



MISSION COUNCIL

24th January 2004

MINUTES

Mission Council met at the Arthur Rank Centre, within the National Agricultural Centre at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire on Saturday 24th January 2004, at 10 a.m.

Session 1

Worship was led by the Chaplain, the Revd Carolyn Smyth. The Moderator's opening address referred to the theological reflection of the October 3-5 2003 Mission Council. This was followed by discussion in small groups.

Mission Council approved the appointment of the Revd John Waller as Clerk in the unavoidable absence, for family reasons, of the Revd James Breslin.

04/01 Welcome

The Moderator, the Revd Alasdair Pratt, welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially those attending for the first time:- Mr Mick Barnes (Eastern synod clerk), Mrs Glennis Massey (Wessex synod), the Revd Colin Offor (Northern synod), Mrs Susan Rand (Northern synod), Mrs Joan Turner (Eastern synod), Mr Graham Campling (synod-clerk elect of the Southern synod, deputising for the Revd Lesley Charlton) and Mr Norman Greville (deputising for East Midlands synod representative).

04/02 Attendance

There were 56 members present with 13 staff and others in attendance and Mrs Barbara Hedgecock (Minutes Secretary).

Apologies for absence were received from the Revd James Breslin (Clerk to Assembly), Ms Suzanne Adofo (CRCW Development Officer), the Revd John Arthur (Synod of Scotland Moderator), the Revd David Bedford (Wessex synod), Mr John Brown (Secretary for Youth Work), Mrs Karen Bulley (Pilots Development Officer), the Revd Lesley Charlton (Southern synod), Mr Peter Clarke (Northern synod), the Revd Graham Cook (Moderator of Mersey synod), the Revd Angus Duncan (Convener of Grants and Loans Group), Mrs Janet Eccles (North Western synod), the Revd Martin Hazell (Convener of Communications and Editorial), the Revd David M. Miller (East Midlands Synod), Mr Lawrence Moore (Director, Windermere Centre) the Revd Dr John Parry (Convener, Inter-faith relations), the Revd Peter Poulter (Northern synod Moderator), Ms Rosemary Simmons (FURY Council), Miss Catriona Smith (Synod of Scotland), Mrs Barbara Turner (East Midlands synod), Ms Amanda Wade (FURY Council), The Revd John Young (Convener of Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee).

04/03 Additional Business

The Deputy General Secretary informed Mission Council that there were three additional papers to consider:

- i) B1: a resolution about the movement of ministers, which would be taken as an adjunct to Paper B.

ii) K1: about the Criminal Records Bureau (Churches' Agency for Safeguarding) Reference Group)

iii) L: a confidential paper, 'Mission Council Advisory Group Report on Mission Council Resolutions 03/37', for consideration in closed session, which would be circulated to voting members only.

04/04 Minutes of Mission Council 3-5th October 2003 – Amendments (Paper K1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 3-5th October 2003, which had been circulated, were presented by the Deputy General Secretary. He drew attention to the corrections previously advised on paper K1:

03/63 line 4: "This was agreed and the Moderator signed the Minutes"; **03/68 second paragraph:** "Mr John Ellis proposed and the Revd John Humphreys seconded an amendment"; **line 6:** delete: The Ministries Committee was asked to do more work on this amended recommendation; **insert:** "The amendment was carried and the resulting substantive motion was then also carried"; **03/70 second paragraph:** delete: Dr Peter Clarke moved an amendment to Recommendation 13 ... and the rest of the paragraph; **insert:** "Mr John Ellis proposed and the Revd Brian Jolly seconded an amendment to Recommendation 13. This was (~~delete: seconded and~~) agreed and the resulting substantive motion was approved; **03/76** "The Revd John Humphreys expressed gratitude to the Revd John Proctor for his work as a member and Convener of the Committee over the past 12 years; **03/78** "The Deputy General Secretary, reporting on the comments received from the plenary and group session, identified the need ..."

The following further corrections were noted:

03/69 second paragraph, first line: "and Mr Tony Bayley";
03/76 Item 1. "The Revd David L. Jenkins would conclude his appointment as Co-ordinator of the Training for learning and serving programme in August 2004. It was hoped to place an advert soon so that a successor could be appointed and be in position by the summer; **Item 2.** "A review by the CME..."; additional last sentence to Item 2: "It is hoped to fill this place by Easter 2004"; **Item 4** "proceed with the Hinde Report"; **Item 4 a)** "Hinde Report".

The corrections having been accepted by Mission Council, the minutes were approved and signed by the Moderator.

04/05 Matters Arising

03/57 (03/42) Resolutions from Yorkshire Synod would be considered as part of the Assembly Arrangements Committee report. *See Minute 04/12*

03/78 Time for Action – Progress on this matter was detailed on Paper J.

03/79 Catching the vision - The General Secretary gave an update, saying that he was amazed at the many talents of Church members through their response to the paper. There would be a meeting of synod "listeners" at the end of March. The General Secretary also gave examples of three very different areas of the country with different requirements and mission priorities.

04/06 The movement of ministers (Papers B, B1 and K)

The General Secretary introduced Paper B, after which a discussion took place. The General Secretary then presented a revised resolution as set out in Paper B1:

The Revd David Grosch-Miller proposed and the Revd Peter Noble seconded the following amendment:

'Mission Council welcomes the following procedure and encourages the Synod Moderators to implement them and make them known to the wider church'.

The Clerk, questioned whether the amendment was in order and invited the Moderator to make a ruling. After debate the Moderator ruled that the amendment should stand. The amendment was carried.

The Revd Roberta Rominger proposed and Mrs Helen Mee seconded a further amendment to paragraph 3 of the procedures, adding the words '... and there is no compelling reason to consider one candidate.' The amendment was defeated.

Mr Grosch-Miller's amendment became the substantive motion

Mission Council welcomes the following procedure and encourages the Synod Moderators to implement them and make them known to the wider church:

- 1. A personal profile on one sheet of A4 to standard format shall be prepared by a minister seeking a move. This will be circulated in advance of the Moderators' meeting. It shall include details of particular geographical or other constraints.**
- 2. A synopsis of its profile on one sheet of A4 to a standard format shall be prepared by a vacant pastorate and tabled at the Moderators' meeting.**
- 3. If more than one minister has expressed an interest in a particular pastorate then the personal profiles of all those interested shall be made available to the pastorate, but they may then choose only one candidate with whom they wish to meet.**
- 4. Pastorates may enquire via the Moderators to see if a particular minister would be willing to meet with them.**
- 5. Ministers seeking a move may be shown more than one profile.**
- 6. On request, ministers may be shown the synopsis of any vacant pastorate not already the subject of a formal introduction.**
- 7. The present system of notifying all ministers monthly of all vacancies shall continue.**
- 8. The Moderators' meeting shall be free to approach ministers to consider urgent needs in particular vacancies."**

The motion was carried.

04/07 Finance Committee/Resource Planning Advisory Group joint report: Budget for 2005 (Paper G)

The Treasurer, Mr Eric Chilton presented the draft budget for 2005 and reported that it had increased very slightly over 2004. There was some concern regarding the pledges for 2004

and it would be necessary to raise funds of 3% more than this year's pledges. After responding to questions, the Treasurer said that a joint report and draft budget would be brought to March Mission Council after some adjustments. The Finance Committee and RPAG jointly recommended the draft budget to Mission Council, which was agreed.

04/08 Resource Planning Advisory Group (Paper H paragraph 1)

The Revd Julian Macro, convener of RPAG presented the Group's report about Ecumenical Support Grants. It was agreed that these grants should cease.

04/09 Mission Council Advisory Group (Paper H, paragraph 2)

The Deputy General Secretary presented the report of the Group, which noted, with reluctance, the resignation of the Revd John Rees both as convener of the Ecumenical Committee and a member of Mission Council Advisory Group. A replacement on MCAG would be sought at the March Mission Council.

Mrs Barbara Hedgecock would complete her period of service as Minutes Secretary to Mission Council in March and the Revd Ken Forbes from the Eastern synod had agreed to take on this task from October 2004.

Election of convener of the Grants and Loans Group – Following the retirement of the Revd Angus Duncan as convener, two nominations had been received to be his successor: Dr Brian Woodhall (North Western synod) and the Revd Duncan Wilson (East Midlands synod). Mission Council would be asked to vote by ballot later in the agenda. *See Minute 04/14*

Mr John Brown, who took up his post as Secretary for Youth Work on 1st January 2004, had been inducted the previous evening by the Moderator of General Assembly in the presence of General Assembly representatives at the FURY Assembly meeting in Swanwick.

04/10 The Union of Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Netherlands

It was agreed that the General Secretary should write on behalf of Mission Council congratulating our partner churches in the Netherlands, on their decision in December 2003 to unite (Reformed and Lutheran) to become the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. The union would take place in May 2004.

04/11 Appointment and terms of reference of CRB(CAS) Reference Group (Paper K1)

The Deputy General Secretary presented the proposed terms of reference for the Group:

Mission Council appoints a Criminal Records Bureau (Churches Agency for Safeguarding) Reference Group to advise on child protection issues, and with the following terms of reference:

- to maintain an overview of the policy offered to local churches with regard to Criminal Records Bureau disclosures and to make recommendations regarding the development of policy and practice, including the use of the Churches Agency for Safeguarding.
- to outline principles and monitor current practice in synods when responding to child protection concerns in support of local churches in their implementation of Good Practice.
- to establish and monitor a process which supports churches in response to the receipt of a blemished Disclosure for a local worker/volunteer.

- to ensure support for local churches during times of sensitive action regarding child protection.
- to monitor and advise on the training provision offered to relevant synod and Assembly-appointed staff regarding sensitive child protection issues.
- to advise the General Secretary and Secretary for Ministries in circumstances where blemished Disclosures are received concerning ministers, CRCWs and nationally-accredited lay preachers.
- to act as a reflecting group for Assembly-appointed staff with child protection responsibility.

The Reference group shall be responsible to Mission Council through the Mission Council Advisory Group.

Mission Council approved the terms of reference, and appointed the following members of the Group: The Revd Adrian Bulley (a synod moderator), Mrs Liz Crocker (County Childcare Specialist for Surrey Children's Service), Mrs Wilma Frew (a magistrate), the Children's Advocate/the Secretary for Youth Work and the Deputy General Secretary.

After some announcements, Mission Council adjourned for lunch.

Session 2

04/12 Assembly Arrangements Committee *Continued from Minute 04/05*

Mr William McVey, convener of Assembly Arrangements Committee presented the report. In the paragraph relating to membership of General Assembly 2004, the sentence referring to Yorkshire Synod now read: "In conversation with the Synod Clerk, Yorkshire Synod have graciously agreed to defer their proposal on two grounds....."

The convener then brought two resolutions on behalf of the Committee:

Mission Council requests district councils not to avail themselves of the right to fill vacant places in the General Assembly by making appointments from other districts within the province or nations.

The Clerk stated that when a district was unable to fill its allotted places to General Assembly, they could be filled from within other districts within the same synod, in consultation with the synod clerk.

The resolution was carried.

Mission Council requests synods to give careful consideration as to the necessity of filling all their allocated places in the General Assembly.

The resolution was carried.

04/13 Resolution in anticipation of local and European elections (Paper K)

The following resolution was proposed by the Revd Martin Camroux (Church and Society Committee) and seconded by the Revd Andrew Prasad (Racial Justice Committee):

Mission Council, acting in the name of the General Assembly, notes with concern the rise in many European countries of extreme right-wing and racist political parties. While accepting that such parties are entitled to operate within the democratic process the

United Reformed Church believes it is vital that they do not become accepted as part of normal political life. In our own country we affirm that membership or any form of support for organisations such as the British National Party is incompatible with Christian discipleship.

The United Reformed Church affirms and celebrates the diverse and multi-ethnic nature of our society. We condemn the hysterical scare campaigns against asylum seekers promoted by some sections of the media, noting that they damage our community life and provide fertile soil for the growth of racist political parties and policies.

As a Church we celebrate our increasing number of multi-ethnic congregations. In advance of the forthcoming local and European elections we call upon all local churches, district councils and synods, to continue to practise and promote racial justice and inclusion.

The Revd John Waller (speaking as Past Moderator rather than Clerk) proposed the following amendment which was seconded by Mrs Helen Clapp:

- to replace 'affirm that' with 'question whether', and alter 'incompatible' to 'compatible' and 'principles' to 'concern'. The amendment was defeated.

The Revd Nigel Uden proposed an amendment, that 'country' be replaced with 'countries'. The Proposer accepted this amendment.

The Revd Chris Vermeulen proposed an amendment, which was seconded by Mr John Seager:
- to omit 'while' and delete '...it is vital that they do not become accepted as part of normal political life'. The amendment was defeated.

The original motion was carried. The editor of *Reform* was asked to prepare a press release to be sent to all local media. The resolution would also be published in *Reform* and on the web site.

04/14 Election of Convener of the Grants and Loans Group *Continued from Minute 04/08*

After a ballot, Dr Brian Woodhall was elected as convener.

04/15 Church House Management Group (Paper C)

The Revd John Waller, convener of the group, presented this paper for information only.

04/16 Staffing Advisory Group 1 (Paper D)

After Mrs Val Morrison, convener of SAG presented the report of the Group, the General Secretary proposed the following resolution:

Mission Council agrees that an overview be taken of the staffing of the Assembly and its offices. It agrees that the Church House Management Group should take responsibility for all support staff and the Staffing Advisory Group for all other posts, whether appointed by Assembly or its committees.

This was carried.

04/17 Training Committee matter

The Revd John Humphreys had asked synods to send representatives to a Training Committee Review Consultation on 10th February. Only half of the synods had replied. He hoped this important part of the review process would be well-supported.

04/18 Closed Session

Mission Council resolved to meet in private session to consider a report from the Mission Council Advisory Group on the implementation of the Mission Council resolutions contained in minute 03/37 (Paper L) , and a report from the Staffing Advisory Group on a Review of the Office and Personnel Manager's post (Paper F).

The Moderator observed that the considerable documentation available at the time of the passing of the resolutions in 03/37 could not be seen by new members of the Council because of the time constraints of a one-day meeting. Whilst new members would need to accept that situation, they should nevertheless feel welcome to participate in the continuing discussion.

04/19 Report from the Mission Council Advisory Group on the implementation of the resolutions in minute 03/37. The Deputy General Secretary introduced the report and explained the actions that had been taken since March 2003. After some questions and discussion, the action taken on resolutions 3 and 5 was noted. No action was required on resolution 4 and resolution 6 would not apply until the whole process was complete.

The consequences of the action taken as a result of resolutions 1 and 2 had been reported to ministers A and D respectively.

In regard to resolution 1 there was a possibility of further action being taken by the Council in the future. On the proposal of the Deputy General Secretary, Mission Council agreed and passed the following resolution:

Mission Council instructs the General Secretary to inform the relevant councils of the church of the result of the Section O process concerning minister A.

In regard to resolution 2, there was some question as to how far the outcome of a Section O process had to remain confidential. On the proposal of the Deputy General Secretary, Mission Council agreed and passed the following resolution:

Mission Council instructs the General Secretary, after consultation with the Legal Advisor, to take any necessary steps to inform the relevant councils of the church of the result of the Section O process concerning minister D.

The Moderator thanked the Council, and those who had advised it, on the sensitive way in which this matter had been considered.

04/20 Report of the Staffing Advisory Group. Mrs Val Morrison reported that a review group had been set up to consider the situation that would arise on the retirement of the present Office and Personnel Manager. He had been in post since 1987 and there had been considerable alterations in the nature of the post since then, due to changes in Church House and in the church generally. After discussion, and consultation with others, the review group proposed a new pattern of human resources and office management.

A number of questions were asked and comments made.

On the proposal of Mrs Morrison, the following resolution was passed:

Mission Council resolves that, as from the retirement of the present Office and Personnel Manager, a small team of staff should cover the areas of Human Resources, Facilities, Health and Safety, IT, under the management of a Human Resources and Facilities Manager; and Assembly Arrangements working to the General Secretary for this part of the post.

At the conclusion of this business Mission Council adjourned for tea, to meet again in open session.

Session 3

04/21 Moderator's Remarks

The Moderator thanked Mrs Jenny Carpenter for the arrangements she had made at the Arthur Rank Centre for today's meeting and asked her to thank those responsible for providing the hospitality.

04/22 Nominations Committee (Papers K and E)

The Revd Dr Stephen Orchard, convener of the Nominations Committee presented the report of the Committee. He advised Mission Council that Mr David Cutler would be convener of the National Assessment Board and the Revd Bernie Collins would become convener of the Windermere Advisory Group.

Dr Orchard also presented Paper E on the **Appointment and review of synod moderators** and proposed that:

‘Mission Council accepts the report of the Nominations Committee containing new guidelines for appointment of synod moderators and the review of their appointment and invites the Committee to propose to General Assembly 2004 the necessary changes to the rules and procedures and to report to that Assembly that the new guidelines have replaced those reported to Assembly in 1986’.

The Revd Nigel Uden proposed and the Revd Clive Sutcliffe seconded an amendment to paragraph 1.5 under New appointments in The Guidance:

“Where the Synod Clerk is advised of a nomination, the nominee will be contacted by letter and if willing to be considered, to supply appropriate documentation.”

This amendment was passed.

Dr Orchard on behalf of the Nominations Committee undertook to report back to the March Mission Council with a revised recommendation and a final version of the report.

04/23 Report on the Assembly Moderator's visit to Cuba and Guyana

The Moderator gave a brief report of his visit. He had been accompanied by the Revd Philip Woods in Guyana and the Revd Carolyn Smyth in Cuba.

04/24 Close

The Moderator thanked Mr John Seager, for whom this would be his last appearance at Mission Council as Yorkshire synod clerk. The Moderator wished Mrs Val Morrison well as John Seager's successor.

Closing Worship was led by the Chaplain.



The
United
Reformed
Church

The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT, United Kingdom
Deputy General Secretary: The Revd Raymond Adams

To: Members of Mission Council
and staff in attendance

December 2003

Mission Council: Saturday 24th January 2004
Arthur Rank Centre, National Agricultural Centre
Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire
Telephone 024 7685 3060

Dear Colleague,

Though this is a busy time for everybody, with thoughts of Christmas and the New Year holiday uppermost in people's minds, I am writing to give notice of the one-day meeting of Mission Council which will take place on Saturday 24th January 2004, from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. (registration and coffee from 9.30 a.m.)

As last year, we shall meet in the relocated Arthur Rank Centre within the grounds of the National Agricultural Centre at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire. A buffet lunch will be provided.

Please find enclosed with this letter:

- A map giving directions to the Centre
- A list of members (to enable you to arrange to travel together)
- An expenses slip (to be completed and left in the box provided on the day)
- A form to be filled in and returned (or information to be e-mailed) to Krystyna Bilogan (krystyna.bilogan@urc.org.uk) (tel: 020 7916 8646) by Friday 9th January 2003, please.
- **Paper A:** an edited version of the theological reflection on the October 2003 Mission Council.
- **Paper B:** on the movement of ministers, with proposals.
- **Paper C:** from the Church House Management Group with observations about some anomalies in staff appointments, is for information. This should be read alongside Paper D.
- **Paper D:** from the Staffing Advisory Group has a specific recommendation in the final paragraph.

More papers will be sent out in mid-January. Please also bring with you the minutes of the October 2003 Mission Council.

The main items of business will include

- consideration of the Revd Dr Des Van der Water's theological reflection.

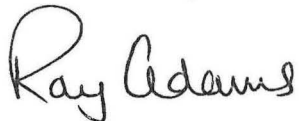
- the General Secretary's paper (B) which juxtaposes the conclusions of the Task Group's Report on Personal and Conciliar Leadership and Authority, proposals from the Deployment Working Party, and comments by the Synod Moderators (as requested at the last meeting) on managing the movement of stipendiary ministers. Mission Council resolved to make a decision at its January meeting.
- A review of procedures for appointing and reviewing synod moderators.
- A discussion on representation at General Assembly (and other matters) presented by the Assembly Arrangements committee.
- Consideration of a report from the Equal Opportunities committee.

Though the agenda will not be fixed until early in January, the approximate timetable for the day will be as follows:

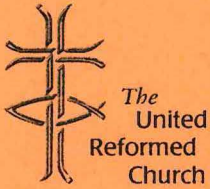
09.30 Arrivals and coffee
10.00 Worship and Session 1
12.30 Lunch
13.15 Session 2
15.15 Tea
15.45 Session 3
16.45 Closing worship
17.00 Departure

I look forward to seeing you at Mission Council, meeting in the early days of a new year. As we face many familiar and recurring challenges for the United Reformed Church, may we also discern together God's new opportunities for our work and witness in the year ahead.

Yours sincerely



The Revd Raymond Adams
Deputy General Secretary



MISSION COUNCIL 24th January 2004

The Moderator:	Revd Alasdair Pratt	Past Moderator:	Revd John Waller
General Secretary:	Revd Dr David Cornick	Moderator Elect:	Revd Sheila Maxey
Deputy General Secretary:	Revd Ray Adams	Treasurer:	Mr Eric Chilton
Clerk:	Revd James Breslin	Legal Adviser:	Mrs Janet Knott

Assembly Standing Committees

Doctrine Prayer & Worship:	Revd John Young
Life & Witness:	Revd Brian Jolly
Church & Society:	Revd Martin Camroux
Youth & Children's Work:	Revd Kathryn Price
Ecumenical:	
Ministries:	Mr John Ellis
Training:	Revd John Humphreys
Finance:	Mr Eric Chilton
Communications & Editorial:	Revd Martin Hazell
Nominations:	Revd Dr Stephen Orchard
Assembly Arrangements:	Mr William McVey
Equal Opportunities:	Revd Wilf Bahadur
Inter-Faith Relations:	Revd Dr John Parry
Racial Justice:	Revd Andrew Prasad

Fury Council

Miss Rosemary Simmons
Ms Amanda Wade

13 synod Moderators, plus 3 representatives from each synod

1 Revd Peter Poulter	Revd Colin Offor, Dr Peter Clarke, Mrs Susan Rand
2 Revd Peter Brain	Revd Chris Vermeulen, Mr George Morton, Mrs Janet Eccles
3 Revd Graham Cook	Mr Donald Swift, Revd Martin Hardy, Revd John Kingsley
4 Revd Arnold Harrison	Revd Pauline Loosemore, Mr John Seager, Mrs Val Morrison
5 Revd Terry Oakley	Mrs Ann Ball, Mrs Barbara Turner, Revd David Miller (Norman Greville dep for BT)
6 Revd Elizabeth Welch	Mrs Melanie Frew, Mr Simon Rowntree, Revd Simon Helme
7 Revd Elizabeth Caswell	Revd Victor Ridgewell, Mick Barnes, Joan Turner
8 Revd David Grosch-Miller	Revd Roz Harrison, Revd Paul Snell, Miss Angela Bebbington
9 Revd Adrian Bulley	Revd Clive Sutcliffe, Mrs Glennis Massey, Revd David Bedford
10 Revd Roberta Rominger	Mrs Helen Clapp, Revd Dr Roger Scopes, Revd Jane Wade
11 Revd Nigel Uden	Mrs Marion Bayley, Revd Lesley Charlton, Mr David Howell (Graham Campling dep for LC)
12 Revd Peter Noble	Revd David Marshall-Jones, Mrs Janet Gray, Mr W Stuart Jones
13 Revd John Arthur	Mrs Helen Mee, Miss Catriona Smith

In attendance

Minute Secretary	Mrs Barbara Hedgecock	Rural Consultant	Mrs Jenny Carpenter
Moderator's Chaplain	Revd Carolyn Smyth	Editor, Reform	Revd David Lawrence
Church & Society	Dr Andrew Bradstock	Training	Revd Roy Lowes
International Church Relations	Revd Philip Woods	Ecumenical Relations	Revd Richard Mortimer
Ministries	Revd Christine Craven	Director, Windermere Centre	Mr Lawrence Moore
Finance	Ms Avis Reaney	Communications	Mrs Carol Rogers
Youth Work	Mr John Brown	Children's Advocate	Mrs Rosemary Johnston
Life & Witness	Revd John Steele	Convener RPAG	Revd Julian Macro
Office & Personnel Manager	Mr Hilary Gunn	Secretary RPAG	Revd Bill Wright
Pilots Development Officer	Mrs Karen Bulley	Grants & Loans Grp Conv'r	
Church Related Community	Ms Suzanne Adofo /	Racial Justice Secretary	Mrs Katalina Tahaafe-William
Work development workers	Mr Stephen Summers		



The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT, United Kingdom
Deputy General Secretary: The Revd Raymond Adams

To: Members of Mission Council and staff in attendance 14th January 2004

Mission Council: Saturday 24th January 2004
Arthur Rank Centre, National Agricultural Centre
Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire
Telephone 024 7685 3060

Dear Colleague,

Enclosed is the second mailing for the one-day meeting of Mission Council at the National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh Park.

Directions: As you arrive at the main entrance and go straight along Avenue M, take the fourth turning on the right into 6th Street, just past the *Farmers' Weekly* building. A few yards further on, the Arthur Rank Centre is on the right. Just before you reach the centre, a right turn leads into a car park. Those who are unable to walk far may alight at the main door of the Centre, and there is room for a few cars to park around the building, but it would be best if the majority used the designated car park.

May I remind you to bring all the enclosed papers with you as well as the **Minutes** of the October 2003 Mission Council, and **Papers A to D** (sent out with the first mailing).

Enclosed please find:

Paper E – on the appointment and review of synod moderators– Staffing Advisory Group's review of a Church House post

Paper F – Staffing Advisory Group's review of the post of Office and Personnel Manager, Church House.

Paper G - Finance Committee/ RPAG: The 2005 budget

Paper H – Resource Planning Advisory Group Report

- Mission Council Advisory Group Report

Paper J – Life and Witness Committee's update on 'Time for Action'

Paper K - Additional business

If manageable, please bring a Bible and a copy of Rejoice and Sing.

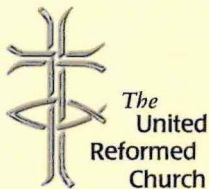
If you have any difficulties or queries, please contact Krystyna Bilogan (tel: 020 7916 8646; e-mail: krystyna.bilogan@urc.org.uk)

I am aware of the long journeys most of us will face for this one-day meeting, but trust that it will be useful in helping to clarify our vision of the Church's missionary task, as well as supporting and affirming those we have appointed to undertake particular tasks on our behalf.

With good wishes for the New Year

Yours sincerely

Ray Adams



MISSION COUNCIL 24 January 2004

AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Ray Adams

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

9.30am Arrivals and coffee

Session 1: 10.00 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.

10- 10.45

Opening Worship (incorporates the theological reflection on the October Mission Council)
(Paper A) **Moderator and Chaplain**

10.45- 11.05

Welcome and apologies for absence

The Moderator welcomes the following synod representatives to their first Mission Council:

Mr Mick Barnes (Eastern synod – new synod clerk)

Mrs Glennis Massey (Wessex synod)

Susan Rand (North Synod)

The Revd Colin Ofor (Northern synod)

Mrs Joan Turner (Eastern synod)

(Invite John Waller to act as clerk)

...and welcomes those who are deputising for a synod representative today:

Mr Norman Greville (East Midlands synod) *Graham Campbell*

(please ask if any others are present for the first time)

① Announce emergency procedures – left door – right door –

The Deputy General Secretary presents apologies for absence from:

The Clerk – James Breslin (whose mother is dying)

Ms Suzanne Adofo (CRCW Development Officer);

The Revd John Arthur (Synod of Scotland Moderator);

The Revd David Bedford (Wessex synod); *(from a Mission conference in Bogotá in Colombia – on sabbatical)*

Mr John Brown (Secretary for Youth Work);

Mrs Karen Bulley (Pilots Development Officer);

The Revd Lesley Charlton (Southern synod);

Mr Peter Clarke (Northern synod);

The Revd Graham Cook (Moderator of Mersey synod);

The Revd Angus Duncan (Convener of Grants and Loans Group);

The Revd Martin Hazell (Convener of Communications and Editorial)

The Revd David M. Miller (East Midlands Synod);

The Revd Dr John Parry (Convener Inter-faith relations)

The Revd Peter Poulter (Northern synod Moderator)

Ms Rosemary Simmons (FURY Council)

Miss Catriona Smith (Synod of Scotland);

Mrs Barbara Turner (East Midlands synod)

Ms Amanda Wade (FURY Council)

The Revd John Young (Convener of Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee).

(Five of those who have sent apologies are participating in the FURY Assembly, which is meeting this weekend in Swanwick).

Notification of additional business:

Deputy General Secretary to lead

Additional papers are tabled: B1, K1; and L (to be issued at lunchtime)

Two additional items (not on the printed agenda):

K1 – the appointment and terms of reference of a CRB (CAS) Reference Group – suggest take before lunch (if time).

Paper L: Regrettably MCAG advises MC to go into closed session to consider outcome of 6 Resolutions passed by March 2003 MC, and further progress.

Paper L will be issued to members of MC during the lunch break.

To avoid too much disruption for staff in attendance and others, suggest they have an early tea break (about 2.30 p.m.)

A matter concerning staff posts (part of SAG report) during that session as well.

Apologise in advance to some conveners of committees presenting reports that a judgement will have to be made as the day proceeds about urgency of business – if time runs out.

Intention to end meeting by 4.45 p.m.

The Minutes of Mission Council meeting on 3-5 October 2003

The Deputy General Secretary will draw attention to the corrections and suggested alterations, which are found at Paper K1 (tabled) – and some extra since this was printed.

Moderator signs minutes

Matters arising:

Deputy General Secretary to lead

03/57 (03/42): Resolutions from Yorkshire Synod

(Comment by convener of Assembly Arrangements – later in agenda)

03/78 Time for Action (**comment from Brian Jolly?**) (Paper J)

03/79 Catching the vision (**brief update by the General Secretary**)

11.05 – 11.40 The movement of ministers **General Secretary** (Papers B and B1)

- Paper B1 is tabled, containing an alternative (?) resolution to the original on page 7 of Paper B.
- Notice of an amendment to the original resolution (see Paper K item 3) will have to be dealt with (**Clerk?**)

11.40 – 12.00 Finance Committee/RPAG: Budget for 2005 **The Treasurer** (Paper G)

12.00 - 12.20 Resolution in anticipation of local and European elections (Paper K)

proposed by **Martin Camroux**/seconded by **Andrew Prasad**

(Comments received by John Waller before MC has led Proposer to seek to withdraw Para 2 from resolution; issue of "on behalf of General Assembly" was on advice of clerk)

(JW suggests withdraw resolution and replace with a better version:

- a) Acting o/b/h Assembly – where is the urgency?*
- b) Not a resolution but general statements – aim at many places, hit few.*
- c) Final sentence of 1st para – could be seen to conflict with BofU "respects rights of personal conviction" and*
- d) Mixes particular point of forthcoming elections with general question of asylum seekers.*

Suggests alternative:

Mission Council, being aware that General Assembly has embraced the policy of encouraging the development of a multi-racial, multi-cultural society in Britain, and noting the rise of extreme right wing and racist parties in many European countries including our own, urges all church members during the period of the local and European elections in May (?) to be active in their communities in ways that are consistent with this policy."

If this were proposed and passed, Mission Council might want to ask editor of Reform to give it prominence in next edition. (JW would leave out Asylum seekers out for now – needs a supporting paper and tidied up – but if included, can it be a second resolution?)

12.20 - If time #: a) appointment and terms of reference of CRB(CAS) Reference Group (Paper K1) **Deputy General Secretary**

If time: # b) 2 minute input from **John Humphreys** – Training Committee matter

If time: # c) Ask General Secretary to write on behalf of MC to our partner churches in the Netherlands congratulating them on their decision in December

2003 to unite (Reformed and Lutheran) to become the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. The union will take place in May 2004.

12.28 latest

Notices and lunchtime arrangements Deputy General Secretary

1. Sign in blue book your attendance and expenses to be put in the box.
2. Make sure you collect Paper L from Krystyna; and tick your name (for MC members only)
3. Lunch arrangements :
 - A finger buffet lunch will be provided at two locations- in neighbouring room (1-way flow of traffic, returning with plate to this room); and downstairs in the entrance hall (another room downstairs to which people will be directed).
 - In view of comparative short time, please keep moving when collecting food – room to talk clear of table areas).
 - Toilets on this floor and downstairs.
 - Locked rooms are clearly out of bounds, Jenny Carpenter happy to show people around and describe work in Arthur Rank Centre.
 - Make sure plates, cups, etc cleared from this room before start of afternoon session.
 - Re-commence promptly at 1.15 p.m.

12.30 -1.15 pm: Buffet Lunch

Session 2: 1.15 – 3.15 p.m.

<p>13.15 – 13.35 Assembly Arrangements</p> <p>✓ 13.35 – 13.50 Resource Planning Advisory Group</p> <p>13.50 – 14.00 Church House Management Group</p> <p>14.00 – 14.15 Staffing Advisory Group - 1</p> <p>✓ 14.15 – 14.30 Mission Council Advisory Group</p>	<p>William McVey</p> <p>Julian Macro (Paper H)</p> <p>John Waller (Paper C for information)</p> <p>Val Morrison (Paper D)</p> <p>Deputy General Secretary (Paper H)</p>
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1. John Rees's resignation as convener of the ecumenical committee is a loss to that committee but also to Mission Council and Mission Council Advisory Group. I have written to him on behalf of MCAG thanking him for his contribution. Though his resignation creates one vacancy for a committee convener on MCAG, I propose to leave appointment of successor until March Mission Council

2. Ken Forbes has agreed to replace Barbara Hedgecock (from Assembly)
3. Convener of GLG : two nominations – Dr Brian Woodhall; Revd Duncan Wilson (vote)
4. John Brown – inducted last night at FURY Assembly

(Mission Council - resolves to go into closed session).

14.30 – 15.15 **Closed Session (ask all those in attendance, who are not voting members to leave and join us after tea at 3.45 p.m.)**

Report on Minute 03/59 (03/37) **Deputy General Secretary**
(Paper L to be tabled)

Staffing Advisory Group - 2 **Val Morrison** (Paper F)

3.15 - 3.45 pm: Break for Tea

Session 3: 3.45 – 4.45 p.m.

<p>15.45- 15.50</p> <p>15.50- 16.15</p> <p>16.15 – 16.30</p> <p>16.30- 16.45</p>	<p>Nominations Committee</p> <p>*Appointment and review of synod moderators ditto</p> <p>*Report on the Assembly Moderator's visit to Cuba and Guyana</p> <p>Closing Worship</p>	<p>Stephen Orchard (Paper K)</p> <p>Moderator (Paper E)</p> <p>Chaplain</p>
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* Matters which could be deferred until March if necessary

Matters to be fitted in wherever there is a gap

Personal Notes:

1. Ask JW if he would be willing to be the theological reflector at March Mission Council.

Find notes or write links:

1. Mission Council Advisory Group report – 2
2. SAG – check process and what needs to happen
3. CRB CAS Reference Group

Phone

Nigel Uden

Val Morrison



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

**AGENDA AND
TIMETABLE**

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

9.30am Arrivals and coffee

Session 1: 10.00 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.

Opening Worship (incorporates the theological reflection on the
October Mission Council) (Paper A)

Welcome and apologies for absence

Notification of additional business

The Minutes of Mission Council meeting on 3-5 October 2003

Matter arising:

03/57 (03/42): Resolutions from Yorkshire Synod

03/78 Time for Action (Paper J)

03/79 Catching the vision

The movement of ministers (Paper B)

Finance Committee/RPAG: Budget for 2005 (Paper G)

Resolution in anticipation of local and European elections (Paper K)

Notices and lunchtime arrangements

12.30 - 1.15 pm: Buffet Lunch

Session 2: 1.15 – 3.15 p.m.

Assembly Arrangements

Resource Planning Advisory Group (Paper H)

Church House Management Group (Paper C)

Staffing Advisory Group -1 (Paper D)

Mission Council Advisory Group (Paper H)

Report on Minute 03/59 (03/37) (Paper L to be tabled)

Staffing Advisory Group - 2 (Paper F)

3.15 - 3.45 pm: Break for Tea

Session 3: 3.45 – 4.45 p.m.

Nominations Committee (Paper K)

Appointment and review of synod moderators (Paper E)

Report on the Assembly Moderator's visit to Cuba and Guyana

Closing Worship



MISSION COUNCIL

24th January 2004

MINUTES

Mission Council met at the Arthur Rank Centre, within the National Agricultural Centre at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire on Saturday 24th January 2004, at 10 a.m.

Session 1

Worship was led by the Chaplain, the Revd Carolyn Smyth. The Moderator's opening address referred to the theological reflection of the October 3-5 2003 Mission Council. This was followed by discussion in small groups.

Mission Council approved the appointment of the Revd John Waller as Clerk in the unavoidable absence, for family reasons, of the Revd James Breslin.

04/01 Welcome

The Moderator, the Revd Alasdair Pratt, welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially those attending for the first time:- Mr Mick Barnes (Eastern synod clerk), Mrs Glennis Massey (Wessex synod), the Revd Colin Offor (Northern synod), Mrs Susan Rand (Northern synod), Mrs Joan Turner (Eastern synod), Mr Graham Campling (synod-clerk elect of the Southern synod, deputising for the Revd Lesley Charlton) and Mr Norman Greville (deputising for East Midlands synod representative).

04/02 Attendance

There were 56 members present with 13 staff and others in attendance and Mrs Barbara Hedgecock (Minutes Secretary).

Apologies for absence were received from the Revd James Breslin (Clerk to Assembly), Ms Suzanne Adofo (CRCW Development Officer), the Revd John Arthur (Synod of Scotland Moderator), the Revd David Bedford (Wessex synod), Mr John Brown (Secretary for Youth Work), Mrs Karen Bulley (Pilots Development Officer), the Revd Lesley Charlton (Southern synod), Mr Peter Clarke (Northern synod), the Revd Graham Cook (Moderator of Mersey synod), the Revd Angus Duncan (Convener of Grants and Loans Group), Mrs Janet Eccles (North Western synod), the Revd Martin Hazell (Convener of Communications and Editorial), the Revd David M. Miller (East Midlands Synod), Mr Lawrence Moore (Director, Windermere Centre) the Revd Dr John Parry (Convener, Inter-faith relations), the Revd Peter Poulter (Northern synod Moderator), Ms Rosemary Simmons (FURY Council), Miss Catriona Smith (Synod of Scotland), Mrs Barbara Turner (East Midlands synod), Ms Amanda Wade (FURY Council), The Revd John Young (Convener of Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee).

04/03 Additional Business

The Deputy General Secretary informed Mission Council that there were three additional papers to consider:

- i) B1: a resolution about the movement of ministers, which would be taken as an adjunct to Paper B.

ii) K1: about the Criminal Records Bureau (Churches' Agency for Safeguarding) Reference Group)

iii) L: a confidential paper, 'Mission Council Advisory Group Report on Mission Council Resolutions 03/37', for consideration in closed session, which would be circulated to voting members only.

04/04 Minutes of Mission Council 3-5th October 2003 – Amendments (Paper K1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 3-5th October 2003, which had been circulated, were presented by the Deputy General Secretary. He drew attention to the corrections previously advised on paper K1:

03/63 line 4: "This was agreed and the Moderator signed the Minutes"; **03/68 second paragraph:** "Mr John Ellis proposed and the Revd John Humphreys seconded an amendment"; **line 6:** delete: The Ministries Committee was asked to do more work on this amended recommendation; **insert:** "The amendment was carried and the resulting substantive motion was then also carried"; **03/70 second paragraph:** delete: Dr Peter Clarke moved an amendment to Recommendation 13 ... and the rest of the paragraph; **insert:** "Mr John Ellis proposed and the Revd Brian Jolly seconded an amendment to Recommendation 13. This was (~~delete: seconded and~~) agreed and the resulting substantive motion was approved; **03/76** "The Revd John Humphreys expressed gratitude to the Revd John Proctor for his work as a member and Convener of the Committee over the past 12 years; **03/78** "The Deputy General Secretary, reporting on the comments received from the plenary and group session, identified the need"

The following further corrections were noted:

03/69 second paragraph, first line: "and Mr Tony Bayley";
03/76 Item 1. "The Revd David L. Jenkins would conclude his appointment as Co-ordinator of the Training for learning and serving programme in August 2004. It was hoped to place an advert soon so that a successor could be appointed and be in position by the summer; **Item 2.** "A review by the CME..."; additional last sentence to Item 2: "It is hoped to fill this place by Easter 2004"; **Item 4** "proceed with the Hinde Report"; **Item 4 a)** "Hinde Report".

The corrections having been accepted by Mission Council, the minutes were approved and signed by the Moderator.

04/05 Matters Arising

03/57 (03/42) Resolutions from Yorkshire Synod would be considered as part of the Assembly Arrangements Committee report. *See Minute 04/12*

03/78 Time for Action – Progress on this matter was detailed on Paper J.

03/79 Catching the vision - The General Secretary gave an update, saying that he was amazed at the many talents of Church members through their response to the paper. There would be a meeting of synod "listeners" at the end of March. The General Secretary also gave examples of three very different areas of the country with different requirements and mission priorities.

04/06 The movement of ministers (Papers B, B1 and K)

The General Secretary introduced Paper B, after which a discussion took place. The General Secretary then presented a revised resolution as set out in Paper B1:

The Revd David Grosch-Miller proposed and the Revd Peter Noble seconded the following amendment:

'Mission Council welcomes the following procedure and encourages the Synod Moderators to implement them and make them known to the wider church'.

The Clerk, questioned whether the amendment was in order and invited the Moderator to make a ruling. After debate the Moderator ruled that the amendment should stand. The amendment was carried.

The Revd Roberta Rominger proposed and Mrs Helen Mee seconded a further amendment to paragraph 3 of the procedures, adding the words '... and there is no compelling reason to consider one candidate.' The amendment was defeated.

Mr Grosch-Miller's amendment became the substantive motion

Mission Council welcomes the following procedure and encourages the Synod Moderators to implement them and make them known to the wider church:

- 1. A personal profile on one sheet of A4 to standard format shall be prepared by a minister seeking a move. This will be circulated in advance of the Moderators' meeting. It shall include details of particular geographical or other constraints.**
- 2. A synopsis of its profile on one sheet of A4 to a standard format shall be prepared by a vacant pastorate and tabled at the Moderators' meeting.**
- 3. If more than one minister has expressed an interest in a particular pastorate then the personal profiles of all those interested shall be made available to the pastorate, but they may then choose only one candidate with whom they wish to meet.**
- 4. Pastorates may enquire via the Moderators to see if a particular minister would be willing to meet with them.**
- 5. Ministers seeking a move may be shown more than one profile.**
- 6. On request, ministers may be shown the synopsis of any vacant pastorate not already the subject of a formal introduction.**
- 7. The present system of notifying all ministers monthly of all vacancies shall continue.**
- 8. The Moderators' meeting shall be free to approach ministers to consider urgent needs in particular vacancies."**

The motion was carried.

04/07 Finance Committee/Resource Planning Advisory Group joint report: Budget for 2005 (Paper G)

The Treasurer, Mr Eric Chilton presented the draft budget for 2005 and reported that it had increased very slightly over 2004. There was some concern regarding the pledges for 2004

and it would be necessary to raise funds of 3% more than this year's pledges. After responding to questions, the Treasurer said that a joint report and draft budget would be brought to March Mission Council after some adjustments. The Finance Committee and RPAG jointly recommended the draft budget to Mission Council, which was agreed.

04/08 Resource Planning Advisory Group (Paper H paragraph 1)

The Revd Julian Macro, convener of RPAG presented the Group's report about Ecumenical Support Grants. It was agreed that these grants should cease.

04/09 Mission Council Advisory Group (Paper H, paragraph 2)

The Deputy General Secretary presented the report of the Group, which noted, with reluctance, the resignation of the Revd John Rees both as convener of the Ecumenical Committee and a member of Mission Council Advisory Group. A replacement on MCAG would be sought at the March Mission Council.

Mrs Barbara Hedgecock would complete her period of service as Minutes Secretary to Mission Council in March and the Revd Ken Forbes from the Eastern synod had agreed to take on this task from October 2004.

Election of convener of the Grants and Loans Group – Following the retirement of the Revd Angus Duncan as convener, two nominations had been received to be his successor: Dr Brian Woodhall (North Western synod) and the Revd Duncan Wilson (East Midlands synod). Mission Council would be asked to vote by ballot later in the agenda. *See Minute 04/14*

Mr John Brown, who took up his post as Secretary for Youth Work on 1st January 2004, had been inducted the previous evening by the Moderator of General Assembly in the presence of General Assembly representatives at the FURY Assembly meeting in Swanwick.

04/10 The Union of Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Netherlands

It was agreed that the General Secretary should write on behalf of Mission Council congratulating our partner churches in the Netherlands, on their decision in December 2003 to unite (Reformed and Lutheran) to become the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. The union would take place in May 2004.

04/11 Appointment and terms of reference of CRB(CAS) Reference Group (Paper K1)

The Deputy General Secretary presented the proposed terms of reference for the Group:

Mission Council appoints a Criminal Records Bureau (Churches Agency for Safeguarding) Reference Group to advise on child protection issues, and with the following terms of reference:

- **to maintain an overview of the policy offered to local churches with regard to Criminal Records Bureau disclosures and to make recommendations regarding the development of policy and practice, including the use of the Churches Agency for Safeguarding.**
- **to outline principles and monitor current practice in synods when responding to child protection concerns in support of local churches in their implementation of Good Practice.**
- **to establish and monitor a process which supports churches in response to the receipt of a blemished Disclosure for a local worker/volunteer.**

- to ensure support for local churches during times of sensitive action regarding child protection.
- to monitor and advise on the training provision offered to relevant synod and Assembly-appointed staff regarding sensitive child protection issues.
- to advise the General Secretary and Secretary for Ministries in circumstances where blemished Disclosures are received concerning ministers, CRCWs and nationally-accredited lay preachers.
- to act as a reflecting group for Assembly-appointed staff with child protection responsibility.

The Reference group shall be responsible to Mission Council through the Mission Council Advisory Group.

Mission Council approved the terms of reference, and appointed the following members of the Group: The Revd Adrian Bulley (a synod moderator), Mrs Liz Crocker (County Childcare Specialist for Surrey Children's Service), Mrs Wilma Frew (a magistrate), the Children's Advocate/the Secretary for Youth Work and the Deputy General Secretary.

After some announcements, Mission Council adjourned for lunch.

Session 2

04/12 Assembly Arrangements Committee *Continued from Minute 04/05*

Mr William McVey, convener of Assembly Arrangements Committee presented the report. In the paragraph relating to membership of General Assembly 2004, the sentence referring to Yorkshire Synod now read: "In conversation with the Synod Clerk, Yorkshire Synod have graciously agreed to defer their proposal on two grounds...."

The convener then brought two resolutions on behalf of the Committee:

Mission Council requests district councils not to avail themselves of the right to fill vacant places in the General Assembly by making appointments from other districts within the province or nations.

The Clerk stated that when a district was unable to fill its allotted places to General Assembly, they could be filled from within other districts within the same synod, in consultation with the synod clerk.

The resolution was carried.

Mission Council requests synods to give careful consideration as to the necessity of filling all their allocated places in the General Assembly.

The resolution was carried.

04/13 Resolution in anticipation of local and European elections (Paper K)

The following resolution was proposed by the Revd Martin Camroux (Church and Society Committee) and seconded by the Revd Andrew Prasad (Racial Justice Committee):

Mission Council, acting in the name of the General Assembly, notes with concern the rise in many European countries of extreme right-wing and racist political parties. While accepting that such parties are entitled to operate within the democratic process the

United Reformed Church believes it is vital that they do not become accepted as part of normal political life. In our own country we affirm that membership or any form of support for organisations such as the British National Party is incompatible with Christian discipleship.

The United Reformed Church affirms and celebrates the diverse and multi-ethnic nature of our society. We condemn the hysterical scare campaigns against asylum seekers promoted by some sections of the media, noting that they damage our community life and provide fertile soil for the growth of racist political parties and policies.

As a Church we celebrate our increasing number of multi-ethnic congregations. In advance of the forthcoming local and European elections we call upon all local churches, district councils and synods, to continue to practise and promote racial justice and inclusion.

The Revd John Waller (speaking as Past Moderator rather than Clerk) proposed the following amendment which was seconded by Mrs Helen Clapp:

- to replace 'affirm that' with 'question whether', and alter 'incompatible' to 'compatible' and 'principles' to 'concern'. The amendment was defeated.

The Revd Nigel Uden proposed an amendment, that 'country' be replaced with 'countries'. The Proposer accepted this amendment.

The Revd Chris Vermeulen proposed an amendment, which was seconded by Mr John Seager:
- to omit 'while' and delete '...it is vital that they do not become accepted as part of normal political life'. The amendment was defeated.

The original motion was carried. The editor of *Reform* was asked to prepare a press release to be sent to all local media. The resolution would also be published in *Reform* and on the web site.

04/14 Election of Convener of the Grants and Loans Group *Continued from Minute 04/08*

After a ballot, Dr Brian Woodhall was elected as convener.

04/15 Church House Management Group (Paper C)

The Revd John Waller, convener of the group, presented this paper for information only.

04/16 Staffing Advisory Group 1 (Paper D)

After Mrs Val Morrison, convener of SAG presented the report of the Group, the General Secretary proposed the following resolution:

Mission Council agrees that an overview be taken of the staffing of the Assembly and its offices. It agrees that the Church House Management Group should take responsibility for all support staff and the Staffing Advisory Group for all other posts, whether appointed by Assembly or its committees.

This was carried.

04/17 Training Committee matter

The Revd John Humphreys had asked synods to send representatives to a Training Committee Review Consultation on 10th February. Only half of the synods had replied. He hoped this important part of the review process would be well-supported.

04/18 Closed Session

Mission Council resolved to meet in private session to consider a report from the Mission Council Advisory Group on the implementation of the Mission Council resolutions contained in minute 03/37 (Paper L) , and a report from the Staffing Advisory Group on a Review of the Office and Personnel Manager's post (Paper F).

The Moderator observed that the considerable documentation available at the time of the passing of the resolutions in 03/37 could not be seen by new members of the Council because of the time constraints of a one-day meeting. Whilst new members would need to accept that situation, they should nevertheless feel welcome to participate in the continuing discussion.

04/19 Report from the Mission Council Advisory Group on the implementation of the resolutions in minute 03/37. The Deputy General Secretary introduced the report and explained the actions that had been taken since March 2003. After some questions and discussion, the action taken on resolutions 3 and 5 was noted. No action was required on resolution 4 and resolution 6 would not apply until the whole process was complete.

The consequences of the action taken as a result of resolutions 1 and 2 had been reported to ministers A and D respectively.

In regard to resolution 1 there was a possibility of further action being taken by the Council in the future. On the proposal of the Deputy General Secretary, Mission Council agreed and passed the following resolution:

Mission Council instructs the General Secretary to inform the relevant councils of the church of the result of the Section O process concerning minister A.

In regard to resolution 2, there was some question as to how far the outcome of a Section O process had to remain confidential. On the proposal of the Deputy General Secretary, Mission Council agreed and passed the following resolution:

Mission Council instructs the General Secretary, after consultation with the Legal Advisor, to take any necessary steps to inform the relevant councils of the church of the result of the Section O process concerning minister D.

The Moderator thanked the Council, and those who had advised it, on the sensitive way in which this matter had been considered.

04/20 Report of the Staffing Advisory Group. Mrs Val Morrison reported that a review group had been set up to consider the situation that would arise on the retirement of the present Office and Personnel Manager. He had been in post since 1987 and there had been considerable alterations in the nature of the post since then, due to changes in Church House and in the church generally. After discussion, and consultation with others, the review group proposed a new pattern of human resources and office management.

A number of questions were asked and comments made.

On the proposal of Mrs Morrison, the following resolution was passed:

Mission Council resolves that, as from the retirement of the present Office and Personnel Manager, a small team of staff should cover the areas of Human Resources, Facilities, Health and Safety, IT, under the management of a Human Resources and Facilities Manager; and Assembly Arrangements working to the General Secretary for this part of the post.

At the conclusion of this business Mission Council adjourned for tea, to meet again in open session.

Session 3

04/21 Moderator's Remarks

The Moderator thanked Mrs Jenny Carpenter for the arrangements she had made at the Arthur Rank Centre for today's meeting and asked her to thank those responsible for providing the hospitality.

04/22 Nominations Committee (Papers K and E)

The Revd Dr Stephen Orchard, convener of the Nominations Committee presented the report of the Committee. He advised Mission Council that Mr David Cutler would be convener of the National Assessment Board and the Revd Bernie Collins would become convener of the Windermere Advisory Group.

Dr Orchard also presented Paper E on the **Appointment and review of synod moderators** and proposed that:

'Mission Council accepts the report of the Nominations Committee containing new guidelines for appointment of synod moderators and the review of their appointment and invites the Committee to propose to General Assembly 2004 the necessary changes to the rules and procedures and to report to that Assembly that the new guidelines have replaced those reported to Assembly in 1986'.

The Revd Nigel Uden proposed and the Revd Clive Sutcliffe seconded an amendment to paragraph 1.5 under New appointments in The Guidance:

"Where the Synod Clerk is advised of a nomination, the nominee will be contacted by letter and if willing to be considered, to supply appropriate documentation."

This amendment was passed.

Dr Orchard on behalf of the Nominations Committee undertook to report back to the March Mission Council with a revised recommendation and a final version of the report.

04/23 Report on the Assembly Moderator's visit to Cuba and Guyana

The Moderator gave a brief report of his visit. He had been accompanied by the Revd Philip Woods in Guyana and the Revd Carolyn Smyth in Cuba.

04/24 Close

The Moderator thanked Mr John Seager, for whom this would be his last appearance at Mission Council as Yorkshire synod clerk. The Moderator wished Mrs Val Morrison well as John Seager's successor.

Closing Worship was led by the Chaplain.

P5
03/69: para 2 - line 2: Bayley (delete: Barley). **Additional Alterations to Minutes**

> **03/76 Training Committee – Additional Business (Paper J)**

The Revd John Humphreys expressed gratitude to the Revd John Proctor for his work as a **member and** Convener of the Committee over the past 12 years. The Moderator had also written a letter of thanks to him. The Revd John Humphreys presented his report as follows:

1. The Revd David L. Jenkins would (~~delete: soon have come to the end of~~) **conclude** his appointment as Co-ordinator ~~of the Training for Learning and Serving programme in August 2004. (delete: the TSL Sub Committee and Training Committee. This being a salaried position)~~ It was hoped to place an advert soon so that a successor could be appointed and (~~delete: the new occupant could be~~) in position by the summer.
2. Since the resignation of the Revd Jean Black as Continuing Ministerial Education Secretary, the Revd Roy Lowes had taken over this responsibility as well as that of Training Secretary. A review ~~of~~^{by} the CME sub committee was nearing completion and the committee had advised the Training Committee of the urgency of appointing a dedicated POET Officer. Discussions had already commenced to expedite the matter and it was noted that the appointment would be on a 50% basis. (**Insert: It was hoped to fill this place by Easter 2004.**)
3. At the March Mission Council the Revd John Proctor circulated a brief paper highlighting the reasons behind the Training Committee's review on training. The review would be taken to General Assembly 2004 with recommendations brought to General Assembly 2005. The committee would welcome any thoughts and ideas regarding the ways the denomination could meet its training needs. These should be sent to the Secretary for Training.
4. The General Synod of the Church of England has decided to proceed with the **Hind** Report and the following three issues were brought to Mission Council's attention:
 - a) The United Reformed Church being closely involved with the Church of England in training colleges and courses, there were concerns about the implications of the **Hind** Report on this partnership.

United Reformed Church
Assembly Arrangements Committee
Report to Mission Council – January 2004

The cost of General Assembly

The committee is pleased to be able to report that General Assembly 2003 at Portsmouth was completed at a saving of £15k against the budget of £170k.

There is however no such good news for the next two years. Assembly in 2004 will cost £240k, and in 2005 will cost £267k. You may recall that Assembly 2002 in St.Andrews cost £265k.

The committee wishes to remind Mission Council of the serious and substantial cost of General Assembly, and of the inexorable rise in this cost. You may be assured that the committee has taken – and continues to take - the cost of assembly very seriously.

Proposals for a future governance structure to be made to the Review Group

However, the committee continues to assert strongly – as it did in its report to Assembly in 2002 – that the shape, size and form of future Assemblies are not to be determined exclusively, or even primarily, by financial considerations. Neither is General Assembly to be designed in isolation from the remaining components necessary for the governance of the church.

To that end, the committee is formulating radical and concrete suggestions that will be sent to the Review Group.

Proposals to be brought to General Assembly 2004 for effect on General Assembly 2005

In the meantime, at the March 2004 Mission Council, the committee will be airing proposals that will be made to General Assembly 2004. These will be proposals which are legally capable of taking effect at General Assembly 2005 – that is, they do not require consideration under the 2-year rule as amendments to the Structure of the URC.

Immediate action re membership of General Assembly 2004

More immediately however, the committee are today proposing that we might painlessly achieve a modest reduction in the number of members of Assembly 2004 – and we have two proposals for this.

Some reduction could be accomplished by abandoning the practice of filling vacancies in the District Council representation; such vacancies are habitually filled from within the Synod. Our proposal does not require Districts or Synods to do something that is contrary to the instructions in the Manual or in Standing Orders. It merely requires synods not to pursue the opportunity that is provided.

We are aware that this does nothing to remedy the situation that some Districts presently face - when the number of ordained people available for General Assembly is in excess of the number of lay people available. This was the subject of a resolution that Yorkshire Synod intended to present and which was to have been considered by MCAG. In conversation with the Synod Clerk, Yorkshire Synod have graciously agreed to withdraw their proposal on two grounds: firstly, that the measure that the AA Committee is now proposing is broader in its concept, and secondly that the issue of the balance between lay and ordained will be addressed in the proposals that the AA Committee will bring to the March MC – and in the more radical proposals that are going to the Review Group.

The committee therefore proposes that:

1. Mission Council requests district councils not to avail themselves of the right to fill vacant places in the General Assembly by making appointments from other districts within the province or nations.

Moderator, the Committee also has a second proposal that it would like to put to MC -regarding Synod membership of General Assembly.

At present Synod membership of General Assembly consists not only of the Synod Moderator, the Clerk and the Treasurer – but also of three other people (there is a variation for the Synod of Scotland). This means that in total there are 72 people from the Synods (excluding Scotland) - over and above those coming from the Districts. We believe this to be excessively generous. We are aware that at least one Synod already restricts its number of representatives in the interest of economy. We applaud this.

The committee therefore proposes that:

2. Mission Council requests Synods to give careful consideration as to the necessity of filling all their allocated places in the General Assembly.



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

A

A theological reflection on Mission Council
(3-5 October 2003)
The Revd Dr Des Van der Water
General Secretary of the Council for World Mission
(edited version from December 2003's *Reform*)

The simple task of being theological reflector to Mission Council turns out, I discover, to be anything but simple and straightforward.

Perhaps the main reason for this is that, in my naivety, I expected that your Mission Council meeting was in fact the-URC-in-council-about-the-mission- of-the-church, and not substantially about the tabling of motions, the discussion of procedures and passing of resolutions.

One could argue, I guess, that mission is concerned with the totality of the life of the church, and therefore the business of this meeting has everything to do with the church's mission. Indeed the 1992 founding document states that the purpose of the Mission Council is: to enable the Church... to take a more comprehensive view of the activity and the policy of the Church.

The document goes on to say that: the Council will ask, is this programme, this appointment, this budget, this grant, this statement designed to further the overall mission, or simply to maintain human structures of institutional life? It seems to me that, in terms of your original vision and purpose for the Mission Council, it is precisely this question that I have just quoted that has not been asked, or certainly not been asked and explored in any depth or detail.

But my own naivety apart, I am here now, for better or for worse. So, for what it is worth, some thoughts and reflections. I propose to do this briefly, by identifying and commenting on three related but distinct strands that, in my view, have emerged within this MC meeting:

1. The first is an underlying concern amongst Mission Council participants, which can best be summed in the question: **What kind of a church are we as the United Reformed Church ?**

The question was articulated in so many words in relation to one particular discussion but my sense is that the concern behind that question cuts across the life, work and witness of the URC.

And the question is not in the first instance seeking an answer in terms of doctrine, polity or church order.

It is foremost an existential one, because in the present social and religious environment the church is judged, not by virtue of what it says, but by what it does and how it goes about its life.

I am not suggesting, for one minute, that the need in the URC for sound theological discourse and exploration is no longer important. On the contrary! This is why you have created a Mission Council – to have the space for theological reflection on mission. But the urgency of the challenge of our times call for a witness that manifests itself in being and doing.

The question, and the concern, about 'what kind of a church we are' was clearly illustrated in your discussions and debate on the paper, Time for Action, and on the main issue of sexual abuse within the church.

Responding to this question is important for many reasons but in relation to the action required to address sexual abuse in the church, the question is particularly relevant. I say this because I am persuaded, that no amount of 'good practice' documents, rules or guidelines will adequately deal with a core problem.

Rules and regulations have their place but, coming as I do from an African context, I wonder whether stuff of human relationships such as warmth, spontaneity and compassion would not just be further eroded in the church. Eroded and perhaps killed off by the additional burden of regulations that substitute for the dynamic of life of the Spirit within the Body of Christ.

2. The second strand was crystallised for me in the context of discussions on the subject of Personal and Conciliar Leadership and Authority.

It seems to me that the heart of this matter relates not so much to concerns expressed about use or abuse of power by a certain strata of leadership, or about the importance of conciliar and democratic decision-making. Underlying it all, I believe, is **the simple but profound question of trust.**

All the checks and balances in the world – and I am not saying that they should not be in place – are not likely to foster, nurture and sustain relationships of trust within the church.

It is my view therefore that the office of synod moderator, the college of moderators, and the moderators' meeting whose task it is, for example, to steward the movement of ministers in the URC, can only be effective on the basis of a fundamental trust-relationship which is implicit in their setting- apart by the church for this and other such tasks.

It goes without saying of course that mutual trust relationships between all the parties concerned, i.e. local church leadership, the minister to be relocated, and synod moderators are critical. In any chain of relationships, the strength and durability of the chain is dependent on each link.

Desmond Tutu has often said that, in matters of ecclesiology and ecclesiastical practice, we must remember that the church is not a democracy. But Desmond Tutu, in addition to having been anti-apartheid campaigner, is also an Anglican. Needless to say, I do not intend to cast any aspersions.

My own view on this matter, for what it is worth, is that democratic principles are not out of place within the church, but heaven help us, if neo-liberal values and social systems are what we have to rely upon. Within the church it should mainly be about recognising and affirming the gifts of the Spirit vis-à-vis the nature and exercise of leadership within the church. But of course you know all this, don't you? So let me move on to my third and final point.

3. The third strand that I wish to identify is a thread that has been discernable, albeit, in fragments throughout this Mission Council meeting, namely the **United Reformed Church's deep desire and quest for a new vision for yourselves as a church.** Unfortunately the core meaning of this word 'vision' has become so fudged today, almost totally hi-jacked by commercial interests, that we have become sceptical if not cynical about what is meant by it also in the church.

I believe that we should not shy away from owning it and using it in the context of the church, as it helps us to seek for synthesis between spiritual foresight and faith insights. For me, the desire for a new vision speaks, on the one hand, about a deep dissatisfaction about what is, and on the other hand, about a passion for what can be realised by God, in union with Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

My own sense of what this means, for the URC, is, at every level of its life to be prepared to change!

To embrace and to undergo fundamental change: not a rearrangement of the ecclesiastical deck-chairs, or a tinkering with institutional structures here and there.

I am talking about being a church transformed.

In his reflections on the reading from Acts yesterday morning the moderator drew our attention to what he called the Conversation of Peter. As I reflected on this insight, and having sat through the sessions of Council, I wondered about the extent to which connections are being made between God's Word opened to us here and the business of Mission Council. If the connections are implicit, I would suggest to you that they should become much more explicit.

You see, it all relates to the 1992 vision for the Mission Council, and that quotation I used at the beginning: the Council will ask, is this programme, this appointment, this budget, this grant, this statement designed to further the overall mission, or simply to maintain human structures of institutional life?

But coming back to the new vision, which of course, is being spearheaded by the Catch the Vision process within the URC we need to ask, to answer and to act upon questions such as:

- **What kinds of conversations do we need to undergo as the United Reformed Church in order to enable our local churches, for instance, to realize that other cultural, racial and minority**

groupings, are not a threat to the church, but in fact a gift from God to the United Reformed Church ?

- **What kinds of conversations do we need to undergo to help rank and file members of the United Reformed Church understand and have compassion for the suffering of our brothers and sisters, as articulated in the WARC statement that came before us?**
- **What indeed are the captivities that we fail to discern, individually and collectively, as the United Reformed Church, making it difficult to attain to the freedoms for which Christ has set us free?**

My friends in Christ, your search for a new vision, I believe, will lead you to painful places that you would probably rather not go. But it is in those painful conversations. In those deep realisations of your captivities that the new vision will emerge and set you free to be, and to become a church relevant for our times, in touch with impulses of the Spirit, and in tune with the very heartbeat of our God.

I must conclude:

In the final analysis, it does not matter really whether you meet as a Mission Council or Moderators' College or even Assembly. What matters is that, together you intentionally seek to discern the mind of Christ, and the prompting of the ever-dynamic Holy Spirit.

May God grant you the grace and the courage to be and to become a church working, worshipping and witnessing in joyous obedience to the will of our God.



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

B

The movement of ministers

This paper is offered to Mission Council in response to the debate about the movement of ministers, which began at its October 2003 meeting. At that meeting the Council was considering two papers, from the Personal and Conciliar Leadership and Authority (PCLA) and Deployment Working Groups. This paper draws on those two pieces of work, and on a full discussion of the issue with the Moderators at their November meeting. I am also grateful to Lawrence Moore for an unsolicited but very helpful paper on leadership, power and authority in this debate.

1. The wider context of the debate

(a) The nature of call

The movement of ministers is a matter of great importance to all in the United Reformed Church. The churches of the reformation grew out of the parish system, so (much as we might dislike admitting it) the principle of 'one minister, one congregation' is part of our DNA, and the subtle pastoral relationship between minister and congregation remains central to our emotional and spiritual life. However, our ancestors in the faith fought for one fundamental change in that system - the right of congregations not to have a minister imposed upon them by a patron, whether that patron were the Crown or a private person or institution. The notion of call is therefore cherished amongst us.

'Calling' was (is) taken with theological and spiritual seriousness. The call of God is a fearful thing. Ministry is a vocation, not a career. Theologies of call can seem to sit ill in a linguistic environment conditioned by concepts of rights and equality, for even a superficial reading of Scripture will reveal that God would spend most of his time before the European Court of Human Rights defending unorthodox appointment practice! It is important that the church maintains its spiritual integrity whilst complying with the contemporary legislative framework. Whilst the language of rights must be respected, call and vocation must continue to be treated seriously, for some of our ministers would not dream of moving to a new sphere of service unless they felt themselves called by God to do so. That also applies to those who are called to serve as Moderators and in other ways. At his consecration a Roman Catholic auxiliary bishop said that when the papal nuncio told him of his prospective elevation his feeling was 'I would rather be pregnant.' Contrary to some assumptions, senior posts are not coveted - and those who do covet them are probably not the right people to occupy them.

However, calling can be expressed in many ways. It is not necessarily synonymous with a phone call from a Moderator. It is also important that we distinguish the call of God from the sinful predilections of the church as a human institution. A pastorate which continually calls white male ministers might have a spiritual hearing defect. It is therefore important that a theology of call is seen to operate within the context of either good equal opportunities practice, or if necessary affirmative action.

(b) The nature of leadership, power and authority in the United Reformed Church

As the PCLA working group discovered, leadership, power and authority are complex matters. We are, we never tire of saying, a conciliar church. That is because we have found that seeking the will of God is best done when we gather together in council and join in prayer and deliberation. The end result of that process is that power is exercised, over the lives of individuals and communities. For example, a Church Meeting may decide to call a minister or not, and a Synod may decide that a candidate is called to ministry, or not. Power, in our understanding, rests with councils, and they have the right to act. That 'right to act' is one kind of authority.

Leadership within those councils is to be found in individuals. It is another kind of authority, the authority of spiritual maturity and gift. It is recognition of those charisms that results in individuals being called to office, or being listened to with particular care as the discussions of councils takes place. We expect persuasion, vision and encouragement (and sometimes rebuke) from our leaders, but that exercise of authority is always tested within the conciliar process of decision-making.

We call men and women to office as Synod Moderators because we recognise that authority within them, and we set them apart to a ministry of leadership. We do not set them apart to exercise power (in the sense of independent executive authority). Such power belongs within the councils of the church. The influence of a Moderator is derived from the fact that s/he is chair of a Synod.

Part of the anxiety generated in the present debate results from a supposed blurring of those distinctions. There is a suspicion that the Moderators' meeting is exercising a power over individuals and churches that rightly belongs to a council of the church, not to the college of Moderators. That may be a mis-perception, but the theological instinct behind it is correct. The Moderators' meeting is not a council of the church. Some of our confusion flows from the way in which we have tangled the threads of power, authority and leadership.

2. The present system

At the moment Moderators act as 'honest brokers', bringing together pastorates seeking ministers and ministers seeking a move, or those seeking

introductions for the first time (usually ordinands). Both pastorates and ministers prepare profiles in advance, and information from these is exchanged via Moderators. All vacancies are reported in the vacancies list which is circulated with the monthly stipend slips, and ministers are free to request introductions to specific pastorates from the Moderators. Moderators are not pro-active. Only very rarely do Moderators approach a minister to consider a vacant pastorate unless they have already expressed a general interest in moving. The Moderators meet together monthly, and it is their present practice that all have to agree to any specific introduction.

There is no doubt that the Moderators strive to operate this system with the good of the whole church in mind, and that they do so with great care and integrity. It needs to be acknowledged that the system has generally served us well throughout the history of the URC, and prior to that in Congregationalism. However, it is a system, and like all systems it should be subject to periodic reconsideration and review. Other churches in the Reformed world operate with a variety of different systems. Moderators, ministers and churches are all in various ways the 'victims' of the system.

3. The perceived problems of the present system

These have been succinctly stated by the PCLA working group.

a) There is anecdotal evidence of unease amongst both pastorates and ministers about a lack of transparency in the present system. We were reminded at a previous meeting of the Council that data is not the plural of anecdote, and it should be noted that short of conducting a survey, it is impossible to assess accurately the extent of this unease. Some pastorates that have travailed long in vacancy doubt that their Moderator is doing all that can be done to find them a minister. Some ministers suspect Moderators of 'blocking' them from certain introductions. A good deal of this is rumour and fantasy, far from the realities and constraints under which the Moderators work. Both pastorates and ministers believe that the Moderators have far more information before them than they actually do. However, such fantasies will always surround a process which relies (even to a limited and legitimate extent) on a closed, confidential meeting.

b) Moderators are in an ambiguous position. They bear responsibility for the pastoral care of ministers, yet are also act as gatekeepers for their 'career progression'. The language of 'career' sits ill with a theology of vocation, but it accurately reflects the perceptions of some ministers. The dual responsibility of the Moderators means that they have to make delicate judgements about how much of their knowledge of pastorates and ministers they can legitimately reveal in the protection of either or both parties. It is obvious that a clash of interests is not far below the surface. That clash cannot be eradicated because it is inherent in any exercise of episcopate (oversight), be it individual or corporate. However, it might be possible to minimise it.

c) As a church we are not consistent. We use a variety of methods to call and appoint to ministerial tasks. Non-stipendiary ministers are appointed by district councils for fixed terms. Posts in Church House, in theological colleges and in some ecumenical instruments (some of which are also open to lay people) are advertised and applications invited. For the posts of General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary, advertisement is supplemented by requests for nomination. Only ministers in pastorates are subject to the process of 'call' through the Moderatorial system. Yet we claim that all these ministries are equal, for there is but one ministry of Word and Sacraments within the Reformed tradition.

d) We have an equal opportunities policy, but in this critical area of our lives, transparency does not operate.

4. Proposals for change

a) An open market system

For the reasons stated above the PCLA working group called for the creation of a system which would

- be open and transparent
- allow appropriate confidentiality for the individuals concerned
- observe good equal opportunities standards

To that end they proposed a system which could be termed laissez-faire - an open market in which pastorates take responsibility for filling vacancies and ministers for seeking a move. In other words, the mediatory, brokering role of Moderators is removed, with the consequence that they can then act as unbiased advisors to both ministers and pastorates. This has certain attractions. However, it also has consequences, and these were quickly exposed by the Deployment Working Party in their response. For them an open market system was a step too far. They therefore propose:

b) An interventionist system

A completely non-interventionist system would, they argue,

- a) perpetuate inequality because the level playing field it created would be bumpy and hard to negotiate for some. Indeed, some might not even get onto the playing field.
- b) disadvantage ministers who are constrained either by geography or spouse's employment, or indeed who are married to another minister and therefore need to seek adjoining pastorates.
- c) deprive the denomination of the wisdom of the Moderators (who between them know all the pastorates and ministers in the church in some depth). By doing so, pastorates would be unaware of the angularity

of some ministers, and ministers unprotected from the problems that pastorates prefer to keep out of their profiles.

They could have gone on to argue that there is an important theological principle at stake here, namely that the stories we tell about ourselves and our churches are inevitably partial, and that they need to be tested against the wisdom of the wider councils of God's people. Part of the process of spiritual discernment is submitting ourselves to the judgements of others. That is precisely what we do when someone claims to be called to ministry. It is hard to think of a group better equipped to do that than the Synod Moderators, whether they are technically a council of the church or not.

However, the group proposes a modification of the present system

- ministers will write a statement (agreed with their Moderator) which will be the basis of the introduction of the minister at the Moderators' meeting. Any divergence of opinion would also have been shared and recorded. Any additional comments made at the Moderators' meeting would be reported back to the minister concerned. This would standardize procedure in the Moderators' meeting and across the Synods.
- a similar process will be adopted by pastorates, this time requiring the agreement of the pastorate, the district/area and the Moderator.
- ministers may be offered a number of pastorate profiles, but may only pursue one at a time.
- once ministers express an interest in a pastorate, their profiles shall be forwarded to a vacancy committee (which shall include representatives of both the pastorate and the district/area), and it will be up to them to decide which minister they wish to meet. This is a distinct and important shift of policy. They may however, meet only one at a time.

The Moderators themselves are not of one mind in the debate about the movement of ministers. That is healthy and unsurprising. They are gifted individuals, not a cloned management team. However, a majority would opt for modification of the present system rather than stepping into the brave new world of laissez-faire.

c) A modification of the present system

- a personal profile on one sheet of A4 to standard format should be prepared by a minister seeking a move. These would be circulated in advance of the Moderators' meeting. This should include details of particular geographical or other constraints.
- A synopsis of its profile on one sheet of A4 to a standard format should be prepared by a vacant pastorate and tabled at the Moderators' meeting.
- If more than one minister has expressed an interest in a particular pastorate then it would be possible for the personal profiles of all those

interested to be made available to the pastorate, but they must then choose one candidate with whom they wish to meet.

- As at present, pastorates could enquire via the Moderators to see if a particular minister would be willing to meet with them.
- Ministers seeking a move could be shown more than one profile.
- On request, ministers could be shown the synopsis of any vacant pastorate that was not already the subject of a formal introduction.
- The present system of notifying all ministers monthly of all vacancies should continue. The publication of details on the web-site might lead to the same problems as any other form of advertising and should be resisted.
- The Moderators' meeting would be free to approach ministers to see if they might respond to urgent needs in particular vacancies.

The Moderators resist the open-market system for a number of reasons, but pastoral concerns are inevitably top of the list. They fear that PCLA's proposals would disadvantage weak and less attractive candidates. Allied to that is the far more serious question (unacknowledged in the report of either working group) that an equal opportunities policy requires 'leverage', and that the Moderators can collectively provide that more efficiently than a programme that would require each vacant pastorate to be trained in equal opportunities interviewing techniques.

One remaining area of concern amongst Moderators is the introduction of students to their first pastorates. Discussions have taken place between Moderators, the Training Committee and the training institutions about this. It is becoming apparent that some modification of the present system, perhaps in the direction of 'stationing', might be useful to all concerned, and more work needs to be done to clarify what this might be.

Mission Council has been presented with three alternatives - the open market, or two versions of a modified interventionist system. The main difference between 3b and 3c is that 3c places less restraint on discussion at the Moderators' meeting. All three proposals have merits and problems, which I have tried to reflect fairly in this paper.

5. Wider concerns

As it discusses, Mission Council might care to bear some of the following wider questions in mind:

1. Ministers are key resources for the mission of our church. Where they are placed and how they are used is of the utmost importance. They are

also our most expensive investment. They cost us a great deal. We therefore need to treat them properly and use them wisely.

2. Ministers are the servants of the servants of God. Their work is to preach the Word and administer the sacraments that the saints may be equipped for their priesthood in the world in Christ's name. In other words, pastorates are not there to serve ministers, but ministers to serve pastorates. There seems to be some evidence that the PCLA task group discovered that there were indeed cases of both pastorates receiving incompetent ministers, and ministers being introduced to impossible pastorates. At present we do not have systems to cope with either. The task group opted for the open market as one solution. Council might wish to reflect on how the church might handle this gap in its procedures.

3. Throughout this paper I have deliberately used the term 'pastorate' rather than church or congregation. That is intended as a recognition of the 'normality' (but not necessarily the desirability) of the multiple charge. That in itself might suggest that the locus of call, and our theology of it, need further attention, and that will undoubtedly fall within the ongoing work of the 'God's tomorrow' project.

4. Pastorates vary considerably in the experience available to them. Some will contain people who are used to appointing staff, others will have none. If there is to be a move towards greater responsibility lying with pastorates, consideration should be given to the support to enable them to fulfill their role properly. Part of that support will be managerial, but some theological – for example, the implications of calling a minister who has a non-realist understanding of God are considerable, but not always appreciated.

6. Process

If we are to change the way in which we move ministers, it is not unreasonable that both ministers and pastorates should be consulted through a debate in the General Assembly. Mission Council is therefore invited to consider the following resolution:

Mission Council recommends to the General Assembly that the proposals for the movement of ministers set out in paragraph (c) be adopted by the United Reformed Church.

David Cornick
December 2003



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

B1

The movement of ministers

Mission Council recommends to the General Assembly that the following proposals for the movement of ministers be adopted as standard policy.

"General Assembly resolves that the following procedures be adopted in respect of the movement of ministers :-

1. A personal profile on one sheet of A4 to standard format shall be prepared by a minister seeking a move. This will be circulated in advance of the Moderators' meeting. It shall include details of particular geographical or other constraints.
2. A synopsis of its profile on one sheet of A4 to a standard format shall be prepared by a vacant pastorate and tabled at the Moderators' meeting.
3. If more than one minister has expressed an interest in a particular pastorate then the personal profiles of all those interested shall be made available to the pastorate, but they may then choose only one candidate with whom they wish to meet.
4. Pastorates may enquire via the Moderators to see if a particular minister would be willing to meet with them.
5. Ministers seeking a move may be shown more than one profile.
6. On request, ministers may be shown the synopsis of any vacant pastorate not already the subject of a formal introduction.
7. The present system of notifying all ministers monthly of all vacancies shall continue.
8. The Moderators' meeting shall be free to approach ministers to consider urgent needs in particular vacancies. "



The
United
Reformed
Church

MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

C

For Information

Church House Management Group

1. As part of its work the Group has considered the Church House budget for 2005 and subjected the figures to closer analysis than has been possible in the past. It wishes to draw to the attention of Mission Council the way in which a number of decisions relating to employment are at present taken in a diffuse and unconnected way. We begin with decisions taken at the last Mission Council.
2. Mission Council accepted without question the creation of two posts within the Training Committee's remit and the regrading of one post within Commitment for Life. In each instance the case for the posts was argued cogently and provision for the cost had been made in the budget of the relevant committee.
3. The Church House Management Group realised in its discussion that actually or potentially these, and any similar, appointments could have an effect on the Church House budget. Examples would be if office space or back up support or equipment was needed at any time. The amount involved might not be large but the discussion which followed soon made clear that the total number of people employed within the whole Assembly budget, and basis on which they are employed, is not overseen by any one group. The present picture looks something like this.
4. Posts which are Assembly appointments are agreed and reviewed by Mission Council, taking advice from its Staffing Advisory Group and Resource Planning Advisory Group. Job descriptions are agreed at this point but it is not clear who has authority to amend them subsequently. The Salaries Committee determines salaries of lay staff, but until now it has not been accountable to any council of the church. The Committee is itself proposing that for the time being it should be accountable to Mission Council through the Mission Council Advisory Group. Terms and conditions of service have been dealt with by a number of different bodies, and the Church House Management Group is currently reviewing these as a matter of priority because in some areas there is not a consistent policy laid down. Ministers are paid under the terms of the Plan for Partnership, with a compensation allowance added. Committees making appointments outside Church House but within their own budgets largely make their own arrangements, although they make use of the Church House personnel function. Committees making appointments within Church House (and within their own budgets) generally use the Personnel office. In both cases the Office and

Personnel Manager writes the contracts and the United Reformed Church becomes the employer. The number of people employed in Church House in administrative and support roles has to date been a matter of internal office decision. The Church House Management Group now has this in its remit.

5. There are further anomalies. There seems to be no agreed principle in deciding which posts are Assembly appointments and which are not. Almost all Assembly appointments are termed, but a few are not. There is an unresolved tension as regards ministers in these appointments between the justice of equating their terms of service to those of lay colleagues, or equating it to ministers in local pastoral charge. Difficult questions may arise when ministers are appointed to lay posts. Of a somewhat different nature is the fact that synod moderators, although Assembly appointments, are dealt with in some ways similarly and in some ways differently from their ministerial colleagues in Church House posts.
6. The matters outlined above are not serious, in the sense that the United Reformed Church has operated in its present way for some years without serious problem. But they are not an example of good practice. They do at times put unnecessary pressure on staff. Whilst it is committed to a programme of continued improvement in management practice, the Church House Management Group will delay making any wholesale proposals for structural change in employment practice until it is clear from the Review what shape the work of the Assembly is likely to take in the future.
7. In the meantime the Group believes that all those involved in employment questions should be aware of potential difficulties, and that Mission Council itself should keep the overall picture in mind as it deals with particular cases. The question always to be asked when a new appointment is proposed or a change to an existing appointment is being contemplated is, Have all the groups and budget holders likely to be affected been consulted?

John Waller
Convener
xii/2003



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

D

Staffing Advisory Group

Paper C from the Church House Management Group is offered to members of Mission Council for information only at this stage. It outlines a number of issues which that group has identified, some of which can be dealt with immediately and some of which will necessarily take longer. In this latter group are matters which have not caused serious problems to date but neither are they good practice.

The Staffing Advisory Group have, however, given consideration to the issues raised by points 1, 2 and 7.

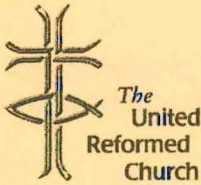
Following the decision made by Mission Council related to the TLS Co-ordinator post, the Job Description was forwarded to the Salaries Committee for grading purposes. That group raised questions about the level of the post as indicated by the Job Description, a Job Description which had not been seen by the Staffing Advisory Group. Staffing Advisory Group have subsequently considered the Job Description and other matters relating to the post and have given their approval.

This process has caused additional work, confusion and concern for a number of people. It should be made clear, that at no stage during the process was the decision made by any group nor advice given by any individual of itself wrong, but the systems within which they worked are unclear.

Part of the confusion comes from the fact that budgets are agreed by the Resource Planning Advisory Group and if the budget makes provision for salaries, that can be seen as approval of a post. But budgetary provision is not a sanction for expenditure it is merely a recognition of a potential spend.

In order to ensure that there is an overview of the Church's pattern of employment and to monitor this part of the Church's budget, Staffing Advisory Group recommend that any new staffing appointments need to be argued through, with that group taking responsibility for all Programme posts and the Church House Management Group taking responsibility for all Non Programme posts.

Val Morrison
Convener
xii/2003



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

E

Nominations Committee

**The Appointment of Synod Moderators and
the Review of their Appointments**

1. In 2001 the Nominations Committee, struck with the contrasting methods of appointment used for senior Assembly appointments, invited the General Secretary to review the appointment of Moderators of Synods. In the course of three appointment procedures carried out subsequently the General Secretary sought confidential comment from all involved in the process and consulted with colleagues in other denominations about comparable procedures. The Nominations Committee received the General Secretary's report at their October meeting 2003 and resolved to bring proposals to General Assembly in 2004 for a revision of the guidance given for the appointment and review of a Synod Moderator.

2. The review and the proposals for change do not arise from any dissatisfaction with the actual appointments made using the existing guidelines. It is the process itself which is flawed. We could find no-one to advocate keeping so large a group as 20 people to make a recommendation to General Assembly for appointment. The collecting of names to be considered for appointment as a moderator does not conform to the Church's own equal opportunities commitments. The Review Group, as it is called even those considering new appointments, has to meet stringent requirements to be representative but there is no requirement that any members be skilled in the way that members of an Assessment Panel are expected to be. The Nominations Committee considered these and other less obvious shortcomings in the present guidelines and decided that they needed to be withdrawn and new ones agreed.

3. Although it is not specifically mentioned in the present guidelines the Nominations Committee presumed that the issue of vocation were determinative in their design. It was agreed that whatever changes were advised in procedures should not exclude from consideration potential candidates who would not initiate an application for a senior post in the Church but would wish the call of God to be mediated to them through other people.

4. The Nominations Committee endorsed the following strengths of the present system.

- its thoroughness and seriousness as a process of discernment and waiting on God

- the bringing together of synod and national minds as is proper in the appointment of church leaders who have both regional and national roles
- wide consultation within the Synod concerned

5. The major changes which the Nominations Committee proposes are to introduce an element of advertising and application to the process, to reduce the size of the nominating group, to encourage a greater synod involvement in drawing up a job description and person profile and, finally, to establish a national panel of people from whom the Assembly representatives on the nominating group will be drawn.

6. Consequent upon changes in the appointment procedure the Nominations Committee considers there should be changes in the review process for moderators already in post. Fundamental to this is a need for regular appraisal within the synod. The accumulated experience of such appraisals is then available at the point of review and can be taken into account by both the review group and the moderator concerned. Since the Assembly is the appointing body the ultimate decision on re-appointment should lie with the Assembly and this needs to be reflected in the process of review.

Stephen Orchard
Convener

The Guidance

A: New appointments

1. Preparing for meeting

1.1 The Nominating Group for an initial appointment by General Assembly will consist of eight people. Four people, including the Convenor of the Group, will be appointed by the Nominations Committee from a panel elected by the General Assembly. Four people will be appointed by the Synod where the vacancy exists and will be responsible for ensuring that the views of church members throughout the area of the Synod are given proper consideration.

1.2 The General Secretary will normally act as secretary to the Group and will arrange the dates and places of meetings. The beginning of the process will most probably be in the September prior to the Assembly at which the appointment will be made.

1.3 All costs will be met by the synod to which the appointment is being made, except the out of pocket expenditure of those appointed by the Nominations Committee, which will be a charge on the General Assembly. The services provided by the General Secretary and his office shall not be a charge on the Group.

1.4 The Synod Clerk will ensure that a comprehensive process of consultation is carried out within the Districts and churches of the Synod before the Group holds its first meeting.

1.5 The Convenor of the Group and the Synod Clerk will circulate to members of the Group a draft job description and person profile, incorporating the appropriate national and local requirements. The Group will normally approve these by correspondence and will only meet to consider these documents when the Convenor judges there is a serious disagreement. The Synod Clerk will advertise the vacancy in *Reform* and within the synod. The advertisement should also be posted on appropriate web sites. The Synod Clerk will oversee the process of issuing details to enquirers. Where the Synod Clerk is advised of a nomination the nominee will be contacted by letter and invited to apply. All nominees shall receive what is essentially the same letter and be advised who has made the nomination. The closing date for applications will allow details to be circulated to members of the Nominating Group before the short-listing meeting.

2. The meetings of the Nominating Group

2.1 The Nominating Group will agree a short list of applicants to be interviewed. If, in the judgment of the Group, there are no suitable applicants, the Group may re-advertise the post and invite applications from people not yet considered.

2.2 The second meeting will carry out interviews with the short-listed candidates and arrive at a name for nomination to the General Assembly. In the event of failure to reach unanimous agreement the support of three Synod and three General Assembly members of the Group is an acceptable basis for a nomination but a simple majority decision is not.

2.3 The Nominating Group should aim to bring its recommendation to the Nominations Committee for presentation to the Mission Council in March, there to be confirmed or not. This will enable the General Secretary to arrange preparation for the Moderator-elect and a formal reception at the July General Assembly.

B. The re-appointment of a serving Synod Moderator

3. Preparing for meeting

3.1 Before a Review Group is appointed the General Secretary will ascertain from the Moderator concerned whether she/he wishes to be considered for a further period of service. This consultation should take place in time for a Review Group to be formed, consider the matter and reach a conclusion no later than eight months before the end of the current appointment. The Review Group, appointed by the Nominations Committee, will consist of five people from outside the synod concerned. The General Secretary or, in his absence, the Deputy General Secretary, will provide services to the Group.

3.2 The synod will appoint its own internal Review Panel, consisting of one representative from each District or equivalent structure under the convenorship of the Synod Clerk. The members of this group would be charged to consult as widely as possible within their constituency. They should meet with the synod Moderator to discover the Moderator's view of the way his/her work has developed and her/his vision for a possible further period of service. The records of any appraisal system should be made available for such a meeting. The panel will then arrive at the synod's view of whether an invitation should be issued for a further time of service.

4. The meetings of the Review Group

4.1 The Review Group will receive written submissions from the Moderator and the Review Panel. They will then meet separately with the Moderator and the Review Panel, or its representatives, and interview them on the basis of their submissions. The Review Group will then reach a conclusion on the re-appointment and inform the Nominations Committee who will bring it to Mission Council no later than six months before the conclusion of the appointment.

4.2 If either the synod or those appointed to act on its behalf between meetings (e.g. an Executive Committee) or the moderator concerned wishes to challenge the decision of the Mission Council they must enter an appeal within one month of the decision being made. The Mission Council shall then appoint a group of five people to hear the appeal and a member of its staff to provide services. The decision of that group will be final.



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

F

Staffing Advisory Group
Review of Office and Personnel Manager's post

The Process

The Review Group consisted of the external members of the Church House Management Group – Val Morrison (Convener), David Marshall-Jones, John Woodman together with Ray Adams. The group met twice, have consulted with Eileen McClenaghan the Head of Personnel in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (which has recently reviewed and re-organised its Personnel function) and have also consulted with members of Church House staff and Synods.

This consultation was undertaken in order to ascertain the perceived support needs in terms of the Human Resources aspect of the job and the views regarding the other aspects of the current role.

Responses

1. Church house staff. The key issues were the requirement for clarity in the roles of the people involved in these areas of work and the acknowledgement of a need for the church to have good up-to-date Human Resource expertise.
2. Synods – Nine synods responded and eight of those were keen to have support in relation to Human Resource expertise.

Conclusions

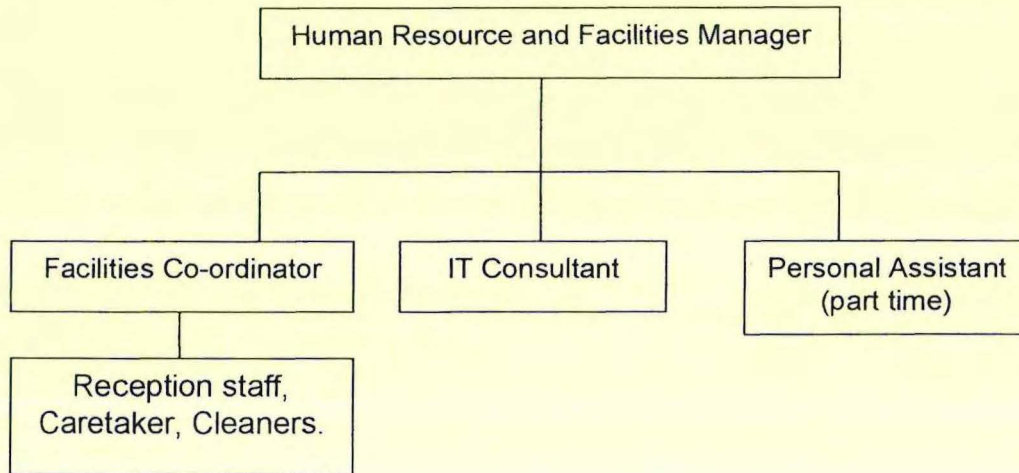
These comments, together with our advice from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and our knowledge of Church House, brings us to the following conclusions.

1. The church must have good arrangements in place to support the Human Resource function. There is increasing legislation, and up-to-date knowledge and expertise in this area is vital.
2. Synods would value such advice and its provision could prevent litigation in the future.
3. A consistent approach to such matters would assist both the church as employer and individuals as employees.
4. We also considered the other aspects of the current and related posts, namely Facilities Management, IT, Health and Safety, Assembly Arrangements. IT sits well with this area of work and currently does not have relevant line management within Church House. It is inappropriate for

Assembly Arrangements to be undertaken by the Human Resources Manager but it nevertheless fits well with facilities co-ordination.

Recommendation

We therefore recommend that a small team of staff should cover the areas of Human Resources, Facilities, Health and Safety, IT, Assembly Arrangements with the following structure:



The Human Resources and Facilities Manager would have

- responsibility for all HR matters with administration support for this area of work being provided by the PA.
- overall responsibility for facilities, Health and Safety and IT with the day-to-day work being undertaken by the Facilities Co-ordinator and the IT consultant respectively.

The General Secretary holds overall responsibility for General Assembly and the Facilities Co-ordinator would provide the practical and administrative support working to the General Secretary for this part of the post.

Budget: The structure outlined above would be covered within the existing budget for this area of work.



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

G

Finance Committee and Resource Planning Advisory Group

Budget for 2005

Finance Committee and the Resource Planning Advisory Group (RPAG) have received the actual results for 2003 as at the end of the third quarter and the pledges for 2004. With this information the draft budget for 2005 has been reviewed and is attached to this paper.

We would like to make the following comments:

1. The expenditure has only increased by £235k. (1.1%) over the budget for 2004 and this is after allowing for an increase in stipends and salaries of 3.5%.
2. The central cost of Youth and Children's Work Trainers is for 11 workers. Currently there are only 8 in post although General Assembly has authorised one per Synod. This is, therefore, the agreed estimated average for 2005. If the budgeted number is exceeded, an overrun will be granted.
3. A ginger group programme is being planned by the Youth and Children's Work Committee. The cost should be available for the Mission Council in March and will then be included.
4. The M & M contribution has been increased by 3% over the actual pledges for 2004. This is in line with the views of Synod and District Treasurers at the Swanwick Consultation in February 2003. This will be considered again with them at this year's Consultation, and is therefore fluid.
5. The present overall planned deficit is similar to previous years. The outcome can always be improved by legacies and other income and by underspending the budget. However it is not felt prudent to allow for a greater margin of improvement.

The draft budget is, therefore, submitted for approval with the caveat that some changes may be necessary at March Mission Council. At that meeting it is intended to present a paper on the Financial Outlook generally which will have relevance both to the budget for 2005 and beyond.

Eric Chilton Convener, Finance Committee
Julian Macro Convener, RPAG

14th January 2004

**THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2005**

	Actual 2002	Budget 2003	Budget 2004	Draft Budget 2005	Percent- -age incr 2004->05
EXPENDITURE					
Ministry					
Local and special ministries and CRCWs	14,835	15,097	15,610	15,754	0.9
Synod Moderators - stipends and expenses	505	513	533	550	3.2
Ministries Committee	235	239	252	251	-0.6
	15,575	15,849	16,395	16,555	1.0
Training					
College training for stipendiary ministry	1,053	1,115	1,145	1,190	3.9
Other training for stipendiary ministry	225	201	220	224	1.8
Training for non-stipendiary ministry	161	140	147	140	-4.8
Central cost of Youth and Children's Work Trainers	178	259	268	248	-7.5
Lay training costs	45	98	110	89	-19.1
Training Committee	99	137	114	128	12.3
	1,760	1,950	2,004	2,019	0.7
Other Mission Activities					
Grants (Ecumenical, and Grants & Loans group)	314	317	301	305	1.2
Ecumenical Committee and International	306	295	268	272	1.4
CWM	47	50	50	50	0.0
Church and Society Committee	91	81	85	87	2.4
Racial Justice programme	74	83	83	89	7.3
Life and Witness	91	100	106	107	0.6
Windermere Centre	78	40	40	57	42.5
Youth and Children's Work Committee	132	192	172	203	18.2
Yardley Hastings	120	100	125	0	-100.0
Pilots Development	64	72	80	83	4.4
Other committees	17	15	16	15	-3.5
	1,334	1,346	1,326	1,268	-4.4
Support Activities					
Assembly	272	170	200	267	33.5
Mission Council	36	34	35	36	4.3
Communication and Editorial	248	269	274	254	-7.3
Reform	18	41	56	41	-26.7
reduction in Comm&Ed &/or Reform			(40)		
Finance office	287	323	348	384	10.4
Central Secretariat	232	220	229	241	4.8
Professional fees	64	92	93	84	-9.7
Computer network	45	55	56	60	6.6
United Reformed Church House costs	247	217	234	249	6.4
Depreciation on buildings	90	75	0	0	n/a
General church costs	105	112	107	96	-10.6
	1,644	1,607	1,592	1,711	7.5
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	20,313	20,751	21,317	21,552	1.1

**THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2005**

	Actual 2002	Budget 2003	Budget 2004	Draft Budget 2005	Percent- age incr 2004->05
INCOME					
MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS	18,687	19,454	20,077	20,375	1.5
INVESTMENT INCOME					
Dividends	245	257	180	230	27.8
Interest	68	50	0	0	n/a
	314	307	180	230	27.8
GRANTS RECEIVED					
Memorial Hall Trust	350	280	280	280	0.0
New College Trust	344	300	290	290	0.0
	694	580	570	570	0.0
LEGACIES	656	0	0	0	n/a
OTHER INCOME					
Donations	321	50	50	0	-100.0
Sundry	21	10	10	10	0.0
	341	60	60	10	-83.3
PROFIT ON SALE OF PROPERTIES	425				
TOTAL INCOME	21,117	20,401	20,887	21,185	1.4
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCE	804	(350)	(430)	(367)	



MISSION COUNCIL 24 January 2004

H

Reports

1. Resource Planning Advisory Group

Ecumenical Support Grants

An appendix to the "Plan for Partnership" made reference to the payment of Ecumenical Support Grants to LEPs where there is an unforeseen change in ministry from URC to another denomination part way through a year. Very few such grants have been sought.

In most cases where there is a form of alternating ministry this is known long in advance and offers for contributions to the Ministry and Mission Fund (M&M Fund) are fixed accordingly. In such circumstances no adjustments are needed or justified. Where a change has been unforeseeable a pastorate has been able to seek an Ecumenical Support Grant. This, in effect, has been a payment from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund (MoM) to a pastorate in order that it can then return the money to the M&M Fund to meet its target. This device has been little used and achieves little except making administrative work.

RPAG, with the support of the Finance Committee, recommends that these Ecumenical Support Grants be abolished.

In those few cases where a change to non-URC ministry could not have been foreseen it will be quite in order for the resultant shortfall in M&M Fund contributions to be noted with no adverse criticism of the Synod concerned.

Julian Macro (Convener)

2. Mission Council Advisory Group

The resignation of the Revd John Rees as convener of the Ecumenical Committee has created a vacancy on Mission Council Advisory Group which is occupied by a convener of an Assembly committee.

Mrs Barbara Hedgecock will complete her period of service as Minutes Secretary to Mission Council in March 2004. The Revd Ken Forbes (Eastern synod) is willing to take on this task from October 2004.

A report will be tabled at Mission Council on the progress of Resolutions 1-5 agreed by the Council in March 2003 (minute 03/37).
The Revd Angus Duncan has given notice of his retirement as convener of the Grants and Loans Group, from the end of January 2004. Two nominations have been received to succeed him as convener:

Dr Brian Woodhall (North Western Synod)
The Revd Duncan Wilson (East Midlands Synod)

Both nominees are willing to serve. Mission Council is asked to make an appointment.

Mr John Brown took up his post as Secretary for Youth Work on 1st January 2004. John's absence from the January Mission Council through his attendance at FURY Assembly in Swanwick on the same weekend, led MCAG to suggest that he be inducted to his post there. The induction of an Assembly-appointed member of staff remains an act of General Assembly. The presence of the Moderator and other General Assembly representatives at FURY Assembly (on Friday 23rd January) honours this principle.



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

J

Life and Witness Committee
Time for Action

Background

The United Reformed Church, along with others, received CTBI's 'Time for Action' report on sexual harassment and abuse in the church. An inter-disciplinary, inter-committee working party was asked to consider the report, and present recommendations to Mission Council as to how the United Reformed Church might frame its response.

The findings of the working party were presented in paper (C) to the October 2003 Mission Council, and there was some discussion on where ultimate responsibility lay for the implementation of a policy and on a number of key areas which should constitute the framework of such a policy. The following needs were identified:

- A 'Good practice' document
- A body of 'experts' (counsellors and theologians)
- A look at what ecumenical partners and non-church agencies might be doing in this field
- Training and awareness-raising material
- An appropriate disciplinary procedure for lay people
- Assembly and Synod authorisation to implement policy.

Mission Council then invited the Life & Witness Committee:

- **To convene a meeting of relevant groups, committees, and individuals to identify the areas in which Mission Council can develop a safe practice policy for the United Reformed Church in response to the CTBI Time for Action report;**
- **And to enable the Mission Council Advisory Group to bring proposals to a future meeting of Mission Council.**

It was noted that four groups had already been named by the working party, whose related expertise should be included in any consultation.

Life & Witness - Progress so far

We anticipate having a 24 hour consultation in the summer, perhaps in **May 2004** at Windermere with some 12 – 15 people. However it is clear that

before this can happen, some 'pre-discussion' is needed with those being invited, to clarify the nature of their contribution to a complex total package.

Dr. Pamela Cressey's offer of help was accepted in compiling a **list of 'experts'** in the theological and counselling fields, and that work is almost complete.

Our **conversations with ecumenical partners** have to date been with the Baptist and Methodist Churches although of course there will be wider consultation. We have also gathered some useful material from the United Churches of Christ and the Presbyterian Church in the USA. The Baptist Union has nothing in place in relation to a safe practice policy of their own, but hoping to address this soon. The Methodist Church has appointed a small group to monitor their response to 'Time for Action' and this meets on 1st March, although a lot of preliminary work appears to have already been done. Co-ordinating Secretary David Gamble was part of the group that produced 'Time for Action' and is well placed to talk about what lies behind the recommendations in the report. We are meeting him for discussions on the 21st January.

To date, we have been rather less successful in discovering **examples of other safe practice policies**, for instance connected to the workforces of major commercial/industrial employers, supermarket chains etc. We have also sought advice in respect of government policy or **legislation** covering safe practice policies. Any contacts or information pointing us in the right direction in each case would be appreciated.

*Brian Jolly
Convener, Life and Witness
Committee*



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

K

Additional business

1. Resolution in anticipation of the local and European elections

Proposer: The Revd Martin Camroux (Church and Society Committee)

Seconder: The Revd Andrew Prasad (Racial Justice Committee)

Mission Council, acting in the name of the General Assembly, notes with concern the rise in many European countries of extreme right-wing and racist political parties. While accepting that such parties are entitled to operate within the democratic process the United Reformed Church believes it is vital that they do not become accepted as part of normal political life. In our own country we affirm that membership or any form of support for organisations such as the British National Party is incompatible with Christian discipleship.

The United Reformed Church affirms and celebrates the diverse and multi-ethnic nature of our society. We condemn the hysterical scare campaigns against asylum seekers promoted by some sections of the media, noting that they damage our community life and provide fertile soil for the growth of racist political parties and policies.

As a Church we celebrate our increasing number of multi-ethnic congregations. In advance of the forthcoming local and European elections we call upon all local churches, district councils and synods, to continue to practise and promote racial justice and inclusion.

2. Nominations Committee Report

Convener-elect 2004

Doctrine, Prayer and Worship – Revd Dr Susan Durber

Ecumenical – Revd Elizabeth Nash

Ministries - Accreditation sub committee – Revd Gwen Collins

Ministries – Retired Ministers Housing sub committee – Revd David Bedford

Secretary elect 2004

Youth and Children's' Work – Revd Steve Faber

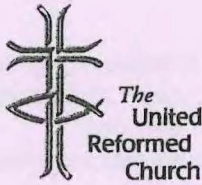
Disciplinary Process Commission Panel – Revd Alison Hall

3. Paper B : Amendment to resolution (page 7):

Mission Council welcomes the guidelines on the movement of ministers set out in paragraph 4 (c), encourages the Synod Moderators to implement them and to make them known to the wider church.

Proposer: David Grosch-Miller

Seconder: Peter Noble



MISSION COUNCIL
24 January 2004

K1

Additional business (continued)

1. Corrections to the Minutes of October 2003 Mission Council

03/63 Minutes of Mission Council 25-27th March 2003

line 4: "This was agreed and the Moderator signed the Minutes".

03/68 Task Group of Personal and Conciliar Leadership and Authority

second paragraph: " Mr John Ellis proposed and the Revd John Humphreys seconded an amendment"

line 6: delete: The Ministries Committee was asked to do more work on this amended recommendation. *insert:* "The amendment was carried and the resulting substantive motion was then also carried",.

03/70 Task Group of Personal and Conciliar Leadership and Authority

second paragraph: delete: Dr Peter Clarke moved an amendment to Recommendation 13... and the rest of paragraph.

Insert: "Mr John Ellis proposed and the Revd Brian Jolly seconded an amendment to Recommendation 13. This was (~~delete: seconded and~~) agreed and the resulting substantive motion was approved.

03/76 Training Committee – Additional Business (Paper J)

The Revd John Humphreys expressed gratitude to the Revd John Proctor for his work as a member and Convener of the Committee over the past 12 years.

03/78 "Time for Action" The Deputy General Secretary, reporting on the comments received from the plenary and group session, identified the need

2. Criminal Records Bureau (Churches Agency for Safeguarding) Reference Group

The Churches Agency for Safeguarding is an ecumenical body (comprising the Methodist Church, the Baptist Union, the United Reformed Church, the Congregational Federation, the Society of Friends, and a number of other Free Churches) established to process applications for Criminal Records Bureau disclosures and to share expertise. In the United Reformed Church this facility is used mainly for processing applications of volunteer and paid workers with young people and children in local churches.

At the moment, applications for CRB disclosures by ministers, CRCWs and nationally accredited lay preachers are processed through the office of Ministries. In order to fulfil

the requirements of the CRB and CAS, the Church needs to establish a reference group to offer advice when blemished Disclosures are returned. There is also need to ensure (with synods) that suitable support is in place for training, pastoral care and risk assessment when required. It is in this context that a reference group has met informally, but now Mission Council is asked to establish the group on a formal basis.

Mission Council appoints a Criminal Records Bureau (Churches Agency for Safeguarding) Reference Group to advise on child protection issues, and with the following terms of reference:

- **to maintain an overview of the policy offered to local churches with regard to Criminal Records Bureau disclosures and to make recommendations regarding the development of policy and practice, including the use of the Churches Agency for Safeguarding.**
- **to outline principles and monitor current practice in synods when responding to child protection concerns in support of local churches in their implementation of Good Practice.**
- **to establish and monitor a process which supports churches in response to the receipt of a blemished Disclosure for a local worker/volunteer.**
- **to ensure support for local churches during times of sensitive action regarding child protection.**
- **to monitor and advise on the training provision offered to relevant synod and Assembly-appointed staff regarding sensitive child protection issues.**
- **to advise the General Secretary and Secretary for Ministries in circumstances where blemished Disclosures are received concerning ministers, CRCWs and nationally-accredited lay preachers.**
- **to act as a reflecting group for Assembly-appointed staff with child protection responsibility.**

The Reference group shall be responsible to Mission Council through the Mission Council Advisory Group.

Initially, the group shall comprise of the Revd Adrian Bulley (synod moderator); Mrs Liz Crocker (County Childcare Specialist for Surrey Children's Service); Mrs Wilma Frew (magistrate); the Children's Advocate/ the Secretary for Youth Work and the Deputy General Secretary.