that all these options are difficult and wanted some combination that does the least damage to our mission priorities.

Questions and Feedback

10 Any comments in the light of this statement are welcome and can be sent to the Treasurer c/o the Finance Office at 86 Tavistock Place. They will all be considered as the work progresses but it is not possible to guarantee all will receive a personal reply.

John G Ellis
Treasurer

21 May 2009

Appendix 2

The Deputy General Secretary's statement, Sunday morning.

- 1) Mission Council did not like receiving two papers, which it found confusing.
- 2) The title of Paper A2 "The Government of the United Reformed Church at the highest level" raised concerns about the nature of authority and where it lies within the councils of the Church, and the suspicion of hierarchy.
- 3) On Friday afternoon we came across an elephant in the room – the deliberate ambiguity written into our founding documents in 1972 to glide over ecclesiological differences between Congregationalists and Presbyterians. Seeing General Assembly and Mission Council as together representing a single council of the Church opened this up and at best was a challenge to grasp nettles and at worst deeply scary.
- 4) **BUT**
- 5) It was recognised that the logic of decisions already taken about the move to a biennial General Assembly and the hope to have no more than 18 or so Resolutions at each future biennial General Assembly did tend strongly towards Mission Council having to take more responsibility for the running of the United Reformed Church.
- 6) **THEREFORE**
- 7) It is probably safer to affirm the unique status and authority of General Assembly whilst recognising that in the new circumstances of a biennial General Assembly it devolves more of that authority than before to Mission Council. Resetting the notch of the degree of authority Mission Council possesses so as to give it more is acceptable, provided that authority is seen as devolving from its unique setting in General Assembly. We prefer this to the alternative that says Mission Council has the authority of its own right, because it represents a single council of the Church with General Assembly.
- 8) On that basis we shall return to you with another paper in November.

Group G on Friday night asked us to develop something based on power and trust, continuity, authority and renewal of personnel. Let me say this as a first response. A lot of work has been and is being done on values. The Mission Committee is looking at mission strategy and outcomes and to that end asked the Faith and Order Reference Group to do some background work on values. What they produced was an intricate, tightly argued piece of theology, from which I quote extracts to give you a flavour.

"The mission of the Church is to be a place where Jesus, and the promise of fullness of life, is made real through the fellowship of the people of God. Furthermore, the Church participates in working out God's purpose of fullness of life for the *oikoumene* sometimes by being the means by which the world is transformed, sometimes by proclaiming a word of judgment on the God-denying, the inhuman and the degrading, and sometimes by discerning God's activity in the world. God's will of redemption for the whole *oikoumene* recognizes the world to be the sphere of God's missionary activity. This challenges the Church to ethical discernment on both personal and political levels. Mission involves speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves, working with those who are poor,

oppressed and unheard for justice, peace and development.

Mission involves the discernment of God's will within a given context and commitment to live out that will in the community of the Church and in the world. This is done so that the triune God may be glorified both in the Church and in the world, by faith and action, by worship and service".

Now what does all that mean translated into the work and witness of Mission Council? Yorkshire Synod agreed these principles for its Committee working:

Principles

Our overall aim is to allow for freedom, trust and openness in all our working so enabling creative energy to be channeled into the mission of the church rather than maintaining structures.

We recognize the need for clear aims, objectives and methods of working.

The following are common elements related to the style of working which it has been agreed that all committees and individual representatives will adhere to and which will be included in each committee's remit.

- Open and clear communication
- Honest and frank expression and genuine listening
- Consultation on sensitive issues
- Focus on what matters at local level
- Informing the 'local' regarding relevant national, Synod and ecumenical initiatives
- Ensuring that activity relates to the Five Marks of Mission
- Considering the ecumenical implications of any thinking or activity
- A recognition that people take action as authorized by their role
- An agreement that emergency action may be necessary subject to early reporting back.

It is within these contexts that any discussions regarding structures should be held. I think I'd want to add other things under "ensuring that activity relates to", but there is so much good material around. The challenge after our first whole denomination review process, Catch the Vision, restructuring, and David Cornick's mantra "we are living through a period of licensed experimentation" is to try to pull it all together. And because we have come from the places and histories that we have, some of us will be frightened by centralization and others will be frightened by things which look too maverick and different. Roberta and I hear two voices. "Don't inflict on us more than we can handle at once" and "please go on giving us eleventy-leven different possibilities from which we can extract what's relevant for where we are". Less, more. Not easy to fulfil all righteousness there. Somehow, trying to steer between that, we need less that is prescriptive and more that is possible within a coherent whole, and we need to wrestle with what dissent properly means in an era of increasing legal regulation.

Which brings me to trust, hard won through time and experience, terrifyingly easy to lose. The last three times I have moved post I have had to start all over again to win it. All I can say is this. Finding myself in a post where I need to go on a learning curve in order to know the answer to questions demanding an immediate reply, and time does not permit the learning curve to take place, I am thrown back on praying my instincts every morning, praying that God will be at work in them and will speak through them. And then I go into the working day and run on instinct, trusting God to be there. Which isn't a bad place to start.

III. ASSEMBLY BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

Notes:

1. The Moderator, the Moderators-elect, the immediate past Moderator and the General Secretary are members *ex officio* of every standing committee.
2. Symbols have been used as follows:
 - * denotes those appointed since General Assembly 2008
 - ** denotes those whom the May Mission Council is invited to appoint for the first time
 - † denotes those who have been invited to extend their periods of service
 - # denotes a Convener Elect who will become Convener in 2010
 - / the name after the slash is the alternate for the one before it
3. The number in round brackets following the name indicates the member's synod: (1) Northern, (2) North Western, (3) Mersey, (4) Yorkshire, (5) East Midlands, (6) West Midlands, (7) Eastern, (8) South Western, (9) Wessex, (10) Thames North, (11) Southern, (12) Wales, (13) Scotland. This numbering is not shown where it is not relevant.
4. When a member of a committee is there as a representative of another body or a particular category this is indicated in round brackets following the name.
5. Committee membership is normally for a period of four years, though this may sometimes exceptionally be renewable. Committee conveners serve an additional preliminary year as convener elect. In sections 1 – 4 of the report, appointments with a different term are noted.
6. The date in square brackets following the name indicates the date of retirement, assuming a full term.
7. In accordance with the decision of General Assembly 2000 some nominations are made directly by the National Synods of Wales and Scotland.
8. In years when General Assembly meets, new committee members normally take up their roles at the conclusion of Assembly. In years when General Assembly does not meet, they normally begin on 1st July.

1. MISSION COUNCIL

Mission Council acts on behalf of General Assembly. It consists of the officers of Assembly, the synod Moderators and three representatives from each synod together with the conveners of Assembly committees.

(Synods appoint and decide terms for their representatives)

Northern Synod	Revd John Durell, Miss Elaine Colechin, Mr Justice Semuli
North Western Synod	Revd Rachel Poolman, Ms Marie Trubic, Mr George Grime
Mersey Synod	Mr Donald Swift, Miss Emma Pugh, Revd Gordon Smith
Yorkshire Synod	Mrs Val Morrison, Mr Roderick Garthwaite, Revd Kay Alberg
East Midlands Synod	Mr Duncan Smith, Mrs Margaret Gateley, Revd Jane Campbell
West Midlands Synod	Mr Bill Robson, Mrs Adella Pritchard, (Vacancy)
Eastern Synod	Mr Mick Barnes, Mrs Joan Turner, Revd Catherine Ball
South Western Synod	Revd Roz Harrison, Mrs Janet Gray, Revd Stephen Newell
Wessex Synod	Mr Peter Pay, Revd Cliff Bembridge, Mrs Margaret Telfer
Thames North Synod	Mr Simon Fairnington, Revd Maggie Hindley, Revd David Lawrence
Southern Synod	Revd Derrick Sena Dzandu-Hedidor, Revd Christopher Parker, Revd Zamantha Walker
National Synod of Wales	Synod Clerk (alternate Revd Peter Trow), Revd Peter Cruchley-Jones, Miss Iris Williams,

2. MISSION DEPARTMENT

2.1 MISSION COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Ed Cox [2012]

Deputy Convener: Revd Elizabeth Caswell [2010]

Mrs Chris Eddowes (1) [2011]

Revd Michael Walsh (2) [2012]

Revd Andrew Willett (3) [2010]

Mrs Anne Parker (4) [2011]

Revd Clare Downing (5) [2012]

Revd Louise Franklin (6) [2010]

Revd Peter Ball (7) [2011]

Revd Tracey Lewis (8) [2012]

Mr Peter Pay (9) [2010]

Mr David Jonathan (10) [2011]

Revd Pauline Sparks (11) [2012]

Revd Simon Walking (12) [2010]

(Vacancy) (13) [2011]

2.1.1 FAITH AND ORDER REFERENCE GROUP

(Members normally serve for six years)

Convener: Revd Dr Robert Pope [2012]

Secretary: The Deputy General Secretary

Revd Dr Susan Durber [2012]

Revd Fleur Houston [2012]

Revd Dr Michael Jagessar [2014]

Revd Dr Sarah Hall [2014]

Revd Dr Neil Messer [2014]

Revd Dr John Bradbury [2012]

2.1.2 INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE REFERENCE GROUP

Convener: Revd Linda Elliott [2011]

Secretary: Secretary for World Church Relations

Members: Revd Nigel Uden (Synod Moderator) [2010], Dr Pamela Cressey (7) [2010]

2.1.3 COMMITMENT FOR LIFE GROUP

Convener: Mrs Helen Lidgett ** [2012]

2.1.4 METHODIST/URC INTERFAITH REFERENCE GROUP

(Members normally serve for six years - in parallel with Methodist terms)

Co-Convener: Revd Peter Brain * [2013]

Members: Revd Clare Downing * (5) [2013] Mr David Jonathan * (10) [2014]

Revd Bill Burgess * (3) [2015] Revd Tim Clarke * (10) [2015]

3. MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH DEPARTMENT

3.1 MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Peter Poulter [2010] #Revd Ruth Whitehead ** [2014]

Secretary: Secretary for Ministries

Dr Roger Allen (3) [2010]

Mrs Helen Renner (3) [2011]

Revd Ruth Whitehead (7) [2011]

Revd Yolande Burns (2) [2012]

Ms Brenda Jesse ** (8) [2013]

Revd David Skitt ** (11) [2013]

Convener of Assessment Board

3.1.1 MINISTRIES - Accreditation Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Geoffrey Townsend [2013]

Secretary: Secretary for Ministries

Mrs Pat Evans (4) [2010]

Revd Sue Henderson (11) [2011]

Revd Malcolm Fife ** (5) [2013]

Revd Terry Oakley ** (Synod Moderator) [2011]

Mrs Tessa Henry-Robinson ** (7) [2013]

3.1.2 MINISTRIES - CRCW Programme Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Paul Whittle [2012]

Secretaries: The CRCW Development Workers

Revd Helen Pope (6) [2011]

Ms Janine Atkinson (8) [2012]

Revd Susan MacBeth (4) [2012] Ms Cristine Smalligan (10) [2012]
Prof John Mellor ** (9) [2013]

3.1.3 MINISTRIES – Leadership in Worship Sub Committee

Convener and Assembly Lay Preaching Advocate: Mrs Jan Harper [2011]
Mr Ed Strachan (2) [2011] Revd Gwynfor Evans (3) [2011]
Mr Alan Cotgreave (6) [2011]

3.1.4 MINISTRIES - Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Dr Anthony Haws [2013]
Mr Brian Knight (8) [2010] Revd Ken Summers (3) [2010]
Mrs Jane Mackerness (4) [2011] Miss Margaret Atkinson (4) [2012]
Revd Catey Morrison (1) [2012]
The Treasurer Convener of Pensions Executive

3.1.5 MINISTRIES - Retired Ministers Housing Sub-Committee

(Members normally serve for five years)
Convener: Revd David Bedford † [2015]
Secretary: Secretary Retired Ministers Housing Society Ltd
Revd Michael Spencer (6) [2011] Revd Nanette Lewis-Head (12) [2012]
Revd Anne Bedford ** (3) [2014] Revd John Humphreys (Synod Moderator) [2013]
The Treasurer
*(Properties are managed by a Company viz: RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING SOCIETY LTD.
Details of the Members of the Board etc may be obtained from the Secretary: Mr Tony Bayley at Church House.)*

3.1.6 ASSESSMENT BOARD

(Members normally serve for five years as training is required)
Convener: Dr Graham Campling [2014]
Retiring 2010 Revd David A L Jenkins (10), Revd Dr Irene John (13), Revd Edward Sanniez (10), Revd Lesley Charlton (11)
Retiring 2011 Revd Jan Adamson (13), Revd Sian Collins (12), Mrs Wendy Smith (2)
Retiring 2012 Mr Geoffrey Harrison (3), Mr James Horton (4), Mrs Margaret Jenkins (3), Revd Janet Maxwell (1), Revd William Young (6)
Retiring 2013 Mrs Irene Wren (5), Revd Lis Mullen (2), Revd Gary McGowan (3), Revd Val Towler (1)
Retiring 2014 Mr Mark Hayes ** (7), Mr Robin Pencavel ** (8), Revd Jamie Kissack ** (4), Revd Paul Floe ** (12)

3.2 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS - Commission Panel

(Members serve for five years as regular training is required. They may be invited to continue serving beyond this as experience is especially valuable on this Panel. Members may not serve beyond the age of 70 for legal reasons.)

Convener: Miss Kathleen Cross [2014]
Deputy Convener: Revd Christine Craven ** [2014]
Secretary: Mrs Wilma Frew [2011]

Members:

Retiring 2010 Revd Meryl Court (10), Revd Nanette Lewis-Head (12), Dr Fiona Liddell (12), Dr Jim Merrilees (13), Mrs Pamela Sharp (3), Mr Patrick Smyth (13)
Retiring 2011 Mr Geoffrey Milnes (5), Revd David Pattie (13), Mr Neil Robinson (4), Revd Yvonne Stone (6)
Retiring 2012 Revd Nicholas Adlem (8), Miss Ina Barker (4), Revd Kay Cattell (5), Revd Kenneth Chippindale (6), Miss Kathleen Cross (2), Revd Alison Davis (7), Revd John Du Bois (11), Revd Joan Grindrod-Helmn (1), Miss Judith Houghton (2), Miss Elizabeth Lawson QC (10), Revd Julian Macro (9),

Revd Colin Offor (1), Mr Nicholas Pye (3),
 Revd Raymond Singh (11), Revd Carolyn Smyth (13),
 Revd Dr David Thompson (7), Mr David Westwood (4)
 Retiring 2013 Revd Pauline Calderwood (4), Revd Bill Bowman (11),
 Dr Peter Campbell Smith (11), Mr Roger Tucker (9)
 Retiring 2014 Revd Hazel Allen ** (8), Mr Mick Barnes ** (7),
 Revd James Brown † (6), Revd Mary Burgess ** (8)
 Mrs Mary Cummings ** (6), Mr Peter Etwell ** (1)
 Revd Christine Fowler ** (8), Mrs Barbara Goom ** (8)
 Mr Andrew Harvey ** (8), Revd Naison Hove ** (10)
 Mr Peter Jolly † (9), Mrs Barbara Lancaster † (2)
 Mrs Barbara Madge † (8), Revd Nicholas Mark † (5)
 Mrs Pat Poinen ** (1), Revd Shelagh Pollard † (12)
 Mrs Lynne Upsdell † (12), Ms Elizabeth Whitten † (7)

3.3 EDUCATION AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Convener: Professor Malcolm Johnson [2011]

Secretary: The Secretary for Education and Learning

Mr John Saunders (8) [2010]

Revd John Smith (13) [2010]

Mr Clive Parsons (6) [2010]

Revd Dr Robert Pope (12) [2011]

Revd Jennifer Snashall (11) [2012]

Revd Dr James Coleman (4) [2012]

Mrs Fiona Smith (4) [2012]

Revd Dr Susan Durber ** (Resource Centre) [2013]

Revd Dr David Whiting ** (1) [2013]

3.3.1 WINDERMERE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Convener: (Vacancy) **

Minute Secretary: Revd Ruth Crofton ** (1) [2013]

Members: Dr Peter Clarke ** (1) [2011] Mr Nick Andrews ** (1) [2011]

Mr Graham Law ** (6) [2013]

Revd Fiona Thomas ** (Secretary for Education and Learning)

Representative of Carver URC

(This is a new committee. The number of members may change in the light of future experience.)

3.4 YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Robert Weston * [2013]

Secretary: Ms Jo Williams

Revd Heather Whyte (6) [2010]

Mrs Anthea Coates (8) [2011]

Mr Chris Gill (11) [2011]

Mr Matthew Franks (8) [2011]

Mrs Memona Shahbaz (10) [2012]

Revd Stuart Radcliffe (2) [2012]

Mr Phillip Timson ** (5) [2013]

Revd Shirley Knibbs ** (4) [2013]

Revd Meg Robb ** (1) [2013]

Miss Tamara Oates ** (5) [2013]

FURY Chair

FURY Council Member

(The committee appoints a secretary annually.)

3.4.1 PILOTS MANAGEMENT Sub Committee

Convener: Revd David Downing [2011]

Member: Mrs Denise Beckley [2010]

(Other members of the sub-committee are appointed by the Youth and Children's Work Committee. The Congregational Federation also has two representatives.)

4. ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

4.1 ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Convener: Dr David Robinson [2012]

Secretary: Ann Barton

Synod Representative for forthcoming Assembly

Synod Representative for previous Assembly who is then replaced after 'review' meeting by Synod Representative for Assembly two years hence.
Moderator, Moderator(s)-elect, General Secretary, Clerk to Assembly

4.1.1 TELLERS AT ASSEMBLY 2010 FOR THE ELECTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MODERATORS FOR 2012 - 2014

Dr Jim Merrilees (Convener), Mr Simon Fairnington, Mr Duncan Smith
(These are all Synod Clerks who are appointed in rotation.)

4.2 COMMUNICATIONS and EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe [2011]

Secretary: Director of Communications

Mrs Esther Searle (8) [2011]

Ms Lucy Berry (10) [2012]

Mr Andy Littlejohns (11) [2012]

Mr Justin Brierley (11) [2012]

Mr Stanley Hazell (8) [2012]

Revd Peter Lyth ** (3) [2013]

Mr Peter Ranscombe ** (13) [2013]

Mr Orin Stephens ** (10) [2013]

Mrs Helen Jones ** (6) [2013]

4.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

Convener: Ms Morag McLintock [2010] #Revd Elizabeth Nash [2014]

Secretary: Mr Andrew Jack ** (10) [2013]

Mr Jim Hurst (2) [2010]

Ms Mary Jeremiah (12) [2012]

Revd Barbara Exley (11) [2012]

Mrs Gwynneth Tilley ** (7) [2013]

Mrs Tina Ashitey ** (10) [2013]

Revd Tom Arthur ** (12) [2013]

4.4 FINANCE COMMITTEE

Convener: The Treasurer

Chief Finance Officer: Mr Andrew Grimwade

Revd Kathryn Taylor (7) [2010]

Mrs Jane Humphreys (7) [2011]

Mr Brian Hosier (10) [2011]

Revd David Walton (13) [2012]

Mr Angus Massie * (10) [2012]

Dr Harry Potter OBE ** (3) [2013]

Mr Richard Dewar ** (9) [2013]

Revd David Aplin ** (10) [2013]

Chairman of the Trustees

4.4.1 STEWARDSHIP Sub-Committee

Convener: Mrs Faith Paulding * [2013]

Mr Gareth Curl * (8) [2011]

Revd Sarah Simpson * (3) [2010]

Mr Keith Berry * (10) [2012]

Revd Dick Gray ** (8) [2013]

(The members of this sub-committee are appointed by the Finance Committee.)

4.5 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

(Synods appoint and decide terms for their representative)

Convener: Revd Malcolm Hanson [2010] #Revd John Durell ** [2014]

Secretary: Miss Sarah Dodds [2013]

Synod Representatives:

Revd Val Towler (1)

Revd Chris Weddle (2)

Revd John Oldershaw (3)

Mrs Val Morrison (4)

Mr Duncan Smith (5)

Dr Anthony Jeans (6)

Mr Mick Barnes (7)

Revd Roz Harrison (8)

Mr Peter Pay (9)

Mr Simon Fairnington (10)

Revd Derrick Sena Dzandu-Hedidor (11)

Dr Jean Silvan-Evans (12)

Dr James Merrilees (13)

with the Immediate Past Moderator and the General Secretary

4.5.1 PANEL FOR THE APPOINTMENT AND REVIEW OF SYNOD MODERATORS, THE GENERAL SECRETARY AND THE DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

(Members normally serve for five years as training is required)

Retiring 2010 Mrs Irene Wren (5) Mr Okeke Azu Okeke (11)
 Revd Dr Susan Durber (7) Mr Ron Todd (1)

Retiring 2011 Dr Graham Campling (11) Mrs Janet Gray (8) Revd Cecil White (4)
 Revd Mary Buchanan (13) Mrs Helen Brown (3)
 Revd Nanette Lewis-Head (12)

Retiring 2012 Revd Raymond Singh (11) Revd Lesley Charlton (11)
 Mrs Sally Abbott (10) Mr Simon Rowntree (6) Dr Jean Silvan Evans (12)
 Mr Alun Jones (4)

Retiring 2013 Revd John Durell (1) Revd Roz Harrison (8)
 Revd John Oldershaw (3) Revd Deborah McVey (7)
 Revd Robert Street (9) Mrs Susan Wilkinson (2)
 Mrs Carol Dixon (1) Revd John Young * (13)

4.6 PASTORAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Alasdair Pratt [2011]
 Secretary: Deputy General Secretary
 Mrs Delyth Rees (12) [2011] Revd Adrian Bulley (Synod Moderator) [2011]
 Revd Birgit Ewald (7) [2012] Dr Paul Ashitey ** (10) [2013]
 [ex officio: The Treasurer The General Secretary The Secretary for Welfare]

4.6.1 STANDING PANEL FOR THE INCAPACITY PROCEDURE

(This Panel is normally convened by the member with legal experience.)

Secretary: Revd Heather Kent * [2012]
 Members: Revd Bill Mahood (Past Moderator of General Assembly) [2012],
 Revd Rowena Francis (Synod Moderator) [2013],
 Mr Donald Swift (Legal experience) [2013],
 Dr Gillian Patterson (G.P.) [2013]

4.7 UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST

(Directors normally serve for six years. The Directors of the Trust elect the Chair from among their own number and appoint a Secretary and a Clerk.)

Chair: Mr Alan Small
 Secretary: Mr Tony Bayley
 Clerk: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones
 Directors:
 Miss Joyce Bain (13) [2010] Mr Ernest Gudgeon (8) [2010]
 Dr Brian Woodhall (2) [2010] Dr Augur Pearce (12) [2012]
 Mr Alan Small (3) [2012] Revd Prof David Thompson (7) [2012]
 Miss Rachel Greening (6) [2014] Dr David Robinson (4) [2014]
 Mr John Woodman (7) [2014]
 Nominated Trustee, being the Honorary Treasurer: Mr John Ellis [2011]
 Mission Council Appointed Trustees: Mrs Val Morrison [2012]
 Miss Isobel Simmons [2010]
 Mrs Claudette Binns [2014]
 Co-opted Director: Revd Michael J. Davies [2010]
 [ex officio: Moderator of General Assembly General Secretary Secretary of the URC Trust
 Convener of the Investment Committee]

4.8 THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION TRUST LTD BOARD MEMBERS

(Members normally serve for six years. Terms run until the AGM in September. The Board members elect the Chair from among their own number and appoint the Company Secretary.)

Chair: Revd Rowena Francis * [2014]
 Company Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones
 Members of URC: Mr Andrew Perkins [2011] Revd Dr John Dyce [2014]
 Revd Rowena Francis * [2014] (Vacancy) [2015]

Members of Fund: Revd Graham Spicer [2009] Revd Duncan Wilson [2012]
Revd David Bedford [2012] Revd Jacky Embrey * [2014]
[ex officio: Honorary Treasurer Convener Investment Committee Convener Maintenance
of Ministry Sub-Committee Convener Pensions Executive]

4.9 PENSIONS EXECUTIVE

Convener: Mr Maurice Dyson † [2012]
Secretary: Mrs Judy Stockings
Members: Revd Kathryn Taylor † [2012] (Vacancy) [2013]
[ex officio: Convener of Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee, Honorary Treasurer]
(The Pensions Executive reports to the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pensions Trust Board, the Maintenance of Ministry Sub Committee and to the Finance Committee.)

4.10 INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Richard Nunn ** [2011]
Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones **
Members: Mr Michael Goldsmith ** [2011] Dr Brian Woodhall ** [2012]
Mr Malcolm Littlefair ** [2013] Mr Andrew Perkins ** [2013]
[ex officio: Convener of the Pensions Executive Honorary Treasurer Chair of the URC
Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd Chair of the URC Trust Treasurer of Westminster College.]

5. REPRESENTATIVES of the UNITED REFORMED CHURCH to MEETINGS of SISTER CHURCHES

Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Revd John Marsh, Revd Mary Buchanan
General Synod of Church of England	Revd Graham Maskery
Methodist Conference	Revd David Tatem
Congregational Federation	Revd Roberta Rominger
General Assembly of Church of Scotland [note7]	Revd John Marsh, Revd Mary Buchanan, Revd Mitchell Bunting,
United Free Church of Scotland [note7]	Revd John Humphreys
Scottish Episcopal Church [note 7]	Revd Mitchell Bunting
Methodist Church in Scotland [note 7]	Revd J.Ross McLaren
Baptist Union of Scotland [note 7]	Revd John Humphreys
Presbyterian Church of Wales [note7]	Revd Peter Noble/Revd Peter Trow
Union of Welsh Independents [note 7]	Revd Peter Noble/Revd Peter Trow
Church in Wales Governing Board [note 7]	Revd Peter Noble/Revd Peter Trow
Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church	To be decided

6. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ON ECUMENICAL CHURCH BODIES

The following have been nominated as URC representatives at the major gatherings of the Ecumenical Bodies listed.

6.1 Council for World Mission (CWM) Assembly 2008 - 2011

Revd Dr John Parry, Ms Patricia Akoli, Revd John Sanderson
Secretary for World Church Relations

6.1.1 CWM European Region Meeting 2008 - 2011

Revd Dr John Parry, Ms Patricia Akoli, Revd John Sanderson
Secretary for World Church Relations, Secretary for Mission (Trustee)

6.2 World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) General Council

Revd Dr Sarah Hall, Ms Emma Pugh, Revd Dr David Pickering,
Secretary for World Church Relations, General Secretary

6.3 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) Church Leaders' Meeting

General Secretary

6.3.1 CTBI Senior Representatives' Forum
General Secretary, Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

6.3.2 CTBI Environmental Issues Network
Revd David Coaker, Revd Dr David Pickering

6.3.3 CTBI Church and Society Forum
Mr Simon Loveitt, Secretary for Church and Society

6.3.4 CTBI Churches' Criminal Justice Forum
Mrs Wilma Frew

6.3.5 CTBI Consultative Group on Ministry amongst Children (CGMC)
Mrs Karen Bulley (Moderator), Ms Jo Williams

6.4 Churches Together in England (CTE)- From Forum 2006
Miss Alison Micklem, Revd Peter Poulter, Revd Andrew Prasad, Mrs Helen Renner, Revd Elizabeth Nash, Mrs Wilma Frew, Mr Stuart Dew, Mr John Brown, Dr Suzanne McDonald
General Secretary, Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

6.4.1 CTE - Enabling Group
Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

6.4.2 CTE - Coordinating Group for Local Unity
Revd Terry Oakley,
Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

6.4.3 CTE - Churches Together for Healing
Revd Delia Bond, Revd Deborah McVey

6.4.4 CTE – Churches' Committee on Funerals and Crematoria
Revd Delia Bond, Revd Sally Thomas

6.4.5 CTE - Free Churches' Education Committee
Mr Graham Handscomb, Mrs Gillian Kingston

6.4.6 CTE – Churches' Joint Education Policy Committee
Mr Graham Handscomb

6.5 Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) Members Meeting [see note 7]
Revd John Humphreys, Revd Mitchell Bunting (alternate Revd Sue Kirkbride)

6.6 National Sponsoring Body for Scotland [see note 7]
Revd John Humphreys, Revd Mitchell Bunting

6.7 Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN) [see note 7]
Revd Peter Noble (alternate Revd Peter Trow)

6.7.1 Commission of Covenanted Churches [see note 7]
Revd Peter Noble (alternate Revd Peter Trow)

7. UNITED REFORMED CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES AT FORMAL BI-LATERAL AND MULTI-LATERAL COMMITTEES

7.1 Methodist/United Reformed Church Liaison Committee
Co-Convener: Revd Terry Oakley (Synod Moderator)
Revd Kay Alberg, Miss Emma Pugh, (Vacancy), (Vacancy), Revd Peter Rand (co-opted)

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

7.2 Roman Catholic – United Reformed Church Bilateral Dialogue

Revd Dr David Thompson, Revd Dr John Bradbury, Revd Dr Sarah Hall, Mrs Ann Shillaker, Mr Malcolm Townsend, Secretary for Ecumenical Relations.

**7.3 Church of England – United Reformed Church Bilateral Dialogue
("God's Reign and our Unity")**

Revd Elizabeth Welch, Revd Dr David Peel
Deputy General Secretary

7.4 Anglican/Moravian Contact Group

Revd David Tatem

7.5 Tri-lateral Conversation of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church

Revd John Humphreys, Revd Mary Buchanan, Revd John Young

8. URC REPRESENTATIVES ON GOVERNING BODIES OF THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES, ETC

8.1 Northern College

Secretary for Education and Learning
Miss Margaret Atkinson (4) [2011]
Mrs Helen Brown [2011]
Revd Dr Robert Pope [2011]
Revd David Jenkins † [2013]
Mr Steve Wood ** (2013)

Luther King House Educational Trust Secretary for Education and Learning

8.2 Westminster College: Board of Governors

Convener: Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms [2014]
Clerk: Revd Cecil White [2012]
Members:
Mr Brian Long [2010]
Revd Fleur Houston [2010]
Dr Jean Stevenson [2013]
Revd Craig Muir † [2015]
Revd Nigel Appleton ** [2015]
Secretary for Education and Learning

8.2.1 Cheshunt Foundation

Mr David Butler [2010]
Revd Craig Muir [2011]

8.2.2 Cambridge Theological Federation Convener Westminster College Governors

8.3 Homerton College Trustees

Lady Sally Williams [2010]
Mrs Elisabeth Jupp [2010]
Revd Dr David Thompson † [2011]
Mr John Chaplin † [2013]

8.4 The Queen's Foundation

Revd Roy Lowes (W.M. Synod Moderator)
Mr Simon Rowntree
In attendance:
Secretary for Education and Learning

9. GOVERNORS OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS WITH WHICH THE URC IS ASSOCIATED

- | | | |
|------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 9.1 | Caterham School | Revd Nigel Uden [2011] |
| 9.2 | Eltham College | Revd Terry Sparks [2011] |
| 9.3 | Walthamstow Hall | Mrs Isabel Heald [2011] |
| 9.4 | Milton Mount Foundation | Mr Graham Rolfe [2011]
Mr Brian West [2011]
Revd Nicola Furley-Smith [2011]
Ms Hilary Miles [2010]
Revd David Cuckson [2010] |
| 9.5 | Silcoates School, | Prof Clyde Binfield [2011]
Mrs Val Morrison [2010]
Mrs Valerie Jenkins [2010]
Dr Peter Clarke † [2013]
Dr Moira Gallagher † [2013]
Revd Janet Lees ** [2013] |
| 9.6 | Taunton School | Revd David Grosch-Miller (Moderator of South Western Synod) |
| 9.7 | Wentworth College | Revd Martin Ambler [2011] |
| 9.8 | Bishops Stortford College | Mr Anthony Trigg [2011] |

10. MISCELLANEOUS

The URC is represented on a variety of other national organisations and committees as follows:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Arthur Rank Centre | Revd David Herbert [April 2011] |
| Churches Legislation Advisory Service | Mrs Sheila Duncan/General Secretary/
Deputy General Secretary |
| Congregational Fund Board | Revd Margaret Taylor [2012]
Revd Eric Allen [2012]
Mr Anthony Bayley [2011]
Revd Geoffrey Roper [2011]
Mrs Jackie Haws ** [2013] |
| Congregational Memorial Hall Trust | Mr Hartley Oldham [from before 1999]
Mr Graham Stacy [from before 1999]
Dr John Thompson [from 2004]
Dr Elaine Kaye [from 2004]
Dr Brian Woodhall [from 2006]
Revd Derek Wales [2011] |
| Discipleship and Witness
Board of Trustees
Publications Development Group | Mrs Patricia Hubbard [from before 1999]
Ms Jo Williams [from 2008] |
| English Heritage's Places of Worship Forum | Mr Hartley Oldham (Convener of the |

	Listed Buildings Advisory Group)
Guides' Religious Advisory Panel	Mrs Susan Walker [from before 1999]
Lord Wharton's Charity	Dr John Thompson † [2013]
Retired Ministers' and Widows' Fund	Mr Ken Meekison [from before 1999] Mrs Jill Strong [from 1999] Revd Julian Macro [from 2004]
Samuel Robinson's Charities	Mr Tony Alderman [from 2004]
Scouts' Religious Advisory Group	Revd David Marshall-Jones [from before 1999]
United Reformed Church History Society Council	Mrs Mary Davies [2012] Revd Michael Hopkins [2012] Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe [2013] Revd Dr David Thompson [2010] Dr David Robinson [2011]
Westhill Endowment Fund	Mr Howard Bridge Revd Dr Stephen Orchard Revd Elizabeth Welch (co-opted)

Appendix 4

Changes required to Section O (to replace paper dated 9 April 2009).

PART I

Paragraph 1.1 In the second sentence after the words "**Assembly Commission**" remove the words "**or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission**". *[N.B. Do not remove these words in the first or third sentences. They are correct there.]*

After the words "**Section F**" insert "**or, in the event of an appeal, Section G**".

Paragraph 1.3.1 Remove the words "**or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission**".

Paragraph 1.3.2 Replace the words "**within the time limit therein specified**" with "**with all due expedition, consistent with the consultation process laid down by the Incapacity Procedure**".

[Note; This ties in with the change made by Mission Council to Part II, Para E.5.3.15.]

Remove the words "**or the Appeals Commission**".

Paragraph 1.3.3 and Paragraph 1.3.4 Remove the words "**or the Appeals Commission**".

Paragraph 2 After the words "**Appeals Commission**" insert "**, the Special Appeals Body**".

Part II

Paragraph A.1 Change the reference in the text from Paragraph 5 to Paragraph 6 of Part I.

Paragraph A.3 Replace the words "**the right of appeal (Paragraph G.1)**" with "**the rights of appeal under Paragraphs E.5.3 and G.1**".

Paragraph A.6.4 After the words "**Assembly Commission**" (both times) insert "**or Special Appeals Body**".

Paragraph A.8 After the words "**Assembly Commission**" insert "**or the Special Appeals Body**".

Paragraph B.6.3

After the words "**Paragraph B.3, B.4 and B.5**" add "**and this Paragraph B.6**".

Paragraph C.1.5

Delete the words "**or the responsible officer of any relevant Organisation**".

Paragraph C.3.1 After the words "**Appeals Commission**" (all three times) insert "**or the Special Appeals Body**".

Paragraph E.5.3 After the words “the Section O Process” insert “which has reached the Commission Stage”.

Remove the words “or the Appeals Commission”.

After the words “the Assembly Commission may” remove “,either on its own account or on a written request from the Mandated Group, stating the reasons for making the request,”.

Paragraph E.5.3.1

Remove the words “or the General Secretary as the case may be”.

Replace the word “intention” with “decision”.

After the sentence ending with the words “such recommendation” insert a new sentence as follows:

“This Notice shall contain a statement of its reasons for reaching its decision to refer back and it may indicate what papers, if any, should be passed to the recipient of the Notice.”

Remove the bracketed words “(or the General Secretary if the reference back is proposed by the Appeals Commission)”.

After the word “received” add “(time being of the essence for this purpose)”.

At the end of E.5.3.1 add the following sentence: **“The Notice shall draw the attention of the recipient to the strict time limit for serving a Notice of Appeal in response to a Notice served under this Paragraph.”**

Paragraph E.5.3.2 After the opening words “In the event of such appeal,” insert the words “the Section O case shall stand adjourned during the course of the appeal and...” .

Remove the words “or the General Secretary as the case may be”.

Paragraph E.5.3.5 Replace the opening wording up to the words “in response thereto” with “The Special Appeals Body shall consider the decision of the Assembly Commission to refer the case back and any representations made in connection therewith....”.

Paragraph E.5.3.6 After the words “request for a Hearing” insert “which is accepted by the Special Appeals Body”.

Paragraph E.5.3.7 After the words “Rules set out in” insert “Paragraph E.10 (as to representation) and”.

Paragraph E.5.3.9

Remove the words “or the General Secretary as the case may be”.

Remove the words “/Appeals Commission”.

Paragraph E.5.3.10

Remove the words “/General Secretary”.

Paragraph E.5.3.11 After the words “the Secretary” insert “of the Assembly Commission”.

Replace the expression “Paragraph E.5.3.8” with “Paragraph E.5.3.1 or Paragraph E.5.3.8 as the case may be”.

Paragraph E.5.3.14 Remove the words **“/General Secretary”**.

Replace the words **“decision of the Special Appeals Body on the appeal”** with **“decision of the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Special Appeals Body”**.

Remove the words **“signed by the Convener”**.

Replace the expression **“Paragraph E.5.3.8”** with **“Paragraph E.5.3.1 or Paragraph E.5.3.8 as the case may be”**.

Paragraph E.5.3.16 Remove the words **“/General Secretary”**.

Paragraph E.5.3.17 Remove the words **“or the Appeals Commission as the case may be”**.

Add the following at the end of the paragraph:

“This declaration shall conclude the disciplinary case against the Minister. The suspension of the Minister will, however, remain in place and will thereafter be subject to the provisions regarding suspension in the Incapacity Procedure [as to these, see the Incapacity Procedure, Part II, Paragraph E.1]. The attention of the Mandated Group is particularly drawn to Paragraph H.4.”

Paragraph E.5.3.18 Remove the words **“/General Secretary”**.

Paragraph E.5.3.19 After the word **“Secretary”** insert **“of the Assembly Commission”**.

Paragraph E.9.3 At the end of the first sentence, continue as follows: **“and/or to append recommendations to its decision under Paragraph F.2.3 or where, of its own accord, it might have it in contemplation to adopt either or both of those courses”**.



The
United
Reformed
Church

The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT, United Kingdom

Deputy General Secretary: The Revd Richard Mortimer

To: Members of Mission Council
and staff in attendance

1st May 2009

Mission Council: Friday 15th – Sunday 17th May 2009

Ushaw College, Durham, DH7 9RH

Telephone: 0191 373 8502; Fax: 0191 373 8503; Email: bookings@ushaw.ac.uk

Dear Colleague

This is the second mailing of papers for Mission Council which meets in Ushaw College, Durham on 15th May. My previous letter, dated 23rd March, contained information about accommodation, meals and transport and included directions to Ushaw College and a list of members. If you did not receive these, please contact Krystyna Pullen immediately – krystyna.pullen@urc.org.uk – or tel: 020 7916 8646.

Registration will take place from 12 noon to 12.30 p.m. and from 1.30 to 2.00 p.m. Ushaw College have asked us to register in Conference Room 1. Please consult your site map if you are unsure where this is. You will be asked to sign the College's Register to comply with fire regulations, as well as the Mission Council Register. Lunch will be served at 12.30 p.m. The first session will begin at 2.00 p.m.

Please find enclosed the following papers:

- The Agenda
- A list of Discussion Groups
- Papers **A, A1, A2, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, K, L and M.**
- A revised floor plan of Ushaw College

Among our work there will be major consideration of the Review and future shape of Mission Council and of the report *Hope in God's Future: Christian Discipleship in the Context of Climate Change*.

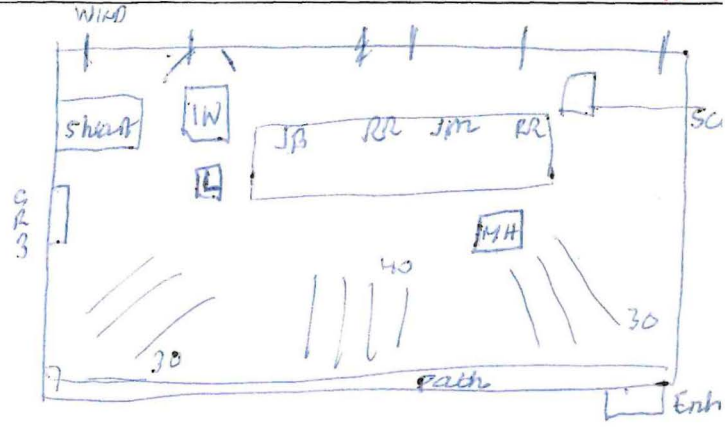
We look forward to welcoming a number of new synod representatives to Mission Council. We hope that the balance in the agenda of worship, presentations, formal and informal discussions will give everyone the opportunity to feel that they have contributed and learned from each other, as we all share our experience of faith and our insights about the life and mission of the Church.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

The Revd Richard Mortimer
Deputy General Secretary

Ustraw



Mission Council 15 – 17 May 2009

Annotated Agenda for Moderator

Friday 15th May

- 12.00 noon *Registration*
- 12.30 p.m. *Lunch*
- 1.30 p.m. *Registration (continued)*
- 2.00 p.m. **Session 1**

Opening Worship and Bible Study The Moderator may wish to say something about the Chaplain's absence

2.30 p.m. **Welcome to New Members**

Rev Christopher Parker (Southern Synod)

Rev Zamantha Walker (Southern Synod)

Rev Rob Weston (Convenor, Youth and Children's Work Committee)

Note : Rev Kay Alberg (Yorkshire Synod) and Mr Josh Thomas (FURY

Moderator) are new members who have given their apologies

Additional Welcomes

Mr Rod Morrison deputising for Rev Kay Alberg

Mrs Anthea Coates deputising for Rev Roz Harrison

The Moderator may like to rule that staff in attendance may freely

participate in discussion without seeking permission, pending

decisions on the Review of Mission Council

Apologies for Absence (Deputy General Secretary will give these)

Received from Kay Alberg, Adrian Bulley, Ed Cox, Andrew Grimwade,

John Brown

Roz Harrison, Malcolm Johnson, Graham Jones and Morag McLintock

Justice Semuli

Welcome to Mr John Knott and invitation to him to address us

Thanks to Mr John Knott who will be with us till after the evening

meal. The Moderator may like to note that both John Knott and

Andrew Middleton are running a half marathon in Janet's memory on

Sunday 17th May

2.45 p.m. Overview of whole agenda: the Deputy General Secretary

The Minutes of the last Meeting, held on 2nd to 4th December 2008

GenSec

Matters Arising: We record the thanks of Ray Adams for the presentation made to him in December

08/48 Meth
Clergy's
Joint mtg

2.30

3.00 p.m. The General Secretary:

08/71 GISS
86 50

to include Joint Meeting with Methodist Council 2010
and an item about the name of an Advisory Group

2.39

3.10 p.m. Review of Mission Council **Papers A, A1, A2**

The Deputy General Secretary to introduce. ~~Rachel Poolman~~
speak on behalf of the Review Group. The General Secretary to
speak on behalf of A2

PATRICK SMYTH

3.45 p.m. Tea

4.15 p.m. **Session 2**

Review of Mission Council continued

6.05 p.m. If Review of Mission Council not yet completed (likely),
the Moderator may like to rule that what is outstanding goes to the
uncompleted business session at 11.00 a.m. on Sunday morning –
Session 9.

a)Disciplinary Procedure **Paper B Replacement** (tabled) The
Clerk may request a small team to join him in the bar one or two
evenings to consider the text in detail, reporting back in Session 9.

b)Charitable Registration The Clerk will report briefly

c)Notice from the Deputy General Secretary: The Secretary for
Ministries invites any Synod Clerks who may wish to meet with him
to arrange a time and place to do so during this meal recess (and
if the Synod Clerks then request it following that Meeting, we may
add something in Session 9)

5.30-6.00 Groups

6.30 p.m. *Evening Meal*

7.30 p.m. **Session 3**

Moderator to welcome Mr Andy Littlejohns, helping Martin Hazell

Gender: General Assembly Resolution 12 **Paper C** Terry Oakley
and Rachel Poolman to present

7.55 p.m. **General Assembly Resolution 49**

The General Secretary to report

8.00 p.m. **Synod of Wales Ecumenical Matter: The Free Church**

Council of Wales Peter Noble to present

8.15 p.m. **Synod of Scotland Ecumenical Matter:**

Episcopal-Methodist-United Reformed Church Talks **Paper L**

John Humphreys to present

8.45 p.m. **General Assembly Resolution 19 Paper D** *SF - doc. flawed*

The Deputy General Secretary

8.04 9.00 p.m. *RJMC Michael J.*
Evening Prayers

Saturday 16th May

8.30 a.m. *Breakfast*

9.15 a.m. **Session 4**

Prayers

Nominations Committee **Paper E and Paper E1 (tabled)**

Rev Malcolm Hanson, Convenor, to present

10.00 a.m. **Ministries Committee: Standards of Conduct for**

Ministers and Elders **Paper F** Rev Peter Poulter, Convenor, to present

10.30 a.m. *Morning Coffee*

11.00 a.m. **Session 5**

URC Trust: Draft Memorandum and Articles **Paper G** Mr Andrew Middleton

11.30 a.m. **Climate Change Paper H**

Moderator to welcome Revd Dr Rosalind Selby, Chair of Working Group who produced the Report, who will introduce it

* Group Work Deputy General Secretary to announce venues and time to report back

12.30 p.m. Lunch

2.20 p.m. Report Back from Groups

Resolutions: these will be taken in a different order

If this item concludes early and the URC Trust matter from the morning has not concluded, we shall try to finish it at this point because Andrew

Middleton cannot be present on the Sunday

3.20 p.m. Wessex Synod Item: URC Website Peter Pay to present

(UNLESS THIS ITEM EMERGES NATURALLY IN MC REVIEW GROUP & GETS RESOLVED THERE)

3.45 p.m. Afternoon Tea

4.15 p.m. Session 7

Moderator welcomes Rev John Waller, Convenor, Human Sexuality Task Group

Human Sexuality Task Group **Paper J** Rev John Waller to present,

Deputy General Secretary to read original remit

5.30 p.m. Finance Mr John Ellis, Treasurer

6.30 p.m. Evening Meal

7.30 p.m. Session 8

Youth & Children's Work: Report of CYDO Task Group

Paper M Rev Rob Weston, Convenor, Y&CW Cttee, to present

8.00 p.m. a) Question about Good Practice – statement from the Deputy General Secretary

b) Ministries: Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee:

Fixed Motor Bike Allowance **Paper K** to be presented by Rev Peter Poulter

[8.30 p.m. Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministries]

Rev Michael Jagessar to present

moved to 8.04pm Friday

9.00 p.m. Evening Prayers

Sunday 17th May

8.30 a.m. *Breakfast*

9.30 a.m. **Holy Communion**

10.30 a.m. *Morning Coffee*

11.00 a.m. **Session 9**

Uncompleted business:

a)Disciplinary Procedure from Session 2

b?)suspect Review of Mission Council, but Nominations
and Ministries: Standards of Conduct also possible

c?)Joint Public Issues Team / Communications may
bring an emergency resolution on the European Elections, given fear of large
BNP protest vote against MP's expenses – if so, Frank Kantor will move it

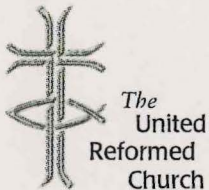
d??)Synod Clerks may bring something about proposed
action by Ministries over Government points based immigration policy
– if they don't, say now!

12.15 p.m. **Thanks and Farewells:**

Mrs Margaret Gateley (East Midlands Synod) last meeting

12.15 p.m. *Closing Worship*

12.30 p.m. *Lunch and Depart*



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

**AGENDA AND
TIMETABLE**

The General Assembly has agreed that every agenda should be headed with the question,
what are the ecumenical implications of this agenda?

Friday 15th May

12.00 noon	<i>Registration</i>	
12.30 p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>	
1.30 p.m.	<i>Registration (continued)</i>	
2.00 p.m.	<p>Session 1 Opening Worship and Bible study Welcome to new members Apologies for absence Welcome to Mr John Knott who will speak to us Minutes of 2nd - 4th December 2008 Mission Council Matters Arising The General Secretary: Joint Meeting with Methodist Council 2010 Review of Mission Council</p>	<p>PAPERS A, A1, A2</p>
3.45 p.m.	<i>Tea</i>	
4.15 p.m.	<p>Session 2 Review of Mission Council continued Disciplinary Procedure Charitable Registration</p>	<p>PAPER B</p>
6.30 p.m.	<i>Evening Meal</i>	
7.30 p.m.	<p>Session 3 Gender: General Assembly Resolution 12 General Assembly Resolution 49 Synod of Wales Ecumenical Matter: The Free Church Council of Wales Synod of Scotland Ecumenical Matter: Episcopal- Methodist-United Reformed Church Talks General Assembly Resolution 19</p>	<p>PAPER C</p> <p>PAPER L PAPER D</p>
9.00 p.m.	<i>Evening Prayers</i>	

Saturday 16th May

8.30 a.m.	<i>Breakfast</i>	
9.15 a.m.	Session 4 Prayers Nominations Committee Ministries Committee: Standards of Conduct for Ministers and Elders	PAPER E PAPER F
10.30 a.m.	<i>Morning coffee</i>	
11.00 a.m.	Session 5 URC Trust: Draft Memorandum and Articles Climate Change Groups	PAPER G PAPER H
12.30 p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>	
2.00 p.m.	Session 6 Climate Change continued: Reporting back and Resolution Wessex Synod Item: URC Website	
3.45 p.m.	<i>Afternoon tea</i>	
4.15 p.m.	Session 7 Human Sexuality Task Group Finance	PAPER J
6.30 p.m.	<i>Evening meal</i>	
7.30 p.m.	Session 8 Youth & Children's Work: Report of CYDO Task Group Question about Good Practice - statement from Deputy General Secretary Ministries: Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee: Fixed Motor Bike Allowance Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministries - presented by Michael Jagessar	PAPER M PAPER K
9.00 p.m.	<i>Evening Prayers</i>	

Sunday 17th May

8.30 a.m. *Breakfast*

9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

10.30 a.m. *Morning coffee*

11.00 a.m. **Session 9**
Uncompleted business
Thanks and farewells
Closing Worship

12.30 p.m. *Lunch*

Depart



The
United
Reformed
Church

MISSION COUNCIL

15 – 17 MAY 2009

GROUPS

The first named person is asked to act as group leader and the second named person in each group as reporter

<p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <p>Graham Campling Stephen Orchard Cliff Bembridge Mary Buchanan Karen Bulley Richard Church Stuart Dew Elizabeth Nash Peter Poulter Adella Pritchard Bill Robson</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">B</p> <p>Terry Oakley John Durell Catherine Ball Craig Bowman Simon Fairnington Roderick Garthwaite David Lawrence John Marsh Val Morrison Iris Williams</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p>Margaret Gateley John Ellis David Grosch-Miller Malcolm Hanson Andrew Middleton Roberta Rominger Alan Small Gordon Smith Joan Turner Jo Williams</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <p>Peter Cruchley-Jones Rowena Francis Francis Brien George Grime Andrew Prasad John Sanderson Rosalind Selby Duncan Smith Zam Walker Robert Weston</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p>John Humphreys Peter Pay Anthea Coates Maggie Hindley Irene Hudson Frank Kantor Richard Mortimer Stephen Newell Emma Pugh Paul Whittle</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">F</p> <p>Donald Swift John Brown Janet Gray Jane Hoddinott Rachel Poolman Justice Semuli Steve Summers Nigel Uden John Waller Irene Wren</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>Howard Sharp Patrick Smyth Mick Barnes James Breslin Jane Campbell Michael Jagessar Lawrence Moore Margaret Telfer Fiona Thomas Kevin Watson</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">H</p> <p>Kirsty Thorpe Roy Lowes Elaine Colechin Martin Hazell Michelle Marcano Rod Morrison Peter Noble Chris Parker David Robinson Marie Trubic</p>

- 1) Mission Council did not like receiving two papers, which it found confusing.
- 2) The title of Paper A2 "The Government of the United Reformed Church at the highest level" raised concerns about the nature of authority and where it lies within the councils of the Church, and the suspicion of hierarchy.
- 3) On Friday afternoon we came across an elephant in the room – the deliberate ambiguity written into our founding documents in 1972 to glide over ecclesiological differences between Congregationalists and Presbyterians. Seeing General Assembly and Mission Council as together representing a single council of the Church opened this up and at best was a challenge to grasp nettles and at worst deeply scary.
- 4) **BUT**
- 5) It was recognised that the logic of decisions already taken about the move to a biennial General Assembly and the hope to have no more than 18 or so Resolutions at each future biennial General Assembly did tend strongly towards Mission Council having to take more responsibility for the running of the United Reformed Church.
- 6) **THEREFORE**
- 7) It is probably safer to affirm the unique status and authority of General Assembly whilst recognising that in the new circumstances of a biennial General Assembly it devolves more of that authority than before to Mission Council. Resetting the notch of the degree of authority Mission Council possesses so as to give it more is acceptable, provided that authority is seen as devolving from its unique setting in General Assembly. We prefer this to the alternative that says Mission Council has the authority of its own right, because it represents a single council of the Church with General Assembly.
- 8) On that basis we shall return to you with another paper in November.



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

A

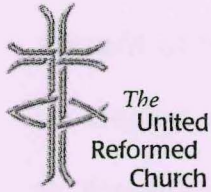
The Review of Mission Council

Two papers are being presented to Mission Council.

Paper A1 is the Report of the Mission Council Review Group, in fulfilment of the task for which it was set up, and we thank all members of the Review Group for all their thoroughness and hard work.

Paper A2 is offered by the General Secretariat in consultation with the Clerk. As the move to a biennial General Assembly provides the occasion and impetus for a re-think, it seemed right that Mission Council members should also be invited to consider something more radical which extends the understanding of the nature of Mission Council without undercutting the detailed work of the Review Group on membership, representation, and Advisory and Task Groups.

Please note the strongly held view of the members of the Review Group that General Assembly and the Synod Moderators' Meeting also need reviewing. Their recommendations to that end were however ruled out of order on the grounds that the specific remit concerned Mission Council alone.



MISSION COUNCIL 15 - 17 May 2009

A1

Mission Council Review Group Report March 2009

1. Membership: Elizabeth Nash (Convenor), Morag M McLintock (Minute Taker), Ray Adams (until December 2009), Roz Harrison, Rachel Poolman and Patrick Smyth. John Macaulay was not able to attend either meeting and withdrew from the Group.
2. The General Assembly 2008 Book of Reports defines the task of Mission Council as taking a comprehensive view of the work of General Assembly; deciding on priorities; and encouraging the United Reformed Church at all levels in its engagement with the world. The scope of this engagement ranges from the local to the international arena, and includes relationships with ecumenical partners in the UK and overseas. While Mission Council services and maintains the work of General Assembly from one meeting to the next, it is principally concerned about the Church's future direction and the support of all its members. The tasks of Mission Council include acting on behalf of General Assembly, acting on its own behalf, as well as instigating work.
3. The Mission Council Review Group met on two occasions, as well as working by email, and considered a wide range of issues connected with Mission Council. Although our remit was concerned with Mission Council, with the change to biennial Assemblies we found that we had to include General Assembly in our discussions and recommendations. We have concentrated on Mission Council but we also believe that there should be a review of the way General Assembly and the Synod Moderators' meetings work. We considered both the name and membership of Mission Council. We have clarified the responsibilities of Mission Council relative to General Assembly. We have some ideas of ways to help the work of Mission Council. We have reviewed the remit and membership of the Mission Council Advisory Group as well as the Advisory Groups and Task Groups of Mission Council. We propose help for the consensus procedures. Some of these recommendations may require a change in our Standing Orders.
4. **Recommendations:**
 - 4.1. Mission Council be renamed Assembly Executive and Mission Council Advisory Group renamed Assembly Executive Advisory Group (AEAG).
 - 4.2. Each Synod to appoint three members to Mission Council for up to two terms of three years. These members and their Moderator to be as balanced as possible in terms of lay and ordained and the full range of our equal opportunities policy.
 - 4.3. Two representatives from our ecumenical partners with full speaking and voting rights be appointed to Mission Council on the advice of the Mission Committee.

- 4.4. URC Representatives to wider ecumenical meetings to report to Mission Committee.
 - 4.5. Assembly Appointed Staff to have full speaking rights on any subject on Mission Council and General Assembly.
 - 4.6. When a Committee Convenor is unable to attend Mission Council or General Assembly, another member of the committee may attend in their place.
 - 4.7. Mission Council agrees to the changes in responsibility of Mission Council and General Assembly.
 - 4.8. Mission Council agrees to the changes to the remit and membership of Mission Council Advisory Group
 - 4.9. Mission Council agrees to the changes to its Advisory and Task Groups.
 - 4.10. A Consensus Adviser be nominated by Nominations to both General Assembly and Mission Council, and four consensus facilitators be nominated by Nominations to General Assembly
5. **Name** It was clear to us that the name Mission Council needed to be changed. Mission is not the primary work of this meeting and with a Mission Committee there is scope for confusion. Although it has been called a Council it has not been identified in the Manual as one of the councils of our conciliar church. We therefore considered that the new name should not include the term council.
6. Mission Council has been the decision making body between Assemblies and clearly that becomes a more important role now that we have biennial Assemblies. So we agreed that 'Assembly' should be in the new name. Although executives are frequently smaller than our Mission Council, since this is a decision making body the term executive seemed the best to us. We therefore propose that Mission Council be called Assembly Executive and MCAG Assembly Executive Advisory Group (AEAG). However, whatever Mission Council decides to call itself in the future we all must ensure that, as they say on the Ronseal advert, it does "exactly what it says on the tin"!
7. **Membership** Synods appoint three members to Mission Council according to their own criteria. This has meant that turnover has been very variable since the length of service of each individual has depended on the Synod. Some Synods send their Mission Council members to General Assembly and some do not. Also it has made it difficult for Mission Council to have a balanced membership according to the United Reformed Church's equal opportunities policy. In order to ensure maximum efficiency and consistency we felt that it would be appropriate for every Synod to have the same turnover period of its membership. We also believe that serving on Mission Council for only 3 years does not give new members a long enough opportunity to get fully involved, especially now that Mission Council meets only twice a year. A longer length of service will mean greater continuity of knowledge and experience when it comes to discussions and reports that are on the agenda for a long time. We recognise that changing personal circumstances may make it difficult for individuals to commit to a longer term of service, but would urge Synods to appoint people automatically to a second term of service where circumstances allow.

8. We therefore propose: **Each Synod to have 3 members appointed for up to two terms of 3 years.** Given that some people can attend only weekend meetings and others only mid week meetings, Synods may appoint alternatives who will communicate with each other between meetings. Each Synod would agree a date for implementation of the new membership system.
9. Mission Council needs a **balanced membership** of:
 - 9.1. ministers, elders and lay people
 - 9.2. the full range of people according to our equal opportunities policy
 - 9.3. theological position
 - 9.4. context and experience
10. Membership of Mission Council consists of four groups of people
 - 10.1. Synod Representatives and Synod Moderators. Moderators are not synod representatives but should be included with them for equal opportunities purposes.
 - 10.2. Assembly Committee Convenors
 - 10.3. Other people such as Assembly Moderators, ecumenical representatives etc.
 - 10.4. Assembly Appointed Staff, depending on the decision of recommendation 4.5
11. At this point we do not make any recommendations regarding the balance of groups 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4. But we felt that it would be possible to improve the balance of Synod Representatives and Moderators. We recognised that it will not be easy for synods to achieve a balance with only four representatives, but nevertheless we recommend asking Synods to provide as balanced a group as possible and suggest that the balance of Mission Council as a whole be reported to each Assembly.
12. There should be two representatives from our **ecumenical partners** appointed on a rolling programme for 4 years each. This should include representatives of a wide range of churches across the three nations. Recommendations for these appointments should come from the Mission Committee. In accordance with the usual ecumenical generosity of the URC, they would have full speaking and voting rights.
13. **URC Representatives to wider ecumenical meetings** should report to Mission Committee.
14. It has long been a discomfort that **Assembly Appointed Staff** are not members of any council and do not have the right to speak. They have the knowledge but can only answer through the convenor of their committee, which has been both clumsy and on occasions difficult. It is not only in their particular work that they have things to offer to Mission Council. They have wide ranging knowledge across the URC. Following consultation with them we recommend that they should have full speaking rights on any subject at both Mission Council and General Assembly. Where there is a clash of interests the staff member will be expected to declare it and staff members and their committee convenors will need to discuss their joint contributions to discussions.

15. Where a **committee convenor** is unable to attend Mission Council or General Assembly an appropriate substitute from the committee should be invited to attend with full speaking and voting rights.
16. **The work of Mission Council and General Assembly.** Now that General Assembly is held only every two years, changes are needed in responsibilities held by the two bodies. With help from James Breslin, Clerk of General Assembly, we propose the following:
 - 16.1. Mission Council be authorised to act on behalf of and with the authority of General Assembly when necessary. Mission Council will have discretion as to when to use this authority bearing in mind that General Assembly can still overturn a Mission Council decision.
 - 16.2. Where a constitutional change has to be referred back to Synods, if all the Synods agree then Mission Council may agree the change. If any Synod registers its dissent then the change must wait until the next General Assembly.
 - 16.3. Every Assembly Committee and Synod be asked to produce a brief written report for accountability and essential information sharing purposes to each General Assembly. Discussion on these written reports to be timetabled into General Assembly. Mission Council will decide which of these reports will be presented verbally to General Assembly.
 - 16.4. There is no change to the judicial functions of General Assembly
 - 16.5. All deaths and jubilees of ministers, CRCWs and Moderators of General Assembly should be remembered at General Assembly
 - 16.6. All newly ordained ministers and newly commissioned CRCWs should be presented at General Assembly
 - 16.7. Nominations Committee report should come to Mission Council for agreement in the years when there is no General Assembly and that agreement should thereafter be reported in writing to the next General Assembly.
 - 16.8. All Assembly Staff appointments should be agreed at Mission Council or if urgent at Mission Council Advisory Group. This would be reported to General Assembly.
 - 16.9. The closure of Churches and the admission of New Churches becomes the responsibility of Mission Council. These changes should be reported in writing to General Assembly. New churches should be welcomed at either Mission Council or General Assembly as appropriate.
17. **Mission Council Advisory Group** We propose that the current remit of Mission Council Advisory Group be altered from:
 - 17.1. To plan the meetings of Mission Council
 - 17.2. To ensure that appropriate follow up actions are taken following meetings of Mission Council and General Assembly.
 - 17.3. To provide support and advice to the Assembly Moderators, the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary.
 - 17.4. To plan the meetings of Mission Council and keep under review the way in which business is done.
 - 17.5. To ensure that appropriate follow up actions are taken following meetings of Mission Council and General Assembly
 - 17.6. To advise the Assembly Moderators, the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary where necessary.

- 17.7. To agree Assembly Staff appointments where necessary between Mission Council meetings.
18. In carrying out the above remit, Mission Council Advisory Group should have regard to the Functions of General Assembly, as set out in the Structure, and should seek to ensure that Mission Council and General Assembly are provided with appropriate reports to enable them to see that those Functions are properly carried out.
19. Membership should consist of:
 - 19.1. one past Assembly Moderator
 - 19.2. both current Assembly Moderators
 - 19.3. one Assembly Moderator elect
 - 19.4. Treasurer
 - 19.5. General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary
 - 19.6. four members of Mission Council at least one of whom is a committee convenor and one a Synod representative. They should be appointed by Mission Council through nomination and election, for four years from those members of Mission Council who have at least three years of their term left to serve. If their term of office on Mission Council expires before the end of their four years on Mission Council Advisory Group then they should be appointed as a member of Mission Council until their term on Mission Council Advisory Group is completed.

We did not recommend that all Assembly Moderators should be on MCAG because 6 of them with only 7 other members of the group seemed very out of balance.

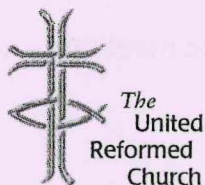
20. **Mission Council Advisory Groups and Task Groups** Over the years Mission Council has set up a number of Advisory Groups, which are standing committees and Task Groups which are to do a specific job and then cease. Appointing people to these groups has become very ad hoc and frequently it has been left to the Deputy General Secretary to find people to do the work. Very often Synod Moderators have been asked to serve on committees and advisory and task groups. Where they have something specific to contribute that is helpful but we felt that we should not burden them with this whenever possible.

We considered that Mission Council should have a minimum of advisory and task groups which report to it directly. Where possible all such groups should be nominated by Nominations, elected by Mission Council and report to the relevant Assembly Committee. In order to provide transparency, it would be helpful if Advisory and Task Group convenors and members are included in the Nominations Report. The term of service on an Advisory Group is the same as on an Assembly Committee. The term of service of a Task Group is the completion of the task.

- 20.1. Staffing Advisory Group (SAG) should remain as a Mission Council Group with its membership to be nominated by Nominations and elected by Mission Council.
- 20.2. Resource Sharing Task Group, which has become an advisory group, should be renamed Resource Sharing Co-ordinating Group (RSCG) and

- remain as a Mission Council Group with its convenor and membership to be nominated by Nominations and elected by Mission Council.
- 20.3. Law and Polity Group to remain an Advisory Group of Mission Council with its membership nominated by Nominations and elected by Mission Council.
 - 20.4. Section O Advisory Group to remain an Advisory Group of Mission Council, but to be renamed the Sections O and P Process Advisory Group, with its membership nominated by Nominations and elected by Mission Council. Changes to Section 1 of both O and P will still have to come to General Assembly, but changes to Section 2 should be reported to Mission Council only.
 - 20.5. Church House Management Group should become an Advisory Group to the Trustees with its membership nominated by Nominations and elected by Mission Council.
 - 20.6. Ethical Investment Advisory Group should become an Advisory Group of the Mission Committee, which also reports to Finance, with its membership nominated by Nominations and elected by Mission Council.
 - 20.7. Criminal Records Bureau Reference Group should become an Advisory Group of the Ministries Committee with its membership nominated by Nominations and elected by Mission Council.
 - 20.8. Sexual Ethics Advisory Group should become an Advisory Group of the Ministries Committee (but recognising its connection with Education and Learning) with its membership nominated by Nominations and elected by Mission Council.
 - 20.9. Human Sexuality Task Group is a Mission Council Group with its membership nominated by Nominations and elected by Mission Council.
 - 20.10. Housing Provision Task Group is a Mission Council Group, with its membership nominated by Nominations and elected by Mission Council, with additional representation from Finance and Ministries Committees, Retired Ministers Housing Sub-Committee and PLATO. It also has power to co-opt.
21. **Consensus Decision Making** had its first Assembly run in 2008. It is clear that it can be done better but it did bring some valuable insights. We recommend that a Consensus Adviser be nominated by Nominations to both General Assembly and Mission Council and to attend Assembly Arrangements Committee when the agenda is being planned. At General Assembly there should be a further four Consensus Facilitators nominated by Nominations to assist the Advisor. None of them should be a member of the body they are advising. Where the facilitators have worked with groups of people off the floor of Assembly it should be the facilitators who report back to the General Assembly explaining the reasons for the proposal they bring. There are a number of people in the URC with experience of Consensus both in synods and in FURY. It is not anticipated that the Consensus Advisor will need to sit next to the Moderator after 2010 unless invited to do so by the Moderator.
22. **Ways of working on Mission Council** There is likely to be more work for Mission Council and therefore we would like to suggest some possible ways of working which may help Mission Council to do all its work:

- 22.1. Some time spent working separately in each of the three Departments, Mission, Ministries and Administration. with synod representatives taking an interest in one department for the whole of their time on Mission Council.
- 22.2. Some time in two groups consisting of Convenors and Secretaries in one group and Synod Representatives in the other.
- 22.3. Decisions from such groups to be reported to the whole Council not to be discussed again.
- 22.4. A focus on the work of each Assembly Committee in turn (up to 2 committees per meeting.)
- 22.5. Between meetings e-mail forums on specific subjects and responding to specific questions. This might also include emergency issues.
- 22.6. Mission Council Agenda should not include discussion of every Assembly resolution. Such items should only come to Mission Council if a committee wishes to test a particular proposal with a wider group of people.



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

A2

The Government of the United Reformed Church at the Highest level
The future General Assembly and Mission Council

Introduction

1. The future pattern of relationships between the General Assembly, Mission Council and the various working parties and committees of both bodies have been changed dramatically by the move to a smaller biennial Assembly.
2. Work as to how this might be addressed has been undertaken by several different groups and individuals and this paper attempts to draw together several different strands of thought, not all of which are wholly in agreement with one another.
3. The United Reformed Church is prone to adopting slogans or mantras without necessarily working through their full implications. "Unity does not mean Uniformity" Reformans semper Reformandans" and most recently "The Mission Council is not a Council of the Church". This last slogan has created a number of problems as it gives rise to the not unreasonable question, "If it isn't a Council of the Church, what is it?" It is therefore suggested that, in light of the fact that it will be necessary for Mission Council to take to itself more of the powers and functions of the Assembly than has previously been the case, that the precedent already established with regard to the Local Church be adopted again, and that we regard Mission Council and General Assembly as collectively constituting a Council of the Church in the same way as Elders' and Church Meeting.
4. In so doing it will be necessary to find a new name that makes this interrelatedness clear and accordingly it is proposed that the Mission Council be renamed "The Assembly Commission" For convenience, from this point onwards that term will be used.
5. Historically the General Assembly has had three functions, legislative, judicial and managerial. While all of these will remain with the Assembly, it will be necessary for the Assembly Commission to undertake these functions more than the Mission Council has done, while at the same time retaining and developing the responsibilities currently held by Mission Council.
6. This in turn will affect the work of several committees and provide an opportunity for revisiting the rather haphazard collection of Committees, Working

Groups, Reference Groups, Task Groups, Advisory Groups and ad hoc meetings that currently service the Assembly and the Mission Council.

General Assembly

7. Historically there have been two views of the role of the General Assembly paralleled by two views as to its powers. One has seen the Assembly as essentially a business meeting dealing with reports and resolutions and overseeing the work of the various committees and councils of the Church. The other has seen the Assembly as an inspirational event where the Church displays itself to itself and to the wider world. In practice both positions have co-existed sometimes uneasily resulting in tensions between the desire for time for debate and deliberation and the desire for time for worship, Bible study and ceremonial acts. Beside this has been an often unstated conflict between the two views of the powers of the Assembly. For some the Assembly is the source and fount of authority within the Church, possessed of ultimate and absolute power over the business of the Church and "bound by itself and only by itself and only so far as it chooses to be bound by itself". This high doctrine of the General Assembly has traditionally been associated with the Church of Scotland and Reformed Churches descended directly from the conflicts of the Reformation period. The second position sees the General Assembly as one of a complex of councils each being possessed of powers granted to it by a constitutional agreement and accordingly limited in its scope and authority. While the United Reformed Church, like many united churches, has never formally articulated a view on this difference it should be noted that recent years have seen a dramatic increase in the amount of business coming to the Assembly, suggesting that there is a tilt towards the position that sees the Assembly as the real source of authority. The adoption of consensus voting and a desire to allow more time for discussion of major business together with an increasing awareness of the difficulties in timing an Assembly which has to deal with a huge amount of business have led to a suggestion that the formal resolutions brought to the Assembly should be reduced from the current 50 to 60 to about 12 to 18. In so doing greater clarity will be needed in seeing what is properly "Assembly Business" and what should be done either in the Assembly Commission, in committees or in Synods.

8. In this model the Assembly will concern itself with the big picture, broad brush issues. It will decide on what needs to be done and the allocation of resources, particularly where there is a degree of conflict over where scarce resources should be concentrated. The Assembly Commission will deal with more detailed business and manage the tactics under the general guidelines agreed by the Assembly. In so doing it will act with the full power and authority of the General Assembly. This will not prevent the Assembly reversing decisions of its Commission but decisions of the Commission should be regarded as decisions of the Assembly and only appealable to the Assembly in cases where the

Commission can be shown to have misdirected itself or otherwise acted inappropriately.

9. Most of the functions of the General Assembly will, in this model, be shared with the Assembly Commission but some will continue to be the sole responsibility of the Assembly and it will always be open to the Assembly Commission to decide that a matter coming before it is of such significance that it should and must be dealt with in the Assembly.

10. Recent changes to the structure of the Church have had an effect on the size of the Assembly. While the number of members has always varied slightly from year to year, and the number voting in any matter where a recorded vote is held has always been less than the total membership, the Assembly of 2010 and subsequent Assemblies will be smaller than hitherto has been the case. The Assembly of 2008 had a membership of about 550 but was visited by considerably more. In every Assembly since 1971 there have been a number of *ex officio* members who were not able to attend or who attended for only a part of the Assembly. There have also been a few members who at the last minute were prevented by illness or other problems. The Assembly of 2010 will have total membership of 328. With fewer *ex officio* members and a smaller number representing Synods the likelihood is that there will be far fewer non-attending members. Best calculations therefore suggest an attendance of about 375 to 400. The Assembly Commission, if all the proposed changes are agreed, will have a total membership of just under 100. While this is larger than the membership of Mission Council it is achieved, for the most part, by a transfer of some people now categorised as, in attendance, to full membership.

11. The General Assembly will of necessity share most of its functions with the Assembly Commission, but several will be reserved to the Assembly alone. The election of the Moderators and of the Clerk will remain Assembly functions. The closure of Churches and admission of new Churches while reported to the Commission will continue to be marked in the Assembly and it will be at the Assembly that representatives of new Churches will be received. Ministerial jubilees will continue to be marked in the Assembly and newly ordained ministers and newly commissioned CRCWs will be presented and welcomed.

12. All Committees and all Synods will report in writing to every Assembly. The General Secretary will, as at present, report on the actions of the Disciplinary Panel and will continue the practice of reporting the names of Ministers removed from the roll for disciplinary reasons. The report of the cost of the panels, currently made to the Assembly, will be made to the Assembly Commission. (The timescale attached to some disciplinary hearings and the costings thereof is such that this information is frequently incorrect when submitted to the Assembly.)

13. The appellate function of the Assembly will be shared with the Assembly Commission, but as at present the right of appeal to the Assembly will be

preserved. While the usual route for an appeal will be from the Local Church to the Synod and thereafter to the Assembly Commission, sitting as a Judicial Commission, it will be open to one or more of the parties to insist on a hearing before the Assembly itself. This option, however, will only be available as an alternative to a hearing before the Judicial Commission. Decisions of that body will be decisions of the Assembly. There will be no appeal from the Commission to the Assembly.

14. At present business comes to the Assembly from three sources. Committees bring reports and resolutions; Synods bring resolutions, sometimes accompanied by detailed supporting documentation equivalent in length and content to a Committee report and sometimes with no accompanying documentation; members of Assembly bring resolutions in their own name. Bodies and individuals without direct access to the Assembly have had three routes whereby they might bring business to the Assembly. One, generally only available to Local Churches, has been to raise a matter in Synod and seek to persuade the Synod to bring the matter before the Assembly. A second, most commonly used by Committees not due to report or by bodies without direct access to the Assembly has been to approach the Mission Council and have it bring the matter to the Assembly as a part of the Mission Council report. A third, only occasionally used in the past but growing in popularity has been to bring business through the Clerk, who has always been able to put down resolutions and submit reports on behalf of others. Section O business and business brought on behalf of the Actuaries has traditionally come through the Clerk. While the Assembly has always had regulations about when business submitted by these different paths should be submitted these have not always been enforced and it is recommended that the rules regarding timing should be applied more rigidly, and that some of the ways whereby business is brought to the Assembly be discontinued. In particular it is proposed that the absolute right of members of the Assembly to introduce new business be abolished and that in future those seeking to bring matters other than through a Committee should do so through a Synod. It is recognised that occasionally there will be matters that cannot be brought through a Synod or through a Committee because of timing problems or other exceptional circumstances and therefore it is proposed that the "Clerk's Business" route be retained but that in future business brought under this heading must first be agreed by the Clerk, General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary and that they will only agree when it is clear that this is a matter that could not have come through a Committee or a Synod.

15 (Should this change be seen as too draconian, a compromise might be to introduce the equivalent of the Parliamentary Ten Minute Rule Bill, whereby time is set aside for matters to be raised in Assembly with very limited time for debate at the end of which the vote would be to refer the matter to the appropriate committee. If passed that Committee would add the matter to its agenda and act as necessary. If rejected the business would terminate.)

16. It will be in the Assembly that all major decisions on policy will be made and it will be for individual Committees assisted as necessary by the Assembly Commission to determine when their concerns are such as to require consideration by the Assembly. Constitutional changes currently require to be introduced in the Assembly where a two thirds vote in favour is required. Thereafter they are referred to Synods and then return to the Assembly where they need only a simple majority to be adopted. Synods in dealing with constitutional changes are required only to report if they are not content and have the right, if they wish, to state in the Assembly their reasons for rejecting a proposed change. Since its introduction this right has been used only once. The move to a biennial Assembly has greatly lengthened the time required to implement constitutional changes and it is therefore recommended that in future such proposals be brought only once to the Assembly and that the Assembly Commission be empowered to receive proposals for constitutional change either on the first or the second vote. Where the Assembly Commission receives proposals for the first vote it will need the two thirds majority currently required of the Assembly.

Assembly Commission

17. What then will the Assembly Commission do?

It will do most of the things that are currently done by the Mission Council and many of the things that are done by the Assembly. At present it acts as a committee like any other Assembly Committee, undertaking pieces of work on its own behalf either as mandated under its general terms of reference or as specifically instructed by the Assembly. It acts as a broker between and advisor to committees dealing with questions and issues where:

- a) they clash
- b) they overlap
- c) they are unsure as to the policy they should follow
- d) they consider a matter to be of greater interest or sensitivity than the relevant committee feels competent to handle.
- e) there is no clarity as to whether a piece of work lies within the mandate of any committee.

It acts on behalf of the Assembly on matters of urgency between meetings of the Assembly, and while most Nominations Committee business comes to the Assembly for approval it increasingly receives and acts upon the recommendations for the appointment and re-appointment of Synod Moderators and Staff Secretaries.

It appoints groups to carry out the initial work in handling appeals, applications for secession and other matters where individuals or groups feel aggrieved and seek redress from the Assembly.

It appoints Advisory Groups, which are in effect standing committees of Mission Council and Working Groups and Task Groups which are either task or time Limited.

18. The Assembly Commission will not act as a Committee in itself. While Mission Council can act on behalf of the General Assembly only in matters of urgency or where specifically charged by the Assembly so to do, the Assembly Commission will act at all times with the full powers of the Assembly except where the Basis and Structure, a Resolution of Assembly or the Assembly Commission itself prevents. It will continue to act as a broker between committees but it will receive and decide upon Committee Reports and Resolutions, rather than as at present confining itself to determining whether work is ready to go before the Assembly.

19. It will function as an Appeals Commission. The right of appeal to the full Assembly will be retained as will the power of the Commission to refer an appeal to the Assembly but where at present the rule states that an appeal whether at Synod or Assembly level may with the consent of the parties be dealt with by a Commission in future the assumption should be that The Assembly Commission will deal with appeals unless one or more parties objects. Decisions on appeals made by the Assembly Commission will carry the same force as decisions made by the Assembly and no appeal from the Commission to the Assembly will be allowed.

20. The Assembly Commission will, on an agreed cycle receive detailed reports from all Assembly Standing Committees and will decide on matters brought by those Committees whether in the form of Resolution, as at present in Assembly, or as queries as is sometimes the case in Mission Council.

21. It will be to the Assembly Commission that Nominations Committee will bring its long lists of nominations, but the election of Moderators of Assembly, Clerks of Assembly and Directors of the United Reformed Church Trust will remain with the General Assembly.

22. It will be able to receive and decide upon proposals to change the Basis and Structure of the United Reformed Church or to make those other changes to the constitution that currently require two votes in the General Assembly. But, when dealing with these matters it will be able to act on behalf of the Assembly only once. There will always have to be a vote in the Assembly as well as a vote in the Commission. Where a proposed Constitutional Change is brought to the Commission for the first vote, the same rule as applies to the Assembly will apply, i.e. a 2/3rds majority will be needed. Where the first vote is held in the Assembly the Commission will need only a simple majority for the second vote.

23. While every Assembly Committee will submit a written report to the Assembly the Assembly Commission will determine which Committees shall report verbally

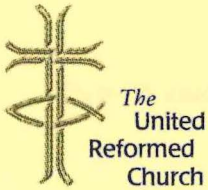
and where they have business of such significance as to require a formal resolution of Assembly. This decision will need to be guided in part by the need to limit the business coming to the Assembly in order that sufficient time may be given to a proper use of Consensus.

24. The General Assembly will continue to have a team of consensus facilitators working under the direction of the Clerk. The Assembly Commission will have at least one of this team present at its meetings carrying out the same function.

25. The Assembly Commission in all of its actions will need to bear in mind that it is the General Assembly which sets policy for the Church. The Assembly Commission will perform more strategic thinking than Mission Council has done, but always within the general outlines agreed by the Assembly. The Assembly Commission is there to help the General Assembly fulfil its role more effectively. If it comes to be seen as having taken over the role and functions of the assembly, it will have failed.

RESOLUTIONS

1. **Mission Council resolves to recommend to General Assembly that Mission Council be renamed, "The Assembly Commission"**
2. **Mission Council resolved to recommend to General Assembly that Changes to the Basis and Structure be adopted to enable the changes outlined in this document and instructs the Clerk together with his legal and constitutional advisors to prepare the necessary changes to the Structure of the United Reformed Church, Rules of Procedure and Standing Orders of Assembly**



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

B (replacement)

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS ADVISORY GROUP

Changes required to Section O (to replace paper dated 9 April 2009).

PART I

Paragraph 1.1

In the second sentence after the words "**Assembly Commission**" remove the words "**or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission**". [N.B. Do not remove these words in the first or third sentences. They are correct there.]

After the words "**Section F**" insert "**or, in the event of an appeal, Section G**".

Paragraph 1.3.1

Remove the words "**or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission**".

Paragraph 1.3.2

Replace the words "**within the time limit therein specified**" with "**with all due expedition, consistent with the consultation process laid down by the Incapacity Procedure**".
[Note; This ties in with the change made by Mission Council to Part II, Para E.5.3.15.]

Remove the words "**or the Appeals Commission**".

Paragraph 1.3.3 and Paragraph 1.3.4

Remove the words "**or the Appeals Commission**".

Paragraph 2

After the words "**Appeals Commission**" insert "**, the Special Appeals Body**".

Part II

Paragraph A.1

Change the reference in the text from Paragraph 5 to Paragraph 6 of Part I.

Paragraph A.3

Replace the words "**the right of appeal (Paragraph G.1)**" with "**the rights of appeal under Paragraphs E.5.3 and G.1**".

Paragraph A.6.4

After the words **"Assembly Commission"** (both times) insert **"or Special Appeals Body"**.

Paragraph A.8

After the words **"Assembly Commission"** insert **"or the Special Appeals Body"**.

Paragraph B.6.3

After the words **"Paragraph B.3, B.4 and B.5"** add **"and this Paragraph B.6"**

Paragraph C.1.5

Delete the words **"or the responsible officer of any relevant Organisation"**.

Paragraph C.3.1

After the words **"Appeals Commission"** (all three times) insert **"or the Special Appeals Body"**.

Paragraph E.5.3

After the words **"the Section O Process"** insert **"which has reached the Commission Stage"**.

Remove the words **"or the Appeals Commission"**.

After the words **"the Assembly Commission may"** remove **“,either on its own account or on a written request from the Mandated Group, stating the reasons for making the request,”**.

Paragraph E.5.3.1

Remove the words **"or the General Secretary as the case may be"**.

Replace the word **"intention"** with **"decision"**.

After the sentence ending with the words **"such recommendation"** insert a new sentence as follows:

"This Notice shall contain a statement of its reasons for reaching its decision to refer back and it may indicate what papers, if any, should be passed to the recipient of the Notice."

Remove the bracketed words **"(or the General Secretary if the reference back is proposed by the Appeals Commission)"**.

After the word **"received"** add **"(time being of the essence for this purpose)"**.

At the end of E.5.3.1 add the following sentence: **"The Notice shall draw the attention of the recipient to the strict time limit for serving a Notice of Appeal in response to a Notice served under this Paragraph."**

Paragraph E.5.3.2

After the opening words "In the event of such appeal," insert the words "the Section O case shall stand adjourned during the course of the appeal and..." .

Remove the words "or the General Secretary as the case may be".

Paragraph E.5.3.5

Replace the opening wording up to the words "in response thereto" with "The Special Appeals Body shall consider the decision of the Assembly Commission to refer the case back and any representations made in connection therewith....".

Paragraph E.5.3.6

After the words "request for a Hearing" insert "which is accepted by the Special Appeals Body".

Paragraph E.5.3.7

After the words "Rules set out in" insert "Paragraph E.10 (as to representation) and".

Paragraph E.5.3.9

Remove the words "or the General Secretary as the case may be".

Remove the words "/Appeals Commission".

Paragraph E.5.3.10

Remove the words "/General Secretary".

Paragraph E.5.3.11

After the words "the Secretary" insert "of the Assembly Commission".

Replace the expression "Paragraph E.5.3.8" with "Paragraph E.5.3.1 or Paragraph E.5.3.8 as the case may be".

Paragraph E.5.3.14

Remove the words "/General Secretary".

Replace the words "decision of the Special Appeals Body on the appeal" with "decision of the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Special Appeals Body".

Remove the words "signed by the Convener".

Replace the expression "Paragraph E.5.3.8" with "Paragraph E.5.3.1 or Paragraph E.5.3.8 as the case may be".

Paragraph E.5.3.16

Remove the words "/General Secretary".

Paragraph E.5.3.17

Remove the words “or the Appeals Commission as the case may be”.

Add the following at the end of the paragraph:

“This declaration shall conclude the disciplinary case against the Minister. The suspension of the Minister will, however, remain in place and will thereafter be subject to the provisions regarding suspension in the Incapacity Procedure [as to these, see the Incapacity Procedure, Part II, Paragraph E.1]. The attention of the Mandated Group is particularly drawn to Paragraph H.4.”

Paragraph E.5.3.18

Remove the words “/General Secretary”.

Paragraph E.5.3.19

After the word “Secretary” insert “of the Assembly Commission”.

Paragraph E.9.3

At the end of the first sentence, continue as follows: “and/or to append recommendations to its decision under Paragraph F.2.3 or where, of its own accord, it might have it in contemplation to adopt either or both of those courses”.

The second sentence remains unchanged.

Paragraph F.4

Change the paragraph reference in the text from J.2 to J.3

Paragraph G.1.3

Replace the words “Section E” with “Sections E and F”.

Paragraph G.3.4

Replace the words “Paragraphs A.6.1 and C.2.4” with “Paragraphs A.6.1, C.2.2 and C.3.1”.

Paragraph G.16

Replace the existing Paragraph G.16 with the following:

G.16 G.16.1 The decision of the Appeals Commission shall conclude its involvement in the Section O Process, except as to the discharge of its responsibilities under Paragraph J.3. Unless the decision falls within Paragraph G.15 (reference back to another duly constituted Assembly Commission), it shall have the effect provided for in Paragraph G.16.2 or Paragraph G.16.3, whichever is applicable.

G.16.2 In the event of the Appeals Commission deciding to delete, the minister’s suspension shall continue up to the date of the decision, on which date the deletion shall automatically take effect. The Section O case shall be regarded as concluded on such day.

G.16.3 In the event of the Appeals Commission deciding not to delete, the minister's suspension shall cease on the date of the decision and the Section O case shall be regarded as concluded on such day.

Paragraph J.1.5

Add a new paragraph as follows:

"Recommendations or guidance appended to any decision of the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission shall not be included in any report to General Assembly under this Paragraph J.1."

Paragraph J.2

Add a new paragraph as follows:

"If a case is concluded under the provisions of Paragraph E.5.3.17 the Report shall simply state that a case has been referred into the Incapacity Procedure and shall not name the Minister."

Paragraphs J.3 and J.4

Renumber the existing Paragraphs J.2 and J.3 as J.3 and J.4.

.....
Notes on the proposed changes to Section O

Most of the changes relate to the provisions for reference into the Incapacity Procedure.

As first drafted, it was possible for the Mandated Group to request the Assembly Commission to refer a case back to the person who called in the Mandated Group with a recommendation to instigate a case within the Incapacity Procedure. On reflection the Advisory Group has concluded that it is sensible to withdraw that right (after all, the Minister/Church Related Community Worker was not given the equivalent right) and leave the matter entirely to the discretion of the Assembly Commission. There would, of course, be nothing to prevent either party making an informal approach to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission to consider making such a referral back.

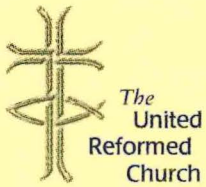
Again, as originally drafted, the decision to refer back to the person calling in the Mandated Group with the recommendation as to the commencement of the Incapacity Procedure could be invoked either by the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, by the Appeals Commission, i.e. either during the Commission Stage whilst still under the jurisdiction of the Assembly Commission or later during the course of an appeal. Now, after considerable further thought, and for a number of reasons, the legal advisor has strongly advised and the Group has agreed that the Paragraph E.5.3 procedure should only be available up to the point when the Assembly Commission reaches its substantive decision. If that Commission has been satisfied that it was handling a disciplinary case right up to that point, it is believed that it should be outside the scope of the Appeals Commission's remit to invoke the Paragraph E.5.3 procedure at the later stage.

In addition to the amendments relating to these two changes, there are a number of other corrections which need to be made, most of which should be self-explanatory.

MCS

April 9th 2009 – updated to 7th May 2009

Sd replacent



**MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009**

B

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS ADVISORY GROUP

CHANGES REQUIRED TO SECTION O

PART I

Paragraph 1.1

In the second sentence after the words "Assembly Commission" remove the words "or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission". *{N.B. Do not remove these words in the first or third sentences. They are correct there.}*

After the words "Section F" insert "or, in the event of an appeal, Section G".

Paragraph 1.3.1

Remove the words "or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission".

Paragraph 1.3.2

Replace the words "within the time limit therein specified" with "with all due expedition, consistent with the consultation process laid down by the Incapacity Procedure".

[Note: This ties in with the change made by Mission Council to Part II, Para E.5.3.15.]

Remove the words "or the Appeals Commission".

Paragraph 1.3.3 and Paragraph 1.3.4

Remove the words "or the Appeals Commission".

Paragraph 2

After the words "Appeals Commission" insert ", the Special Appeals Body".

Part II

Paragraph A.3

Replace the words "the right of appeal (Paragraph G.1)" with "the rights of appeal under Paragraphs E.5.3 and G.1".

Paragraph A.6.4

After the words "Assembly Commission" (both times) insert "or Special Appeals Body".

Paragraph A.8

After the words "Assembly Commission" insert "or the Special Appeals Body".

Paragraph B.6.3

After the words "Paragraph B.3, B.4 and B.5" add "and this Paragraph B.6"

Paragraph C.1.5

Delete the words "or the responsible officer of any relevant Organisation".

Paragraph C.3.1

After the words "Appeals Commission" (all three times) insert "or the Special Appeals Body".

Paragraph E.5.3

After the words "the Section O Process" insert "which has reached the Commission Stage".

Remove the words "or the Appeals Commission".

After the words "the Assembly Commission may" remove ", either on its own account or on a written request from the Mandated Group, stating the reasons for making the request,".

Paragraph E.5.3.1

Remove the words "or the General Secretary as the case may be".

Replace the word "intention" with "decision".

After the sentence ending with the words "such recommendation" insert a new sentence as follows:

"This Notice shall contain a statement of its reasons for reaching its decision to refer back and it may indicate what papers, if any, should be passed to the recipient of the Notice."

Remove the bracketed words "(or the General Secretary if the reference back is proposed by the Appeals Commission)".

After the word "received" add "(time being of the essence for this purpose)".

At the end of E.5.3.1 add the following sentence: "The Notice shall draw the attention of the recipient to the strict time limit for serving a Notice of Appeal in response to a Notice served under this Paragraph."

Paragraph E.5.3.2

After the opening words "In the event of such appeal," insert the words "the Section O case shall stand adjourned during the course of the appeal and..."

Remove the words "or the General Secretary as the case may be".

Paragraph E.5.3.5

Replace the opening wording up to the words "in response thereto" with "The Special Appeals Body shall consider the decision of the Assembly Commission to refer the case back and any representations made in connection therewith....".

Paragraph E.5.3.6

After the words "request for a Hearing" insert "which is accepted by the Special Appeals Body".

Paragraph E.5.3.7

After the words "Rules set out in" insert "Paragraph E.10 (as to representation) and".

Paragraph E.5.3.9

Remove the words "or the General Secretary as the case may be".

Remove the words *"/Appeals Commission"*.

Paragraph E.5.3.10

Remove the words *"/General Secretary"*.

Paragraph E.5.3.11

After the words *"the Secretary"* insert *"of the Assembly Commission"*.

Replace the expression *"Paragraph E.5.3.8"* with *"Paragraph E.5.3.1 or Paragraph E.5.3.8 as the case may be"*.

Paragraph E.5.3.14

Remove the words *"/General Secretary"*.

Replace the words *"decision of the Special Appeals Body on the appeal"* with *"decision of the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Special Appeals Body"*.

Remove the words *"signed by the Convener"*.

Replace the expression *"Paragraph E.5.3.8"* with *"Paragraph E.5.3.1 or Paragraph E.5.3.8 as the case may be"*.

Paragraph E.5.3.16

Remove the words *"/General Secretary"*.

Paragraph E.5.3.17

Remove the words *"or the Appeals Commission as the case may be"*.

Add the following at the end of the paragraph:

"This declaration shall conclude the disciplinary case against the Minister. The suspension of the Minister will, however, remain in place and will thereafter be subject to the provisions regarding suspension in the Incapacity Procedure [as to these, see the Incapacity Procedure, Part II, Paragraph E.1]. The attention of the Mandated Group is particularly drawn to Paragraph H.4."

Paragraph E.5.3.18

Remove the words "/General Secretary".

Paragraph E.5.3.19

After the word "Secretary" insert "of the Assembly Commission".

Paragraph E.9.3

At the end of the first sentence, continue as follows: "and/or to incorporate recommendations into its decision under Paragraph F.2.3 or where, of its own accord, it might have it in contemplation to adopt either or both of those courses".

The second sentence remains unchanged.

Paragraph F.2.3

Replace the words "in its written statement (see Paragraph F.3.3) append such recommendations to" with "incorporate within and as part of".

End the final sentence with the words "the Minister only" and delete the words "and that they are of an advisory nature and do not form part of the decision."

Paragraph F.2.4

Replace the word "include" with "incorporate within and as part of".

Delete the whole of the final sentence.

Paragraph F.4

Change the paragraph reference in the text from J.2 to J.3

Paragraph F.5.2

Replace the words "appended to" with "incorporated within and forming part of".

Paragraph F.6.4

Replace the words "appended to" with "incorporated within and forming part of".

Paragraph G.1.3

Replace the words "Section E" with "Sections E and F".

Paragraph G.8.4

Replace the words "appended to" with "incorporated within and forming part of".

Paragraph G.13.4

Replace the words "in its written statement (see Paragraph G.13.3) append such recommendations to" with "incorporate within and as part of".

End the final sentence with the words "the Minister only" and delete the words "and that they are of an advisory nature and do not form part of the decision."

Paragraph G.13.5

Replace the word "include" with "incorporate within and as part of".

Delete the whole of the final sentence.

Paragraph G.14.4

Replace the words "appended to" with "incorporated within and forming part of".

Paragraph G.14.6

Replace the words "appended to" with "incorporated within and forming part of".

Paragraph G.16

Replace the existing Paragraph G.16 with the following:

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deletion shall automatically take effect. The Section O case shall be regarded as concluded on such day.

G.16.3 In the event of the Appeals Commission deciding not to delete, the minister's suspension shall cease on the date of the decision and the Section O case shall be regarded as concluded on such day.

Paragraph J.1.5

Add a new paragraph as follows:

"It shall not be necessary to include in any report to General Assembly under this Paragraph J.1 any recommendations or guidance incorporated into any decision of the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission."

Paragraph J.2

Add a new paragraph as follows:

"If a case is concluded under the provisions of Paragraph E.5.3.17 the Report shall simply state that a case has been referred into the Incapacity Procedure and shall not name the Minister." Renumber Paragraphs J.2 and J.3 as J.3 and J.4.

Notes on the proposed changes to Section O

Most of the changes relate to the provisions for reference into the Incapacity Procedure.

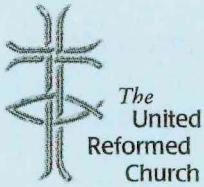
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has strongly advised and the Group has agreed that the Paragraph E.5.3 procedure should only be available up to the point when the Assembly Commission reaches its substantive decision. If that Commission has been satisfied that it was handling a disciplinary case right up to that point, it is believed that it should be outside the scope of the Appeals Commission's remit to invoke the Paragraph E.5.3 procedure at the later stage.

In addition to the amendments relating to these two changes, there are a number of other corrections which need to be made, most of which should be self-explanatory.

MCS
April 9th 2009



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

C

General Assembly 2008 Resolution 12 – Further work:
Progress report to Mission Council

Resolution 12: *The United Reformed Church, despite its commitment to women's ministry, has been unable to achieve equality of opportunity, proper gender equality and participation by women at all levels of the Church's life.*

Therefore General Assembly instructs its Equal Opportunities and Nominations Committees to work together to discover the theological, cultural and structural reasons why this is the case.

Assembly requests that procedures and policies to address this imbalance be brought to the 2010 General Assembly.

(Following debate, neither consensus nor agreement was achieved. The matter was remitted to Mission Council).

We recognise that it is by no means clear to everyone on Mission Council that there are significant issues around gender that need addressing in the life of the United Reformed Church. The outcome of the General Assembly discussion of Resolution 12 means that Assembly has not expressed a view on this either.

We plan to do some further research to establish what, if any, concerns there are about women's appointment to, and exercise of, leadership roles within the URC. On the basis of that research we plan to report to Mission Council in November 2009, with, if necessary, specific proposals about how concerns can be better understood and addressed.

This timetable will allow us to synthesise, where appropriate, with the Mission Committee and with the group reviewing the appointment process for Synod Moderators.

Methodology

- 1) A targeted questionnaire – to women who have had or who currently hold roles with a remit wider than the local: e.g. Synod Moderators, Convenors of Assembly Committees

- 2) A public blog – an open forum for women in the URC to share their experiences
- 3) A private questionnaire – where women's responses can be collated anonymously
- 4) Data gathering – gathering together statistics

Liaison

We are aware of overlapping pieces of work within the URC in this area, and are aware of the need of being in communication with:

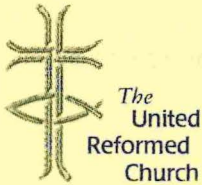
- 1) Women in Ministries network and blog
- 2) Mission Committee
- 3) Task Group reviewing appointment process for Synod Moderators
- 4) Nominations Committee
- 5) Equal Opportunities Committee

Cross-referencing

Questions about gender are not only raised within the URC. There may be something to learn from the following contexts:

- 1) Societal
- 2) Ecumenical
- 3) World church

Terry Oakley
Rachel Poolman
April 09



MISSION COUNCIL 15 - 17 May 2009

D

General Assembly 2008 Resolution 19: Equal Opportunities updated Policy

General Assembly urges all churches, synods and United Reformed Church committees to embrace the General Assembly updated Equal Opportunities policy (as adopted on General Assembly's behalf by Mission Council in October 2006) by 31st January 2010 and thereafter to implement said updated policy.

Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

The United Reformed Church believes that all people are created in God's image and are loved by God. In his ministry Jesus showed God's love by his openness to all people, including those who were marginalised in his day.

Statement of intent

The United Reformed Church affirms its commitment to show the same openness to all people in today's world. It intends in spirit and in deed to promote equality of opportunity and diversity in all spheres of its activity and is committed to behaving as an equal opportunity organisation. It acknowledges that people are called to be diverse and lively, inclusive and flexible through the sharing of the gospel.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy Statement

Exclusion and discrimination can occur on many grounds including those recognised in law, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status and disability. The United Reformed Church seeks to eradicate less favourable treatment in these areas by endeavouring to:

- Build inclusive communities where all will be treated with dignity and respect and have equality of opportunity to contribute their gifts to the common life;
- Identify and remove barriers to participation in employment, training, promotion, leadership and representation on church committees and in the attitudes and actions of every congregation;
- Take positive action to counter attitudes and practices contrary to this statement of intent ;

- Define within the law where being of a particular religion or belief is or is not a requirement for any post within the church.
- Develop detailed policies to give effect to these requirements; and
- Monitor and report on progress in fulfilling these requirements.

This policy is the overarching equality and diversity direction of the United Reformed Church and should be read in conjunction with The United Reformed Church's declaration that it is a multicultural church and its equality policies on employment, church activities, membership, committees and councils.

From Convenor, Equal Opportunities Committee to Deputy General Secretary:

"Please put Resolution 19 on Mission Council's agenda (re embracing EO policy and implementing it). I won't be at MC so might be a good time to discuss it so it comes from someone else and allows for creative thinking".

Comments will be invited from the floor and fed back to the Convenor and Committee.



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

E

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT
MAY 2009 MISSION COUNCIL

I. INTRODUCTION

Work on the reshaping of committees following the Catch the Vision process has continued through the past year. During this time three new committees have come into existence – the Windermere Management Committee, the Investment Committee and the Stewardship Sub-Committee. Efforts continue as we seek to make our committee structures and lines of responsibility as transparent and clear as possible.

The Nominations Committee has continued to try to make committee and other vacancies widely known as early as possible. Information about Assembly 2010 vacancies was sent out in March 2009 and should now be available throughout the church. The Committee seeks suggestions of suitable nominees from synods, FURY, central staff and committees.

A major piece of work on Monitoring, which was presented at the December meeting of Mission Council, showed how committees and other leadership positions had been filled 2005 – 2008. Partly as a result of this, and at the request of Mission Council Advisory Group, a special group was set up to review the procedures for appointing synod moderators.

The search for more Black and Minority Ethnic people for committees has been facilitated by the use of the Skills Survey and the efforts of Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry colleagues. We observe, however, that nearly half of the known BME people invited to serve were not able to accept the invitation.

The Committee tries to have an overview of how the United Reformed Church uses its resources of personnel. It also strives for transparency, so that the Committee's report to Assembly or Mission Council gives the "person in the pew" a true picture of how the work of the Church is being carried out. Recently it has been concerned about the number of special groups and sub-committees which have been appointed by committees and councils without any overall co-ordination or consultation, potentially leading to the overburdening of willing people and a great deal of the work of the Church being done "invisibly", sometimes without clear lines of accountability. The Committee is seeking to co-operate with other committees in order to find ways of working together in making such appointments, so that the whole picture becomes clear to all and the church's resources of people and time can be used better.

II. ASSEMBLY STAFF APPOINTMENTS

1. NOMINATING GROUPS

1.1 The Nominating Group for the post of **Secretary for World Church Relations** convened by the Revd Elizabeth Welch nominated the Revd Jane Rowell to serve from 1st July 2009 until 30th June 2014, subject to review before the end of this period. Mission Council agreed that in view of a potentially early appointment to this post MCAG might authorise this appointment on the recommendation of the nominating group, and it duly did so at its Meeting on April 2nd.

1.2 The Nominating Group for the post of **Secretary for Ecumenical Relations** convened by the Revd John Humphreys nominated the Revd David Tatem to serve from 1st July 2009 until 30th June 2014, subject to review before the end of this period.

III. ASSEMBLY BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

Notes:

1. The Moderator, the Moderators-elect, the immediate past Moderator and the General Secretary are members *ex officio* of every standing committee.
2. Symbols have been used as follows:
 - * denotes those appointed since General Assembly 2008
 - ** denotes those whom the May Mission Council is invited to appoint for the first time
 - † denotes those who have been invited to extend their periods of service
 - # denotes a Convener Elect who will become Convener in 2010
 - / the name after the slash is the alternate for the one before it
3. The number in round brackets following the name indicates the member's synod: (1) Northern, (2) North Western, (3) Mersey, (4) Yorkshire, (5) East Midlands, (6) West Midlands, (7) Eastern, (8) South Western, (9) Wessex, (10) Thames North, (11) Southern, (12) Wales, (13) Scotland. This numbering is not shown where it is not relevant.
4. When a member of a committee is there as a representative of another body or a particular category this is indicated in round brackets following the name.
5. Committee membership is normally for a period of four years, though this may sometimes exceptionally be renewable. Committee conveners serve an additional preliminary year as convener elect. In sections 1 – 4 of the report, appointments with a different term are noted.
6. The date in square brackets following the name indicates the date of retirement, assuming a full term.
7. In accordance with the decision of General Assembly 2000 some nominations are made directly by the National Synods of Wales and Scotland.
8. In years when General Assembly meets, new committee members normally take up their roles at the conclusion of Assembly. In years when General Assembly does not meet, they normally begin on 1st July.

1. MISSION COUNCIL

Mission Council acts on behalf of General Assembly. It consists of the officers of Assembly, the synod Moderators and three representatives from each synod together with the conveners of Assembly committees.

(Synods appoint and decide terms for their representatives)

Northern Synod	Revd John Durell, Miss Elaine Colechin, Mr Justice Semuli
North Western Synod	Revd Rachel Poolman, Ms Marie Trubic, Mr George Grime
Mersey Synod	Mr Donald Swift, Miss Emma Pugh, Revd Gordon Smith
Yorkshire Synod	Mrs Val Morrison, Mr Roderick Garthwaite, Revd Kay Alberg
East Midlands Synod	Mr Duncan Smith, Mrs Margaret Gateley, Revd Jane Campbell
West Midlands Synod	Revd Anthony Howells, Mr Bill Robson, Mrs Adella Pritchard
Eastern Synod	Mr Mick Barnes, Mrs Joan Turner, Revd Catherine Ball
South Western Synod	Revd Roz Harrison, Mrs Janet Gray, Revd Stephen Newell
Wessex Synod	Mr Peter Pay, Revd Cliff Bembridge, Mrs Margaret Telfer
Thames North Synod	Mr Simon Fairnington, Revd Maggie Hindley, Revd David Lawrence
Southern Synod	Revd Derrick Sena Dzandu-Hedidor, Revd Christopher Parker Revd Zamantha Walker
National Synod of Wales	Synod Clerk (alternate Revd Peter Trow), Revd Peter Cruchley-Jones, Miss Iris Williams,
National Synod of Scotland	Miss Irene Hudson, Mr Patrick Smyth, Revd John Sanderson

2. MISSION DEPARTMENT

2.1 MISSION COMMITTEE

Convener:	Revd Ed Cox [2012]
Deputy Convener:	Revd Elizabeth Caswell [2010]
Mrs Chris Eddowes (1) [2011]	Revd Michael Walsh (2) [2012]
Revd Andrew Willett (3) [2010]	Mrs Anne Parker (4) [2011]
Revd Clare Downing (5) [2012]	Revd Louise Franklin (6) [2010]
Revd Peter Ball (7) [2011]	Revd Tracey Lewis (8) [2012]
Mr Peter Pay (9) [2010]	Mr David Jonathan (10) [2011]
Revd Pauline Sparks (11) [2012]	Revd Simon Walkling (12) [2010]
(Vacancy) (13) [2011]	

2.1.1 FAITH AND ORDER REFERENCE GROUP

(Members normally serve for six years)

Convener:	Revd Dr Robert Pope [2012]
Secretary:	The Deputy General Secretary
Revd Dr Susan Durber [2012]	Revd Fleur Houston [2012]
Revd Dr Michael Jagessar [2014]	Revd Dr Sarah Hall [2014]
Revd Dr Neil Messer [2014]	Revd Dr John Bradbury [2012]

2.1.2 INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE REFERENCE GROUP

Convener:	Revd Linda Elliott [2011]
Secretary:	Secretary for World Church Relations
Members:	Revd Nigel Uden (Synod Moderator) [2010], Dr Pamela Cressey (7) [2010]

2.1.3 COMMITMENT FOR LIFE GROUP

Convener:	Mrs Helen Lidgett ** [2012]
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2.1.4 METHODIST/URC INTERFAITH REFERENCE GROUP

(Members normally serve for six years - in parallel with Methodist terms)

Co-Convenor: Revd Peter Brain * [2013]

Members Revd Clare Downing * (5) [2013] Mr David Jonathan * (10) [2014]
 Revd Bill Burgess * (3) [2015] Revd Tim Clarke * (10) [2015]

3. MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH DEPARTMENT

3.1 MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Peter Poulter [2010] #Revd Ruth Whitehead ** [2014]

Secretary: Secretary for Ministries

Dr Roger Allen (3) [2010]

Mrs Helen Renner (3) [2011]

Revd Ruth Whitehead (7) [2011]

Revd Yolande Burns (2) [2012]

Ms Brenda Jesse ** (8) [2013]

Revd David Skitt ** (11) [2013]

Convener of Assessment Board

3.1.1 MINISTRIES - Accreditation Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Geoffrey Townsend [2013]

Secretary: Secretary for Ministries

Mrs Pat Evans (4) [2010]

Revd Sue Henderson (11) [2011]

Revd Malcolm Fife ** (5) [2013]

Revd Terry Oakley ** (Synod Moderator) [2011]

Mrs Tessa Henry-Robinson ** (7) [2013]

3.1.2 MINISTRIES - CRCW Programme Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Paul Whittle [2012]

Secretaries: The CRCW Development Workers

Revd Helen Pope (6) [2011]

Ms Janine Atkinson (CRCW) [2012]

Revd Susan MacBeth (4) [2012]

Ms Cristine Smalligan (10) [2012]

Prof John Mellor ** (9) [2013]

3.1.3 MINISTRIES – Leadership in Worship Sub Committee

Convener and Assembly Lay Preaching Advocate: Mrs Jan Harper [2011]

Mr Ed Strachan (2) [2011]

Revd Gwynfor Evans (3) [2011]

Mr Alan Cotgreave (6) [2011]

3.1.4 MINISTRIES - Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Dr Anthony Haws [2013]

Mr Brian Knight (8) [2010]

Revd Ken Summers (3) [2010]

Mrs Jane Mackerness (4) [2011]

Miss Margaret Atkinson (4) [2012]

Revd Catey Morrison (1) [2012]

The Treasurer

Convener of Pensions Executive

3.1.5 MINISTRIES - Retired Ministers Housing Sub-Committee

(Members normally serve for five years)

Convener: Revd David Bedford † [2015]

Secretary: Secretary Retired Ministers Housing Society Ltd

Revd Michael Spencer (6) [2011]

Revd Nanette Lewis-Head (12) [2012]

Revd Anne Bedford ** (3) [2014]

Revd John Humphreys (Synod Moderator) [2013]

The Treasurer

*(Properties are managed by a Company viz: **RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING SOCIETY LTD.**
Details of the Members of the Board etc may be obtained from the Secretary: Mr Tony Bayley
at Church House.)*

3.1.6 ASSESSMENT BOARD

(Members normally serve for five years as training is required)

Convener: Dr Graham Campling [2014]

Retiring 2010 Revd David A L Jenkins (10), Revd Dr Irene John (13), Revd Edward Sanniez (10), Revd Lesley Charlton (11)

Retiring 2011 Revd Jan Adamson (13), Revd Sian Collins (12), Mrs Wendy Smith (2)

Retiring 2012 Mr Geoffrey Harrison (3), Mr James Horton (4), Mrs Margaret Jenkins (3), Revd Janet Maxwell (1), Revd William Young (6)

Retiring 2013 Mrs Irene Wren (5), Revd Lis Mullen (2), Revd Gary McGowan (3)
Revd Val Towler (1)

Retiring 2014 Mr Mark Hayes ** (7), Mr Robin Pencavel ** (8)
Revd Jamie Kissack ** (4), Revd Paul Floe ** (12)

3.2 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS - Commission Panel

(Members serve for five years as regular training is required. They may be invited to continue serving beyond this as experience is especially valuable on this Panel. Members may not serve beyond the age of 70 for legal reasons.)

Convener: Miss Kathleen Cross [2014]

Deputy Convener: Revd Christine Craven ** [2014]

Secretary: Mrs Wilma Frew [2011]

Members:

Retiring 2010 Revd Meryl Court (10), Revd Nanette Lewis-Head (12),
Dr Fiona Liddell (12), Dr Jim Merrilees (13), Mrs Pamela Sharp (3),
Mr Patrick Smyth (13)

Retiring 2011 Mr Geoffrey Milnes (5), Revd David Pattie (13), Mr Neil Robinson (4),
Revd Yvonne Stone (6)

Retiring 2012 Revd Nicholas Adlem (8), Miss Ina Barker (4), Revd Kay Cattell (5),
Revd Kenneth Chippindale (6), Miss Kathleen Cross (2),
Revd Alison Davis (7), Revd John Du Bois (11),
Revd Joan Grindrod-Helmn (1), Miss Judith Haughton (2),
Miss Elizabeth Lawson QC (10), Revd Julian Macro (9),
Revd Colin Offor (1), Mr Nicholas Pye (3),
Revd Raymond Singh (11), Revd Carolyn Smyth (13),
Revd Dr David Thompson (7), Mr David Westwood (4)

Retiring 2013 Revd Pauline Calderwood (4), Revd Bill Bowman (11),
Dr Peter Campbell Smith (11), Mr Roger Tucker (9)

Retiring 2014 Revd Hazel Allen ** (8), Mr Mick Barnes ** (7),
Revd James Brown † (6), Revd Mary Burgess ** (8)
Mrs Mary Cummings ** (6), Mr Peter Etwell ** (1)
Revd Christine Fowler ** (8), Mrs Barbara Goom ** (8)
Mr Andrew Harvey ** (8), Revd Naison Hove ** (10)
Mr Peter Jolly † (9), Mrs Barbara Lancaster † (2)
Mrs Barbara Madge † (8), Revd Nicholas Mark † (5)
Mrs Pat Poinen ** (1), Revd Shelagh Pollard † (12)
Mrs Lynne Upsdell † (12), Ms Elizabeth Whitten † (7)

3.3 EDUCATION AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Convener: Professor Malcolm Johnson [2011]

Secretary: The Secretary for Education and Learning

Mr John Saunders (8) [2010]

Revd John Smith (13) [2010]

Mr Clive Parsons (6) [2010]

Revd Dr Robert Pope (12) [2011]

Revd Jennifer Snashall (11) [2012]

Revd Dr James Coleman (4) [2012]

Mrs Fiona Smith (4) [2012] Revd Dr Susan Durber ** (Resource Centre) [2013]
Revd Dr David Whiting ** (1) [2013]

3.3.1 WINDERMERE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Convener: (Vacancy) **
Minute Secretary: Revd Ruth Crofton ** (1) [2013]
Members: Dr Peter Clarke ** (1) [2011] Mr Nick Andrews ** (1) [2011]
 Mr Graham Law ** (6) [2013]
 Revd Fiona Thomas ** (Secretary for Education and Learning)
 Representative of Carver URC

(This is a new committee. The number of members may change in the light of future experience.)

3.4 YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Robert Weston *[2013]
Secretary: Ms Jo Williams
Revd Heather Whyte (6) [2010] Mrs Anthea Coates (8) [2011]
Mr Chris Gill (11) [2011] Mr Matthew Franks (8) [2011]
Mrs Memona Shahbaz (10) [2012] Revd Stuart Radcliffe (2) [2012]
Mr Phillip Timson ** (5) [2013] Revd Shirley Knibbs ** (4) [2013]
Revd Meg Robb ** (1) [2013] Miss Tamara Oates ** (5) [2013]
FURY Chair FURY Council Member

3.4.1 PILOTS MANAGEMENT Sub Committee

Convener: Revd David Downing [2011]
Member: Mrs Denise Beckley [2010]
(Other members of the sub-committee are appointed by the Youth and Children's Work Committee. The Congregational Federation also has two representatives.)

4. ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

4.1 ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Convener: Dr David Robinson [2012]
Secretary: Office & Personnel Manager
Synod Representative for forthcoming Assembly
Synod Representative for previous Assembly who is then replaced after 'review' meeting by
Synod Representative for Assembly two years hence.
Moderator, Moderator(s)-elect, General Secretary, Clerk to Assembly

4.1.1 TELLERS AT ASSEMBLY 2010 FOR THE ELECTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MODERATORS FOR 2012 - 2014

Dr Jim Merrilees (Convener), Mr Simon Fairnington, Mr Duncan Smith
(These are all Synod Clerks who are appointed in rotation.)

4.2 COMMUNICATIONS and EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe [2011]
Secretary: Director of Communications
Mrs Esther Searle (8) [2011] Ms Lucy Berry (10) [2012]
Mr Andy Littlejohns (11) [2012] Mr Justin Brierley (11) [2012]
Mr Stanley Hazell (8) [2012] Revd Peter Lyth ** (3) [2013]
Mr Peter Ranscombe ** (13) [2013] Mr Orin Stephens ** (10) [2013]

4.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

Convener: Ms Morag McLintock [2010] #Revd Elizabeth Nash [2014]
Secretary: Mr Andrew Jack ** (10) [2013]
Mr Jim Hurst (2) [2010] Ms Mary Jeremiah (12) [2012]
Revd Barbara Exley (11) [2012] Mrs Gwynneth Tilley ** (7) [2013]
Mrs Tina Ashitey ** (10) [2013] Revd Tom Arthur ** (12) [2013]

4.4 FINANCE COMMITTEE

Convener: The Treasurer
Chief Finance Officer: Mr Andrew Grimwade
Revd Kathryn Taylor (8) [2010] Mrs Jane Humphreys (7) [2011]
Mr Brian Hosier (10) [2011] Revd David Walton (13) [2012]

Dr Harry Potter OBE ** (3) [2013] Mr Richard Dewar ** (9) [2013]
Chairman of the Trustees

4.4.1 STEWARDSHIP Sub-Committee

Convener: Mrs Faith Paulding * [2013]
Mr Gareth Curl * (8) [2011] Revd Sarah Simpson * (3) [2010]
Mr Keith Berry * (10) [2012] (Vacancy) ** [2013]
(The members of this sub-committee are appointed by the Finance Committee.)

4.5 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

(Synods appoint and decide terms for their representative)

Convener: Revd Malcolm Hanson [2010] #Revd John Durell ** [2014]
Secretary: Miss Sarah Dodds [2013]
Synod Representatives:
Revd Val Towler (1) Revd Chris Weddle (2) (Vacancy) (3)
Mrs Val Morrison (4) Mr Duncan Smith (5) Dr Anthony Jeans (6)
Mr Mick Barnes (7) Revd Roz Harrison (8) Mr Peter Pay (9)
Mr Simon Fairnington (10) Dr Graham Campling (11) Dr Jean Silvan-Evans (12)
Dr James Merrilees (13)
with the Immediate Past Moderator and the General Secretary.

4.5.1 PANEL FOR THE APPOINTMENT AND REVIEW OF SYNOD MODERATORS, THE GENERAL SECRETARY AND THE DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

(Members normally serve for five years as training is required)

Retiring 2010 Mrs Irene Wren (5) Mr Okeke Azu Okeke (11)
Revd Dr Susan Durber (7) Mr Ron Todd (1)
Retiring 2011 Dr Graham Campling (11) Mrs Janet Gray (8) Revd Cecil White (7)
Revd Mary Buchanan (13) Mrs Helen Brown (3)
Revd Nanette Lewis-Head (12)
Retiring 2012 Revd Raymond Singh (11) Revd Lesley Charlton (11)
Mrs Sally Abbott (10) Mr Simon Rowntree (6) Dr Jean Silvan Evans (12)
Mr Alun Jones (4)
Retiring 2013 Revd John Durell (1) Revd Roz Harrison (8)
Revd John Oldershaw (3) Revd Deborah McVey (7)
Revd Robert Street (9) Mrs Susan Wilkinson (2)
Mrs Carol Dixon (1) Revd John Young * (13)

4.6 PASTORAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Alasdair Pratt [2011]

Secretary: Deputy General Secretary

Mrs Delyth Rees (12) [2011]

Revd Adrian Bulley (Synod Moderator) [2011]

Revd Birgit Ewald (7) [2012]

Dr Paul Ashitey ** (10) [2013]

[*ex officio*: The Treasurer The General Secretary The Secretary for Welfare]

4.6.1 STANDING PANEL FOR THE INCAPACITY PROCEDURE

(This Panel is normally convened by the member with legal experience.)

Secretary: Revd Heather Kent * [2012]

Members: Revd Bill Mahood (Past Moderator of General Assembly) [2012],

Revd Rowena Francis (Synod Moderator) [2013],

Mr Donald Swift (Legal experience) [2013],

Dr Gillian Patterson (G.P.) [2013]

4.7 UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST

(Directors normally serve for seven years)

Chair: Mr Alan Small

Secretary: Mr Tony Bayley

Directors:

Miss Joyce Bain (13) [2010]

Mr Ernest Gudgeon (8) [2010]

Dr Brian Woodhall (2) [2010]

Mr John Ellis (11) [2011]

Dr Augur Pearce (12) [2012]

Mr Alan Small (3) [2012]

Revd Dr David Thompson (7) [2012]

Miss Rachel Greening (6) [2014]

Dr David Robinson (4) [2014]

Mr John Woodman (7) [2014]

Mission Council Appointed Trustees:

Mrs Val Morrison [2012]

Miss Isobel Simmons [2010]

Mrs Claudette Binns [2014]

Co-opted Director: Revd Michael J. Davies [2010]

[*ex officio*: Moderator of General Assembly General Secretary Deputy General Secretary Treasurer]

4.8 THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION TRUST LTD BOARD MEMBERS

(Members normally serve for five years)

Chair: Revd Rowena Francis *

Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones *

Members of URC: Mr Andrew Perkins [2011] Revd Dr John Dyce [2013]

Revd Rowena Francis [2013] (Vacancy) [2014]

Members of Fund: Revd Graham Spicer [2009] Revd Duncan Wilson [2012]

Revd David Bedford [2012] Revd Jacky Embrey ** [2014]

[*ex officio*: Honorary Treasurer Convener Investment Committee Convener Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee Convener Pensions Executive]

4.9 PENSIONS EXECUTIVE

Convener: Mr Maurice Dyson † [2012]

Secretary: Mrs Judy Stockings

Members: Revd Kathryn Taylor † [2012] (Vacancy) [2013]

[*ex officio*: Convener of Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee, Honorary Treasurer]

(The Pensions Executive reports to the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pensions Trust Board, the Maintenance of Ministry Sub Committee and to the Finance Committee.)

4.10 INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Richard Nunn ** [2011]
Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones **
Members: Mr Michael Goldsmith ** [2011] Dr Brian Woodhall ** [2012]
Mr Malcolm Littlefair ** [2013] Mr Andrew Perkins ** [2013]

5. REPRESENTATIVES of the UNITED REFORMED CHURCH to MEETINGS of SISTER CHURCHES

Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Revd John Marsh, Revd Mary Buchanan
General Synod of Church of England	Revd Graham Maskery
Methodist Conference	Revd Jason Askew
Congregational Federation	Revd Roberta Rominger
General Assembly of Church of Scotland [note7]	Revd John Marsh, Revd Mary Buchanan, Revd Mitchell Bunting,
United Free Church of Scotland [note7]	Revd John Humphreys
Scottish Episcopal Church [note 7]	Revd Mitchell Bunting
Methodist Church in Scotland [note 7]	Revd J.Ross McLaren
Baptist Union of Scotland [note 7]	Revd John Humphreys
Presbyterian Church of Wales [note7]	Revd Peter Noble/Revd Peter Trow
Union of Welsh Independents [note 7]	Revd Peter Noble/Revd Peter Trow
Church in Wales Governing Board [note 7]	Revd Peter Noble/Revd Peter Trow
Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church	To be decided

6. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ON ECUMENICAL CHURCH BODIES

The following have been nominated as URC representatives at the major gatherings of the Ecumenical Bodies listed.

6.1 Council for World Mission (CWM) From Assembly 2006

Revd David Coleman, Mrs Ann Shillaker, Ms Catherine Lewis-Smith (CWM Trustee).
Secretary for World Church Relations

6.1.1 CWM European Region Meeting 2005 - 2008

Revd David Coleman, Mrs Ann Shillaker, Ms Catherine Lewis-Smith,
Secretary for World Church Relations, Deputy General Secretary (CWM Europe Trustee)

6.2 World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) General Council

Revd Dr Sarah Hall, Ms Emma Pugh, Revd Dr David Pickering,
Secretary for World Church Relations, General Secretary

6.3 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) Church Leaders' Meeting General Secretary

6.3.1 CTBI Senior Representatives' Forum

General Secretary, Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

6.3.2 CTBI Environmental Issues Network

Revd David Coaker, Revd Dr David Pickering

6.3.3 CTBI Church and Society Forum

Mr Simon Loveitt, Secretary for Church and Society

6.3.4 CTBI Churches' Criminal Justice Forum

Mrs Wilma Frew

6.3.5 CTBI Consultative Group on Ministry amongst Children (CGMC)

Mrs Karen Bulley (Moderator), Ms Jo Williams

6.4 Churches Together in England (CTE)- From Forum 2006

Miss Alison Micklem, Revd Peter Poulter, Revd Andrew Prasad, Mrs Helen Renner, Revd Elizabeth Nash, Mrs Wilma Frew, Mr Stuart Dew, Mr John Brown, Dr Suzanne McDonald
General Secretary, Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

6.4.1 CTE - Enabling Group

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

6.4.2 CTE - Coordinating Group for Local Unity

Revd Terry Oakley,
Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

6.4.3 CTE - Churches Together for Healing

Revd Delia Bond, Revd Deborah McVey

6.4.4 CTE - Women's Coordinating Group

Revd Samantha White

6.4.5 CTE – Churches' Committee on Funerals and Crematoria

Revd Delia Bond, Revd Sally Thomas

6.4.6 CTE - Free Churches' Education Committee

Mr Graham Handscomb, Mrs Gillian Kingston

6.4.7 CTE – Churches' Joint Education Policy Committee

Mr Graham Handscomb

6.5 Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) Members Meeting [see note 7]

Revd John Humphreys, Revd Mitchell Bunting (alternate Revd Sue Kirkbride)

6.6 National Sponsoring Body for Scotland [see note 7]

Revd John Humphreys, Revd Mitchell Bunting

6.7 Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN) [see note 7]

Revd Peter Noble (alternate Revd Peter Trow)

6.7.1 Commission of Covenanted Churches [see note 7]

Revd Peter Noble (alternate Revd Peter Trow)

7. UNITED REFORMED CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES AT FORMAL BI-LATERAL AND MULTI-LATERAL COMMITTEES

7.1 Methodist/United Reformed Church Liaison Committee

Revd Kay Alberg, Miss Emma Pugh, (Vacancy), (Vacancy), Revd Peter Rand (co-opted)
Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

7.2 Roman Catholic – United Reformed Church Bilateral Dialogue
Revd Dr David Thompson, Revd Dr John Bradbury, Revd Dr Sarah Hall, Mrs Ann Shillaker,
Mr Malcolm Townsend
Staff Secretary responsible to be decided.

**7.3 Church of England – United Reformed Church Bilateral Dialogue
("God's Reign and our Unity")**
Revd Elizabeth Welch, Revd Dr David Peel
Deputy General Secretary

7.4 Anglican/Moravian Contact Group
Revd David Tatem

**7.5 Tri-lateral Conversation of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist
Church and the United Reformed Church**
Revd John Humphreys, Revd Mary Buchanan, Revd John Young

8. URC REPRESENTATIVES ON GOVERNING BODIES OF THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES, ETC.

- 8.1 Northern College** Secretary for Education and Learning
Miss Margaret Atkinson (4) [2011]
Mrs Helen Brown [2011]
Revd Dr Robert Pope [2011]
Revd David Jenkins † [2013]
Mr Steve Wood ** (2013)
- Luther King House Educational Trust Secretary for Education and Learning
- 8.2 Westminster College: Board of Governors**
Convener: Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms [2014]
Clerk: Revd Cecil White [2012]
Members:
Mr Brian Long [2010]
Revd Fleur Houston [2010]
Dr Jean Stevenson [2013]
Revd Craig Muir † [2015]
Revd Nigel Appleton ** [2015]
Secretary for Education and Learning
- 8.2.1 Cheshunt Foundation** Mr David Butler [2010]
Revd Craig Muir [2011]
- 8.2.2 Cambridge Theological Federation** Convener Westminster College Governors
- 8.3 Homerton College Trustees** Lady Sally Williams [2010]
Mrs Elisabeth Jupp [2010]
Revd Dr David Thompson † [2011]
Mr John Chaplin † [2013]

- 8.4 **The Queen's Foundation** Revd Roy Lowes
Mr Simon Rowntree
In attendance:
Secretary for Education and Learning

9. **GOVERNORS OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS WITH WHICH THE URC IS ASSOCIATED**

- 9.1 **Caterham School** Revd Nigel Uden [2011]
9.2 **Eltham College** Revd Terry Sparks [2011]
9.3 **Walthamstow Hall** Mrs Isabel Heald [2011]
9.4 **Milton Mount Foundation** Mr Graham Rolfe [2011]
Mr Brian West [2011]

Revd Nicola Furley-Smith [2011]

- 9.5 **Silcoates School,** Ms Hilary Miles [2010]
Revd David Cuckson [2010]
Prof Clyde Binfield [2011]
Mrs Val Morrison [2010]
Mrs Valerie Jenkins [2010]
Dr Peter Clarke † [2013]
Dr Moira Gallagher † [2013]
Revd Janet Lees ** [2013]
9.6 **Taunton School** Revd David Grosch-Miller (Moderator of
South Western Synod)
9.7 **Wentworth College** Revd Martin Ambler [2011]
9.8 **Bishops Stortford College** Mr Anthony Trigg [2011]

10. **MISCELLANEOUS**

The URC is represented on a variety of other national organisations and committees as follows:

- Arthur Rank Centre** Revd David Herbert [April 2011]
Churches Legislation Advisory Service Mrs Sheila Duncan/General Secretary/
Deputy General Secretary
Congregational Fund Board Revd Margaret Taylor [2012]
Revd Eric Allen [2012]
Mr Anthony Bayley [2011]
Revd Geoffrey Roper [2011]
Mrs Jackie Haws ** [2013]

Congregational Memorial Hall Trust	Mr Hartley Oldham [from before 1999] Mr Graham Stacy [from before 1999] Dr John Thompson [from 2004] Dr Elaine Kaye [from 2004] Dr Brian Woodhall [from 2006] Revd Derek Wales [2011]
Discipleship and Witness Board of Trustees Publications Development Group	Mrs Patricia Hubbard [from before 1999] Ms Jo Williams [from 2008]
English Heritage's Places of Worship Forum	Mr Hartley Oldham (Convener of the Listed Buildings Advisory Group)
Guides' Religious Advisory Panel	Mrs Susan Walker [from before 1999]
Retired Ministers' and Widows' Fund	Mr Ken Meekison [from before 1999] Mrs Jill Strong [from 1999] Revd Julian Macro [from 2004]
Samuel Robinson's Charities	Mr Tony Alderman [from 2004]
Scouts' Religious Advisory Group	Revd David Marshall-Jones [from before 1999]
United Reformed Church History Society Council	Mrs Mary Davies [2012] Revd Michael Hopkins [2012] Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe [2013] Revd Dr David Thompson [2010] Dr David Robinson [2011]
Lord Wharton's Charity	Dr John Thompson † [2013]

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RESOLUTIONS

1. Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints committees and representatives of the Church as set out in the Nominations Committee report subject to additions and corrections contained in the Supplementary Report.
2. Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints the Revd David Tatem to the post of Secretary for Ecumenical Relations from 1st July 2009 until 30th June 2014, subject to review before the end of this period.



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

E1

**SUPPLEMENTARY NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT TO
MAY 2009 MISSION COUNCIL**

Please replace items 4.7, 4.8 and 4.10 in the original report with the following:

4.7 UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST

(Directors normally serve for six years)

Chair: Mr Alan Small

Secretary: Mr Tony Bayley

Directors:

Miss Joyce Bain (13) [2010]

Dr Brian Woodhall (2) [2010]

Dr Augur Pearce (12) [2012]

Revd Prof David Thompson (7) [2012]

Dr David Robinson (4) [2014]

Mission Council Appointed Trustees:

Mr Ernest Gudgeon (8) [2010]

Mr John Ellis (11) [2011]

Mr Alan Small (3) [2012]

Miss Rachel Greening (6) [2014]

Mr John Woodman (7) [2014]

Mrs Val Morrison [2012]

Miss Isobel Simmons [2010]

Mrs Claudette Binns [2014]

Co-opted Director: Revd Michael J. Davies [2010]

*[ex officio: Moderator of General Assembly General Secretary Secretary of the URC Trust
Honorary Treasurer Convener of the Investment Committee]*

*(Mr John Ellis serves in a dual capacity as a synod nominee and as the Honorary
Treasurer.)*

**4.8 THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION TRUST LTD
BOARD MEMBERS**

(Members normally serve for six years. Terms run until the AGM in September.)

Chair: Revd Rowena Francis * [2014]

Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones *

Members of URC: Mr Andrew Perkins [2011] Revd Dr John Dyce [2014]

Revd Rowena Francis * [2014] (Vacancy) [2015]

Members of Fund: Revd Graham Spicer [2009] Revd Duncan Wilson [2012]

Revd David Bedford [2012] Revd Jacky Embrey * [2014]

*[ex officio: Honorary Treasurer Convener Investment Committee Convener Maintenance
of Ministry Sub-Committee Convener Pensions Executive]*

4.10 INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Richard Nunn ** [2011]

Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones **

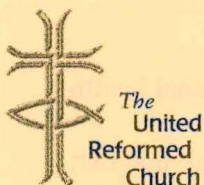
Members: Mr Michael Goldsmith ** [2011]

Dr Brian Woodhall ** [2012]

Mr Malcolm Littlefair ** [2013]

Mr Andrew Perkins ** [2013]

*[ex officio: Convener of the Pensions Executive Honorary Treasurer Chair of the URC
Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd Chair of the URC Trust Treasurer of Westminster College.]*



MISSION COUNCIL 15 - 17 May 2009

F

Ministries Resolution:

Mission Council adopts the Ministerial Standards of Conduct and the Elders' Standards of Conduct and commends them to the church.

- a) The Ministerial Standards of Conduct should be included as part of the Terms of Settlement signed by a minister and the pastorate when a minister moves or a new pastorate is formed.
- b) The Elders' Standards of Conduct should be shared with prospective elders and its implications understood as part of the preparation for ordination.

Ministerial Standards of Conduct

1. Introduction

This paper sets down expectations of Ministers of Word and Sacraments within the United Reformed Church. A parallel paper about the expectations of elders and local churches is to be read alongside this document.

2. Basis of Union

The foundation for the conduct of ministers is in the Basis of Union, summarised in Schedule E paragraph 2,

'Ministers must conduct themselves and exercise all aspects of their ministries in a manner which is compatible with the unity and peace of the United Reformed Church and the affirmation made by ministers at ordination and induction (Schedule C) and the Statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D) in accordance with which ministers undertake to exercise their ministry.'

The relevant promises in Schedule C are a) 'to live a holy life and to maintain the truth of the Gospel whatever trouble or persecution may arise', b) 'to fulfil the duties of your charge faithfully, to lead the church in worship, to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, to take your part in the councils of the Church, and to give leadership to the Church in its mission to the world, and c) as a minister of the United Reformed Church 'to seek its well-being, purity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church'.

3. Standards of Professional Behaviour

3a Personal integrity and health

- To live a Christian life as a person of prayer and integrity.

- To be aware of the need to have appropriate boundaries that safeguard personal health and welfare and which promote healthy relationships with others.
- To maintain strict confidentiality of all matters shared with them in that manner, except when required by law to do otherwise, e.g. with regard to the safety of children.
- In seeking counsel from colleagues care and sensitivity will be exercised and the identity of the person shall not be revealed unless permission has been granted.
- To recognise the need for and have concern for a healthy lifestyle, to balance availability and accessibility to ministry demands with time for family and friends, personal renewal and rest and spiritual growth.
- To attend meetings, respond to correspondence and keep appropriate records efficiently and effectively, having regard to the Data Protection Act.
- To account carefully for expenses and any funds held on behalf of others.
- Not to undertake duties whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs or when medically advised not to do so.
- Not to use privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material.
- Not to do anything to undermine the spiritual health of another.

3b Relationships with ministerial colleagues

- To support the ministry of other ministers and not interfere with the conduct of ministry or the direction of church life of other pastorates.
- To strive to protect colleagues from prejudicial discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation.
- To sever all professional ties with a previous pastorate and refer any requests or enquires of previous pastorates to the interim moderator or new minister.
- To respect the work of predecessors and successors and deal honourably with their record.
- To consider carefully the location of retirement housing and try to avoid living in the immediate area of past pastorates.
- To welcome retired colleagues as members and worshippers in the pastorate.

3c Relationship with elders, members and others

- To regard all persons with equal love and concern.
- To work collaboratively and safeguard the contribution of the whole church in decision-making processes.
- To share leadership and pastoral care with others called to these purposes.
- To seek advice from colleagues if in doubt about ones competence to deal with any issue or situation.
- To consider very carefully taking any position of responsibility in a pastorate served by another minister and to support the direction of church life initiated through the leadership of the pastorate.
- To consult with colleagues, elders and others as appropriate when considering taking on extra work.
- Not to seek to influence a pastorate in the call of a new minister.
- Not to be with a child or children or young people in a place quite separate from others.
- Not to enter a sexual relationship with anyone within a professional relationship.

3d Relationship with Councils of the church

- To be active in the councils of the Church.
- To accept the oversight of Synod and Synod Moderators.
- To submit to disciplinary procedures when initiated by the councils of the church and to inform as soon as possible the Synod Clerk and Synod Moderator when involved in legal proceedings (civil or criminal).
- To participate in accompanied self-appraisal and review as appropriate.
- To work to the agreed terms of settlement
- To follow guidelines for on-going ministerial training issued by ministries committee.

April 2009

Elders' Standards of Conduct

1. Introduction

This paper prepared by the Moderators' meeting sets down expectations of elders in relation to Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) within the United Reformed Church. A parallel paper about the expectations of Ministers and CRCWs is to be read alongside this document.

2. Basis of Union

The foundation for the conduct of ministers is in the Basis of Union, summarised in Schedule E paragraph 2,

'Ministers must conduct themselves and exercise all aspects of their ministries in a manner which is compatible with the unity and peace of the United Reformed Church and the affirmation made by ministers at ordination and induction (Schedule C) and the Statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D) in accordance with which ministers undertake to exercise their ministry.'

The relevant promises in Schedule C are a) 'to live a holy life and to maintain the truth of the Gospel whatever trouble or persecution may arise', b) 'to fulfil the duties of your charge faithfully, to lead the church in worship, to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, to take your part in the councils of the Church, and to give leadership to the Church in its mission to the world, and c) as a minister of the United Reformed Church 'to seek its well-being, purity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church'.

Elders 'share with ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the local churches, taking counsel together in the elders' meeting for the whole church and having severally groups of members particularly entrusted to their pastoral care. They are 'associated with ministers in all the councils of the church'. Elders promise at their ordination to 'accept the office of elder of the United Reformed Church' and promise 'to perform its duties faithfully'.

Elders and members receive ministers at their induction or CRCWs at their commissioning 'as from God' to serve among them and with them in the world. They promise to pray for the

minister/CRCW, to seek together the will of God and 'give due honour, consideration and encouragement, building one another up in faith, hope and love'.

Members promise, 'in dependence on God's grace, to be faithful in private and public worship, to live in the fellowship of the Church and to share in its work', and to give and serve, as God enables them, 'for the advancement of his kingdom throughout the world'. They also promise 'by that same grace, to follow Christ and to seek to do and to bear his will' all the days of their life'

3. Standards of Christian Behaviour

The following points are the expectations a minister may have of elders and members.

3a *Personal integrity and health*

- To live a Christian life as persons of prayer and integrity.
- To be committed to growing in faith and discipleship and developing the gifts each has been given.
- To be aware of the need of ministers, elders and members to have appropriate boundaries that safeguard personal and spiritual health and welfare, to promote healthy relationships with others and not to do anything to undermine the spiritual health of another.
- To maintain strict confidentiality of all matters shared in that manner, except when required by law to do otherwise, e.g. with regard to the safety of children, and to respect ministers' needs to maintain that same confidentiality.
- In seeking counsel from others and in discussion in meetings about pastoral concerns to exercise care and sensitivity so that the identity of any person shall not be revealed unless permission has been granted.
- To recognise the need for ministers, elders and members to have a healthy lifestyle, to balance demands on ministers/CRCWs availability and accessibility with respect for ministers'/CRCWs' time for family and friends, personal renewal and rest and spiritual growth.
- Not to use privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material.

3b *Relationships with ministers*

- To work collaboratively with ministers/CRCWs and elders and members in all aspects of the life of the pastorate.
- To support the ministers/CRCWs, through prayer, encouragement and partnership, including honouring the terms of settlement with regard to holidays, financial benefits and continuing training.
- To honour the ministers/CRCWs currently called to serve and not invite or encourage other ministers to be involved in the life of the church or to offer pastoral care without the ministers'/CRCWs' consent.
- To regard all persons with equal respect and concern and not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation, including ministers/CRCWs.
- To refrain from raising pastoral issues with a previous minister/CRCW.

- To respect the work of previous ministers/CRCWs and deal honourably with their record.
- To welcome retired ministers/CRCWs as members and worshippers in the pastorate.

3c *Relationship with elders, members and others*

- To regard all persons with equal love and concern.
- To work collaboratively and safeguard the contribution of the whole church in decision-making processes.
- To share leadership and pastoral care with others called to these purposes.
- To seek advice from others if in doubt about one's competence to deal with any issue or situation.
- To consider very carefully taking any position of responsibility and to support the direction of church life initiated through the ministers/CRCWs, elders and church meetings.
- Not to be with a child or children or young people in a place quite separate from others.

3d *Relationship with Councils of the church*

- To recognise that the pastorate is part of the wider United Reformed Church and that the ministers/CRCWs are committed to play their part in the wider councils of the Church and in ecumenical relationships.
- To accept the oversight of Synod and Synod Moderators.
- To participate in Synod's consultation and review of the pastorate as appropriate.

April 2009



**MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009**

G

**REPORT FROM UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST (URCT)
ON PROGRESS BEING MADE BY LOCAL CHURCHES, SYNODS
AND THE URCT TOWARDS CHARITY REGISTRATION**

Due to the removal of the exemption for churches to register as Charities introduced by the Charities Act 2006 it is now necessary for all local churches with an income of over £100,000 per annum, Synods and URCT to formally register as charities. The Charity Commission have stipulated that the registration process should be completed by October 2009. To date eight local churches have completed their registrations and others will follow in the near future. The guidelines for local churches' registration provided by the Trust have been much appreciated. Those Synods that have to register are also well advanced towards registration.

URCT, a registered Trust Company limited by guarantee, has a Memorandum and Articles of Association. Before registration can take place these documents now need to be revised and updated, so as to incorporate the changes introduced by the 2006 Charities and Companies Acts.

This process is well underway. Drafts of both documents were considered by URCT at their meeting on Wednesday the 22nd April 2009. Further refinement is required and amended draft documents will be available for consideration by URCT at its next meeting on the 20th May 2009. Subject to approval/making of necessary changes the documents will then be sent to the Charity Commission for consideration prior to registration. Subject to any amendments that the Charity Commission may require the application for registration of URCT will be made to the Charity Commission in good time to enable the process to be completed prior to October 2009.

24 April 2009



MISSION COUNCIL 15 - 17 May 2009

H

'Hope in God's Future Report' - Draft Resolution

Mission Council:

- a) adopts *Hope in God's Future*
- b) Commends the report as a helpful guide for reflection and action, and encourages local churches and Synods to enable these through prayer, preaching, bible study, teaching, discussion and acts of corporate confession, repentance and commitment
- c) Acknowledges the action taken by many individuals across our churches with respect to their personal lifestyles and affirms members of congregations as they continue to make adjustments in their carbon emissions.
- d) Recognising the action already taken in response to Resolution 49 of the 2007 General Assembly, commits to implementing the recommendations of the *Hope in God's Future Report*.
- e) Approves the appointment of a climate change specialist on a one day a week basis for an initial period of six months to help integrate the recommendations of this report into the mission focus and priorities of the URC.

Hope in God's Future: Christian Discipleship in the Context of Climate Change

Summary

1. Approaching God in the context of climate change

The theological task is to reflect on modern scientific accounts of the threats presented by climate change in the context of affirming the triune God as creator and redeemer of the universe. The scientific analyses of climate change and the role of human carbon emissions are well-grounded. It is now intellectually and morally irresponsible to fail to acknowledge and address the urgent need for radical cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in order to prevent intolerable damage to human populations and mass extinctions of many plant and animal species.

2. Encountering the Word of God

Reading the Bible in the context of climate change gives a vision of hope in God's faithfulness to creation, a call to practise love and justice to our human and other than human neighbours, and a warning of God's judgement of those who fail to do so. In this context, closing our ears to the voices of those most vulnerable to climate change would be nothing less than giving up our claim to be disciples of Christ.

3. Responding to God's Word

What is required of God's people in the industrialized world is repentance. The first step towards this change of heart and practice is confessing our complicity in the sinful structures that have caused the problem.

4. The body of Christ in the World

A core component to Christian discipleship is now a commitment to lifestyles consistent with levels of carbon emissions the earth can sustain. The church must commit itself to the UK government target of reducing carbon emissions by a minimum of 80% by 2050 and to urgent action to meet appropriate interim goals, as well as assisting members of its congregations to make similar changes and engaging with government to enable national and international change.

5. Sending out

We call on our churches to confess their guilt in relation to the causes of climate change, to show signs of repentance and redeemed sacramental living and to be a prophetic voice in the life of our communities in the following ways:

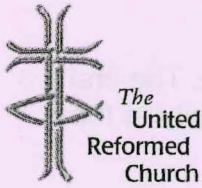
1. Through prayer, preaching, bible study, teaching, and discussion to raise awareness of the need for confession and repentance among the churches and thereby enable acts of corporate confession in liturgical settings.
2. To act urgently to reduce the carbon emissions of our churches in line with the national goal of a minimum 80% reduction by 2050 and appropriate interim targets. This will require first a systematic audit of church carbon emissions at national and local levels and second a strategy to reduce these emissions according to the target.
3. To help members of congregations to make similar adjustments in the carbon emissions associated with their lifestyles by supporting them in a personal audit and strategies to reduce their emissions.
4. To campaign at a local and national level for policies that strengthen and take steps towards realizing the commitment to a minimum 80% reduction by 2050.

1. Approaching God in the context of climate change

*To you, our God, we bow the knee
in praise and worship; honour be
to you for all around we see,
your glorious work in land and sea.¹*

1.1. The Christian doctrine of creation

The foundation of the Christian doctrine of creation, and therefore the starting point for theological reflection on the issue of climate change, is the great affirmation of Genesis 1.31: 'God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.' In this statement we see both that the universe, our solar system and all life on earth are entirely dependent on God for their origin and continuing existence, and that all these things were declared good by their creator. The opening of John's Gospel identifies this creative work with the Word of God,



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incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, showing that the reconciliation of all things to God in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus cannot be separated from God's act of creation (Col. 1.15–20; Eph. 1.9–10). Creative and redemptive work also belongs to the work of the Spirit, sweeping over the face of the waters in the beginning (Gen. 1.2), animating creatures as the breath of life (Gen. 1.30; Gen. 2.7) and inspiring a groaning creation as it awaits redemption (Rom. 8). God, Creator and Redeemer, Father, Son and Spirit, is the transcendent and immanent source, sustenance and salvation of all creation.²

1.2. The scientific understanding of climate change

In this theological context, we approach the current scientific understandings of recent and future changes in the earth's climate. In the second half of the twentieth century it was recognised that 'global atmospheric concentrations of CO₂, methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) have increased markedly as a result of human activities since 1750 and now far exceed pre-industrial values determined from ice cores spanning many thousands of years'³ – carbon dioxide levels being around 30% higher than pre-industrial values by the year 2000. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is tasked with drawing together observations and climate modelling studies, together with assessing potential impacts of future climate change resulting from human activity. After over 15 years of concerted research, the fourth report of the IPCC published in 2007 concluded that 'Warming of the climate system is unequivocal'⁴ and that 'Most of the observed increase in global-averaged temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic [human induced] GHG [greenhouse gas] concentrations.'⁵ In predicting future climatic changes, the IPCC set out several scenarios, projecting temperature rises by the end of the 21st century ranging from just under 2C (compared to the end of the 20th century) for a gradual reduction in GHG emissions after 2040, to 4C for continuing increasing GHG emissions.⁶

Associated with these global temperature increases, the IPCC also judges climate change will cause:

- increased frequency of heat waves over most land areas (very likely);
- increased occurrence of heavy precipitation events over wet areas (very likely);
- increased tropical cyclone activity (likely);
- decreases in water availability and droughts in semi-arid areas (high confidence);
- the North Pole to be ice free in summer months by 2050, although recent trends in decreasing ice coverage have been faster than model predictions, suggesting that the rate of climate change, at least in some areas is faster than projected;⁷
- gradual sea level rise of seven metres over a timescale of 1000 years, although 'more rapid sea-level rise on century timescales cannot be excluded', affecting 'major changes in coast lines and inundation of ... river deltas and low lying islands'.⁸

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All of these changes will have significant impacts upon all human populations and the wider ecosystem of the earth. The Stern Review notes that 'the poorest developing countries will be hit earliest and hardest by climate change, even though they have contributed little to causing the problem'.⁹ In Africa, for example, agricultural production is projected to be severely compromised as early as 2020, and food production in other areas will be compromised. Progress toward achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals is likely to be impeded and by the mid 21st century there are likely to be 200 million refugees as a result of climate change.¹⁰ For global warming as low as 1.5C, it is estimated that 30% of species face an increased risk of extinction, while for warming of 3.5C, 40–70% of species may become extinct.¹¹

While there was some legitimate debate during the early stages of the development of scientific models of climate change regarding their accuracy, there is now an overwhelming scientific consensus that the analysis provided in the IPCC report is robust and reliable.¹² Even in the most optimistic scenario identified in the report, where there is international action to bring rapid and significant cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, the associated rise in global temperatures of 2C by the end of the 21st century will make many areas of human population uninhabitable and cause the extinction of many plant and animal species. It is important to note that while much progress has been made in understanding climate change, the scientific view continues to develop. Some new research released since publication of the IPCC report suggests climate change will occur even faster than the IPCC estimates.¹³ Regardless of whether this is eventually accepted into the consensus scientific view, the conclusions of the current IPCC report are sufficiently robust to suggest that it is now intellectually as well as morally irresponsible to fail to accept this analysis of our current situation.

2. Encountering the Word of God

*We to your word, this live-long day
open our ears and hearts, and minds;
may we be led along your way,
your will and our true selves to find.*

2.1. Theological approach

The remainder of our report tackles the question of how these theological and scientific accounts bear upon each other as we work out a theological response to climate change. The approach we have adopted is to:

- recognize the situation we find ourselves in, and the questions our faith provokes in this context;
- bring these questions into dialogue with the Bible and Christian theological traditions; and
- seek to discern the implications of this encounter for changed practice.

Our report also seeks to reflect our *practice* as Christians, and is structured to reflect many Christian liturgies. We seek to bring the situation of the church, as part of a world facing threats of climate change, into encounter with God's word in the Bible in order to inform and motivate a response by the church and the world.

2.2. Christian hope in the context of climate change

We consider it crucial to begin our theological response to climate change by reflecting upon our situation in relation to the over-arching biblical narrative: God creating the universe, God in Christ bringing reconciliation to a world gone astray, and God's promised redemption of all things in Christ and through the Spirit.¹⁴ This understanding of the place in which the church finds itself crucially shapes theological thinking about climate change. First, and most importantly, followers of Christ must hope in these days and not despair. If we affirm the goodness of God's creation, God's incarnation in Jesus Christ, and God's promise of redemption, we cannot despair of what will be, because we are called to have faith in God and hope in God's promises. God's creatures do not have the power ultimately to frustrate the purposes of the almighty God we worship; God's sacrifice in Christ was a once-for-all effective action to defeat the sin of God's creatures and to refuse to allow it the final word. In these days between the resurrection of Christ and Christ's return, we are part of a creation groaning in labour pains for the new creation on its way (Rom. 8). These are testing times, but faithfulness means not weakening our grip on the hope that has been set before us (Heb. 6.18). We cannot, therefore, countenance a future in which God has abandoned the project of creation and redemption, in which climate change destroys all that God has established or in which human irresponsibility overwhelms God's ability to bring redemption to creation. The basis for Christian responses to climate change is hope in the realization of the reign of God over a renewed creation.

This affirmation of Christian hope in the face of climate change is subject to two kinds of misunderstanding. First, ever since disputes with Marcion and other Gnostics in the early church, some Christians have been tempted to view redemption as an escape from the created order rather than its renewal. This view of the endtimes leads to a lack of concern for what happens on earth, for it considers material creation as unimportant in comparison with the higher spiritual reality to which some human beings are destined. This has obvious relevance to debates about climate change. Such a theological view would suggest that actions to mitigate global warming are unimportant. This Gnostic view of creation and redemption has been consistently rejected by Christian theologians from Justin Martyr in the second century onwards. It is inconsistent with the Christian understanding of the incarnation of God in Christ in which God affirms all God has made, the promise of the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. 15) and faith that God will make all things new (Rev. 21.1–8).¹⁵ Christian hope means hope for what God is doing in this world, not that spiritual beings will escape the destruction of the material.

The second possible misunderstanding is that we need not act in relation to the threat of climate change because God will sort out the problem for us. In creation God has given creatures freedom, and human beings bear weighty responsibility. Their good and bad actions have real and serious consequences for others. Hope in God's future does not mean a naïve confidence that bad things will not happen. This is made clear by the biblical narrative of human disobedience of God,

originating with Adam and Eve in Eden and Cain's murder of his brother (Gen. 3–4), and rehearsed in a catalogue of human atrocities throughout history and continuing to this day. Hope in God's future is, therefore, not an alternative to wise and moral actions in response to the situations that confront us (Rom. 6.1–2). Christian hope guarantees that such faithful actions will not finally prove to be meaningless and ineffective but will find a place in God's purpose for the redeeming of the world. Hope is thus a reason for bold action in the world in accordance with God's will for creation, not an excuse for inaction.

2.3. The human vocation to love and do justice

The Bible provides no shortage of counsel for how humankind should live in accordance with God's will, bearing significantly on the question of climate change. Jesus summarizes the Jewish law in the commandments to love God and love the neighbour (Mk. 12.29–31). Our love of God is demonstrated in our joining with God's action on the seventh day of creation, in a Sabbath commitment to worship and interruption of our daily work. This love, in response to the covenant God made with all living creatures after the flood (Gen. 9), cannot wholly be distinguished from the second call to love of neighbour: Luke's gospel follows this two-fold commandment with the parable of the Good Samaritan as an example of neighbourly love (Lk. 10.25–37). This love is linked in Matthew's shocking identification of Christ with those in need in his vision of God's judgement of those who fed the hungry, gave water to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, cared for the sick and visited those in prison — and of those who did not (Mt. 25.31–46). In this vision those in need are particularly identified with Christ. This priority is echoed in Jesus' 'Nazareth manifesto' where he declares he has been anointed by the Spirit to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Lk. 4.18–19). The beatitudes similarly announce God's blessing on the poor, the mourning, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, peacemakers and the persecuted. Luke follows this with a catalogue of the woes to fall on those who are rich, full, laughing, and well-regarded by others (Mt. 5.3–12; Lk. 6.20–26). There is no doubt that Christ's disciples should show particular concern for the poor and vulnerable.

The New Testament demand to love the neighbour, with particular attention to the poor, can be seen in continuity with the emphasis in Jewish law and Jewish prophetic writings. Jewish law made particular provision for those in need, as well as establishing economic structures such as the Jubilee to prevent differences between rich and poor becoming too great (Lev. 25.8–17). The prophets protested against oppression of the poor by the rich: the book of Isaiah opens with a vision of cities desolated because of evildoing. God calls Israel to cease doing evil, learn to do good, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan and plead for the widow (Isa. 1.16–17). Amos declares that because Israel has trampled on the poor and taken their grain they will lose their houses and vineyards (Amos 5.11) and Deuteronomy associates departing from God's law with agricultural catastrophe (Deut. 28.38–40). The judgement Jeremiah prophesies has an ecological dimension in which the mountains quake, the birds flee and the fruitful land becomes a desert (Jer. 4.24–6). God speaks these warnings through the prophets

to call God's people back to the acts of love and justice required by their covenant with God: this is a call for changed living to transform Israel's future, rather than the fatalistic living out of a future fixed by God. The words of the prophets remind us that concern for the poor and vulnerable is not only a matter of love and charity, but of what is due to them under God's law: it is a matter of justice.

2.4. Hearing the neighbour as a test of discipleship

In the context of this biblical demand for love and justice, encountering those whose communities are imperilled by climate change is especially striking. In September 2007 the Pacific Conference of Churches issued a statement from their General Assembly concerning climate change. They understand themselves to be guardians of the Pacific Ocean or Moana, and 'deplore the actions of industrialized countries that pollute and desecrate our Moana'. They declare 'the urgency of the threat of human induced effects of climate change to the lives, livelihoods, societies, cultures and eco-systems of the Pacific Islands' and call on 'our sisters and brothers in Christ throughout the world to act in solidarity with us to reduce the causes of human induced climate change. We issue this call especially to churches in the highly industrialized nations whose societies are historically responsible for the majority of polluting emissions. We further urge these countries to take responsibility for the ecological damage that they have caused by paying for the costs of adaptation to the anticipated impacts.'¹⁶ The echoes of the anger of the prophets ring loud through this statement. The Pacific Islanders face grave threats to their way of life as a result of the burning of fossil fuels by industrialized nations: we cannot fail to recognize this as the trampling of the poor by the rich criticized by Amos. The demands of justice and love for these neighbours are even stronger than the claim of the man cared for by the Good Samaritan: here are nations left wounded by our negligence in the past, whose injuries we continue to worsen through our irresponsibility in the present. Closing our ears to this call would be nothing less than giving up our claim to be Christ's disciples.

Being able to hear the voice of these communities already threatened by climate change is a blessing to us in shaping a theological response, especially as many who are not able to make themselves heard are also threatened. Among these are communities in sub-Saharan Africa for whom changes in climate have already brought increasingly frequent famines and droughts, as well as those in India, the Americas and Europe who have suffered heat waves and storms intensified by global warming.¹⁷ There is also a much larger group of human beings threatened by climate change who have no chance of making themselves heard: those not yet born. As well as alerting ourselves to the demand of love and justice to our present neighbours, we need to understand what it means to treat as neighbours those in following generations. The covenant God made after the flood was with all the creatures in every generation descended from those saved in the ark (Gen. 9): we must not make the mistake of thinking that those alive today have any superiority under the covenant over those to follow us. For some, thinking of children and grandchildren helps to give faces to those who will inherit the earth we leave (cf. Mal.4.6), but this must be only a first step in appreciating the enormity of the moral demand of future generations. The requirement to develop our moral imaginations in this direction is particularly crucial given that the worst effects of failing to reduce

carbon emissions now will be felt by those alive one hundred years and more from now. Christians should resist market-based economic analyses that discount the well-being of future generations in relation to those alive today, and thereby portray as unattractive actions that will benefit future generations but which incur immediate costs.¹⁸

2.5. Attending to other than human neighbours

Attending to biblical depictions of human obedience to God's will also directs our attention to non-human creation. The creatures of each day of the Genesis creation narrative are declared good (Gen. 1) and the whole of creation in all its diversity is declared 'very good' at the end of the sixth day (Gen. 1.31). After the great flood, God makes a covenant not only with Noah and his family but with every living creature that came out of the ark (Gen. 9.9–10). The law of Israel protects not only human beings, but the animals they keep, who must not be made to work on the Sabbath (Exod. 20.10) or muzzled while they are treading grain (Deut. 25.4). The Sabbath year is to rest the land and benefit both livestock and wild animals alongside the Israelites and their hired workers (Lev. 25.5–7). When Job questions God's treatment of him he is reminded of the majesty of God's careful provision for every creature, even those like Behemoth and Leviathan who are threatening to humanity (Job 38–41). This attention to creation beyond the human is echoed in the New Testament: where Jesus reminds his disciples of God's concern for birds and lilies (Mt. 6.25–34); the letters to the Colossians and Ephesians emphasize the union of all things in Christ (Col. 1.15–20; Eph. 1.9–10) and the letter to the Romans pictures the whole of creation awaiting its share in the freedom of the children of God (Rom. 8.18–23). This biblical vision of solidarity among God's creatures accords with modern scientific discoveries relating to both the genetic affinity between human and other animals and the radical interdependence of all life on earth.

This biblical regard for creation beyond the human has often been overlooked in interpretations of God's injunction to 'have dominion' over other creatures (Gen. 1.28). This instruction has been seen as giving human beings licence to use other animals as they will, ignoring the fact that this original dominion was limited and did not include, for example, permission to kill them for food (Gen. 1.29).¹⁹ Biblical commentators on Genesis are now agreed that identifying human beings as the image of God does not name a particular capacity as God-like, but gives them a particular role in relation to other creatures.²⁰ Many have seen in this role a call to care for and protect the rest of creation as a reflection of God's care for it. This kind of care, with the instruction to Adam to till and keep the soil of Eden (Gen. 2.15), has often been described as 'stewardship' of creation, rooted in the image of a person placed in a position of responsibility to manage somebody else's property, finances, or household.²¹ This picture of a human role on behalf of the rest of creation can help us recognize our responsibility to care for other life, although it is important to recognize its limitations. God is present and active in sustaining creation from moment to moment. We are not, therefore, stewards acting in place of an absent landlord, but servants called to play our part in response to God's care for creation. This responsibility has obvious relevance to

climate change, suggesting that the potential mass extinctions of other species on the planet caused by human activities represent our abdication from a divinely-entrusted duty. Biblical texts testifying to God's concern for creatures beyond the human, together with Israelite law defending them, demand that we should be motivated by love and justice to protect non-human neighbours threatened by climate change alongside the human ones.

2.6. Bringing God's judgement upon us

Alongside hope in the future that God is bringing, therefore, comes an urgency to cooperate with God's purposes. Where human beings have wilfully neglected their responsibilities before God, both Old and New Testament texts proclaim God's judgement: Jeremiah prophesies that the rich will not get to enjoy their wealth and Jesus warns those who fail to care for him, embodied in those in need, are not fit for eternal life. The Bible repeatedly tells of a world turned upside-down when God's reign is inaugurated, with those now well-off going hungry and those now first finding themselves last (Mt. 10.30; Mk 10.31). In encountering biblical warnings about the consequences of failing to love and deal justly with those in need, it is hard to escape the conclusion that in continuing to emit carbon at rates that threaten our neighbours, present and future, human and other than human, we are bringing God's judgement upon us. Even here we should not despair: that God judges rather than abandons us is a sign of God's grace and continuing love for us. But in our encounter with God's word in the context of climate change we should be clear that, while we have grounds for hope in the future God will bring if we act in accordance with God's love for all creation, we also have grounds for fear of God's judgement if we continue to fail to respond to the urgent needs of our neighbours. When the rich man, who had ignored Lazarus begging at his gate, asked to be allowed out of hell to warn his brothers, Abraham replied they already had Moses and the prophets (Lk. 16.27–8). Neither can we say we have not heard.

3. Responding to God's Word

*Thus knowing holiness and grace,
in humble honesty confess
we all our sins before your face,
and turn our lives to righteousness.*

3.1. Confession

In encountering God's word in the context of climate change we have received a vision of hope in God's faithfulness to creation, a call to practise love and justice to our neighbours, and a warning of God's judgement of those who fail to do so. In response our first action must be confession: acknowledging what we have done wrong is the first and necessary step towards the change of direction repentance requires. We must confess that we:

- are heirs to the riches of an industrialized economy that has been instrumental in causing the climatic change already placing our neighbours in peril;

- are so addicted to the fruits of this economy that we find it hard even to want to live lives that do not threaten the future of life on planet earth; and
- know much of the good we should do to live within sustainable boundaries, but struggle to summon the moral will to change.

Our wrongdoing is best understood as complicity in structural sin, a socially embedded and continuing pattern where the rich and powerful exploit those who are poor and powerless, just as they did in the days of the prophets.

South African theologian, Ernst Conradie, has argued that the need for white South Africans to confess their involvement in the structures of apartheid is a good analogy for the confession necessary in relation to climate change.²² Just as most white South Africans had no direct responsibility for the establishment or maintenance of apartheid but were guilty in benefiting from it and failing to challenge its injustice, so we did not originate the industrialized economies that resulted in climate change but are now guilty of enjoying the fruits of systems that threaten the future of God's creatures. Drawing on Barth's work, Conradie notes that our confession is only possible because of our knowledge of God's grace: it is our encounter with God's mercy that enables us to recognize our guilt. Conradie recognizes, however, that for most of us confession is still some way off, because we are not sure that we can envisage or want to live the renewed and reordered lives that would result from being forgiven. Like the rich man who could not bear Jesus' command to be separated from his possessions and sadly turned away (Mk. 10.17–22), we look at the prospect of lives within levels of carbon emissions that the earth can sustain, and decide we prefer our lives of sin. Here, then, is the first challenge to the church: receive God's grace, come to desire a forgiven life, and thus be enabled to confess current wrongdoing.

3.2. Repentance

Authentic confession leads to repentance: a turning from past sin to the way God would have us live. As individuals, churches and nations, we need to work towards this about turn, which is the only hope for the kind of societal changes that will avoid our carbon emissions resulting in catastrophic climate change. If we think of this task of repentance only as an individual matter we are likely to fail in our attempts to bring about the change necessary even in our own lives: repentance of structural sin must have a corporate dimension in which, as churches, we take action collectively and turn our practice around at institutional and individual levels. Beyond this, we need to consider what role we can play as churches and citizens in contributing to a similar turning about of our nation, by entering the political arena to make the case for strong action based on our moral duties to our neighbours.²³ In response to repentance, God promises forgiveness, and in God's name the church offers absolution from sin. Before us, therefore, is the great and joyous prospect of being welcomed home with open arms by our God (Lk. 15.20), released from our burden of guilt and despair into lives as God's forgiven children. It may be that desire for this newness of life, for lives washed clean of the stain of our sin (Ps.51), is the strongest motivation for the change of life to which God calls us.

3.3. *Intercession*

One response of those forgiven by God must be intercession for those threatened by climate change. In confidence in God's good purposes for creation we ask God to:

- protect human populations made vulnerable by changes in climate;
- protect those in generations to come who will inherit the problems we have created; and
- protect those plant and animal species whose habitats will be eradicated by global warming.

As our prayers in this area become more detailed, however, they also become more uncomfortable: we pray for:

- nations to recognize the urgency of action in response to climate change;
- politicians to be bold in setting out strategy to achieve the goals that need to be reached; and
- the citizens of nations — and especially nations like ours — to be motivated to support costly action to cut carbon emissions and seek to ameliorate its effects for those it threatens.

Our prayers of intercession, therefore, lead us to pray for continuing change in our hearts and minds, allowing us to play a part in changing the hearts and minds of others, and becoming part of the answer to our intercessions.

4. **The body of Christ in the world**

*Sustained by word and bread and wine,
Christ's body we are fed to be.
May servant life we know was thine
be ours in all humility.*

4.1. *United as Christ's body*

As participants in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, enacted in the sacrament of holy communion, the church is united in its saviour Jesus Christ and nourished to live in holiness as Christ's body on earth. In responding to Jesus' command to eat bread and drink wine as his body and blood in remembrance of him, the material stuff of creation, in the form of grain and grapes, becomes a sign and sacrament of God's presence with us. Through participation in Christ, we are made capable of lives we could not otherwise live. We are transformed from individual disciples into members of his one body, no longer dependent on ourselves but bound together in the life of our Lord. Together we are equipped and enabled to act as God's people in the world, witnessing to what God is doing and serving God and neighbour. Just as the humble bread and wine become sacraments of God's presence with us, so our small acts in response to God's call become signs of God's presence in the world.

4.2. Judging what repentance requires

Before we can identify what actions are necessary at ecclesial, individual and national levels, we must determine what reductions in our carbon emissions are necessary in order to avoid the worst effects of climate change. The IPCC 4th Assessment Report estimates that keeping the globally-averaged equilibrium temperature increase between 2 and 2.4C above pre-industrial values will require greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced by between 50 and 85% by 2050 compared to emission levels in 2000, leading to an eventual stabilization of greenhouse gases to between 445 and 490 parts per million (ppm).²⁴ In common with many other interpreters of the IPCC report, the recent first report of the UK Government Committee on Climate Change judges that 'the global danger zone starts above about 2C and that global policy should aim to keep ...temperature increases below this'²⁵. However, in making this assessment they note that 'it is no longer possible with certainty, or even with high probability, to avoid this danger zone' and therefore 'strategies for adaptation to temperature increases of at least 2OC' should be planned, with the additional aim 'to reduce to very low levels (e.g. less than 1%) the dangers of exceeding 4C'²⁶. In light of this judgement, the Committee on Climate Change concludes that global emissions of greenhouse gases would have to be reduced by 50% below current emissions by 2050. Since 'it is difficult to imagine a global deal which allows the developed countries to have emissions per capita in 2050 which are significantly above a sustainable global average' of 'between 2.1 and 2.6 tonnes per capita' for the UK this implies an '80% cut in UK Kyoto (greenhouse gas) emissions from 1990 levels'.²⁷ Towards this end, they set three five-year carbon budget targets which would see a reduction in UK emissions of 42% by 2020,²⁸ achieved through energy efficiency measures and technological developments to de-carbonise power generation and transport.²⁹ Meeting the ambitious target of an 80% cut in emissions will not prevent serious damage caused by climate change: a 2C rise in global temperatures will make areas uninhabitable by humans, lead to droughts, food shortages and large numbers of environmental refugees, as well as the probable extinction of a third of species on earth.³⁰ While it would be good to do more than this³¹ we cannot aim to do less, even if other nations are not yet ready to take similar action. In recognition of the damage we have already done, and in response to our encounter with God's word and with the voiced and unvoiced claims of our neighbours, we must reduce our carbon emissions to levels that the earth can sustain without increasing the damage caused by climate change.

4.3. Enabling repentance in the church

In the remainder of this section we set out some practical initiatives at the ecclesial, individual and national level that would be both signs of repentance and first steps toward the forgiven and redeemed lives to which we are called. We have argued that confession is the first step towards repentance and changed life and that that is only possible alongside the hope of a good and God-given future in which we can live forgiven lives before God. As churches we must first seek to enable and equip this change of heart, mind and will through prayer, preaching, bible study, discussion and reflection, leading to corporate liturgical acts of confession. On this change of heart all else depends. These actions are the

church's preparation for joining in the redemptive mission of God in this area of life. They lead the church to where its members may hear God's universal call to changed lives in response to the threat of climate change.³² They are a precondition to the church recognizing that a commitment to living within sustainable levels of carbon emissions is central to Christian discipleship in our days. Through our common worship and common life we are transformed, and become a community capable of transformation.

4.4. Reducing the carbon footprint of the church

As churches, we must address the carbon footprint of our own activities. We must first move quickly to discover the current level of our carbon emissions and identify a strategy to enable an audit of carbon emissions at all levels of the church, so that local churches, regional structures, and national church institutions become aware of the starting point for action to reduce carbon emissions. Alongside this we must establish a way of supporting church structures at all levels in making reductions in carbon emissions proportionate to the overall reductions necessary by 2050 of at least 80%, with the urgent and immediate interim steps this requires. National churches will need to provide support and incentives for local and regional structures to meet this challenge. We do not underestimate the magnitude of this task but consider it the minimum adequate response to the situation we face, as well as the only morally authentic basis for calling on church members and the nation at large to make similar changes. We recognize the structural factors, internal and external to the churches, that impede progress towards these goals, and the need for churches to work in partnership with local and national government to overcome the barriers to change. Church policy in many areas, including the investment of church funds, will need to be reviewed in the light of this commitment.

4.5. Helping members of congregations to reduce emissions

Alongside actions to address the carbon emissions associated with the corporate life of our churches, we need to identify ways of enabling members of congregations to make changes in their carbon footprint matching the minimum of an 80% reduction target together with appropriate interim goals. Again, the first task is to encourage and facilitate an audit of current carbon emissions, followed by supporting individuals in church or small group contexts to commit to reducing their carbon footprint and identifying strategies to do so. We believe that many will respond to the offer of exchanging a general consciousness of guilt for addressing the topic in a group context in a responsible and realistic way. The early church began as a movement of small groups of Christians who agreed to be accountable to one another. It may be that, if we can recover this sense of accountability which small groups can foster, many may be enabled to make changes that seemed impossible in isolation. If congregations were able to see the net impact of both corporate and individual commitments to reduce carbon emissions, this might be a significant encouragement and motivation for further action.

4.6. Engaging politically to work for national and international change

Finally, alongside movement towards these changes in the corporate life of the church, we need, as churches, to be prepared to contribute to public political debate about appropriate responses to climate change. Our churches should support the UK government in developing a coherent strategy towards cutting emissions by a minimum of 80% by 2050, even in a global context in which others are not yet ready to make matching commitments. The churches must speak prophetically to challenge politics bound by party interest and the horizon of the election cycle; they must also act to build grassroots coalitions so that politicians offering wise and responsible long-term action in response to climate change will find electoral support. Cuts must come from real reductions in carbon emissions from the UK: while support to assist poorer nations in sustainable energy development is crucial, it would be irresponsible for the UK to buy out its responsibility to reduce its own carbon emissions. High on the list of political priorities must be advocacy in support of those poor nations most exposed to the threats of climate change through no fault of their own, where help is owed not only on grounds of charity but also as restitution and reparation for damage done by the activities of industrialized nations. Churches at regional and local levels need to work towards action with local governments. At every level, the corporate commitments of our churches to act in relation to their own carbon emissions will significantly enhance their contribution to this public debate. Effective political initiatives will often come from joint projects with other churches, other faith groups or non-religious groups sharing similar goals, and action to improve understanding between such potential allies and networks is important.³³

4.7. Alertness to disproportionate impact on the vulnerable and poor

In making these proposals for the kinds of action churches should engage in as signs of repentance and sacramental living, we recognize that, for many members of church communities, action in response to these issues will seem confusing, threatening and unwelcome. Alongside making the case for substantial change, our churches must keep alert to the pastoral implications of the proposed changes for church members. In particular, we must avoid strategies for reducing carbon emissions that have a disproportionate impact on the poor and vulnerable.

4.8. The need for action in relation to other environmental issues

In addressing the issue of climate change, we must also recognize that it is only one of many environmental issues requiring attention by our churches: related issues include concern for:

- threats to biodiversity;
- deforestation;
- water shortages;
- depletion of non-renewable resources; and
- the impact of rapid rises in human population.

Climate change is but one manifestation of the impact of a global industrialized economy. Action in response to climate change will ameliorate the impact of some

of these environmental challenges, but it is also required in these other areas.³⁴ Appreciation of the complex interrelationships of environmental issues and other justice concerns is also necessary, such as balancing the economic advantages to poor communities of fairly traded goods from overseas against the carbon costs of such imports. Attention to the challenge of climate change should not be at the expense of concern for other justice issues affecting the poor.

5. Sending out

*From worship we are bidden, 'rise,
for into all my world you go,
to teach and serve and to baptise
that all my Son and will may know.'*

5.1. A call to action

We call on our churches to respond to the challenge of climate change:

- as those affirming the hope of God's continued faithfulness to creation;
- as those who have received the call to show love and justice to neighbours present and future, human and other than human; and
- as those who have heard the warning of God's judgement of those who hear and do not act.

We call on our churches to confess their guilt in relation to the causes of climate change, to show signs of repentance and redeemed living and to be a prophetic voice in the life of our communities, through promoting a change of heart among congregations;³⁵ urgently reducing church carbon footprints at every level in line with national targets;³⁶ enabling members of our congregations to make similar changes towards sustainable lifestyles;³⁷ and engaging politically with local and national governments.³⁸

5.2. The way ahead

We are aware that the responses to the challenge of climate change we call for in this report require our churches to make a considerable journey from where we find ourselves at the moment. This is a journey unlike any other that most of us have taken, and which has a destination only future generations will reach and benefit from. The destination is a promise rather than a recognisable place and the route has not been mapped out. The costs of the journey are to be borne now but the benefits will not be felt in our time. While we live in an age of individuality and immediacy, this is a journey not of individuals but of a community: the people of God and the people of the earth, which requires trust in the future rather than the immediate. Such a journey changed the children of Israel from a disorganised group of refugees into a nation. The beginning of their journey involved giving up the comfort and apparent security of one lifestyle and moving to a more dangerous and uncomfortable way of living. But they gained freedom. The most difficult part of such a journey is the exodus, the leaving without looking back. The Israelites' guide was a God who loved justice and hated oppression, who cared for the humble and opposed exploitation: we believe in the same God who loves those who are exploited and oppressed today. We too set out on a journey of freedom in

response to the challenge of climate change, blessed by God's peace, sent by our saviour and going our way in the company of the Holy Spirit (John 20.21–22).

¹ Hymn 'To you, our God, we bow the knee' written for this report by Rosalind Selby, to be sung to the Celtic version of the tune to 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross', *Complete Mission Praise* no. 1126, © Rosalind Selby 2008.

² In this report we avoid using masculine pronouns for God, but for scriptural and ecumenical reasons retain, alongside other names, the traditional trinitarian formula which includes masculine referents.

³ IPCC, 'Summary for Policymakers of the Synthesis Report of the IPCC Fourth Assessment', (2007), 5.

⁴ IPCC, 'Synthesis Report Summary', 2.

⁵ IPCC, 'Synthesis Report Summary', 5.

⁶ IPCC, 'Synthesis Report Summary', 7–8, Figure SPM-5 and Table SPM-1.

⁷ IPCC, 'Synthesis Report Summary', 13, Table SPM-3.

⁸ IPCC, 'Synthesis Report Summary', 13.

⁹ *Stern Review Report on The Economics of Climate Change* (London: Cabinet Office – H. M. Treasury, 2005), URL: < http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sternreview_index.htm>, xxvi.

¹⁰ IPCC, 'Synthesis Report Summary', 11, Table SPM-2, 18; N. Myers, 'Environmental Refugees: An Emergent Security Issue', Paper presented at the 13th Economic Forum, Prague, 23–27 May 2005, URL: <http://www.osce.org/documents/eea/2005/05/14488_en.pdf>.

¹¹ IPCC, 'Synthesis Report Summary', 13–14.

¹² See the DEFRA position on climate change (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/ENVIRONMENT/climatechange/index.htm>); The United Nations Framework Commission on Climate Change (<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>); the United Nations Environment Programme Global Environment Outlook Report (<http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/media/>); The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change (<http://www.occ.gov.uk/activities/stern.htm>); and the Royal Society guide to climate change controversies (<http://royalsociety.org/page.asp?id=6229>).

¹³ J. Hansen, *et al.*, 'Target Atmospheric CO₂: Where Should Humanity Aim?', *The Open Atmospheric Science Journal*, 2 (2008), 217-231, doi: 10.2174/1874282300802010217, URL: <<http://www.bentham.org/open/toascj/openaccess2.htm>>.

¹⁴ See paragraph 1.1 above.

¹⁵ Tom Wright makes this point in a recent book (N. T. Wright, *Surprised By Hope* (London: SPCK, 2007))

¹⁶ Pacific Conference of Churches, 'Statement From the Pcc 9th General Assembly on Climate Change', (2007)

¹⁷ In 2005, Lord Robert May, President of the Royal Society, drew attention to the findings that 'climate change, largely caused by a rise in greenhouse gas emissions from human activities, may already be responsible for an increase in drought conditions, and hence for a rise in the risk of famine, in eastern Africa where millions are already at risk of hunger' ('Open letter to Margaret Beckett and other G8 energy and environment ministers', October 2005, URL: <<http://royalsociety.org/page.asp?id=3834>>). See also Andrew Simms and John Magrath, *Africa-Up in Smoke? 2: The Second Report on Africa and Global Warming from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development*, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxfam Publishing, 2006).

¹⁸ For a theological discussion of this issue, see Rachel Muers, *Living for the Future: Theological Ethics for Coming Generations* (London: T & T Clark, 2008); for a detailed philosophical and economic analysis of this issue, see John Broome, *Counting the Cost of Global Warming* (Cambridge: White Horse Press, 1992).

¹⁹ Gerhard von Rad is one of many commentators to reject the interpretation of dominion as unlimited license: see Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis* (London: SCM, 1972), 60.

²⁰ See, for example, Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis*, Word Bible Commentary (Waco: Word, 1994), 30; Victor P. Hamilton, *Genesis*, Nicot (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 135; Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1982), 32; von Rad, *Genesis*, 58 and the

detailed discussion in J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2005), 93–145.

²¹ Calvin's commentary on Gen. 2.15 concludes 'let every one regard himself as the steward of God in all things which he possesses. Then he will neither conduct himself dissolutely, nor corrupt by abuse those things which God requires to be preserved.' (John Calvin, *Genesis*, ed. & trans. John King (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), vol. 1, 125.

²² Ernst Conradie, *The Church and Climate Change* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2008).

²³ We outline what signs of repentance might look like in section 4 below.

²⁴ IPCC, 'Synthesis Report Summary', 20, Table SPM.6.

²⁵ UK Government Committee on Climate Change, 'Building a Low-Carbon Economy — The UK's Contribution to Tackling Climate Change', December 2008 (London: The Stationery Office, 2008), URL: <<http://www.theccc.org.uk/reports/>>, 20.

²⁶ Committee on Climate Change, 'Building a Low-Carbon Economy', 20.

²⁷ Committee on Climate Change, 'Building a Low-Carbon Economy', xiv–xv.

²⁸ Following the EU framework, the figure of 42% is the intended budget reduction relative to 1990 that will apply 'following a global deal on emissions reductions'. Before a global deal is reached an 'Interim budget' requires a 34% reduction by 2020 (Committee on Climate Change, 'Building a Low-Carbon Economy', xix).

²⁹ Recent documents published by the EU and Australian governments also commend the global target of a 50% reduction in emissions by 2050. However, in aiming towards this, they recently adopted less ambitious emission reductions by 2020: the EU up to 30% and Australia 15%. See European Commission, *Combating Climate Change: The EU Leads The Way* (Brussels; European Commission Publication, 2008), URL:

<http://ec.europa.eu/publications/booklets/move/75/index_en.htm>) and Australian Government Department of Climate Change, *Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme: Australia's Low Carbon Future* (Canberra: Australian Government, 2008), URL: <<http://www.climatechange.gov.au>>. Again both these figures refer to 'intended' targets following a global deal on emissions reductions. Prior to this, 'interim' targets of 20% for the EU and 5% for Australia are proposed. For discussion of the viability of a 50% reduction by 2050 see also Ross Garnaut, *The Garnaut Climate Change Review Final Report* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008), URL: <<http://www.garnautreview.org.au>>, and K. Anderson, and A. Bows, 'Reframing the Climate Change Challenge in Light of the Post-2000 Emission Trends', *Phil Trans Royal Soc A*, vol. 336, no. 1882 (2008), 3863–3882, DOI: 10.1098/rsta.2008.0138.

³⁰ See section 1 above.

³¹ The Operation Noah campaign (<http://www.operationnoah.org/>) opts instead for the goal of zero carbon emissions, supported by the Centre for Alternative Technology Report, *Zero Carbon Britain* (Llwyngwern: CAT Publications, 2007), URL: <<http://www.zerocarbonbritain.com/>>.

³² Where 'church member' is used in this document it is intended to refer to regular participants in the worship and other activities of churches, rather than narrower denominational definitions of the term.

³³ We welcome the Church of England 'Shrinking the Footprint' campaign (URL: <<http://www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org/>>) and the London Roman Catholic Church 'For Creed and Creation' (URL: <<http://www.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/environment/ForCreedandCreation.pdf>>) as examples of cross-denominational work on this issue.

³⁴ The Eco-Congregation initiative (URL: <<http://www.ecocongregation.org/>>) is one example of an approach to church action on environmental issues taking a range of environmental concerns into account.

³⁵ See section 4.3 above.

³⁶ 4.4.

³⁷ 4.5.

³⁸ 4.6.

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Revd Dr Rosalind Selby (Chair) – URC; Revd Dr Paul Beetham – Methodist; Francis Brienen – URC; Dr David Clough – Methodist; Dr David W Golding CBE – Baptist; Revd Dr David Gregory – Baptist; Stephanie Grey – Methodist; Revd Mike Shrubsole – URC; Revd Dr John Weaver – Baptist.

Convened and supported by: Steve Hucklesby – Methodist; Revd Dr Rosemary Kidd – Baptist

Working Group Brief

A THEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

A joint project of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and United Reformed Church

1. Initiative and purpose

In October 2007 Methodist Council considered and passed a resolution asking for a revised policy to be brought to the Spring 2009 Methodist Council. The report to Methodist Council recognised that "while the [existing] policy has a broad scope, the lack of an explicit statement on climate change is anomalous in the context of the concern felt by many Methodists on this issue today". The Baptist Union of Great Britain and the United Reformed Church have also identified a need for further theological reflection on climate change. The purpose of the project is to provide a theological perspective on our interaction with the global eco-system in the light of the threat of climate change.

2. Expected outcomes

This project will:-

Provide a clearly defined theological position on climate change to underpin our environmental Policies

Enable our churches to speak with boldness and clarity

Help to provide a rationale and commitment for our own action

3. Output

The output will be a report that can be recommended by our churches for study. The report must be of a manageable and readable length. However, the scope of the topic is potentially large and invites consideration of multiple theological perspectives. Therefore some form of brief executive summary will be necessary. This could be incorporated into Environmental Policies or other statements from our churches.

4. Timescale

To deliver a report to Methodist Council by Spring 2009 a draft must come to the Faith and Order Committee meeting of January 2009. The draft report would also be presented to Baptist Union, Faith and Unity Executive (draft also required in January) and URC Mission Committee.

5. Process

The Joint Public Issues Team will coordinate a process in collaboration with the relevant councils and committees in our organisations. The process will establish a working group comprising 3 persons from each denomination. The group should ideally seek to bring together people with varied backgrounds and provide a range of expertise. The members will require theological expertise. The group will work on this project through a combination of face-to-face meetings (probably no more than three) and email exchange. A Chair will lead the working group and one person may be required to take on the role of lead author to ensure consistency of style.



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

J

Human Sexuality Task Group

Members: Sister Cecily Boulding, John Bradbury, Lucy Brierley (Secretary), Richard Church, Doreen Daley, Claire Gouldthorpe, Val Morrison, John Waller (Convener)

Report to Mission Council: May 2009

1. The members of the Group were recruited in the autumn of 2008 and since then meetings have been held in December 2008 and February and April 2009.
2. The Group wishes to ask Mission Council to make certain changes to the remit which the Council agreed in January 2008. The reasons for this are chiefly attributable to the 18-month time lapse between the 2007 Assembly report and decisions, the Mission Council deciding how to implement them, and the Group being able to begin its work.
3. The Group believes the time lapse to be significant because:
 - 3.1 From a general enquiry it seems that the Commitment entered into by Assembly has not been discussed/adopted by many synods or local churches. Any dissemination of it now will require a re-telling of the circumstances in which it arose.
 - 3.2 It is arguable that in the intervening months the United Reformed Church has moved theologically to a greater understanding of the value of diversity in God's purposes as a result of the Catch the Vision process.
 - 3.3 The Vision4Life programme, and particularly the current emphasis on the Bible, means that one of the fundamental aspects of the human sexuality discussion – the interpretation of Scripture – is being addressed throughout the United Reformed church, albeit in a wider context.
 - 3.4 In the last eighteen months the focus for synods and local churches has been the demands and opportunities of mission alongside questions relating to ministry, leadership, and the resources available to support them; and it is likely to be directed towards the "God is still speaking" programme in the months ahead.
4. This is not a coded message that the human sexuality discussion should be discreetly dropped from the church's agenda. Far from it: the Group believes

it has been given a task fundamental to many issues regarding the nature of the Christian life, Christian fellowship, and the place of unity and diversity in the Christian church. Such matters cannot be put aside, but attention does need to be given to the context in which the discussion is resumed.

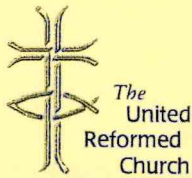
5. The Group started its work with the Commitment made by Assembly in 2007. Whilst any document of this nature is capable of improvement and change, the Group finds it an honest description of the variety of insights held within the church at this time and a way in which they can be held together in loving tension by the grace of God. In many ways it is regrettable that the Commitment was not adopted by the synods in the six months after that Assembly. The Group believes that disseminating it now, almost two years after it was agreed and at a time when other issues are at the top of the agenda, is not likely to be helpful. Rather the Commitment should stand as a statement of the United Reformed Church's present position on human sexuality issues, be available for reference, and be the basis from which the continuing discussion will begin. Whilst this is stated as the Group's view, a careful examination of the 2007 resolutions confirms that this was the context in which the Assembly wished the discussion to continue.
6. The Group has given preliminary consideration to ways in which the discussion of issues that arouse deep emotions and give rise to strong and differing convictions can best be continued. In this regard it has looked with interest at models used in ecumenical partner churches. The Methodist Church has provided a "safe space" at some conferences when people could speak about sexual matters from a personal perspective. The witness of heterosexual parents with homosexual children was found particularly influential with those of conservative views. The Church of Sweden (Lutheran) has held a major series of hearings at which the subject was broadened to include marriage, cohabitation and human friendship. Following the hearings, visual and written material was made available for wider discussion. This has caused the Group to question whether a major report for discussion at Assembly 2010 is the best way forward. Such a discussion would involve a limited number of people, be under time constraint, and would not be able to be resumed in that forum until 2012. The Group is also aware that a major report running to 114 pages and representing a year's work by over 30 people was presented to the 1999 Assembly, yet most of it received scant attention there or in the church at large. (Incidentally, the task group is using the 1999 report as one of its resources.) Without ruling out the possibility of some report being made to Assembly 2010, the Group seeks permission to give more attention to other ways of continuing the discussion.
7. If Mission Council agrees to this change, one of the next tasks for the Group will be to consider what "other ways" could be effective. This might include, for example, providing material in written and visual forms for local churches to use in a variety of contexts; making such material available for existing church training programmes; testing ideas on selected small groups; and seeing the synods, rather than the Assembly, as the best place for wider

discussion. The Group would look to the Communications office for guidance in this part of its work, but it also asks to be given a budget within it must work. In thinking of timescale, the Group hopes it may be realistic to alert the synods to the possibility that this next phase of the process could be launched at their autumn 2010 meetings.

8. Within itself the Group contains those who would identify with each of the three positions defined in the Commitment, as well as being divided between those who have been involved in previous parts of the discussion and those who have not. It benefits immensely from sharp theological questioning from Sister Cecily Boulding, its ecumenical observer. From this diversity, and from the many aspects of the subject of human sexuality, the Group's early discussion has led it to the view that the first part of its work should focus round three areas. They are not as yet closely defined, but they can be divided as follows:
 - 8.1 Unity and diversity
 - 8.2 The use of Scripture in theological reflection and practice
 - 8.3 Human relationships and human sexuality
9. It will be noted that the third of these rather widens the agenda. The Group has been influenced by the fact that some ecumenical partners have found this a helpful way of proceeding. In addition, it also wishes to affirm sexuality primarily as a gift of God, rather than as the human problem it has appeared to be in some previous discussions, and to include within its remit people who, in different ways, have felt excluded from the discussion so far – for example, those who are married, those who lead a celibate life either through choice or circumstance, and those who are widowed and living alone. The Group also believes something needs to be said about valued human friendships which do not have a sexual expression.
10. No reference has so far been made to the eleven points listed in Section 9 of the 2007 Assembly report, which Mission Council asked the Group to take up. The Group has commissioned, and briefly considered, a preliminary report on what might be involved in the further study of the points. At its next meeting the Group would like to look more closely at the points and rank them in three categories: those that can naturally be incorporated in the work proposed in paragraph 8; those that require specific expertise and which can be referred to other groups; and those which will be left to a later part of this process.
11. In summary Mission Council is asked:
 - 11.1 to release the Group from the remit to disseminate the Commitment, at least in the immediate term
 - 11.2 to release the Group from the requirement to produce a major report for Assembly 2010, whilst leaving the option for some report to be made at that stage

- 11.3 to encourage the Group to work on alternative ways of continuing the human sexuality discussion
- 11.4 to provide the Group with an indication of the financial budget within which it should work
- 11.5 to support the Group in its intention to focus the next part of its work on the three areas listed in paragraph 8 above
- 11.6 to accept the Group's plans for progressing the eleven points listed in section 9 of the 2007 Assembly report.

23 April 2009
John Waller



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

J1

MISSION COUNCIL
26 January 2008

A2

Report on proposed human sexuality task group -
AMENDED at Jan Mission Council

A Introduction

This paper relates to Document 2, the report presented to General Assembly 2007 under the title "Moratorium on policy decisions on homosexuality."

In resolution 47 (page 37 of Record) General Assembly asked Mission Council "to set up a task group to oversee the process of addressing issues of human sexuality, particularly those set out in the report, and to enable the process of widening discussions to involve the whole church."

B Proposed remit for task group:

1. With regard to the 2007 report to General Assembly, to disseminate the Commitment as appropriate, to listen carefully to different voices within the church, to seek to increase mutual understanding, and to strive to maintain the unity and integrity of the United Reformed Church.
2. To explore the suggested methods of working set out in section 8 of the Assembly Report, particularly in relation to the pace and manner in which different matters might be addressed.
3. To take up the questions raised in section 9 of the Assembly Report and to set in train processes for handling these issues whether by different means or grouped together, whether by the task group itself or by others, and then to enable wider discussion and decision on them as appropriate.
4. To gather and publish accessible materials as appropriate.
5. To report to Mission Council and, through Mission Council, to General Assembly regularly, so that interim progress reports are given, if appropriate, to each meeting of these bodies, and that a major, if not final, report for General Assembly is submitted by 2010.

C In doing its work, it is suggested that the task group will also want:

1. To work within the spirit of the Commitment made at General Assembly 2007.
2. To consider the implications of resolution 45, and particularly the outcomes of the Catch the Vision and Vision4Life processes.
3. To consider ways in which resolution 46 concerning "the continuing use of the earlier material" might be fulfilled.
4. To liaise with synods and local churches, as well as ecumenically and internationally, and to consult with individuals and groups and with legal advisers as appropriate.
5. Generally, to act as a reference point and to give leadership over issues to do with human sexuality *in consultation with the Sexual Ethics Advisory Group*.
6. To deal with all these matters sensitively but also as expeditiously as possible, with a view to completing the remit within a reasonable number of years.

D Suggested composition of task group (ensuring Gender balance):

Convener

Secretary

Five further members so that the whole group includes -

- at least one who identifies in general terms with each of the three positions outlined in the Commitment;
- some people of different sexualities;
- one theologian or biblical scholar or ethicist;
- someone from an ecumenical partner church;
- a young person;
- if possible, someone with communications skills

All of these would need to have the ability to work with others and be sensitive to people of different views, preferably have some prior knowledge of some of the issues, and have the confidence of the church.

E Title of Task Group

Since this is not the first task group on the subject, a title needs to be found which either indicates the stage we have got to or otherwise provides a unique identification for this new group. Possible suggestions include:

Human sexuality 2008 task group

Human sexuality task group 2008

Post Commitment task group

Wider issues in human sexuality task group



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

K

Ministries: Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee

Fixed Allowance for motor bicycles

Resolution: Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, agrees to the following change in the Plan for Partnership: *Add the following words to 6.3.4.2 after "a fixed car allowance should be paid."*:

A fixed allowance may be claimed for motor bicycles if this is the only mode of transport used by the minister for church business. The amount paid shall be 25% of the fixed car allowance.

[6.3.4.2 then continues: "The rate of fixed car allowance will be advised by the MoM Sub-Committee (see Appendix A)." Currently the recommended rate is £1,200 pa.]



MISSION COUNCIL 15 - 17 May 2009

Synod Of Scotland: EMU

Following the end of the SCIFU process (Scottish Churches Initiative for Union) which was rejected by the Church of Scotland and questioned in part by the Scottish Episcopal Church the three remaining participants undertook a series of meetings to explore possible ways to work together. These three partners were the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church giving rise to the shorthand name of EMU.

Senior representatives of the three churches have now met eight times. There has been progress in the areas of Church & Society and in Education where possibilities for closer working are already being explored.

It is worth noting that in the area of Church & Society the Church of Scotland has a very good ecumenical engagement – for example the CofS Church & Society Council has members from other churches attending, the Council also oversees two ecumenical ventures – the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office and Eco-congregations. A question for future consideration will be if the three EMU churches develop closer working what impact and what possibilities will this have for the Church of Scotland?

One of the most exciting outcomes of the EMU meetings has been the proposal to establish a ecumenical covenant. Due to Episcopal sensitivity to the historical use of the word covenant in Scotland the term Partnership will be used. The draft below was discussed at our last EMU meeting. The text will be revised following comments made at the meeting and presented to each of our churches during 2009 with a view to being adopted in 2010 as part of marking the centenary of 1910. In the case of the United Reformed Church the proposal will be discussed at our Autumn Synod

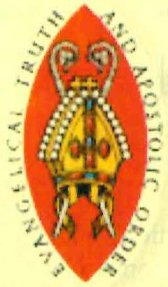
The United Reformed Church is already involved in a number of Local Ecumenical Partnerships with the Episcopal and Methodist Churches, in covenant partnerships with the Episcopal Church and in United Churches with the Methodist Church. We are also involved in a number of partnerships, both covenant & united models, with the Church of Scotland. It is worth noting that in Livingston all four of these denominations form the Livingston Ecumenical Parish. A map of LEPs in Scotland can be viewed at:

<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&mmsa=0&msid=117202437677520601536.000464a4bf560b558dd29&ll=56.154729,-3.619995&spn=2.609265,3.196899&t=h&source=embed>

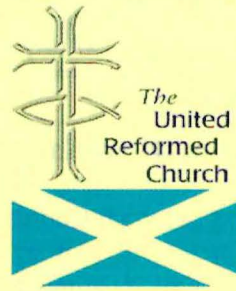
A shorter URL for printing could be http://scotland.urc.org.uk/?page_id=17

The growth of LEPs in Scotland has been slow. It is hoped that in areas where the member churches of EMU co-exist there may be scope for further development and that in other areas it will be easier for isolated church members to be welcomed fully into a tradition not their own. It will certainly be a benefit in looking at future deployment of ministers and church resources. There is also a hope that being a larger entity the EMU partnership will be more easily able to relate to the Church of Scotland.

STATEMENT OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN



**THE SCOTTISH
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**



**NATIONAL SYNOD
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**



**THE METHODIST
CHURCH IN
SCOTLAND**

We, the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC), the Methodist Church in Scotland and the National Synod of Scotland of the United Reformed Church, in recognition of our developing relationships, instigate this statement of partnership. We solemnly declare that we will work for ever closer co-operation in serving Christ. We are glad of the partnerships that have already been established between us and commit ourselves to strengthening these relationships and building new ones. By regular meetings between our various officers, and encouragement to our congregations, we shall work to identify, explore and develop opportunities to share in mission and ministry by continuing to forge stronger ties between us. Specifically we shall explore together ways of:

Being Church and serving God together;

Increasing the confidence of our members to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to others;

Cooperating in teaching and learning about Jesus Christ, and our mission together;

Cooperating on Church and Society issues, supporting community development and taking action together for justice, especially among the most deprived and poor in Scotland;

Sharing in the provision and deployment of both lay and ordained ministries of all the people of God;

Sharing our resources across Scotland to fulfil our shared Christian mission to spread the Gospel

We shall seek to widen our Ecumenical engagement within this Partnership and with other denominations, wherever possible, so that our working together may be as wide as possible and our diversity not hindered by ongoing dis-union and rivalry. Progress in this partnership will be formally reviewed on a 5 yearly basis from the date of signature.

In signing this statement we affirm our commitment to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and trust in God's power for the implementation of this partnership.



MISSION COUNCIL
15 - 17 May 2009

M

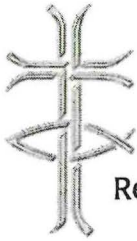
CYDO Programme Task Group: Assembly Resolution 40
Background Note for Mission Council in May

1. The Task Group had its first meeting on 13 October 2008. It was agreed that there was a need to take action quickly and the Convener of the Y&CWC made it clear that the group had the authority to make decisions for immediate action.
2. The YCWTDO Review Group had been most concerned about the **overall management of the programme** and the need for all YCWTDOs to give their share of time for Assembly tasks (about 45 days each year). Consequently the group recommended that an overall manager be appointed – to oversee the work of the Church House staff team and the CYDOs in relation to Assembly tasks. This was rejected by GA so the main concern of the task group was to try to establish strong links between all those involved in the leadership and management process; that is: the Y&CWC, the three Church House (CH) staff, the CYDOs and their synod-based managers.
3. The group began by discussing the outcomes of a discussion with the three CH staff and Michelle and Peter Pay. This had raised issues about:
 - the staff development policy;
 - joined-up working with synod-based CYDO managers;
 - allocation of, and time spent on, Assembly work;
 - the development of a project proforma to be shared with CYDOs and their managers.
4. It is clear that the **Y&CWC has overall responsibility** for the development of policy and the vision for Children's and Youth Work (C&YW). The three CH staff and the CYDOs and others in the synods are responsible for the implementation. Joined up thinking and actions are essential, as management by committee does not happen naturally. However, the Y&CWC needed to be realistic about what could be achieved so it was important that information was fed back to the committee about the effectiveness of tasks/events. The following pattern of meetings was agreed (at the October meeting of the Task Group for immediate action) to establish formal links and rationale for the meetings and to allow for the relatively quick transfer of information between the various groups:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Y&CWC		x				x			x			
CYDOs		?	?			?	?			?	?	
Managers			x							x		

It is a matter of concern that the CYDOs have not felt able to fit in with this. This demonstrates the need for firmer management as they are not, as employees, free to do as they wish.

5. **Management of the three CH staff:** this was out of the Task Group's hands; they would continue to be line-managed by the Deputy General Secretary and it was accepted that there needed to be a more structured appraisal system. Michelle has been dealing with this. The management and team work of the three officers are crucial to the success of the programme.
6. **Management of the CYDOs (GA Res 39):** sound procedures and communication links are needed to ensure that this is effectively carried out by synod-based managers. CYDOs are Assembly appointments and the procedures outlined in the handbook should be followed for their appointment and appraisals. Central support is given re contracts and all appraisal reports must be sent to HR, who will build up a profile of general development needs. Induction and training needs to be provided for the CYDO managers.
7. **Meetings of CYDOs:** while three are indicated above, the length and purpose needed to be determined as well as the self-management issue. Not all CYDOs have attended for all of the meetings. Contrary to 6.3 in the Review Report, it is important that these meetings are only for members of the CYDO team as the main focus will be on Assembly tasks, related training and development and team building. Attendance at the meetings is a mandatory part of their Assembly time. The Task Group agreed that it was important that the three CH staff attended the meetings and had a major input into the agendas, which needed to be determined much earlier than they had in the past. The meetings will follow early after the meetings of the Y&CWC so that early feedback can be given and actions taken or initiated.
8. **Meetings of CYDO Managers:** it was (in October) agreed that:
 - these would be facilitated by the secretary of the Y&CWC; ie one of the three CH staff and their secretary on rotation - currently Jo;
 - one of the managers (on rotation) would chair the meeting for a year - suggested Neil Robinson initially - and would be the link with the secretary re the agenda. Notes of the meeting would be circulated within two weeks;
 - the three CH staff would attend as much of the meeting as seems relevant and time would be built in for discussions with individual managers about the GA work being carried out by their CYDOs.
9. **Staff Handbook:** it was accepted that this needed amending as a priority, in particular to clarify the above issues. The Task Group has worked on this and, in the process, has been agreeing the support and development and the management procedures. The task is almost complete thanks to the hard work of the group. The Managers and CYDOs have been consulted. Hopefully the Handbook will be shorter than the last; it will begin by a list of Frequently Asked Questions.
10. The overall concern of the group has been to utilize the professional expertise the church receives from the three CH staff and the CYDOs so that the Assembly programme is implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible and so that we carry out the church's vision for work with children and young people linked to our churches in whatever ways.



The
United
Reformed
Church

The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT, United Kingdom

Deputy General Secretary: *The Revd Richard Mortimer*

To: Members of Mission Council
and staff in attendance

23rd March 2009

Mission Council: Friday 15th – Sunday 17th May 2009

Ushaw College, Durham, DH7 9RH

Telephone: 0191 373 8502 Fax: 0191 373 8503 Email: bookings@ushaw.ac.uk

Dear Colleague

I am writing to remind you that Mission Council will meet at Ushaw College, Durham, from 15 – 17 May. To ensure that our arrangements are completed in time, I would ask you to supply us with the information we need about your requirements for accommodation and meals.

It would be very helpful if you could reply immediately (and by Thursday 2nd April at the latest) either by e-mail (krystyna.pullen@urc.org.uk); by telephone (020 7916 8646); by fax (020 7916 2021); or by completing the enclosed form and sending it to Krystyna Pullen.

Some preliminary papers are enclosed:

- directions to Ushaw College
- a list of members and representatives (to help people plan to share transport)
- an expenses slip (to be completed and handed in at the end of the meeting)
- a Reply Form about your accommodation and meal requests, and certain other necessary information.

Please note that only just over half the rooms are en-suite.

Following its Health & Safety assessments, Ushaw College have asked us to sign in for fire evacuation purposes. There will be a folder in the Reception area. This is in addition to signing our Attendance Register.

Registration will take place on Friday 15th May from 12.00 noon – 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 – 2.00 p.m.

Approximate timings for Friday as a guideline:

Lunch:	12.30 – 1.30 p.m.
1 st session:	2.00 – 3.45 p.m.
Tea:	3.45 – 4.15 p.m.
2 nd session:	4.15 – 6.15 p.m.
Evening meal:	6.30 – 7.30 p.m.
3 rd session:	7.30 – 9.00 p.m.
Evening Prayers:	9.00 – 9.15 p.m.
Bar	9.15 – 10.30 p.m.

Breakfast is served at 8.30 a.m.

Mission Council will close with lunch on Sunday 17th May.

Further details will be sent with the second mailing which you should receive approximately 7 days prior to the meeting.

The next meeting dates are:

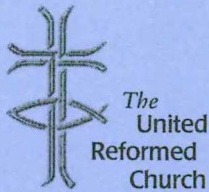
Monday 16 th	Wednesday 18 th November 2009 at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick
Tuesday 9 th	Thursday 11 th March 2010 at All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney
Friday 19 th	Sunday 21 st November 2010 at Ushaw College, Durham
Tuesday 17 th	Thursday 19 th May 2011 at High Leigh, Hoddesdon
Friday 25 th	Sunday 27 th November 2011 at The Hayes, Swanwick

With good wishes

Yours sincerely



The Revd Richard Mortimer
Deputy General Secretary



MISSION COUNCIL

15 – 17 MAY 2009

Friday - Sunday

MEMBERS & REPRESENTATIVES

The Moderator
General Secretary
Deputy General Secretary
Clerk
Legal Adviser

Rev John **Marsh**
Rev Roberta **Rominger**
Rev Richard **Mortimer**
Rev James **Breslin**
Mr Andrew **Middleton**,
Towns Needham Solicitors

Past Moderator Rev Dr Stephen **Orchard**
Moderators Elect Rev Dr Kirsty **Thorpe**
Mrs G Val **Morrison**
Treasurer Mr John **Ellis**

Assembly Standing Committees

Assembly Arrangements
Communications & Editorial
Education & Learning
Equal Opportunities
Finance
Ministries
Mission
Nominations
Youth & Children's Work

Dr David **Robinson**
Rev Dr Kirsty **Thorpe**
Prof Malcolm **Johnson**
Ms Morag **McLintock**
Mr John **Ellis**
Rev Peter **Poulter**
Rev Ed **Cox**
Rev Malcolm **Hanson**
Rev Rob **Weston**

FURY Advisory Board Representatives

Mr Josh **Thomas** - Moderator
Ms Jane **Hoddinott**

13 synod Moderators, plus 3 representatives from each synod

1 N	Rev Rowena Francis	Miss Elaine Colechin	Rev John Durell	Mr Justice Semuli
2 N.W	Rev Richard Church	Mr George Grime	Rev Rachel Poolman	Ms Marie Trubic
3 Mer	Rev Howard Sharp	Miss Emma Pugh	Rev A. Gordon Smith	Mr Donald Swift
4 York	Rev Kevin Watson	Rev Kay Alberg	Mr Roderick Garthwaite	Mrs G. Val Morrison
5 E.M	Rev Terry Oakley	Rev Jane Campbell	Mrs Margaret Gateley	Mr Duncan Smith
6 W.M	Rev Roy Lowes	Mrs Adella Pritchard	Rev Anthony Howells	Mr William Robson / (A Jeans)
7 E	Rev Paul Whittle	Revd Catherine Ball	Mr Mick Barnes	Mrs Joan Turner
8 S.W	Rev David Grosch-Miller	Mrs Janet Gray	Rev Roz Harrison	Rev Stephen Newell
9 Wex	Rev Adrian Bulley	Rev G Cliff Bembridge	Mrs Margaret Telfer	Mr Peter Pay
10 Th.N	Rev Dr Andrew Prasad	Mr Simon Fairnington	Rev Maggie Hindley	Rev David Lawrence
11 S	Rev Nigel Uden	Dr Graham Campling	Rev Chris Parker	Rev Zam Walker
12 Wal	Rev Peter Noble	Rev Dr Peter Cruchley-Jones	Rev John Sanderson	Mrs Iris Williams
13 Scot	Rev John Humphreys	Ms Irene Hudson		Mr Patrick Smyth

In attendance

Minute Secretary	Mrs Irene Wren	Ministries	Rev Craig Bowman
Moderator's Chaplain	Rev Mary Buchanan	Mission	Ms Francis Brienen
Children's Work Dev't Officer	Miss Jo Williams	Pilots Development	Mrs Karen Bulley
Church & Society	Mr Frank Kantor	Press Officer	Mr Stuart Dew
Church Related Community Work	Mrs Suzanne Adofo / Mr Stephen Summers	Racial Justice & Multicult	Rev Dr Michael Jagessar
Communications	Rev Martin Hazell	'Reform' Editor	Ms Kay Parris
Ecumenical Relations	-	Rural Consultancy	Rev Graham Jones
Education & Learning	Rev Fiona Thomas	URC Trust	Mr Alan Small
Finance	Mr Andrew Grimwade	Windermere Centre	Mr Lawrence Moore
Human Resources	Ms Michelle Marcano	World Church Relations	-
		Youth Work	Mr John Brown

THE NEW ROLE OF MISSION COUNCIL

A paper for web-based discussion by Mission Council members
(Deadline for comments: 5 October 2009)

From the reflections of the Deputy General Secretary to the final morning of the May 2009 Mission Council:

- 1) Mission Council did not like receiving two different papers about its future, which it found confusing.
- 2) The title of Paper A2 "The Government of the United Reformed Church at the highest level" raised concerns about the nature of authority and where it lies within the councils of the Church, and the suspicion of hierarchy.
- 3) On Friday afternoon we came across an elephant in the room – the deliberate ambiguity written into our founding documents in 1972 to glide over ecclesiological differences between Congregationalists and Presbyterians. Seeing General Assembly and Mission Council as together representing a single council of the Church opened this up and at best was a challenge to grasp nettles and at worst deeply scary.
- 4) **BUT**
- 5) It was recognised that the logic of decisions already taken about the move to a biennial General Assembly and the hope to have no more than eighteen or so Resolutions at each future biennial General Assembly did tend strongly towards Mission Council having to take more responsibility for the running of the United Reformed Church.
- 6) **THEREFORE**
- 7) It is probably safer to affirm the unique status and authority of General Assembly whilst recognising that in the new circumstances of a biennial General Assembly it devolves more of that authority than before to Mission Council. Resetting the notch of the degree of authority Mission Council possesses so as to give it more is acceptable, provided that authority is seen as devolving from its unique setting in General Assembly. We prefer this to the alternative that says Mission Council has the authority of its own right, because it represents a single council of the Church with General Assembly.
- 8) On that basis we shall return to you with another paper in November.

So if Mission Council is to receive more devolved authority than before from General Assembly, what might that look like?

If General Assembly is now to meet once every two years, handling no more than eighteen resolutions on each occasion, Mission Council becomes effectively the principal derivative body charged with dealing with those matters which can no longer come to General Assembly as in the days when it would have fifty to sixty resolutions before it each year. General Assembly will retain its overview and ultimate authority and will have power to reverse decisions of Mission Council. It will equally be open to Mission Council to declare something so important that it must be decided by General Assembly alone.

Mission Council, then, will continue to undertake the work it has always carried out. It will undertake pieces of work on its own behalf under its general terms of reference or as specifically instructed by General Assembly. It will act as a broker where Committees find clash or overlap with other

Committees, and it will advise when it is unclear where a mandate lies or what policy should be followed. It will act on behalf of General Assembly on matters of urgency between meetings of the Assembly. It will appoint Groups to carry out the initial work in handling appeals, applications for secession and other matters where individuals or groups feel aggrieved. It will appoint Advisory Groups, and Working Groups and Task Groups which are either task or time limited.

Rather than confining itself to determining if work is ready to go to General Assembly or not, Mission Council will, on an agreed cycle, receive and decide upon reports and resolutions from all Assembly Standing Committees, Synods, and (particularly in relation to legal and disciplinary matters) the Clerk. While every Assembly Committee will submit a written report to the General Assembly Mission Council will determine which Committees shall report verbally and where they have business which requires a formal resolution of Assembly. This is to help limit the business coming to General Assembly to manageable proportions.

Mission Council will receive the long list of nominations from Nominations Committee, but the election of Moderators of Assembly, Clerks of Assembly and Directors of the United Reformed Church Trust will remain with the General Assembly.

Where proposals to change the Basis and Structure of the United Reformed Church or other constitutional changes currently require two votes in General Assembly, Mission Council will be able to act once on General Assembly's behalf. Proposed changes coming first to Mission Council will require a two thirds majority, but where it takes the second vote a simple majority will suffice.

Mission Council will share responsibility for hearing appeals with General Assembly. Where at present, with the consent of the parties, an appeal may be dealt with by a Commission, in future such appeals will be dealt with by Mission Council.

Simply for purposes of cross-reference, General Assembly will remain the place where:

- a) Moderators and Clerks of General Assembly and Directors of the URC Trust are elected,
- b) Closure of Churches and admissions of new Churches are marked, and representatives of new Churches are received,
- c) Ministerial Jubilees are recognised and all Ministers who have died since the previous General Assembly are remembered,
- d) Newly ordained Ministers and newly commissioned CRCWs are received,
- e) All Assembly Standing Committees and all Synods report in writing,
- f) The General Secretary reports on the work of the Disciplinary Panel and
- g) All appeals which as at present have to be taken to General Assembly are heard.

krystyna pullen

From: Michael Bluett
Sent: 15 July 2009 12:22
To: krystyna pullen
Subject: RE: Mission Council May 09 - Minutes and papers on website

Dear Krystyna,

I have put up the public documents with little or no description:
http://www.urc.org.uk/what_we_do/mission_council/mission_council

Could you confirm the dates of the next meeting and any additional text you want on this page (alternatively I could quickly teach you how to modify it yourself – I have updated the Website Guide at http://www.urc.org.uk/what_we_do/communications/examples/website_guides/)?

Yours,

 chael

From: krystyna pullen
Sent: 14 July 2009 14:52
To: Michael Bluett
Subject: Mission Council May 09 - Minutes and papers on website

Michael

As previously discussed. I attach Minutes and papers which need to go onto the website. All the people of the Members & Reps list receive Minutes and papers. Email addresses are on d/base Mailings, GS-Mission Council. This list, as I explained will be updated about beginning of October .

Roberta's note says:

These (Minutes) now need posting on the website in the Mission Council section. The following papers should also be posted:

C (on Res 12), D (Equal Opps), G (URC Trust), J & J1 (Human Sexuality), K (motorbikes), L (Scotland ecumenism), and M (CYDOs). We should name it "May 09 Mission Council minutes"

The other paper I have attached is the one Richard has written for consultation with email members via a secure section of the website. Could you liaise with Michael on this? We need the paper up with some facility for people to post comments, all in a password protected place.

Then we need to email (or post) all Mission Council members with the address and password.

Michael - if there are any queries please let me know but you probably know more than I do. It's a little late to do this today but Roberta has asked that this is done as soon as is possible - this week.

*Krystyna Pullen
P A to the General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary
and Moderator of General Assembly
United Reformed Church House
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT
Tel: 020 7916 8646; Fax 020 7916 2021/1928
email: krystyna.pullen@urc.org.uk*

In an effort to use paper more responsibly please do not print this email unless you really need to

15/07/2009

krystyna pullen

From: Roberta Rominger
Sent: 14 July 2009 12:02
To: krystyna pullen
Subject: Mission Council papers
Attachments: Minutes of the Mission Council RR version May 2009.doc; 0907 The new role of Mission Council web discussion.doc

Hi,

Here are the minutes with three or four corrections. These now need posting on the website in the Mission Council section. The following papers should also be posted:

C (on Res 12), D (Equal Opps), G (URC Trust), J & J1 (Human Sexuality), K (motorbikes), L (Scotland ecumenism), and M (CYDOs). Could you see to this, or would you like me to? (We should change the name of our minutes to something like "May 09 Mission Council minutes" to save embarrassment!!)

The other paper I have attached is the one Richard has written for consultation with email members via a secure section of the website. Could you liaise with Michael on this? We need the paper up with some facility for people to post comments, all in a password protected place. Then we need to email (or post) all Mission Council members with the address and password.

Thanks!

Roberta

14/07/2009