

MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 1998

MINUTES

Minutes of the Mission Council held at the Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh on 24 January 1998.

The Meeting was constituted by the Moderator, the Reverend David Jenkins. Worship was led by the Chaplain, the Revd Stephen Thornton, who challenged the Council to consider what was meant by "the ministry of the whole people of God" and "the priesthood of all believers". Three members of Council shared what they believed God was calling them to be and do.

98/01 Welcome

The Moderator welcomed members to the meeting, particularly the following who were attending for the first time: Dr. Donald South (Mersey Province), the Revd Clive Sutcliffe (Eastern Province), the Revd David Williams (Wessex Province), Mr. Desmond Curry (Nominations Committee) and Miss Georgette Margrett (FURY Chair). He also welcomed Mr. Dai Hayward and the Revd Pat Nimmo who were present as members of the Resource Planning Advisory Group.

98/02 Attendance

There were 68 members present with 10 members of staff in attendance, Mr. Dai Hayward, the Revd Pat Nimmo and Mrs. Sally Brooks (Minute Secretary).

Apologies for absence were received from the Revds Peter McIntosh, Marjorie Lewis-Cooper, Ann Jackson, Bill Wright, David Lawrence and Janet Sowerbutts and Mr. Paul Franklin.

98/03 Minutes of Mission Council 30 September to 2 October 1997

The Minutes of the Mission Council held on 30 September – 2 October, which had been circulated, were approved and signed with the following corrections:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 97/40 | Reference to "the Revd Alan Smith" should read "the Revd Allan Smith". |
| 97/54 | The first sentence should read: "The Revd Bob Andrews explained that the Ecumenical Committee had eight "core" members (i.e. those appointed by Assembly and not by other committees)."
In the second sentence "propose" should be replaced with "nominate". |
| 97/60 | "page 9" should read "page 7". |

98/04 Matters Arising

97/48 Secretary of the Advisory Group on Grants and Loans (AGOGAL). **The Deputy General Secretary proposed that Mr. David Lane, an Elder from Purley, should be appointed as secretary of AGOGAL.**

This was agreed.

97/50 & 97/74 General Assembly 1997 Resolution 18 Groups.

The General Secretary introduced a report which detailed the activity that had resulted from the passing of Resolution 18 at the 1997 General Assembly and the decisions of Mission Council in October 1997. He noted that the Core Group had met three times, once with the conveners of the Working Groups. Since these meetings the Core Group had begun work on developing the remits of the Working Groups and would present these to the Groups for consideration. It was hoped that the finalised remits could be communicated to the March 1998 Mission Council.

97/60, 97/68 & 97/75 General Assembly 1997 Resolution 19

The General Secretary reported that fewer letters regarding the passing of Resolution 19 had been received since the last Mission Council. There appeared to be a mis-understanding of Standing Orders that led people to believe that the Moderator, the General Secretary and the Clerk were permitted to bring a Resolution to the 1998 General Assembly. This was not the case. The General Secretary explained that Resolutions to Assembly had to come through the Councils of the Church. If following this process a Synod Resolution sought to amend or reverse Resolution 19 then initially it would be ruled out of order under Standing Order 3 e iv, but under that same Standing Order, could be admitted by the named Officers of the Assembly.

97/71 General Assembly 1997 Resolution 41

The General Secretary reported that, since the last Mission Council, the Pastoral Group established in response to the General Assembly Resolution 41 had not received any requests for assistance. Mission Council Advisory Group (MCAG) recommended **that the Pastoral Group should remain in existence until the September 1998 meeting of Mission Council.** At that time, consideration should be given to whether or not the Group should continue. This was agreed.

97/64 Provincial Management of YCWT/YLTOs

The Deputy General Secretary reported that Helen Brown, who had been appointed following the January 1997 Mission Council to manage the change to provincial management of the Youth and Children's Work Trainers, had originally recommended that the overall oversight of the programme should be transferred to the Youth and Children's Work Committee from the Training Committee. However, following wide consultation she was now recommending, and he was proposing, **that the responsibility for the overall oversight of the provincial management of the Youth and Children's Work Trainers should remain with the**

Training Committee. The Revd John Sutcliffe, convener of the Training Committee, reported that the initial concerns of the Committee had been addressed and therefore the Training Committee had agreed to retain this responsibility. This was agreed.

The Revd Ray Adams asked when the new Staff Development Policy would be available. It was reported that this was being printed and should be available within 10 days.

Further Matters Arising were noted later and these are recorded in Minute 98/08 on page 3.

98/05 Correspondence

The General Secretary read a letter that he had received from Dr. D. Preman Niles, the General Secretary of the Council for World Mission (CWM), explaining that having been the grateful recipients of financial support from the United Reformed Church over many years, the CWM now felt that it was right to offer financial support in return and to encourage the Church not to stop raising money for mission but to review the way that the money raised was being used. The Ecumenical Committee and Resource Planning Advisory Group would consider our response and make an initial report to the March Meeting of Mission Council.

The General Secretary went on to list a number of new and on-going initiatives in which the Church was engaged and stressed that this generous offer from CWM was an exciting development.

98/06 Presentation by the Resource Planning Advisory Group.

The Revd Duncan Wilson presented a report on "A future shape for Church and Ministry", following which the Council divided into groups to consider the report and questions arising from it.

98/07 Report back from Discussion Groups

Mission Council reconvened in plenary session and the groups reported on their discussions.

98/08 Matters Arising (Continued from 98/04)

The Clerk provided clarification on the method by which a Resolution could be brought to the General Assembly, referring to Standing Orders 2b, 2c and 2d.

97/65 URC Holiday Forum

The General Secretary presented **A Memorandum of Understanding between the United Reformed Church and Holiday Forum** which was accepted and agreed by the Council.

97/77 Ministerial Discipline

The Deputy General Secretary explained that, since the last meeting of Mission Council at which the working party on ministerial discipline was

discharged (minute 97/77), certain matters had arisen which needed attention.

He reported that as a result of a seminar held in the autumn it was suggested that certain minor amendments should be made to the procedural guidelines agreed at the last Mission Council. Mr. Hartley Oldham had written these up. It was agreed that the Revd Elizabeth Caswell, Dr. David Thompson and Mr. Graham Stacy would review the amendments on behalf of Mission Council and report back later.

Their report and the resulting decision is recorded in Minute 98/18 on page 8.

Mission Council agreed to ask Mr. Hartley Oldham, the Revd Keith Forecast and Mrs. Margaret Carrick Smith to draft guidelines for use by Provincial Panels.

Mission Council agreed that, as it has oversight of the ministerial discipline procedures on behalf of General Assembly and in view of the fact that the procedures are completely new, it would call for a review of the operation of the procedures in March 1999.

98/09 Agenda

The Deputy General Secretary drew the attention of the Council to a number of typing errors in the papers and explained that a paper suggesting minor changes in the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration would be tabled later.

98/10 The Grouping of Churches

The Deputy General Secretary introduced a paper on the grouping of Churches which had been produced in response to the request from Toller United Reformed Church to prepare clearer guidelines for the creation of a group pastorate where there is already a minister in post, and to give guidance as to when a grouping of churches becomes effective to form the group.

Following a number of suggestions and comments, Mission Council agreed that the paper in its current form was not suitable for presentation to General Assembly, but that the essentials of the report should be summarised for presentation to the Assembly. A document containing guidelines would also be prepared.

98/11 Equal Opportunities Committee

Mrs. Susan Rand introduced a paper detailing a draft Equal Opportunities Policy for Local Churches. Members of Mission Council were invited to send their comments to the Equal Opportunities Committee.

Permission was sought and granted for one other member of the Committee to attend the March meeting of Mission Council when the Draft Policy would be discussed in detail.

98/12 Report of the Mission Council Advisory Group (MCAG)

The Deputy General Secretary introduced the report from MCAG, noting that Mission Council needed to make decisions relating to future meetings of the Council.

Mission Council agreed that:

- 1) the January meeting of Mission Council should continue to be held at the Arthur Rank Centre in Stoneleigh if possible
- 2) the March meeting of Mission Council should be held after the Provincial Synod meetings
- 3) the meetings of Mission Council should continue to alternate between mid-week and weekends
- 4) the proposed dates were acceptable provided that the chosen locations were available.

Mission Council received the report.

98/13 Staffing Advisory Group

Mr. Geoff Lunt introduced the report of the Staffing Advisory Group and thanked Mr. Denis Earp, who was retiring from the Group. He then explained the background to the proposal relating to the post of Pilots Development Officer.

It was proposed:

- a) that subject to the necessary funding being able to be identified, Mission Council approves the appointment of a full-time Pilots Development Officer, to work to the agreed Job Description, for an initial 5-year period;
- b) that on the assumption that funding is available, a nominating group be established to seek such a Pilots Development Officer, who may be a suitable lay person or an ordained minister, and that a decision about the post location should be made by this nominating group in conjunction with the Pilots' Management Committee;
- c) to instruct the appropriate Advisory Group or Committee to investigate the costing of the proposed post and report to the Spring 1998 meeting on the question of funding availability.

This was agreed.

Mr. Lunt then introduced the proposal relating to the post of Centre Minister, National Youth Resource Centre (NYRC), Yardley Hastings. There was some discussion and concerns were expressed. It was agreed that the proposal should be withdrawn and reconsidered after further consultation with interested parties.

The General Secretary proposed that Mission Council should establish a small group to listen to all the views and opinions and to prepare a revised proposal. It was agreed that the members of the Group should be the Revd Graham Cook (Convener), the Revd Lesley Charlton, the Revd John Waller and

Mr. Geoff Lunt and that the Group should report directly to the March meeting of Mission Council.

A further report from the Staffing Advisory Group was received later and is recorded in Minute 98/15 on page 6.

98/14 Resource Planning Advisory Group

The Revd Duncan Wilson gave a brief summary, highlighting the significant points from the group reports and proposing an outline for further work to be done by RPAG. Members of Mission Council suggested additional matters which should be included, and it was agreed that RPAG would produce another report for a further meeting of Mission Council.

98/15 Staffing Advisory Group (Continued from 98/13)

Mr. Geoff Lunt introduced the proposal relating to the post of Church-Related Community Work (CRCW) Development Worker. The following was agreed by Mission Council:

Mission Council authorises the extension of the post of CRCW Development Worker for a further, but final, period of 5 years to August 2003, on the clear understanding that the work thereafter be devolved to the Provinces and Districts.

Mission Council then discussed the second part of the recommendation from the Staffing Advisory Group:

Mission Council urges the Central Management Committee to revise the Job Description for the post to include the following specific points:

- (i) responsibility for advocating and fostering Church-Related Community Work within the URC and, where possible and necessary, ecumenically.
- (ii) developing a strategy which will enable the work of the post to be devolved to Provinces and Districts by Summer 2003.
- (iii) develop appropriate local management structures for all authorised CRCW posts as appropriate.

A proposal to amend clause (ii) was agreed:

- (ii) **developing a strategy which will enable the management and oversight of CRCWs to be devolved to Provinces and/or Districts by Summer 2003.**

The amended resolution was then put to Council.

Mission Council urges the Central Management Committee to revise the Job Description for the post to include the following specific points:

- (i) **responsibility for advocating and fostering Church-Related Community Work within the URC and, where possible and necessary, ecumenically.**

- (ii) developing a strategy which will enable the management and oversight of CRCWs to be devolved to Provinces and/or Districts by Summer 2003.
- (iii) develop appropriate local management structures for all authorised CRCW posts as appropriate.

The amended resolution was carried unanimously.

98/16 Nominations Committee

The Revd Jessie Clare presented the report of the Nominations Committee, which included a resolution concerning the Disciplinary Commission:

In the event of the unavailability of the Secretary of the Commission to carry out necessary duties, Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints the Deputy General Secretary to act as Secretary. In the absence of both the Commission Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary, the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee shall act.

It was noted that, as Secretary to the Pastoral Committee, the Deputy General Secretary could have a conflict of interest and therefore an amended resolution was presented to the Council.

In the event of the unavailability of the Secretary of the Commission to carry out necessary duties, Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee to act as Secretary.

This was agreed.

The Nominations Committee recommended that, **with the agreement of the Staff Secretaries concerned, they should undertake the responsibilities of Secretaries of the following committees: Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness; Ministries and its Accreditations Sub-Committee; Training.**

Mission Council agreed.

The following nominations for Conveners were reported:

Nominations Committee	Revd Glyn Jenkins
Church and Society Committee	Mrs. Gabrielle Cox
Retired Ministers Housing Sub-committee	Revd Simon Swailes
Youth & Children's Work Committee	Revd Derek Lindfield
CRCW Management Sub-committee	Revd Susan Flint

The Nominations Committee also proposed the appointment of Mr. Ray Chambers as a member of the Board of the URC Pension Fund. This was agreed.

Jessie Clare reported that the Officers of Assembly had appointed the Revd Bill Wright as Secretary for Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness for a temporary period until no later than March 1999.

She also reported that, although the Appointment Group for the Secretary for Youth Work was unable to bring a name for appointment by Mission Council, the Group was actively engaged in its task. The Revd Stephen Thornton reported on the interim arrangements which had been made to cover the period after Mr. Paul Franklin's appointment finished on 28 February 1998. The Revd Michael Davies had agreed to work for one or two days each week to provide cover until a permanent appointment could be made.

Mission Council welcomed this and expressed its gratitude to Michael Davies for being willing to take on this responsibility. The Council agreed that the decision taken at its October meeting (Minute 97/69) should remain in force:

Mission Council, noting the importance of the development of Youth Work, agreed to authorise the Officers of the General Assembly to make an appointment on behalf of the Council should an appropriate candidate be found before the next meeting of the Mission Council.

Mrs. Wilma Frew reported on behalf of the Thames North Moderator Appointment Group their proposal **that Mission Council should appoint the Revd Roberta Rominger as Moderator of the Thames North Province for a period of seven years beginning on 1 September 1998.**

This was agreed.

98/17 Assembly Arrangements Committee

The Revd Alasdair Pratt reported that the venue for the 1999 General Assembly would be the Theatre and Floral Hall, Southport in the Mersey Province.

Under Standing Order 4a of General Assembly the time allocated to subsequent speeches in any debate is 5 minutes, but this can be reduced to 3 minutes if deemed appropriate by the Moderator. The Assembly Arrangements Committee had considered proposing that the Standing Order be amended to provide for 3 minute speeches only, but were unable to bring a unanimous recommendation.

Mission Council asked the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee to produce a report, to be circulated with the Minutes, detailing the arguments for both retaining the present position and changing it so that a decision could be taken at the March meeting of the Council.

98/18 Ministerial Discipline Procedures (continued from Matters Arising (Minute 98/08))

The Revd Elizabeth Caswell, Dr. David Thompson and Mr. Graham Stacy reported that they had reviewed the amendments to the procedures and confirmed their acceptance of them. Mission Council accepted and agreed with their decision.

98/19 Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration

Mr. Graham Stacy introduced the report from the Pensions Executive and explained the background to the Resolution which was then put to Council.

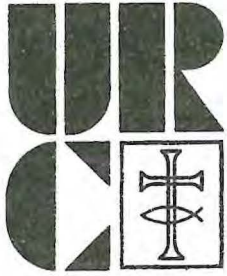
Mission Council, acting for the assembly, amends the second paragraph of para 6.1.4 of the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration so that the final sentence reads "From 1 January 1998, this will be the same percentage of basic stipend as that payable as an employer's contribution to the URCMPF in the terms of para 15.1 of the Rules of the URCMPF."

The Resolution was carried unanimously.

98/20 Closing Remarks

The Moderator thanked the Revd Michael Cruchley for his assistance in making the arrangements for the meeting. He noted that the Council had thanked the staff of the Arthur Rank Centre at lunchtime and he thanked the members of the Council for their involvement in the discussions. He then adjourned the meeting.

The Chaplain led the Council in prayers, a period of reflection and the singing of a hymn.



The United Reformed Church

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General Secretary The Revd Anthony G Burnham BA

Telephone 0171 916 2020
Fax number 0171 916 2021

Deputy General Secretary

The Revd John Waller MA

Direct line telephone: 0171 916 8646
Direct line fax: 0171 916 1928

To: All members of Mission Council
and Staff in attendance

9 January 1998

Dear Colleague

Mission Council - Saturday, 24 January 1998

I enclose the remaining papers for our meeting at the Arthur Rank Centre in Stoneleigh. You received papers A, B and C with the first mailing. A list of groups is printed on the back of the agenda.

May I remind you that if you are not able to be at this meeting - or if you have vegetarian or other dietary requirements - you must inform Naomi Davies in my office no later than Friday, 16th January.

Similarly, if you would like overnight accommodation or transport from Coventry railway station you must let Michael Cruchley (at the Arthur Rank Centre) know by Friday, 16 January.

Since the initial mailing we have been made aware of a number of changes in the membership of the Council. FURY Council will now be represented by Georgette Margrett and Dave Coaker. Allan Smith no longer represents the Eastern Province: his place has been taken by Clive Sutcliffe. We shall also have with us for the day, Dai Hayward and Pat Nimmo, who are members of the Resource Planning Advisory Group but not of Mission Council.

The provincial management of the Youth and Childrens' Work trainers was agreed by Mission Council in January 1997. Subsequently Helen Brown was appointed to manage the change over a 12 month period. Apart from certain matters of detail, she has completed her task. Her report was presented to the last Mission Council as paper G. The one change that she recommends as a result of wide consultation is that the overall oversight of the programme should remain with the Training Committee, and not be transferred to the Youth and Childrens' Work Committee, as the 1997 report proposed. If Council will agree to this change, the Training Committee will take on the few outstanding matters (including final approval of the new Staff Development Policy). The Committee has, however, one or two concerns to raise with the Council.

I look forward to seeing you at Stoneleigh.

Yours sincerely

Revd John Waller
Deputy General Secretary



The United Reformed Church

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To: Members of Mission Council
and staff in attendance

16 December 1997

Dear Colleague

*Mission Council – Saturday 24 January 1998
Arthur Rank Centre, National Agricultural Centre,
Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire*

The next meeting of the Mission Council will take place on Saturday, 24 January 1998, at the Arthur Rank Centre (Telephone 01203 696969).

I am assuming that you will be present. If you are not able to come – or if you have vegetarian or other dietary requirements – **please inform Naomi Davies in my office no later than Friday 16 January.**

A map giving directions to the Centre is enclosed. If you require either overnight accommodation or transport from Coventry railway station **please let Michael Cruchley (at the Arthur Rank Centre) know by Friday 16 January at the latest.**

I enclose:

- a list of members (to enable you to arrange to travel together).
- an expense slip (to be completed and left with me on the day).

Please will you bring with you a bible and a copy of Rejoice and Sing.

The timetable for the day will be:

09.30	Arrivals and coffee
10.00	Prayers, followed by Session 1
12.30	Lunch
13.30	Session 2
15.15	Cup of tea
15.45	Session 3
16.45	Closing Worship
17.00	Finish

cont.../2

cont....2mc

The major part of this meeting will be given to a presentation by the Resource Planning Advisory Group, which we shall discuss both in groups and in plenary session. It should take in many of our pressing concerns in the areas of mission and ministry, growth and decline. The importance of the subject is such that our consideration will be given space in all three sessions.

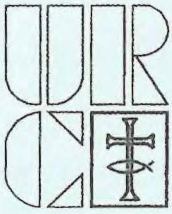
Three papers are enclosed for your post-Christmas reading! One deals with the way the shape of groups may be changed: it results from a request by the Toller commission. The next comes from the Equal Opportunities Committee. It will be tabled at this meeting but not discussed until March. The third is the report of the Mission Council Advisory Group.

My hope is that in your church and in your home the celebration of Christmas will be filled with happiness and hope. I look forward to seeing you at Stoneleigh.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Waller', written over a horizontal line.

Revd John Waller
Deputy General Secretary



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 1998

**AGENDA AND
TIMETABLE**

10.00 am WORSHIP

Session 1

Welcomes and apologies

Minutes of the meeting 30 September - 2 October 1997

Matters arising

97/48 Secretary of Advisory Group on Grants and Loans

97/50 and 97/74 Resolution 18 groups (Paper D)

97/60, 97/62, 97/68 and 97/75 MC decisions re resolution 19

97/71 Resolution 41 pastoral group (See Paper C, para 6)

97/64 Provincial management of Youth and Childrens Work Trainers

97/65 URC Holiday Forum (Paper E)

97/77 Ministerial Discipline Working Party (Paper F)

Notice of any additional business

(No later than 11.05 am)

Presentation by Resource Planning Advisory Group (Paper G)

Group discussion

12.20 pm BREAK

12.30 - 1.30 LUNCH

Session 2

Reports back from groups

The grouping of churches (Paper A)

Equal Opportunities Committee (Paper B)

Report of Mission Council Advisory Group (Paper C)

Staffing Advisory Group (Paper H and paper H¹ at meeting)

3.15 pm BREAK

3.15 - 3.45 TEA

Session 3

Plenary session and conclusions on Resource Planning
Advisory Group report

Nominations Committee (Paper I)

Assembly Arrangements Committee

Ministerial Discipline procedures (Paper F, paragraph 2)

4.45 pm CLOSING WORSHIP

Groups

The first named person in each group is asked to act as leader, the second as reporter. Members of MCAG have their names in italic.

A	B
<p>Arnold Harrison Chris Wright Peter Brain Mary Eden Jean Sylvan Evans Jack Gow Hilary Gunn Susan Rand <i>Graham Stacy</i> Jill Strong Stephen Thornton</p>	<p>Lesley Husselbee Simon Rowntree Sue Brown Denis Earp David Jenkins David Lawrence <i>Graham Long</i> Geoff Lunt Bill Mahood Barbara Martin Graham Maskery</p>
C	D
<p>Malcolm Hanson Graham Campling <i>Tony Burnham</i> Jessie Clare Michael Cruchley Marjorie Lewis-Cooper <i>John Marro</i> <i>William O'Brien</i></p>	<p>Rosemary Johnston Alasdair Pratt Bob Andrews Sally Brooks Desmond Curry Keith Forecast John Jenkinson <i>Fai Nunn</i></p>
E	F
<p>John Humphreys Lesley Charlton Brian Evans Paul Franklin <i>Dai Hayward</i> Peter McIntosh Peter Roche Ann Sutcliffe David Thompson Elizabeth Welch</p>	<p>Philip Woods Elizabeth Caswell Bob Day Val Morrison Rachel Poolman John Rees Carol Rogers Colin Thompson <i>Derek Wales</i> David Williams</p>
G	H
<p>Christine Meekison Graham Cook Tom Bayliss <i>Christine Craven</i> John Edwards <i>Clem Frank</i> Wilma Frew Ann Jackson Hartley Oldham Steve Wood Ken Woods</p>	<p>Peter Devaney Ray Adams Peter Clarke David Helyar Georgette Margrett Sheila Maxey Margaret Carrick Smith Donald South <i>John Sutcliffe</i> John Waller Elizabeth Whitten</p>

MISSION COUNCIL 24 JANUARY 1998

The Moderator:	Revd David Jenkins
General Secretary:	Revd Tony Burnham
Clerk:	Mrs Margaret Carrick Smith
Moderator Elect:	Mrs Wilma Frew
Past Moderator:	Dr David Thompson
Treasurer:	Mr Graham Stacy
Deputy General Sec:	Revd John Waller
Legal Adviser:	Mr Hartley Oldham

Assembly Standing Committees

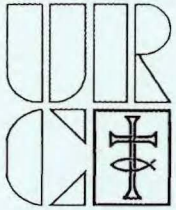
Doctrine Prayer & Worship:	Revd Dr Colin Thompson	
Discipleship Stewardship & Witness:	Revd Elizabeth Caswell	
Church & Society:	Mrs Val Morrison - or- Professor Malcolm Johnson	
Youth & Children's Work:	Revd Stephen Thornton	
Ecumenical:	Revd Bob Andrews	
Ministries:	Revd Graham Long	<u>Fury Council</u>
Training:	Revd John Sutcliffe	Ms Jenny Hale
Finance:	<i>Mr Graham Stacy</i>	Miss Liz Burns
Communications & Editorial:	Mr Chris Wright	
Nominations:	Revd Jessie Clare	
Assembly Arrangements:	Revd Alasdair Pratt	
Equal Opportunities:	Mrs Susan Rand	
Inter-Faith Relations:	Revd Bill Mahood	

12 Provincial Moderators, plus 3 representatives from each Province

1 <i>Revd David Jenkins</i>	Revd Peter Poulter, Mr Peter Clarke, Revd Ann Jackson
2 Revd Keith Forecast	Revd Bob Day, Mrs Ann Sutcliffe, Mr Gordon Ollerenshaw
3 Revd Graham Cook	Mrs Barbara Martin, Dr Donald South, Revd Peter Roche
4 Revd Arnold Harrison	Revd John Jenkinson, Mr Steve Wood, Mr Brian Evans
5 Revd Malcolm Hanson	Mrs Jill Strong, Revd Graham Maskery, Mrs Irene Wren
6 Revd Elizabeth Welch	Mr Simon Rowntree, Mrs Erica Young, Revd Tom Bayliss
7 <i>Revd Elizabeth Caswell</i>	Mrs Elizabeth Whitten, Mr Ken Woods, Revd Allan Smith
8 Revd Ray Adams	Revd John Rees, Mrs Mary Eden, Mr Geoff Lunt
9 Revd Derek Wales	Revd Julian Macro, Revd David Williams, Mrs Sue Brown
10 Revd Janet Sowerbutts	Dr Jack Gow, Revd Rachel Poolman, Revd John Edwards
11 Revd David Helyar	Mrs Christine Meekison, Revd Lesley Charlton, Dr Graham Campling
12 Revd John Humphreys	Dr Jean Sylvan Evans, Mr Denis Earp, Mr Peter Devaney

In attendance:-

Minute Secretary	Mrs Sally Brooks	Editor, Reform	Revd David Lawrence
Moderator's Chaplain	<i>Revd Stephen Thornton</i>	Training	Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee
Church & Society	Revd Peter Brain	Ecumenical Relations	Revd Sheila Maxey
Intl. Church Relations	Revd Philip Woods	Director, Windermere Centre	Revd Peter McIntosh
Ministries	Revd Christine Craven	Communications	Mrs Carol Rogers
Chief Accountant	Mr Clem Frank	Nominations	Mr Desmond Curry
Youth Work	Mr Paul Franklin	Childrens Advocate	Mrs Rosemary Johnston
Office & Personnel Mngr.	Mr Hilary Gunn	Multi-racial, multi-cultural	
Discipleship Stewardship		development worker	Revd Marjorie Lewis-Cooper
& Witness	Revd Bill Wright	Convener RPAG	Revd Duncan Wilson
Rural Consultant	Revd Michael Cruchley		



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 1998

A

A paper on the Grouping of Churches

1. In June 1994 a Commission of the General Assembly heard an appeal by the church at Toller against a decision of the East Midlands Synod. The subject of the appeal was an unhappy situation which had arisen in Northamptonshire in the course of creating a new group pastorate. The commission found in favour of the local church. Events have now moved on considerably and are of no further concern to a wider audience.
2. However the last finding of the Commission reads:

“ The Commission has no remit to deal with the implications of these findings. We nevertheless ask the Mission Council to consider the substance of the following requests made by Toller United Reformed Church in their submission, namely that they ask the wider church:

 - i to prepare clearer guidelines for the creation of a group pastorate where there is already a minister in post; and
 - ii to give guidance as to when a grouping of churches becomes effective to form the group’ “.
3. There was some initial delay in taking action on this request. Then MCAG decided to ask the Moderators’ Meeting to draw up an initial response based on its experience, and then to ask the Cambridge District Council to comment on the response in the light of its own work on grouping.
4. MCAG added a third request to the two from the Toller Commission. It sought comment on paragraph 1(1) of the structure of the United Reformed Church (Manual page B1). This reads:

“ Members of the United Reformed Church associated in a locality for worship witness and service shall together comprise a local church. Since the proper functioning of the local church is so fundamental to the life of the United Reformed Church, when there is a number of small congregations in proximity to one another unable separately to provide leadership and resources for the work of the church, such congregations shall consult with the district council to formulate an acceptable scheme for joining together with a single membership, a common church meeting and elders’ meetings representative of all the constituent congregations, and a shared ministry”.

It was felt that this paragraph could have some bearing on the outcome of the discussions.

5. The Moderators and the District Council both accepted the request of MCAG but both found the task extremely complex and very time-consuming. Some 21 months elapsed between the request first being made of the Moderators' Meeting and the final response being received from the Cambridge District Council. Mission Council should not be surprised that it is not being advised to make a short response to the Toller Commission's request!
 6. The paragraphs that follow are written in a form that could be submitted to General Assembly in the name of Mission Council (after a suitable preamble).
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7. The context of this paper is a problem which arose in a group of churches and its contents suggest how such problems can be avoided. The danger to the reader is that groups can come to be seen only as problems. Our experience in many places in the United Reformed Church is otherwise. Groups have brought new life and vitality to churches and provided stimulating patterns of ministry for ministers and elders. That experience needs always to be kept in mind and related to the comments in the final paragraph.
8. There are a number of good reasons why it may be desirable to create or to change a group of churches whilst a minister or ministers are still in post. These may include: mission needs and opportunities, financial constraints, deployment policy, the availability of other ministers (or lay leaders) in the area.
9. ~~The above may be considered good for both sides, and for communication of people.~~
Although the cause may be the same, stress will affect people to different degrees and in different ways. That does not mean that change is to be avoided – indeed our mission and ministry situation means that it should increasingly be regarded as the norm. It does mean that the terms of every ministerial settlement should be set out clearly from the outset and have the agreement of all parties. Further, changes should be the consequence of a publicly-agreed strategy which is then implemented by a process of consultation with all parties.
10. If it is felt that this general thinking should be expressed in resolutions of General Assembly, the following are suggested for consideration:
 - 10.1 In declaring a vacancy District Councils shall ensure that the written terms of settlement agreed by the pastorate contain a statement clearly indicating that the number of congregations in the pastorate may be changed by a decision of District Council after due consultation even if the initial call is for a specified term.
 - 10.2 In developing a mission strategy each District Council shall review from time to time the pattern adopted for deploying ministers.

11. So far this response has been in general terms. The Toller Commission asked for "clearer guidelines". It is the view of Mission Council that local circumstances will inevitably vary so considerably that no one set of guidelines can be applied to every situation. What is offered instead is a suggestion of the range of consultation that should take place.

12. STEP ONE

- 12.1.1 Is/are the minister(s) in post willing to co-operate in a change to the shape of the pastorate? This will entail a careful conversation between the provincial moderator (and/or a person deputed by him/her) and the minister(s) concerned.
- 12.1.2 Is the pastorate to which the minister is already inducted willing to co-operate in a change to the shape of the pastorate? This will entail careful consultations between those deputed by the District Council (probably through one of its committees) and the elders of the congregation(s) involved.
- 12.1.3 Is/are the congregation(s) which may be added to the pastorate willing to co-operate with the proposals and is it likely that the minister(s) in post will be called? This will entail careful consultations between those deputed by the District Council (probably through one of its committees) and the elders of the congregations involved.
- 12.1.4 When 12.1 – 12.3 have been completed (and they are likely to require more than one meeting each) those who have consulted with the minister(s) and the various elders meetings concerned should meet with the responsible District Committee to consider whether the re-shaping of the pastorate should be explored further or whether further discussions should take place with some or all of the people consulted.
- 12.1.5 The District Committee will report its discussions to the elders meetings and the minister(s) and through the elders to the church meetings. What are the reactions?

STEP TWO

- 12.2.1 The District Committee on receiving the reports from church meetings will report progress to the District Council. What is the general feeling in District?

STEP THREE

- 12.3.1 If all the soundings are positive the District Committee, each of the congregations and the minister(s) need some detailed answers to the implications of re-shaping the pastorate.
- 12.3.2 Obvious questions will include: What happens to MMF for each congregation? Is the District Treasurer being consulted? How are the local expenses to be shared in the proposed new pastorate? How is the ministers time to be shared on Sundays and weekdays? How will the new pastorate make decisions on pastorate matters?
- 12.3.3 What questions do each of the congregations have?
- 12.3.4 What are the questions of the minister(s)?
- 12.3.5 Will the Synod agree to the proposed new pastorate?
- 12.3.6 The District Committee will need to ensure that the questions are properly heard and discussed. It is likely that this task is better done by one person or a small group of people.

STEP FOUR

- 12.4.1 Step three should have resulted in a package of recommendations.
- 12.4.2 Are the elders' meetings ready to agree to the package?
- 12.4.3 Is/are the minister(s) ready to agree to the package?
- 12.4.4 Are the church meetings ready to agree with package?
- 12.4.5 Is/are the church meeting(s) being added to the pastorate ready to make a formal call to the minister(s)?
- 12.4.6 Is the District Council ready to recognise the new pastorate and to concur with the call of the additional church(es)?
- 12.4.7 Is Synod ready to recognise the new pastorate?

STEP FIVE

- 12.5 All things having been carefully considered District Council can meet in an act of worship to recognise the newly shaped pastorate and to induct the minister(s) to his/her/their new charge.

SIDE STEPS

Any of the questions could result in the process being halted. What are the anxieties? What are the personal factors involved? Who is not being heard by whom? Is there a need to challenge someone and if so by whom? Was the idea a good one in the first place? Are there any temporary resolutions that could be explored as a part of an overall strategy eg. A shared commitment to become a group within a certain period of time (*see the Hull covenant Toller question 2 para 2.2*).

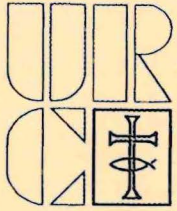
13. The word "group" and the phrase "group of churches" are in common use in the United Reformed Church, yet they have no place in the Structures of the United Reformed Church other than in the proposal in paragraph 1(1). There are relatively few examples of groups of this sort being created.
14. Among the many consequences are: the word "group" carries many meanings, even within the same situation; group structures can be highly developed or they may be non-existent; the District Council may or may not be involved in the creation of groups and the definition of structures; critical connections can be vague or not defined, in particular the connection between the group structure and individual church and elders' meetings, between the group structure and the District Council, between the minister and the group/local churches. This lack of clarity has the potential for danger, which will often be focussed on the call of a minister – even when that call is to a well-established group.
15. There are at least two options for Mission Council at this point.
16. It would be possible for the Council to commission work with a view to the concept of "group" being written into the structures of the United Reformed Church. This would be a substantial piece of work and Assembly would need to be told that this was the reason for further delay in responding to the second part of the Toller Commission's request.

17. On the other hand it may be decided that the concept of "group" needs more time to develop naturally before being made part of our formal structures. In that event the following points of guidance could be offered for application to all group situations involving two or more local churches sharing one or more ministers.
18.
 - 18.1 The creation of a group pastorate should only take place after the fullest consultation (see paragraph 12).
 - 18.2 There should be a clearly-defined meeting point between the congregations other than the minister(s) or interim moderator(s).
 - 18.3 This should not be seen as an extra meeting, to be accepted reluctantly. It will need to deal with matters of shared concern but it also may become a place for the sharing of insights, skills and resources. Flexibility in the light of local circumstances is the key. One possible pattern is that of joint Elders' Meetings and separate Church Meetings. In some groups shared meetings may be more significant and more frequent than the separate meetings.
 - 18.4 It needs to be agreed what are the functions of that meeting; who is a member and how are they elected; what is the authority of that meeting in relation to the separate Church and Elders' Meetings, and what are the channels of communication; are there circumstances in which Church meetings and/or Elders' Meetings will meet together and what authority will such meetings have; what is the relationship and what are the channels of communication between the "pastorate meeting" and the District Council.
 - 18.5 Critical to any group agreement is the arrangements for calling (a) minister(s) or for changing the pattern of ministry. These should have the agreement of the District Council and of the relevant Synod Committee.
 - 18.6 If a minister is to serve in a group pastorate, it is important that, in declaring a vacancy, the District Council should not only be satisfied with the terms and conditions of the call but also with the adequacy of the group structures for acting and making decisions as a pastorate.
 - 18.7 It is good practice that whenever a group of churches is inaugurated, or an existing group charged, the District Council organises an act of worship to recognise what has happened. If possible it should include a signing of an agreement by representatives of the churches concerned.
 - 18.8 In planning their programme of pastoral visits District Councils should give oversight to the wholeness of groups as well as to the individual needs of churches.

19. There is no enthusiasm in either the Moderators' Meeting or the Cambridge District Council for promoting paragraph 1(1) of the structures as the main way forward for the creation of groups. It is felt that it could well be worth trying in more places than at present, when it fits the needs and realities of the situation. In other cases local churches will have their own distinctive identity, their own style of church life and their own mission opportunities – which may better be served by separate Elders' and Church Meetings.

20. On a topic necessarily full of detail, our eyes need to remain firmly on our main objectives, what church structures and relationships will best serve our missionary situation now and in the immediate future? How is the resource of ministry best used to serve that mission? How can we achieve those objectives as a community of people committed to loving God and each other for the sake of the world for which Christ lived and died?

John Waller
December 1997



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 1998

B

December 1997

DRAFT

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR LOCAL CHURCHES

1. Theological Basis
2. Equal Opportunity Policy
3. The Law
4. Policy on Employment
5. Policy on Church Activities
6. Membership, Churches, Committees and Councils
7. Monitoring

CHECKLISTS

1. Recruitment and Employment
2. Church Activities
3. Membership
4. Monitoring

Produced by the URC Equal Opportunities Committee

1. THEOLOGICAL BASIS

We affirm that all people have dignity because they are created in God's image, and are loved by God.

We affirm the principle of justice seen in the Bible, and apply that as a challenge to behaviour that discriminates on the basis of race, gender, or disability.

We affirm that God's love is seen in the coming of Jesus, so that all may have abundant life. This good news is for all.

We affirm that in Christ all are one, over-riding social and cultural distinctions, and commit ourselves to share and use the gifts God gives to people.

We affirm that there is richness in diversity. The differences between people are part of the beauty of creation. Harmony which unites people despite these differences is part of the reconciling mission of God.

We affirm that visions of God's Kingdom are inclusive. We do not believe that God excludes people on the basis of race, gender, or disability: All are called to respond to God's grace with faith.

We recognise that because of human failings and imperfect love, we need systems and checks to help us put this understanding into practice and uphold the principle of equality of opportunity.

We recognise that power can be used in wholesome or degrading ways, and believe that Jesus shows a healthy use of power. We commit ourselves to using power in a positive way by working towards equality of opportunity.

2. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

In the light of this the following Equal Opportunity statement was adopted at Assembly in 1994.

a) The Church affirms in its Basis of Union that "all ministries shall be open to both men and women". At Assembly in 1987 it adopted a Declaration on Racism and in 1990 adopted a Declaration of Equal Opportunities Policy in relation to ministers.

b) This policy is not a statement of what the Church has already achieved; it is a declaration of the way it intends to move forward at all levels and in all aspects of its life within the limitations of its resources. In particular, it is an aid to appointing the most suitable people to all positions of responsibility within the church disregarding irrelevant considerations; it does not oblige the church as employer or otherwise to make appointments of people other than those most capable of fulfilling the responsibilities.

Assembly declares:

i) The Church will behave as an "equal opportunity organisation" and not discriminate on grounds of race, gender or disability.

ii) The Church works to combat racism, sexism and prejudice against people with disabilities and is committed to positive action rather than containing the issues.

iii) The Church is aware of possible barriers, for example to women, black people and people with disabilities, within the structures of the Church in ministry and other posts: this has to do with expectations, position, role and status.

iv) The Church will therefore establish appropriate methods of monitoring the appointment, call, representation and position of women, black people and people with disabilities in the Church and take appropriate action where necessary.

3. THE LAW

Over the years legislation has been passed making discrimination on grounds of race, gender or disability unlawful in certain circumstances. Breach of this may result in a liability to pay compensation to someone who has suffered discrimination.

The Church as an employer needs to comply with such legislation unless it has claimed specific exemptions.

The most important Acts currently available are:

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Race Relations Act 1976

Disabled Persons (Employment) Acts 1944, 1988

Equal Pay Act (1970) and Amendment Regulations (1983)

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

4. POLICY ON EMPLOYMENT

4.1 Non-discrimination

As an employer, of whatever number of employees, the local Church accepts the responsibility to ensure that, at all stages (including recruitment, selection for employment, promotion, pay and conditions and access to training) no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, gender or disability.

4.2 Person specification

In designing jobs and recruiting we will take care to ensure that no potential applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements that are not necessary. (See recruitment checklist for some guidance on this.)

4.5 Access to employment

We accept the responsibility to enable all people to have access to our buildings and facilities and as far as possible to have equipment available to allow people with disabilities to be employed.

4.6 Positive action

Within the limits allowed by the law we will take positive action to redress imbalances in employment with regard to race, gender or disability.

5. POLICY ON CHURCH ACTIVITIES

5.1 Non-discrimination

We accept responsibility, in all services provided to the public, not to give less favourable treatment to anyone on the grounds of race, gender or disability.

5.2 Church worship

We accept our responsibility to make it possible for all who wish to join in the public worship of God to feel welcome to do so regardless of race, gender or disability.

5.3 Other activities

We accept our responsibility to be open, not only for our church members, but for all who may need what we have to offer, or be able to offer what we need.

6. MEMBERSHIP, COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS

6.1 Non-discrimination

We accept responsibility to welcome into membership all those who love our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and want to serve him through membership of our church, regardless of race, gender or disability.

6.2 Eldership and Committees

We accept our responsibility to ensure that all members, regardless of race, gender or disability, are enabled to respond to the call of God to participate in decisions affecting the life of the church through eldership or committee membership and to examine carefully situations where any group appears to be under-represented.

6.3 District Councils, Provincial Synods & General Assembly

We acknowledge our responsibility to encourage people, regardless of race gender or disability, to take a full part in all our Councils.

7. MONITORING

7.1 Effectiveness

We acknowledge that if our equal opportunities policy is to be effective we must look to our practice in all our church's life and check our performance regularly.

7.2 Responsibility

We acknowledge the responsibility to be more aware of whether or not ethnic minorities, women and people with disabilities are reasonably represented in the many different facets of the life of the church. Sometimes this can be done informally but in other situations formal monitoring will be needed.

7.3 Records

For formal monitoring purposes we acknowledge the need to keep records of all job applicants and employees showing their gender, ethnic origin and any disabilities, these records to be assessed annually.

We acknowledge the value of keeping such records for our membership, committees and representation on other bodies.

7.4 Report

There will be an annual report to the Church meeting on the operation of this policy.

THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS ARE GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES
FOR YOU TO USE TO CHECK YOUR OWN PRACTICE.

1. CHECKLIST ON GOOD PRACTICE IN RECRUITMENT & EMPLOYMENT

1.1 Job description

This needs to be accurate and clear and should be prepared in consultation with those who will work closely with the appointee.

If any restrictions on who can do the job are suggested, scrutinise the reasons very carefully to ensure that a restriction really is necessary. Be sure that the Job Title fits the Job Description.

1.2 Person specification

This needs to list the skills and qualities needed to do the job. Be careful to include only what is necessary. You can add skills that would be an advantage but are not essential as long as you do not treat them as essential when shortlisting.

In drawing up the specification look at any equal opportunities implications, eg asking for particular working hours when a degree of flexibility could be built in, asking for specific qualifications that are not essential, or expecting people to be church members if this is not strictly necessary.

1.3 Advertising

Look for methods of reaching a wide range of people. Try to think outside the traditional and cheapest options to ensure that those capable of doing the job hear about it. As an equal opportunities employer you should never rely only on word of mouth advertising.

1.4 Application form

This should clearly ask for the information you need, should not ask for anything you do not need, and should give space for the person to say why they think they are suitable for the post.

Personal details and equal opportunities monitoring should be on a separate sheet so as not to influence the selection panel. (See appendix for an example) It is also useful to ask how the person heard about the post.

1.5 Information for applicants

The following should be sent to each applicant:

- the application form
- the job description
- the person specification
- the equal opportunities statement
(see appendix for examples of these)
- a few words about your organisation
- date of interview if possible
- information about what will be needed at the interview
eg a typing test or a presentation: this is particularly necessary if disabled people need to bring equipment to enable them to carry out the test
- a named person or persons from whom they can get more information about the post.

1.6 Shortlisting

The small selection panel should meet to choose those to be interviewed on the basis of how well they meet the person specification. This should happen as soon as possible after the closing date for applications.

The panel should agree the issues on which questions at the interview will be asked, based on the person specification, and who will ask each question. Every applicant should be informed immediately as to whether they have been shortlisted or not and the time of interview where appropriate.

1.7 The interview

The interview panel should be a small group, normally between two and five, with a balance of members appropriate to the post as far as possible.

This should be done on the basis of the agreed issues with any extra questions only being used to clarify questions or answers. Each member of the panel should have a form based on the person specification to assess each applicant.

At the end of all the interviews the successful candidate should be chosen based on those assessments. All interviewees must be told when they will hear the result of their interview. This should be as soon as possible after the interviews when the successful candidate has accepted the post.

1.8 References

These can be taken up at any stage but should normally only be referred to after the interviews have been completed. The candidate should be advised when references will be taken up.

1.9 Induction

A period of induction, properly organised, should be given to every new employee as soon as possible after they take up the post and that should include any plans for training.]

1.10 Contract

A written contract of employment should be drawn up and agreed as soon as possible, preferably before the commencement of the employment and certainly within 2 months. (This is a legal requirement).

1.11 Supervision and Support

Members of staff should be clear as to who is responsible for supervising their work. They should also have at least one person they can turn to for support who they are happy with.

1.12 Discipline, grievance and appeals procedure

This should be clearly laid out and in the hands of all employees. It should include guidance on how to deal with discrimination and harassment immediately and effectively. NB If the person on the receiving end of certain such behaviour does not see it as a joke then it is not a joke.

Please Note

If you are responsible for making an appointment and any of this is new to you please contact the Citizens Advice Bureau for more information.

2. CHECKLIST ON SERVICE PROVISION

2.1 Buildings

Are they accessible, usable and attractive? Think about wheelchairs, pushchairs, induction loops, those who are frail. Are toilets accessible to all users of the building? Are printed materials also available in large print and braille?

Ask these questions about all the premises not just the worship area. People should not have to fight for the right to be able to share in church activities.

2.2 Hirings/lettings

Do people in the area know the premises are available for use? Do you use these contacts as opportunities for widening the church's contacts? Do you welcome hirings from all groups or would you treat some with suspicion.

2.3 Church activities

Do you encourage visitors and members from outside the church circle? Think about how you advertise and where, what links members of your congregation have with other groups, whether there are groups with particular needs where the church could offer support eg groups for the disabled, Asian lunch clubs, women's or young people's groups.

2.4 Worship

Are worship services accessible and welcoming to all? Are there ways you can improve this?

2.5 Mission Audit

How well do you know your catchment area? Look at who is around and see if there are any new ideas for offering your resources in the name of Christ.

3. CHECKLIST ON MEMBERSHIP: CHURCHES, COMMITTEES, & COUNCILS

3.1 Welcome

Making people feel welcome without overwhelming them is important. Open invitations to membership of the church are sometimes easier to handle than personal invitations but should always be followed by a personal invitation to those worshipping with you. Look for people in your congregation able to handle such matters sensitively.

3.2 Awareness

Are there members of your congregation who are skilled in working with people with disabilities without being patronising? Are members of your congregation aware of the different cultural backgrounds (social as well as ethnic) of people in your area and are they sensitive to them?

3.3 Committees and councils

Do look round the whole congregation when seeking members or representatives for committees etc. We need insights from many different backgrounds if we are to be truly open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and using the full variety of God given gifts.

3.4 Training

Do look at the possibilities of training people to be on committees. Many of our meetings can be very intimidating for the uninitiated. Training does not need to be formal but structures can be explained and participation

3.5 Participation

Are the structures used for meetings encouraging for everyone to take part?

* Is the layout of the room a help or a hindrance to this?

Do people know when comments are welcomed?

* Is sufficient time given for those who react more slowly to propositions?

* Do a good proportion of those present join in or is it just a few who do all the talking?

* Are the issues made clear enough for people to follow the discussions and know what propositions are being made?

* Are people with hearing or visual impairment able to take a full part?

* Are people whose first language is not English able to follow the discussions and take part?

* Does the meeting make a special effort to understand those with a speech impairment or a pronounced accent?

* Are people encouraged to come to meetings?

* Is transport provided for those who need it?

* Are expenses given to everyone who holds an office whether they need it or not? (Those who do not need it can put it back in the plate, those who do should not be embarrassed by having to ask.)

NB These are only a few of the questions you could ask.

4. CHECKLIST ON MONITORING

4.1 Keeping records on employment

You should keep records of all applicants, interviewees and successful candidates including race, gender and any disability.

These records should be checked annually to how they compare with what you might expect in your area.

4.2 Looking at membership

How does your church membership reflect the make up of your catchment area? Are there gaps? How could you fill them?

4.3 Eldership, committees etc

Does membership of these groups reflect the membership of the church [or the membership of your catchment area]? If not, why not?

4.4 Area profile

You should be able to find out the ethnic make up of your catchment area and get some idea of the proportion of people with disabilities. The proportion of women in the community is usually just over 50%. It might also be useful to check on numbers of young people in the area.

[Other Acts useful to know about are:

Charities Act 1993
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978
Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981
Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1992
Companies Act 1948, 1989
Data Protection Act 1984
together with any EC legislation or directives.]

You will also find useful the following Codes of Practice:

- "Code of Practice for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity in Employment".
- "Code of Practice for the Elimination of Discrimination on the Grounds of Sex and Marriage and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity in Employment".
- "Code of Practice on the Employment of Disabled People".

Literature and guidance can be obtained from CRE, EOC, etc (with addresses)



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 1998

C

Report of the Mission Council Advisory Group

1. The group met on 11 December 1997.
2. The suggestions made by provincial groups at the last Mission Council have been recorded. They are now being collated and a paper of proposals will be prepared in due course.
3. MCAG looked again at the report on Oversight Ministries. It had two papers before it. The meeting decided that it was best to defer Mission Council discussion of the subject until March and in the meantime to ask for the preparation of a single paper which took account of all the points being made.
4. Consideration was given to a proposal from the Synod of the Northern Province that Mission Council should explore the possibility of establishing a regular process of visits to provinces to review their life, witness and mission. The Synod has been asked to prepare a paper for MCAG setting out in more detail what it has in mind.
5. The resolution 18 core group had asked about the position of three of its members, David Thompson, Val Morrison and Graham Maskery who would cease to be members of Mission Council at Assembly 1998. It was agreed that they should all remain members of the core group at least until March 1999 and that they should be invited to attend Mission Council meetings as and when appropriate.
6. Mission Council is required to review the work of the resolution 41 pastoral group. No request for help from the group has been received since the last Mission Council. At the appropriate time MCAG will recommend that the group remains in being, as it is possible to anticipate situations in which its help could be needed.
7. MCAG agreed to put a pattern of meetings for 2000 and 2001 to Mission Council. This is set out below:

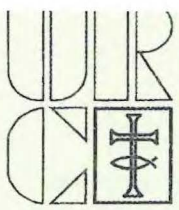
2000	22 January 21-23 March 29 September-1 October	(Saturday) (Tuesday-Thursday) (Friday-Sunday)	? High Leigh Durham
2001	20 January 23-25 March 2-4 October	(Saturday) (Friday-Sunday) (Tuesday-Thursday)	? High Leigh Swanwick

cont.....2mcag

Note: In this exercise everything depends on the availability of accommodation. Mission Council is therefore asked to comment on the balance of mid-week/weekend meetings, their preferences of meeting places, and on whether there are dates to be avoided (say within 7 days of those proposed). Bookings will be made as far as possible in line with the views of the Council.

8. It is hoped to bring a name for the new secretary for the Advisory Group on Grants and Loans to the January meeting.
9. The meeting of MCAG made a number of other agenda decisions for the January Council meeting.

John Waller
December 1997



**Resolution 18
Paper A2 revised in the light
of discussion and decisions at Mission Council**

Resolution 18 was agreed by the Assembly in July 1997 in the following amended form

18. *Assembly,*
noting the requests made in a number of responses from local churches, District Councils and provincial Synods for further time and space to reflect on these matters, asks Mission Council to arrange for further work to be done, ecumenically and in consultation with our partner churches through the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Council for World Mission (CWM) where appropriate and possible, on
- a) *the nature of Biblical authority for the life of the church;*
 - b) *the relationship between the authority of General Assembly and the other Councils of the Church;*
 - c) *the matter of ordination and human sexuality, including the implications of ordaining ministers in committed homosexual relationships;*
and also to consider ways in which the Church may be assisted in reflection on the wider issues of human sexuality. To enable this process Assembly asks Mission Council to establish a timetable for these reflective processes and ensure appropriate representation on necessary consultative groups and working parties.

Mission Council agreed at the October 1997 meeting

to implement Assembly Resolution 18 in accordance with the proposal submitted by the Mission Council Advisory Group, except that the Core Group shall have 5 members rather than the proposed 3.

The Proposal as amended in the light of the debate and the above resolution is as follows:

1. Mission Council should remit responsibility for the implementation of resolution 18 to a core group of 5 of its senior members, plus the General Secretary, who will act as secretary. "Senior" is intended to describe gifts and experience rather than age.

The core group would work through the conveners of the sub-groups described in paragraph 2 below. It would be responsible for arranging the ecumenical consultation required by the resolution. This requirement must also take account of the position of LEP's and the recognition of ministers of and by other denominations. It would consider and respond to requests for the appointment of co-opted members to each Working Group. It would be negotiate the allocation of Assembly appointed staff to any sub groups to be the in-house contact person. This would be considered with due sensitivity with regard to the workload of the staff.

2. The core group would oversee the work of the following four sub-groups and in due course would report to Mission Council.
The sub-groups would be:
 - 2.1 Biblical authority (6 people)
 - 2.2 Authority of General Assembly and other councils; and the role of personal conviction (6 people)
 - 2.3 Ordination and human sexuality (8 people)
 - 2.4 Reflection on wider issues of sexuality (8 people)
3. The Core Group, as part of its role, will give consideration to the implications of the findings of the Working Groups because this work is not an end but part of a process. The Core Group will report to the March 1999 Mission Council with a view to a report being submitted to Assembly.
4. The core group should be asked to consider the possibility of publishing discussion papers on any or all of the areas of its remit, in order to allow wider discussion of the issues involved so that people can be prepared for Assembly discussion.
5. The treasurer would be asked to authorise an overspend on the 1997 and 1998 budgets to allow this work to proceed. A separate budget figure would be provided for the 1999-2000 period.

The names of the members of the Groups appointed are listed as an appendix to this paper.

Mission Council also agreed the following resolution, which was sent out with a covering letter.

"Mission Council:

- a) has received and heard calls from a number of District Councils, churches, ministers and members to suspend or rescind Resolution 19. After careful reflection, Mission Council is of a mind that it is neither appropriate nor within its power to take such action;
- b) expresses its continuing concern for the unity, peace and well-being of the United Reformed Church, and reaffirms the vital significance of Resolutions 17 and 18 which emphasise the need for a spirit of unity and for further work to be done;
- c) understands General Assembly not finally to have defined the United Reformed Church's attitude to homosexual relationships and sees Resolution 19 as holding options open until the Resolution 18 process is complete;
- d) urges all the councils and members of the Church to speak and act with that sympathy and compassion to which Christ calls us."

Resolution 18 Working Groups

Core Group

Elizabeth Welch (Convener)
Tony Burnham (Secretary)
Malcolm Hanson
Graham Maskery
Val Morrison
David Thompson

Biblical Authority (2.1)

Robert Way (Convener)
Stanley Russell (Secretary)
Susan Durber
Colin Gunton
David Hilborn
Ann Jeffers

Authority of General Assembly & Other Councils (2.2)

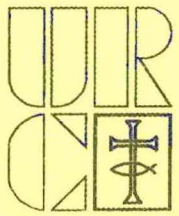
Margaret McKay (Convener)
Martin Cressey (Secretary)
John Hall
Donald Hilton
Philip Morgan
Rowena Francis

Ordination and Human Sexuality (2.3)

Stephen Brown (Convener)
Kirsty Thorpe (Secretary)
Rose Barrett
Philip Burroughs
James Breslin
John Humphreys
Janet Webber
Bert Worrall

Reflection on Wider Issues of Sexuality (2.4)

Peter Clarke (Convener)
Rachel Poolman (Secretary)
Richard Church
Ivan Cox
Clare Hardwick
John Macaulay
Neil Messer
Zam Walker



MISSION COUNCIL

24 January 1998

E

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH AND HOLIDAY FORUM**

1. The United Reformed Church recognises URC Holiday Forum as a valuable part of the life of the URC. URC Holiday Forum is one of the many diverse activities within the aegis of the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee, to which reports will be submitted at least once a year.
2. The **Objectives** of URC Holiday Forum are to encourage people to a further understanding and knowledge of the Christian religion and of social and ethical issues, and to provide a forum to encourage people in the pursuit of Christian practice and lifestyles, particularly as promulgated by the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom; and in particular, to arrange the URC Holiday Forum for the furtherance of these objectives, in a relaxed holiday atmosphere.
3. **Management.** URC Holiday Forum is organised by a Steering Group, nominated by those attending. The appointments will be confirmed by the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee, with such approval not being unreasonably withheld. The Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee shall appoint a representative to the Steering Group. If at any time, the URC, through the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee, decides that the management or the conduct of the URC Holiday Forum is not in keeping with the Objectives outlined above, discussions will take place between the Steering Group and the URC before the URC withholds the right to the use of the name "URC", together with any implied linkage to the denomination.
4. **Finance.** The Steering Group of URC Holiday Forum will be responsible for the day to day operations, including the maintenance of their own bank accounts. Annual accounts will be submitted to the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee. Should the URC Holiday Forum encounter financial problems, the URC will provide financial help for up to two years, whilst discussions take place regarding the future running of URC Holiday Forum.



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 1998

F

Ministerial Discipline

1. At the last meeting of Mission Council the working party on ministerial discipline was discharged (minute 97/77). Since then certain matters have arisen which need attention.
2. As a result of a seminar held in the autumn it was suggested that certain minor amendments should be made to the procedural guidelines agreed at last Mission Council. Hartley Oldham has written these up and will have copies available at the January meeting. Members are invited to discuss the amendments with Hartley Oldham during the lunch and tea breaks. Council will then be asked to approve the amendments in the third session.
3. A proposal also emerged that it would be helpful to have guidelines available for Provincial groups. It is suggested that Mission Council asks Hartley Oldham, Keith Forecast and Margaret Carrick Smith to draft such guidelines.
4. Mission Council has oversight of the ministerial discipline procedures on behalf of General Assembly. In view of the fact that these are completely new procedures, it is suggested that Council calls for a review of the operation of the procedures in March 1999.

John Waller
January 1998



MISSION COUNCIL

24 January 1998

G

A Future Shape for Church & Ministry

A Resource Planning Advisory Group Background Paper

This background paper was written by RPAG in October 1997. Since it was written RPAG has held discussions with various committees of the church. As a consequence RPAG's thinking has evolved further and has found resonance with others. The paper is, in some ways, a point through RPAG has passed. As such it remains relevant because it is formative. It is not offered as being a definitive statement of the present view.

Introduction

This paper is intended to draw together various strands of a wide discussion about the future of ministry in the United Reformed Church, and in particular those from a residential meeting by RPAG in September 1997. It is not intended to be a comprehensive treatise about why we are where we are, although the present context is outlined. The document is an attempt to start where we are and to chart an overall view of a distant mountain which is seen through the mist, together with a more detailed identification of a path over some of the initial foothills (while recognising that analogies are incomplete metaphors for any total concept, but serve to illustrate the thoughts). This paper is not a fully worked up route plan. It is simply an attempt to identify a long term perspective and to place some short term steps before the denomination. The consequences of some of the choices that lie before the denomination need to be evaluated.

The intention is to provide a vision of the nature of ministry in the future. The denomination probably divides between the followers of Abraham who are prepared to embark on a journey of faith, and the followers of Moses who need the picture of a promised land. This paper attempts to hold the needs of both followers in balance.

The Present Context

Much has been written, in many different places and many different countries about the decline in the health of the denominational church. In the UK we have been made aware that attendance in the Anglican church will shortly fall below 1 million, while the Methodists and others lament the same trend. Membership of the URC has fallen below 100,000 for the first time. It may be a comfort to know that we are in the same boat as others. It is no comfort to know that the boat is decidedly leaky! Why has this situation arisen? What is going on around us? It is inevitably dangerous in a paper such as this to suggest that the authors know all the answers, but at the risk of leading with the chin here are some suggestions.

“What is happening?” can be characterised under three broad headings;

1. Breakdown — There is a breakdown in attendance and in organised religion although this is not the same as a breakdown in belief *per se*. With this comes a decrease in people's experience and memory of church and what it means. There is also a lessening of the perceived need for “rites of passage”.
2. Believing but not belonging — There seems to be an underlying need for people to believe in something while not being committed to organised structures. The public response to Diana, Dunblane and Hillsborough are examples of this.
3. The sociologists view — There is a sense of wasteland and also a sense of hope, both of which are possible manifestations of people's ambiguous feelings at the end of the millennium. There is an increased search for roots, and separately, and in some ways in conflict, a greater hedonism whereby carnivals and spectacles are on the rise. There is also a wider sense in which people have stopped believing in a single answer to issues.

If these changes are abroad the next question must be “why?”. We need to assess the “why?” if we are to understand how the URC is to respond. Again, inevitably incomplete, here is an offering of some of the reasons.

1. We live in an age of flux. The rate of change is increasing. The church at large has not responded to modernity as ushered in by the industrialisation of society and the very rapid growth of the urban population. It is signally failing to cope with the pressures of post-modernity and post-industrial society.
2. Post-modernism has seen the emergence of a consumer culture, and with it opportunity to centre interest and pleasure upon oneself. This has been reinforced in the 1980s through the politically justified self-centred view of society which condoned the breakdown of the idea of, and commitment to “society” and “community”.
3. The world appears to be getting much smaller and the flow of information much faster. The concept of globalization fosters this impression.
4. Society is responding to the flood of information by increasing of visual images. We live in an age saturated with signs and symbols. These offer instant recognition of ideas and replace verbal explanation and spoken appeal. People find comfort in visual drama.

As individuals, and collectively as a denomination, we may regret the changes that are upon us — but with us they unquestionably are. It is our duty to discern the Spirit moving and to respond appropriately.

How should the URC respond to the world as we find it?

Honesty of approach and understanding are prerequisites for an answer to this question. Our belief is that we are organised in a way that makes an effective response difficult. Certainly there are examples of individual churches engaged in mission at the point of need, but these are not ubiquitous and best practise is not widely shared. It is recognised, however, that there is no universal “one method fits all” answer.

A major concern we highlighted was the need to strive for the best quality we can in all we do. This was felt to be an overarching principle to which we must move. Too often we give God second best. This is unacceptable.

Our deliberations highlighted several areas of concern where change is needed in order to be able to provide a proper response to the challenge of the future. As before, this is not an exhaustive list but is indicative of the nature of the issues before the denomination. They include ideas of:-

1. Being faithful in living out the Gospel
2. Valuing people — ordained & lay
3. Forming alliances & being salt in other institutions
4. Representing bold signs of hope
5. Investing “massively” in what we believe
6. Demonstrating an attitude of confidence & of catalysis
7. Improving leadership — ordained & lay
8. Engaging in relevant affirmative worship
9. Being characterised by having open doors and receptiveness
10. Seeking simplification of the way things are done.

There is a question about how large an individual’s sense of accountability to God is in the value placed on church and its membership. This contrasts with current society’s context where the perception is that nothing is for life.

A Distant Mountain

In looking forward to the next ten years, if present trends continue, we can probably make some assumptions. The two main ones are, firstly, that membership/adherents will continue to decline and, secondly, the ministerial needs of increasingly smaller churches will remain in line with current needs. Given that the URC has a higher

ratio of stipendiary ministers per member than all other denominations it is unrealistic to argue for a significant increase in the provision of that ministry. Non-stipendiary ministry is a valuable asset but the need for a variety of forms of ministry becomes clear.

Currently the model of ministry that prevails throughout the large majority of the denomination is one of the chaplain of the local church and its congregation. Sometimes, in an attempt to spread the stipendiary resource across places and churches, ministry is delivered in a group. As churches decline the resource is spread ever more thinly, resulting in ministerial stress and congregational dissatisfaction. Sometimes groups are developed in a reactive way without due thought for the societal, geographical and ecumenical forces which affect on the local churches concerned.

RPAG is looking for a new emphasis based upon a form of ministry already practised in some URCs, which initiates and responds to offers of collaboration with other churches and the wider community, and which requires flexibility, openness and readiness to innovate. Leadership in such situations is often shared with a wide variety of "para-ministries" centred upon mission initiatives. We must learn from these situations. In addition it is desirable that research is undertaken to discover and evaluate the considerable variety of "para-ministries" and could usefully be added to the CRCW review currently underway.

The proposition is that numbers of churches are clustered in team ministry. The cluster should be defined in terms of its natural geography, sense of community (where people go to shop or the hospital), and possible ecumenical boundaries. Team ministry would require differing individual gifts from the stipendiary ministers to achieve a balanced overall ministry, but their prime tasks would be to develop local leadership within the cluster and to developing connections beyond the cluster. The term cluster is used as a way of differentiating this concept from existing ideas of group or district although RPAG is aware of the use of the term in some Districts.

In order that this does not simply add another layer to the denomination's structures it could be that the cluster, of whatever size, replace much of the present district structure; particularly in regard to giving greater accountability, responsibility for resources and flexibility in deploying ministerial resources. The cluster would look to Synod to concur with a call and to provide a framework within which the local church is challenged about its role. Quinquennial visits would need a sharper focus to accomplish this. The cluster may not be able to undertake all that a district currently does, nor perhaps should it. There is a need for a mechanism through which issues outside the scope of the cluster can be addressed and resolved. This will be likely to be through Synod, thus by-passing district. The cluster's focus would be local while Synod provided regional support.

It is envisaged that the provision of stipendiary ministry in these circumstances will challenge both local congregations and ministers. We recognise the scale of the educational task as the denomination moves in this direction. We need to start with some manageable steps through which we can build our collective confidence.

The Near Foothills

In starting the journey to the distant mist-shrouded mountain we can begin to plan our first steps on the foothills. Just as there are many routes across the foothills there are many first steps on our journey. There will be different opinions about the choice of route. RPAG, after deliberation, recommends, as the first step, the subject of on-going professional development to Training and Ministries Committees for consideration, refinement and action. RPAG welcomes the proposal of the Training Committee, agreed by General Assembly this year, that "ministers are expected to undertake appropriate subsequent training (known as continuing ministerial training) throughout their ministry".

Most professions today require, as a pre-condition for continued acceptance within the profession, regular participation in activities targeted at ensuring currency of professional knowledge. This often involves attendance at courses which count towards a total number of points to maintain the relevant qualification. By contrast the URC has no compulsory mechanism by which it ensures the continuing up-dating of ministerial skills. It is laughable to suggest that the skills a minister gained when he or she was trained 40, 20 or even 10 years ago remain relevant without the need for review today. RPAG is of the strong view that the denomination must invest in its ministers through compulsory on-going professional development, and proposes that the Training Committee formulates a programme as a matter of urgency. Linkage with assisted self-assessment

may be seen as threatening, but should rather be seen as invoking care and ownership.

From a well trained, and relevantly trained, cadre of ministers will flow other benefits which might include personal and collective liberation from the siege mentality which often accompanies those who are in a well worn routine.

In addition RPAG suggests that a two-pronged recruitment campaign is consistently undertaken. The first target group is the young who could have a life of ministry ahead and who come from today's world. The second thrust should be to attract a substantial number of NSMs. The NSM programme has already proved to be a valuable ministerial resource to the church. However it is time that a major review was undertaken to see if procedures and developments since 1979 can be improved.

Summary

The ultimate opportunity and challenge is to redefine ministry and its provision in the context of today's world. To this end RPAG makes the following observations.

1. We should aspire to the highest quality in all we do.
2. The need for ministry will continue to increase, despite falling member/adherent numbers. In the interim, while the denomination assesses the future RPAG suggests that stipendiary ministry continues to be provided on a *pro-rata* to membership basis that is similar to today.
3. Ministry — especially stipendiary ministry — needs to be re-shaped to meet the needs of today.
4. The URC should move towards coherent clusters of local churches with team ministry.
5. A prime role of the ministry is to identify and encourage the growth of local leaders in ways that are relevant to local needs, thereby ensuring that workloads are shared and vulnerability to personnel change is lowered and the life of the local church is developed.
6. A sustained recruitment campaign aimed at attracting young stipendiary and non stipendiary ministers should be initiated.
7. A key requirement is for a consistent education programme about the change and for congregations to commit themselves to the change and its implications.
8. The roles of district and province will also change giving a sharper focus to each.
9. As a first step a supportive programme should be initiated through which ministers will be required to undertake on-going professional development. Suitable courses need to be identified and costed.
10. Mission Council should oversee the programme to ensure that it is regarded as a priority in our life and that its quality meets our needs.

These are major changes, which if endorsed in principle, will need thorough planning in both communication and implementation.

October 1997



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 1998

H

MISSION COUNCIL STAFFING ADVISORY GROUP

REPORT TO MISSION COUNCIL 24th JANUARY 1998

INTRODUCTION

1. The Staffing Advisory Group met on 11th November 1997 primarily to consider a proposal relating to the following post:

Pilot Development Officer

PILOT DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

2. The Group was sorry to learn of the circumstances which had made it necessary for this post to be considered again so soon after reporting on the matter to Mission Council in Autumn 1996.

3. A paper regarding the purpose of the post, its role, its accountability, main duties and costs had been circulated to the Group in advance of its meeting and the Group was joined by Revd Stephen Thornton and Mr Paul Franklin for discussion of the paper and the post.

4. Pilots is a mid-week, non-uniformed organisation for boys and girls together and seeks to generate an interest in the overseas church and engage with world development issues. It is thus a highly appropriate movement for our Church. It is ecumenical in that there is strong collaboration with the Congregational Federation, and there are hopes of involving other CWM Churches in the future.

5. It was explained that the Pilots organisation was at a crucial stage in its life and desperately needed a period of stable and dedicated leadership so that the 175 companies (155 URC; 20 Congregational) could be properly supported and encouraged and so that the Pilot movement could be developed and strengthened. Changes had been introduced quite recently in that there now exists a Management Group and a separate Publications Group to form the "core" organisation of the movement. Recently, too, the concept of "capitation" under which companies make a per-head contribution towards funds had been put in place.

6. Up to now the post of Master Pilot (previous name) had been filled by an ordained Minister on a 50% part-time basis, usually coupled with a 50%

scoped pastorate in one or other of the Provinces. This arrangement was cumbersome and imposed restrictions which militated against total effectiveness. It was very strongly argued that it was now urgently the case that to develop the Pilot movement, increase the strength of existing companies and undertake the advocacy and training leading to the creation of new ones, a full-time post was now necessary. A paper setting out the level of costings, assuming a lay appointment or a ministerial appointment, was available to the Group; in either case the total package costs in 1998 terms would be not less than £38,000 to £45,000 (salary/stipend, travel, housing, support costs, etc).

7. It is not for the Staffing Advisory Group to make judgements about whether or not the necessary financial support can be found, but the Group was convinced that, subject to the necessary funds being available, there would be great benefit for the Pilot Movement as a whole, and for the United Reformed Church, in creating a full-time Pilot Development Officer. The Group believe that the post, which should have an initial life of 5 years, could be filled by a suitable lay person with theological understanding and teaching and presentational skills, or by a suitable ordained minister. The Group feels that as this is a development post it could be based in UR Church House or elsewhere, as agreed by a nominating group and the Management Committee of Pilots.

8. The Job Description which was given to the Group is attached at Annex A to this Report.

9. The Staffing Advisory Group thus recommends:

- a. *That subject to the necessary funding being able to be identified, a Pilot Development Officer, to work to the annexed Job Description, for an initial 5-year period*
- b. *That Mission Council, on the assumption that funding is available, agrees that a nominating group be established to seek such a Pilot Development Officer, who may be a suitable lay person or an ordained minister, and that a decision about the post location should be made by this nominating group in conjunction with the Pilots' Management Committee.*
- c. *That Mission Council instructs the appropriate Advisory Group or Committee to investigate the costing of the proposed post and report to the Spring 1998 meeting on the question of funding availability.*

Annex: Proposed Job Description

ANNEX TO PAPER.....

JOB DESCRIPTION - PILOT DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

The Role:

A full time, centrally appointed post to advocate and support the work of Pilots and the world church in the churches, especially among children.

Accountability:

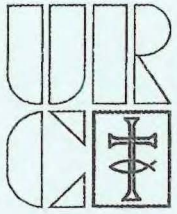
The Development Officer will be responsible to the Pilot Management Group and jointly to the national Youth & Children's Work Committee of the URC and the Children's Work Board of the Congregational Federation.

Purpose of Post:

The Development Officer will be responsible for advocating and developing Pilots as the Children's Organisation within the URC and within the Congregational Federation. seeking to link children with the local and world-wide church,

Main Duties:

1. To support and encourage all those involved with Pilots.
2. To advocate Pilots within the sponsoring bodies and to find opportunities for promoting it more widely with other church bodies and ecumenical groups.
3. To work with the Pilots' Publications Group in producing high quality resources for companies and attractive advocacy material.
4. To work with the Pilots' Management Group in setting and achieving specific targets for the development of Pilots, and in ensuring the effective working of the organisation.
5. To make provision for the training of Pilot Officers and the maintenance of good child-care practice throughout the organisation.
6. To develop new projects which will involve and interest children in development issues, in their membership of the world-wide church, and with their partnership with other young people in CWM.
7. To maintain networks of communication and mutual support within Pilots though visiting, consultation and contacts with Provincial Pilot Officers.
8. To represent Pilots on the Youth & Children's Work Committee of the URC, the Children's Work Board of the Congregational Federation, and other bodies as appropriate.
9. To prepare an Annual Budget for Pilot finances in co-operation with the Pilots' Treasurer, and the appropriate officers of the URC and the Congregational Federation.



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 1998

I

Nominations Committee - report for Mission Council

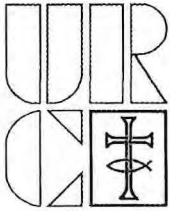
The committee met on 9th December last and agreed the following proposition:

Disciplinary Commission

In the event of the unavailability of the Secretary of the Commission to carry out necessary duties, we advise Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, to appoint the Deputy General Secretary to act as Secretary. In the absence of both the Commission Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary, the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee shall act.

Correspondence is in progress on some forty nominations to committees etc.: we hope to report verbally on the key appointments of six Conveners. With the agreement of the Staff Secretaries concerned, we recommend that they should undertake the responsibilities of Secretaries of the following committees: Discipleship, Stewardship & Witness; Ministries and its Accreditation Sub-Committee; Training.

Desmond Curry
Secretary



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 1998

*Extended agenda for the
benefit of the Moderator
and his supporters!*

SESSION 1

WORSHIP

Welcome

New members: Donald South (Mersey)
Clive Sutcliffe (Eastern)
Georgette Margrett (FURY Chair)

From Resource Planning Advisory Group: Dai Hayward
Pat Nimmo

Apologies

Peter McIntosh Marjorie Lewis-Cooper
Ann Jackson Paul Franklin
Bill Wright David Lawrence

Minutes of the meeting 30 September - 2 October 1997

Clerk will introduce these corrections:

97/40 Allan Smith, not Alan Smith
97/54 The Clerk has a revised text to propose

Matters Arising

97/48 Secretary of AGOGAL. DGS will propose the name of David Lane, an elder at Purley.

97/50 & 97/74 Resolution 18 groups. (Paper D). GS will introduce paper, which is simply for information, and make any other necessary comments.

97/60, 97/68, 97/75 MC decisions re resolution 19. GS can be asked to comment on the present situation. Any general discussion ought to be brief!

97/71 Resolution 41 pastoral group. GS will propose that the group should continue in being (see MCAG report, Paper C, para 6)

97/64 Provincial management of YCWs etc. (See last para of JW letter to Mission Council dated 9.1.98) DGS to introduce and recommend change. John Sutcliffe should then be asked to speak for Training Committee.

97/65 URC Holiday Forum (Paper E). GS will report that task given to the 3 wise men has been completed.

97/77 Ministerial Discipline (Paper F). DGS will introduce. Decision on para 2 to be made in third session. MC is asked to agree 3&4 at this point.

*these can be
taken together
and spoken to
by GS*

Notice of any additional business.

DGS wishes to draw attention to typing error in the papers.

It is likely that a paper suggesting minor changes in the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration will be tabled at the meeting. MC will be asked to act on behalf of GA because MoM wish some changes to operate from 1.1.98. DGS will propose this is taken as last item of business.

It is possible that GS will want to offer a short over-view of mission strategy. If so, it is suggested that this be taken immediately before RPAG report. This is being negotiated with Duncan Wilson.

WE NEED TO MOVE TO NEXT ITEM AT ABOUT 11.00am IF THE ABOVE BUSINESS IS NOT COMPLETE, ANY OUTSTANDING ITEMS CAN BE DEFERRED TO SECOND SESSION (AFTER GROUP REPORTS).

Presentation by Resource Planning Advisory Group (Paper G) (30 minutes)

This will be introduced by the Convener, Duncan Wilson.

Group discussion (to 12.20pm, so no return to plenary meeting)



SESSION 2

Report back from groups (30 minutes allowed)

Any remaining business from Session 1

The grouping of Churches (Paper A) This will be introduced by DGS. The question to be decided is suggested in paragraph 6: is the Mission Council willing to make this its response to the Toller commission request?

Equal Opportunities Committee (Paper B) This will be introduced briefly by Susan Rand. It is for discussion in **March**. People will be invited to **send** comments to Committee.

Report of Mission Council Advisory Group (Paper C) General comment may be sought. DGS will then introduce the one item requiring decision: para 7. There are 3 questions:

1. Do you want to go on using Stoneleigh in January?
2. Do you want alternating weekday/weekend meetings?
3. Are there any dates to be avoided in the periods indicated?

Staffing Advisory Group (Paper H and H1 at meeting). This will be introduced by Geoff Lunt. There are 3 posts to be considered and there is the potential for some discussion, particularly in regard to the Yardley Hastings post.

3.15 Break for tea We may need it! MC could be encouraged to talk informally over tea about what it particularly wants to see emerging from the plenary session.

tea-time

SESSION 3

Plenary session and conclusions on RPAG presentation. 30 minutes have been allocated for this. Duncan Wilson has been asked to make a brief introduction, highlighting the significant points from the group reports. Moderator will need to guide MC towards any conclusions or recommendations it seems to want to make.

Nominations Committee (Paper I) This will be presented by Jessie Clare. There is a resolution on the paper needing to be decided. We may hear the names of some nominated conveners. Jessie will also report the arrangement whereby Bill Wright is acting as Secretary for Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness for a temporary period until no later than March 1999.

The Appointment Group for the Secretary for Youth Work is unable to bring a name for appointment by MC. It is however actively engaged in its task. Stephen Thornton will report on interim arrangements to cover the period after Paul Franklin finishes on 28 February.

Wilma Frew needs to be invited to make a report from the Thames North Moderator Appointment Group. It will be asking MC to appoint the Revd Roberta Rominger as Moderator of the Thames North Province for a period of seven years beginning on 1 September 1998.

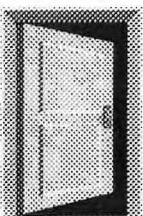
Assembly Arrangements Committee. This report will be made by Alasdair Pratt. Because decisions are required, 10-15 minutes needs to be allowed.

Ministerial Discipline procedures (Paper F, paragraph 2) This will be introduced by DGS. It should simply be a formality.

Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration. (Paper expected at meeting). This should be introduced by Graham Stacy.

THANKS. These do not need to be extensive this time. Particularly Michael Cruchley and the Arthur Rank Centre Staff. possibly the Resource Planning Advisory Group.

CLOSING WORSHIP





MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 1998

H¹

MISSION COUNCIL STAFFING ADVISORY GROUP

FURTHER REPORT TO MISSION COUNCIL 24th JANUARY 1998

INTRODUCTION

1. The Staffing Advisory Group met again on 15th January 1998 to consider proposals relating to the following posts:

CENTRE MINISTER, NATIONAL YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE [NYRC], YARDLEY HASTINGS

CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORK [CRCW] DEVELOPMENT WORKER

CENTRE MINISTER, NYRC, YARDLEY HASTINGS:

2. This post is currently vacant, following the resignation of Revd Martin Nicholls, and the national Youth & Children's Work Committee has taken the opportunity to conduct a full review of the post in its relation to the work at Yardley Hastings, to the work and role of the national Youth Secretary, and to the work and role of the Committee.

3. The SAG had the benefit of a written submission, prepared on behalf of the Committee by the Youth Secretary, and met with Revd Stephen Thornton (Convener) and Mr Paul Franklin (Youth Secretary) to discuss the proposals.

4. In essence, it is proposed that there should continue to be a post for a full-time ordained Minister to serve at NYRC, but that the name should be changed from the present 'Chaplain' to 'Centre Minister'. It is proposed that the Centre Minister should continue to serve as the Minister of Yardley Hastings URC (as to 30% of time) and that the remaining 70% of full-time work should be devoted to the NYRC. While it would be expected that the post-holder would work very closely with the Youth Secretary and FURY Council in contributing to the development of the National Youth Programme, the post-holder would not serve automatically as Chaplain to FURY Council. This would allow the post-holder to deploy 70% of his/her time to the NYRC with the primary objects of:

- enabling the worship and spiritual development of the Centre, its Staff and visitors
- provide pastoral support to the Centre Staff
- provide pastoral support and enable spiritual development of the Community Team

- developing the Centre's programme
- planning and leading events at the Centre on, say, 3 weekends out of 5
- advocacy of the Centre within the life of the URC

5. To allow the Centre Minister to carry through the duties outlined, it is also proposed that the post of Resource & Development Officer [not an Assembly appointment] should be re-designated as Centre Manager. The Centre Manager would be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Centre, the personnel management and supervision of Centre Staff and the Community Team, strategic planning, financial management and budgetary control, marketing and the recruitment and oversight of the training of the Centre Staff and Community Team.

6. As a result of these changes the Centre Minister, to whom the Centre Manager is answerable, would have overall responsibility for the running of the Centre without having to become over-involved in the "nitty-gritty" of day-to-day management. Both the Centre Minister and the Centre Manager would serve on the Centre Management Committee.

7. The SAG believes that the proposals are sensible, provide a clear division of responsibilities and make it more possible than heretofore for the Centre to become that integral and essential part of the National Youth Policy and Programme developed and overseen by the national Youth and Children's Work Committee. Accordingly, the Group recommends that Mission Council should authorise the post of Centre Minister for a period of 5 years, with an appropriate degree of flexibility about the end point of its life depending upon the date of appointment of a post-holder.

8. A Job Description for the Centre Minister is attached as an Annex to this Report.

RECOMMENDATION:

A. Mission Council approves the appointment of an ordained stipendiary Minister to serve as Centre Minister of the NYRC, Yardley Hastings, as to 70% of full-time and to serve as Minister of Yardley Hastings URC as to 30% of full-time. Mission Council authorises the post for a 5-year period with an end-date adjusted to conform to normal post-timing policies.

B. Mission Council approves the Job Description for the Centre Minister annexed to the Report of the Staffing Advisory Group.

CHURCH- RELATED COMMUNITY WORK [CRCW] DEVELOPMENT WORKER:

9. The CRCW Development Worker post was established in 1992 for a 5-year period. In late 1996 the post came up for review by the SAG and, on its recommendation, Mission Council authorised a one-year extension of the post to August 1998. The post is currently filled by Mr Graham Ghaleb. The main reason why a one-year post extension was authorised was because a major review of the CRCW Programme was to be undertaken by, or for, Ministries Committee.

10. SAG had the benefit of a paper prepared by Revd Vaughan Jones, Convener of the CRCW Central Management Committee, and also met with the following:

- Revd Graham Long, Convener of Ministries Committee
- Revd Vaughan Jones, Convener of CRCW Central Management Committee
- Revd Graham Cook, one of the two members of the CRCW Review Team

to discuss the paper and the issues involved with it.

11. SAG expresses its regret that, for good and valid reasons, the Review has not been able to be concluded within the expected timeframe and that, therefore, the post of CRCW Development Worker has had to be considered without the benefit of the Review Group's Report and Recommendations.

12. SAG recognises that in the 5½ years of the life of the post much has been achieved and that the CRCW Programme has developed and expanded. It notes that there has been a net increase in CRCWs in post from 7 to 10 and that 8 new accredited posts exist. Covenant agreements are now in place for all posts, management procedures have been tightened, a more flexible training programme has been developed in conjunction with the Manchester Christian Institute, and procedures and publicity material and forms have been developed and updated. In short, the CRCW programme has developed well and there has been a blossoming of enquirers.

13. In furtherance of its vision of the CRCW Programme as the seed for the development of a responsive diaconal ministry within the Inner City, Housing Estates and Areas of Rural Poverty, the Central Management Committee has considered major, ambitious objectives for the next 5 years of the Programme which include:

- continuing to support and strengthen the existing programme through devolved responsibilities, enabling Provinces and Districts to play a full role in future development.
- establishing "non-stipendiary" CRCWs in a variety of contexts.
- linking the programme to a deepening fellowship of diaconal work within the URC.
- strengthening the capacity of the URC to work effectively in its mission to areas of poverty.
- building ecumenical relationships in the furtherance of community work ministry.

The Central Management Committee recognises that these objectives are dependent on the recommendations of the Programme Review Group and may require substantial revision in the light of the Review outcome.

14. SAG, although disappointed that the Review Group has not concluded its work, listened very carefully to arguments which pressed the view that with the development which had taken place within the Programme, and at this critical stage in the life of the Programme, it would be inappropriate to recommend the ending of the life of the Development Worker post. This post is seen as being key to the continuation and development of the Programme, particularly at this stage in its life. SAG was impressed by an interim view of the Review Group that with the blossoming of CRCW enquirers and the on-going need for support and extensive training, the post should be continued. The Group was of the view that it was essential for the on-going embedding of the CRCW programme as a valid ministry of the URC that it should become more "owned" and "fostered" within Provinces and Districts, and SAG believes that a prime emphasis should be placed in the next few years on the development of a strategy to enable the devolvement of the work to Provinces and Districts to take place. Indeed, the SAG believes that the Development Worker post-holder should use the next few years to develop a local management structure for all CRCW posts, as appropriate.

15. The Job Description for the post, as proposed by the Central Management Committee, is annexed to this Report.

16. In summary, the SAG believes that the post of CRCW Development Worker should be extended for a 5-year period, to August 2003, on the clear understanding that the post ends then and the work, overseen by the Central Management Committee, should then be devolved to Provinces and Districts.

RECOMMENDATION:

A. Mission Council authorises the extension of the post of CRCW Development Worker for a further, but final, period of 5 years to August 2003, on the clear understanding that the work thereafter be devolved to Provinces and Districts.

B. Mission Council urges the Central Management Committee to revise the Job Description for the post to include the following specific points:

- (i) responsibility for advocating and fostering Church-Related Community Work within the URC and, where possible and necessary, ecumenically.*
- (ii) developing a strategy which will enable the work of the post to be devolved to Provinces and Districts by Summer 2003.*
- (iii) develop appropriate local management structures for all authorised CRCW posts as appropriate.*

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Church Related Community Work Development Worker

Accountability: The Development Worker will be accountable to the CRCW Central Management Committee through a named supervisor who will help the worker prioritise the work.

Responsibilities

The development Worker will develop the programme by:

- ♦ developing and implementing a recruitment and training strategy for stipendiary and non-stipendiary church-related community work
- ♦ facilitating the development and ensuring the delivery of the CRCW training programme in consultation with the Manchester Christian Institute,
- ♦ ensuring the development of training opportunities in community work and its role in mission for local churches, church based community work projects, District Councils and Provinces,
- ♦ encouraging local churches-in-community to develop church-related community work as a central focus for mission and advising them on the development of such projects,
- ♦ seeking new and imaginative opportunities for Church-Related Community Work both within the URC and ecumenically,
- ♦ maintaining regular and supportive relationships with local projects, workers and students
- ♦ building links with other forms of diaconal ministry which serve areas of poverty (e.g. local pastoral workers, youth workers, Voluntary Organisation workers),
- ♦ encouraging a broader theological and missiological reflection within the denomination on this ministry and its role within local communities and areas of marginalisation,
- ♦ advising the Central Management Committee on matters relating to the training and management of CRCWs, the assessment of local projects and the development of the programme in line with the CRCW Covenant,
- ♦ implementing a rigorous equal opportunities strategy within recruitment, training and projects,
- ♦ adopting new styles of work and responsibilities as determined by General Assembly and in the light of the recommendations of the Review Group.



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 1998

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Para 6.1.4 of the Plan for Partnership reads:-

6.1.4 Pension Fund: ministers who have not attained the age of 50 years at the date of initial induction to stipendiary service under the Plan may join the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund (URCMPF).

A minister aged 50 years or over at the date of initial induction to stipendiary service under the Plan, may not join the URCMPF. Only in these circumstances will an amount agreed by the General Assembly be paid, at the minister's request, to any personal pension arrangement chosen by that minister. From July 1st 1992 this will be 10% of basic stipend.

Members of Mission Council will recall that at the last meeting of the Council, it was agreed that, following the advice of the Actuary, the employer's contribution to the Ministers Pension Fund should be increased from 10.65% to 11.75%. The Pensions Executive consider that, in light of this change, the contribution to personal pension arrangements should be the same as the employer's contribution payable to the URCMPF, and requests that Mission Council approves the change in the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration.

The Pensions Executive feel that it is appropriate for this increase to take place from 1 January 1998, the same date from which the URCMPF Pension Fund contribution was increased. No payments have yet been made to personal pension arrangements in respect of the 1998 year and as we undertake to make these payments at the beginning of January each year, it is hoped that Mission Council can give approval to this change without delay.

The following resolution will be moved:-

Mission Council, acting for the Assembly, amends the second paragraph of para 6.1.4 of the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration so that the final sentence reads "From 1 January 1998, this will be the same percentage of basic stipend as that payable as an employer's contribution to the URCMPF in the terms of para 15.1 of the Rules of the URCMPF."

The United Reformed Church

Resource Planning Advisory Group

The Ministry & Mission Fund 1998

“Updating the Five Year Plan is not simply a matter of numerical calculation using the latest information. It is the tool through which we ask if we are using our resources, skills, talents and funds in the furtherance of God’s kingdom.

Revd Duncan Wilson, convener of RPAG at General Assembly 1997.

The Five Year Plan

The Resource Planning Advisory Group (RPAG) has not felt able to produce an numerical update to the five year plan because several of the assumptions which formed the basis for the plan presented at General Assembly in 1996 have proved to be unreliable. This is partly because we are getting better at understanding what factors give rise to significant variations in the planning process. As we have begun to understand better, we have come to realise that the questions may be easy — the answers certainly aren’t. As this document stated last year the plan will change as we discern God’s will. It is in the process of just such a change.

The Role of RPAG

RPAG is an advisory group of Mission Council. Comprised of fewer than a dozen people, it is tasked with assessing holistically the way the denomination holds in balance a variety of competing issues. Chief among these is the provision of ministry and the funding of that provision. There are other lesser, but nonetheless important issues which take their place in RPAG’s deliberations.

This document attempts to explain how Mission Council, through RPAG, will be invited to view the future. If the denomination can achieve a consensus about that future it will be relatively straightforward to become more detailed about the financial implications. This is not to say that the future can be viewed without an understanding of the financial resources required; rather it is an attempt to say that any financial forecast is of limited value unless the denomination, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has a vision of the future.

If you have any comments arising from this document please send comments to Mr Dai Hayward, RPAG Secretary, 47 Cleveland Avenue, Darlington. DL3 7HF. (Fax 01325 365832) Alternatively you can let your Provincial Mission Council representative know.

Ministry

There are three well known major forces at work in the denomination. Over at least the last decade

1. Membership has declined at about 3% per year
2. The number of ministers has declined at about 1½% per year
3. The number of buildings closed is barely noticeable

Today there are 660 stipendiary ministers. The number of ministers is set to decline over the next three years as nearly 100 ministers retire. The number of students expected to be inducted into stipendiary ministry is about 50. Therefore we can expect a decrease in stipendiary ministers of about 50 over the next three years unless we induct some from other churches. This, rather than finance, represents the biggest challenge for the denomination over the next few years.

The URC Year Books show the following membership in URC churches.

1976	175,000
1986	131,000
1996	97,000

If we add all members of Local Ecumenical Projects the 1996 membership is 125,000.

EXPENDITURE (£000s)	1996 Actual	1997 Estimate	1998 Budget
MINISTRY			
Stipends, NI, Pension (Local & Special ministries)	11,615	11,842	12,181
Stipends, NI, Pension (CRCWs)	133	146	163
Disturbance allowance, grants, etc	354	325	310
Provincial Moderators - stipends, housing	390	370	390
Pension Fund contributions	3,600	750	750
	16,092	13,433	13,794
TRAINING			
College training for stipendiary ministry	637	710	730
Other training for stipendiary ministry	72	77	82
Non stipendiary ministry training	81	76	90
YLTO/YCWT programme	360	364	446
Support for Westminster College	29	84	100
Support for Windermere Centre	27	37	35
Support for Yardley Hastings	51	14	46
Lay training	12	10	32
St Andrew's Hall grant	78	71	83
	1,347	1,443	1,644
ASSEMBLY APPOINTED STAFF			
Salaries/Stipends - Executive staff	237	253	283
Salaries/Stipends - Support staff	181	221	207
Housing & expenses	128	125	21
	546	599	611
MISSION			
Council for World Mission & missionary support	689	728	676
Grants for national & local mission	186	192	211
Ecumenical Councils	122	129	41
	997	1,049	1,028
ASSEMBLY RELATED COSTS			
General Assembly	71	94	144
Assembly committees/conferences	56	68	68
Mission Council committees/conferences	22	26	23
	149	188	235
COMMUNICATIONS & EDITORIAL			
Salaries	139	140	64
Other costs	27	54	32
	166	194	196
ADMINISTRATION			
Personnel & finance - salaries	245	271	283
- other costs	9	18	25
Premises costs	171	160	166
Professional fees	79	78	73
Misc expenses	191	192	171
	695	719	718
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	19,992	16,625	18,226

INCOME (£000s)	1996 Actual	1997 Estimate	1998 Budget
INVESTMENT INCOME			
Dividends	304	158	144
Income from WCM funds		50	50
Interest on cash	308	358	250
	612	566	444
GRANTS			
Memorial Hall Trust	448	546	448
New College London Trust	225	225	225
Died of Covenant - URC Insurance Co Ltd	78	75	78
Department for Education	59	51	63
CWM towards cost of multi-racial dev worker		6	8
	810	903	822
MINISTRY & MISSION CONTRIBUTIONS	16,462	16,742	16,665
LEGACIES & MAJOR DONATIONS	74	53	50
SUNDRY INCOME			
Sundry income	99	23	25
Provincial contributions to YLTO/YCWT	152	177	202
	251	208	227
PROFIT ON SALE OF PROPERTY	85		
TOTAL INCOME	18,294	18,472	18,208
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) IN THE YEAR	(1,698)	847	(18)

Activities as a percentage of expenditure	1996	1997	1998
Ministry	80.5	76.2	75.7
Training	6.7	8.2	9.0
Assembly appointed staff	2.7	3.4	3.4
Mission	5.0	6.0	5.6
Assembly related costs	0.8	1.0	1.3
Communication & editorial	0.8	1.1	1.1
Administration	3.5	4.1	3.9
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	100.0	100.0	100.0
M&M Fund contributions (% of expenditure)	82.3	95.0	91.4