

MISSION COUNCIL

3rd – 5th October 2006

MINUTES

Mission Council met at All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney, from the 3rd to the 5th October 2006. Present with the Moderator were sixty-eight voting members, fourteen others in attendance, and three guests.

Session One

06/37 Welcome

The Moderator welcomed those attending Mission Council for the first time or in a new capacity: Revd Dr Robert Pope (theological reflector), the Revd Peter Ball (Convener of Life and Witness), the Revd Malcolm Hanson (Convener of Nominations), Mr Simon Loveitt (Convener of Church and Society), Ms Morag McLintock (Convener of Equal Opportunities), the Revd Rachel Poolman (North Western Synod), the Revd Peter Poulter (Convener of Ministries), the Revd Neil Thorogood (Convener of Youth and Children's Work and Chaplain), Miss Jo Williams (Children's Work Development Worker). The Revd Dr Stephen Orchard (Moderator Elect) was greeted after his arrival at a later session. Deputising were the Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe (Minutes Secretary), the Revd John Sanderson (Synod of Scotland), the Revd John Young (Synod of Scotland) and Dr Pamela Cressey (Eastern Synod). Guests were Mr Delbert Sandiford (Diocese of Southwark) and Mrs Sue Wilkinson and Mrs Jackie Haws, members of the Stewardship sub-committee.

06/38 Attendance

Apologies were given:

Mrs Suzanne Adofo, Mrs Irene Hudson, the Revd Alan Paterson, the Revd Dr John Parry, Miss Sara Paton, Miss Isobel Simmons, Mrs Liz Tad, Mrs Joan Turner and Mr Brian Woodall.

Worship

The Chaplain led worship and the Moderator led Bible Study on the story of David and Goliath.

06/39 Notification of Additional Business

The Deputy General Secretary introduced the agenda and some additional papers.

06/40 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of 24th-26th March 2006 were approved with two alterations. Page 4, minute 06/16 paragraph 3 line 4 to read 'New relationships with Mansfield, Queen's and with part-time courses would be explored' and line 6 to read 'concept of Regional Training Partnerships'.

06/41 Matters arising

The Revd Nigel Uden asked if the Mission Council document on Civil Partnerships would be circulated to local churches. It was reported as available on the website.

Reports

06/42 Mission Council Advisory Group

The Deputy General Secretary introduced Paper A. Following Resolution 2 of 2005 General Assembly, on 'Saying sorry' to those who have been sexually abused, the Deputy General Secretary read a letter written by Mr Alan Hart, shortly before his death, who had been consulted about this matter. Mr Hart had doubted if guidelines could cover all issues and considered the key words in the report were 'where appropriate to do so'. Issues have arisen as to where legal liability rests and the advice of MCAG was that this matter should not be proceeded with. It was suggested that synod moderators could consult the General Secretary, where appropriate, when a situation arose. The Deputy General Secretary would reflect on a form of words expressing this to be brought back to Mission Council later in the business of the meeting.

The Deputy General Secretary reported on the appointment of Mr Keith Webster to the Staffing Advisory Group and Mr John Ellis as Treasurer from Assembly 2007 for four years. MCAG had approved the Secretary for Training becoming a founding director of the South North West Regional Training Partnership on behalf of the United Reformed Church and commended the Revd Dr Stephen Orchard's paper on the work of Nominations Committee.

The Deputy General Secretary moved the proposals for how to deal with resolutions from 2006 Assembly, which had been discussed by MCAG:

- Resolution 1 on exploring consensus procedures for decision-making. Three people with relevant experience had agreed to serve on a group and a fourth from Thames North was needed. In reply to a question about training the Revd Roberta Rominger said someone from the Uniting Church of Australia was coming to train those in Thames North Synod and this offer was open to others.
- Resolution 2, about the possibility of allowing provision and payment for housing NSMs. It was agreed that Ministries Committee be asked to do this work and report back.
- Resolution 3, on reconsidering Assembly's position in respect of applications for Lottery Funding, will be referred to Church and Society Committee for report back to Mission Council.
- Resolution 11 on Ministerial Incapacity procedure will be considered by the Section O Advisory Group and reported back to Mission Council.
- Resolution 16, about Ministerial development. Ministries Committee will report to Mission Council in due course.
- Resolution 40 asks Mission Council to bring proposals on extending the 'Declaration of a Safe Church' to cover emotional, physical and domestic abuse and neglect. In answer to a question as to whether bullying would be included in this the Deputy General Secretary assured Mission Council this could be done, though there was some concern that if the 'Declaration' was extended to cover too wide a brief it might lose its original focus.

A paper had been received from Thames North Synod Executive raising questions about Assembly's response to the Department of Trade and Industry's Statement of Good Practice relating to the status of ministers. Ministries had submitted the statement in Paper A. The Revd Elizabeth Nash sought clarification that this was not finished work. East Midlands Synod had initiated conversations with ministers and there were some very serious issues to be considered. The Revd Peter Poulter said Ministries Committee were still in discussion with DTI, who have yet to respond to the United Reformed Church submission, and the comments of ministers would also be sought. He found the East Midlands document very helpful and a significant contribution.

06/43 Moratorium on human sexuality

The Deputy General Secretary reported that the moratorium on decision making about human sexuality in relation to ministers of word and sacrament was due to expire at Assembly 2007. MCAG had received a paper from the Revd Malcolm Hanson suggesting a way forward. It was proposed that a small group should consider this and **report back to Mission Council as soon as possible**. The meeting, having agreed to these proposals, undertook to appoint a nominating group, which would then appoint a balanced group to do this work. A list of names for those who might serve on the resulting group, suggested by MCAG, was made available for additions from Mission Council members.

Mission Council appointed the Revd Dr David Peel (immediate Past Moderator) to convene this Nominating Group and further appointed to it the Revd Nigel Uden, Mrs Val Morrison and the Revd Dr Susan Durber.

06/44 Section O Advisory Group

Mission Council was asked to accept the version of Part 1 of the Section O procedure due to return to Assembly in 2007, which did not refer to the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure. The Revd Roberta Rominger asked that this be distributed electronically for the benefit of Synods.

06/45 Sexual Ethics Steering Group

This group had been set up in January. Mr Patrick Smyth wanted to know how the work covered by Resolution 40 would fit with this and whether they came within same framework. The Revd Roberta Rominger, on behalf of the group, explained that this would be explored.

06/46 Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry – report of audit group

The Revd Andrew Prasad said that the task of auditing the presence of barriers to full participation of minority ethnic people in the life of the church, called for by General Assembly, had been begun in 2005 in partnership with the Churches Commission for Racial Justice. This had proved impossible to sustain and it was restarted in 2006 with help from Southwark Diocese and in particular Mr Delbert Sandiford, Executive Officer for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns. More time was needed so he suggested reporting back in March 2007. This was agreed. Mr Sandiford reported that the committee had met several times and had sought responses from the secretaries of committees as well as reviewing material produced by the church. The group was aware of some ethnic monitoring data for churches but this was very limited. The Revd Dr Susan Durber, from the Prayer Handbook Committee, said the 2007 edition would have a strong World Church emphasis and the 2008 edition would reflect the "World on our Doorstep – multicultural Britain".

06/47

Mission Council met in Closed Session.

Business from March Mission Council referred to the Trustees was considered.

Session Two

06/48 The United Reformed Church: for what shall we be known? 1

Lawrence Moore introduced an exercise on identity and church membership in the 21st century. He suggested how we might be distinctive under the headings 'United', 'Reformed' and 'Church'. A series of three-way conversations opened up the discussion further.

The Chaplain closed the session with Bible reading and prayer.

Session Three – Wednesday October 4th, 9.15am

Morning worship was led by the chaplain.

06/49 Church and Society Committee – a Joint Public Issues Team

Mr Simon Loveitt introduced Paper B, a report from Mr Stuart Dew on the Joint Public Issues Team with the Methodist Church and Baptist Union. An outline proposal for this had been approved last March and the pilot scheme had been operating since September 1st. This was not a new agency but a way of working together. The Committee was asking Mission Council to endorse the pilot scheme and reflect carefully on the issues raised in the paper. Firm recommendations would then be brought to Mission Council in March. Questions were raised as to how the new team related to Wales, Scotland and the Isle of Man in terms of devolved government, and in terms of their distinct ecumenical contexts. A definition of what was meant by 'public issues' was also sought.

Mr Loveitt explained that the scheme would run until the end of August 2007 by which time it aimed to demonstrate a number of things achieved. It included two United Reformed Church people on the team of seven, Mr Stuart Dew and Ms Wendy Cooper. Whereas the Methodist Church had put their full team within Public Issues Team, the United Reformed Church was still doing some work outside it. The Peacemaking Report issued at General Assembly was an example of joint work

and had been well received. The effect of the team was still being explored with regard to differing ecumenical settings and questions related to devolution. All three denominations in the team were active partners in CTBI and would continue to be so. The Moderator pointed out that Mr Stuart Dew remained the first point of contact on these issues. Mr Dew commented that 'public issues' included social justice, church and society or church in society issues in the public domain. Mission Council endorsed the pilot scheme.

06/50 Resolution re. 200th Anniversary of the abolition of the Slave trade

Andrew Prasad introduced Paper G on the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade in 2007. This was about expressing regret for our corporate past and looking at current forms of slavery. The conveners and secretaries of the Church and Society, Life and Witness and Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry Committees had consulted as to how the United Reformed Church might mark this. They had identified issues of terminology, of getting our history right, of hearing the voice of the victim and of disagreement as to what extent slavery had funded the Industrial Revolution. The Revd James Breslin valued the paper but felt it told only part of the story. Alongside deep regret there should be pride in some of the actions of those in our tradition, for which he cited three examples from the late 18th and early 19th century. Ours was a mixed history with a long involvement in opposition to the slave trade. After abolition, when slavery still existed in the colonies, our story was honourable. Mr Nigel Macdonald considered it would be better to say that slavery 'helped' to fund the Industrial Revolution rather than 'made possible'. He preferred a resolution that encouraged Fairtrade within the churches.

Mrs Melanie Frew welcomed the paper and the wonderful opportunities 2007 gave for working with black and ethnic minorities. She regretted the paper's omission of those who profited from the slave trade within the cultures from which they came. This continued in the presence of oligarchs who kept their own people poor in Africa today but the paper was silent about that. The General Secretary spoke of visiting Ghana with the Assembly of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and seeing the Gold Coast slave castles. The question that remained in his mind from seeing the holding spaces below the Dutch Reformed Chapel was how we could do this to our sisters and brothers. He was struck by how very ordinary evil is. This was about the blindness of the people of God to the Word and Spirit of God. He supported the resolution while wanting the church to separate facts from interpretation and find a more nuanced history.

The Revd Dr Susan Durber wondered if this was an opportunity to reflect on how we read the Bible. At times Christians had debated whether slavery was permissible from their reading of the scriptures. The Revd Richard Pope emphasised the report's reference to the need for racism awareness and cross-cultural training. The Revd John Sanderson told Mission Council that the ecumenical working group in Scotland on this subject advised that the word 'commemorate' alone was appropriate for this anniversary and 'celebrate' should not be used at all.

The Revd Andrew Prasad thanked everyone for the debate. There was acknowledgement of the role of church campaigners against slavery in the report, although it was brief. He agreed to temper the language used about the Industrial Revolution but resisted the suggestion that Fairtrade be brought into this.

Mission Council agreed the three proposals outlined in the paper:- to encourage synods and local churches to mark the anniversary – if possible ecumenically; to ask Church and Society, Life and Witness and Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry (with support offered from Doctrine, Prayer and Worship) to liaise with Assembly Arrangements Committee about an appropriate commemoration of the anniversary during General Assembly 2007; and to support the proposal for an annual UK Anti-Slavery Memorial Day.

The Revd Dr Stephen Orchard, Moderator elect, spoke of the need to demonstrate awareness that this was not the celebration of some gracious act by white people towards black people, and of the need to balance remorse with looking to the future.

06/51 Equal Opportunities Committee

Ms Morag McLintock introduced Paper E on updating the denomination's Equal Opportunities policy, which had first been adopted in 1994 and was now out of date. The Revd Ruth Whitehead agreed with the content of the policy but found the last sentence of the statement of intent jarred. The Revd Peter Brain asked what positive action the committee envisaged related to point 3 of the policy, which stated that positive action should be taken to counter attitudes and practices contrary to the statement of intent. Ms McLintock said the plan was for the Committee to work on clarifying this along with Nominations Committee in coming year. Discussion followed as to whether the proposed revisions constituted a complete new policy, or fell within the terms of Resolution 17 of Assembly 2005, which had given Mission Council authority to alter part of the Equal Opportunities Policy in line with case law. The Convener proposed altering all references in Paper E from 'new' to 'updated'. The Clerk proposed re-wording point 4 to read: 'Where being of a particular religion or belief is or is not a requirement for any post within the church.' With this minor amendment Mission Council agreed the revised policy.

Session Four

06/52 Ethical Investment Advisory Group

Mission Council noted the resignation of Mr Matthew Prevett and confirmed the appointment of Mr Simon Loveitt and Mrs Melanie Frew as additional members of the group.

06/53 Stewardship

Mr Lawrence Moore led a Bible study on the theme of stewardship. Mrs Sue Wilkinson and Mrs Jackie Haws of the Stewardship Sub-Committee gave a presentation on the concerns of that body and Mission Council split into groups to consider some questions.

Session Five

06/54

Group leaders reported back from the discussion on Stewardship. The Moderator thanked them. The sub-committee would now take this work forward and report back in due course.

06/55 Treasurer's report including 2007 Budget

The Treasurer presented Paper D on the budget, which had been referred from Assembly and agreed by the Trustees showing a deficit of £646,000. A normal deficit figure was about £300,000 a year and anything above that level was distinctly uncomfortable. The new budget figures were more precise with regard to students in college and ministers in post as these had not been compiled two years ahead. Because of reduced expenditure due to Catch the Vision the denomination could live with a larger deficit for a while. Savings would come from reduced spending on General Assembly, from transferring the full cost of YCWTDOS to Synods and in discretionary expenditure on committees in particular. The income pledges for the year beginning in January 2007 should be much firmer. Ministry and Mission Fund contributions were on a plateau, meanwhile expenditure had been held. Paragraph 4 should read 'Synods have been asked about' not 'Synods have agreed to bear the full non-salary costs of YCWTDOS in 2007'. And if this saving were not included, £55,000 would have to be added to the deficit. To maintain the value of the ministerial stipend at the current level the proposed increase was 3.2%.

In response to concerns about the way the consultation on the costs of YCWTDOS would take place the Treasurer replied that a discussion had taken place at the Resource Sharing Group. A further consultation would involve Synods, Youth and Children's Work Committee and all concerned. The principle behind this was the need for greater local accountability for the costs of officers. Miss Kathleen Cross said that as manager she signed off the expenses each month for the YCTWDO in North Western Synod and believed this to be standard practice. The Moderator advised that each Synod needed to discuss their view on the question of transferring the cost of YCWTDOS before the consultation took place.

The Treasurer reported that the Retired Ministers Housing Fund owed the church £10 million which it was paying interest at 1% less than base rate. If it obtained outside funding for this it would incur additional costs of £300,000 per year. There was a need to consider whether the church could self-finance the fund. This was a resource sharing issue. Debate then resumed as to whether the outcome of the proposed consultation about YCWTDs non-salary costs would be included in the 2007 budget or not. If these costs were reinstated in the 2007 budget the deficit would be £701,000. The Moderator proposed that Mission Council should consider Paper ADD 2 before deciding this.

The Revd Peter Poulter presented the recommendation of the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee on the level of stipend for 2007. Their recommendation to the Ministries Committee had been to raise the stipend by 3.4%. Mr Patrick Smyth inquired about the monetary difference between this figure and that of 3.2% quoted by the Treasurer. The Treasurer replied this was £30,000 but such an increase would have to be subject to the agreement of the Trustees, who only concurred with the 3.2% proposal. Discussion followed about the balance to be struck between reducing the budget and honouring the church's responsibility for its ministers. Discussion was expressed about the rise in ministerial stipend being voted on in a meeting where ministerial interests predominated. The Treasurer questioned the accuracy of the figures quoted from the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee, of which he is also a member. The Trustees had considered the difference between the United Reformed Church stipend, that of the Methodist Church and the recommended Baptist basic stipend. To agree the 3.4% increase would increase this difference and in LEP's the stipend was a real issue. LEP's with Methodist involvement would rather have a Methodist minister because of the lower stipend and expenses.

Mission Council voted on both figures separately and those supporting a 3.2% increase were the majority. In response to an expression of concern about the issues which had been raised the General Secretary undertook to forward a note of the debate to the Ministries and the Finance Committees and to report back at a future stage. The Revd Elizabeth Nash considered the case and demonstrated the problems that arise when ministers are members of the councils where decisions are taken on matters affecting their terms and conditions. The General Secretary agreed that he would live in the tension between being the body of Christ and putting a legal/legislative template on the body of Christ, which is not always an easy fit. Paper D was then accepted. Mission Council formally agreed that the basic stipend for 2007 be £20,424.

Session Six

06/56 Trustees' report

The General Secretary presented Paper C, the Report of the Trustees. The Treasurer reported that the new Trustee body was in being and had started its deliberations. Three people were willing to join the Trustees: Linda Austin (Catch the Vision steering group), John Ellis (Assistant Treasurer and Honorary Treasurer elect) and the Revd Dr David Thompson (former Moderator). Mission Council agreed these appointments.

06/57 Age Discrimination

The Treasurer presented Paper ADD 3. Regulations related to pension schemes would come into force in January 2007 or after that as a result of the Age Discrimination Act. There could be a need to amend the URC Ministers' Pension Fund rules because a new liability had arisen. The church was in a covenant relationship with the Fund and with its Trustees. It was imperative that the Trustees agreed any new liabilities and amended the rules to ensure the church was safeguarded from any adverse impact. The final phrase of the paper should read 'and consideration should be given to any such individuals adversely affected by change of rules because of the legislation.'

After expressions of concern at the speed with which this measure was being undertaken, and about its possible impact, the Deputy General Secretary advised Mission Council that the church was obliged to take this action otherwise penalties would be levied. The measure was approved.

06/58 Catch the Vision – update

The General Secretary quoted figures from a new book by Peter Brierley, 'Pulling out of the nosedive', based on the results of the 2005 English Church Census. Decline was slowing but the news was not too cheery. Growth was coming not from new expressions of church, or from institutional churches in steady decline (the URC fastest, then Methodists and Roman Catholics) or from white evangelicalism but from the expansion of black led churches in inner London. The capital had 11% of the country's churches but 20% of its churchgoers.

The book predicted that the United Reformed Church, which had 121,700 members in 1998 and 69,900 in 2005 (a drop of 43%) would decline to 33,100 by 2015 (a further drop of 53%). These figures were a result of the church's age profile. The survey also showed nearly half of URC churchgoers were in suburban areas. It calculated black churchgoers in the URC as 5,200 in 1998 and 3,700 in 2005, a decline of 38% but one which was questioned in Mission Council. The denominations with the oldest age profiles were the Methodists and United Reformed Churches, both of whose average age was 55. Almost half (47%) of the overall attendance of both churches was aged 65 or over and almost a quarter (23% and 25% respectively) was aged 75 and over. These two denominations had the smallest number of men in their congregations and were in serious decline.

At the start of Catch the Vision process we had been told the local church was over managed and something had been done about that. Synods were now free to create supportive mission and pastoral structures with local churches. With Assembly becoming a council of synods, the synods rather than national committees should set the agenda of the church and local churches should set the agenda of synods. There was a chance to turn the pyramid upside down and let mission drive the agenda. This meant prioritising resources to the local churches, balancing our budget and managing with less. A local church required of the wider church both ministry, training, financial legal and property support, pastoral care and fellowship. Even so the local church was not perfect and some mission was needed beyond or outside the local church.

As a next step we must focus on our spirituality, core values and evangelisation process. Part of this work would be done cross culturally, especially in London. Spiritualities were shaped by our innate values, experience, context and scriptural tradition. The hope was to get churches telling their stories to each other and talking about their life with God, stimulated by a new DVD of about 12 such congregational stories.

The General Secretary also reported that the Charity Commission was keen to avoid the need for a statutory instrument as a result of the structural changes agreed by Assembly because of the length of time it would take. The Clerk, the Legal Advisor & the Revd Dr David Thompson were now working on this. There was still a need to work on the shape of Assembly, of Mission Council and the cycle of the church year as well as the role of the Moderator of Assembly. Work within the synods was going on apace and the Catch the Vision group would meet with Moderators in November.

There was a fairly slow evolution on the new committee structures and consultations would be needed with all interested parties and conveners from October to March. The critical point in the processes would come about when a new committee structure and a new budget emerged. This work did not have to be rushed, nor was it constrained by the B of Union or our constitution. One dream was of the church running on five committees. The steering group believed their work was coming to an end. The log jam had been broken and we were moving into mission, spirituality, evangelism and renewal. The discussion needed to be wider and deeper with wider greater ownership. The group would ask Mission Council and Assembly to demit it at the end of July 2007.

06/59 Catch the Vision – governance

The Treasurer introduced Paper C1 on a Governing Document for the United Reformed Church. A Synod Trust Officer, who was also a Charity Commissioner, had produced this draft, which would need to be endorsed by Assembly 2007. There was currently a transitional body of 12 including the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary and the Treasurer. From Assembly 2007 the Moderator of the General Assembly would also be a Trustee. Many of those serving on

the transitional trustee body this year would probably continue but the church must follow a due process of Trustee election nonetheless. There was a need to find 9 acceptable nominees within the synods and the paper suggested these be grouped into three constituencies for this purpose. The proposal was that Mission Council could also nominate three Trustees, one a representative of FURY and, if necessary, two to ensure gender and ethnic representation.

After expression of a range of concerns about this proposed process, the Treasurer agreed that each synod could make independent nominations for Trustees, offering more than one name so that it was possible to select people to cover the required range of skills. There was a need for someone with human resources skills. The hope had been to keep the membership of the new body to 16. The Clerk said he felt that he should be on the Trustee body as it is the Clerk and the Moderator who are named in any legal actions against the denomination.

Ms Morag McLintock received confirmation that a Trustee from FURY would need to be aged 18 or over. She doubted if two discretionary nominations through Mission Council could ensure a balanced membership if all the synods put forward middle aged men as Trustees. The Revd Dr Stephen Orchard proposed these issues be resolved by the Nominations Committee in consultation with the Trust body. He was persuaded now that the new body needed to be representative of the synods. The Revd Dr David Peel, in the chair, said more work could be done on this but it was urgent that the church should appoint the first group of new Trustees.

The Treasurer outlined the added difficulty that the new body should have a succession plan, with people serving initially for two, four or six years, although this might cause a lack of continuity. In reply to a question about how the Trustees would relate to the church he said the report and accounts are submitted currently by Finance to Assembly. In future it was suggested that the accounts would go to Mission Council and the report to Assembly or Mission Council, subject to debate and agreement. The Revd Peter Brain said synod nominations could include an indication as to how long a term a possible Trustee might be willing to serve.

The Revd Malcolm Hanson said there were issues which could not be resolved during the debate. He proposed that nominations for one or two names from each synod should come to the Secretary of Nominations Committee in December. The Secretary would request CVs and references for these people in January 2007, in time for Nominations Committee in February. Names could be reported to Mission Council in March and then taken to 2007 Assembly. These proposals would be drafted for Mission Council to see. As there was continued debate about the appropriate size of the new Trustees body the present Trust would consider the merits of the arguments for a small, medium or large membership.

Session seven

06/60 Renewal of Trident

Mr Simon Loveitt presented Paper H, including a resolution on Trident. It was 23 years since General Assembly had called for the cancellation of the (then) proposed Trident nuclear submarine programme. The Revd John Young suggested that under point 5 church members in Scotland might contact their MSP's also. In Wales this would apply with relation to AMs (Assembly Members). The Revd Colin Offor proposed removing the word 'independent' in point 4 and this was agreed. The Revd Peter Brain said Trident makes less military sense now than it did 23 years ago. The economics were absurd, it made no moral sense and it breached at least 6 of the classic Just War theories. Mr Loveitt said the Methodist Church has passed a resolution and the Baptist Union was working towards one in November. This was being done through Mission Council rather than General Assembly due to the degree of urgency. The resolution was agreed.

06/61 Declaration of a Safe Church – progress report

The Deputy General Secretary presented an update on progress with Declaration of a Safe Church in the Paper ADD, written at his request by Mrs Sheila Brain. The last Mission Council meeting had revealed there was a range of synod activity on this matter. The church was moving to a stage where it needed a continuing body to monitor all those issues arising. There were a number of parallel processes going on, which were talking to one another. At the next Mission Council it was hoped to have shaped these recommendations on an umbrella body more clearly.

06/62 The United Reformed Church: for what shall we be known? – 2

The Moderator introduced questions for group work, based on the previous discussions, which the groups then considered.

Session Eight

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed. The Chaplain presided and the Moderator preached.

Session Nine

The Moderator reported that the stipend figure for 2007 would be £20,424.

06/63 Nominations

Following a report from the convener, the Revd Malcolm Hanson,

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, agreed that Martin Hazell be appointed as Director of Communications from January 1st 2007 until 31st December 2011

He then explained that the monitoring of committee membership for balance had two dimensions. The first category, that of counting people in categories of male/female, ordained/lay was less difficult. The second category, taking into account age, geography, theology and ethnicity, was far harder to gauge. Nominations needed to talk with the Equal Opportunities, Racial Justice and Multicultural Committees to find a strategy for enriching the life of the church and assessing whether balanced was near to achievement or not. People of ability needed to be encouraged and their names given to synod members of the Committee. Decisions about the future of Assembly also had implications for Nominations Committee.

The Revd Malcolm Hanson then presented Paper C2, on the appointment of United Reformed Church Trustees, following the discussion minuted in 06/59. Mr Mick Barnes said the previous debate had been taken into account well but not until point 8 did the paper refer to informing potential Trustees as to what the role might entail. People needed to be told this information clearly at the start. That view commanded general support. The Treasurer pointed out that information on the role of a Trustee was available from the website, but there was still a need to find language and documentation about this specific role, which must be put within the context of the new Governing Document. He would undertake this task and hoped to get the Trustees' agreement for a written outline of what the work entailed within a few weeks. The Revd Peter Poulter suggested that the possible time commitment involved also needed to be specified. The process outlined in Paper C2 was agreed.

The Revd Dr Susan Durber commented on the Nominations Committee report in the Paper ADD. She asked if the church could be more intentional about head hunting. Mission Council was reminded that a list of the posts to be filled is available through each synod Nominations Committee representative. The Revd Dr Stephen Orchard remembered when local churches had been asked to help in this process and this had failed. Last year the Committee had invited open nominations, which was open to anybody to do, and three names resulted. It was a question of galvanizing each other to do more. Lists from interest groups and others were helpful.

The Revd Elizabeth Nash said the nominations process presented a serious problem because it was a closed system and those outside it did not know what happened. Perhaps a search committee was needed instead, which wrote job descriptions and advertised around. The Women in Ministries group had compiled a list of things people were interested in and sent this to Nominations. She did not think the denomination had reached a good place in terms of equal

opportunities. There was not the right balance in its leadership and we did not look at Moderators, Church House staff, or committee conveners as groups.

The Revd Elizabeth Welch said when the Synod Nominations Committee in West Midlands looks at the national list there are no job descriptions or details of the time commitment required. To list each committee and vacancy with one line was not enough, so more detail would be helpful. Ms Morag McLintock asked that the information process continued after nomination, with an information pack for each committee member and convener. The General Secretary said the debate was further evidence of a communication gap. One thing that could not be revealed was how many people refused nomination. The Convener offered to take these comments away. They required consideration by the Committee and further work. He reminded Mission Council of the scope of the committee secretary's job and how unseen it is. Mutual interdependence and trust were needed for the nomination process to work.

He reported that the Interfaith Relations Committee convener, the Revd Dr John Parry, had resigned so it was agreed that the Revd Peter Colwell, the convener elect, would take on the role at once. The Revd Martin Hazell said that once he became Director of Communications he would not be able to continue as convener of Communications and Editorial Committee. It was agreed that the Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe, convener elect, would become convener on January 1st.

06/64 Appointing of Task Group on the end of the Moratorium

The Revd Dr David Peel (immediate Past Moderator) brought a list of five people to be invited to join a Task Group on the end of the Moratorium on Human Sexuality, to be convened by the Revd Malcolm Hanson. These were Ben Beke of Dulwich URC, the Revd Dr John Bradbury from Liverpool, Janet Eccles an elder from Grange over Sands, the Revd Sheila Maxey (former Assembly Moderator) and the Revd Sally Willett (Evangelism and Renewal Advocate – GEAR). He suggested the group should have power to co-opt an additional member from an ecumenical partner if they considered this helpful. If these people did not accept this invitation the nominating group had other names which could be offered in consultation with the Convener. Mission Council accepted the names of those proposed to serve on the task group, and the other details outlined by Dr Peel.

06/65 Saying Sorry Resolution from Assembly 2005

Following on the earlier debate in 06/42 the Deputy General Secretary offered a form of words for inclusion in the Mission Council report to General Assembly:

'As situations arise, and in particular circumstances, the Synod Moderator concerned may consult the General Secretary and the Assembly Moderator to see if a one-to-one meeting, offered in a pastoral context, would be both helpful and appropriate.' This form of words was agreed.

06/65 The United Reformed Church: for what shall we be known? - 3

Mr Lawrence Moore led a session feeding back from the earlier group work on core values.

06/66 Theological Reflection

The Revd Dr Robert Pope had observed a number of occasions in Mission Council when a wedge seemed to be driven between expressions of theology and what people took to be practical. There was a need to reclaim hope and the future. He had observed the church being crippled by a mentality of decline. Reformed theologians, however, had made a vast contribution to addressing this. We should not think we know it all yet, or feel embarrassed about diversity. There was a need to tell stories but we should write in the 'God known in Christ' when doing so. Spirituality was not a replacement for Christian belief and living. We needed to use more explicit language at times. We also needed to do some theological thinking about what we meant by representation.

06/67 Thanks

The Moderator thanked Dr Pope, the Chaplain, Mr Lawrence Moore, the Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe, and the Revds Martin Hazell, David Grosch-Miller and Nigel Uden for their particular contributions to Mission Council. She also expressed appreciation for the support of the officers of General Assembly during the meeting.

Farewells were expressed to those attending their last meeting: the Revd Dr John Parry (in his absence), Mrs Susan Rand and the Revds Yolande Burns, Colin Ofor, Clive Sutcliffe, Victor Ridgewell and Peter Poulter (in his last Mission Council as Moderator of Northern Synod though continuing as Convener of Ministries Committee).

06/67 Adjournment and Closing Worship

Following worship, led by the Moderator, the Mission Council stood adjourned until 27th January 2007.



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

1st September 2006

Mission Council: 3-5 October 2006
All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to remind you that Mission Council will meet in London Colney, near St Albans, in just less than five weeks' time. To ensure that our arrangements are completed in time, I would ask you to supply us with the information we need about your requirements for accommodation and meals.

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

Some preliminary papers are enclosed:

- directions to All Saints Pastoral Centre (just off the M25 motorway, north of London)
- a list of members (to help people plan to share transport, where possible)
- an expenses slip (to be completed and handed in at the meeting)
- background information about Mission Council
- a form about your accommodation and meal requests, and certain other necessary information.

Please note that you should bring soap and a towel with you.

1. Registration at All Saints will take place on Tuesday afternoon from 2.30 p.m. Tea will be served from 3.15 p.m. and the first session of Mission Council will start at 4 p.m.

2. You are invited to volunteer to be a group leader and/or reporter during the year 2006-7. If a sufficient number of people take their turn, no one should have to lead a group or be a reporter more than once in the year.

Copies of the agenda, timetable and all related papers shall be sent out in about three weeks' time.

3. Mission Council dates and venues already agreed for 2007 are:

Saturday 27 January at The Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh,
Warwickshire

Friday 23 - Sunday 25 March at High Leigh Conference Centre

Friday 5 - Sunday 7 October at Ushaw College, Durham

The meeting of Mission Council provides the opportunity for representatives from a wide area of interest and experience both to consider particular issues which have been remitted to it by General Assembly, and to seek to discern through worship and discussion the priorities which we believe God is calling the United Reformed Church to make for the time ahead.

With that exciting prospect, I look forward to seeing you at All Saints Pastoral Centre on 3rd October.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Adams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a period at the end.

The Revd Raymond Adams
Deputy General Secretary



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

26th September 2006

Mission Council: 3-5 October 2006
All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney

Dear Colleague,

Enclosed please find papers for the meeting of Mission Council in London Colney, near St Albans, next week.

An Agenda and timetable

Paper A: Report of the Mission Council Advisory Group

Paper A1: Section O Advisory Group

Paper A2: Report of the Sexual Ethics Steering Group

Paper A3: Reflections on the experience of the Nominations Committee

Paper B: Report on the Public issues team

Paper C: Trustees Report

Paper C1: Proposed Governance document

Paper D: 2007 Budget

Paper E: Equal Opportunities

Paper F: Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry Audit

Paper G: Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act

(Paper ADD - Additional business - will be tabled at the meeting. This paper already includes (for reasons of space) the report of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group.

The thematic content of Mission Council will include a discussion led by the Moderator and Lawrence Moore (Director the Windermere Centre) on the identity of the United Reformed Church. This comes under the working title, 'For what shall we be known?'

Mission Council will also have the opportunity to consider Stewardship, both through bible study (led by Lawrence Moore) and a presentation by members of the Stewardship sub-committee. This comes at a time when Mission Council needs to consider the priorities of the Church: the next phase of 'Catch the Vision' will concentrate on a spirituality for the 21st century; and General Assembly has asked Mission Council to consider launching a designated Stewardship Sunday.

We are pleased that our theological reflector will be the Revd Dr Robert Pope, lecturer at the University of Bangor, and minister of St Paul's United Reformed Church, Penmaenmawr.

A list of Groups will be issued on arrival, but the leaders and reporters of group discussions will be

(group leader; reporter)

A: John Brown; Ruth Whitehead

B: Pauline Loosemore; David Eldridge

C: Glenis Massey; David Peel

D: Terry Oakley; Morag McLintock

E: Donald Swift; Susan Durber

F: John Macaulay; Colin Offor

G: Elizabeth Nash; Graham Campling

H: Patrick Smyth; Wilma Prentice

During Mission Council we plan to make time for conveners of Assembly committees and staff secretaries to meet as a group, chaired by the General Secretary. This was planned for last year, but pressure on the agenda meant this had to be abandoned.

Please remember to bring your copy of the March Mission Council's Minutes. Some spare copies will be available for those who are present for the first time.

As my earlier letter indicated registration at All Saints will take place on Tuesday afternoon from 2.30 p.m., tea will be served from 3.15 p.m. and the first session of Mission Council will start at 4 p.m.

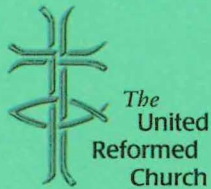
I look forward to seeing you on 3rd October.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Adams". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Revd Raymond Adams
Deputy General Secretary



MISSION COUNCIL

3 – 5 OCTOBER 2006

MEMBERS & REPRESENTATIVES

The Moderator
General Secretary
Deputy General Secretary
Clerk

Revd Elizabeth Caswell
Revd Dr David Cornick
Revd Ray Adams
Revd James Breslin

Past Moderator
Moderator Elect
Treasurer
Legal Adviser

Revd Dr David Peel
Revd Prof Stephen Orchard
Mr Eric Chilton
Mrs Janet Knott

Assembly Standing Committees

Doctrine Prayer & Worship
Life & Witness
Church & Society
Youth & Children's Work
Ecumenical
Ministries
Training
Finance
Communications & Editorial
Nominations
Assembly Arrangements
Equal Opportunities
Inter-Faith Relations
Racial Justice

Revd Dr Susan Durber
Revd Peter Ball
Mr Simon Loveitt
Revd Neil Thorogood
Revd Elizabeth Nash
Revd Peter Poulter
Revd John Humphreys
Mr Eric Chilton
Revd Martin Hazell
Revd Malcolm Hanson
Mr William McVey
Ms Morag McLintock
Revd Dr John Parry
Revd Andrew Prasad

Fury Council

Miss Isobel Simmons (Chair)
Miss Sara Paton

13 synod Moderators, plus 3 representatives from each synod

- | | | |
|---------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 N | Revd Peter Poulter | Revd Colin Offor, Revd John Durell, Mrs Susan Rand |
| 2 N.W | Revd Peter Brain | Miss Kathleen Cross, Revd Alan Wickens, Revd Rachel Poolman |
| 3 Mer | Revd Howard Sharp | Mr Donald Swift, Revd Jenny Morgan, Mrs Wilma Prentice |
| 4 York | Revd Arnold Harrison | Revd Pauline Loosemore, Mr Roderick Garthwaite, Mrs Val Morrison |
| 5 E.M | Revd Terry Oakley | Mrs Irene Wren, Revd Yolande Burns, Mrs Margaret Gateley |
| 6 W.M | Revd Elizabeth Welch | Mrs Melanie Frew, Revd Anthony Howells, Dr Tony Jeans (Mr Bill Robson alt) |
| 7 E | Revd Elizabeth Caswell | Revd Victor Ridgewell, Mr Mick Barnes, Mrs Joan Turner |
| 8 S.W | Revd David Grosch-Miller | Revd Roz Harrison, Mrs Janet Gray, Revd Richard Pope |
| 9 Wex | Revd Adrian Bulley | Revd Clive Sutcliffe, Mrs Glenis Massey, Revd Ruth Whitehead |
| 10 Th.N | Revd Roberta Rominger | Revd David Varcoe, Revd John Macaulay, Mr David Eldridge |
| 11 S | Revd Nigel Uden | Dr Graham Campling, Mr Nigel Macdonald, Mrs Maureen Lawrence |
| 12 Wal | Revd Peter Noble | Revd Stuart Jackson, Mrs Barbara Shapland, Mrs Liz Tadd |
| 13 Scot | Revd John Humphreys | Revd Alan Paterson, Miss Irene Hudson, Mr Patrick Smyth |

In attendance

Minute Secretary	Revd Ken Forbes	Church Related Community Work	Mrs Suzanne Adofo/ Mr Stephen Summers
Moderator's Chaplain	Revd Neil Thorogood	Grants & Loans Convener	Dr Brian Woodhall
Ministries	Revd Christine Craven	Rural Consultant	Revd Graham Jones
Training	Revd Roy Lowes	Racial Justice	Mrs Katalina Tahaafe-Williams
Youth Work	Mr John Brown	HR & Facilities Manager	Ms Michelle Marcano
Children's Work Dev't Officer	Miss Jo Williams	Windermere Centre	Mr Lawrence Moore
Pilots Dev'ment Officer	Mrs Karen Bulley	Life & Witness	
Church & Society	Mr Stuart Dew	Communications	
Ecumenical Relations	Revd Richard Mortimer	Reform	
International Church Rel's	Revd Philip Woods	Theological Reflector	Revd Dr Robert Pope

MISSION COUNCIL – 3 – 5 OCTOBER 2006

GROUPS

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

<p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <p>John Brown Ruth Whitehead Peter Ball Peter Brain John Durell Melanie Frew Stuart Jackson Richard Pope Susan Rand Katalina Tahaafe-Williams Sue Wilkinson</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">B</p> <p>Pauline Loosemore David Eldridge Roz Harrison Graham Jones Simon Loveitt Val Morrison Peter Noble John Sanderson Howard Sharp Kirsty Thorpe Philip Woods</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p>Glenis Massey David Peel James Breslin Arnold Harrison Nigel Macdonald Lawrence Moore Peter Poulter Barbara Shapland Neil Thorogood Irene Wren</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <p>Terry Oakley Morag McLintock Ray Adams Mick Barnes Eric Chilton Roderick Garthwaite Janet Gray Jackie Haws Richard Mortimer Elizabeth Welch</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p>Donald Swift Susan Durber Karen Bulley Elizabeth Caswell Kathleen Cross David Grosch-Miller Martin Hazell Anthony Howells Maureen Lawrence Roy Lowes Steve Summers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">F</p> <p>John Macaulay Colin Offor Adrian Bulley Pamela Cressey Margaret Gateley Malcolm Hanson Michelle Marcano Rachel Poolman David Varcoe John Young</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>Elizabeth Nash Graham Campling Christine Craven Andrew Grimwade Janet Knott Stephen Orchard Andrew Prasad Victor Ridgewell Roberta Rominger Clive Sutcliffe Alan Wickens</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">H</p> <p>Patrick Smyth Wilma Prentice David Cornick Stuart Dew John Humphreys Tony Jeans Andrew Middleton Jenny Morgan Robert Pope Nigel Uden Jo Williams</p>



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

**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?

TUESDAY 3rd

Arrivals from 2.30 p.m. Tea is served from 3.15 p.m.

4.00 p.m.

Session 1

Opening Worship and Bible Study
Welcome to guests and new members
Apologies for absence
Notice of additional business
Minutes of Mission Council held 24-26 March 2006
Matters arising

Reports

a) Advisory Groups:

Mission Council Advisory Group -1

PAPER A

Section O Advisory Group

PAPER A1

Sexual Ethics Steering Group

PAPER A2

b) Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry - report of audit group

PAPER F

c) Nominations Committee

5.30 p.m.

Closed Session to consider business from March Mission Council referred to the Trustees.

6.30 p.m.

Dinner

7.30 p.m.

Session 2

The United Reformed Church: for what shall we be known? -1

8.45 p.m.

Evening Prayers

WEDNESDAY 4th

8.30a.m.

Breakfast

9.15 a.m.

Session 3

Morning Worship

Church and Society Committee - a Joint Public Issues Team

PAPER B

Resolution re 200th Anniversary of the abolition of the Slave trade

PAPER G

Equal Opportunities Committee

PAPER E

	Mission Council Advisory Group - remaining business	PAPER A
10.45 a.m.	<i>Coffee</i>	
11.15 a.m.	<u>Session 4</u> Stewardship - bible study, presentation and discussion Groups	
1.00 p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>	
2.30 p.m.	<u>Session 5</u> Plenary on group responses The Treasurer's report including the 2007 Budget Trustees' report Ethical Investment Advisory Group	PAPER D PAPER C PAPER ADD
3.45 p.m.	<i>Tea</i>	
4. 15p.m.	<u>Session 6</u> Catch the Vision - Governance (including report of Staffing Advisory Group)	PAPER C1
(5.30 p.m. Meeting of Assembly Committee Conveners and Staff Secretaries, chaired by the General Secretary)		
6.30p.m.	<i>Dinner</i>	
7.30p.m.	<u>Session 7</u> The United Reformed Church: for what shall we be known? - 2 Conversation in groups	
8.45p.m.	Evening Prayers	
THURSDAY 5th		
8.30 a.m.	<i>Breakfast</i>	
9.15 a.m.	Service of Holy Communion	
10.15 a.m.	<i>Coffee</i>	
10.45 a.m.	<u>Session 9</u> Remaining business to include Task Group on the end of the moratorium Assembly Arrangements Committee The United Reformed Church: for what shall we be known?' - 3: plenary session	
12.00 noon	Closing worship	
12.30 p.m.	<i>Lunch and Departures</i>	



The
United
Reformed
Church

MISSION COUNCIL 3-5 October 2006

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?

TUESDAY 3rd

4.00 p.m.

Session 1

Opening Worship and Bible Study

Chaplain and Moderator

Welcome to guests and new members

Moderator

The Moderator welcomes

The Revd Dr Stephen Orchard

Moderator-Elect

The Revd Dr Robert Pope

Theological Reflector

The Revd Peter Ball

Convener of Life and Witness

The Revd Malcolm Hanson

Convener of Nominations

Mr Simon Loveitt

Convener of Church and Society

Ms Morag McLintock

Convener of Equal Opportunities

The Revd Rachel Poolman

representing North Western synod

The Revd Peter Poulter

Convener of Ministries

The Rev Neil Thorogood

Convener of Youth and Children's Work & Chaplain

Miss Jo Williams

Children's Work Development Worker

Deputising

The Revd Kirsty Thorpe

for the Revd Ken Forbes (as Minutes Secretary)

The Revd John Sanderson

for Mrs Irene Hudson (Synod of Scotland)

The Revd John Young

for the Revd Alan Paterson (Synod of Scotland)

Dr Pamela Cressey

for Mrs Joan Turner (Eastern synod)

Mr Delbert Sandiford

Chair of Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns in the Diocese of Southwark (to speak later in the this session)

Mrs Sue Wilkinson (North Western)

and Mrs Jackie Haws (Thames North) - members of the Stewardship sub-committee (are to make a presentation on Wednesday morning)

Mr Andrew Grimwade

Chief Accountant (to be welcomed Wednesday afternoon)

The Moderator should ask if there are any others attending for the first time in their present capacity

Apologies for absence

Deputy General Secretary to lead

Mrs Suzanne Adofo

(CRCW Development worker)

Mrs Irene Hudson

(Synod of Scotland)

The Revd Alan Paterson

(Synod of Scotland)

The Revd Dr John Parry

(Convener of Interfaith Relations)

Miss Sara Paton	(FURY representative)
Miss Isobel Simmons	(FURY Chair)
Mrs Liz Tad	(Synod of Wales)
Mrs Joan Turner	(Eastern synod)
Mr Brian Woodhall	(Convener of the Grants and Loans Group)

Notice of additional business **Deputy General Secretary** to lead

- o **PAPERS ADD and ADD-2** - were available on arrival :
 - ADD** Includes Nominations report - taken later this afternoon
 EIAG - taken tomorrow morning after MCAG report
 Safe Church Report - ditto
 - ADD-2** contains Proposal re Stipend (to be taken Session 5 - Wed p.m.)
- o Paper on Groups - questions for Session 4 will be given out at that time, though Group Leaders can pick up copy of questions in advance.
- o Resolution on Ministers' Stipends for 2007 - to be taken in Session 5 on Wednesday afternoon
- o Resolution on Trident (still to be worked on by C&S)

Minutes of Mission Council held 24-26 March 2006

The Moderator to ask if there are any comments, before seeking agreement to sign minutes.

Notified corrections:

Page 4; Session 4: 06/16 Training Review :para 3; line 4 should read 'Mansfield, Queens.....explored' (delete 'developed').
 line 6 – should read ' Regional' (delete ' Ecumenical') Training Partnerships'.

Matters arising

(None which we are aware of which are not already on the agenda)

Reports

a) Advisory Groups:

Mission Council Advisory Group -1	PAPER A	Deputy General Secretary to lead
Section O Advisory Group	PAPER A1	The Clerk will answer any questions
Sexual Ethics Steering Group	PAPER A2	Roberta Rominger will answer any questions

b) Racial Justice and Multicultural ministry - report of audit group (**PAPER F**)

Andrew Prasad (Convener) to introduce **Mr Delbert Sandiford** (Chair of Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns in the Diocese of Southwark) who will present this report

5.30 p.m. Closed Session to consider business from March Mission Council referred to the Trustees

- a) **Deputy General Secretary** to introduce
- b) **General Secretary and Legal Adviser** to expand (as required)
- c) **Peter Poulter** to give verbal report on progress of the Liaison Group

6.30 p.m. *Dinner*

7.30 p.m.

Session 2

The United Reformed Church: for what shall we be known? -1

The Moderator will introduce Lawrence Moore: both will lead the evening session with other inputs

Any Notices

Deputy General Secretary

8.45 p.m.

Evening Prayers

The Chaplain

WEDNESDAY 4th

8.30a.m.

Breakfast

9.15 a.m. Session 3

Morning Worship

The Chaplain

Notices - Members will require Paper H for this session and PAPER ADD-2 this afternoon (new papers) - if Paper H is not on the table, it will be circulated as soon as it is printed)

9.30 Church and Society - a Joint Public Issues Team

PAPER B

Simon Loveitt (Convener) and/or Stuart Dew (Secretary) to lead

9.45 Resolution re 200th Anniversary of the abolition of the Slave trade

PAPER G

Andrew Prasad (Convener of Racial Justice) and Simon Loveitt (Convener Church and Society) to lead

10.10 Equal Opportunities Committee

PAPER E

Morag McLintock (Convener) to lead

10.45 a.m.

Coffee

11.15 a.m.

Session 4

Stewardship - bible study, presentation and discussion

Moderator: Stewardship is on Mission Council's agenda this year in the light of Catch the Vision, the Maintenance of Ministry Review, and the decision of Assembly that Mission Council should consider launching a designated Stewardship Sunday.

The Stewardship Sub-Committee is an Assembly-appointed group, a sub-committee of Life and Witness; and it seemed timely that Mission Council should hear about the concerns of this group, and in the light of Assembly's decision.

Lawrence Moore is going to set the context by leading a bible study on Stewardship; Sue Wilkinson and Jackie Haws are going to make a short presentation on behalf of the committee; and they have prepared some questions which Mission Council is asked to discuss in groups afterwards

11.15 Lawrence Moore
 11.45 or so Sue Wilkinson (Jackie Haws) Stewardship presentation
 by 12 noon Deputy General Secretary to give directions to venues for Group work
(hand-out from the sub-committee to be given out: questions are listed on the back) flip chart sheets and pens in each room - please bring back at 2.30 p.m.
 12 noon - till about 12.45 : Groups

1.00 p.m. Lunch

2.30 p.m. Session 5
 2.30 until (up to) 3.00 p.m. Plenary on group responses

3.00 p.m. (The Moderator may wish to welcome Mr Andrew Grimwade Chief Accountant who is attending Mission Council for the first time)

The Treasurer's report including the 2007 Budget	PAPER D
Stipend for 2007	PAPER ADD-2
Trustees' report	PAPER C
Ethical Investment Advisory Group	PAPER ADD

3.45 p.m. Tea

4. 15p.m. Session 6
 Catch the Vision: Governance PAPER C1
 General Secretary to lead (and the Treasurer?)
 (to include report of Staffing Advisory Group - Val Morrison (Convenor)

Discussion in situ - (plenary or in small groups if required)

(5.30 p.m. Meeting of Assembly Committee Conveners and Staff Secretaries, chaired by the General Secretary)

6.30p.m. Dinner

7.30p.m. Session 7
 a) A paper and resolution on 'Trident' PAPER H
 b) Declaration of a Safe Church - progress report - to be noted PAPER ADD

The United Reformed Church: for what shall we be known? - 2
 Conversation in groups - questions to be issued during Mission Council (EC/LM)

8.45p.m. Evening Prayers The Chaplain

THURSDAY 5th

- 8.30 a.m. Breakfast
- 9.15 a.m. Service of Holy Communion The Chaplain and Moderator
- 10.15 a.m. Coffee
- 10.40 a.m. Session 9
Remaining business to include
- i) Nominations Committee PAPER ADD
Malcolm Hanson (Convener) to lead
- Add: Dr John Parry has resigned as Convener of Interfaith Relations. Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly needs to appoint a successor: the Revd Peter Colwell as Convener*
- ii) Appointment of URC Trustees PAPER C2
 - 11.05 a.m. ii) Accept Task Group on the end of the moratorium DGenSec
 - 11.10 a.m. iii) Mission Council Advisory Group - remaining business PAPER A
return to 'Saying Sorry' - suggestion DGenSec to lead
- 11.15 a.m. iv) The United Reformed Church: for what shall we be known?' - 3
plenary session Lawrence Moore
- 12 noon Initial comments by the theological reflector Robert Pope
- 12.10 p.m. Concluding remarks: among which ...
The Moderator may wish to thank various people: e.g. Lawrence Moore
those for whom this Mission Council is the last they will attend in their present capacity:
- The Revd Yolande Burns (East Midlands synod)
The Revd Colin Offor (Northern synod)
The Revd John Parry (absent) has resigned as convener of Interfaith Relations
The Revd Peter Poulter retires as Moderator of the Northern synod at the end of 2006,
but will continue as a member of Mission Council as Convener of
Ministries Committee.
- Mrs Susan Rand (Northern synod)
The Revd Clive Sutcliffe Wessex synod
(ask if there are any others?)
- 12.15 p.m. Closing worship
- 12.30 p.m. Lunch and Departures

MCAG Report to October 2006 Mission Council

1. For Report

A) From 2005 Assembly: 'Saying Sorry' resolution:

This resolution from East Midlands instructed MC to prepare recommendations for the Church on ways in which someone at a senior level could apologise on behalf of the United Reformed Church to someone who had been sexually abused in a church context.

The original intention of this resolution was for a pastoral response at a senior level. Investigations showed that the Methodist Church does this on an informal basis, but for us the matter has been skewed by the question of implied legal liability for the Assembly in offering an apology.

MCAG had approached Alan Hart to consider doing some work on this. Sadly he was unwell -and therefore declined the request - and died shortly afterwards: but he did write the following:

' The Methodist Church is very fortunate in having David Gamble - an able and experienced minister who has a legal training, He can therefore temper individual pastoral sensitivity with a feeling for circumstances where he may be ' standing into danger' (to use a nautical phrase). I'm not at all sure that it's feasible to write guidelines that will provide an adequate substitute for this personal grasp, given the way individual cases differ - and each fresh case raises fresh issues. Perhaps the key words in the MCAG report of David Gamble's work are 'where appropriate to do so'. That requires individual judgement rather than trying to apply a rule from guidelines. I do hope you can find someone whose guidelines will prove these fears of mine unfounded'.

Other issues which have arisen is where legal liability rests (for insurance purposes) - and therefore the interim conclusion of MCAG is that the request for guidelines be not proceeded with.

My own suggestion to Mission Council is that as situations arise, the synod moderator concerned may consult with the General Secretary (and if appropriate the Assembly Moderator of the time) to see if a meeting in a pastoral context would be appropriate in particular circumstances, and ' where appropriate to do so.'

B) i) Note appointment of Keith Webster to SAG

- ii) Note appointment of John Ellis as Assistant Treasurer - leading to appointment as Treasurer (ask Clerk)

B&C For information

2. for decision

A. Note methods proposed for dealing with 2006 Assembly resolutions which have been remitted to Mission Council (go through them individually)

B. Submission from Thames North Synod Executive

A paper received from the Executive - raising a number of questions about the Assembly's response to the DTI on the status of ministers.

At MCAG's request Ministries Committee has responded and seeks to offer the response printed on the paper.

In the last 24 hours, I received a paper from East Midlands Synod where a group has raised some concerns.

- o Peter Poulter / Christine Craven - invite to comment or answer questions
- o Elizabeth Nash also may wish to comment

(Action - accept response or refer back to Ministries for further consideration)

2. Moratorium - MC should excuse my shorthand -

Mission Council Advisory Group - aware of the ending on the moratorium on decision making which would define the Church's policy on issues of human sexuality concerning the ordination of ministers of word and sacraments

- was grateful to receive a paper proposing a way forward in the present climate

MCAG suggests we appoint a small group to consider the paper and bring a proposal to the next Mission Council if possible.

List of names proposed - to which Mission Council is asked to accept or add to. (List to be left on table - other names may be added)

Saying Sorry Resolution - from Assembly 2005

As situations arise, and in particular circumstances, the synod moderator concerned may consult the General Secretary and the Assembly Moderator to see if a one-to-one meeting, offered in a pastoral context, would be both helpful and appropriate.



Thames North Synod
Synod Executive

Clergy
Working
Conditions

RESPONSE TO STATEMENT OF GOOD PRACTICE SUBMITTED BY MISSION
COUNCIL TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

1. The Executive wish to stress that their intention is not to make a case for Ministers changing their status but for Ministers to understand what the differences are and for them to be given the opportunity of coming to an informed decision. .
- 2 The paper submitted in the name of the United Reformed Church paper states that the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) called for responses from religious bodies to be disseminated widely within their organisations. The Executive know that at least one Synod Moderator and hopefully all of them have distributed both the DTI paper and the URC response to Ministers. However there was no specific invitation to comment or, more importantly, no indication of how disagreement would be decided.
- 3 It is very unfortunate that what the Executive wanted to achieve has been undermined in that the Mission Council Paper in its opening paragraph includes a statement that certainly can be challenged. As already stated if Ministers wish to have rights different from those of employees that is their right. However to suggest that these rights are similar is completely contrary to the facts.
- 4 The very first reference to where decisions are taken highlights the difference. All the URC decisions are taken by General Assembly and there is little argument with the accuracy of the decisions quoted in the paper. However this is a very big difference from the position of employees and other workers. Their terms and conditions cannot be changed unless the changes are negotiated through a recognised negotiating body on which their representatives sit or where no such body exists, in agreement with the individual themselves. Ministers are not collectively represented at Assembly and are not individually consulted about changes. They are forced on them by decision of Assembly.
- 5 The Mission Council paper then sets out comments under the main headings in the DTI paper, then under the headings of the bullet points under these main headings. The Executive followed the same pattern of the Mission Council paper though it is of interest to note that the Mission Council Paper dealt with the headings in a different order from that in the DTI paper. The following comments follow the Mission Council pattern

Terms and Conditions of Work

6 Standard: Faith Groups should make available statements of clergy terms and conditions (and if appropriate individual job descriptions) with the aim that clergy have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the support they can expect.

6.1 The Mission Council statement refers to the training given to prepare ministers for their responsibilities and, to be fair, every effort is made to achieve this. However, their statement shows that the URC does not meet the standard regarding support. The standard is that there should be a clear statement of the support, which will be given. Since the URC at present does not do this, they have stated that Ministers should find immediate support from those with whom they work. Note the ministers and not the URC, should and not will find. The role of Synod Moderators in giving support is not clear in that they also have responsibilities for congregations who often are the reason for the need for support.

6.2.1 Arrangements for special leave in cases of sickness and caring responsibilities

It is interesting that the URC paper deals firstly with the administration arrangements and gives priority to maintaining records in the national office. Notification to the local church comes in the last two sentences of the second paragraph suggesting a distorted view of who is immediately affected by such absences. Before commenting further on the second paragraph, it is important to note the last sentence of the first paragraph which states Synod can grant compassionate leave when special circumstances effect. Certainly there are some Ministers who were not aware of this and it would be interesting to learn

- how many Synods have decided who would make such decisions,
- what authority does whoever is making the decisions have
- where did that authority come from
- what advice has been given to ensure equality of treatment across the Synods.

Back to the second paragraph, which seems to suggest that there is in every congregation 'straightforward arrangements' for handing over ministerial commitments in the advent of sickness or personal emergencies. Whilst in most congregations there would be an expectation that the Church Secretary or the Pulpit Supply Secretary would deal with the problems, this is different from 'straightforward arrangements'. The paragraph could be interpreted that it is the Minister's responsibility to make these arrangements, which if it is only notifying the Church Secretary is reasonable. However if it is suggesting that the Minister, when faced with sickness or a personal crisis, has to arrange cover, that is certainly not what would be expected of an employee.

6.2.2 Entitlement to annual leave and rest breaks

Though most of this is a statement of what is understood, there are details missing which would be in a statement to an employed person Firstly there would be a clear definition of what a week is. Secondly there would be an indication of the circumstances in which a week of holiday can be carried over and who decides if it is appropriate. Thirdly

there is again a statement that the Synod has a responsibility. The bullet points in the previous paragraph equally apply to this statement.

6.2.3 Arrangements, where appropriate, for maternity, paternity, ante-natal and adoption leave

There is little surprise in the statement that the URC shall follow the provisions of the law regarding employed persons in every respect. It has to be hoped that it is only an error that the future tense is used. However, the last sentence contradicts it, in that the law states that an employee must have a written statement spelling out how these provisions are applied.

6.2.4 Provision of accommodation, where appropriate

Provision of accommodation is not a requirement by law for an employee but where it is provided the terms should be detailed. It is accepted that this should form part of the terms of settlement and therefore the majority of these paragraphs are accurate and are no better than those that would apply to an employee whose job entitled them to accommodation. However the changes to allowances would be agreed either in a negotiating body on which representatives of the employee sit or with the employee themselves. The MoM Sub-Committee does not do either but imposes them.

6.2.5 Role of spouses and locums, and the division of responsibilities within team ministries

This all embracing heading with a mixture of unrelated areas make it very difficult for the URC to produce a sensible statement and for comments to be made on it.

6.2.5.1 Of course, the DTI are aware that in many faiths spouses have been exploited and it is a welcome sign that the URC puts down on paper that absence of inputs from spouses or others in the household will not be regarded as detrimental to the Minister in any way.

6.2.5.2 The statement that it would be a rare occasion that the URC could supply a locum minister to a pastorate is a description of the present policy though there could be a debate on whether or not they could but do not wish so to do.

6.2.5.3 Why Mission Council decided to introduce Interim Moderators into this heading is difficult to understand when becoming an Interim Moderator is a matter of choice for the Minister and not a responsibility that is imposed.

6.2.5.4 As far as being a member of a Team Ministry is concerned the paragraph does no more than point in the right direction and in comments to the DTI, no more would be expected.

6.2.6 Agreement to provide a written statement of grounds for termination of appointment

There are a whole series of questions that arise from the Mission Council statement

- * Who has the authority to supply a written statement in cases of disciplinary dismissal (It is assumed that Section O spells this out)?
- * How were individual ministers consulted in agreeing to Section O being imposed on them?
- * How can the terms of resolutions at Church Meetings and at Synod be the only official statement of grounds for termination particularly when the grounds for termination is not disciplinary?

6.2.7 Provision of time off to look for another appointment or arrange training in the event of loss of post

A first quick read of the Mission Council statement suggests that they are very enlightened on this matter. However a closer look and a comparison of what happens in employment suggests that it is not as good as first read. Firstly all the responsibility is placed on the Minister. Secondly it suggests they can only make arrangements if the other appointment is to another URC pastorate with no indication of who or how the actions of the Minister are monitored.

This paragraph is another one where the DTI have covered different areas and has added in training in the event of the loss of post. Mission Council does not mention training but only states that a Minister might receive a stipend for up to three months. An employee whose job had disappeared would be in a redundancy situation where clear conditions will have been part of his statement of terms of employment.

6.2.8 Rights to belong to and be active in a trade union

This is the heading in the DTI document to which Mission Council has decided to cloud their minimal commitment to trade union membership and the recognition of trade union representatives, by linking it to taking part in the councils of the Church which Ministers, whilst committed to doing so have the choice of what they do.

6.2.9 Minimum period of notice

The Mission Council statement on this is clear and is similar to the position found in employment

6.2.10 Pension arrangements, where appropriate

Though the URC has to be commended for its pension arrangements attention has to be drawn to the fact that the members of the Fund do not have the power to elect their own Trustees.

Development and personnel support

7 **Standard: Faith Groups should provide support for clergy when they apply for posts and over the course of appointments to help with ongoing development**

The URC statement is a mixture of the good things the URC does and provides and selectively omits areas that are inadequate compared with employment. Though the URC uses the word 'call' when a Minister is seeking to move, the practice is that the 13 Synod Moderators operate guidelines, which mean that except in exceptional circumstances which are mentioned in the guidelines, will arrange for the Minister to be given the opportunity of testing that call. However, where there are exceptional circumstances the, congregation to which the Minister feels called may never know of the interest shown in their pastorate. The Minister should receive an explanation from their own Synod Moderator of the decision. They have no right of appeal and it is unlikely they would want one, bearing in mind that normally they do not want their exploration of a move to be known to their present pastorate.. Whilst it is good that the URC recognises that serious issues can arise in a Minister's life, what authority do the Synod Moderators have, where is that authority given and what is the position if the cause of the serious issue is the Synod Moderator

The second paragraph in the paper again underlines the difference between what would happen in employment and for Ministers. Even the worst employer would not consider setting up a new scheme such as *Taking Stock* without involving either the representatives of the employees or the employees themselves. From their past record the URC will not consult all Ministers and will reach a decision even if the majority of Ministers were opposed to it, though at present there is no way of finding that out.

Information & Consultation

8 **Standard: Faith Groups should aim to ensure that clergy are kept informed of and consulted about changes affecting them**

This is an entitlement for an employee but unfortunately despite the Mission Council Statement, Ministers are not consulted about changes in terms and conditions, statements of practice, policy changes and financial decisions. These are all decided by councils of the URC and Ministers are not consulted on any them even though some, if not all, of them directly affects them. There has been a suggestion that because reports and proposals coming to General Assembly are available, (NOTE not supplied) to every Minister, that replaces the need for consultation. At each Assembly the majority of Ministers do not attend and how receiving a note of the decisions after they have been taken comes under a paragraph on consultation, questions the knowledge of the authors on the meaning of consultation. The composition of Assembly is such that even if they wanted to, Ministers would find it extremely difficult to influence those attending.

Resolving disputes

- 9 **Standard: There should be clear procedures for resolving disputes (including grievances and disciplinary cases, and issues over appointments) and there should be a point of recourse when formal procedures and agreed good practice are not followed.**

It may or may not be significant but Mission Council decided to comment on this subject as the last one, whereas in the DTI document it was the second one. This means that comment has been made about the imposition of Section O without consultation. Making that statement does not mean that Section O is not an adequate disciplinary procedure and to make a real assessment would need a lot more study. Of course the same comment about lack of consultation relates to the Grievance Procedure. That title for what is in the statement is only correct in that both words are used. However in terms of the basic principles of a grievance procedure in employment terms it lacks credibility. In employment a Grievance Procedure would start by commencing an informal approach in an attempt to achieve a mutually agreed solution. Only if that failed would the formal procedure follow. However at each and every stage the management dealing with that stage would have authority to take a decision. At no level even at the final level is there any suggestion that decisions can be made. The procedure is so inadequate that the Executive feel it necessary to comment on each numbered paragraph

1. What does a legitimate place of complaint mean and where does it say who has the authority to decide what is legitimate. Who has the authority to decide who should agree a timescale
2. The whole point of having a procedure is to deal with what a minister feels is a grievance. Whether or not it is genuine is for the procedure to identify
3. The points made for 2 apply here only the word is legitimate instead of genuine.
4. Why approach the Synod Moderator, Synod Clerk or District Secretary? What authority do they have to impose a solution?
5. If the Synod Moderator is supporting the Minister, the grounds for the grievance should have been identified and an informal attempt made to reach a solution. Only if that failed should the procedure be necessary
6. Which Council of the Church is responsible for appointing a small independent group and where did this the authority come from?
7. If the parties cannot agree on the composition of the small independent group, who decides and where does that authority come from?
8. Does the word 'accompanied' include being represented by. If it does not the statement about recognising trade union membership is to put it mildly misleading. Arbitration suggests imposing a solution but where is the authority to impose it.

- 10 The Synod Executive would like Mission Council to reconsider what they have submitted and make a further submission setting out the significant differences between employment rights and those applied by the URC to Ministers.

17th June 2006

Clergy Working Conditions

Introduction: The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has asked all faith groups to consider the working conditions of their clergy. The DTI were concerned to establish that clergy should not be treated less favourably than employees with regard to their terms and conditions of employment. The DTI produced a statement of good practice which they considered to be the minimum requirements. The URC has responded to this statement of good practice. All ministers in the East Midlands Synod have been sent copies of both the DTI statement and the URC response. Some ministers met at summer school and also at a ministers gathering to discuss the URC's response and are very concerned that the URC is not meeting the standard of employment rights of other workers.

We feel that it was important to recognise that if the URC fails to provide clergy with terms and conditions of employment that are no less favourable than the statutory minimum employment conditions, the DTI may consider legislation to change the status of clergy from self-employed to employed. This would force the changes on the URC, and might not be what the majority of clergy would wish. Many clergy still feel that employment status would not be consistent with their sense of vocation. Whilst this is not a unanimous view, it is a view that we felt should be respected and acknowledged.

We felt that the URC would want to be a model of good practice compared with commercial organisations. The Church, as the body of Christ should seek to embody God's vision of justice and love and mercy in all its activities, including in its relationship with those who serve in its ordained ministry.

Issues that we feel need to be addressed:

1. The most important concern is that ministers have not been properly **consulted** about this response and are not normally consulted about any changes to their terms and conditions. Some Synods have sent out copies of these papers and ministers have not been asked to respond individually. The URC does not negotiate with ministers collectively through a trade union as it does not presently recognise any trade union for negotiating purposes. The URC has argued that because ministers are members of the councils at which decisions are made they are therefore being consulted and about their terms and conditions. But the councils of the church are not a context in which ministers speak or vote on their own behalf. At every council each member of that council must speak and vote on behalf of the church as a whole. For example on the question of pay, the church must take decisions which balances the ability to raise the money alongside what is considered acceptable pay levels. Ministers and lay people must take the decision together without one group speaking on their own behalf.

2. The URC response to the DTI includes references to at least 6 different documents. So information about ministerial terms and conditions is to be found in a number of different places. The Methodist Church's response to the DTI will include the production of a **handbook** which will gather together all information about working conditions. This would be very helpful in the URC also.

3. **The length of the working week** is defined in employment but is not addressed in the URC. It is recognised that the stipend is not an hourly rate for the job, but intended to free a minister from the need to be employed outside of the church in order to be able to devote her or his energy to ministry. However, it would be helpful to define more clearly the expectations of the URC in return for this stipend in terms of some pattern of work.

All ministers are expected to have one day off a week. Most people in outside employment work morning and afternoon five days a week, not three sessions for six days! Flexibility of hours is very useful but without some more clarity it can lead to abuse of both under and over work. Discussions about and clarity on what is expected would be helpful. None of this detracts from the minister's response to urgent and important pastoral demands that will override the normal routine of a week.

4. The current system for the **movement of ministers**, while a little more open than it used to be does not match what would be appropriate in employment. It is not an equal opportunities system. It would be good to consult ministers on how they feel about the present system and whether it could be improved.

5. It would be good to address the position of **Non-Stipendiary Ministers** and their placement by District Councils to ensure a greater recognition of their sense of being called to their appointment. The Handbook could include their terms and conditions.

6. The present **grievance procedures** are quite old and employment legislation has changed since they were written so they need review. The URC does not have any middle range **disciplinary procedures** to match the grievance procedures. Section 'O' serves a very different purpose.

Recommendations:

We would like to suggest the following proposals:

1. All serving ministers should be consulted and informed directly about any proposed changes to their terms and conditions.
2. The URC produce a handbook of terms and conditions which is given to all serving ministers.
3. The URC consults serving ministers and produces a more detailed description of what constitutes a working week.
4. The URC consults ministers on the present system for the movement of ministers to see how they feel about it and whether it could be changed and improved.
5. The URC consults with non-stipendiary ministers about the present arrangements for their placement within and by the District Councils, particularly in view of the creation of New Synods.
6. The URC consults all serving ministers and reviews the present grievance procedures as well as preparing matching disciplinary procedures.

The group who met at summer school and the ministers gathering included:

Ann Jack, Peter Meek, Duncan Wilson, David Turner, Janet Conway, Richard Eastman, David Yule, Derek Hopkins, Pam Smith, Paula Parish West and Elizabeth Nash

01.10.06



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

A

Mission Council Advisory Group

1. for Report

A. Matters outstanding from the 2005 Assembly:

(extract from Mission Council report to 2006 Assembly)

3.1 Resolution 2: 'Saying sorry': 'General Assembly, noting the actions of the Methodist Church with regard to those who have been sexually abused', instructed Mission Council 'to prepare recommendations for similar actions on the part of the United Reformed Church and to bring them to the Assembly of 2006'.

Investigation into this revealed that there are certain circumstances in which a senior representative of the Methodist Church invites victims of sexual abuse to a meeting of a pastoral nature, and where genuine sorrow can be expressed on behalf of the Church by sitting alongside the person. There is no implication in this apology, however, that the Methodist Conference accepts direct responsibility for causing the abuse, nor that a 'representative' apology can replace that of the guilty party.

3.1.1 Mission Council, aware of the importance of such a meeting, strongly believes that a way must be found to make it possible to respond wholeheartedly to such suffering in the life of the Church, and intends to work further on guidelines to establish how this may be done without it being construed that the Assembly accepts legal liability.

Further comments on this position will be offered by the General Secretary and the Legal Adviser.

B. Matters from the March 2006 Mission Council:

i) Mission Council remitted to MCAG the responsibility for appointing a member of the Staffing Advisory Group. Mr Keith Webster (Thames North Synod) was approached and accepted nomination. This appointment was confirmed by MCAG at its September meeting.

ii) The Treasurer's appointment Group nominated Mr John Ellis to serve as Treasurer of the United Reformed Church from Assembly 2007. The Assembly, with that understanding, appointed John Ellis as Assistant Treasurer from Assembly 2006. Hon Treasurers are appointed for a four-year period.

C. Trustee Matters: Mission Council Advisory Group, acting as trustee (prior to General Assembly's decision in July 2006 that the United Reformed Church Trust should act as trustee for an interim period, pending the creation of new Assembly structures)

i) took further legal advice following a resolution made at the previous Mission Council, and made a decision. This will be reported to Mission Council in closed session.

ii) approved the Secretary for Training becoming a founding director of the South North West Regional Training Partnership on behalf of the United Reformed Church.

D. Other information. MCAG commends Paper A3, 'Reflections on the experience of the Nominations Committee', to Mission Council. This paper is a personal reflection by Dr Stephen Orchard, written for that committee as he relinquished his role as convener. MCAG felt that it merited a wider audience, especially those who are planning future structures for the Church. It is offered as a background paper for information and study.

2. for decision

A. Matters arising (Resolutions) from the 2006 Assembly

Resolution 1: instructs Mission Council to explore consensus procedures for decision making - detailed proposals to Assembly 2007.

(Proposal: Task Group of Elizabeth Nash, Roberta Rominger, Lindsey Sanderson and Andrew Littlejohns (or other designated FURY representative) should be asked to consider this and report to Mission Council)

Resolution 2: instructs Mission Council to investigate the possibility of changing United Reformed Church regulations to allow flexibility in the provision and payment for housing NSMs *(Proposal: Ministries Committee should consider this and report to Mission Council)*

Resolution 4: Assembly should reconsider its position in respect of applications for Lottery Funding. *(Proposal: Church and Society Committee should consider this and report to Mission Council)*

Resolution 11: Ministerial Incapacity procedure - withdrawn for referral back: to return to Assembly in 2007 *(Proposal: Section O Advisory Group should consider and report to Mission Council)*

Resolution 16: Ministerial development - (b) authorises Mission Council to implement a scheme (Ministries having devised one, consulted synods and reported back to MC - no time scale set) *(Proposal: Ministries committee report to Mission Council in due course).*

Resolution 40: Mission Council to revisit the 'Declaration of a Safe Church' and bring to the next Assembly proposals to extend its provisions to cover emotional, physical and domestic abuse and neglect. *(Proposal: Carla Grosch-*

bulky

Miller, Sheila Brain and Sara Paton to consult before bringing outline proposals for ways in which Mission Council might deal with this resolution)

B. Submission from Thames North Synod Executive

A paper was received on behalf of Mission Council by MCAG, concerning discussions between the DTI and faith communities on the status of ministers, and good practice in their terms of service. It raised a number of issues from the report which was made by the Ministries Committee to March 2006 Mission Council.

To give something of the background, the Thames North synod Executive report begins:

" The Executive wish to stress that their intention is not to make a case for Ministers changing their status but for Ministers to understand what the differences are and for them to be given the opportunity of coming to an informed decision. .

The paper submitted in the name of the United Reformed Church paper states that the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) called for responses from religious bodies to be disseminated widely within their organisations. The Executive know that at least one Synod Moderator and hopefully all of them have distributed both the DTI paper and the URC response to Ministers. However there was no specific invitation to comment or, more importantly, no indication of how disagreement would be decided".

It is hoped that the following statement (made after consultation with the Ministries Committee) will suffice at the present time.

Mission Council is grateful for the Thames North Synod Executive's paper arising from the United Reformed Church's response to the Department of Trade and Industry's Statement of Good Practice. At this time Mission Council does not intend to submit a further submission to the DTI but will take careful note of the comments made by the Executive in any further consultation it has with the Department. *(It is understood, from recent enquiries of the Thames North Synod that this course of action is in accordance with the Executive's intention).*

It appears, however, that there are different understandings about the present stage of the consultation with the Department of Trade and Industry. The Ministries Committee, and those involved in the DTI's Clergy Working party who have been in correspondence with the Department on this matter have offered the following explanation:

When the Clergy Working party met in January 2005, representatives of the Department of Trade and Industry promised to revise the draft of the

Statement of Good Practice on Clergy Working conditions, and invited faith groups to respond to it.

The United Reformed Church received the revision in December 2005 and the accompanying letter dated 12th December stated that the best way forward would be an agreement on the text. The letter further included the following, 'However, because changes have been made to the text a chance to offer a final comment was given to the members of the Clergy working party.' The Church took up this offer of comment in 2006, by setting out the provisions made by the United Reformed Church, so that the DTI could advise this Church and other faith groups what provisions needed to be put in place or improved.

This action accords with our view that the Government has not yet reached a decision to change the employment status of the 'clergy' but is considering what extensions of the legal rights of employees are appropriate for the 'clergy' as office holders and whether sufficient agreement can be reached with faith groups without a change in law.

The letter of the 12th December gave no suggestion that, at that time, the Government had reached any conclusions which required internal consultations to begin within faith groups about the employment status of 'clergy'.

Since sending the United Reformed Church's response to the DTI in April 2006, and receiving the acknowledgement of our response, there has been one further letter from the Department. In September the Church was informed that the DTI had still not received responses from all members of the Clergy working party, but that we would be contacted when it was possible for further consultation to take place.

3. Moratorium on human sexuality

With less than a year to go before the formal ending of the moratorium on decision-making on issues related to human sexuality, and in view of the debate on civil partnerships at the 2006 Assembly, the Moderator undertook at Assembly to ask Mission Council to consider how to enable the Church to move forward. The General Secretary received a paper from the Revd Malcolm Hanson (a former Assembly Moderator) outlining a possible way to proceed, which, recognizing the diversity of views, would ensure

- i) that all can feel their views have been heard and accepted
- ii) that the Church agrees to continue in fellowship
- iii) that people commit themselves to travel on a future path together.

Mission Council Advisory Group having given preliminary consideration to this, proposes that Malcolm Hanson be invited to convene a small group

- a) to consider the paper
- b) to decide whether it could be the basis of agreement for the Church in its present context of living with diversity; or to identify an alternative workable process.

- c) to consult ecumenical colleagues where appropriate, and to refer to the process which led to the recent discussion on this at the Methodist Conference
- d) to report back to Mission Council as soon as possible (i.e. January or March 2007).

MCAG recommends that the Group should be made up of those who have wide acceptance in the Church and who will approach the task in a sensitive manner. An initial list of proposed names will be tabled at Mission Council, to which other names may be added. Mission Council will then be asked to appoint a small ad-hoc nominating group to work on this during the Council, so that the task group will be fairly representative.



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

A1

Section O Advisory Group

In the light of the 2006 General Assembly's decision to refer Resolution 10 (Ministerial Incapacity Procedure) back for further consideration, the Section O Advisory Group asks Mission Council to note that the version of Part I of Section O which was approved under Assembly Resolution 8 will need to be changed to reflect the fact that Assembly declined to accept the MIP.

Two versions are printed below:

- one with the references to Ministerial Incapacity Procedure shown *in italics* and the other showing Part I without them and with the necessary renumbering of paragraphs.

Mission Council is asked to accept that the version of Part I which will come to Assembly in 2007 for ratification will be the revised one without references to MIP. Mission Council may think it appropriate to inform Synods that this is happening - it would be unfortunate if Synods felt they should block the possibility of ratification because of the references to MIP.

SECTION O

Process for dealing with cases of Ministerial Discipline

PART I - Substantive Provisions

**(governed by General Assembly Function 2(5)(xi)
of the Structure of the United Reformed Church)**

[Note: General Assembly 2006 deferred consideration of the resolutions to introduce the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure referred to in Paragraphs 1.3 and 3 below. Therefore Mission Council is requested by the Advisory Group to remove the words shown in this font which can be re-introduced to coincide with the introduction of the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure.]

1. 1.1 Under the provisions of this Section O an Assembly Commission (as defined in Section A of Part II) shall operate under the authority of the General Assembly for the purpose of deciding (in cases properly referred to it) the questions as to whether a Minister has committed a breach of discipline and, if the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission should so decide, whether on that account his/her name should be deleted from the Roll of Ministers or alternatively whether a written warning should be issued to him/her. *The Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission may also decide to make a recommendation/referral in accordance with provisions of Paragraph 1.3.* Under the Ministerial Disciplinary Process (known as "the Section O Process") the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission is also able to make recommendations (*other than recommendations under Paragraph 1.3*) and offer guidance but only within the limits prescribed in Section F of Part II.

1.2 *Subject only to Paragraph 1.3, once the disciplinary case of any Minister is being dealt with under the Section O Process, it shall be conducted and concluded entirely in accordance with that Process and not through any other procedure or process of the Church.*

1.3.1 *If it considers that the situation concerning a Minister involved in a case within the Section O Process relates to or involves a perceived incapacity on the part of that Minister which might render him/her unfit to exercise, or to continue to exercise, ministry on account of medical, psychological or other similar or related reasons, the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission may make an Order in accordance with the Rules of Procedure referring the case back to the Synod Moderator/Deputy General Secretary or other person who called in the Mandated Group with a recommendation that the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure (as defined in Section A of Part II) be initiated in respect of the Minister concerned, whereupon the Section O Process shall stand adjourned pending the outcome of such recommendation.*

1.3.2 *The Rules of Procedure contained in Part II shall provide for the service of the above Order (and any accompanying documentation if appropriate) on the Synod Moderator/Deputy General Secretary or other person who called in the Mandated Group and under those Rules s/he shall be required, within the time therein specified, to notify the Secretary of the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission in writing whether the recommendation has been accepted or rejected.*

1.3.3 *If the recommendation has been accepted, the notification shall specify the date on which the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure was initiated, whereupon the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission shall make a further Order declaring the Ministerial Disciplinary case to be concluded, subject only to the continuation of the Minister's suspension until the issue of his/her suspension has been resolved in accordance with the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure.*

1.3.4 *If the recommendation has been rejected, the notification shall state the reasons and the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission shall forthwith reactivate the Ministerial Disciplinary case.*

2. The Assembly Commission, the Commission Panel, the Appeals Commission and all aspects of the Section O Process shall at all times remain under the jurisdiction and control of the General Assembly which has the authority through the exercise of its functions as contained in Paragraph 2(5) of the Structure to amend, enlarge or revoke the whole or any part of the Section O Process, save only that, so long as it remains in force, the decision reached in any particular case (whether or not on appeal) and any orders made in accordance with this Section O Process shall be made in the name of the General Assembly and shall be final and binding on the Minister and on all the councils of the Church.

3. 3.1 *Subject only to Paragraph 3.2, the Section O Process shall not be initiated in respect of any Minister if his/her case is currently being dealt with under the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure.*

3.2 *The Section O Process may be initiated in respect of a Minister as a result of a recommendation issuing from the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure, in which case there may be a short transitional overlap between the commencement of the Ministerial Disciplinary case and the conclusion of the case within the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure.*

4. 4.1 In considering the evidence and reaching its decision, the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission shall in every case have full regard to the Basis of Union and in particular Paragraph 2 of Schedule E thereto which states the responsibilities undertaken by those who become Ministers of the United Reformed Church and the criteria which they must apply in the exercise of their ministry.

4.2 As part of such consideration, the Assembly Commission or Appeals Commission shall be entitled to have regard to any conduct on the part of a Minister occurring prior to his/her

ordination to the ministry which, in the Commission's view and when viewed in the light of Schedule E to the Basis of Union, would have prevented, or was likely to have prevented, him/her from becoming ordained, where such conduct was not disclosed by the Minister to those responsible for assessing his/her candidacy for ordination.

5. 5.1 A Minister may appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission to delete his/her name from the Roll of Ministers under Section F of Part II or to issue a written warning under that Section by lodging a Notice of Appeal in accordance with the Rules of Procedure at Part II, stating the ground/s of such appeal.

5.2 The Mandated Group of the Council which lodged the Referral Notice in any case may in the name of that Council appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission not to delete the name of the Minister from the Roll of Ministers by lodging a Notice of Appeal in accordance with the Rules of Procedure stating the ground/s of such appeal. In any case where no written warning is attached to the decision not to delete, the Notice may state, if the Mandated Group so desires, that the appeal is limited to the question of the issue of a written warning to the Minister.

5.3 No-one other than the Parties has any right of appeal from the decision of the Assembly Commission.

6. Procedural matters shall in every case be dealt with in accordance with the Rules of Procedure as contained in Part II.

7 7.1 Save only as provided in Paragraph 7.2, this Part I of the Section O Process is subject to Paragraph 3(1) of the Structure.

7.2 Mission Council acting in the name of General Assembly has authority by single resolution of that Council to make as and when necessary and with immediate effect such changes to Part I as are, on the advice of the legal advisers to the United Reformed Church, required to bring the Section O Process into line with the general law of the land consequent upon any changes in legislation and/or case law.

7.3 All such changes to the Section O Process as are made by Mission Council under Paragraph 7.2 shall be reported to the next meeting of the General Assembly.

SECTION O

Process for dealing with cases of Ministerial Discipline

PART I - Substantive Provisions

(governed by General Assembly Function 2(5)(xi) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church)

[Note: The wording below shows Part I without the references to the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure, the introduction of which was deferred by General Assembly 2006.]

1. 1.1 Under the provisions of this Section O an Assembly Commission (as defined in Section A of Part II) shall operate under the authority of the General Assembly for the purpose of deciding (in cases properly referred to it) the questions as to whether a Minister has committed a breach of discipline and, if the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission should so decide, whether on that account his/her name should be deleted from the Roll of Ministers or alternatively whether a written warning should be issued to him/her. Under the Ministerial Disciplinary Process (known as “the Section O Process”) the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission is also able to make recommendations and offer guidance but only within the limits prescribed in Section F of Part II.

1.3 Once the disciplinary case of any Minister is being dealt with under the Section O Process, it shall be conducted and concluded entirely in accordance with that Process and not through any other procedure or process of the Church.

2. The Assembly Commission, the Commission Panel, the Appeals Commission and all aspects of the Section O Process shall at all times remain under the jurisdiction and control of the General Assembly which has the authority through the exercise of its functions as contained in Paragraph 2(5) of the Structure to amend, enlarge or revoke the whole or any part of the Section O Process, save only that, so long as it remains in force, the decision reached in any particular case (whether or not on appeal) and any orders made in accordance with this Section O Process shall be made in the name of the General Assembly and shall be final and binding on the Minister and on all the councils of the Church.

3. 3.1 In considering the evidence and reaching its decision, the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission shall in every case have full regard to the Basis of Union and in particular Paragraph 2 of Schedule E thereto which states the responsibilities undertaken by those who become Ministers of the United Reformed Church and the criteria which they must apply in the exercise of their ministry.

3.2 As part of such consideration, the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission shall be entitled to have regard to any conduct on the part of a Minister occurring prior to his/her ordination to the ministry which, in the Commission’s view and when viewed in the light of Schedule E to the Basis of Union, would have prevented, or was likely to have prevented, him/her from becoming ordained, where such conduct was not disclosed by the Minister to those responsible for assessing his/her candidacy for ordination.

4. 4.1 A Minister may appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission to delete his/her name from the Roll of Ministers under Section F of Part II or to issue a written warning under that Section by lodging a Notice of Appeal in accordance with the Rules of Procedure at Part II, stating the ground/s of such appeal.

4.2 The Mandated Group of the Council which lodged the Referral Notice in any case may in the name of that Council appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission not to delete the name of the Minister from the Roll of Ministers by lodging a Notice of Appeal in accordance with the Rules of Procedure stating the ground/s of such appeal. In any case where no written warning is attached to the decision not to delete, the Notice may state, if the Mandated Group so desires, that the appeal is limited to the question of the issue of a written warning to the Minister.

4.3 No-one other than the Parties has any right of appeal from the decision of the Assembly Commission.

5. Procedural matters shall in every case be dealt with in accordance with the Rules of Procedure as contained in Part II.

6. 6.1 Save only as provided in Paragraph 6.2, this Part I of the Section O Process is subject to Paragraph 3(1) of the Structure.

6.2 Mission Council acting in the name of General Assembly has authority by single resolution of that Council to make as and when necessary and with immediate effect such changes to Part I as are, on the advice of the legal advisers to the United Reformed Church, required to bring the Section O Process into line with the general law of the land consequent upon any changes in legislation and/or case law.

6.3 All such changes to the Section O Process as are made by Mission Council under Paragraph 6.2 shall be reported to the next meeting of the General Assembly.



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

A2

Sexual Ethics Steering Group

The Sexual Ethics Steering Group (SESG) was formed to oversee the implementation of recommendations passed by Mission Council in January 2006 upon receipt of the Review Group Report (lessons learned from Minister A case).¹ Its members are Carla Grosch-Miller (convener), with Roberta Rominger and Ray Adams. Work accomplished thus far:

- In July, SESG published *Preserving the Integrity of the Body: Sexual Ethics within the United Reformed Church*, which is an abridged version of the Review Group Report. The purpose of the publication is to disperse information about clergy sexual misconduct and the URC's proposed efforts to respond constructively.
- The group has prepared remit documents for the Training Committee, the Ministries Committee, the Moderators and a Pastoral Response Task Group (to be formed), and will be meeting with the Committees and Moderators this autumn to introduce the tasks to be completed. Members of a Pastoral Response Task Group are being recruited. The APRC will also be approached this autumn as regards the treatment of mental illness.
- SESG has also cooperated with the Time for Action task group (Sheila Brain and Peter Poulter) as regards (1) a proposed URC policy and procedure on sexual harassment and abuse and (2) the coordination of work in the Synods in response to the Declaration of a Safe Church [Resolution 6, General Assembly 2005].

The attached Venn diagram and memorandum of understanding set forth the areas of work undertaken by the SESG and the Time for Action group, and

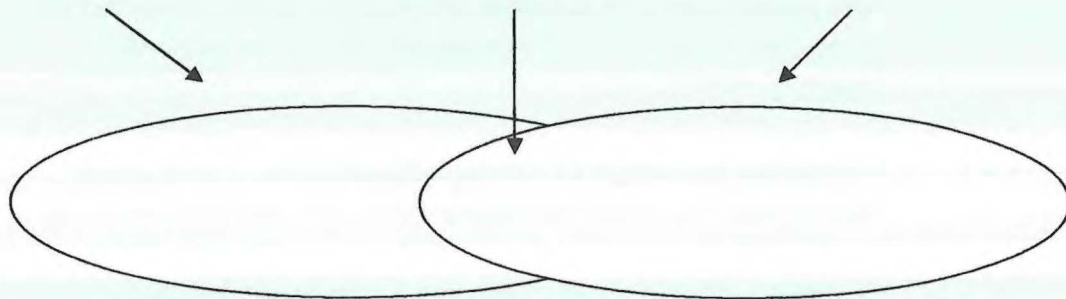
¹ SESG is distinct from the Liaison group also formed in response to the Review Group Report. SESG focuses on systemic issues; the liaison group deals with matters relating to a particular case.

where they overlap. It is believed that, in time, all work in the area of sexual ethics and responding to sexual abuse should be overseen by the same body.

Time for Action task force:
Aimed at local churches

Sexual Ethics Steering Group:
Aimed at clergy

Declaration of a Safe Church (Res.6)	<i>Overlapping areas:</i> <i>harassment/abuse guidelines</i>	Training/prevention
Sexual harassment/abuse policy: Synod and local church response to incidents	<i>formal procedures if respondent non-ordained²</i>	Ministerial Standards/ Formal procedures - Section O
Training for local churches	<i>pastoral responses to incidents³</i> <i>congregational awareness⁴</i>	Pastoral procedures Reinstatement



² Time for Action task force will develop as part of sexual harassment/abuse guidelines.

³ Sexual Ethics steering group will develop through special task group.

⁴ Brochure in development, through the Sexual Ethics steering group.



For Information

MISSION COUNCIL

3-5 October 2006

A3

Reflections on the experience of the Nominations Committee Stephen Orchard

The purpose of these reflections is to stimulate thinking about the kind of recommendations the Nominations Committee might pass on to the Catch the Vision group, especially as a new committee structure is contemplated for the Church and a new role for the Nominations Committee within it.

1. Does the present committee structure work?

The Nominations Committee is not in a position to assess the effectiveness of committees which serve the Church in terms of measuring their goals and outcomes. There are, however, significant indicators which come our way. The most obvious is the difficulty we have filling all the committee places and finding people willing to act as Secretaries and Conveners. This would seem to indicate that either we have too many committee places in relation to the size of the Church or that the word has got about that serving on central Church committees is not a very rewarding role in terms of one's Christian vocation. This impression is reinforced by the consequent difficulty we have in meeting Equal Opportunities targets. Although there are more women than men in membership of the Church there are still many more men than women who serve as stipendiary ministers. This means that when places are hard to fill we can usually make up the numbers by calling in a male minister. The time of meeting for most committees is organised to meet the needs of those who serve the Church full time and militates against a wider involvement of lay people than at present. It is also evident that since the Church is governed by committees at all levels significant numbers of people are already deeply committed at a local level and have no aspiration to serve on national committees in addition. The constant changing of the membership of committees, prompted by fear that there will be no new blood, militates against the accumulation of experience, which can be the basis of effective committees. At present we seem to err more on the side of impermanence than permanence.

2. How representative can committees be?

Apart from representations that we should improve our equal opportunities record the committee has been under fairly constant pressure to make committees more representative of the whole Church across the UK and, in particular, to see that Wales and Scotland are represented. Quite apart from the policy decision, taken when committees were set up, to resist the idea that all synods should be represented the present number of committees would make great demands on Wales and Scotland in terms of finding enough people to represent them. There also seems to be a confusion

about the nature of committees. Some people see them as essentially task oriented and argue that the people with the expertise required should be selected. Other people see them as representative of the Church as a whole, monitoring the work. Committees such as the Nominations Committee need to be seen to be representative of the whole Church; an investment sub-committee needs particular expertise. Our difficulties arise with a whole raft of committees which argue that they are trying to be both representative and task oriented.

3. Do committees make decisions?

The General Secretary has expressed some frustration that people charged with responsibilities often seem to duck out of them or pass the parcel to another committee. It is evident from the experience of Mission Council that different committees can be addressing the same topic and coming to different conclusions, or duplicating their work. The best kind of decision-making that committees make is when they act in a representative way, awarding benefits or determining vocations or disciplinary matters. The committees we set up to make appointments rarely come in for criticism. Committees can also act as a sounding board for staff who have to make managerial decisions on a day to day basis without benefit of a committee meeting. Where committees seem to founder is when they get involved in the minutiae of the Church's business. Committees also can delay decisions in the Church by making no provision for what should be done between meetings. The worst case scenario is when no one seems clear which committee can make the final decision and further committees have to be set up to enable committee to speak to committee. There is almost certainly a correlation between the indecisiveness of some committees and the poor attendance record of members. This only intensifies the frustration when a committee eventually wants to make a decision and is inquorate. Perhaps all committees should issue a briefing note for members and potential members setting out what is expected of them and what delegated powers the committee holds.

4. The role of committee convener

Some of the difficulties which committees encounter are blamed, anecdotally, on the convener. It is clear that the convener has a strong influence over the group experience of the committee in question. Some convenors have a major role between meetings in supporting staff. Others have no such responsibilities. The original concept of the Mission Council rested on the Convenors of committees being major players there and pushing forward the business of the Church as a team. This is reflected in the enhanced role given to convenors in MCAG. Unfortunately, as convenors only serve for four years none of them serves for very long on MCAG. Rather than a corporate planning exercise the convenors usually find themselves explaining the work of their committees to a Mission Council made up largely of synod representatives. They are more likely to be involved in apologetic, or in testing a policy on its way to Assembly, than in working on a common strategy for the Church. If committees are to continue under the new structures there needs to be careful thought about how convenors are chosen, how long they serve and whether they act as a kind of non-executive

directorates for the staff team or are simply there to ensure efficient running of committee meetings.

5. The Nominations Committee

Any future committee will need to carry the confidence of the Church that it is properly representative. If the number of local councils of the Church is of the order of 30 or so then some thought will need to be given as to how this is to be achieved. In my time the Nominations Committee has had a reasonable balance of gender and of lay and ordained but has been conspicuously short of young people or ethnic minorities. The process by which nominations are secured is heavily biased in spite of our attempts to open it up. Alone among present committees it has no time limit on membership, except for the Convenor and Secretary. Given the amount of patronage which those two people end up exercising, that is probably a good principle to keep for the future. Synods will also need to review their practices if they are to remain the chief providers of nominations for Assembly committees.



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

B

Church and Society Committee

Report on Joint Public Issues team

1. Earlier this year, the Church and Society committee approved progress towards setting up a Joint Public Issues Team with the Methodist Church and the Baptist Union. Mission Council approved an outline proposal in March. Planning continued and a one year pilot began on 1 September. Decisions will need to be taken before September 2007 regarding a more formal, longer-term arrangement.

2. A management group consists of Simon Loveitt, Convenor of the Church and Society committee; Anthea Cox, Co-ordinating Secretary for Public Life and Social Justice in the Methodist Church; and Graham Sparkes, head of the department for Faith and Unity within the Baptist Union. That group appointed a team leader, Alison Jackson, who is a member of the Methodist staff. Although the work of team members will be co-ordinated by the team leader, a line management responsibility for URC staff is retained by Ray Adams, URC Deputy General Secretary.

3. The Aim and Objectives are:

Aim: The Joint Public Issues Team will enable our three churches to work together in living out the gospel of Christ in the church and in society. We will promote equality and justice by influencing those in power and by energising and affirming local congregations.

*Objectives: Promote the importance of Christian engagement with public issues
Provide resources & support for those active in public issues in local churches
Campaign according to the priorities set by the three Churches
Respond to Government consultations as appropriate
Provide briefing on current issues of public concern
Report to committees and Councils of the three Churches as required*

4. Joint working is about getting better value for what each of the churches spends by pooling expertise, reducing duplication and allowing staff to specialise

more, across the wide Church and Society brief. It also advances ecumenism and increases opportunities for Churches to speak with one voice. This furthers co-operation that has developed in specific areas of work (eg. the Peacemaking report that went to Assembly this year, the URC/Methodist environmental network, and the Radar group which pools knowledge of political and parliamentary affairs).

5. Imaginative names were considered but it was decided that the working title 'Joint Public Issues Team' best described what the team is seeking to do. A logo has been produced and a website will be hosted by the Methodist Church. Team meetings are held weekly, however staff members continue to work from denominational locations to ensure that links are maintained and to avoid the need for costly moves.

6. The work of the team will inform policymaking but, for the URC, policy remains in the hands of the Church and Society committee and General Assembly. The team is formed on the basis that, whilst the URC wishes to play an enthusiastic part in contributing to its success, there are tasks that both Secretary and Administrator need to undertake as URC staff members, that will be outside its remit. Other team members are in a similar position.

7. Other denominations and groupings have expressed interest in becoming involved; these expressions of interest remain to be considered further.

8. A review will be undertaken so that recommendations for the future can come before the Church and Society committee, and before Mission Council in March 2007, and before similar bodies in other Churches. I consider these are among the questions that will need to be addressed:

Has the pilot demonstrated that the Churches can work more effectively together than separately?

There are clear gains; are the Churches prepared for some loss of separate identity that might stand alongside these?

Do the participating Churches want to commit to a more formal longer-term arrangement? If so, what is the best constitution for the team?

What implication does this have for an appointment when my contract ends in October 2007, and for staff salaries? (Methodist lay staff undertaking comparable work are currently paid significantly more than those in the URC or the Baptist Union). What are the implications for the responsibilities of the Administrator for Church and Society, as a member of Church House support staff?

Who is the right person to represent the URC on the management group? Simon Loveitt, as Church and Society Convenor, was asked to do this for one year. Unlike other members of the group, he is not a paid member of the central staff of the Church. Changes to the committee structure may influence what arrangement should follow.

Should the joint team retain bases within the three denominations or seek to work from one office? Consideration of this issue could be linked to other discussions regarding the possible future movement of some elements of work currently at Church House.

9. The Church and Society view is that closer working is entirely sensible and that the URC needs to be an enthusiastic participating partner. However, in the absence of any national plan for unity between the denominations, the URC needs to ensure that its distinctive identity and capacity to act independently is retained. Answers to the questions need to ensure that this balance is maintained.

10. For now, Mission Council is asked simply to endorse the decision to proceed with the pilot and to reflect prayerfully on the questions above, in preparation for making decisions for the future in March 2007.

September 2006



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

C

Report of Trustees

The United Reformed Church Trust has had its first meeting following the resolution of General Assembly that its directors should also be the Trustees.

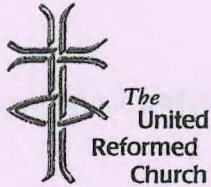
The meeting was preceded by an introduction to Trusteeship to which the directors and others were invited. Each was then given the opportunity to agree to become a Trustee for the transitional year until General Assembly in 2007. Three of the attendees who are not currently directors of the URC Trust have indicated that they are willing to become Trustees and directors of the URC Trust. They are

Linda Austin, a member of the Catch the Vision steering group
John Ellis, Assistant Treasurer and Honorary Treasurer elect
David Thompson, former Moderator.

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, is therefore asked to nominate them as directors of the URC Trust.

The Trustees have considered the attached Governing Document which will have to be adopted at General Assembly next year. At this stage Mission Council may wish to consider it fully at its March meeting. However, in order to commence the nomination process for Trustees, Mission Council are asked as a minimum to approve Section 7.

John Waller



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

**The United Reformed Church
Governing Document**

concerning the United Reformed Church and the constitution of a body to take responsibility for and be accountable to the temporal authorities for its religious and other charitable work.

Adopted on the day of.....20..... by Minute..... of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church.

Statements

The United Reformed Church was formed in 1972 by the union of the Presbyterian Church of England and the uniting churches of the Congregational Church in England and Wales, and was enlarged in 1981 by union with the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, and in 2000 by union with the concurring churches of the Congregational Union of Scotland, in accordance with the United Reformed Church Acts of 1972, 1981 and 2000.

The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church represents that church in its entirety including its constituent synods and local churches and its associated bodies and its committees constituted and appointed to carry out the work that is conducted centrally on behalf of all the members of the United Reformed Church. The General Assembly meets once every two years but the members elected to serve or are otherwise entitled to be present and vote thereat shall continue to hold office until the next ordinary meeting of General Assembly.

The General Assembly is the highest review body and the final authority of the United Reformed Church and has under the Basis of Union and Structure of the Church the power to make, alter or rescind rules for the conduct of its own proceedings and of those of other councils and commissions of the United Reformed Church.

The object of the United Reformed Church is to advance religion in accordance with the Basis of Union and to conduct such other ancillary and incidental charitable work.

1. Governing Document

The property of the United Reformed Church shall be administered and managed in accordance with the provisions in this Governing Document.

> Take back for Jan 11
> ask Synods to nominate one trustee (or two) Now's Assoc with Trustees
C1
by Dec
Signal + Competence + hint what 2, 4 or 6

2. Name

The name of the body hereby constituted is the Trustees of the United Reformed Church (the Trustees).

3. Object

The object of the Trustees is to administer and manage the general property held in connection with the United Reformed Church and conduct the temporal affairs, dealings and matters of the United Reformed Church which are administered centrally and ensure compliance with the temporal obligations of the United Reformed Church arising from its status and from its pursuance of its objects and work. Within the meaning of the expression in the Charities Act 1993 they are the charity trustees of the general property held in connection with the United Reformed Church.

4. Application of Income and Property

Money and property will be held by or under the control of the Trustees and be used to further the work of the United Reformed Church.

5. Amendments

Amendments to this governing document may only be effected by General Assembly by a 75% majority vote at the meeting at which any amendment is proposed.

6. The conduct of business meetings

(Standard clauses)

The quorum of the Board of Trustees is six or greater.

7. Trustees.

The body of Trustees when complete shall consist of 16 members consisting of 3 ex-officio Trustees, 12 elected Trustees and one nominated Trustee.

The ex-officio Trustees shall be the Moderator of the General Assembly, the General Secretary, and the Deputy General Secretary.

The elected Trustees shall be appointed as follows:-

Synods will be grouped into three constituencies (Synod groups) namely Northern, North Western, Mersey, Yorkshire and Scotland; West Midlands, South Western, Wessex and Wales; and East Midlands, Eastern, Thames North and Southern. Each group may nominate three Trustees. A Trustee will serve from the end of the General Assembly at which the Trustee from the Synod group is due to retire. So far as reasonably possible the synods will co-operate so that the trustee body will have in its

number at least one Trustee who has legal experience, at least one who has investment experience, at least one who has finance experience, at least one who has human resources experience and at least one who has full involvement in leading the life and witness of a local church, whether he or she is a minister or an elder. The first elected Trustees shall be the individuals listed in the first column of the schedule hereto who have been nominated by the Synod groups in the corresponding row of the second column of the schedule.

Except during the initial sequence of retirement, on the occasion of each General Assembly one elected Trustee from each Synod group shall retire. In respect of each group, the Trustee to retire shall be the one who has been longest in office. The initial sequence of retirement shall be as follows, namely, one elected Trustee from each group shall retire at the General Assembly in 2010; followed by one Trustee from each group at the General Assembly in 2012; followed by one Trustee from each group at General Assembly in 2014. This means that, normally, Trustees elected from Synod nominations shall retire at the General Assembly when they have completed six years service.

Mission Council may nominate three Trustees for election, namely, one to be a representative of FURY and two to ensure there is adequate gender and ethnic representation of the life of the Church.

The nominated Trustee shall be appointed by Mission Council to act as Treasurer and he or she shall hold office for 6 years.

Hon.
comes into being next yr

The Trustees may co-opt up to 2 additional Trustees with the agreement of Council in the event of:

1. Unexpected vacancy
2. Requirement of specific expertise

for such period as the Trustees and Council agree being no longer than 2 years or until the next General Assembly whichever is shorter.

Trustee indemnity insurance will be provided.

After they have served their term, each Trustee must stand down for a minimum of two years but will then be eligible for re-election.

Timetable and process for nomination (every two years to coincide with General Assembly):

- Synods groups consider candidates for Trustees whom they will nominate and seek their consent and agreement to stand for election. Synod groups may nominate more candidates than the number of vacancies provided that they list candidates in order of preference.
- Synods groups provide nominations (together with CV and two references - one from the local church and one professional, for each nomination) to the Nominations Committee by the end of December.

- Nominations Committee take up references, review eligibility and discuss with the Trustees at their March meeting
- The Trustees then interview candidates and nominate preferred candidates to the General Assembly for election

On the occasion of the impending retirement of the Honorary Treasurer, Mission Council will advise Synods and ask for nominations to be provided to the Nominations Committee who will follow the above procedure.

The Trustees will elect one of their elected United Reformed Church members as Chairperson who will act as a facilitator and serve the office of Chairperson. His/her term of service as a Trustee may be extended by up to two years if necessary to provide continuity of Chairperson. This appointment will be endorsed by General Assembly. After this term the Chairperson must stand down for a minimum of two years.

If an elected Trustee is appointed Honorary Treasurer his/her term of service may be extended by up to two years if necessary to provide continuity.

8. Mission Council's relationship to the Trustees

Mission Council is the standing representative body entrusted with the general care of the spiritual and ecclesiastical matters of the United Reformed Church. Mission Council is responsible for ensuring that policy, directions and resolutions of General Assembly are carried out and for implementing policy and determining priorities in the conduct of the work of the United Reformed Church between meetings of General Assembly. Subject to these directions, the Trustees are responsible for the application of the income and property of the United Reformed Church.

9. Clerk

The Trustees at their first meeting after each General Assembly shall appoint a clerk.

10. Holding Trustee

United Reformed Church Trust shall be the holding trustee of the general property of the United Reformed Church which the Trustees consider may more conveniently be held by that body than by the Trustees.

11. Disqualification and removal of trustees

Individuals who are disqualified for acting as trustees by virtue of the Charities Act 1993 shall not be able to take office as Trustee and if disqualified whilst a Trustee shall cease to hold office.

12. The centrally-managed work of the United Reformed Church

General Assembly entrusts to Mission Council the employment of staff and the control of costs within a budget agreed by the Trustees.

13. Trustees not to be personally interested

No trustee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the United Reformed Church (otherwise than as a trustee) or receive remuneration or be interested (otherwise than as a trustee) in any contract entered into by the trustees.

14. Repair and insurance

All buildings being general property of the United Reformed Church shall be kept in repair and shall be adequately insured, including third-party and accident insurance as well as buildings and contents insurance. The trustees shall also insure suitably in respect of public liability and employer's liability.

15. Annual Report and Accounts

The Trustees' report and accounts shall be prepared on an annual basis and presented to General Assembly when it meets, and to Mission Council in the intervening years for report to General Assembly in the following year. When General Assembly meets it will also be presented with the Trustees' report and accounts for the intervening year.



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

D

2007 Budget

The budget has been reviewed and agreed by the Trustees.

The Trustees believe the level of the budget deficit is unsustainable in the future. It was agreed with considerable reluctance for 2007 and only on the basis that there are savings coming through from Catch the Vision i.e.

1. General Assembly every two years, average of £100k. per annum
2. Full cost of YCWT's borne by Synods, £280k. per annum
3. Modest savings in discretionary expenditure particularly on committees.

On the income side, it was noted that Synods are finding it difficult to increase their Ministry and Mission Fund contributions. Overall pledges seemed to have reached a plateau.

On the expenditure side, Synods have ^{been asked} ~~agreed~~ to bear the full non-salary costs of YCWT's in 2007. A Consultation is being held with Synods to consider meeting the full costs of YCWT's in 2008.

Provision has been made in the budget for stipend increases of 3.2% and salary increases of 3.5%. The Trustees believe these are the only sustainable figures in view of the budget deficit. If any higher figures are considered, they can only be at the expense of real reductions in expenditure elsewhere.

Eric Chilton

20th September 2006

Trustees don't like deficit
reduced deficit over 2 or 3 yrs.
Pledges should be frozen - on a plateau.
Scope for greater commit. to Mission
Mins' stipends have been held on 3 → 3.2%
bec of reduced number of mins + underspends.

put back £50K
+ defer transfer of
funds re YCWTs
until 2008.

If this were a normal year, trustees would
have said if normal deficit - Min stip 1.5%
but want to keep value of min at normal
level - 3.3% - only bec of this rather
than normal

2007 BUDGET

	Actual 2004 £'000 restated	Actual 2005 £'000	Budget 2006 £'000	Proposed Budget 2007 £'000
EXPENDITURE				
MINISTRY				
Local and special ministries and CRCWs	15,610	15,505	15,588	15,766
Synod moderators - stipends and expenses	556	551	573	598
Ministries committee	220	226	266	269
	16,386	16,282	16,427	16,633
TRAINING				
College training for stipendiary ministry	1,088	1,110	1,176	1,166
Other training for stipendiary ministry	203	176	192	191
Training for non-stipendiary ministry	114	91	130	110
Lay training costs	75	85	95	85
Training committee	128	155	138	143
	1,608	1,617	1,731	1,695
OTHER MISSION ACTIVITIES				
Grants & Loans group	112	102	120	120
Ecumenical committee and international	533	477	566	538
Church and Society committee	99	70	92	96
Racial Justice programme	79	98	93	99
Life and Witness committee	92	90	106	45
Windermere Centre	101	116	82	85
Youth and Children's Work committee	176	208	268	238
Central cost of Youth and Children's Work trainers	169	227	272	225
Yardley Hastings	27	32	0	0
Pilots Development	74	81	92	102
Other committees	14	15	16	16
	1,476	1,516	1,707	1,564
SUPPORT ACTIVITIES				
General Assembly and Mission Council	261	284	294	308
Communication and Editorial	271	242	336	293
Finance office	268	352	375	324
Central secretariat	246	280	272	278
Professional fees	46	79	88	95
I.T. Services	62	41	92	95
URC House costs	203	256	267	269
General church costs	80	77	92	88
	1,437	1,611	1,816	1,750
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	20,907	21,026	21,681	21,642

2007 BUDGET

	Actual 2004 £'000	Actual 2005 £'000	Budget 2006 £'000	Proposed Budget 2007 £'000
INCOME				
MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS				
	19,691	19,932	20,185	20,111
INVESTMENT INCOME				
Dividends	259	172	255	220
Interest	67	136	0	50
	326	308	255	270
GRANTS RECEIVABLE				
Memorial Hall Trust	315	315	315	315
New College London Trust	286	318	290	290
	601	633	605	605
LEGACIES				
	631	213	0	0
OTHER INCOME				
Donations	50	0	0	0
Sundry	23	28	10	10
	73	28	0	10
PROFIT ON SALE OF PROPERTIES and by transfer				
	1,096	100	-	-
	50	199	-	-
TOTAL INCOME	22,468	21,413	21,055	20,996
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCE	1,561	387	(626)	(646)
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) as % of M&M Income		1.94	(3.10)	(3.21)



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

E

Equal Opportunities Committee
New Policy

The URC Equal Opportunities Policy was approved by General Assembly in 1994. Since then the law relating to discrimination has extended in its terms and scope considerably. This has included:

- Amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Sex Equality (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 extending the scope of the Sex Discrimination Act
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Therefore given our current outdated policy and our duty as an employer, the URC Equal Opportunities Policy requires updating to reflect the changes in discrimination legislation. The Equal Opportunities Committee has been working on a ^{an updated} new policy and the final draft is attached for Mission Council's approval and adoption¹. Previous drafts of the policy have been circulated to our legal advisers and the Synod Moderators for their comments. The result of such work and consultation is the policy before you.

Should the ^{updated} new policy be approved, the Equal Opportunities Committee will thereafter work on and produce guidelines/procedures to assist all in implementing the policy.

This policy is not just a bit of paper that has been produced so that "boxes can be ticked". It is something that we all need to embrace and implement as we seek to be an inclusive Christian community.

Together lets move from Law to Love!

MMM

Convenor, Equal Opportunities Committee
September 2006

¹ In terms of Resolution 17 passed at General Assembly 2005 namely
General Assembly resolves that Mission Council, acting in the name of General Assembly, shall have the authority by a single resolution of that council to make as and when necessary and with immediate effect such changes to any part of the Equal Opportunities policy as are, on the advice of the legal advisors to the United Reformed Church, required to bring that policy into line with the general law of the land consequent upon any changes in legislation and/or case law

Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

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

Statement of intent

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

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy Statement

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

- Build inclusive communities where all will be treated with dignity and respect and have equality of opportunity to contribute their gifts to the common life;
- Identify and remove barriers to participation in employment, training, promotion, leadership and representation on church committees and in the attitudes and actions of every congregation;
- Take positive action to counter attitudes and practices contrary to this statement of intent ;
- Define within the law when being of a particular religion or belief is a requirement for any post within the church.
- Develop detailed policies to give effect to these requirements; and
- Monitor and report on progress in fulfilling these requirements.

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

June 2006



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

F

Racial Justice & Multicultural Ministry Audit
Interim Report

Catch the Vision... Towards a new spirituality for the 21st century

"Celebrate the multicultural vision of a Church characterised by justice and mutual respect and encourage the development of multicultural churches and communities as an essential part of the way we are church." (Catch the Vision Report to Assembly 2005, p.9)

- 1 Introduction
- 1.1 The Catch the Vision Report to General Assembly 2005 affirmed the development of multicultural churches and communities as an essential part of being church, and recognised multiculturalism as 'one of the foundations of our spirituality'. General Assembly prophetically responded by declaring the United Reformed Church to be a multicultural church, and committed to practical steps for developing multicultural ministry (Resolutions 52 and 34 a - e).
- 1.2 Resolution 34 (d) required the Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry committee to conduct an audit for the presence of barriers to full participation of minority ethnic people in the life of the church and to report to the October 2006 Mission Council.

Resolution 34 Developing Multicultural Ministry

(d) General Assembly authorises the Committee for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry to conduct an audit of church structures, policies, procedures and practices for the presence of barriers to full participation of minority ethnic people, and to report with recommendations to Mission Council no later than October 2006.

- 1.3 The Churches Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ) agreed to lead the audit and for the Commission General Secretary, Revd Arlington Trotman, to chair an ecumenical audit group to carry out this task. A series of meetings took place in the autumn of 2005 in which members of the audit group were confirmed and the methodology and audit process were set. The commission was also going through a restructuring process in late autumn 05. By early spring 2006 it became clear that CCRJ's continuing involvement in the URC audit was too difficult to maintain.
- 1.4 The Southwark Diocese had gone through a similar audit in recent years and was currently going through a follow up process. In mid-spring 2006 Bishop Tom

Butler warmly agreed to Mr Delbert Sandiford, Executive Officer for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns for Southwark Diocese, working with us.

- 1.5 The March 2006 Mission Council agreed to the Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry committee's proposal that Resolution 34 c) be included in the audit process. There are overlapping issues in both parts of the resolution that the audit group would have had to look at as part of its task.

Resolution 34 Developing Multicultural Ministry

c) General Assembly instructs the Secretaries for Training, Ministries and Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry to evaluate the accessibility to minority ethnic people of the systems of candidacy and training for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Church Related Community Workers, lay preachers and lay leaders, and to report with recommendations to Mission Council no later than March 2006.

Further, the audit group was asked to report on both parts c) and d) of Resolution 34 to Mission Council in October 2006.

2 The Audit Process

- 2.1 The new ecumenical Audit Group first met in May 2006. At this and subsequent meetings detailed lines of enquiry have been agreed, and the gathering of information is in progress. It became very clear to the group that the tasks it has undertaken demand more time than the resolution allowed. The issues are complex and the gathering of information depends very much on when church councils, committees, groups, networks, and individuals can meet. In order for the group to fulfil its tasks responsibly it must take the time to consult as widely as possible. This is critical if the Group is to present to the church a balanced and accurate report with appropriate recommendations.
- 2.2 So far the Group has consulted with synod Training Officers, the Secretary for Ministries, the Secretary for Training, the convener of the Equal Opportunities committee, and the Secretary for Life and Witness. The Group has also reviewed ministry information packs, synod local church leadership course materials, and evaluated the contents of "Reform" magazine for cultural inclusiveness.
- 2.3 The Group is very aware that it has a lot more work to do. A series of meetings with key stake holders is being planned to take place over the next few months, and further data gathered. Other written materials are currently being evaluated and some responses from committees and individuals already consulted with are forthcoming. The Group is aiming to complete its work by March 2007.

3 Emerging Observations

3.1 Based on the information gathered and consultations made thus far, the Group offers the following emerging observations. It needs reiterating that while these observations may give helpful insights about some areas of the church's life, they do not represent the whole picture. Until our research tasks are complete we can only offer what seem to be emerging so far:

- By and large the publicity materials and information packs reflect a diverse and inclusive church in terms of images portrayed on the covers. In regards to content, there is recognition of diversity with regards to gender, class, education, church tradition, theology, and disability, but race-ethnic diversity is markedly absent.
- There is little evidence of more intentional and systematic approach to ensuring visible representation and participation of black and minority ethnic people at the various levels and structures of the church's life and practice. The same picture seems to be emerging in relation to church policies and procedures. Such intentional and systematic approach is critical if the church is truly serious about developing multicultural ministry.
- There is a need for racism awareness and cross-cultural training for all church professionals involved in education, training and learning in the life of the church. The outcome of the consultation with Training Officers affirmed this point and the Training Officers were keen that as a group they be given such training. The Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry Committee, in response to the Assembly 2005 Resolutions on Developing Multicultural Ministry, has produced training resources for this purpose and they are available for the whole church.

These are: The Multicultural Ministry Toolkit for equipping the whole church to grow and develop multicultural churches and communities; and *We Belong* specifically for racism awareness and cross-cultural training in a sensitive, respectful, open and safe environment. Details from the Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry office.

- 'Reform' magazine reflects cultural diversity and inclusiveness but this is driven by the world mission outlook of the URC. The greater proportion of these images is related to international issues e.g. poverty in Jamaica, the work of Christian Aid in Nicaragua etc. There is rather less mention or representation of BME members in the UK. This is a problem because the cumulative effect of such images send out the message that black and minority ethnic people are to be found overseas only when in fact they are right here and are active members of the United Reformed Church. It is the continuing misconception that the world church is out there in far off lands, not right here on our doorstep.

4 Conclusion

The Audit Group is very committed to carrying out its tasks responsibly. To that end it brings this report to the October 2006 Mission Council as an interim report asking that it be given more time to complete its research and consultations appropriately. It is also envisaged by the Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry committee that much of

the content and findings of the audit process will be central to its own report to General Assembly in 2007. The Group and the Committee therefore asks Mission Council to support the following proposal:

Resolution

Mission Council affirms the work of the Audit Group and gives it further leave to complete its work and to bring its final report and recommendations on Developing Multicultural Ministry Resolution 34 c) and d) to Mission Council in March 2007.

Membership of the Ecumenical Audit Group:

Rev Wale Hudson-Roberts, Racial Justice Co-ordinator, the Baptist Union;

Michelle Marcano, URC Personnel Secretary;

Delbert Sandiford, Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns, Southwark Diocese; (Chair)

Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry

Rev Fiona Thomas, Training Officer, URC Thames North Synod.

Committee for Racial Justice & Multicultural Ministry

Convener: Revd Andrew Prasad

Secretary: Katalina Tahaafe-Williams

September 2006



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

G

Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act
27th March 2007

Church and Society: Life and Witness: Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry

The 27th March 2007 marks the two hundredth anniversary of the British Act of Parliament that ended four centuries of shameful British involvement in the slave trade which transported at least fifteen million¹ African men, women and children to *Britain, Europe, the Americas and elsewhere* in slavery. *It is important to note that this figure does not include the thousands who perished en route, were lost in wars, those left behind to die - (as only able-bodied men, women and children were taken), nor those from Asia and the South Pacific who were captured and enslaved. The magnitude of the destruction to lives, families, communities and societies and the long term consequences to those victims, their families, descendants, and their countries is unimaginable even by today's standards.*

The bicentenary is a time to celebrate, and it is also a time for honest and open reassessment of what has changed in the last two hundred years. The economic wealth and power of the West and indeed of Britain both in the past and today is directly connected to the slave trade and the colonisation of many indigenous peoples and their lands throughout the world. It was the huge profits from the slave trade and sugar cultivation (by forced labour of slaves in the plantations) that made possible Britain's industrial revolution. Funds accumulated from the slave and sugar trades financed "...James Watt's steam engine, the south Wales iron and coal industries, the south Yorkshire iron industry, the north Wales slate industry, the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, and the Great Western Railway."² For most of the eighteenth century Bristol became England's second city, and Liverpool the greatest of the slaving ports, due to the success of the slave trade. The merchant Joshua Gee wrote in 1729:

*"The supplying our Plantations with Negroes is of that extraordinary Advantage to us...Plantations...are the great Cause of the Increase of the Riches of the Kingdom... All this great Increase of our Treasure proceeds chiefly from the Labour of Negroes in the Plantations."*³

The anniversary celebrations can be hollow and lose integrity without clear acknowledgement that the slave trade made possible the political, economic and cultural dominance Britain and the Western world continue to enjoy in the world today. It is a

¹ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, University of North Carolina Press, 1944, p.63

² Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, London Pluto Press, 1984, p.16

³ Joshua Gee, *The Trade and Navigation of Great-Britain Considered*, Sam Buckley, 1729, pp.25, 126

reminder that the black peoples of Africa, the descendants of African slaves in Britain, Europe, the Americas and other parts of the world still suffer the consequences of slavery, physically and psychologically, through racist attitudes, economic exploitation and impoverishment. It is a reminder of the need for us in the West to consider our part in the creation of today's world poverty and the large-scale migration of the poor. It also serves to highlight the fact that a different form of slavery exists today in which people are trafficked for the purposes of prostitution and labour exploitation, and it is our responsibility to do all we can to expose and help eradicate that.

Whilst many Christians were active in the abolition movement, sadly, many more Christians and Churches were not only slow to speak out against the evil of slavery, but were actively involved - and profited from - the slave trade. At a time when religious dissent came to be accepted and tolerated in Britain, researchers have not found a single record of any dissenter of our reformed traditions actively engaged in the fight to end the enslavement of Africans.

As Britain prepares for the 2007 bicentenary of the Act to abolish the slave trade in the British colonies, an Act responding, in part, to a campaign involving many from British churches, our three committees believe this to be an opportunity for the United Reformed Church to prayerfully reflect about this tragic part of our shared history and how it impacts not only our present but our future as well. We believe this to be a God-given opportunity for the United Reformed Church, sharing in this history with our predecessors, to repent, seek forgiveness and reconciliation with our African sisters and brothers in our churches and beyond, for the sake of the healing, wholeness and unity of the Body of Christ. While deeply regretting our part in this grim history, we also express our total rejection of any form of slavery declaring it to be an abuse of human life and contrary to God's purposes for God's Kingdom.

We therefore ask that Mission Council:

- ✓ 1. Encourages synods and local churches to mark the 200th Anniversary of the Act to abolish the slave trade, ecumenically if possible, making use of worship resources, such as those prepared by the *Set All Free* project of Churches Together in England, Churches Commission for Racial Justice, and the URC Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry Committee.
- ✓ 2. Asks Church and Society, Life and Witness and Racial Justice and Multi-Cultural Ministry committees to liaise with Assembly Arrangements committee over an appropriate form of commemoration of the anniversary, during General Assembly 2007, that would include a formal statement of *deep regret*⁴ in recognition of Britain's involvement and specifically the links that our own predecessors had to the slave trade.
3. Support the proposal for a UK annual Anti-Slavery Memorial⁵ Day by -

⁴ On 8 February 2006 the General Synod of the Church of England voted to apologise for its role in the Slave Trade

⁵ A 'memorial' day would emphasise the enslavement of Africans which consequences continue to influence the lives of their descendants both in Africa and diaspora today. Contemporary forms of slavery will be included in the 'memorial day' but it is first and foremost about the enslavement of Africans and indigenous peoples.

- including the date in our Church calendar and asking all our churches to observe this date, remembering the past and present victims of the slave trade,
- commit to working for justice and peace for all the peoples whose lives and livelihood continue to be affected by the consequences of the slave trade, and
- commit to exposing and eradicating all contemporary forms of slavery today

Set All Free www.setallfree.net

Churches Commission for Racial Justice www.ctbi.org.uk/ccrj

Church and Society www.urch.org.uk > Our Work > Church and Society

Racial Justice and Multi-Cultural Ministry www.urch.org.uk > Our Work > Racial Justice and Multi-Cultural Ministry

Life and Witness www.urch.org.uk . Our Work > Life and Witness

Church and Society

Convener: Simon Loveitt (from July 06)

Secretary: Stuart Dew

Life and Witness

Convener: Peter Ball

Secretary: John Steele

Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry

Convener: Andrew Prasad

Secretary: Katalina Tahaafe-Williams

75% GNP by Slave Trade
 - didn't drive Slave Trade
 - Slavery continues today
 > adopt Fairtrade
 but
 "Mazdan/Priest"

Phileman
 used as argument for and
against slavery,

> use "commemorate" not "celebrate".



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

H

Resolution on Trident

The United Reformed Church has historically been opposed to the use of nuclear power for warlike purposes. General Assembly passed a resolution to that effect as long ago as 1983 and it remains in force. That resolution called for the cancellation of the (then) proposed Trident nuclear submarine programme.

This year, the URC produced, jointly with the Methodist Church, the report 'Peacemaking: a Christian Vocation'. This urges church members to oppose the renewal of the UK's Trident nuclear deterrent and to "make bold and immediate steps" to meet its disarmament obligations in full. The report was adopted by URC General Assembly, and commended as a helpful guide for church leaders who may be called upon to comment upon ethical considerations relating to war and peace.

A decision will be taken on the renewal of the UK's Trident programme within the next few months. Recent public comments by senior politicians encourage the view that the decision may be made sooner, rather than later.

Individuals and organisations, who have various views about Trident, but who share a concern that there should be a full a public and parliamentary debate before any decision is taken, have come together to form a "Big Trident Debate" group. The group has issued a public statement (see www.bigtridentdebate.org.uk) which says that government has a responsibility to facilitate a thorough, national consultation. This dialogue should inform the decision-making process and take place before the Government makes any decision on the way forward. The statement says government should publish comprehensive information and analysis on all the key issues, including nuclear and non-nuclear options, current and future perceived threats to the UK, the deterrent capability of nuclear weapons to address such threats, estimated costs for each option, international obligations and implications for nuclear proliferation.

Organisations that have so far committed to support the Group's statement include CND, War on Want, Greenpeace and the Green Party.

Mission Council is invited to:

Express the support of the United Reformed Church for the Big Trident Debate group - this support to be expressed jointly with colleague Churches, if possible.

Call upon the UK government to publish comprehensive information on all key issues, including both nuclear and non-nuclear options, so that there can be an informed public and parliamentary debate before any decision is taken.

Re-affirm its opposition to Britain having ^a ~~an independent~~ Trident nuclear weapons programme.

Ask the Church and Society committee, acting with colleague Churches if possible, to encourage church members to write to their MP/ ^{✓ MSP} expressing opposition to the renewal of Trident.



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

ADD

Additional Business

A. Nominations Committee

1. Director of Communications

A nominating group convened by the Revd Dr Stephen Orchard has nominated the Revd Martin Hazell for the post of Director of Communications.

Resolution: Mission Council appoints the Revd Martin Hazell to the post of Director of Communications for a period of five years from 1 January 2007 to 31st December 2011.

Monitoring

The Committee continues to strive to meet various criteria for balance within the membership of committees. Recent checks suggest that the balance of male/female and ordained/lay is roughly even (though not necessarily proportional).

The issue of minority ethnic representation continues to be a concern. The strategy called for at the 2005 Assembly has yet to be devised, as have guidelines for identifying and encouraging those from ethnic minorities. It has, in fact, proved difficult to set up the necessary discussions with the Equal Opportunities and Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministries Committees, but it is hoped there will be a meeting in the near future to take these matters forward. Involvement of people from minority ethnic groups seems particularly lacking in relation to Boards, Panels, governing bodies and Mission Council itself. Stephen Orchard's paper (A3) refers to the way in which the timing of meetings often militates against lay, and probably also some minority ethnic, involvement.

In seeking names of suitable people of all backgrounds to approach, the Committee is almost entirely dependent on suggestions coming through synod representatives on the Committee, though suggestions from elsewhere are also always welcome. We are grateful, for instance, for a recent substantial list from FURY. The balance of membership on committees is inevitably limited by the range of names coming forward and is finally determined by the mix of those approached and who accept nomination. Names are especially needed at this time of year as committee vacancies are considered in detail in November.

3. General Assembly

The decision at the 2006 Assembly to hold Assemblies in alternate years from 2008 has implications for the work of Nominations Committee. The committee has

offered to the Catch the Vision steering group some comments on whether committee appointments should continue to be made on an annual basis, or whether biennially, and also on the method of selecting the two additional past-Moderators to serve at each Assembly. The Committee has concerns about the implementation of the process for the appointment of Trustees, which is outlined in paper C1.

B. Ethical Investment Advisory Group

Matthew Prevett has resigned as secretary and as a member of the Group. Stuart Dew, Secretary for Church and Society, has taken over the role of secretary. As Matthew was originally a FURY nominee, the new secretary has been asked to liaise with FURY and with the Youth office, to identify another nominee, to be reported to Mission Council in due course.

The Group seeks also to appoint Simon Loveitt, Convenor of Church and Society, and Melanie Frew, Convener of Commitment for Life, as members.

Mission Council is invited to approve these appointments

c. Declaration of a Safe Church (progress report)

1. Review of the "Declaration of a Safe Church" - Resolution 40 (General Assembly 2006)

It was the particular issue of sexual harassment and abuse, as highlighted in the CTBI Report "Time for Action", that triggered the challenge to the church that abusive behaviour between adults has to be recognised and declared to be unacceptable, just as much as that against children. This resulted in the "Declaration of a Safe Church" which was accepted by Assembly in 2005 and forwarded to churches for affirmation and application. The response to the Declaration, although broadly positive, raised a number of issues, and in particular:

- a) the wording of the Declaration caused some difficulty in one or two places and could be misleading about what was expected of the local church
- b) several local churches and also synods expressed the view that the concept of "safe church" needed to be broadened out to include other aspects of abusive behaviour, (possibly also health and safety issues). This was highlighted in Resolution 40 which came to General Assembly 2006 following an initiative from FURY and which called for the Declaration to be revisited with a view to extending its provisions.

A small group representing the "Time for Action" response group, the sexual ethics review group and FURY is looking at this and hopes to be able to bring an appropriate response to Mission Council in 2007.

2) Proposed Policy and Procedures for implementation at General Assembly and within Synods.

It is evident that Synods are fully in agreement about the urgency of moving forward on the particular issue of tackling sexual harassment and abuse in the church, and considerable progress has been made on agreeing an overall policy which can be put in place and applied at Synod level.

At the same time, work is being done on an outline training programme for use within Synods, aimed at local churches and ministers.

The proposed policy document also includes procedures for dealing with incidents arising at Assembly and within Assembly Committees or sub-groups.

Further work is currently being done on the Policy and Procedures document in the light of comments received and it is hoped to produce a final version early in 2007.

Recommendation

It is now evident that this whole issue has to be recognised by Mission Council as a core concern and that, if a proper Policy and Procedure is to be adopted, it has to relate to a recognised body which can oversee the implementation of the policy and monitor its application, noting that incidents which arise may involve not only ordained ministers, but also a wide range of others within the church.

We recommend that Mission Council should consider the establishment of such a group; its brief to include

- (a) the finalisation of an agreed Policy and Procedures for adoption, together with guidelines on its implementation (in particular the selection, training, and role of Synod Advisers)
- (b) consideration of how to respond to calls for a broader-based policy relating to a range of aspects of abusive behaviour and whether these could be brought under one umbrella, e.g. by incorporation into the "Good Practice Guidelines" under specialist headings, together with a revised "Declaration" for use on church notice boards.

Sheila Brain - October 2006

Note: As discussions are continuing between this group and the Steering Group (convened by Carla Grosch-Miller) on the implementation of Resolution 40, Mission Council is asked to note the progress and concerns reported in this paper, and to await further specific proposals to be brought to the January 2007 Mission Council - R.A.



MISSION COUNCIL
3-5 October 2006

ADD 2

Additional Business - 2

On the Report from the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee regarding the level of stipend etc for 2007

MINISTERIAL REMUNERATION

Recommendation to Mission Council concerning the stipend level for 2007

Mission Council will set the level of the basic stipend for 2007 at its meeting in October 2006.

Draft Resolution: Mission Council sets the basic stipend for 2007 at £20,460.

The Maintenance of the Ministry sub-committee has reviewed the latest available inflation indices and has also considered the levels and rates of increase of stipends in the other major denominations in the United Kingdom.

In August 2006, the Retail Price Index (RPI) was 3.4 % higher than the year before and the RPIX (RPI excluding mortgage interest) was up 3.3 %. The latest average earnings index (for July) was 3.7 % higher than the year before. 2.7%

The various denominations review their stipends at different times in the year. One denomination made an increase of 2.8% and another denomination went up 4 %. The basic stipend paid by the United Reformed Church is higher than the current minimum / basic stipends of the Anglican, Baptist and Methodist Churches.

The basic stipend in 2006 is £19,788. Taking all the above factors into consideration, the recommendation is that this should be increased by 3.4 % (rounded) to £20,460 in 2007.

The Church's budget for 2007 has not been used in arriving at this recommendation. Financial constraints in the Church might affect the number of ministers that the Church could afford to pay but it should not affect what is paid to individual ministers. The 2007 budget assumes a 3.2 % increase in the stipend level.

Other grants and allowances

The Maintenance of the Ministry sub-committee has approved increases to the child allowances and associated income limits at the same rate as stipends are increased. It has approved increases to resettlement grants and ordination loans from £2666 to £2700.

ADD 3

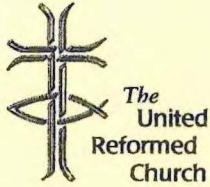
MISSION COUNCIL

3-5 October 2006

Additional Business – 3

Age Discrimination

Having regard to the provisions of the Age Discrimination Act and Regulations to be produced in respect of pension schemes, Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, agrees to amend the Rules of the URC Ministers' Pension Fund with effect from 1 December 2006 or such later date as the Regulations come into effect to the extent needed to ensure that no additional liabilities fall upon the Fund as a result of the Act. Mission Council directs the Trustees of the Church to do all things necessary to achieve this objective in conjunction with the URC Ministers' Pension Trust. Mission Council notes that this may impact adversely in respect of future service of some members and that consideration be given to any such individuals affected.



Stewardship sub-committee

Convener: Ray McHugh (Yorkshire Synod)
Members: John Durell (Northern Synod)
Gareth Curl (South Western Synod)
Sarah Simpson (Mersey Synod)
Jackie Haws (Thames North Synod)
Sue Wilkinson (North Western Synod)

Terms of Reference - always remembering that Christian Stewardship is our response to the grace of God in Jesus Christ, to promote the concept of Christian Stewardship and enable the development of resources which support the practical implementation of Christian Stewardship in order to further the mission of the church.

This Committee believes -

- ✦ that there should be a holistic approach to stewardship based on a biblical foundation
- ✦ that there should be a consistent message coming from the church
- ✦ that local churches should be offered help in the holistic understanding of stewardship
- ✦ that the Stewardship Sunday material should focus on a holistic approach

A few resources:

The Life and Witness website has -

The Christian Stewardship Handbook

ACT - (a tool box to dip into)

TRIO (The responsibility is ours)

This is still the most successful financial programme. It is used by other denominations as well as our own. There is now an animated version as well as an acetate version. There is also a follow up.

Coming soon.....

A workshop aimed to help develop a Church's understanding of how a mission focus can be enhanced by good stewardship if the big picture of using all our resources is better understood and recognised in the context of the bible.

Questions for Group discussion following the presentation on Stewardship

- 1 What do you consider to be the stewardship issues the church is in danger of forgetting and what message would we wish to convey to the church at this time?
- 2 What do Mission Council see as the role of the Stewardship Sub Committee in the Catch the Vision process?
- 3 If the Stewardship Sunday material were to come from Ministry and Mission churches will assume a financial focus. How can stewardship be rescued for an over emphasis on financial issues?



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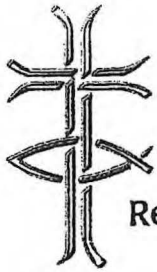
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A workshop aimed to help develop a Church's understanding of how a mission focus can be enhanced by good stewardship if the big picture of using all our resources is better understood and recognised in the context of the bible.

Questions for Group discussion following the presentation on Stewardship

- 1 What do you consider to be the stewardship issues the church is in danger of forgetting and what message would we wish to convey to the church at this time?
- 2 What do Mission Council see as the role of the Stewardship Sub Committee in the Catch the Vision process?
- 3 If the Stewardship Sunday material were to come from Ministry and Mission churches will assume a financial focus. How can stewardship be rescued for an over emphasis on financial issues?



The
United
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Church

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Deputy General Secretary: *The Revd Raymond Adams*

To all Assembly Committee Conveners and Staff Secretaries

26th September 2006

Dear Colleague

Please find enclosed a paper which David Cornick wrote last year outlining the relationship and respective responsibilities of Committee conveners and staff secretaries. Although this was produced in consultation with staff, there has never been an opportunity to discuss it with conveners.

It is planned that at Mission Council there will be such an opportunity, when conveners and secretaries can meet together, and this document (which is a discussion paper) will form part of the agenda. David will also update conveners on plans for reorganising our internal structures under the *Catch the Vision* process.

The meeting will take place on Wednesday 4th October at 5.30 p.m. (at the end of the afternoon session of Mission Council).

With good wishes

Yours sincerely

The Revd Ray Adams
Deputy General Secretary

Proposed guidelines for Assembly Committee convenors and Staff secretaries

Mission Council Advisory Group requested a paper which sets out the duties of Convenors and Secretaries of Committees because there seems to be a variety of practices across Committees and some degree of comparability might be helpful. This paper is an attempt to establish some guidelines for convenors and secretaries. It recognises that the range and remit of committees varies considerably, and that the working relationship between convenors and secretaries must be negotiated. This paper provides the basis for such a conversation.

1. The model on which the church presently operates is pseudo-Parliamentary. That is to say, it assumes that the Convenor of a Committee is its public, political face in Mission Council and Assembly. Assembly staff (with the exception of the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary) do not have a voice in those meetings.
I have long felt that this is a strange model for a church, given the depth of expertise of some staff secretaries, but it would not be wise to work towards a change of ethos until we know what the *Catch the vision* structures group will recommend as the pattern for our future government.
2. If the Convenor is the 'politician', the (staff) Secretary is the civil servant. That means that the Secretary must have an extensive, in-depth knowledge of their subject area, and be responsible for briefing the Convenor. A wise Convenor will rely heavily on the knowledge of the Secretary and will usually be guided by them. The model would suggest that policy is the responsibility of neither the Convenor nor the Secretary, but the Committee. Committees are appointed by the Assembly, and are responsible to Assembly for work in specific areas. It would not be too much to say that they are the Assembly in that specific work. However, this is the ideal rather than the reality. Some committees fail completely to get to grips with policy. In others the officers define policy outside the committee. In yet others there is a heavy reliance on the staff secretary to 'drive' policy.
3. Pursuing the model further in spite of this, the Secretary should be responsible for:
 - Preparing Committee agendas (nb. This assumes that the staff secretary is the committee secretary, which is not so in all cases. Might it be sensible to shift this responsibility to staff secretaries?)
 - Gathering or providing briefing papers to the Committee
 - Taking the minutes of meetings and circulating them, after they have been cleared for accuracy by the convenor
 - Dealing with routine correspondence and administration, although where matters of policy are concerned it may be appropriate for the convenor to respond
 - Preparing the first draft of the report to Assembly, and then revising it in collaboration with the convenor in the light of the Committee's direction.
4. The convenor should be responsible for:

- Chairing Committee meetings
 - Helping the Committee formulate policy
 - Dealing with exceptional correspondence, especially where this is about policy rather than practice
 - Revising the report to Assembly in collaboration with the Secretary (see above). This is particularly important because the Convenor has to be the 'voice' of the Committee at Assembly, and the report must enable him/her to do that.
 - Presenting the Committee's work at Mission Council and Assembly.
5. One question, which inevitably arises, is the respective roles of line managers and Committee convenors. Most staff secretaries are either responsible to more than one Committee, or have job descriptions which include more responsibilities than simply handing the work of Committees. The church must manage them with clarity and efficiency, not least so that they don't impair their health through overwork. The Deputy General Secretary is the line manager for the Assembly Team. He is responsible for the annual appraisal of the team. It has recently been established that there should be consultation between the staff secretary and his/here convenor prior to the Team member's annual appraisal. However, appraisals are confidential, and feedback to convenors should only happen with the consent of the appraisee.
6. Policy is at present the responsibility of Committees, and the Committees (through their convenors) should work out what the work priorities are for a given period (say a year) with the staff secretaries, always bearing in mind that the Team member will have a wider remit than the Committee. Those goals will in turn become part of the staff secretary's annual appraisal
7. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that good communication is vital to the success of our work, and that conversations between convenors and secretaries should be frequent and regular. However, if the relationship between a convenor and a staff Secretary breaks down, there should be recourse to mediation by either the Deputy General Secretary or the General Secretary.
8. The question of whether a structure of Committees and secretaries is outmoded is one for the CTV process.
9. Suggested good practice for convenors:
- a) **Consultation:** Be a team player - so that you don't pull policy out of your own head when speaking in public. It is important for the convenor to make an informed contribution to the councils of the Church.
 - b) **Chairing skills:** convene meetings well. Use the gifts and experience of the people on your committee, and help them work together as a policy-making and policy-critical group.
 - c) **Co-operation:** work on relationships with your staff secretary - especially on areas of shared responsibilities. Some convenors give greater attention to detail than others - some convenorships require this, others don't.
 - d) **Commitment:** Be committed to the task as long as you are doing it. (4-5 years may be enough for heavily committed people).

- e) **Characteristics:** Understand the particular characteristics of your committee: its range of responsibilities - some have to manage a more complicated set of relationships than others, and therefore the demands on convenors vary a great deal.
- f) **Assembly process:** Understand the role of the committee in relation to Mission Council and General Assembly: a convenor has to get things through and must understand the dynamics of the process. *(N.B. There is plenty of advice around -R.A.)*
- g) **Preparation** for committee meetings is as important as turning up!

DGC Oct 05 (revised September 2006)