

## MISSION COUNCIL MARCH 7-9 2008

### MINUTES

Mission Council met at All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney, from Friday 7th March to Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2008. Present with the Moderator were 71 voting members and 16 others in attendance.

#### **Session One**

Mission Council was convened by the Moderator, the Revd Dr Stephen Orchard, who invited the Chaplain, the Revd Lucy Brierley, to lead opening worship.

#### **Welcome**

The Moderator welcomed everyone present and offered a special welcome to those attending for the first time or in a new capacity:

#### **Welcome**

Mr Justice Semuli (Northern); the Revds David Fox and Dr Peter Cruchley-Jones (Wales); Ms Francis Brienan (Secretary for Mission); the Revd Ed Cox (Convener of the Mission Committee); Mrs Barbara Bruce (Scotland); the Revd Kevin Watson (Synod Moderator, Yorkshire); Mr Duncan Smith (East Midlands); Mr James Wickens (FURY moderator); Dr David Robinson (Convener-elect, Assembly Arrangements Committee).

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

Ms Marie Trubic (North Western); Mr Donald Swift (Mersey); the Revd Jane Campbell (East Midlands); the Revd John Sanderson (Scotland); Mr Alan Small (Chair of Trustees); the Revds Carla Grosch-Miller (Convener of Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry); Graham Jones (Rural Officer); Ms Morag McLintock (Convener of Equal Opportunities); Ms Michelle Marcano, Mr Lawrence Moore, Ms Jo Williams (staff).

#### **08/17 Agenda**

The Deputy General Secretary introduced papers tabled for the meeting.

#### **08/18 Minutes**

The Minutes of the January Meeting were adopted as amended.

#### **08/19 Matters Arising**

i) *Relating Together, Worshipping Together, Life Together*. The leaflets discussed at the last meeting had been distributed to synods.

The Revd E Caswell took the Chair

ii) The Revd Dr Stephen Orchard presented the report of the General Secretary interviewing group and proposed the name of the Revd Roberta Rominger for the post.

**Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appointed the Revd Roberta Rominger as General Secretary from a date to be agreed with the Thames North Synod for a seven year period. The appointment was received with acclamation.**

The Revd Dr Stephen Orchard resumed the chair.

#### **08/20 Paper A - MCAG**

i) The Deputy General Secretary reported on the appointment of members to various groups and teams, and noted that a number of volunteers/nominations were still required. This was particularly important for the Human Sexuality Task Group.

ii) The General Secretary presented the Resolution:

**Mission Council agrees that up to 50% of the ministry of the Revd James Breslin which relates to his work as Assembly Clerk should be funded from the General Assembly budget for the remaining period of his appointment until the close of General Assembly 2012.**

**The Resolution was carried**

#### **Paper A1 - Election of Advisory Groups to Mission Council 2008-09**

In presenting the paper, the Deputy General Secretary notified Mission Council of the action needed to provide members for advisory groups.

#### **Paper A2 - Listed Buildings Advisory Group**

The Deputy General Secretary presented the annual report of the LBAG.

#### **Paper A3 - Inter-Synod Resource Sharing**

The Deputy General Secretary noted in presenting that this is one of the groups that require a new Convener. It was pointed out that 'the Centre' (page 1, point 8) should read 'the Retired Ministers Housing Society'.

#### **Paper A4 - Ethical Investment Advisory Group**

The Paper was presented by the Treasurer, Mr John Ellis.

#### **Papers A5, A5(i), A5(ii) - Section O Advisory Group**

The Clerk presented, and suggested that a small group examine the papers in detail and report back to Mission Council later in the meeting. The Treasurer suggested that papers G2 and G3 be also examined by this group. The meeting agreed and the group was appointed.

#### **Paper A6 - Grants and Loans Group**

The Deputy General Secretary Presented the paper.

#### **08/21 Paper B - London Synod Commission**

The Deputy General Secretary presented the report. The Moderators of Thames North and Southern Synods outlined past and current collaboration between the two synods. In the light of the work of the Partnership Forum the London Synod Commission concluded that detailed work on the implications of a London Synod should be deferred until the Partnership Forum had completed the first phase of its work. After brief debate, Mission Council accepted the report and its recommendations.

#### **08/22 Paper G1 - CRCWs and the Councils of the Church**

The Clerk presented the paper and moved adoption of the Resolutions:



1. Mission Council instructs the Clerk of Assembly, in consultation with the Ministries Committee and the CRCW Development Workers, to prepare alterations to the Structure of the United Reformed Church such as to grant membership of the relevant Councils of the Church to Church Related Community Workers.

2. Mission Council resolves to move in General Assembly that 'General Assembly appoints all serving CRCWs currently in post or commissioned between this date and the next ordinary meeting of the General Assembly to serve as additional members of the Synod in which they are based.'

The Resolutions were carried.

#### **08/23 Local Church Trusts**

The Clerk related the history of the drafting of a suitable document outlining local church constitutions. This was thought to be important in the context of changes to charity law. Further consultation with the Charity Commission will be required before this matter is finalised. It is intended to keep synods notified of progress.

#### **Session Two**

08/24 The Moderator led a panel discussion on 'Areas of Growth'.

#### **Session Three - Saturday Morning**

Worship was led by the Chaplain, and included the induction of Ms Francis Brienan to the post of Secretary for Mission.

#### **Welcome**

The Moderator welcomed Mr Ron Buford, visiting from the UCC.

#### **08/25 Papers D, D1, D2, D2(i) - Youth and Children's Work**

The Revd Neil Thorogood presented the papers. He noted that there were areas of growth in Youth and Children's Work throughout the United Reformed Church, and other areas of decline and loss.

The Moderator noted that there would be opportunity to discuss the papers in detail in groups.

#### **08/26 Paper C - Church and Society**

Mr Simon Loveitt presented paper C and highlighted a number of points.

#### **Session Four**

#### **08/27 Papers J, J1, J2, J3, J4 - Ministries Committee**

The Revd Peter Poulter presented. He outlined a proposed sliding scale of eligibility for application for retired ministers' housing based on years of service.

Mr John Ellis outlined the options for the church:

- a) that no action be taken because there is no crisis at the moment. There is a trend, however, which could lead to the need for drastic action in the future;
- b) assume that extra capital will appear to solve the problem;
- c) increase the regular income to the RMHS from the Ministry and Mission Fund
- d) accept the Ministries Committee's proposals.

The Treasurer maintained that the only guarantee given to ministers at present was that the society would provide housing for ministers with no other way of providing for their own accommodation. That would not change. What would change was the amount of money being provided. There was no means test, but manse families were consulted about the capital they are able to contribute. A new system for the newly-ordained would not produce savings for many years.

Mr Poulter also introduced Resolution M1 (paper J), Challenge to the Church.

Mission Council met in groups.

### **Session Five**

**08/28** The groups reported on their discussions on Papers J and J1 from the Ministries Committee. (notes of comments were kept and handed on to the committee)

John Ellis, responded to questions arising from the discussion about housing for retired ministers.

Peter Poulter, responding to the discussion about Paper J said that the outline did not intend to suggest that a strict inflexible pattern of local leadership should be adopted. This was *not* a blueprint, but an attempt to provide support and encouragement for synods and local congregations. He felt that some groups had not engaged with the real question, which was about the number of ordained stipendiary ministers needed. The Church could not achieve its present goals with existing numbers.

Peter Ball believed that the work done in the previous year on the leadership of elders needed to be revisited, compared with the present paper, and co-ordinated. The Secretary for Ministries believed that Elders issues should come under the Ministries Committee. This view received a positive response.

Mission Council asked Ministries Committees to take its views into consideration when preparing its report for General Assembly.

### **Session Six**

#### **08/29 Paper F - Mission Committee Report**

Ed Cox reported. The Committee had been charged to bring together the work of five former Assembly committees and had to form a coherent staff team within Church House. The greater task was a missiological one: i.e. to bring some kind of theological, missiological and practical coherence to what was a huge remit.

The Committee had to confirm all the work that already happening, and the staff team that was undertaking it. He noted the huge appetite and enthusiasm for looking afresh at the Church's mission. People were talking not about decline, but about sharing visions of the future. The Committee had met twice and done 3 things: it had

1. developed a series of '10 year outcomes'
2. defined a set of principles in setting priorities.

3. created a meeting programme for the rest of this year.

Pressing issues to be addressed included: Hope 08; 'God is still speaking'; a new resolution on black minority and ethnic representation at General assembly; a reconsideration of representation on ecumenical bodies; the Methodist/URC inter-faith reference group.

Mr Ron Buford briefly addressed Mission Council on 'God is Still Speaking'

The Revd Peter Colwell (convener of the Inter-faith relations committee) reported on progress with the Methodist/URC inter-faith reference group. (Paper F1)

The Clerk maintained that it was easy to find out about the major religions, we needed people who could offer advice and information about the minor religions;

Paper F2 (Racial Justice and Multicultural ministry): A question was asked about the meaning of 'black minority ethnic' membership. Should it be black *or* ethnic?

- In view of the unhelpful debate last year at General Assembly it was important to think carefully about wording, as well as the size of synod representation in the new structure.
- Mission Council was told that the Nominations Committee was attempting a skills audit, and that it was not always possible to identify people's ethnicity.

The Clerk commented on Resolution RJ2. If this were to be done, an ethnicity survey would need to be taken among members of Assembly 2008, and this needed to be decided now. Mission Council was in favour of this.

#### **08/30 Paper G2 - Rules of Procedure**

The Clerk noted two significant changes.

- 1) Appointment of tellers: Tellers should be appointed at the Assembly at which they will serve. This was agreed.
- 2) Paper G2, 1.5 should read 'When a synod cannot fill all its allotted places at Assembly its vacant seats may be filled from another synod bearing in mind the need to balance...etc.'
- 3) Concerning those who can speak in Assembly: he suggested that 2.2 line 2 should read: 'a registration card. In decision sessions, no member of the Assembly shall speak'. This was agreed.

The clerk also clarified the ballot procedure for the election of Assembly Moderators

7.2.3 It was agreed that synod moderators should be treated the same as other ministers in this context, though it was complicated by their fixed-term contracts

The Ministries Committee had been reviewing the principle of fixed-term appointments and would soon be ready to report.

#### **08/31 Paper G4 - Rules of Procedure: Appointment of a General Secretary and Deputy**

The Clerk reported, and presented alternative amendments to the rules for appointing a General Secretary.

The Revd Malcolm Hanson suggested a panel system as was presently used for appointing Synod Moderators. Mr Hanson moved that this be referred back.

It was agreed that a group should be convened to bring this matter to General Assembly 2008.



It was suggested that this be an appropriate time to consider whether the office of General Secretary might be open to candidates other than ministers.

#### **08/32 Paper H - Treasurer's Report**

Mr John Ellis presented the paper and moved resolutions A and B:

**A Mission Council, while thanking all those whose work on its Grants and Loans Group has assisted the mission of the Church, agrees that the Group should now be dissolved.**

**B Mission Council resolves to phase out by 2012 the demand on the Ministry and Mission Fund to provide funding for the former purposes of the Grants and Loans Group.**

**Resolutions A and B were carried**

#### **08/33 Paper H1 - Windermere**

Mr Ellis reported and moved adoption of Resolutions 1 and 2:

1. Mission Council believes that the annual financial support for the Windermere Centre revenue budget should normally be in the range £50k-£100k at 2008 prices.

A question was raised about the freehold of the Windermere site.

Mr Ellis responded that paragraph 11 alludes to the freehold question: negotiations are progressing satisfactorily towards a settlement agreeable to all parties.

The Treasurer was asked why such parameters are being set prior to the Education and Learning Committee review of Windermere's work. Following discussion, Mr Ellis suggested amending the resolution to apply only to the 2009 budget. Resolution 1 was then carried in the amended form:

**1. Mission Council believes that the annual financial support for the Windermere Centre 2009 revenue budget should be in the range £50k-£100k at 2008 prices.**

**Resolution 1 was carried as amended.**

2. **Mission Council delegates to MCAG authority to approve the link building at Carver Memorial Church provided that:**

- (i) **the plans have the support of the Carver Church Meeting, the NW Synod Trust, the Windermere Advisory Group, the Finance Committee, the Education and Learning Committee and the URC Trustees; and**
- (ii) **the total cost to be met by grants from central funds is not more than £250k**

**Resolution 2 was carried.**

#### **08/34 Paper E - Communications and Editorial**

The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe presented paper E. Mission Council advised that the Vision4Life material should be published in both electronic and paper formats.

In response to questions, Dr Thorpe expressed the hope that profiles of those involved with the process would appear in the relaunch issue of Reform.

PDF subscription downloads would be a challenge, but could be looked at.

It was suggested that the publishing policy might be revised to coincide with the Vision4Life years. ( Paper E page 2 – line 4 should read ‘ This policy will be reviewed in four years’. Manuscripts could be received in the way that other publishers do i.e. by submitting a synopsis and first chapter. The convener agreed to consider this, but the committee would wish to take its original proposal to General Assembly.

#### **08/35 Church and Society - Emergency Resolution on Gaza**

Mr Simon Loveitt presented an emergency resolution on Gaza. After discussion, it was agreed that the resolution should be re-drafted and considered later in the meeting.

The Moderator led Mission Council in prayer for Gaza.

#### **Session Seven**

##### **08/36 Paper J4 - The Ministerial Working week**

The Revd Peter Poulter presented the paper, outlining the deficiencies of the Plan for Partnership in defining ministerial time-management. The committee believed that this should be considered in terms of a longer period than a week. It was not an attempt to introduce time-sheets, but guidance to help minister to be aware of their work and life patterns.

Mr Poulter outlined the origins of papers J2, J3 and J4.

Mission Council met in groups.

Evening worship was led by the Chaplain.

#### **Session Eight - Sunday Morning**

The Chaplain and the Moderator led Mission Council in worship which included celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion.

##### **08/37 Papers J2, J3, and J4**

Groups reported on their discussions of the previous evening (notes have been kept and passed on to the relevant committee)

The Revd Peter Poulter responded. Re the Ministerial Working Week: the paper needed a bigger context; there were issues of Christian lifestyle to be considered for the whole people of God; core ministerial tasks needed to be more closely defined; the issue should not be addressed by counting hours; a paper for churches and ministers to discuss together was needed; the needs of single ministers should be considered; the paper aimed to focus on the understanding that ministry was not a job, but a way of life, and therefore holistic and theological perspectives should inform the discussion.

##### **08/38 Papers K and K1 - Nominations**

The Revd Malcolm Hanson reported, and moved the resolution:

**Mission Council agrees to appoint Mrs Claudette Binns as a Trustee to serve forthwith and until General assembly 2014.**

**The Resolution was carried**

Mr Hanson moved the resolution:

**Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints the Revd Paul Whittle as Moderator of Eastern Synod from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015.**

**The Resolution was carried.**

There was brief discussion on gender balance in the church's leadership.

Mr Hanson moved the resolution:

**Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, re-appoints the Revd Richard Mortimer as Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Faith and Order, from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013.**

**The resolution was carried.**

Mr Hanson reported on progress towards a Secretary for Ministries

Mr Hanson moved adoption of the resolution:

**Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints the Revd Dr Michael Jagessar as Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry, from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2013**

**The Resolution was carried.**

Mr Hanson reported that the Rev Terry Oakley's appointment as East Midlands Moderator was due to end in August 2010, when he would have only have 21 months before retirement. If he were not reappointed, it would be difficult to take another post at that time. He therefore sought an early review, which had been carried out.

Mr Hanson moved the resolution:

**Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, reappoints The Revd Terry Oakley as Moderator of the East Midlands Synod from 1st September 2010 to 31 May 2012.**

**The Resolution was carried.**

Mr Hanson reported that Mrs Janet Gray would convene an appointing group for Thames North Synod Moderator, and hoped to be able to bring a name to General Assembly.

**Paper K, Para 6, Think-tank on Mission and Spirituality.**



Mr Hanson sought (and received) Mission Council's agreement to an adjustment of the process for appointing members.

**Paper K, Para 8, Church Membership Requirement**

Mission Council approved the Nominations Committee's suggestion that there might be more flexibility in this area, advising that the committees concerned be consulted.

Mr Hanson moved the resolution:

**Mission Council agrees that, in years when there is no ordinary meeting of General Assembly, the transition date for committee membership shall be the end of the summer meeting of Mission Council or 1<sup>st</sup> July, whichever is the later.**

**The resolution was carried.**

The Deputy General Secretary appealed again for nominations to task/advisory groups

**08/39 Papers A5,A5(i) and A5(ii) - Section O Advisory Group**

The Clerk reported on the group's work and notified two minor changes. Mission Council agreed that the documents should go to General Assembly.

**Session Nine**

**08/40 (ref 08/35) Emergency Resolution on Gaza**

Mr Simon Loveitt moved the resolution:

**Emergency Resolution on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip**

Events in recent days heighten concern regarding the situation in Israel/Palestine. A report from Christian Aid and a consortium of agencies\*, published on Thursday March 6<sup>th</sup>, said: "the situation for 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip is worse now than it has ever been, since the start of the Israeli Occupation in 1967". Since Thursday, the attack on a religious school in Jerusalem increases the likelihood of spiralling retaliatory violence.

Reflecting on the deepening humanitarian crisis, Mission Council:

- i. Expresses a sense of outrage at the impact of the continuing violence on the civilian populations.
- ii. Calls on the Israeli government and Palestinian armed groups to cease all attacks against civilians.
- iii. Supports the call by Christian Aid and other agencies for international efforts to be directed towards ending the blockade of Gaza, which is causing enormous hardship to ordinary women, children and men.
- iv. Appeals to Palestinian and Israeli leaders to draw from their faith traditions, that which respects all people created in God's image, and to work towards achieving peace and justice in both Israel and Palestine.

Mission Council asks the Church and Society committee to ensure that this resolution is sent to:

- i. Her Majesty's Government.
- ii. Christian Aid
- iii. United Reformed Church project partners in the region, assuring them of our prayerful support.

\*'The Gaza Strip: A Humanitarian Implosion' published by Crisis Action

It was proposed to add to those to whom the statement should be sent, 'iv. The Palestinian National Authority'; and that 'Mission Council' should be changed to 'The United Reformed Church'.

This was agreed

#### **08/41 Statement on Iraq**

Simon Loveitt presented a statement which was discussed. There was a call for amendment or removal of paragraph 2 and that a sentence be included expressing concern for service personnel and their families; and that another statement on that subject should also be drafted. This was agreed.

#### **08/42 General Secretary**

The General Secretary addressed Mission Council. He spoke about Rembrandt, who grew up in the midst of a religious war. A third of his output consisted of biblical themes, yet he severed his formal links with the church. He used the bible almost as a diary of his own life; and he appeared in many of his own paintings as a bystander. Rembrandt knew scripture in intense depth and let scripture read him. Scripture became real to Rembrandt because he imagined himself to be there.

#### **08/43 (ref 08/41) Paper C1**

Simon Loveitt presented a revised statement on the war in Iraq which Mission Council agreed:

#### **Statement on the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Iraq War**

Reflecting on the forthcoming 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Iraq war on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008, Mission Council of the United Reformed Church:

1. Expresses deep sorrow and regret at the devastating consequences of this war and occupation – for the people of Iraq and the families of the coalition forces, reflected in these tragic statistics:
  - An estimated 1.2 million Iraqis have been killed directly and indirectly. As a result of the destruction of infrastructure, tens of thousands experience on-going malnutrition and disease.
  - Since 2003 there has been a mass exodus of people fleeing from the on-going violence and occupation. More than 4.4 million Iraqis have been uprooted from

their homes. Some 2.2 million are displaced internally and more than 2 million have fled to neighbouring countries – Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that one in five Iraqi refugees registered in Syria is a victim of violence. Many suffer from chronic illness which is exacerbated as their financial resources run out. Refugee children are falling behind in education, and one UNHCR survey in Syria found 10% of the children of refugee families were working for a living.
  - The minority Christian community has suffered from targeted attacks on churches and Christian leaders. The Iraqi Christian community of 800,000 has been reduced to between 400,000 and 600,000 as a direct consequence of the war.
  - 174 British, 3,923 US and 133 other military personnel have been killed in Iraq between March 2003 and 14 January 2008 and thousands more injured and maimed; returning home some are vilified for simply doing their duty.
  - According to The Ministry of Defence the UK has spent £5 billion on the war in Iraq over and above the UK's defence budget.
2. Reiterates that entering the War in Iraq in support of US forces before exhausting all other options in contravention of international law was an ill-conceived decision on the part of the British government; it has contributed to the immense human suffering and misery outlined above and was contrary to views of many people of faith in Britain.
  3. Repeats its call for leaders to reflect on the root causes of the situation in Iraq and to address these based on the understanding that where conflict and tension abound, lasting peace and stability are more likely to emanate from a dismantling of structures that perpetrate injustice or division than from violence and aggression.
  4. Mindful of the on-going humanitarian crisis, calls on all those with influence and authority to work with renewed urgency and vigour to bring an end to the occupation of Iraq by coalition forces based on the development of sustainable security and livelihoods for the people of this region.
  5. Seeks commitment to resolution of conflict through diplomatic means and the use of multilateral institutions in compliance with international law, in order to achieve a lasting basis for peace, not only in Iraq but in the entire Middle East region.
  6. Pays tribute to and supports in prayer the work of forces chaplains whose calling is to provide spiritual support and comfort to service women and men.

#### **08/44 Thanks**

The Moderator thanked the General Secretary for his service to the Church during the past seven years and wished him well as he left to take up his new post as Secretary of Churches Together in England. The Moderator presented Dr Cornick with a cheque on behalf of the 13 synods and the General Assembly. Dr Cornick thanked Mission Council.



The Moderator thanked those who were completing their terms of service on Mission Council. The General Secretary thanked the Moderator and his chaplain for their leadership of Mission Council during 2007-2008.

Closing worship was led by the Chaplain.



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

# The United Reformed Church

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

To: Members of Mission Council  
and staff in attendance

4<sup>th</sup> February 2008

Mission Council: Friday 7- Sunday 9 March 2008  
All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney (near St Albans, Herts)

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 (and by Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> February at the latest) either by e-mail ([krystyna.pullen@urc.org.uk](mailto: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)
- a form about your accommodation and meal requests, and certain other necessary information.

Please note that there are no ensuite rooms at All Saints (a Lenten discipline?) and that you should bring soap and a towel with you. Hair shirts and sandals are optional.

Registration will take place on Friday 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.

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

Having held our last January meeting of Mission Council just over a week ago, we move into a new pattern of meeting dates starting later this year. These are:

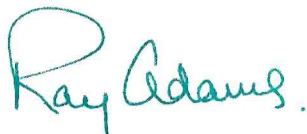
- Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>- Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008 at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick

- Friday 15<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at Ushaw College, Durham
- Monday 16<sup>th</sup> -Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick

This meeting of Mission Council will witness the transition from some of the old committee structures to the new, with a report from the newly-formed Mission Committee. We shall take the opportunity to express our appreciation for David Cornick's considerable contribution to the life of the United Reformed Church, this being his last appearance at Mission Council as General Secretary. Most of all, through worship and discussion, we shall aim to discern the priorities which we believe God is calling us to own and live by in the time ahead.

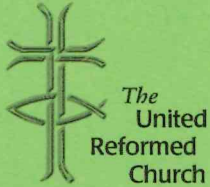
With good wishes,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ray Adams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

The Revd Ray Adams  
Deputy General Secretary





# MISSION COUNCIL

7 – 9 March 2008

## MEMBERS & REPRESENTATIVES

The Moderator  
General Secretary  
Deputy General Secretary  
Clerk

Rev Prof Stephen Orchard  
Rev Dr David Cornick  
Rev Ray Adams  
Rev James Breslin

Past Moderator  
Moderator Elect  
Treasurer  
Legal Adviser

Rev Elizabeth Caswell  
Rev John Marsh  
Mr John Ellis  
Mrs Janet Knott

### Assembly Standing Committees

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

Mr William McVey  
Mr Simon Loveitt  
Rev Dr Kirsty Thorpe  
Rev Dr Susan Durber  
Rev Elizabeth Nash  
Prof Malcolm Johnson  
Ms Morag McLintock  
Mr John Ellis  
Rev Peter Colwell  
Rev Peter Ball  
Rev Peter Poulter  
Rev Ed Cox  
Rev Malcolm Hanson  
Rev Carla Grosch-Miller  
Rev Neil Thorogood

### FURY Advisory Board Representatives

Mr James Wickens - Moderator  
Ms Jane Hoddinott

### 13 synod Moderators, plus 3 representatives from each synod

1 N	Rev Rowena Francis	Miss Elaine Colechin	Rev John Durell	Mr Justice Semoli
2 N.W	Rev Richard Church	Rev Rachel Poolman	Ms Marie Trubic	Rev Alan Wickens
3 Mer	Rev Howard Sharp		Miss Emma Pugh	Mr Donald Swift
4 York	Rev Kevin Watson	Mr Roderick Garthwaite	Rev Pauline Loosemore	Mrs Val Morrison
5 E.M	Rev Terry Oakley	Rev Jane Campbell	Mrs Margaret Gateley	Mr Duncan Smith
6 W.M	Rev Elizabeth Welch	Mrs Adella Pritchard	Rev Anthony Howells	Mr Bill Robson/Dr Tony Jeans
7 E	Rev Elizabeth Caswell	Mr Mick Barnes	Mrs Joan Turner	Rev Cecil White
8 S.W	Rev David Grosch-Miller	Mrs Janet Gray	Rev Roz Harrison	Rev Stephen Newell
9 Wex	Rev Adrian Bulley	Rev G Cliff Bembridge	Mrs Margaret Telfer	Mr Peter Pay
10 Th.N	Rev Roberta Rominger	Mr David Eldridge	Rev John Macaulay	Rev David Varcoe
11 S	Rev Nigel Uden	Dr Graham Campling	Mrs Maureen Lawrence	Mr Nigel Macdonald
12 Wal	Rev Peter Noble	Rev Dr Peter Cruchley-Jones	Rev David Fox	Mrs Liz Tadd
13 Scot	Rev John Humphreys	Ms Irene Hudson	Rev John Sanderson	Mr Patrick Smyth

### In attendance

Minute Secretary  
Moderator's Chaplain  
Children's Work Dev't Officer  
Church & Society  
Church Related Community Work

Rev Ken Forbes  
Rev Lucy Brierley  
Miss Jo Williams  
Mr Frank Kantor  
Mrs Suzanne Adofo/  
Mr Stephen Summers  
Rev Martin Hazell  
Rev Richard Mortimer  
Rev Roy Lowes  
Mr Andrew Grimwade  
Dr Brian Woodhall  
Ms Michelle Marciano

Life & Witness  
Ministries  
Mission  
Pilots Development  
Press Officer

Rev Christine Craven  
Ms Francis Brien  
Mrs Karen Bulley  
Mr Stuart Dew

Communications  
Ecumenical Relations  
Education & Learning  
Finance  
Grants & Loans  
HR & Facilities

Racial Justice  
Rural Consultancy  
Windermere Centre  
World Church Relations  
Youth Work

Rev Graham Jones  
Mr Lawrence Moore  
Rev Dale Rominger  
Mr John Brown





# *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

26<sup>th</sup> February 2008

**Mission Council: Friday 7- Sunday 9 March 2008**  
**All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney (near St Albans, Herts)**

*Dear Colleague,*

This second mailing contains the agenda and most of the papers to be considered when we meet in Mission Council at London Colney on 7<sup>th</sup> March.

The 'A' papers (A1-A6) are from Advisory Groups which report to General Assembly through Mission Council. Most of these reports are for information, though some (Papers A5, A5(i) and A5(ii)) are about procedures which need our decision. We normally set a small group of volunteers at Mission Council to the task of looking at these papers in detail before we accept them.

Other papers are grouped in families: e.g. those relating to Ministries have the prefix 'J'; and business to be taken by the Clerk is under 'G'.

At present we are having to operate both old and new structures: this explains the reason you will find reports and resolutions from 'old' committees which shall in future come under the new Mission Committee, but which were asked by Assembly to do some work on a particular issue (e.g. Church and Society).

All the papers are important, but those to which we shall allocate time in group discussion are Papers D, J and J1 (possibly also J2 and J3). Other papers will have to be tabled ( e.g. Paper H, so that the outcome of meetings taking place just a few days before Mission Council can be reported.

There will be time on the agenda for the Moderator to highlight areas of growth within the Church, with the help of one or two members of Mission Council; and the General Secretary will offer a reflection on this his last Council before moving to his new post as General Secretary of Churches Together in England.

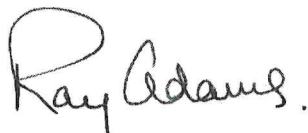
On a practical matter, please remember that there are no ensuite rooms at All Saints and that you should bring soap and a towel with you.

Registration will take place on Friday 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.

It is our hope that through this meeting, set in the context of worship, we shall seek and discern God's will for our Church at this particular time, and deepen our experience of life together in Christ.

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'.

The Revd Ray Adams  
Deputy General Secretary





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
*7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008*

**AGENDA AND  
TIMETABLE**

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

**FRIDAY**

<i>2.30p.m. onwards</i>	<i>Check in</i>	
<i>3.30p.m.</i>	<i>Tea</i>	
<i>4.00p.m.</i>	<i>Session 1</i>	
	Opening Worship and bible study	
	Welcome and apologies	
	Minutes of 26 <sup>th</sup> January Mission Council	
	Matters Arising	
	Report on the appointment of a new General Secretary	
	MCAG Report	PAPER A
	Notification of nominations of those to serve on	
	Mission Council task and advisory groups	PAPER A1
	<u>Advisory Group Reports (to be included in Mission Council's Report to Assembly)</u>	
	Listed Buildings Advisory Group	PAPER A2
	Inter-synod resource sharing	PAPER A3
	Ethical Investment Advisory Group	PAPER A4
	Section O Advisory Group	PAPER A5
	Incapacity procedure	PAPER A5(i)
	Sec O Rules of Procedure	PAPER A5 (ii)
	Grants and Loans Group	PAPER A6
	Report of the London Synod Commission	PAPER B
	Notices	
<i>7.00p.m.</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	
<i>8.00p.m.</i>	<i>Session 2</i>	
	'Areas of growth': a discussion led by the Moderator	
<i>9.00p.m.</i>	<i>Evening Prayers</i>	

**SATURDAY**

<i>8.30a.m.</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>
<i>9.15a.m.</i>	<i>Session 3</i>

	<b>Morning Worship to include the induction of Francis Brienen as Secretary for Mission</b>	
9.45	Youth and Children's Work Committee Church and Society Report - 1	PAPER D PAPER C
10.30a.m.	<i>Coffee</i>	
11.00a.m.	Session 4 Ministries Committee: Challenge to the Church RMHS Report and Resolutions Capability Procedure Grievance Procedure	PAPER J PAPER J1 PAPER J2 PAPER J3
11.45a.m.	Groups	
1.00p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>	
2.30 p.m.	Session 5 Plenary discussion and resolutions	
3.30p.m.	<i>Tea</i>	
4. 00p.m.	Session 6 Mission Committee Report incorporating Inter Faith Report Racial Justice Report	PAPER F PAPER F1 PAPER F2
	CRCWs and the Councils of the Church Amended Rules of Procedure Composite Resolution Local Church Constitution Revised proposals for the appointment of a General Secretary	PAPER G1 PAPER G2 PAPER G3 (verbal report) PAPER G4
	Treasurer's Report Update on Windermere Centre Development	PAPER H (to be tabled) PAPER H1
	Communications and Editorial Report Church and Society Report - 2	PAPER E PAPERS C2 AND C3
6.30p.m.	<i>Dinner</i>	
7.45p.m.	Session 7 Briefing on the Groups' tasks (together)  Group work	PAPER ASS
9.00p.m.	<i>Evening Prayers</i>	

**SUNDAY**

8.00 a.m.            *Service of Holy Communion*

8.45 a.m.            *Breakfast*

9.30 a.m.            *Plenary discussion on Group work*  
*Nominations Committee*

**PAPER K**

10.45: *Coffee*

11.15 *Session*

*The General Secretary*

*Thanks to the General Secretary*

*Thanks to those completing their term of service on Mission Council*

12.30p.m.            *Closing Worship*

1.00p.m.            *Lunch*

*Depart*





08/03 iv) Life Together and Relating Together Resolutions 6 and 40; booklets now have been sent to synods.

4.90

08/04 Report on the appointment of a new General Secretary  
(The Moderator to lead)

MCAG Report

PAPER A

1 (a) strong advice from Section O Advisory Group

- list of synod advisors on policy and procedures; and Pastoral Response Team thus far

(b) SEAG - add (awaiting synod moderator, a minister/CRCW)

(c) MIP - almost complete list

(d) Moderator's ruling re appointment of co-Moderators from 2008

*The Clerk/ The General Secretary*

(e) 08/03: iii) Human Sexuality Task Group

(MCAG suggested take names we have and ask for further nominations: John Waller had agreed to chair the group, and Lucy Brierley to act as Secretary. Ask three Assembly Moderators present to bring a balanced list to Sunday's session (Malcolm Hanson, Elizabeth Welch and Elizabeth Caswell) - requires a further list of names (report those who have already responded)

(f) and (g) Report names of those who have already agreed (**list**)

2. Resolutions about the Clerk - see also Paper A(i) - *General Secretary to lead*

Notification of nominations of those to serve on Mission Council task and advisory groups

PAPER A1

*Deputy General Secretary and Clerk to lead*

Advisory Group Reports (to be included in Mission Council's Report to Assembly)

*Deputy General Secretary to lead*

Listed Buildings Advisory Group

PAPER A2

Inter-synod resource sharing

PAPER A3

Ethical Investment Advisory Group

PAPER A4

*Clerk to lead*

Section O Advisory Group

PAPER A5

capacity procedure

PAPER A5(i)

Sec O Rules of Procedure

PAPER A5 (ii)

*Deputy General Secretary to lead*

Grants and Loans Group

PAPER A6

*(Paper F to be taken later - future of GLG's work)*

Report of the London Synod Commission

PAPER B

*Deputy General Secretary to lead : suggest*

*Moderators of Thames North and Southern speak to this*

Notices

Deputy General Secretary

1. Make sure attendance register has been signed, and expenses given in.



## 2. Any other essential notices

*(Aim to end first session no later than 6.30 p.m.)*

7.00p.m. Dinner

8.00p.m. Session 2  
'Areas of growth': a discussion led by the Moderator

9.00p.m. Evening Prayers The Chaplain

## SATURDAY

8.30a.m. Breakfast

9.15a.m. Session 3  
Morning Worship to include the induction of Francis Brienen as Secretary for Mission  
*The Moderator may wish to welcome Mr Ron Buford from UCC ( Dale Rominger may introduce if required)*

9.45 Youth and Children's Work Committee PAPER D, D1, D2  
and D2(i)

10.15 Church and Society Report - 1 PAPER C

10.30a.m. Coffee

11.00a.m. Session 4  
Ministries Committee: Challenge to the Church PAPER J  
RMHS Report and Resolutions PAPER J1  
Capability Procedure PAPER J2  
Grievance Procedure PAPER J3

11.45a.m. Groups

1.00p.m. Lunch

2.30 p.m. Session 5  
Plenary discussion and resolutions

3.30p.m. Tea

4. 00p.m. Session 6  
Mission Committee Report PAPER F  
incorporating Inter Faith Report PAPER F1  
Racial Justice Report PAPER F2

4.30p.m. CRCWs and the Councils of the Church PAPER G1  
Amended Rules of Procedure PAPER G2  
Composite Resolution PAPER G3  
Local Church Constitution (verbal report)



Revised proposals for the appointment of a General Secretary  
PAPER G4

4.50 p.m. Treasurer's Report PAPER H (to be tabled)  
Update on Windermere Centre Development PAPER H1

5.10 p.m. Communications and Editorial Report PAPER E  
5.30 p.m. Church and Society Report - 2 PAPERS C2 AND C3  
*Emergency resolution on Gaza*

6.30p.m. *Dinner*

7.45p.m. Session 7  
Briefing on the Groups' tasks (together) PAPER ASS  
Group work PAPERS J1, J2 and J3  
*J4 tabled*

9.00p.m. *Evening Prayers*

SUNDAY

8.00 a.m. Service of Holy Communion

8.45 a.m. *Breakfast*

9.30 a.m. Plenary discussion on Group work  
Nominations Committee PAPERS K and K1

10.45: Coffee →

11.15 Session

*11.40-12.12*  
*12.14-20*  
The General Secretary  
Thanks to the General Secretary (the Moderator) *ten. chq. o card.*  
Thanks to those completing their term of service on Mission Council:  
Ken Forbes (Minute clerk)  
Barbara Shapland (synod of Wales - retired at January MC)  
Liz Tadd (synod of Wales)  
Irene Wren (East Midlands - to become Minute clerk)  
Cecil White (Eastern - moving to Yorkshire synod)  
Peter Ball (Convener Life and Witness)  
Susan Durber (Convener DP&W)  
Simon Loveitt (Convener Church and Society)  
Elizabeth Nash (Convener Ecumenical)  
Carla Grosch-Miller (Convener Racial Justice and MM)  
William McVey (Convener Assembly Arrangements).

Christine Craven (Secretary for Ministries) - *to be thanked at Assembly*

Elizabeth Caswell (Moderator of Eastern Synod and past moderator of Assembly)

Elizabeth Welch (Moderator of West Midlands Synod)

*Rh- as TN Mod.*

Lucy Brierley (Chaplain)

The General Secretary will thank the Moderator

12.30p.m.

Closing Worship

The Chaplain

1.00p.m.

Lunch

Depart

# MISSION COUNCIL – 7 – 9 MARCH 2008

## 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;"><b>A</b></p> <p><b>Peter Ball</b> <b>John Brown</b> Cliff Bembridge Barbara Bruce Christine Craven David Eldridge Rowena Francis Janet Gray Simon Loveitt Peter Noble Steve Summers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b></p> <p><b>Malcolm Johnson</b> <b>Roberta Rominger</b> <del>Jane Campbell</del> Richard Church Elaine Colechin Andrew Grimwade Anthony Howells Stephen Orchard Peter Poulter Patrick Smyth Margaret Telfer</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>C</b></p> <p><b>Nigel Macdonald</b> <b>Richard Mortimer</b> Ann Barton David Cornick Ed Cox Peter Cruchley-Jones Jane Hoddinott Peter Pay Rachel Poolman Elizabeth Welch Brian Woodhall</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>D</b></p> <p><b>Roderick Garthwaite</b> <b>Roy Lowes</b> Francis Brien Adrian Bulley Susan Durber David Fox Irene Hudson Stephen Newell Emma Pugh Dale Rominger Duncan Smith</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>E</b></p> <p><b>Alan Wickens</b> <b>Val Morrison</b> James Breslin Lucy Brierley Malcolm Hanson Frank Kantor Maureen Lawrence David Robinson Howard Sharp Neil Thorogood Joan Turner</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>F</b></p> <p><b>Elizabeth Nash</b> <b>Graham Campling</b> Suzanne Adofo Ray Adams Mick Barnes Ken Forbes John Humphreys John Macaulay Bill Robson Liz Tadd Kirsty Thorpe Kevin Watson</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>G</b></p> <p><b>Margaret Gateley</b> <b>David Grosch-Miller</b> Karen Bulley Peter Colwell Stuart Dew Pauline Loosemore John Marsh Justice Semuli David Varcoe James Wickens Irene Wren</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>H</b></p> <p><b>Elizabeth Caswell</b> <b>John Ellis</b> John Durell Roz Harrison Martin Hazell Janet Knott William McVey Terry Oakley Adella Pritchard Nigel Uden Cecil White</p>



## Induction of an Assembly-appointed lay member of staff

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we as the Mission Council of the United Reformed Church, acting on behalf of General Assembly are now to induct **Francis Brienen as Secretary for Mission**

The Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry in and through the Church, the whole people of God called and committed to his service. To equip them for this ministry he gives particular gifts, and calls some of his servants to exercise them in offices duly recognised within the Church.

It is right that we should hear again the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church, and identify ourselves with it.

*This Statement (Basis of Union, Schedule D)  
is read in one of the approved forms.*

*All stand as the presiding minister asks the one to be inducted to affirm her faith.*

Do you accept this statement  
and confess again your faith in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit?  
**I do.**

In dependence on God's grace  
do you reaffirm your trust in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord  
and your promise to follow him and to seek to do and to bear his will all the days of your life?  
**I do.**

Do you believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments,  
discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority  
for the faith and conduct of all God's people?  
**I do.**

Do you accept the office of Secretary for Mission in the United Reformed Church and do you  
promise to perform its duties faithfully?  
**I do.**

Do you, the members of Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly of the  
United Reformed Church accept and receive Francis to serve among you?  
**We do**

Will you encourage and support *her*, and respond to *her* ministry acknowledging that it comes  
to you from God?  
**We will**

### Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for the various gifts which you give to your people, and for the  
varieties of ministry in the Church.

We thank you for all women and men of faith and integrity who have served this church; and  
we thank you, now, for Francis. Through the decision of this Mission Council you have called  
her to serve us. So we pray that you will give *her* the promised blessings of your Holy Spirit;  
give *her* humility and grace, and fill *her* with fresh vision and courage to perform the task you  
have called her to do. Make *her* wise with the mind of Christ, and give *her* the gifts *she*  
need(s) to fulfil this service faithfully; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Francis, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and according to the decision of Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly, I declare you to be inducted to serve as Secretary for Mission; and welcome you into this office, in confirmation of which I give you the right hand of fellowship.

*The Moderator (and others) give(s) the right hand of fellowship.*

May the God of peace sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit, soul and body be kept sound and blameless. The one who calls you is faithful, and will do this.

And may God give us all grace through everything we say and do, to give glory to God in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**



**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**A**

**Mission Council Advisory Group**

**1. Arising from October 2007 and January 2008 Mission Councils**

a) 08/11 (07/82) Declaration of a Safe Church: Papers E2 (The Pastoral Response Team) and E3 (Policy and Procedure in response to alleged incidents of sexual harassment and abuse against adults\*) were accepted by the October Mission Council subject to the scrutiny of the legal adviser and (on his advice) the agreement of the Section O Advisory Group, to ensure that those parts of the procedure which relate to the disciplinary process are consistent with it.

At the same time, Synods were asked to provide names of Synod advisers on the Policy and Procedure (PAISHAA)\*. Names notified, so far, to the Deputy General Secretary are: names to be confirmed (Northern); Mr Leo Roberts and the Revd Carole Gotham (North Western); names to be confirmed (Mersey); names to be confirmed (Yorkshire); Mrs. Pippa Hodgson, the Revd Hamish Forbes Temple (East Midlands); Mr Chris Burgham, with a second to be confirmed (West Midlands); Mrs Sharn Waldron and Mr Henry Playle (Eastern); names to be confirmed (South Western); The Revds Tom Grant and Mary Thomas (Wessex); The Revds Meryl Court and Keith Brown (Thames North); The Revd David Coleman and Mrs Maureen Lawrence (Southern); names to be confirmed (Wales); Miss Myra Rose, Mr Stephen Alexander (Scotland).

Names of members of Synod Pastoral Response Teams notified, so far, to the Deputy General Secretary are:

The Revds Yvonne Tracey and Barry Hutchinson (Northern); Mr Leo Roberts and the Revd Carole Gotham (North Western); names to be confirmed (Mersey); names to be confirmed (Yorkshire); names to be confirmed (East Midlands); names to be confirmed (West Midlands); names to be confirmed (Eastern); names to be confirmed (South Western); names to be confirmed (Wessex); The Rev. David Trafford, Mrs. Fredwyn Hosier, Ms. Lesley Trenkel, the Dr Rosalind Selby (Thames North); The Revds David Coleman and Zam Walker, and Mrs Maureen Lawrence ( Southern); names to be confirmed (Wales); Mrs Niki Morrison and the Revd John Young (Scotland).

Since the January Mission Council the Section O Advisory Group has strongly urged that neither paper 'Policy and Procedure' nor 'the Pastoral Response Team' should be used until those parts of them which relate to the Section O process are rewritten.

b) Sexual Ethics Advisory Group: The membership of this group is the Revd Carla Grosch Miller (Convener) the Revds Roberta Rominger, Elizabeth Gray-King (Education and Learning) and Alan Evans (Ministries) and two others (to be advised).



c) Ministerial Incapacity Procedure Advisory Group:

Members for this group are being sought, and names will be reported in due course.

d) 08/03 (i) Election of Moderators of General Assembly The Moderator has overruled the decision of the January Mission Council to appoint co-Moderators at the 2008 Assembly to serve immediately. (This has been appended to the January Mission Council Minutes). Mission Council is invited to accept MCAG's original proposal that John Marsh (Moderator-elect) should serve for two years as Assembly Moderator from 2008-2010, supported by the immediate -past Moderator and the Moderator-elect. The 2008 Assembly should be asked to appoint two moderators to serve in tandem from 2010.

Some work remains to be done on the detailed consequence of these changes, and it is suggested that a separate group should meet soon after the July Assembly to consider these.

e) 08/03 (iii) Human Sexuality Task Group: The Revd John Waller has agreed to convene this group and the Revd Lucy Brierley has agreed to serve as secretary. As some sensitivity is required in determining the balance of the Group, MCAG suggests that three former Moderators of Assembly who are members of Mission Council should make the selection from available names. The Secretary has begun to contact the people suggested by members of Mission Council, with a copy of the task group's remit. He is also seeking names of young people to serve on the Group. Mission Council may be asked therefore to make offer more names of people who could serve.

f) 08/13 (iv) and (v) Names for Task Groups (Paper 08/02): Names will be reported at Mission Council

a) *Task Group on the future composition and role of Mission Council*

b) *Advisory Group of oversee the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure.*

c) *Sexual Ethics Advisory Group*

v) 08/13 Working party on Housing Provision for Ministers and CRCWs. Progress on this will be reported to Mission Council.

## 2. Resolution about the Assembly Clerk

MCAG brings a proposal, following a request from Northern synod that, in view of the increased workload caused by widespread structural changes in the Church, that this ought to be recognised formally as part of the total ministry of the Revd James Breslin. It is therefore proposed that, for the remaining four years of his appointment as Assembly Clerk, and subject to negotiation with the Northern synod and the local church, 50% of James Breslin's ministry should be funded by the Assembly, and his present percentage of ministry adjusted to take account of that. According to the rules, Mr. Breslin cannot be reappointed beyond his existing second term as Clerk, and therefore this will be a special arrangement. It should not be assumed from this that an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament is always (or even normally) required to fulfil the role of Clerk to the Assembly, nor that the work of a future Clerk will be funded in this way. The Clerk will be responsible to the General Secretary for that part of his ministry which relates to General Assembly work.

**Resolution:** Mission Council agrees that up to 50% of the ministry of the Revd James Breslin which relates to his work as Assembly Clerk should be funded from the General Assembly budget for the remaining period of his appointment until the close of General Assembly 2012.





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**A(i)**

**Mission Council Advisory Group - supplementary**

**The Clerk to Assembly**

The Manual (Section C, 5.1) states that Assembly '...may appoint a Clerk of the Assembly as distinct from the General Secretary.' The Clerk is initially appointed for five years, and may be renewed for a further five years, always ensuring an overlap with the service of the General Secretary.

The Clerk's role is a significant one. S/he is the independent source of constitutional advice to all members of the church, and that independence must be carefully safeguarded for the good of the church.

The duties of the Clerk include:

- Ensuring the production of the minutes of Assembly and authorising them
- Working with the Legal Advisors and members of the newly appointed Law and Polity Group on issues of constitutional change
- Drafting constitutional documents
- Advising on the proper wording of resolutions to the Assembly and to Mission Council
- Being in attendance at all sessions of Mission Council and the General Assembly
- Offering independent advice on the constitution and procedures of the church to all members
- Membership of the Section O working party (the oversight group for the process and its amendment)
- Advising and attending working parties as necessary where matters of constitutional change are part of the business
- Acting as Secretary in certain appeals procedures (eg. when a committee secretary is implicated in the appeal)
- Acting collegially (as necessary) as one of the officers of the Assembly

In the present climate of change, those functions have proved extremely time-consuming. Northern Synod has therefore requested that 50% of Mr Breslin's ministry until he concludes his service as Clerk should be the responsibility of the Assembly. It should not be assumed that this arrangement will continue beyond 2012, for by that date the new structures will be in place and operating, and the need for intense constitutional and quasi-legal work will hopefully have diminished.

I believe it would be for the good of the whole church if Mission Council agrees this resolution. Mr Breslin would be responsible to Assembly through the line management of the General Secretary for the performance of the duties outlined above.

David Cornick  
March 2008



**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**A1**

**Election of Advisory Groups to Mission Council 2008-2009**

The groups are listed below. Under each there is a statement of its remit, a list of the current members and the date on which their service ends. There are also details of eligibility and length of service.

**1. Mission Council Advisory Group**

*The remit of Mission Council Advisory Group ("MCAG") is*

- (i) to plan the meetings of Mission Council;*
- (ii) to ensure that appropriate follow up actions are taken following meetings of Mission Council and General Assembly; and*
- (iii) to provide support and advice to the Assembly Moderator and the General Secretary.*

*In carrying out the above remit, MCAG should have regard to the Functions of General Assembly, as set out in the Structure, and should seek to ensure that Mission Council and General Assembly are provided with appropriate reports to enable them to see that those Functions are properly carried out.*

Moderator	John Marsh	
Immediate past Moderator	Stephen Orchard	
Moderator(s)-elect	to be appointed	
2 Committee Conveners	Morag McLintock	2010
	Simon Loveitt	(2008)
Treasurer	John Ellis (ex officio)	
4 members of Mission Council	David Grosch Miller	2011
	Rachel Poolman	2011
	Peter Colwell	(2008)
	Irene Wren	2008
Committee Convener	1 VACANCY	2008
Mission Council Members	2 VACANCIES	2008

The General Secretary

The Deputy General Secretary is secretary to the Mission Council Advisory Group.

*Those elected to serve on this group who are conveners of Assembly Committees, serve for 4 years from their year of appointment or until they cease to be conveners, whichever is the shorter. Those who are appointed, because they are members of Mission Council, serve for 4 years from year of their appointment or until they cease to be members of Mission Council, whichever is the shorter.*



**2. Staffing Advisory Group**

*The Group considers any Assembly post due to become vacant, or proposals for new posts and recommends (through the Mission Council Advisory Group) to Mission Council whether this post should continue or be created.*

Convener	Val Morrison	2008
Secretary	The General Secretary	
3 members	Peter Paye	2009
	Keith Webster	2010
	VACANCY for a Convener	2008
	and a member	2008

*(March 2005 Mission Council agreed to co-opt Veronica Taylor and Chris Wright to this group until the Catch the Vision review was completed in 2007)*

The Convener must be a member of Mission Council and serve for 4 years or until s/he ceases to be a member of the Council, whichever is the shorter. Members may or may not be members of Mission Council and should serve for 4 years.

**3. Grants and Loans Group - proposals for the future working of this group are being considered by the Finance Committee. It is proposed that no new nominations are made to this group, but that existing members be asked to continue until the hand-over is completed in 2008**

*The group considers all grant and loan applications from local churches and local church projects. This includes the grants previously on the agenda of the Advisory Group on Grants and Loans, grants and loans from the Church Buildings Fund, and the consideration of grant applications to the CWM self-support fund. It also stimulates reflection on the theology and practice of mission in the light of its experience.*

Convener	Brian Woodhall	2008
Secretary	Graham Rolfe	2010

*One representative from each synod plus, as consultants:  
A Senior Financial representative, the Secretary for World Church Relations, Secretary for Church and Society, A CRCW Development Worker, the Secretary for Youth Work and the Deputy General Secretary*

*The convener must be a member of Mission Council, or be invited to attend, and will serve for 4 years. The secretary may or may not be a member of Mission Council and serves for 4 years.*

#### 4. Section O Process Advisory Group

Convener	Julian Macro	2010
Secretary	Margaret Carrick Smith	2010
Ex officio:		
Secretary of Commission Panel		
Convener of Commission Panel (co-opted)		
The General Secretary		
The Clerk to the Assembly		
The Secretary for Ministries		
The Legal Adviser is in attendance		

The convener and secretary may or may not be members of Mission Council. They normally serve for 4 years. Other members of the Group serve 'ex officio'.

#### 5. Church House Management Group

Convener	Donald Swift	2008
Secretary	Human Resources Manager	
3 members	Graham Morris	2010
	Val Morrison	2008
	John Woodman	2009

Ex officio:  
The Deputy General Secretary  
The Chief Financial Officer  
The Director of Communications  
The Human Resources and Facilities Manager

The convener and members of the Group may or may not be members of Mission Council. They normally serve for 4 years and report to the Trustees. Church House staff serve 'ex officio'.

**VACANCY for a Convener and a member of the Group**

#### 6. Ethical Investment Advisory Group

Convener	Raymond Singh
Secretary	Secretary for Church and Society

Ex Officio:

- John Ellis (originally representing the Methodist Church now as URC Hon Treasurer)
- Melanie Frew (Commitment for Life Convener)
- Someone with experience of other churches' ethical investment policies or an ecumenical investment pool (Tony Hardy - CCLA until 2008) - a replacement is being sought
- Simon Loveitt (representing the Church and Society Committee)
- Richard Nunn (representing the URC Pensions Trust)



**7. Criminal Records Bureau (Churches Agency for Safeguarding) Reference Group (established in January 2004)**

Adrian Bulley (a synod moderator)  
 Liz Crocker (a child care specialist)  
 Wilma Frew (a magistrate)  
 The Secretary for Youth Work  
 The Children's Work Development Officer  
 The Deputy General Secretary

**8. Resource Sharing Task Group**

Convener	Elizabeth Caswell	2008
Secretary	John Rea	
Members	Rachel Greening	2009
	Dick Gray	2009
	Margaret Atkinson	2011

This group organises consultations with synod-appointed representatives (two per synod)

**VACANCY for a Convener**

**7. Sexual Ethics Advisory Group**

Convener	Carla Grosch Miller	2012
	Roberta Rominger	2012
	VACANCY (tba)	
	VACANCY (tba)	
	Elizabeth Gray-King (Ed. & Learning)	
	Alan Evans (Ministries)	

**9. Law and Polity Advisory Group**

Convener	David Thompson	2012
	David Eldridge	2012
	Morag McLintock	2012
	John Durell (synod clerk)	2012
	Donald Swift (synod clerk)	2012
	The Clerk to Assembly (ex officio)	
	The Legal Adviser (ex officio)	



**Action required of Mission Council**

**Mission Council Advisory Group:**

Elect one Assembly committee convener and two members of Mission Council.

**Staffing Advisory Group**

Elect a Convener (who must be a member of Mission Council) and one member (who need not be a member of Mission Council).

**Church House Management Group**

Elect a Convener who has experience of the Church and its processes (who need not be a member of Mission Council) and a member with experience in personnel management.

**Resource Sharing Task Group**

Elect a Convener.

Nominations shall be taken from a proposer and a seconder; or from groups at Mission Council.



**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**A(i)**

## **Mission Council Advisory Group - supplementary**

### **The Clerk to Assembly**

The Manual (Section C, 5.1) states that Assembly '...may appoint a Clerk of the Assembly as distinct from the General Secretary.' The Clerk is initially appointed for five years, and may be renewed for a further five years, always ensuring an overlap with the service of the General Secretary.

The Clerk's role is a significant one. S/he is the independent source of constitutional advice to all members of the church, and that independence must be carefully safeguarded for the good of the church.

The duties of the Clerk include:

- Ensuring the production of the minutes of Assembly and authorising them
- Working with the Legal Advisors and members of the newly appointed Law and Polity Group on issues of constitutional change
- Drafting constitutional documents
- Advising on the proper wording of resolutions to the Assembly and to Mission Council
- Being in attendance at all sessions of Mission Council and the General Assembly
- Offering independent advice on the constitution and procedures of the church to all members
- Membership of the Section O working party (the oversight group for the process and its amendment)
- Advising and attending working parties as necessary where matters of constitutional change are part of the business
- Acting as Secretary in certain appeals procedures (eg. when a committee secretary is implicated in the appeal)
- Acting collegially (as necessary) as one of the officers of the Assembly

In the present climate of change, those functions have proved extremely time-consuming. Northern Synod has therefore requested that 50% of Mr Breslin's ministry until he concludes his service as Clerk should be the responsibility of the Assembly. It should not be assumed that this arrangement will continue beyond 2012, for by that date the new structures will be in place and operating, and the need for intense constitutional and quasi-legal work will hopefully have diminished.

I believe it would be for the good of the whole church if Mission Council agrees this resolution. Mr Breslin would be responsible to Assembly through the line management of the General Secretary for the performance of the duties outlined above.

David Cornick  
March 2008





## MISSION COUNCIL 7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# A2

### The Listed Buildings Advisory Group

#### Introduction

The Listed Buildings Advisory Group coordinates the work of the Synod Listed Buildings Advisory Committees in the promotion of mission, focusing on the role of the historic church building as a mission resource. Such buildings have a positive role to play and it is worthy of note that other denominations, notably the Methodists, Anglicans and Roman Catholics, draw down large sums of public money which they use to regenerate historic buildings and in doing so enhance their mission potential. The Methodists, for example, point to numerous examples (Ludlow, St Austell, and Mumbles to name just three) where a renewal of mission, greater community use and wider community regeneration has followed sensitive re-ordering and thoughtful modernisation of their historic buildings.

The Group's approach is fully in line with the values of Catch the Vision and ideas of new ways of being church. It accords closely with the approach of Andrew Mawson and Peter Southcombe in their 'One Church 100 uses' initiative being taken up by some Synods. In their book, they make the point in particular that while a building remains in use, possibly by diversifying its role, the Church retains a toehold in the community from which mission can develop. Once a building is sold, they add, the opportunity for mission in that community has gone for ever.

Our journey to where we are as a church is clearly reflected in the buildings our forefathers erected to worship in. Many are widely recognised as being of historic importance. Each listed United Reformed Church building, has been judged by a body external to ourselves and competent to make the judgement, as being important in the history of their communities and worth a second or even a third or fourth glance architecturally. What an endorsement! What an opportunity to declare the church's long-standing and continuing mission to the people!

Church buildings are centres of God's work, resources for mission, and they need to be continually seen in this light. The historic church buildings we have inherited are a priceless asset. Regardless of what the law requires, future generations will not thank us if we have unreasonably changed them for short term benefit without taking account of the wider picture. Nevertheless, as mission changes, so buildings have to change to reflect it or, on occasion, may even have to be disposed of. However, where the churches' mission demands it there are usually ways of both retaining the best and providing suitable resources for the future. The challenge is to manage the tension between preserving the best of what is and creating premises which support lively and vibrant church communities, which in their turn minister to a wider community. If we do this well, our buildings can go on serving us while continuing to tell us about who we are and how we come to be what we are.

#### The work of the year

The group met twice in the year. It has revised and agreed with the Department of Culture Media and Sport the control procedure by which Synods manage the denomination's Ecclesiastical Exemption arrangements. Now on the Church's website, it reflects the new structure of the United Reformed Church and incorporates for the first time provision for appeals.

The Group continues to foster relations with other denominations and bodies with similar concerns where these will benefit the Church's work. In 2007 these have included:



- Attendance at the English Heritage Places of Worship Forum
- Mutual cross-representation at Listed Buildings Advisory Committee meetings with the Baptist Union of Great Britain to share best practice
- Attendance at the annual Roman Catholic conference on the management of historic church buildings

On behalf of the Church the Group monitors developments in the legislative and regulatory framework affecting historic church buildings. It undertook a detailed study of the government's Heritage White Paper which proposes changes in the way historic buildings are recorded and managed, and prepared a response which included expressing concern about the implications for local churches and their officers. Similarly the group responded to new proposals from English Heritage on Conservation Principles, Policy and guidance urging the need to provide assistance to church officers in preparing the documentation proposed. In particular, statements of significance are rapidly becoming standard currency in any official discussion of historic buildings, but there are no proposals to help churches acquire the skills required to prepare them.

The Group has received advice from the Charity Commission that the Historic Chapels Trust is entitled to acquire (and trustees enabled to dispose of) redundant places of worship at less than the market value, subject to a Charity Commission scheme.

Hartley Oldham  
David Figures

19 February 2008



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

## MISSION COUNCIL 7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# A3

### Inter-Synod Resource Sharing

The Resource Sharing Task Group (RSTG) and the Inter-Synod Resource Consultation continue to meet. All meetings have been conducted in a good spirit with openness and transparency being essential elements. The work towards achieving the goal of greater sharing of resources between synods continues. Those involved in the process are always seeking new ideas and ways to improve what has already been achieved. To those synods who contribute substantial funds each year for sharing amongst synods a very grateful thanks is extended, not only from General Assembly but also from the synods receiving financial help.

The quartet and quintet groups have met in accordance with the existing arrangements. The continual exchange of ideas and information on all manner of topics has proved to be extremely useful and beneficial to all concerned. It is clear there is a greater understanding of the various problems faced by individual synods and the solutions to them.

The following are some of the more important issues raised:

- the use of capital receipts from the sale of redundant properties for use on mission projects;
- the implications of the new Charities Act 2006, with reference to the new accounting methods for churches having to register;
- ministry and Mission payments relative to Local Ecumenical Projects;
- the proposed model Synod 14;
- the dissolution of district and area councils;
- the need for more accountability with regards to expenditure on buildings;
- the increasing burden of costs being devolved to synods following the decisions taken about the funding of the YCWT programme;
- the proposal that synods should contribute 10% of sale receipts of redundant properties to the Centre. RMHS .

Work has continued on the proposal to develop a blue-print of a model synod; it is currently referred to as Synod 14. The recent work has been looking at Core Tasks and Core Staff. Core Tasks are based on the manual and are seen as a framework on which to build. Core Staff are not prescribed in any way and it is evident synods deal with this issue in many different ways and this is to be expected. It is hoped to complete the work in the near future.

The RSTG has held two meetings since General Assembly in 2007. The General Secretary and Mr John Ellis Honorary Treasurer attended the RSTG meeting held on 2 October 2007. Mr Ellis also attended the full Consultation meeting held on the 9 October 2007.

There is still much work to be done in encouraging synods to work more closely together and to look at other ways of sharing resources. There appears to be some willingness to move in this direction but some synods are still reticent and remain to be convinced of the possible benefits.

Mr Tom Woodbridge (Scotland) and the Rev'd Elizabeth Caswell (Eastern) and Convener are due to stand down from their duties with the RSTG in October 2008. Both have made significant contributions to the whole process over the years they have been involved and the United Reformed Church is indebted to them for their valuable service. Replacements are being sought and they will be reported in due course.





The  
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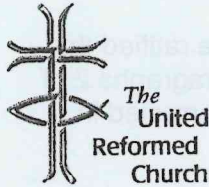
A4

### Ethical Investment Advisory Group

The Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) has been involved in the following activities and discussions since the last Assembly:

1. Synod investments – the EIAG continued to communicate with Synods on their investments portfolios with a view to greater sharing of information and good practice across the United Reformed Church. Most recently, John Ellis has written to Synods in his capacity as Treasurer requesting information on the performance of Synod investments and this information is awaited.
2. Oikocredit – following discussion on the services offered by Oikocredit at their October meeting, the EIAG supported the idea that an article be written in Reform explaining Oikocredit's activities. This appeared in the January 2008 edition of Reform and the EIAG has endorsed the decision to follow this up with a mailing to all churches publicising Oikocredit which was agreed at a follow-up meeting with Patrick Hynes, the UK representative of Oikocredit, in December.
3. Extension of ethical investment guidelines – the EIAG has commissioned Church and Society to undertake a review of the United Reformed Church's ethical investment guidelines to incorporate the social, environmental and governance impact of companies operations in addition to the existing policy guidelines. These guidelines will be developed in conjunction with ecumenical partners but the United Reformed Church will take the lead on this important initiative with the view to submitting these guidelines to Mission Council at their December meeting.
4. Review of Nestle' boycott – the working group established to review the decision taken at Assembly in 1992 to boycott Nestle' products met last year and has commissioned a number of reports to guide their response on this complex issue (including the extended ethical investment guidelines and analysis of the Methodist Church's decision to engage with Nestle'). An update report will be incorporated in the General Assembly reports.
5. Climate Change – reflecting on the impact of companies operations on climate change (recently debated by the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility), the EIAG endorsed the decision for this issue to be included in the extended investment guidelines of the United Reformed Church. It also endorsed the proposal by Richard Nunn that the United Reformed Church affiliate with the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change which is to be put to the Pension Trust and Trust Investment Committee at their next meetings.
6. Ethics of United Reformed Church's Auditors – following a question at Assembly, concerns had been followed up with PricewaterhouseCoopers, who undertook to look at issues thrown up by aspects of PwC's African operations. PwC noted however that they are not a multinational company and the British Partnership responsible for our audit is quite distinct from those operating abroad.





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**A5**

**Section O Advisory Group**

**Report to General Assembly 2008**

All documents relating to Section O need revision because of changes to the Church structures, cross references to the separate Incapacity Procedure (Section P) and because Church Related Community Workers now come within the scope of Section O. Among other changes we have provided for information to be given to the church's Press Officer at the start of a case and at other stages. The reason for this is, of course, so that s/he is able to respond appropriately to any approaches from the media. The Press Officer will not initiate contact with the press about a case.

This work has constituted a major task, not least because errors in our documents could lead to miscarriages of justice. It is essential that any who need to use Section O ensure that they have the most up-to-date version of the schedules and guidelines.

We have reviewed the way that training and support should be given to Mandated Groups who have the onerous responsibility of investigating allegations and where appropriate preparing and presenting a case for an Assembly Commission hearing. Each Synod has now appointed one person to be a member of a Joint Panel from which one member will be selected to lead in the work of a Mandated Group. We hope that the measures we are taking will give greater confidence to those concerned.

We have also liaised with Synod Moderators about the support that they need in the operation of Section O.

We have prepared eight resolutions of which a maximum of five will be presented to the Assembly. Resolution [A] ratifies the decision taken under Resolution 12 of 2007 to introduce a Procedure (the Section P Procedure) for dealing with cases of incapacity involving ministers or Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs). (This Procedure was formerly known as the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure and it has been renamed to reflect the inclusion of CRCWs.) If this resolution is passed by the Assembly then Resolutions [B], [C], [D] and [E] will be taken and Resolutions [F], [G] and [H] will be withdrawn. Resolution [B] puts in place the Rules of Procedure (Part II) for the Section P Procedure, Resolution [C] would ratify Resolution 16 of 2007 which adopted a new Part I of Section O, Resolution [D] puts in place a new Part II for Section O and Resolution [E] provides indemnity for those within the church who fulfil their functions under the Section O Process and the Section P Procedure. If Resolution [A] is not passed, then Resolutions [B], [C], [D] and [E] will be withdrawn and Resolutions [F], [G] and [H] will be presented instead. These are comparable to Resolutions [C], [D] and [E] respectively but without references to the Incapacity Procedure (Section P).

N.B. Resolution 18 of 2007 makes changes to the Basis of Union and Resolutions 14 of 2007 (with or without the reference to the Incapacity Procedure), 15 of 2007 (if Resolution [A] is passed) and 19 of 2007 make changes to the Structure. All need to be ratified by the 2008 Assembly. They will be included in a composite resolution no.



[?] which will include all the changes to the Basis and Structure due to be ratified this year. The references to the Structure contained in the headings and Paragraphs 2 of the respective Parts I set out in Resolutions [A], [C] and [F] have been corrected in accordance with these changes.

## RESOLUTIONS

**Resolution [A]:** General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision taken under Assembly Resolution 12 of 2007 to introduce a Procedure for dealing with cases of incapacity involving Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church-related Community Workers (CRCW) who are regarded as being incapable of exercising, or of continuing to exercise, their respective ministries on account of (i) medical and/or psychiatric illness and/or (ii) psychological disorder and/or (iii) addiction and approves the Introduction and Part I of that Procedure in the form set out below:

### SECTION P

#### PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CASES OF INCAPACITY INVOLVING MINISTERS OR CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS

*The Introduction which follows does not form part of the text of the Incapacity Procedure*

##### INTRODUCTION

The Procedure which follows allows the Church to deal with the cases of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) who are regarded as being incapable of exercising, or of continuing to exercise, their respective ministries on account of (i) medical and/or psychiatric illness and/or (ii) psychological disorder and/or (iii) addiction. It is not a disciplinary process and will only be invoked in situations where the Assembly Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee, if that committee has been involved, has said that it can do no more.

Whilst considered as a last resort, the Incapacity Procedure will nevertheless enable the

Church to take decisive action in cases where the continued exercise of ministry would

undermine the promises made by the Minister at ordination or, in the case of a CRCW,

at his/her commissioning.

**PART I** – subject to Paragraph 3(1) of the Structure

(governed by General Assembly Function 2(6)(a)(xi) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church)

Note: The words and expressions marked \* (the first time they appear) are defined in Part II of this Procedure.

1. Under the provisions of this Ministerial Incapacity Procedure (herein called "the Incapacity Procedure\*") a Review Commission\* and, in the event of an appeal, an Appeals Review Commission\* shall operate under the authority of the General Assembly for the purpose of considering and deciding upon cases properly referred to it in which Ministers\* or Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs)\*, whilst not perceived to have committed any breach of discipline, are nevertheless regarded as being incapable of exercising, or of continuing to exercise, ministry on



account of (i) medical and/or psychiatric illness and/or (ii) psychological disorder and/or (iii) addiction.

2. The Review Commission, the Standing Panel\*, the Appeals Review Commission, and all aspects of the Incapacity Procedure 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(6) of the Structure\* to amend, enlarge or revoke the whole or any part of this Incapacity Procedure, save only that, as long as that Procedure remains in force, the decision reached in any particular case (whether or not on appeal) and any orders made in accordance with the Incapacity Procedure shall be made in the name of the General Assembly and shall be final and binding on the Minister or CRCW and on all the councils of the Church\*.

3. Subject only to Section H of Part II, when the case of any Minister or CRCW is being dealt with under the Incapacity Procedure, it must be conducted and concluded entirely in accordance with that procedure and not through any other procedure or process of the Church.

4. The Incapacity Procedure shall not be initiated in respect of any Minister or CRCW if his/her case is currently being dealt with under the Disciplinary Process, save only where the Incapacity Procedure is initiated as a result of a recommendation from the Disciplinary Process, giving rise to a short transitional overlap between the commencement of the case within the Incapacity Procedure and the conclusion of the Disciplinary Process in relation to that Minister or CRCW.

5. Although the operation of the Incapacity Procedure is not based upon the conscious breach by the Minister or CRCW of the promises made at ordination or commissioning, the Review Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Review Commission shall, in considering the matter and reaching its decision, in every case have full regard to the Basis of Union\* and in particular (in the case of Ministers) Paragraph 2 of Schedule E thereto and (in the case of CRCWs) Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II thereto which state the responsibilities undertaken by those who become Ministers and CRCWs of the Church and the respective criteria which they must apply in the exercise of their ministries.

6. Save only as provided in Paragraph 7, this Part I of the Incapacity Procedure is subject to Paragraph 3(1) of the Structure.

7. Mission Council acting in the name of General Assembly has 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 Incapacity Procedure as are, on the advice of the legal advisers to the Church, required to bring that procedure into line with the general law of the land consequent upon any changes in legislation and/or case law and any such changes as are made under this Paragraph shall be reported to the next annual meeting of the General Assembly.

***N.B. If Resolution A is passed by the Assembly then Resolutions [B], [C], [D] and [E] will be taken and Resolutions F, G and H will be withdrawn. If Resolution [A] fails then Resolutions [B], [C], [D] and [E] will be withdrawn and Resolutions [F], [G] and [H] will be taken.***

**Resolution [B]:** General Assembly resolves to adopt the Rules of Procedure for the Incapacity Procedure (Part II of Section P) contained in Document xx. {Attached }



**Resolution [C]:** General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision taken under Assembly Resolution 16 of 2007 to replace the whole of the existing Part I of Section O with the following:

**SECTION O  
PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH CASES OF DISCIPLINE INVOLVING MINISTERS  
AND CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS**

**PART I – Substantive Provisions**

(governed by General Assembly Function 2(6)(A)(xi)  
of the Structure of the United Reformed Church)

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 or a church-related community worker (CRCW) 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 CRCWs as the case may be 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 or CRCW 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 or CRCW involved in a case within the Section O Process relates to or involves a perceived incapacity on the part of that Minister or CRCW which might render him/her unfit to exercise, or to continue to exercise, the ministry of Word and Sacrament or the ministry of Church Related Community Work on account of (i) medical and/or psychiatric illness or (ii) psychological disorder or (iii) addiction, 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 or CRCW 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 or the CRCW'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(6) 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 or the CRCW 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 or CRCW 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 or CRCW 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 (in the case of Ministers) Paragraph 2 of Schedule E thereto and (in the case of CRCWs) Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II thereto which state the responsibilities undertaken by those who become Ministers and CRCWs of the United Reformed Church and the respective criteria which they must apply in the exercise of their ministries.

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 or CRCW occurring prior to his/her ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament or his/her commissioning to the ministry of Church Related Community Work as the case may be which, in the Commission's view and when viewed in the light of Schedule E or Schedule F to the Basis of Union, would have prevented, or was likely to have prevented, him/her from becoming ordained or commissioned, where such conduct was not disclosed by the Minister or CRCW to those responsible for assessing his/her candidacy for ordination or commissioning.

5. 5.1 A Minister or CRCW may appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission to delete his/her name from the Roll of Ministers or CRCWs 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 or CRCW from the Roll of Ministers or CRCWs 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 or CRCW.



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.

**Resolution [D]:** General Assembly agrees to replace the existing Part II of the Section O Process with that included as Document yy. {Attached.}

**Resolution [E]:** General Assembly resolves that the United Reformed Church shall provide a full indemnity for those persons who either as members of any Church-related Panel, Commission, Committee, Council or Group or by virtue of the office held by them within the Church are called upon to fulfil any function within or related to the Disciplinary Process set out in Section O of the Church's Manual or the Incapacity Procedure introduced by virtue of Resolutions [A] and [B]. *[ Insert the relevant resolution numbers covering the ratification of the Incapacity Procedure Part I and the introduction of the Incapacity Procedure Part II ]* and to be set out in Section P of the Manual or who are appointed by Mission Council to any voluntary role within or related to either of these.

.....  
.....

**Resolution [F]:** General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision taken under Assembly Resolution 17 of 2007 to replace the whole of the existing Part I of Section O with the following:

**SECTION O**

Process for dealing with cases of discipline involving Ministers and Church-Related Community Workers.

**PART I – Substantive Provisions**

(governed by General Assembly Function 2(6)(A)(xi) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church)

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 or a Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) 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 CRCWs as the case may be 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.

1.2 Once the disciplinary case of any Minister or CRCW 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(6) 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 or CRCW 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 (in the case of Ministers) Paragraph 2 of Schedule E thereto and (in the case of CRCWs) Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II thereto, which state the respective responsibilities undertaken by those who become Ministers or CRCWs of the United Reformed Church and the criteria which they must apply in the exercise of their ministries.

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 or CRCW occurring prior to his/her ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament or his/her commissioning to the ministry of Church related Community Work as the case may be which, in the Commission's view and when viewed in the light of Schedule E or Schedule F to the Basis of Union, would have prevented, or was likely to have prevented, him/her from becoming ordained or commissioned, where such conduct was not disclosed by the Minister or CRCW to those responsible for assessing his/her candidacy for ordination or commissioning.

4. 4.1 A Minister or CRCW may appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission to delete his/her name from the Roll of Ministers or CRCWs 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 or CRCW from the Roll of Ministers or CRCWs 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 or CRCW.

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.

**Resolution [G]:** General Assembly agrees to replace the existing Part II of the Section O Process with that included as Document yy with the following differences:

**A.5.2** Replace the words “(i) the Assembly Commission or (ii) the Special Appeals Body” with “the Assembly Commission”.

**A.5.11, A.5.29, B.3.4, B.7.4, D.5, E.5.3** in its entirety. All deleted.

*[ Later sub-paragraphs to be re-numbered as a consequence of these deletions. ]*

**F.1.2** Delete the words “,in the absence of a decision to refer under Paragraph E.5.3,”.

**G.2.2, G.2.3** On the first line of these two paragraphs, the reference will be to Paragraph 4 of Part I, not Paragraph 5.

**J.1** Delete the words “ (other than decisions made by the Special Appeals body under Paragraph E.5.3)”.

**Resolution [H]:** General Assembly resolves that the United Reformed Church shall provide a full indemnity for those persons who either as members of any Church-related Panel, Commission, Committee, Council or Group or by virtue of the office held by them within the Church are called upon to fulfil any function within or related to the Disciplinary Process set out in Section O of the Church's Manual or who are appointed by Mission Council to any voluntary role within or related to Section O.



**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**A5(i)**

**Section O Advisory Group**  
**INCAPACITY PROCEDURE**

**PART II – not subject to Paragraph 3(1) of the Structure**  
**(governed by General Assembly Function 2(6)(A)(xii) of the Structure of the**  
**United Reformed Church)**

**A. GENERAL**

A.1.1 The following is a list of definitions of terms as used in the Incapacity Procedure:-

- **“Appeals Commission”** means the Commission constituted under the Disciplinary Process for the purpose of hearing and deciding each appeal dealt with under that process
- **“Appeals Review Commission”** means the Commission consisting of three person constituted for the purpose of hearing and deciding upon each appeal under Part II, Section L of the Incapacity Procedure
- **“Assembly Commission”** means the Commission constituted under the Disciplinary Process for the purpose of hearing and deciding upon each case dealt with under that process
- **“Basis of Union”** means the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church
- **“Church”** means the United Reformed Church
- **“Commencement Notice”** means the Notice sent or delivered to the Secretary of the Review Commission in accordance with Part II, Paragraph B.3 in order to initiate the Incapacity Procedure
- **“Consultation Group”** means the group of persons required to be consulted in accordance with Part II, Paragraph B.1 in order to initiate the Incapacity Procedure
- **“CRCW”** means a person whose name is on the Roll of Church Related Community Workers who is under consideration within the Incapacity Procedure (and see also Paragraph A.1.2)
- **“Decision Record”** means the record of the Decision made by the Review Commission or the Appeals Review



Commission as the case may be in the case of any Minister or CRCW under consideration within the Incapacity Procedure

- **“Disciplinary Process”** means the Process operated by the Church for the purpose of exercising discipline in respect of persons whose names are on either the Roll of Ministers or the Roll of CRCWs, such process being contained in Section O of the Church’s Manual
- **“Enquiry”** means the enquiry carried out by the Review Commission in accordance with Part II, Section G
- **“Hearing”** means any Hearing conducted by the Review Commission or the Appeals Review Commission under Part II, Sections J or L
- **“Incapacity Procedure”** means the whole Procedure set out in Parts I and II hereof for dealing with cases of ministers or CRCWs falling within Part I, Paragraph 1 hereof
- **“Minister”** means a person whose name is on the Roll of Ministers and who is under consideration within the Incapacity Procedure (and see also Paragraph A.1.2)
- **“Minister’s Representative”** means any person appointed to represent a Minister in accordance with Part II, Paragraph A.7 (and see also Paragraph A.1.2)
- **“Notice of Appeal”** means a Notice of Appeal lodged by or on behalf of a Minister or a CRCW in accordance with Part II, Paragraph L.1.1
- **“Outside Organisation”** means any body or organisation outside the Church by which the Minister or CRCW is employed or with which the Minister or CRCW holds any position or post or has any involvement, paid or unpaid, where such body or organisation would have a reasonable and proper expectation of being made aware of the particular step(s) being taken and/or the particular recommendation(s) or guidance being issued under the relevant paragraph of these Rules of Procedure in which the reference to the expression ‘Outside Organisation’ appears
- **“Press Officer”** means the person appointed to act for the Church and to be its spokesperson as regards its interaction with the Press and other media bodies
- **“PRWC”** means the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee which operates under the General Assembly of the Church (and shall include any committee or body which may be set up in

- **“Record of the Hearing”** means the Secretary’s Minute together with any verbatim record made and transcribed in accordance with Part II, Paragraph J.9
- **“Review Commission”** means a Commission consisting of five persons selected as described in Part II, Section D for the purpose of hearing and deciding upon each case dealt with under the Incapacity Procedure
- **“Roll of CRCWs”** means the Roll of Church Related Community Workers defined in the first paragraph of Schedule F, Part II to the Basis of Union (and see also Paragraph A.1.2)
- **“Roll of Ministers”** has the meaning given to it in Paragraph 1 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union (and see also Paragraph A.1.2)
- **“Secretary of the Review Commission”** means the person appointed to act as the Secretary of the Review Commission in accordance with Part II, Paragraph D.2
- **“Secretary’s Minute”** means the summary minute of the Hearing prepared by the Secretary of the Review Commission in accordance with Part II, Paragraph J.9
- **“Special Appeals Body”** means the body appointed to hear appeals under Part II, Section H against a proposed reference back and recommendation to commence the Disciplinary Process.
- **“Standing Panel”** means the panel of four persons constituted in accordance with Part II, Section C who will form part of each Review Commission
- **“Statement of Reasons”** means a statement appended to the Decision Record setting out the reasons for the Decision
- **“Structure”** means the Structure of the United Reformed Church
- **“Suspension” and “to Suspend”** shall have the meanings given to them in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union and the third and fourth paragraphs of Schedule F to the Basis of Union
- **“Synod”** means that Synod which in relation to any Minister or CRCW exercises oversight of that Minister or CRCW in accordance with its function under Paragraph 2(4)(A)(xv) of the Structure

A.1.2 For the avoidance of repetition, whenever the word ‘Minister’ or the expressions ‘the Roll of Ministers’ or ‘the Minister’s representative’ or any word or expression relating to a minister or ministry appears in the Incapacity



Procedure, it shall be taken as being equally referable to a CRCW or to the Roll of CRCWs or to the office of CRCW or to a CRCW's representative as the case may be, unless such construction is precluded by the context.

- A.2 The Incapacity Procedure needs to move along in a timely manner so that feelings of frustration and unfairness do not arise as a result of unexplained delays and also so as to reduce the period of maximum stress for the Minister and all those involved. Yet, of equal importance, the issues have to be explored sensitively to enable wise and thoughtful decisions to be taken. Thus the Review Commission must at all times be mindful of the need to balance proper expedition on the one hand with the need to achieve natural justice both for the Minister and the whole Church and an outcome which is fair and properly considered.
- A.3 Subject to the exception contained in Paragraph A.4 all statements, whether written or oral, made during and in the context of the Incapacity Procedure shall be regarded as being made in pursuance of that object and for no other reason and shall be treated as confidential within the framework of the Incapacity Procedure.
- A.4 The Review Commission may, with the consent of the person or group making it, pass on any statement falling within Paragraph A.3 to any person or group within the Church, provided that the Review Commission satisfies itself that any statement so passed on will remain within the confidential forum of the recipient(s).
- A.5 In any case where a person authorised or required to take some action regarding the appointment of persons to the Standing Panel or to any Review Commission or in the initiation of the consultation specified in Paragraph B.1 or as a member of the Consultation Group\* or in the subsequent issue of a Commencement Notice\* or some other administrative or procedural matter under the Incapacity Procedure is unable for any reason to do so, then, unless the Incapacity Procedure already makes specific provision for such a situation, that person's duly appointed deputy shall take such action in his/her place. This paragraph does not permit any member of a Review Commission or an Appeals Review Commission to appoint his/her own deputy.
- A.6 In any case where the Secretary of the Review Commission or the General Secretary in the case of appeals) is unable for any reason to carry out the duties of that office, his/her place shall be taken by a deputy duly authorised by or in the name of the General Assembly.
- A.7.1 Any Minister coming within the Incapacity Procedure shall be entitled to appoint another person to act as the Minister's Representative\* in receiving and responding to any forms, letters or other documents, in dealing with any other procedural matters and in attending any meeting or Hearing\*, with or without the Minister.
- A.7.2 In the case of any Minister who, by reason of his/her incapacity, may be incapable of understanding the implications of his/her involvement in the



Incapacity Procedure or the nature and substance of the Commencement Notice\*, or of dealing with any procedural issues or of taking any active part in any meetings or at any Hearings, the Review Commission, or the Appeals Review Commission, as the case may be, may, in response to an application made on the Minister's behalf, agree to the appointment of an appropriate person to act as the Minister's representative for the purposes set out in Paragraph A.7.1.

A.7.3 In the case of a Minister coming within Paragraph A.7.2 on whose behalf no such application is made under that Paragraph, the Review Commission or the Appeals Review Commission may invite the PRWC\* to advise whether such an appointment would be appropriate in the Minister's best interests and, if so, to recommend a person for appointment and may thereupon appoint the person so recommended as the Minister's representative for the purposes set out in Paragraph A.7.1.

A.7.4 In the event that the PRWC for whatever reason does not respond to the invitation contained in Paragraph A.7.3, the Review Commission or the Appeals Review Commission may, following consultation with the Moderator of the Synod\*, itself appoint a person as the Minister's representative for the purposes of Paragraph A.7.1.

A.8 The Church recognises that, from time to time, cases falling within the Incapacity Procedure may attract the attention of the national or local press and other media organisations and authorises Synod Moderators, Assembly Officers and the Secretary of the Review Commission to supply to the Press Officer\* such information as s/he may reasonably require to deal with all press/media enquiries in a tactful and discreet manner so as to protect the interests of the Church, the Minister and all others involved in the case. This paragraph is intended to take effect independently of and in addition to those paragraphs throughout this Part II under which the Press Officer has been identified as one of the persons to whom specific information is given at various points in the Procedure.

## **B. INITIATION OF THE INCAPACITY PROCEDURE**

B.1. B.1.1 If at any time the Moderator of the Synod or the Deputy General Secretary believes that a particular Minister may be incapable of exercising (or of continuing to exercise) his/her Ministry on any of the grounds specified in Paragraph 1 of Part I, s/he shall consult with the other of them and with the Convener of the PRWC and those persons ("the Consultation Group\*") shall together consider whether the Incapacity Procedure should be initiated.

B.1.2 The Moderator of the Synod or the Deputy General Secretary may, if s/he considers that there are strong and urgent reasons for so doing, and only so long as s/he forthwith invokes the consultation procedure set out in Paragraphs B.1.1 and B.2, suspend\* the Minister with immediate effect, either orally or in writing. Suspension\* imposed orally shall be immediately confirmed in writing to the Minister. As to the contents of the Notice of Suspension, see Paragraph E.6.



- B.1.3 The person issuing the suspension under Paragraph B.1.2 shall forthwith (i) give written notice of the Minister's Suspension to the Moderator of the Synod (if s/he is not the person issuing the suspension), the Synod Clerk, the General Secretary, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries and the Convener of the PRWC, and (ii) make a written disclosure of the Minister's Suspension to the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation\* (as defined in Paragraph A.1). The Notice shall stress to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used. In order to preserve confidentiality any notice or disclosure given under this Paragraph shall not disclose any reason for the imposition of the Suspension. However, any such notice or disclosure shall contain a statement explaining the effect of Suspension as outlined in either Paragraph 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union or the fourth paragraph of Part II of Schedule F to the Basis of Union whichever is relevant and shall (if such be the case) state that the Police have been apprised of the matter giving rise to the Suspension.
- B.2. As part of that consultation they must satisfy themselves as to the following matters:-
- B.2.1 that all reasonable steps to rehabilitate the Minister have been made; and
- B.2.2 that the procedures for ill health retirement do not apply or that there is no reasonable prospect of their implementation or of the resignation of the Minister; and
- B.2.3 that, if the PRWC has already been involved, that Committee believes that it can do no more for the Minister; and
- B.2.4 that no case against the Minister is already in progress under the Disciplinary Process.
- B.3. If, having so consulted, the Consultation Group believes, unanimously or by a majority, that the Incapacity Procedure should be initiated, the Moderator of the Synod or the Deputy General Secretary shall forthwith send or deliver to the Secretary of the Review Commission\* a Commencement Notice in order to initiate the Incapacity Procedure, setting out the reasons for the issue of such notice and at the same time inform the Minister that this step has been taken. As to the procedures to be followed regarding suspension, see Section E of this Part II.
- B.4 In the event that the Consultation Group decides that a Commencement Notice should not be issued, the suspension shall immediately be terminated and written confirmation thereof sent by the Moderator of the Synod or Deputy General Secretary as the case may be to the recipients of the Notice of Suspension under Paragraph B.1.3(i) and to any Outside Organisation to whom a written disclosure was made under Paragraph B.1.3(ii).



- B.5. On the initiation of the Incapacity Procedure the Moderator of the Synod or the Deputy General Secretary shall put in train appropriate procedures to ensure pastoral care for the Minister, his/her family and the local church(es) involved.
- B.6. Should the Moderator of the Synod or the Deputy General Secretary receive in accordance with the provisions applicable to the Disciplinary Process a recommendation falling within Paragraph 4 of Part I, s/he shall forthwith invoke the consultation procedure set out in Paragraph B.1 and B.2 and, unless the Consultation Group considers, either unanimously or by a majority, that there are compelling reasons to the contrary, the Moderator of the Synod or the Deputy General Secretary receiving the said recommendation shall forthwith initiate the Incapacity Procedure in accordance with Paragraph B.3 and shall attach to the Commencement Notice a copy of such recommendation. S/he shall send a copy of the Commencement Notice to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission\* or the Appeals Commission\* as the case may be to enable that commission to make a final order declaring the proceedings under the Disciplinary Process to be concluded.

#### **C. STANDING PANEL**

- C.1 Appointment to the Standing Panel shall be by resolution of General Assembly on the advice of the Nominations Committee, who shall in considering persons for appointment select one person from each of the following categories, namely (i) a former moderator of General Assembly (who shall also have the responsibility of consulting with the officers of the General Assembly for the purposes set out in Paragraph D.4.1, (ii) a Synod Moderator or a minister in local pastoral charge or a CRCW serving in a local situation, (iii) a doctor with experience of general medical practice and (iv) a person with some legal, tribunal or professional experience or other similar background (see also Paragraph D.6.1).
- C.2 Subject to the age limit imposed by Paragraph C.3, members of the Standing Panel shall be appointed for a term not exceeding five years as the General Assembly shall in each case think fit with power to the General Assembly to determine any such appointment during its term or to renew any such appointment for successive terms not exceeding five years each.
- C.3 When any member of the Standing Panel reaches the age of seventy, s/he must forthwith resign from the Standing Panel and shall no longer be eligible to serve on any new Review Commission, but any person who reaches his/her seventieth birthday whilst serving on a Review Commission in a case in progress may continue so to serve until the conclusion of that case.

#### **D. REVIEW COMMISSION**

- D.1 No person shall sit as a member of the Review Commission or the Appeals Review Commission in the hearing of any case in which s/he has any involvement whether as a member of any local Church or Synod connected with the case or whether on account of some personal or pastoral involvement



as a result of which it is considered by the officers of General Assembly or by the proposed person him/herself that it would not be appropriate for him/her to take part in the hearing of the case.

- D.2 A Secretary shall be appointed by resolution of General Assembly, on the advice of the Nominations Committee, to be responsible for all secretarial and procedural matters laid upon him/her by the Incapacity Procedure, including the servicing of the Review Commission, and the period and terms of office shall be such as General Assembly shall decide.
- D.3 On receipt of a Commencement Notice, the Secretary shall forthwith take the following steps (marking every envelope containing papers despatched in connection with the Incapacity Procedure with the words 'Private and Confidential'):
- D.3.1 Acknowledge receipt of such Notice and
- D.3.2 Send to the Minister copies of the Commencement Notice and any supporting documentation, together with a Notice giving the Minister the opportunity to submit a written response within a period of one month from the date of the Commencement Notice and
- D.3.3 Send to each member of the Standing Panel a copy of the Commencement Notice and any supporting documentation, together with a Notice drawing attention to Paragraph D.4 and requesting confirmation that the addressee is unaware of any circumstances which in the present case might prevent him/her from serving on the Review Commission.
- D.4.1 The member of the Standing Panel in the first category mentioned in Paragraph C.1 (or the member in the second, third or fourth categories (in that order) if the member(s) in the preceding category(ies) is/are unable to participate in the particular case) shall forthwith consult with the officers of General Assembly and jointly with them appoint as the fifth member of the Review Commission a person (not already a member of the Standing Panel) chosen on account of particular expertise or experience in the subject matter of the case, ascertaining through the procedures set out above that no conflict of interest or other reason would prevent such person from serving upon the Review Commission.
- D.4.2 In the event that any member of the Standing Panel shall be unable to take part in the particular case, the Secretary shall invite the officers of General Assembly to appoint another person as his/her replacement on the Review Commission, making every effort to appoint someone with similar experience/expertise.
- D.5 When the identity of all five members of the Review Commission has been provisionally ascertained, the Secretary shall notify the Minister or the Minister's representative in writing thereof and invite him/her to state within 14 days of receipt of the Notice whether s/he has any objection to any of the persons serving upon the Review Commission and, if so, the grounds for such



objection. Any such objection shall be considered by the officers of General Assembly, whose decision on whether to uphold or reject the objection shall be final.

- D.6.1 The Review Commission shall appoint its own convener who shall be a member of the Church and who shall normally be the person appointed to the Standing Panel by virtue of his/her legal, tribunal or professional experience or other similar background under Paragraph C.1(iv).
- D.6.2 The Convener of the Review Commission shall not have a casting vote, unless the Review Commission shall in circumstances arising under Paragraph D.7.1 consist of an even number of members.
- D.7.1 In the event that any member of the Review Commission shall be unable to carry out his/her duties on that Commission, the remaining members shall continue to act as the Review Commission, subject to there being a minimum of three members.
- D.7.2 Once a Review Commission has been duly constituted and has taken any steps to investigate the case, no person shall subsequently be appointed to serve on that Review Commission.
- D.7.3 In the event that the Review Commission shall be reduced to fewer than three members at any time after it has taken any steps to investigate the case under the Incapacity Procedure, that Review Commission shall stand down and be discharged and a new Review Commission shall be appointed under this Section D which shall have access to all information (including documentation available to the former Review Commission).
- D.7.4 If the Convener of the Review Commission is unable to continue to serve for the reason stated in Paragraph D.1, the remaining members shall appoint one of their number to be the Convener in his/her place.

## **E. SUSPENSION**

- E.1 If the Minister has already been suspended before the case has come into the Procedure, the Review Commission must, as soon as it has been constituted, decide whether the suspension should be continued or lifted, and inform all those concerned.
- E.2 If the Minister has not already been suspended, the Review Commission may, either immediately upon its appointment or at any time during the continuance of the case, resolve that the Minister be suspended.
- E.3 Any suspension, whenever imposed, may be lifted by the Review Commission at any time during the continuance of the case.
- E.4 The Secretary of the Review Commission shall forthwith (i) give written notice of any decision regarding Suspension made by the Review Commission under Paragraph E.1, E.2 or E.3 to the Minister, the General Secretary, the



Synod Moderator, the Synod Clerk, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries, the Convener of the PRWC (and the Deputy General Secretary if s/he issued the Commencement Notice under Paragraph B.3) and (ii) make a written disclosure of the Minister's Suspension to the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation, unless notice thereof has already been given to that Outside Organisation under Paragraph B.1.3. The Notice shall stress to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used. In order to preserve confidentiality any notice or disclosure given under this Paragraph shall not disclose any reason for the imposition of the Suspension. However, any such notice or disclosure shall contain a statement explaining the effect of Suspension as outlined in either Paragraph 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union or the fourth paragraph of Part II of Schedule F to the Basis of Union whichever is relevant and shall (if such be the case) state that the Police have been apprised of the matter giving rise to the Suspension.

- E.5 An existing suspension continued under Paragraph E.1 or a new suspension under Paragraph E.2 shall remain in force until either:-
  - E.5.1 the Review Commission makes a subsequent decision relative to that suspension or
  - E.5.2 the Review Commission reaches a decision under Paragraph K.4.2 that the name of the Minister be retained on the Roll of Ministers\*, in which case the suspension automatically ceases on the date upon which that decision is formally notified to the Minister or
  - E.5.3 the Review Commission reaches a decision under Paragraph K.4.3 that the name of the Minister be deleted from the Roll of Ministers, there being no appeal within the period allowed, in which case the suspension shall continue up to the date of deletion (i.e. the date of expiry of such period under Paragraph K.4.3) or
  - E.5.4 there is an appeal against the decision of the Review Commission, in which case the suspension shall continue throughout the appeal proceedings and automatically cease on the date of the formal notification of the Appeals Review Commission's decision to the Minister (whether this be that his/her name be retained on or deleted from the Roll of Ministers, in the latter case the termination of the suspension coinciding with the deletion).
- E.6 The Notice of Suspension, whether issued under Paragraph B.1.2 or Paragraph E.4, shall inform the Minister that any conduct on his/her part during such Suspension which breaches or contravenes either Paragraph 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union or the fourth paragraph of Part II of Schedule F to the Basis of Union whichever is relevant may be taken into account by the Review Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Review Commission in reaching its decision under Section F or Section G as the case may be.
- E.7 For the avoidance of doubt, in the case of a suspension first imposed under the Disciplinary Process upon a Minister who then enters the Incapacity Procedure



through the issue of a Commencement Notice, the provisions of the Incapacity Procedure, and not those of the Disciplinary Process, shall thereafter govern all aspects of that suspension. Conversely, in the case of a suspension first imposed hereunder upon a Minister who then enters the Disciplinary Process as a result of the steps set out in Section H, the provisions of that Process shall thereafter govern all aspects of that suspension.

## **F. INITIAL REVIEW**

- F.1 The members of the Review Commission shall consult together as soon as possible to consider the information laid before them and to agree upon the course which their enquiry\* should take (as to which, see Section G below).
- F.2 At the outset the Review Commission will need to address the following questions:
- F.2.1 Have all the steps outlined at Paragraphs B.1 and B.2 been taken?
- F.2.2 How has the Minister responded, if at all, to the issues raised in the Commencement Notice, particularly those relating to his/her conduct and/or behaviour or to any other concerns and/or problems expressed about his/her ministry and will it be necessary to meet with other persons with knowledge of any relevant events or circumstances to test the accuracy and weight of these matters and their importance to the enquiry?
- F.2.3 Should an early meeting with the Minister be sought or should this be deferred pending further enquiry?
- F.2.4 Is specialist advice and guidance relevant as to the question of whether, based on the criteria set out in Part I, Paragraphs 1 and 5, the Minister is or is not capable of exercising, or of continuing to exercise, ministry? If so, what steps should be taken to ensure that such advice and guidance are available for consideration by the Review Commission?
- F.2.5 Are there any special factors in the particular case which should be taken into account at this stage? This is particularly relevant in cases coming into the Procedure following a recommendation from the Disciplinary Process.
- F.3 Having carried out its initial review and agreed on its modus operandi, the Review Commission will move into the enquiry stage of its proceedings.

## **G. CONDUCT OF ENQUIRY**

- G.1 The Review Commission shall have control of all procedural matters, including the gathering of information and any issues relating to the Minister's suspension. The Review Commission shall also have discretion as regards the extent to which written statements, reports, videos, recorded interviews and other recordings and transcripts may be taken into account.



- G.2 The members of the Review Commission will need to pay constant attention to all the issues referred to in Paragraph F.2 and any other factors present throughout the whole progress of the case.
- G.3 Where cases come into the Procedure following a recommendation from the Disciplinary Process, information may already have been considered within that Process. However, the Review Commission must always carry out its own enquiry and cannot rely upon such information simply because it was presented and considered within the Disciplinary Process.
- G.4 In the light of Paragraph 1 of Part I the Review Commission should, as early as possible in its investigation and wherever possible or practicable, take the following steps:
- G.4.1 meet with the Minister or, if circumstances render this impossible or impracticable, with the Minister's representative, either or whom may, if s/he wishes, have a friend present with him/her and
- G.4.2 seek the written permission of the Minister or his/her representative (but only so far as the latter has the authority in law to grant such permission on behalf of the Minister) to apply for copies of all the Minister's medical notes, records and reports from his/her General Practitioner and copies of the reports from any specialist who may have examined or been consulted by the Minister.
- G.5 If the Review Commission is unable to follow the steps outlined in Paragraph G.4 in any given case, it will need to consider the underlying reasons very carefully and be prepared to proceed with its enquiry in the light of the best information available.
- G.6 As envisaged in Paragraph F.2.2, the Review Commission may also meet with other persons during the course of its enquiry and should inform each such person that s/he may be called later to give evidence and answer questions at a Hearing with the Minister present. If any such person refuses or expresses an unwillingness to attend any Hearing in person, the Review Commission may invoke the provisions of Paragraph G.1.
- G.7 The Review Commission shall be entitled to call for and consider all minutes of meetings, correspondence, notes, reports and documents which it considers appropriate to its enquiry. This provision shall not apply where those from whom such documentation is requested can show that it is protected by confidentiality, but instead they would be asked to supply a written report which would also be available to the Minister.
- G.8 Should the Review Commission consider that at any time the Minister might, whether or not deliberately, be in danger of infringing any of Paragraphs K.1.5/8, it shall, wherever practicable, draw this to the attention of the Minister or his/her representative.



## **H. RECOMMENDATION FOR REFERRAL TO THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS**

- H.1 If it considers that, in a case within the Incapacity Procedure, the circumstances relating to the Minister may fall within the ambit of Paragraph 1 of Part I of the Disciplinary Process, the Review Commission or the Appeals Review Commission may, at any time during the Incapacity Procedure and whether or not a Hearing has taken place, adopt the following procedure:
- H.2 It shall instruct the Secretary of the Review Commission or the General Secretary as the case may be to inform the Minister by written notice of its intention to refer the case back to the person who initiated the consultation under Paragraph B.1 with the recommendation that the Disciplinary Process should be commenced in respect of the Minister, stating its reasons for such recommendation. This Notice shall inform the Minister that if s/he is dissatisfied with this proposed reference back s/he may within a period of twentyone days from the receipt of the said Notice give written notice to the Secretary of the Review Commission (or the General Secretary if the reference back is proposed by the Appeals Review Commission) of his/her intention to appeal against the proposed reference back. If at the end of the period no such notice of intention to appeal has been received then the procedure set out in Paragraphs H.14 and H.17 shall be followed.
- H.3 In the event of such appeal, the Secretary of the Review Commission or the General Secretary as the case may be shall request the Officers of the General Assembly to appoint a Special Appeals Body of three persons to hear the appeal against the proposed referral, whereupon the said Assembly officers shall within fourteen days (or such further time as they may reasonably require) appoint the Special Appeals Body, which shall in turn appoint its own Convener.
- H.4 In making such appointment the Assembly officers shall have full regard to the safeguards and the criteria for appointment contained in Paragraphs D.1, L.3.2/4, L.4, L.5 and L.6 (with the necessary changes).
- H.5 The Assembly officers shall also appoint a person to act as the secretary of the Special Appeals Body for the hearing of the appeal.
- H.6 The Special Appeals Body shall consider the recommendation of the Review Commission/Appeals Review Commission and any representations made by the Minister in response thereto and any other papers relevant to the issue of the proposed reference back and shall invite the Minister by written notice to submit any further written representations within a period of twentyone days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.
- H.7 Whether or not the Minister submits further representations under Paragraph H.6, the Special Appeals Body may meet with the Minister or, if circumstances render this impossible or impracticable, with the Minister's



- representative, either of whom may, if s/he wishes, have a friend present with him/her and, if the Minister does submit representations under that paragraph, the Special Appeals Body should normally meet with the Minister unless there are strong reasons for not doing so.
- H.8 The Special Appeals Body shall invite the PRWC to comment on the appeal and shall have regard to any representations by it.
- H.9 Unless the Minister makes a request for a formal hearing or the Special Appeals Body of itself decides to convene one (in which case the provisions of Section L shall apply (with the necessary changes)), the Special Appeals Body shall decide the matter having had regard to the written material referred to in Paragraph H.6, any representations made by the Minister or the PRWC and any meetings held under Paragraph H.7.
- H.10 In the event that a formal hearing does take place, the Rules applicable thereto shall, so far as possible, accord with the Rules set out in Section J for the conduct of hearings before the Review Commission.
- H.11 In recording its decision, the Special Appeals Body shall append a statement of its reasons for reaching its decision and, if the decision is to reject the appeal, it may indicate what papers, if any, should be passed with the notice of the decision to the person to whom the reference back will be made.
- H.12 As soon as the Special Appeals Body has reached its decision, the Secretary of that body shall give written notice thereof, and of any reasons appended to the decision, to the Secretary of the Review Commission or the General Secretary as the case may be, who shall in turn inform the members of the Review Commission/Appeals Review Commission thereof.
- H.13 If the decision of the Special Appeals Body is to allow the appeal and to reject the proposed reference back, the Incapacity Procedure shall immediately be resumed and the Secretary of the Review Commission/General Secretary shall send to the Minister a notice advising him/her of that fact and a copy of the notice of the decision and the statement of reasons appended to the decision.
- H.14 If the decision of the Special Appeals Body is to reject the appeal and to uphold the decision to refer the case back to the person who initiated the consultation under Paragraph B.1 with the recommendation that the Disciplinary Process should be commenced in respect of the Minister, or if there is no appeal against the reference back, the Incapacity Procedure shall stand adjourned pending the outcome of that recommendation and the Secretary of the Review Commission/General Secretary shall send to the Minister (i) a notice advising him/her of that fact, (ii) a copy of the notice of the decision and the statement of reasons appended to the decision, (iii) a copy of the Notice to the person who initiated the consultation procedure under Paragraph B.1 (see Paragraph H.17) and (iv) copies of any papers being sent with the last mentioned Notice in accordance with Paragraph H.11.



- H.15' Once the decision of the Special Appeals Body has been made and the requirements of Paragraph H.11 have been duly complied with, the roles of the Special Appeals Body and of its secretary are concluded and they have no further part to play in the case.
- H.16 The decision of the Special Appeals Body on the matter of the proposed reference back is final and binding.
- H.17 If the decision is to reject the appeal and uphold the reference back, or if there is no appeal against the reference back, the Secretary of the Review Commission/General Secretary shall forthwith send or deliver to the person who initiated the consultation procedure under Paragraph B.1 (i) a written notice setting out the decision of the Special Appeals Body on the appeal, signed by the Convener and incorporating both the recommendation and a statement of the reasons given for making the recommendation and (ii) such other papers (if any) as are referred to in Paragraph H.11.
- H.18 That Notice shall state that the proceedings under the Incapacity Procedure shall stand adjourned to await the recipient's response and shall also state the time, which shall be not be longer than twentyone days, within which the recipient must notify the Secretary of the Review Commission/General Secretary in writing whether the recommendation contained in the Notice has been accepted or rejected.
- H.19 The Secretary of the Review Commission/General Secretary shall at the same time send copies of the said Notice (but not the accompanying documentation) to the Moderator of the Synod (in any case where s/he is not already the recipient of the Notice under Paragraph H.17), the Synod Clerk, the General Secretary, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries and the Convener of the PRWC.
- H.20 If written confirmation is received from the recipient of the Notice, countersigned by the Secretary of the Assembly Commission who operates within the Disciplinary Process, that the recommendation contained in the Notice has been accepted and that the Disciplinary Process has been initiated in respect of the Minister, the Review Commission or the Appeals Review Commission as the case may be shall declare the case within the Incapacity Procedure to be concluded and no further action shall be taken in respect thereof.
- H.21 The Secretary of the Review Commission/General Secretary shall give written notice to this effect to the Minister and the persons specified in Paragraph H.19 above, and also the responsible officer of any Outside Organisation to whom notice of the Incapacity Procedure has already been given.
- H.22 If written notification is received from the recipient of the Notice that the aforesaid recommendation has been rejected, the case shall forthwith be



resumed within the Incapacity Procedure. The Secretary shall give notice to this effect to the Minister and the persons specified in Paragraph H.19.

- H.23 No recommendation for referral to the Disciplinary Process shall be made in any case which enters the Incapacity Procedure as a result of a recommendation from the Disciplinary Process.
- H.24 As to the position regarding the suspension of a Minister to whom this Section H applies, see Paragraph E.6.
- H.25 For the avoidance of doubt, decisions taken by the Special Appeals Body under the provisions of this Section H are not subject to the requirement to report to General Assembly contained in Section N of this Part II.

*For the avoidance of confusion, there is no Section I.*

## **J. HEARINGS**

- J.1 The Review Commission shall decide when it is appropriate for a Hearing to take place and whom it requires to attend, whereupon the Secretary shall consult with the Convener, the other members of the Review Commission, the Minister and any other such persons as might be required to attend as to the venue, date and time for the Hearing and, when these are fixed, shall give written notification thereof to all concerned with the request that they confirm their intention to attend and, in the case of the Minister, state whether it is his/her intention to have a person to accompany him/her.
- J.2 The Hearing shall be conducted in private and only the following persons shall be permitted to attend:
- The members of the Review Commission
  - The Secretary or a duly appointed Deputy
  - The Minister
  - A person chosen by the Minister to accompany him/her
  - Any medical, specialist, expert or other witnesses, but only while giving evidence, unless the Review Commission otherwise directs
  - Any persons notified by the Secretary of the Review Commission under Paragraph J.1 that they are required to attend (and see Paragraph J.5)
  - Any persons whom the Minister intends to call as a witness, the Minister having already given prior written notice to the Secretary of the Review Commission of his/her intention so to do (and see Paragraph J.5)
  - A representative of the Church's Legal Advisers, if requested to attend by the Review Commission.
  - Any person responsible for operating the recording equipment or otherwise preparing a verbatim report of the proceedings referred to in Paragraph J.9.



- Any other persons at the discretion and by the direction of the Review Commission (and see Paragraph J.5)
- J.3 Subject to ensuring that the rules of natural justice are observed, the Convener should ensure that the proceedings are as relaxed and informal as possible.
- J.4.1 All witnesses called by the Review Commission to give evidence shall be subject to questioning by the Convener (and by other members of the Review Commission with the Convener's permission). The Minister shall be entitled to ask questions of such witnesses.
- J.4.2 When the process described in Paragraph J.4.1 has been completed, the Minister or his/her representative may invite witnesses called by him/her to give evidence and may question them, as may the Convener and other members of the Review Commission with the Convener's permission.
- J.5 Unless the Review Commission directs otherwise, witnesses shall only be present while giving evidence.
- J.6 When all the witnesses have given evidence, the Minister or the Minister's representative may if s/he wishes address the Review Commission.
- J.7 In the special circumstances of any case the Convener may, if s/he considers it appropriate and helpful, vary any of the above procedures at his/her discretion.
- J.8 In considering the evidence and information before it, the Review Commission shall apply a standard of proof on the balance of probability.
- J.9 The Secretary of the Review Commission shall prepare a summary minute of the proceedings at the Hearing ('the Secretary's Minute\*'). Where possible, a verbatim record of the proceedings shall also be made by electronic recording, or by such other means as shall be directed by the Convener. The Record of the Hearing\* shall consist of the Secretary's Minute together with any such verbatim record, which shall be transcribed in the event of an appeal.
- J.10 At the conclusion of the Hearing the members of the Review Commission will wish to deliberate upon their final decision, together with any guidance and/or recommendation(s) which they may wish to append to their decision. The Convener will inform those present that the decision will not be made that day but that written notification of the decision will be given within ten days to the Minister, the General Secretary, the Synod Moderator, the Synod Clerk, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries, the Convener of the PRWC, the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation (and the Deputy General Secretary if s/he issued the Commencement Notice in accordance with Paragraph B.1). The Hearing is thus concluded.

## **K. REVIEW COMMISSION'S DECISION AND ITS NOTIFICATION**

- K.1 Following the conclusion of the Hearing, the Review Commission shall, all meeting and deliberating together, but in the absence of the Minister and all



- other persons, consider all the information concerning the Minister which has been before them during the case for the purpose of reaching a decision in accordance with Paragraph K.2. In particular they must make a careful and detailed appraisal of all of the following:
- K.1.1 the circumstances which have led up to the commencement of the case as indicated in the Commencement Notice and
  - K.1.2 any expert opinion of a medical, psychological or similar or related nature in respect of the Minister which has been sought by the Review Commission or which has in any way been presented to it during the case and
  - K.1.3 information supplied by the Minister and others within the Procedure, whether or not on the Minister's behalf and
  - K.1.4 reports and other documentation requested by the Review Commission from other persons or bodies within or outside the Church with whom the Minister, through the exercise of his/her ministry, might have had a particular involvement, such as ecumenical posts, chaplaincies or positions within public bodies and
  - K.1.5 Any obstruction or unreasonable delay on the Minister's part in complying with the procedural steps prior to the Hearing and
  - K.1.6 The failure by the Minister to attend at any meeting or at the Hearing without satisfactory explanation and
  - K.1.7 Any obstruction caused by the Minister or the Minister's Representative to the Review Commission in the conduct of any such meeting or the Hearing itself and
  - K.1.8 Any conduct on the part of the Minister during his/her Suspension under the Incapacity Procedure which breaches or contravenes either Paragraph 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union or the fourth paragraph of Part II of Schedule F to the Basis of Union whichever is relevant and
  - K.1.9 all other factors properly coming within the scope of the review being undertaken by the Review Commission and
  - K.1.10 the weight to be attached to each of the factors in the case as indicated above, bearing in mind the manner in which the information was provided and, where appropriate, whether the Minister or his/her representative had the opportunity of challenging or commenting upon it.
- K.2 The purpose of the deliberation referred to in Paragraph K.1 is to enable the Review Commission to reach (either unanimously or by a majority) a decision in accordance with Part 1 Paragraph 5 as to whether, having full regard to the Basis of Union and in particular Paragraph 2 of Schedule E thereto or the



second paragraph of Part II of Schedule F thereto whichever is relevant, the name of the Minister in the particular case should remain upon, or be deleted from, the Roll of Ministers.

- K.3 The Review Commission shall record its decision (the Decision Record\*) and, in doing so, shall state whether it was reached unanimously or by a majority and shall append a statement of its reasons (the Statement of Reasons\*) for the decision, but shall not be obliged, unless it wishes to do so, to comment in detail on any of the matters considered by it.
- K.4.1 The decision so taken shall conclude the involvement of the Review Commission in the Procedure except as to the discharge of its responsibilities under Paragraph N.2 and shall have the effect provided for in Paragraph K.4.2 or Paragraph K.4.3, whichever is applicable.
- K.4.2 If the Review Commission/ Appeals Review Commission decides to retain the Minister's name on the Roll of Ministers, his/her status is unchanged.
- K.4.3 If the Review Commission decides to delete the name of the Minister from the Roll of Ministers, no appeal having been lodged by or on behalf of the Minister within the period specified in the notification referred to in Paragraph K.8.1, deletion shall take effect on the date of expiry of such period.
- K.5.1 Every decision reached under the Incapacity Procedure (whether or not on appeal) is made in the name of the General Assembly and is final and binding on the Minister and on all the Councils of the Church.
- K.5.2 If the decision is that the name of the Minister shall remain on the Roll of Ministers, the Review Commission may in its Decision Record (see Paragraph K.6) append such recommendations to its decision as it considers will be helpful to moderators of synod, synods, local churches, the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries, the PRWC and others within the Church and also to any relevant Outside Organisation. It is emphasised that any such recommendations must relate to the future ministry of the Minister only and that they are of an advisory nature and do not form part of the decision.
- K.5.3 If the decision is to delete the name of the Minister from the Roll of Ministers, the Review Commission is particularly requested to include appropriate guidance concerning any restrictions which it considers ought to be placed upon any activities involving the Minister after his/her deletion with the object of assisting moderators of synod, synods, local churches, the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries, the PRWC and others within the Church and also any relevant Outside Organisation. It is emphasised that any such guidance is of an advisory nature and does not form part of the decision.
- K.6 Within ten days of the date of the Review Commission's decision the Secretary shall send or deliver to the Minister or the Minister's representative written notification of the decision and copies of the Decision Record, the



Statement of Reasons and any recommendations or guidance issued with the Decision Record.

- K.7 Where the decision is that the Minister's name be retained on the Roll of Ministers, the Secretary shall at the same time send or deliver notice of that fact and of the consequent termination of the Minister's Suspension under Paragraph E.5.2 to the General Secretary, the Moderator of the Synod, the Synod Clerk, the Deputy General Secretary (but only if s/he issued the Commencement Notice), the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries, the Convener of the PRWC and the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation and shall at the same time send to those persons copies of the Decision Record and the Statement of Reasons and any recommendations appended to the Decision (as regards any Outside Organisation, only those recommendations which it expressly states to be its wish that such be passed on to that Outside Organisation) and sent to the Minister in accordance with Paragraph K.6, stressing to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used.
- K.8 Where the decision is that the Minister's name be deleted from the Roll of Ministers, then:
- K.8.1 The written notification shall draw the Minister's attention to his/her right of appeal and specify the precise date by which notice of appeal must be lodged by the Minister with the Secretary.
- K.8.2 The Secretary shall, at the same time as taking the action required under Paragraph K.6, send to the General Secretary, the Moderator of the Synod, the Synod Clerk, the Deputy General Secretary (but only if s/he issued the Commencement Notice), the Press Officer, the Secretary of the Ministries Committee and the Convener of the PRWC a Notice to the effect that a decision has been made by the Review Commission that the Minister's name be deleted from the Roll of Ministers. Such Notice shall not contain any further information other than that the decision is still subject to appeal and that a further Notice will be sent when it is known whether there is to be an appeal or not. The Notice shall stress to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used.
- K.8.3 If by the date specified in the written notification to the Minister under Paragraph K.6 as the final date for the lodging of an appeal no appeal has been lodged by the Minister, the Secretary of the Review Commission shall send or deliver notice of the Minister's Deletion and of the consequent termination of the Minister's Suspension under Paragraph E.5.3 to the General Secretary, the Moderator of the Synod, the Synod Clerk, the Deputy General Secretary (but only if s/he issued the Commencement Notice), the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries, the Convener of the PRWC and the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation and shall at the same time send to those persons copies of the Decision Record and the Statement of Reasons and any guidance appended to the Decision and sent to the Minister in accordance



with Paragraph K.6 (as regards any Outside Organisation, only such guidance as it expressly states to be its wish to be passed on to that Outside Organisation), stressing to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used.

K.8.4 If the Minister lodges a Notice of Appeal\*, the procedure set out in Section L applies.

## **L. APPEALS PROCEDURE**

L.1.1 Should the Minister wish to appeal against the decision of the Review Commission to delete his/her name from the Roll of Ministers, s/he or his/her representative must lodge written notice of such Appeal with the Secretary of the Review Commission within 21 days of receipt by the Minister of the written notification of the decision under Paragraph K.6 (which shall set out the grounds of the appeal either in detail or in summary form as the Minister chooses).

L.1.2 The Secretary of the Review Commission shall forthwith notify the General Secretary that an Appeal has been lodged, at the same time passing on to the General Secretary the Notice of Appeal together with the body of papers laid before the Review Commission in hearing the case and the Record of the Hearing as defined in Paragraph J.9. The General Secretary shall thereupon act in a secretarial and administrative capacity in all matters relating to the Appeal.

L.1.3 At the same time the Secretary of the Review Commission shall also notify the Moderator of the Synod, the Synod Clerk, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries, the Convener of the PRWC and the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation (and the Deputy General Secretary if s/he issued the Commencement Notice in accordance with Paragraph B.3) that the Minister has lodged an Appeal against the decision of the Review Commission. The Notice shall stress to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used.

L.1.4 A Notice of Appeal which is outside the time limit specified in Paragraph L.1.1 will not normally be accepted. The General Secretary may, however, at his/her discretion accept a Notice of Appeal which is not more than twentyeight days out of time, but only if s/he is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which would justify the exercise of discretion by the General Secretary to allow the appeal out of time.

L.1.5 The Rules set out in this Part II as applicable to the Review Commission shall also apply to the Appeals Review Commission (with the necessary changes), except for those which by their context are inappropriate for the Appeals Procedure.



- L.1.6 No-one apart from the Minister shall have a right of appeal against a decision of the Review Commission.
- L.2 On receipt of the Notice of Appeal lodged under Paragraph L.1, the General Secretary shall as soon as possible acknowledge receipt of the Notice of Appeal and send to the Minister a copy of the Record of the Hearing before the Review Commission (see Paragraph J.9).
- L.3.1 The Officers of the General Assembly shall within 14 days of receipt by the General Secretary of the Notice of Appeal under Paragraph L.1.2 (or within such further time as they may reasonably require) appoint the Appeals Review Commission, which shall consist of three persons, in accordance with Paragraphs L.3.2 and L.3.3.
- L.3.2 The three persons to be so appointed shall be (i) a person with some legal, tribunal or other professional experience or other similar background (being a member of the Church but not necessarily a member of General Assembly), who shall normally act as Convener of the Appeals Review Commission, (ii) a former Moderator of the General Assembly and (iii) either a person with general medical experience or one with professional expertise in the condition(s) giving rise to the subject matter of the case (such person not necessarily being a member of the Church).
- L.3.3 In the event that for any reason it is inappropriate for the person in the first category specified in Paragraph L.3.2 to be the Convener of the Appeals review Commission, the convenership shall be assumed by the person in the second category thereof.
- L.3.4 Persons appointed to an Appeals Review Commission are subject to Paragraph D.1.
- L.4.1 The General Secretary shall send or deliver to each of the proposed appointees a written invitation to serve on the Appeals Review Commission for the hearing of the Appeal, naming the Minister concerned but supplying no further information about the case.
- L.4.2 The invitation shall draw the attention of each proposed appointee to Paragraph D.1 and shall request confirmation that s/he is willing to accept appointment and that s/he is unaware of any circumstances which in the present case might prevent him/her from serving on the Appeals Review Commission.
- L.4.3 The Invitee shall within seven days of receipt of the invitation to serve notify the General Secretary in writing whether s/he is able and willing to accept appointment and, if so confirming compliance with Paragraph L.4.1.
- L.5.1 The General Secretary shall notify the Minister or the Minister's representative in writing of the names, addresses and credentials of each proposed appointee, drawing attention to Paragraph D.1 and pointing out that any objection to any of the proposed appointees must be made to the General



Secretary in writing within fourteen days, setting out the grounds of such objection.

L.5.2 To ensure that the appeals process moves along in a timely manner, any such objection received outside the period allowed will not normally be considered unless very good reason can be shown for its late delivery.

L.5.3 The officers of the General Assembly shall consider every objection properly notified and shall decide whether to uphold or reject it.

L.5.4 If they reject the objection, the General Secretary shall notify the Minister or the Minister's representative.

L.5.5 If they uphold the objection, the General Secretary shall give written notification thereof to the Minister or the Minister's representative and to the person to whom the objection has been taken and the above procedure shall be repeated as often as is necessary to complete the appointment of the Appeals Review Commission.

L.6.1 In the event that any member of the Appeals Review Commission shall be unable to carry out his/her duties on that Commission, the remaining members shall continue to act as the Appeals Review Commission, subject to there being a minimum of two members, in which event, but not otherwise, the Convener shall have a casting vote.

L.6.2 In the event that, for the reasons stated in Paragraph L.6.1 the Appeals Review Commission shall consist of fewer than two members at any time after that Commission has taken any steps in connection with the Appeal, the Appeals Review Commission so appointed shall stand down and be discharged and a new Appeals Review Commission shall be appointed in accordance with the procedure laid down in this Section L to hear the Appeal.

L.6.3 Once the Appeals Review Commission has been validly constituted and has taken any steps in accordance with this Section L, no person shall be subsequently appointed to serve on that Appeals Review Commission.

L.7 Each member of the Appeals Review Commission when appointed shall receive from the General Secretary copies of the following:

L.7.1 The Decision Record and

L.7.2 The Statement of Reasons and

L.7.3 The Notice of Appeal, setting out the grounds of the appeal and

L.7.4 The body of papers considered by the Review Commission and

L.7.5 The Record of the Hearing



- L.8 The members of the Appeals Review Commission, when constituted, shall consult together as soon as possible to review the information laid before them and to agree upon the course which their conduct of the appeal shall take, following the procedures set out in Sections F and G (and Section H if they deem it appropriate). In addition, they may, if the circumstances so require, consider any of the following, particularly if any such issues are raised in the Notice of Appeal:
- L.8.1 Whether there is or may be new information which has come to light and which could not have reasonably been available to the Review Commission before it made its decision under Section K.
- L.8.2 Whether any such new information would in its opinion have been material in that, had it been tested and proved to the satisfaction of the Review Commission, it might have caused it to reach a different decision.
- L.8.3 Whether there may have been some procedural irregularity or breach of the rules of natural justice or serious misunderstanding by the Review Commission of the information before it or of any aspect of the Procedure itself.
- L.9.1 Before reaching its decision on the Appeal, there shall be a Hearing before the Appeals Review Commission which the Minister shall normally be expected to attend.
- L.9.2 The General Secretary shall consult with the Convener and the other members of the Appeals Review Commission and, where possible, with the Minister or his/her representative as to a suitable venue, date and time for the Hearing and, having so consulted, shall decide thereupon and shall notify all concerned in writing of the arrangements for the Hearing.
- L.9.3 The General Secretary shall (unless excluded for the reasons specified in Paragraph D.1) attend the Hearing for the purpose of giving such procedural advice to the Appeals Review Commission as may be appropriate and of keeping a formal record of the Hearing. S/he shall not be present when the Appeals Review Commission deliberates and decides on the case.
- L.9.4 If the General Secretary cannot for any reason be present at the Hearing, the Appeals Review Commission shall itself appoint such person as it considers appropriate to deputise for him/her for that purpose, ascertaining beforehand that such person is not excluded for reasons specified in Paragraph D.1. Such person will carry out the duties set out in Paragraph L.9.3 but shall not be present when the Appeals Review Commission deliberates and decides on the case.
- L.9.5 The General Secretary or his/her deputy appointed under Paragraph L.9.4 shall prepare a summary minute of the proceedings at the Hearing (the Secretary's minute). Where possible, a verbatim record of the proceedings shall also be made by electronic recording or by such other means as shall be directed by the Convener of the Appeals Review Commission. The Record of the



Hearing shall consist of the Secretary's minute together with any such verbatim record.

- L.9.6 A representative of the Church's legal advisers may, at the invitation of the Appeals Review Commission, attend the Hearing in order to advise it on matters relating to procedure, evidence and interpretation, but s/he shall not take any part in the decision reached by the Appeals Review Commission, nor shall s/he be present when it deliberates and decides upon the case.
- L.9.7 The conduct of the Hearing of the Appeal is in the hands of the Appeals Review Commission whose Convener will at the outset of the Hearing read out the decision of the Review Commission.
- L.9.8 At some point during the Hearing the Convener will invite the Minister or his/her representative to address the Appeals Review Commission on the subject matter of the Appeal.
- L.10.1 The members of the Appeals Review Commission shall at the conclusion of the Hearing, all meeting and deliberating together but in the absence of the Minister and all other persons consider and arrive at their decision in accordance with Paragraph L.10.2. In so doing they are required to make a careful and detailed appraisal of all the factors set out at Paragraphs K.1.1 to K.1.6 and of all the information, reports, representations and other factors forming the subject matter of the appeal
- L.10.2 The purpose of their deliberation is to enable them to reach (either unanimously or by a majority vote) a decision in accordance with Paragraph 5 of Part I of the Procedure as to whether, having full regard to the Basis of Union and in particular Paragraph 2 of Schedule E thereto or the second paragraph of Part II of Schedule F thereto whichever is relevant, the name of the Minister in the particular case should remain upon, or be deleted from, the Roll of Ministers.
- L.10.3 There shall be no appeal from the decision of the Appeals Review Commission which is final and binding on the Minister and on all the Councils of the Church.
- L.11.1 The Appeals Review Commission shall record its decision (the Decision Record) and, in doing so, shall state whether it was reached unanimously or by a majority and whether its decision upholds or reverses the decision of the Review Commission and shall append a statement of its reasons for the decision (the Statement of Reasons), but shall not be obliged, unless it wishes to do so, to comment in detail on any of the matters considered by it.
- L.11.2 The decision so taken shall conclude the involvement of the Appeals Review Commission in the Procedure except as to the discharge of its responsibilities under Paragraph N.2.
- L.11.3 If the decision is that the name of the Minister shall be deleted from the Roll of Ministers, such deletion takes effect with immediate effect.



L.12 Within ten days of the date of the Appeals Review Commission's decision the General Secretary shall:

L.12.1 Send or deliver to the Minister or his/her representative written notification of the decision and copies of the Decision Record and the Statement of Reasons and any recommendations or guidance issued with the Decision Record.

L.12.2 send or deliver notice of that fact and of the consequent termination of the Minister's Suspension under Paragraph E.5.4 to the General Secretary, the Moderator of the Synod, the Synod Clerk, the Deputy General Secretary (but only if s/he issued the Commencement Notice), the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries, the Convener of the PRWC and the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation and shall at the same time send to those persons copies of the Decision Record and the Statement of Reasons and any recommendations or guidance appended to the Decision and sent to the Minister in accordance with Paragraph L.12.1 (as regards any Outside Organisation, only such recommendations or guidance as it expressly states to be its wish to be passed on to that Outside Organisation), stressing to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used.

#### **M. FORMS, SENDING/DELIVERY OF DOCUMENTS and MISCELLANEOUS**

M.1 Model forms have been prepared to assist those concerned with the Procedure. The forms may be amended from time to time and new forms introduced. Use of the model forms is not compulsory and minor variations in the wording will not invalidate them, but it is strongly recommended that the model forms be used and followed as closely as possible to avoid confusion and to ensure that all relevant information is supplied at the proper time.

M.2 Any form, letter or other document required to be sent or delivered to a person under the Procedure shall be assumed to have been received by that person if sent or delivered in any of the following ways:

M.2.1 By delivering the same personally to the person concerned or

M.2.2 By delivering the same or sending it by first class pre-paid post or by Recorded Delivery post addressed to the last known address of the person concerned in a sealed envelope addressed to that person or

M.2.3 In such other manner as the Review Commission or the Appeals Review Commission (in the latter case if the sending or delivery relates to the Appeals Procedure) may direct having regard to the circumstances.

M.3 Any form, letter or document required to be sent or delivered to the Secretary of the Review Commission or on the General Secretary (in the case of an appeal) shall be delivered or sent by first class pre-paid post or by Recorded Delivery post addressed to the Secretary of the Review Commission or the



General Secretary as the case may be at the address given in the current issue of the Year Book or subsequently notified or (in the absence of any such address in the Year Book) in an envelope addressed to that person at Church House, 86 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9RT and marked "Ministerial Incapacity Process".

M.4 All documents required to be served shall be placed in a sealed envelope clearly addressed to the addressee and marked "Private and Confidential".

M.5 Where any form, letter or other document is sent by first class pre-paid post, it shall be assumed to have been received by the recipient on the third day after the posting of the same.

M.6 Where any issue or question of procedure arises whilst the matter is under the jurisdiction of the Review Commission or the Appeals Review Commission, that Commission shall resolve each such issue or question or give such directions as shall appear to it to be just and appropriate in the circumstances.

M.7 Deletion as a result of the Incapacity Procedure shall have the effect of terminating any contract, written or oral, between the Minister and the United Reformed Church or any constituent part thereof in relation to his/her ministry.

**N. REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY, COSTS AND RETENTION OF RECORDS AND PAPERS**

N.1 The General Secretary shall report to the General Assembly all decisions reached by the Review Commission and the Appeals Review Commission (other than decisions made by the Special Appeals Body under Section H of this Part II) in the following manner:

N.1.1 If a decision of the Review Commission to delete the name of a Minister from the Roll of Ministers is subject to appeal, the Report shall simply state that a decision has been reached in a case which is subject to appeal and shall not name the Minister.

N.1.2 If a decision of the Review Commission to delete is not subject to appeal, the Report shall so state.

N.1.3 If a report has already been made to the General Assembly under Paragraph N.1.1 and the Appeals Review Commission reverses the decision of the Review Commission and allows the name of the Minister to remain on the Roll of Ministers, the General Secretary shall report the decision of the Appeals Review Commission to the next meeting of the General Assembly without naming the Minister.

N.2 The cost of operating the Incapacity Procedure and the reasonable and proper expenses of persons attending a Hearing and the costs of any reports obtained by or on the authority of the Review Commission or the Appeals Review Commission or any other costs and expenses which the Review Commission



or the Appeals Review Commission deem to have been reasonably and properly incurred in the course of the Procedure (but excluding any costs of representation) shall be charged to the general funds of the Church, and the Report of each case to the General Assembly shall state the total cost incurred in that case.

N.3 The Secretary of the Review Commission shall be responsible for the keeping of the record of decisions taken by the Review Commission and by the Appeals Review Commission, and for the custody of all papers relating to concluded cases, which shall be kept in a locked cabinet at Church House.



**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**A5(ii)**

**Section O Advisory Group**

**SECTION O**

**PART II - Rules of Procedure (governed by General Assembly Function 2(6)(A)(xii) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church)**

**A. GENERAL**

A.1 These are the Rules of Procedure referred to in Paragraph 5 of Part I.

A.2 A.2.1 In the interests both of the Minister or CRCW as the case may be and of the whole church, the Section O Process once begun should be conducted and concluded as expeditiously as possible, consistent with the proper conduct of the procedures.

A.2.2 To this end, these Rules impose time limits for the various steps which have to be taken. However it is equally in the interests of all that the Section O Process once begun should not be aborted, delayed or hindered by an unduly narrow or restrictive application of the time limits or indeed of any other aspects of these Rules.

A.3 Accordingly if any of the time limits specified in these Rules of Procedure are not complied with, the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission may in its discretion allow a reasonable further period for such compliance, except as regards the strict time limit imposed upon the right of appeal (Paragraph G.1). In other cases, if the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission considers that sufficient time has been allowed and the action required has still not been carried out or that there has been an unreasonable delay in the carrying out of the action (whether or not these Rules imposed a time limit in such case), it may proceed and attach whatever weight it believes appropriate in the circumstances to such failure to comply, or to any delay in compliance.

A.4 The sole object of the Section O Process is to enable a decision to be reached in accordance with Section F, or Section G in the event of an appeal. All statements, whether written or oral, made during and in the context of this process shall be regarded as being made in pursuance of that object and for no other reason. All such statements shall be treated as confidential within the framework of the Section O Process.

A.5 For the purpose of Parts I and II of this Section O, a reference to any of the Sections A to J shall mean a reference to that Section of this Part II and the following words and expressions carry the following meanings :-

A.5.1 **"Appeals Commission"** shall mean the Commission constituted for the hearing of each Appeal in accordance with Section G.

A.5.2 **"Appointers"** shall mean, for the purposes of the appointment of (i) the Assembly Commission or (ii) the Special Appeal Body, the Convener and the Deputy Convener of the Commission Panel Provided that (i) if either of them shall be unable to act the General Secretary shall substitute for that one and act jointly with the other and (ii) if both shall be unable to act the Appointers shall be the General Secretary and the Moderator of the General Assembly.

A.5.3 **"Assembly Commission"** shall mean a Commission consisting of five (5) persons selected from the Commission Panel for the purpose of hearing and deciding each case dealt with under the Section O Process.

A.5.4 **"Basis of Union"** shall mean the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church.

A.5.5 **"Commission Panel"** shall mean a Panel consisting of a maximum of fifty (50) members of the United Reformed Church from whom shall be chosen the persons to form the Assembly Commission to hear each case being dealt with under the Section O Process.



A.5.6 **“Commission Stage”** shall mean that part of the Section O Process initiated in accordance with Paragraph B.9.1 and continuing until the conclusion of the case.

A.5.7 **“Council”** shall mean the council of the Church whose Mandated Group is called in to act on its behalf under these Rules of Procedure.

A.5.8 **“CRCW”** shall mean a person whose name is on the Roll of Church Related Community Workers who is under consideration within the Section O Process (and see also Paragraph A.10).

A.5.9 **“Deletion”** and **“to delete”** shall mean the removal of/to remove the name of a Minister or a CRCW from the Roll of Ministers or Church Related Community Workers as the case may be other than at the request of the Minister or CRCW concerned or by the acceptance of his/her resignation or by his/her death.

A.5.10 **“Hearing”** shall mean the Hearing conducted by the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission under Section E or Section G.

A.5.11 **“Incapacity Procedure”** shall mean the Procedure operated by the United Reformed Church for the purpose of dealing with cases involving the incapacity of Ministers or CRCWs and contained in Section P of the Church’s Manual (and for the avoidance of doubt this is the definition referred to in Paragraph 1.3.1 of Part I).

A.5.12 **“Initial Enquiry”** shall mean the enquiry conducted by the Mandated Group, in conjunction with the person calling in the Mandated Group in accordance with the provisions of Section B, during the period beginning when it is so called in and ending when it serves either a Notice of Non-Continuance or a Referral Notice in accordance with these Rules of Procedure.

A.5.13 **“Investigation”** shall mean the process of investigation carried out by the Mandated Group as set out in Section D.

A.5.14 **“Joint Panel”** shall mean the Panel as defined in Paragraph B.2.2 from which one person shall be appointed to be a member of the Mandated Group.

A.5.15 **“Mandated Group”** shall mean the group mandated to act in the name of a Synod or General Assembly (or Mission Council acting on its behalf) under Section B of these Rules of Procedure.

A.5.16 **“Minister”** shall mean a person whose name is on the Roll of Ministers who is under consideration within the Section O Process (and see also Paragraph A.10).

A.5.17 **“Notice of Appeal”** shall mean a Notice specified in Paragraph G.1 whereby either of the parties in any case indicates his/her/its intention to appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission.

A.5.18 **“Notice of Non-Continuance”** shall mean a Notice served under Paragraph B.8.2 at the conclusion of the Initial Enquiry by the Mandated Group on the person calling it in to indicate that the Mandated Group does not intend to proceed further with the disciplinary case against the Minister or CRCW.

A.5.19 **“Notice of Reference back”** shall mean a Notice from the Appeals Commission of any reference back for a re-hearing by the Assembly Commission under Paragraph G.11.7.

A.5.20 **“Outside organisation”** shall mean any body or organisation outside the Church by which the Minister or CRCW is employed or with which the Minister or CRCW holds any position or post or has any involvement, paid or unpaid, where such body or organisation would have a reasonable and proper expectation of being made aware of the particular step(s) being taken and/or the particular recommendation(s) or guidance being issued under the relevant paragraph of these Rules of Procedure in which the reference to the expression ‘Outside Organisation’ appears.

A.5.21 **“Parties”** shall mean (i) the Council, which for the purpose of the Section O Process shall act solely and exclusively through the Mandated Group, and (ii) the Minister or CRCW.

A.5.22 **“Press Officer”** shall mean the person appointed to act for the Church and to be its spokesperson as regards its interaction with the Press and other media bodies.

A.5.23 **“Referral Notice”** shall mean a Notice specified in Paragraph B.10.1 whereby a case involving a Minister or CRCW is referred into the Commission Stage and shall include any statement of reasons for such referral which may be appended to it.

A.5.24 **“Roll of CRCWs”** shall mean the Roll of Church Related Community Workers defined in the first paragraph of Schedule F, Part II to the Basis of Union (and see also Paragraph A.10).



A.5.25 **"Roll of Ministers"** shall have the meaning given to it in Paragraph 1 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union (and see also Paragraph A.10).

A.5.26 **"Rules of Procedure"** shall mean the Rules of Procedure governing the system of ministerial or CRCW-related discipline commencing with the exercise by the Synod or General Assembly of its function as set out in Paragraph 2(4)(A)(xvii) or Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xxiii) of the Structure as the case may be and continuing throughout the Section O Process such Rules being contained in this Part II of Section O.

A.5.27 **"Secretary of the Assembly Commission"** shall mean the person appointed by the General Assembly on the advice of the Nominations Committee to be responsible for all secretarial and procedural matters laid upon him/her by virtue of the Section O Process, and the period and terms of office of that person shall be such as the General Assembly shall decide.

A.5.28 **"Section O Process"** shall mean the whole Process set out in Parts I and II of this Section O (subject to such variations as shall from time to time be made).

A.5.29 **"Special Appeals Body"** shall mean the body appointed to hear appeals under Paragraph E.5.3 against a proposed reference back and recommendation to commence the Incapacity Procedure.

A.5.30 **"Structure"** shall mean the Structure of the United Reformed Church.

A.5.31 **"Suspension"** and **"to suspend"** shall have the meanings assigned to them in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union and the third and fourth paragraphs of Part II of Schedule F to the Basis of Union.

A.5.32 **"Synod"** shall mean that Synod which in relation to any Minister or CRCW exercises oversight of that Minister or CRCW in accordance with its function under Paragraph 2(4)(A)(xv) of the Structure.

A.5.33 **"Synod Panel"** shall mean the Panel referred to in Paragraph B.2.1 from which persons shall be appointed to be members of the Mandated Group.

A.6 A.6.1 Subject to the age limit imposed by Paragraph A.6.4, appointment to the Commission Panel shall be by Resolution of the General Assembly on the advice of the Nominations Committee (or such other committee as may in the future perform the functions of the Nominations Committee), who shall in considering persons for appointment take into account (i) the need for balance and for a variety of skills and specialisations, particularly in the following areas - experience in ministerial oversight, theology and doctrine, law, counselling, psychology, mental health, experience in conduct of meetings and tribunals, and (ii) the advantages of including on the Commission Panel persons from a variety of ethnic minority backgrounds.

A.6.2 Subject to the age limit imposed by Paragraph A.6.4, members of the Commission Panel shall be appointed for such term not exceeding five (5) years as the General Assembly shall in each case think fit with power for the General Assembly to determine any such appointment during its term or to renew any such appointment for successive terms of five (5) years each, but any person who reaches the end of the term of his/her appointment on the Commission Panel whilst serving as a member of an Assembly Commission in a case in progress may continue so to serve until the conclusion of that case.

A.6.3 The General Assembly shall appoint from the Commission Panel one member to be the Convener of the Commission Panel and one member to be the Deputy Convener of the Commission Panel, each (subject to the provisions of Paragraph A.6.2) to serve for such period as General Assembly shall decide.

A.6.4 When any member of the Commission Panel reaches the age of seventy, s/he must forthwith resign from the Commission Panel and shall no longer be eligible to serve on any new Assembly Commission, but any person who reaches his/her seventieth birthday whilst serving on an Assembly Commission in a case in progress may continue so to serve until the conclusion of that case.

A.7 In any case where a person authorised or required to take some action regarding (i) the appointment of persons to any Mandated Group or (ii) the calling in of a Mandated Group or (iii) some other administrative or procedural matter under the Section O Process is unable for any reason to do so, then, unless the Section O Process already makes specific provision for such a situation, that person's duly appointed deputy shall take such action in his/her place. This Paragraph does not permit any member of an Assembly Commission, an Appeals Commission or a Mandated Group to appoint his/her own deputy.

A.8 In any case where the Secretary of the Assembly Commission (or the General Secretary in the case of Appeals, save where Paragraph G.10.5 applies) is unable for any reason to carry out the duties of that office, his/her place shall be taken by a deputy duly authorised by or in the name of General Assembly.



A.9 Where any issue or question arises relating to procedure or to the proper expedition of the Process whilst the matter is under the jurisdiction of the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission that Commission shall resolve each such issue or question or give such directions as shall appear to it to be just and appropriate in the circumstances.

A.10 For the avoidance of repetition, whenever the word ' Minister' or the expression 'the Roll of Ministers' or any word or expression relating to a Minister or ministry appears in the Section O Process, it shall be taken as being equally referable to a CRCW or to the Roll of CRCWs or to the office of CRCW as the case may be, unless such construction is precluded by the context.

A.11 The Church recognises that, from time to time, cases falling within the Section O Process may attract the attention of the national or local press and other media organisations and authorises Synod Moderators, Assembly Officers and the Secretary of the Assembly Commission to supply to the Press Officer such information as s/he may reasonably require to deal with all press/media enquiries in a tactful and discreet manner so as to protect the interests of the Church, the Minister and all others involved in the case. This paragraph is intended to take effect independently of and in addition to those paragraphs throughout these Rules of Procedure under which the Press Officer has been identified as one of the persons to whom specific information is given at various points in the Process.

## **B. APPOINTMENT AND ROLE OF MANDATED GROUP AND INITIATION OF SECTION O**

B.1 B.1.1 To enable them to carry out their respective functions under Paragraphs 2(4)(A)(xvii) and 2(6)(A)(xxiii) of the Structure, every Synod and the General Assembly shall act solely through a group of three persons ("the Mandated Group") which shall have mandated authority to act in the name of the Synod or the General Assembly as the case may be in every matter requiring consideration under those respective functions.

B.1.2 The Mandated Group called in to deal with any particular case under the provisions of this Section B has no pastoral role to fulfil and its precise functions are described in Paragraphs B.8 and B.9.

B.2. B.2.1 Every Synod shall appoint and maintain a panel ("the Synod Panel") of persons from that Synod and, in considering persons for appointment, regard shall be had for achieving as wide a geographical representation within the Synod as possible.

B.2.2 There shall also be a standing panel ('the Joint Panel') consisting of a maximum of thirteen persons, of whom one shall be nominated by each Synod and selected preferably on account of some legal, tribunal or professional experience or other similar background, which would equip them for assuming a role as part of a Mandated Group. The list of those currently on the Joint Panel shall be held by the Synod Moderators.

B.3.1 In cases arising under Paragraph 2(4)(A)(xvii) of the Structure (Synods), if at any time the Moderator of the Synod, in consultation with such officers of the Synod as s/he considers appropriate, believes that there is or may be a disciplinary issue in respect of any Minister in membership or under the authority of that Synod, s/he shall forthwith in the name of the Synod appoint two persons from the Synod Panel for that Synod and one person from the Joint Panel as provided in Paragraphs B.2.1 and B.2.2 to constitute the Mandated Group for the particular case and at the same time inform the Minister that this step has been taken and follow the procedure laid down in Paragraphs B.6.1/4.

B.3.2 In cases arising under Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xxiii) of the Structure (General Assembly or Mission Council on its behalf), if at any time the Deputy General Secretary, in consultation with such other officers of the General Assembly as s/he considers appropriate, believes that there is or may be a disciplinary issue in respect of any Minister s/he shall forthwith in the name of General Assembly appoint three persons as provided in Paragraph B.3.3 to constitute the Mandated Group for the particular case and at the same time inform the Minister that this step has been taken and follow the procedure laid down in Paragraphs B.6.1/4.

B.3.3 In cases arising under Paragraph B.3.2, the Deputy General Secretary, in consultation with such other officers of General Assembly as s/he considers appropriate, shall constitute the Mandated Group by the appointment of all three persons, each of whom shall be selected from either the Joint Panel or any of the Synod Panels (at least one from the Joint Panel and at least one from the Synod Panels).

B.3.4 Should the Moderator of the Synod or the Deputy General Secretary receive in accordance with the provisions applicable to the Incapacity Procedure a recommendation falling under Paragraph 3.2 of Part I, s/he may regard this as a sufficient indication of a possible disciplinary issue as to justify the calling in of the Mandated Group under the provisions of Paragraph B.3.1 or Paragraph B.3.2.



B.3.5 On any occasion throughout the Section O Process where notices and papers are required to be sent to the Moderator of the Synod, then in a case proceeding under Paragraph B.3.2 they shall also be sent to the Deputy General Secretary.

B.4 If any member of a Synod Panel or the Joint Panel is a member of a local church connected with a case or has any pastoral or personal involvement in a case or is the subject of a disciplinary complaint, that person shall not form part of the Mandated Group for that case.

B.5 B.5.1 If any member of a Synod Panel or the Joint Panel is disqualified under Paragraph B.4 or is for any other reason unable to act in a particular case, the person calling in the Mandated Group shall appoint another member from the same panel to serve as a member of the Mandated Group for that case. The Mandated Group for all matters relating to that case shall be its remaining member(s) together with the person(s) appointed under this Paragraph. If only one such person is disqualified or otherwise unable to act, then, until any such further appointment is made, the mandate shall continue to be held by the remaining two members of the Mandated Group. If two members of the Mandated Group are disqualified or otherwise unable to act, there is no mandate for the remaining member to act alone.

B.5.2 No person shall serve as a member of or as the spokesperson for a Mandated Group in connection with any case where s/he would fall within any of the restrictions contained in Paragraph C.3.1.

B.6 B.6.1 In constituting the Mandated Group, the person so doing shall follow the procedures set out in Paragraph B.3.1 or in Paragraphs B.3.2 and B.3.3, whichever procedure is appropriate to the particular case, advising the members of the Mandated Group of the identity of the Minister but giving no further information at that point.

B.6.2 In the event that any of the proposed appointees on to the Mandated Group is/are unable or unwilling to act, the process(es) of appointment from the Synod Panel and/or the Joint Panel shall continue until a Mandated Group consisting of three members has been duly constituted.

B.6.3 The commencement of the steps set out in Paragraphs B.3, B.4 and B.5 to constitute the Mandated Group marks the commencement of the Section O Process and the completion of those steps marks the calling in of the Mandated Group for the purposes of these Rules of Procedure.

B.6.4 As soon as the above steps have all been taken, the person calling in the Mandated Group shall issue to each member thereof a written statement setting out the reasons for the calling in of the Mandated Group, the names of possible informants and any other sources of information at that time available. To avoid prejudice, that statement must not contain any assumptions or inferences or any personal reflections or opinions.

B.7.1 In cases of extreme emergency, the Moderator of the Synod or other person entitled to call in the Mandated Group may, if s/he considers that there are strong and urgent reasons for so doing and only so long as s/he forthwith calls in the Mandated Group, suspend the Minister with immediate effect either orally or in writing. Suspension imposed orally shall be immediately confirmed in writing to the Minister.

B.7.2 The person imposing the Suspension under Paragraph B.7.1 shall forthwith (i) give written notice of the Minister's Suspension to the Moderator of the Synod (if s/he is not the person calling in the Mandated Group), the Synod Clerk, the General Secretary, the Press Officer and the Secretary for Ministries, and (ii) make a written disclosure of the Minister's Suspension to the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation (as defined in Paragraph A.5.20). The Notice shall stress to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used. In order to preserve confidentiality any notice or disclosure given under this Paragraph shall not disclose any reason for the imposition of the Suspension (see also Paragraphs B.9.2 and B.11). However, any such notice or disclosure shall contain a statement explaining the effect of Suspension as outlined in either Paragraph 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union or the fourth paragraph of Part II of Schedule F to the Basis of Union whichever is relevant and shall (if such be the case) state that the Police have been apprised of the matter giving rise to the Suspension.

B.7.3 If a Minister entering the Section O Process has already been suspended under the Incapacity Procedure, that suspension shall continue until it is terminated in accordance with these Rules of Procedure and meanwhile shall be governed by them.

B.7.4 Suspension imposed under Paragraph B.7.1 shall continue during the Mandated Group's initial enquiry period referred to in Paragraph B.8.1. If at the end of that period the Mandated Group serves a Referral Notice on the Minister, it must also serve on him/her a Notice confirming the continuance of the Suspension during the Commission Stage.

B.7.5 In the event that the initial enquiry period terminates without the issue of a Referral Notice, the Minister's Suspension under Paragraph B.7.1 shall automatically cease on the issue of a Notice of Non-



Continuance under Paragraph B.8.2, whereupon the person imposing the Suspension under Paragraph B.7.1 shall give written notice of the cessation of the Suspension both to the Minister and to the persons specified in Paragraph B.7.2.

B.8 The functions of the Mandated Group called in by the person authorised for that purpose under Paragraph B.6 in any particular case are described in this Paragraph B.8 (as regards the initial enquiry) and in Paragraph B.9 (as regards the Investigation):

B.8.1 The Mandated Group shall carry out its own initial enquiry with all due expedition in consultation (where practical and appropriate) with the person calling in the Mandated Group for the sole purpose of ascertaining whether the Commission Stage should be initiated. Having done so, it must bring its initial enquiry to a conclusion in accordance with Paragraphs B.8.2 and B.8.3.

B.8.2 If the Mandated Group decides as a result of its initial enquiry not to proceed any further with the matter, it shall serve on the Moderator of the Synod or other person calling it in a notice to that effect (a Notice of Non-Continuance), which shall have the effect of discharging from further involvement in that case the Mandated Group itself (subject to due compliance by it of Paragraph H.4) and the Council in whose name it conducted the initial enquiry.

B.8.3 On receipt of a Notice of Non-Continuance the person calling in the Mandated Group shall forthwith notify the Minister, the Moderator of the Synod (if s/he was not the person calling in the Mandated Group) and the Synod Clerk that the Mandated Group is not proceeding any further and if the person calling in the Mandated Group has already suspended the Minister under Paragraph B.7.1, s/he must notify all the persons, bodies and organisations specified in Paragraph B.7.2 that disciplinary proceedings against the Minister and the Minister's Suspension are terminated with immediate effect.

B.8.4 If on the other hand the Mandated Group decides as a result of its initial enquiry to initiate the Commission Stage, it shall follow the procedure laid down in Paragraphs B.9.1 and B.9.3 whereupon the Commission Stage will be initiated.

B.9 B.9.1 Whenever the Mandated Group, having as a result of its Initial Enquiry become aware of any information relating to the Minister concerned which might require disciplinary investigation, concludes unanimously or by a majority that this is indeed so, it shall forthwith in the name of the Synod suspend the Minister (unless s/he has already been suspended under Paragraph B.7.1, in which case the Mandated Group shall serve on the Minister a notice that his/her Suspension shall continue during the Commission Stage) and initiate the Commission Stage in accordance with Paragraph B.10. Suspension under this Paragraph shall take effect when the Minister receives Notice thereof from the Mandated Group either orally or in writing. Suspension imposed orally shall be immediately confirmed in writing (as to the contents of the written notice of Suspension, see also Paragraph B.11).

B.9.2 Suspension, whether imposed under Paragraph B.7.1 or B.9.1, does not imply any view about the correctness or otherwise of any allegations made concerning the Minister, nor does it affect the Minister's stipend or the CRCW's salary or the Minister's or CRCW's pension arrangements under the relevant United Reformed Church Pension Scheme.

B.9.3 The Mandated Group shall forthwith, by written notice to the person who called it in, advise him/her of the issue of the Referral Notice and the Notice of Suspension, and that person shall in turn forthwith (i) give written notice thereof to the Moderator of the Synod (if s/he is not the person calling in the Mandated Group) the Synod Clerk, the General Secretary, the Press Officer and the Secretary for Ministries, and (ii) make a written disclosure of the Minister's Suspension to the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation, unless notice thereof has already been given to that Outside Organisation under Paragraph B.7.2. The Notice shall stress to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used. In order to preserve confidentiality any notice or disclosure given under this Paragraph shall not disclose any reason for the imposition of the Suspension (see also Paragraphs B.9.2 and B.11). However, any such notice or disclosure shall contain a statement explaining the effect of Suspension as outlined in either Paragraph 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union or the fourth paragraph of Part II of Schedule F to the Basis of Union whichever is relevant and shall (if such be the case) state that the Police have been apprised of the matter giving rise to the Suspension.

B.9.4 During the Commission Stage it is the responsibility of the Mandated Group to conduct the Investigation in accordance with Section D, to comply with all procedural matters under the Rules of Procedure and to present the case against the Minister at the Hearing under Section E and at the Hearing of any Appeal under Section G.

B.10 To initiate the Commission Stage pursuant to Paragraph B.9.1, the Mandated Group in the name of the Council shall take the following steps:

B.10.1 Serve on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission a duly completed Referral Notice which should clearly state the reasons why the Mandated Group believes that a breach of ministerial discipline has or may have occurred and which should also include where possible a summary of the supporting



information on the basis of which the Mandated Group has issued the Referral Notice and which must disclose the name and address of any Outside Organisation notified of the Minister's Suspension under either Paragraph B.7.2 or Paragraph B.9.3.

B.10.2 Serve on the Minister notice of the issue of the Referral Notice and of his/her Suspension (or of the continuance of his/her Suspension if Paragraph B.7.1 applies).

B.11 The Notice of Suspension, whether issued under Paragraph B.7.1 or Paragraph B.9.1, shall inform the Minister that, in accordance with these Rules of Procedure, any conduct on his/her part during such Suspension which breaches or contravenes either Paragraph 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union or the fourth paragraph of Part II of Schedule F to the Basis of Union whichever is relevant may be taken into account by the Assembly Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Commission in reaching its decision under Section F or Section G as the case may be.

B.12 Once a Referral Notice has been issued by a Mandated Group in any case, no further Referral Notice shall in any circumstances be issued in respect of the subject matter of that referral, save only where the Minister has been the subject of an earlier disciplinary case in which the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission issued a written warning under the provisions of Paragraph F.2.2 or Paragraph G.11.3.

## C. REFERENCE TO AND CONSTITUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMISSION

C.1 On receipt of either a Referral Notice or a Notice of Reference back, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall forthwith take the following steps:

C.1.1 Acknowledge receipt of such Notice.

C.1.2 In the case of a Referral Notice, serve on the Minister a copy of the Referral Notice and a Notice which shall invite the Minister's preliminary response.

C.1.3 In the case of a Notice of Reference back, invite any comments from the Parties regarding the Notice and accompanying statement received by them from the General Secretary in accordance with Paragraph G.14.1.

C.1.4 Inform the Convener and the Deputy Convener of the Commission Panel (or, in their absence or the absence of either of them, the other person or persons specified in Paragraph A.5.2) ('the Appointers') of the receipt of the Referral Notice or the Notice of Reference back and pass to such person or persons copies thereof and of any other papers which accompany such Notice.

C.1.5 Inform the General Secretary, the Moderator of the Synod, the Synod Clerk, the Press Officer and the Secretary for Ministries and the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation of the receipt of the Referral Notice but not of the contents thereof, apart from the name of the Minister.

C.1.6 On receipt of the Minister's response under Paragraph C.1.2 and any documents which may accompany it, provide the Mandated Group with copies thereof.

C.1.7 In any case arising as a consequence of a Notice of Reference back, where comments are received from either of the parties as a result of the invitation contained in Paragraph C.1.3, provide the other party with copies thereof.

C.2 C.2.1 The Appointers shall, within 7 days of compliance by the Secretary of the Assembly Commission with Paragraph C.1.4 (or within such further time as they shall reasonably require), jointly appoint five (5) persons from the Commission Panel to constitute the Assembly Commission for the hearing of that case, and in making such appointments they shall have regard to the provisions of Paragraphs C.2.2 and C.3.

C.2.2 The Appointers shall (so far as possible) (i) appoint at least one man and at least one woman and at least one minister and at least one lay person onto the Assembly Commission and (ii) have regard to the nature of the case, the need for balance and the skills, specialisation and cultural understanding of the members of the Commission Panel.

C.3 C.3.1 No person shall be appointed to sit as a member of the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission in the hearing of any case in which he/she has any involvement, whether as a member of any local church or Synod connected with the case or (in the event of a re-hearing under Paragraph G.11.7) a member of the previous Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission, or whether on account of some personal or pastoral involvement as a result of which it is considered by



those responsible for selecting the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission for that case or by the proposed appointee him/herself that it would not be appropriate for him/her to hear the case.

C.3.2 Under the Rules of Procedure, either of the parties may object on any of the grounds set out in Paragraph C.3.1 to the proposed appointment of any person to the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission for the hearing of his/her case and, in the event of any such objection, the decision of those charged under the Section O Process with making the appointment shall be final and binding.

C.4 C.4.1 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall send to each member of the Commission Panel whom the Appointers propose to appoint to the Assembly Commission notice of his/her proposed appointment, stating the name of the Minister but containing no further details of the case. The Notice shall draw the invitee's attention to Paragraph C.3.1 and shall request confirmation that the invitee is willing to accept appointment and that s/he is unaware of any circumstances which in the present case might prevent him/her from serving on the Assembly Commission.

C.4.2 The Invitee shall within 7 days of receipt of such Notice serve on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission a Notice indicating whether s/he is able and willing to accept appointment and, if so, confirming compliance with Paragraph C.3.1.

C.5 C.5.1 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall serve notice on the Parties setting out the name and office or credentials of each proposed appointee, drawing attention to Paragraphs C.3.1 and requiring notice of objection to any of the proposed appointees under that Paragraph to be served upon the Secretary of the Assembly Commission within 14 days of the service of the Notice given under this Paragraph.

C.5.2 Any such Notice of Objection must state the grounds for such objection.

C.5.3 To ensure that the Commission Stage is moved along in a timely manner, any Notice of Objection received outside the period allowed will not normally be considered unless very good reason can be shown for its late delivery.

C.5.4 The Appointers shall consider any objection properly delivered and shall decide whether to uphold or reject the objection.

C.5.5 If they reject the objection the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall serve notice thereof on the objector.

C.5.6 If they uphold the objection, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall serve notice thereof upon the objector, the person to whom the objection was taken and the other Party upon whom the Notice referred to in Paragraph C.4.1 was served.

C.5.7 In the event of any objection being upheld, the procedure outlined in Paragraphs C.2 to C.5 shall be repeated to complete the appointment of the Assembly Commission and to give notice to the Parties of the person appointed.

C.6 The Appointers shall appoint one member of the Assembly Commission to be its Convener, but s/he shall not have a casting vote, unless the Assembly Commission shall in circumstances arising under Paragraph C.7.1 of these Rules consist of an even number of members.

C.7 C.7.1 In the event that during the Commission Stage any member of the Assembly Commission shall be unable to carry out his/her duties on the Assembly Commission, the remaining members shall continue to act as the Assembly Commission, subject to there being a minimum of three members.

C.7.2 In the event that in the terms of Paragraph C.7.1 the Assembly Commission shall be reduced to fewer than three members at any time after it has taken any steps under Section E the Assembly Commission so appointed shall stand down and be discharged and a new Assembly Commission shall be appointed under this Section C.

C.7.3 Once the Assembly Commission has been duly constituted and has taken any steps under Section E, no person shall subsequently be appointed to serve on that Assembly Commission.

C.7.4 If the Convener of the Assembly Commission is unable to continue to serve for the reasons stated in Paragraph C.7.1, the remaining members shall, following consultation with the Appointers, appoint one of their number to be the Convener in his/her place.



## **D. INVESTIGATION BY THE MANDATED GROUP**

D.1 It shall be the role of the Mandated Group to investigate the matters which are the subject of the Referral Notice with a view to presenting the case in the name of the Council at the Hearing.

D.2 D.2.1 In the course of the Investigation, the Mandated Group shall normally interview the person or persons lodging the initial complaint (if any) and the Minister concerned and shall make all other investigations which it considers necessary.

D.2.2 Any person being interviewed in accordance with Paragraph D.2.1 may, if s/he so wishes, have a friend present with him/her at such interview.

D.3 In conducting its Investigation and preparing for the Hearing, the Mandated Group shall at all times have in mind the statement set out in Paragraph A.2.1 regarding the proper expedition of the Section O Process (and see also Paragraph E.4 as to the role of the Secretary of the Assembly Commission in this respect).

D.4 In cases where Paragraph E.7.1 applies, the Mandated Group may itself monitor the criminal proceedings, but shall otherwise for the period specified in that Paragraph suspend its own investigation of any matter under the Section O Process which might also be related to the criminal proceedings.

D.5 In cases coming into the Section O Process following a recommendation from the Incapacity Procedure, the Mandated Group shall have regard to the following matters:

D.5.1 The Mandated Group must carry out its Investigation fully and must not rely upon any information simply because it was presented and considered within the Incapacity Procedure.

D.5.2 The Mandated Group should pay careful attention to any special factors involved in a case which has first been within the Incapacity Procedure.

## **E FORMAL PROCEDURES UP TO AND INCLUDING THE HEARING**

E.1 E.1.1 The Assembly Commission's sole purpose in conducting the Hearing under this Section E is to establish whether or not there has been a breach of ministerial discipline, having regard to Paragraph 3 of Part I.

E.1.2 The object of Paragraphs E.2, E.3, E.4, E.5.1 and E.5.2 is to ensure that the Parties are aware beforehand of the evidence which will be presented at the Hearing and that they have time to consider the same.

E.2 E.2.1 Unless the case is subject to compulsory adjournment under Paragraph E.7, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall as soon as practicable after the appointment of the Assembly Commission:

E.2.1.1 provide the Convener and the other members of the Assembly Commission with (i) copies of the Referral Notice, (ii) the Minister's response under Paragraph C.1.2 and (iii) any documents which may accompany it and

E.2.1.2 in the case of any Assembly Commission appointed as a consequence of a Notice of Reference back, provide the Convener and the other members thereof with copies of (i) the Notice of Reference back, (ii) the documents, statements and information delivered to the previous Assembly Commission in accordance with these Rules of Procedure and (iii) any comments received from the parties as a result of the invitation contained in Paragraph C.1.3.

E.2.2 Having complied with Paragraph E.2.1, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall forthwith serve on each of the Parties a notice which shall:

E.2.2.1 notify the Parties that the Referral Notice and any statement from the Minister lodged in response to the Notice referred to in Paragraph C.1.2 will be part of the documentary evidence at the Hearing,

E.2.2.2 call upon the Parties to lodge copies of any documents or of any further statements relating to matters to which they may wish to refer at the Hearing (the Notice should indicate to the Parties that copies of any such documents or statements will be made available to the other Party),



E.2.2.3 call upon the Parties to state the names of persons whom they propose to invite to attend the Hearing and, briefly, the purpose of their attendance and the approximate length of time which each of the Parties will require at the Hearing,

E.2.2.4 call upon the Mandated Group to nominate a spokesperson (who need not be a member of the Mandated Group) to act on its behalf in the questioning of witnesses and in the general presentation of the case and indicate the name and status of such person,

E.2.2.5 call upon the Minister to state whether s/he wishes to have a person present with him/her at the Hearing pursuant to Paragraph E.10.1 and, if so, call upon the Minister to indicate the name and status of such person and whether s/he will be present to give the Minister support and advice under Paragraph E.10.1.1 or to present the Minister's case under Paragraph E.10.1.2.

E.3 E.3.1 Within 14 days of the service of the Notice under Paragraph E.2.2, the Parties shall comply with Paragraphs E.2.2.2 and E.2.2.3 by serving on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission the documents, statements and information requested, whereupon the Secretary shall forthwith provide copies thereof for the Convener and the other members of the Assembly Commission.

E.3.2 As soon as possible after the expiration of such period of 14 days referred to in Paragraph E.3.1, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall provide each Party with copies of the documents, statements and information delivered by the other Party under Paragraph E.3.1.

E.3.3 The Parties shall respond to the respective invitations contained in Paragraphs E.2.2.4 and E.2.2.5 no later than 14 days prior to the date set for the Hearing and copies of each Party's response shall thereupon be sent by the Secretary of the Assembly Commission to the other Party.

E.4 Having in mind the statement regarding proper expedition set out in Paragraph A.2.1 but taking account of the need for the Parties to make their due preparations for the Hearing, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall, when it seems most appropriate to him/her:

E.4.1 consult with the Convener and the other members of the Assembly Commission as to a suitable venue, date and time for the Hearing and, where possible, with the Parties as to a suitable date and time for the Hearing and, having so consulted, decide thereupon and

E.4.2 having complied with Paragraph E.4.1, forthwith serve on each of the Parties a notice stating the date, time and place of the Hearing.

E.5 E.5.1 It shall be for the Assembly Commission to decide on all procedural and evidential matters, both before and during the Hearing. It may make such directions as it deems appropriate regarding such matters and fix a time for compliance with such directions, if necessary postponing or adjourning the Hearing to enable such compliance to be made. Such matters shall include the following:

E.5.1.1 All matters relating to the form of the written material lodged by the Parties in accordance with Paragraph E.3.1 and the extent to which the same may be later amended or supplemented, and to which further written material may be introduced and disclosed and

E.5.1.2 The extent to which written statements, videos and other recordings and transcripts shall in exceptional circumstances be admitted as evidence at the Hearing.

E.5.2.1 Having notified the Parties prior to the Hearing, the Assembly Commission may invite any person with expert or specialist knowledge in any particular field to attend the Hearing with a view to that person giving evidence at the Hearing and may issue such requests and directions in that connection as it considers appropriate.

E.5.2.2 The legal advisers to The United Reformed Church shall be available for the purpose of advising the Assembly Commission on matters relating to procedure, evidence and interpretation at any point in the Section O Process.

E.5.3 If it considers that, in a case within the Section O Process, the circumstances relating to the Minister fall within the ambit of Paragraph 1 of Part I of the Incapacity Procedure, the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission may, either on its own account or on a written request from the Mandated Group, stating the reasons for making the request, at any time during the Commission Stage and whether or not a Hearing has taken place, adopt the following procedure:



E.5.3.1 It shall instruct the Secretary of the Assembly Commission or the General Secretary as the case may be to inform the Parties by written notice of its intention to refer the case back to the person who called in the Mandated Group with the recommendation that the Incapacity Procedure should be commenced in respect of the Minister, stating its reasons for such recommendation. This Notice shall inform the Parties that if either of them is dissatisfied with this proposed reference back that Party may within a period of twentyone days from the receipt of the said Notice give written notice to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission (or the General Secretary if the reference back is proposed by the Appeals Commission) of that Party's intention to appeal against the proposed reference back. If at the end of the period no such notice of intention to appeal has been received then the procedure set out in Paragraphs E.5.3.11 and E.5.3.14 shall be followed.

E.5.3.2 In the event of such appeal, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission or the General Secretary as the case may be shall request the Appointers to appoint a Special Appeals Body consisting of three persons drawn from the Commission Panel to hear the appeal against the proposed referral and when so appointed the Special Appeals Body shall appoint its own Convener.

E.5.3.3 In making such appointment the Appointers shall have full regard to the safeguards set out in Paragraphs C.2.2, C.3, C.4 and C.5.

E.5.3.4 The Appointers shall also appoint a person (not necessarily a member of the Commission Panel) to act as the Secretary of the Special Appeals Body for the hearing of the appeal.

E.5.3.5 The Special Appeals Body shall consider the recommendation of the Assembly Commission/Appeals Commission and any representations made by the parties in response thereto and any other papers relevant to the issue of the proposed reference back and shall invite the Parties by written notice to submit any further written representations within a period of twentyone days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

E.5.3.6 Unless either of the Parties makes a request for a Hearing or the Special Appeals Body of itself decides to convene a Hearing the Special Appeals Body shall decide the matter on the basis of the written material referred to in Paragraph E.5.3.5.

E.5.3.7 In the event that a Hearing does take place, the Rules applicable thereto shall, so far as possible, accord with the Rules set out in Paragraph G.10 for the conduct of hearings before the Appeals Commission.

E.5.3.8 In recording its decision, the Special Appeals Body shall append a statement of its reasons for reaching its decision and, if the decision is to reject the appeal, it may indicate what papers, if any, should be passed with the notice of the decision to the person to whom the reference back will be made.

E.5.3.9 As soon as the Special Appeals Body has reached its decision, the Secretary of that body shall give written notice thereof, and of any reasons appended to the decision, to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission or the General Secretary as the case may be, who shall in turn inform the members of the Assembly Commission/Appeals Commission thereof.

E.5.3.10 If the decision of the Special Appeals Body is to allow the appeal and to reject the proposed reference back, the Section O case shall immediately be resumed and the Secretary of the Assembly Commission/General Secretary shall send to the Parties a notice advising them of that fact and a copy of the notice of the decision and the statement of reasons appended to the decision.

E.5.3.11 If the decision of the Special Appeals Body is to reject the appeal and to uphold the decision to refer the case back to the person who called in the Mandated Group with the recommendation that the Incapacity Procedure should be commenced in respect of the Minister, or if there is no appeal against the reference back, the Section O Process shall stand adjourned pending the outcome of that recommendation and the Secretary shall send to the Parties (i) a notice advising them of that fact, (ii) a copy of the notice of the decision and the statement of reasons appended to the decision, (iii) a copy of the Notice to the person who called in the Mandated Group (see Paragraph E.5.3.14) and (iv) copies of any papers being sent with the last mentioned Notice in accordance with Paragraph E.5.3.8.

E.5.3.12 Once the decision of the Special Appeals Body has been made and the requirements of Paragraph E.5.3.8 have been duly complied with, the roles of the Special Appeals Body and of its secretary are concluded and they have no further part to play in the case.

E.5.3.13 The decision of the Special Appeals Body on the matter of the proposed reference back is final and binding.



E.5.3.14 If the decision is to reject the appeal and uphold the reference back, or if there is no appeal against the reference back, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission/General Secretary shall forthwith send or deliver to the person who called in the Mandated Group (i) a written notice setting out the decision of the Special Appeals Body on the appeal, signed by the Convener and incorporating both the recommendation and a statement of the reasons given for making the recommendation and (ii) such other papers (if any) as are referred to in Paragraph E.5.3.8.

E.5.3.15 That Notice shall state that the proceedings under the Section O Process shall stand adjourned to await the recipient's response and shall also state the time, which shall be not be longer than twentyone days, within which the recipient must notify the Secretary in writing whether the recommendation contained in the Notice has been accepted or rejected.

E.5.3.16 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission/General Secretary shall at the same time send copies of the said Notice (but not the accompanying documentation) to the Moderator of the Synod (in any case where s/he is not already the recipient of the Notice under Paragraph E.5.3.14), the Synod Clerk, the General Secretary, the Press Officer and the Secretary for Ministries. The Notice shall stress to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used.

E.5.3.17 If written confirmation is received from the recipient of the Notice, countersigned by the Secretary of the Review Commission who operates within the Incapacity Procedure, that the recommendation contained in the Notice has been accepted and that the Incapacity Procedure has been initiated in respect of the Minister, the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission as the case may be shall declare the case within the Section O Process to be concluded and no further action shall be taken in respect thereof.

E.5.3.18 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission/General Secretary shall give written notice to this effect to the Parties and the persons specified in Paragraph E.5.3.16 above, and also the responsible officer of any Outside Organisation to whom notice of the Section O proceedings has already been given. The Notice shall stress to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used.

E.5.3.19 If written notification is received from the recipient of the Notice that the aforesaid recommendation has been rejected, the case shall forthwith be resumed within the Section O Process. The Secretary shall give notice to this effect to the Parties and the persons specified in Paragraph E.5.3.16.

E.5.3.20 No recommendation for referral to the Incapacity Procedure shall be made in any case which enters the Section O Process as a result of a recommendation from the Incapacity Procedure.

E.5.3.21 For the avoidance of doubt, decisions taken by the Special Appeals Body under the provisions of this Paragraph E.5.3 are not subject to the requirement to report to General Assembly contained in Section J of these Rules of Procedure.

E.6 E.6.1 Either Party may at any time request an advancement or postponement or adjournment of the Hearing, setting out his/her/its reasons for such request.

E.6.2 The Assembly Commission may at any time advance, postpone or adjourn the Hearing as it considers it appropriate, whether of its own accord or at the request of either Party, but always having regard to the need to conclude the Section O Process as expeditiously as possible. Notice of the amended hearing date, time and place shall be served on the Parties by the Secretary of the Assembly Commission.

E.6.3 Any advancement of the hearing date shall normally require the consent of both Parties.

E.7 E.7.1 Where (i) the Minister is the subject of a criminal charge for an alleged offence falling into any of the categories set out in Paragraph E.7.2 below relevant to the subject matter of the Section O Process or (ii) information has been laid before the Police which may result in such relevant criminal charge being brought against him/her, in either such event the Assembly Commission shall (unless the circumstances of Paragraph E.9.1 apply) postpone or adjourn its own proceedings pending the verdict of the criminal courts (whether or not on appeal) on the charges brought against the Minister (as to which see Paragraph E.7.7) or the withdrawal of the charge (in relation to alternative (i) above) or the notification that no charge is to be brought (in relation to alternative (ii) above).

E.7.2 The categories of criminal offence relevant to adjournment under Paragraph E.7.1 are:



E.7.2.1 unlawful killing, or deliberate or reckless, actual or threatened, infliction of physical injury to the person or damage to the property of another,

E.7.2.2 rape, sexual abuse or any other offence of a sexual nature,

E.7.2.3 criminal offences relating to stalking and/or sexual harassment,

E.7.2.4 fraud, blackmail, robbery, theft or burglary.

E.7.2.5 all drugs- and drink-related offences.

E.7.3 If the case falls within this Paragraph E.7, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall, as soon as practicable after the appointment of the Assembly Commission, notify the Parties of the compulsory adjournment of the case.

E.7.4 It shall be the responsibility of the Mandated Group to procure a duly certified Court record or memorandum of the decision of the criminal or civil court in connection with any such case and to lodge it with the Secretary of the Assembly Commission, whereupon the Section O Process shall be re-activated and the case brought to a Hearing as soon as possible, unless the Minister shall have lodged with the Secretary of the Assembly Commission within twenty-eight days of the passing of the sentence in the criminal case, written evidence that s/he has lodged an appeal against the verdict of the criminal court on the charges brought against the Minister (as to which see Paragraph E.7.7).

E.7.5 In the event of the Minister being convicted of any criminal offence, whether or not within the categories listed in Paragraph E.7.2, the Assembly Commission shall for the purposes of the Section O Process regard the commission of such offence(s) as proved.

E.7.6 If the Minister has given to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission the written evidence of appeal in the criminal case referred to in Paragraph E.7.4, it shall be his/her responsibility to notify the Secretary of the Assembly Commission of the outcome of his/her appeal in the criminal case as soon as s/he becomes aware of it and to supply to the said Secretary a duly certified court record or memorandum of the decision on the said appeal, whereupon the Section O Process shall be reactivated and the case brought to a hearing as soon as possible. Meanwhile the Minister shall respond promptly to any requests for information from the Secretary of the Assembly Commission as to the progress of the appeal in the criminal case. If the Minister fails to comply with the provisions of this Paragraph, the said Secretary may him/herself seek and obtain the required information as to the progress and outcome of the appeal in the criminal case.

E.7.7 The purpose of this Paragraph is to make clear that the compulsory adjournment of a Section O case in circumstances falling within Paragraph E.7.1 ceases immediately the criminal court has reached a verdict (whether or not on appeal) as to whether the Minister is guilty of the offence(s) with which s/he has been charged and will not continue during any extended period in a criminal case where the court, having reached its verdict, has deferred sentencing to a future date or where the Minister is appealing against the sentence only and not against the guilty verdict itself.

E.8 Any of the following may be taken into account by the Assembly Commission in reaching its decision under Paragraph F.2 that is to say:

E.8.1 Any obstruction or unreasonable delay on the part of either of the Parties in complying with the procedural steps prior to the Hearing and/or

E.8.2 The failure by the Minister to attend at the Hearing without satisfactory explanation and/or

E.8.3 Any obstruction caused by either of the Parties to the Assembly Commission in the conduct of the Hearing itself and/or

E.8.4 Any conduct on the part of the Minister during his/her Suspension under the Section O Process which breaches or contravenes either Paragraph 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union or the fourth paragraph of Part II of Schedule F to the Basis of Union whichever is relevant and/or

E.8.5 Any failure, unnecessary delay or obstruction on the part of the Minister in complying with the requirements of Paragraph E.7.6.

E.9 E.9.1 The Assembly Commission has no power to accept the voluntary resignation of a Minister. A Minister may however at any time during the Section O Process and of his/her own free will



make a written statement to the Assembly Commission admitting the truth of some or all of the facts or circumstances alleged, on the basis of which the Assembly Commission would consider it correct to make a decision to delete under Paragraph F.2.1 or to issue a written warning under Paragraph F.2.2. In such circumstances the Assembly Commission can, if it considers it appropriate so to do and having informed the Minister that the consequences of such admission might be a decision to delete or to issue a written warning, convene, conduct and conclude the Hearing and on the basis of that admission reach its decision in accordance with Paragraph F.2.

E.9.2 If as a result of its investigation during the Commission Stage, the Mandated Group unanimously comes to the view that no breach of discipline on the part of the Minister has occurred or at least that no breach can be established to the standard of proof required, it may give written notice to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission before the Hearing date that as a consequence it does not intend to press the case against the Minister. Thereupon the members of the Assembly Commission shall consult together to decide whether they still require the Parties to attend a formal Hearing before them or whether in the circumstances their attendance can be dispensed with. If they elect for the former, the Hearing will take place as planned. If they elect for the latter, they may in consultation together dispense with the formal Hearing and come to the decision to allow the name of the Minister to remain on the Roll of Ministers under Paragraph F.2.1. If this procedure is adopted, the said consultation shall constitute the Hearing and its decision shall be effective for all purposes as though a formal Hearing had taken place.

E.9.3 Paragraph E.9.2 shall not apply where the Mandated Group, whilst not pressing the case for Deletion, requests the Assembly Commission to issue a written warning under Paragraph F.2.2. In such a case a formal Hearing shall take place.

E.10 E.10.1 The Minister may invite one person to accompany him/her at the Hearing ('the accompanying person') in which case either of the following shall apply:

E.10.1.1 If the Minister elects to present his/her response, the accompanying person may give him/her support and advice but shall not address the Assembly Commission nor question the Minister or any of the witnesses nor present the Minister's response nor take any active part in the Hearing.

E.10.1.2 If the Minister elects to invite the accompanying person to present the Minister's response, the Minister will not be permitted in the interests of the good ordering of the procedures at the Hearing to question the witnesses nor present the response himself/herself.

E.10.2 Neither the spokesperson nominated by the Mandated Group in accordance with Paragraph E.2.2.4 nor the Minister's accompanying person invited to present his/her response under Paragraph E.10.1.2 shall be permitted to give evidence in the case or personal testimony as to the Minister's character, either by written statement or orally at the Hearing. Where the Minister has invited a person to be present at the Hearing to give support and advice only under Paragraph E.10.1.1, the Assembly Commission may, in its absolute discretion if it sees fit, consider a written statement received from such person prior to the Hearing strictly limited to personal testimony as to the character of the Minister, but shall not permit him/her to give evidence in the case or oral testimony as to character at the Hearing.

E.11 All members of the Assembly Commission or, if Paragraph C.7 shall apply, those persons, not fewer than three, who are acting as the Assembly Commission shall attend the Hearing, which may only proceed provided that the Assembly Commission remains quorate throughout the Hearing. No member of the Assembly Commission who does not attend the whole of the Hearing shall play any part in the making of the decision reached under Paragraph F.2.

E.12 E.12.1 The Hearing must be conducted in private and only the following persons shall be permitted to attend:

The Members of the Assembly Commission

The Secretary of the Assembly Commission or a duly appointed Deputy (see Paragraphs A.8 and E.12.3)

The Minister

The accompanying person defined in Paragraph E.10.1

The members of the Mandated Group

The Spokesperson for the Mandated Group (if not already a member of the Mandated Group)

Any witnesses (but only while giving evidence, unless the Assembly Commission otherwise directs)

A representative of the Church's legal advisers (see Paragraph E.14.3)

Any persons responsible for operating the recording equipment or otherwise preparing the verbatim record of the proceedings referred to in Paragraph E.12.4

Any other person by the direction of the Assembly Commission and with prior notification to the Parties.



E.12.2 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall (unless excluded for reasons specified in Paragraph C.3.1) attend the Hearing for the purpose of giving such procedural advice to the Assembly Commission as may be appropriate and of ensuring compliance with Paragraph E.12.4. S/he shall not be present when the Assembly Commission deliberates and decides on the case.

E.12.3 In the event that the Secretary of the Assembly Commission cannot for any reason be present at the Hearing, the Assembly Commission shall itself appoint such person as it considers appropriate to deputise for him/her for that purpose, ascertaining beforehand that such person is not excluded for reasons specified in Paragraph C.3.1. Such person shall carry out the duties set out in Paragraph E.12.2 but shall not be present when the Assembly Commission deliberates and decides on the case.

E.12.4 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission or his/her deputy shall prepare a summary minute of the proceedings at the Hearing (the Secretary's minute). Where possible, a verbatim record of the proceedings shall also be made by electronic recording or by such other means as shall be directed by the Convener of the Assembly Commission. The Record of the Hearing shall consist of the Secretary's minute together with any such verbatim record, which shall be transcribed in the event of an appeal.

E.13 E.13.1 The conduct of the Hearing is in the hands of the Assembly Commission and, subject to the Assembly Commission's overriding discretion, the order of procedure shall be as follows:

E.13.2 The Mandated Group through its spokesperson shall be given the opportunity to make an opening submission and then to present its evidence and question its witnesses. Persons called to give evidence by the Mandated Group are open to questioning by the Minister or his/her spokesperson as the case may be.

E.13.3 If the Minister is presenting his/her own case, s/he shall then be given the opportunity to present his/her evidence in person, following which s/he is then open to questioning by the spokesperson for the Mandated Group.

E.13.4 If a spokesperson is appearing for the Minister, that spokesperson shall be given the opportunity of questioning the Minister, who shall then be open to questioning by the spokesperson for the Mandated Group.

E.13.5 The Minister may if s/he wishes remain silent and furthermore cannot be compelled to attend the Hearing of the Assembly Commission and it is a matter for the Assembly Commission in considering its decision as to what weight should be attached to the Minister's silence or non-attendance.

E.13.6 The Minister or his/her spokesperson shall then have the opportunity of questioning any further witnesses whom s/he wishes to call and when each one has given his/her evidence that witness shall then be open to questioning by the spokesperson for the Mandated Group.

E.14 E.14.1 The members of the Assembly Commission shall be entitled to ask questions and also to interject during the examination of witnesses if they consider the questioning to be oppressive or immaterial to the matter in hand or if for any other reason they consider it appropriate so to do.

E.14.2 Persons who have already been questioned may be asked to answer further questions later in the Hearing if it appears to the Assembly Commission that this would be helpful and appropriate in the circumstances.

E.14.3 A representative of the Church's legal advisers shall normally be present at the Hearing (unless his/her attendance has been expressly dispensed with by the Assembly Commission) in order to advise and address the Assembly Commission on matters of procedure, evidence and interpretation, but s/he shall not take any part in the decision reached by the Assembly Commission, nor shall s/he be present when the Assembly Commission deliberates and decides upon the case.

E.15 At the Hearing the Parties shall be allowed to question any such person as attends the Hearing under Paragraph E.5.2.1 and to comment on any evidence, information, opinion or advice offered by him/her.

E.16 E.16.1 E.16.1.1 In all cases the burden of proving the case against the Minister shall fall upon the Mandated Group.

E.16.1.2 In considering the evidence before it, the Assembly Commission shall apply the civil standard of proof, which requires that decisions on disputed allegations shall be reached on the balance of probability.



E.16.2 During the Commission Stage of any case brought against a Minister, the Assembly Commission cannot take cognisance of any matter which has already been part of the body of evidence laid before any Assembly Commission or Appeals Commission during the Commission Stage of any previous case brought against that Minister unless (i) the decision reached in the previous case (whether or not on appeal) fell within Paragraph F.2.2 and (ii) such matter in the opinion of the current Assembly Commission falls within the scope of the conduct, statement, act or omission in respect of which the written warning referred to in that Paragraph was issued. The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall have authority to inspect the papers of that earlier case for the sole purpose of ensuring compliance with this Paragraph.

E.16.3 The Assembly Commission may at its discretion have regard to information concerning any matter which, although not referred to specifically in the Referral Notice (including any such arising during the Commission Stage), is in its opinion germane to the issue(s) specified in the Referral Notice provided that (i) it believes it right and proper to do so and (ii) it affords to each of the Parties a proper opportunity of considering and refuting or challenging any such information.

E.17 No person appearing in any capacity before the Assembly Commission at the Hearing (as distinct from those serving the Assembly Commission in compliance with Paragraph E.12.4) shall make any record of any part of the proceedings at the Hearing by means of any tape recording system or other mechanical or electronic recording device or system.

E.18 When the process of presenting and examining the evidence at the Hearing has been concluded, the spokesperson for the Mandated Group and the Minister or the accompanying person as appropriate (in that order) shall be given the opportunity to address the Assembly Commission, following which the Convener of the Assembly Commission shall announce to the Parties that the members of the Assembly Commission would at that point retire to consider their decision which would not be announced that day but would be notified to the Parties in accordance with Paragraph F.3. The Hearing is thus concluded.

## **F. THE DECISION of the ASSEMBLY COMMISSION**

F.1 F.1.1 Following the conclusion of the Hearing, the Assembly Commission shall, all meeting together but in the absence of the Parties, consider the evidence presented to it, in order first to determine whether the allegations (or any of them) made against the Minister have been proved to its satisfaction and, if so, whether they are sufficiently serious as to amount to a breach of discipline by the Minister in the light of Paragraph 4 of Part I and in particular either Paragraph 2 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union or the second paragraph of Part II of Schedule F to the Basis of Union whichever is relevant.

F.1.2 If the Assembly Commission concludes that a breach of discipline has so arisen, it must then consider whether it should direct the name of the Minister to be deleted from the Roll or whether in the circumstances the issue of a written warning would be sufficient. In this context the Assembly Commission may take into account, in addition to the seriousness of the allegations, such factors as the degree of remorse shown by the Minister and his/her preparedness to change or to undergo counselling or training.

F.2.1 Having completed the process set out in Paragraph F.1, the Assembly Commission shall reach its decision (either unanimously or by majority vote) which shall, in the absence of a decision to refer under Paragraph E.5.3, be either to delete the name of the Minister from the Roll of Ministers or to allow his/her name to remain on the Roll of Ministers.

F.2.2 If the Assembly Commission considers that there has been some conduct, statement, act or omission on the part of the Minister which, although not sufficiently serious to justify deletion, is nevertheless of sufficient concern to justify lesser disciplinary action against the Minister it may, whilst allowing the name of the Minister to remain on the Roll and as part of its decision, issue a written warning to the Minister that any continuance or repetition of any of the disciplinary matters complained of might be considered a cause for deletion by a future Assembly Commission.

F.2.3 If the decision is that the name of the Minister shall remain on the Roll of Ministers, whether or not it also decides to issue a written warning, the Assembly Commission may in its written statement (see Paragraph F.3.3) append such recommendations to its decision as it considers will be helpful to moderators of synod, synods, local churches, the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries and others within the Church and also to any relevant Outside Organisation. It is emphasised that any such recommendations must relate to the future ministry of the Minister only and that they are of an advisory nature and do not form part of the decision.



F.2.4 If the decision is to delete the name of the Minister from the Roll of Ministers, the Assembly Commission is particularly requested to include appropriate guidance concerning any restrictions which it considers ought to be placed upon any activities involving the Minister after his/her deletion with the object of assisting moderators of synod, synods, local churches, the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries and others within the Church and also any relevant Outside Organisation. It is emphasised that any such guidance is of an advisory nature and does not form part of the decision.

F.3 In recording its decision the Assembly Commission shall comply with the following:

F.3.1 It shall state whether its decision is unanimous or by a majority.

F.3.2 It shall set out any written warning issued to the Minister under Paragraph F.2.2.

F.3.3 It shall append a written statement of its reasons for reaching its decision, but shall not be obliged (unless it wishes to do so) to comment in detail on all or any of the matters of evidence laid before it.

F.4 The decision so taken shall conclude the involvement of the Assembly Commission in the Section O Process, except as to the discharge of its responsibilities under Paragraph J.2, and shall have the effect provided for in Paragraph F.7.

F.5 F.5.1 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall within 10 days of the date of the decision serve on the Minister and the Mandated Group notice of the decision and of the written Statement of Reasons given under Paragraph F.3.3. Such notice shall draw the attention of the Minister and the Mandated Group to the strict time limit for serving Notice of Appeal under Paragraph G.1.1.

F.5.2 If Paragraph F.2.2 applies, s/he shall at the same time (i) serve on the Minister any written warning referred to in that Paragraph, (ii) send a copy thereof to the Mandated Group and (iii) send to the Minister and the Mandated Group copies of any recommendations or guidance appended to the decision of the Assembly Commission under Paragraph F.2.3 or Paragraph F.2.4.

F.6 F.6.1 At the same time as s/he serves on the Minister and the Mandated Group the documents referred to in Paragraphs F.5.1 and F.5.2, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall send to the General Secretary, the Moderator of the Synod, the Synod Clerk, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries and, in a case arising under Paragraph B.9.3, the Deputy General Secretary a Notice to the effect that a decision has been reached by the Assembly Commission, simply stating whether the decision of the Assembly Commission has been to delete or to retain the name of the Minister on the Roll of Ministers, and, if the latter, whether or not a decision to issue a written warning was also made. Such notice shall not contain any further information other than that the decision is still subject to the possibility of an appeal being lodged and that a further Notice will be sent under Paragraph F.6.3 (if there is no Appeal) or under Paragraph G.1.2.1 or Paragraph G.1.2.2 (if there is an Appeal).

F.6.2 If an appeal is lodged by either Party, the procedure contained in Section G shall apply.

F.6.3 If within the time specified in Paragraph G.1.1 no appeal is lodged by either Party, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall within 10 days of the expiration of such period (or within 10 days of the decision itself if the first proviso to Paragraph F.7.2 applies or immediately upon receipt by him/her of irrevocable notices from both parties of the waiver of their rights of appeal if the second proviso to Paragraph F.7.2 applies) send to the Minister and the Mandated Group and the persons referred to in Paragraph F.6.1 notice of that fact and of the consequent termination of the Minister's Suspension in accordance with Paragraph F.7.1 or F.7.2 whichever is applicable and at the same time shall send to those persons copies of the Statement of Reasons sent to the Minister and the Mandated Group in accordance with Paragraph F.5.1. At the same time the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall send to all those persons copies of the documents sent in accordance with Paragraph F.5.2, stressing to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used. The Mandated Group shall thereupon comply with Paragraph H.4.

F.6.4 At the time of compliance with Paragraph F.6.3, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall also send to the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation notice of the decision of the Assembly Commission (including, in the event of a decision not to delete, the date of cessation of the Minister's Suspension), together with copies of the Statement of Reasons sent to the Minister and the Mandated Group in accordance with Paragraph F.5.1 and details of any recommendations or guidance issued by the Assembly Commission as appended to its decision which it expressly states to



be its wish to pass on to such Outside Organisation, stressing the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used.

F.7 F.7.1 In the event of the Assembly Commission deciding to delete and there being no appeal against that decision under Paragraph 4.1 of Part I within the period allowed under Paragraph G.1, the Suspension shall continue up to the first day after the expiration of such period, on which day the deletion shall automatically take effect. The Section O case shall be regarded as concluded on such day.

F.7.2 In the event of the Assembly Commission deciding not to delete and there being no appeal against that decision under Paragraph 4.2 of Part I within the period allowed under Paragraph G.1, the Suspension shall automatically cease on the first day after the expiration of such period and the Section O case shall be regarded as concluded on that date, provided that (i) where the Mandated Group has formally signified to the Assembly Commission under Paragraph E.9.2 that it does not intend to press the case for any disciplinary action to be taken against the Minister and the Assembly Commission decides not to issue a written warning, the Assembly Commission may as an appendage to its decision not to delete state that the Minister's Suspension shall terminate with immediate effect and in that case the Section O case shall be regarded as concluded on the date on which the Assembly Commission formally notifies its decision to the Parties under Paragraph F.5 or (ii) where the decision is to allow the Minister's name to remain on the Roll of Ministers and no written warning is issued and where both parties within the time allowed for an appeal to be lodged state in writing and irrevocably that they waive their rights of appeal, the Minister's Suspension shall cease and the Section O case shall be concluded, both events taking place on the date on which the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall have received such statements from both parties (as to the notification of the cessation of the Suspension, see Paragraphs F.6.3 and F.6.4).

## G. APPEALS PROCEDURE

G.1 G.1.1 Any Notice of Appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission given under Paragraph 4 of Part I must be served on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission no later than 21 days from the date of service of the decision of the Assembly Commission on the appellant and for this purpose time shall be of the essence, and such Notice shall state the grounds of the appeal (which may be in detail or in summary form as the appellant chooses).

G.1.2 G.1.2.1 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall forthwith notify the General Secretary that an Appeal has been lodged, at the same time passing on to the General Secretary the Notice of Appeal together with the body of papers laid before the Assembly Commission in hearing the case and the Record of the Hearing as defined in Paragraph E.12.4. The General Secretary shall thereupon act in a secretarial and administrative capacity in all matters relating to the Appeal.

G.1.2.2 At the same time the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall also notify the Moderator of the Synod, the Synod Clerk, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries and, in a case arising under Paragraph B.3.2, the Deputy General Secretary that an Appeal has been lodged against the decision of the Assembly Commission.

G.1.3 Except for those Rules which by their context are inappropriate for the Appeals Procedure, the Rules set out in Section E shall also apply to Section G (with the necessary changes).

G.2 On receipt of the Notice of Appeal served under Paragraph G.1, the General Secretary shall as soon as possible take the following steps:

G.2.1 Acknowledge receipt of the Notice of Appeal, send to the Appellant a copy of the Record of the Hearing (see Paragraph E.12.4) and follow the procedure set out in either Paragraph G.2.2 or Paragraph G.2.3.

G.2.2 (If the Appeal is brought by the Minister under Paragraph 5.1 of Part I) serve Notice of the receipt of the Appeal on the Mandated Group, attaching to such Notice a copy of the Notice of Appeal served under Paragraph G.1.1 and of any accompanying statement of reasons and a copy of the Record of the Hearing (see Paragraph E.12.4) and call upon the Mandated Group to submit within 21 days from the date of service of the Notice under this Paragraph a counter-statement containing any comments which the Mandated Group wishes to make in connection with the Appeal or

G.2.3 (If the Appeal is brought by the Mandated Group under Paragraph 5.2 of Part I) serve Notice of the receipt of the Appeal on the Minister, attaching to such Notice a copy of the Notice of Appeal served under Paragraph G.1.1 and of any accompanying statement of reasons and a copy of the Record of the Hearing (see Paragraph E.12.4) and call upon the Minister to submit within 21 days from the date of service of the Notice under this Paragraph a counter-statement containing any comments which the Minister wishes to make in connection with the Appeal.



G.3 G.3.1 The Officers of the General Assembly shall within 14 days of receipt by the General Secretary of the Notice of Appeal under Paragraph G.1.1 of these Rules (or within such further time as they shall reasonably require) appoint the Appeals Commission in accordance with Paragraph G.3.2 and Paragraphs G.4 to G.7.

G.3.2 The Appeals Commission for the hearing of each such appeal shall consist of the following five persons:

G.3.2.1 A Convener who shall be a member of the United Reformed Church (but not necessarily a member of the General Assembly) with legal and/or tribunal experience to be selected by the officers of the General Assembly and

G.3.2.2 The Moderator of the General Assembly or if for any reason he/she should be unable to serve, a former Moderator of the General Assembly to be selected by the officers of the General Assembly and

G.3.2.3 Three other members of the General Assembly to be selected by the officers of the General Assembly.

G.3.3 The relevant date for ascertaining whether persons qualify for appointment under Paragraph G.3.2 is the date on which under the Rules of Procedure the Secretary of the Assembly Commission notifies the General Secretary that an appeal has been lodged against the decision of the Assembly Commission.

G.3.4 In selecting persons for appointment to the Appeals Commission in accordance with Paragraph G.3.2, the officers of the General Assembly shall, so far as possible, apply the same criteria as are set out in Paragraphs A.6.1 and C.2.4 in relation to appointments to the Commission Panel and to Assembly Commissions.

G.3.5 All persons proposed for appointment to an Appeals Commission, in any capacity, are subject to Paragraph C.3.1.

G.4 G.4.1 The General Secretary shall send to each of the proposed appointees for the Appeals Commission an invitation to serve on the Appeals Commission for the hearing of the Appeal in that case, naming the Minister concerned but supplying no further information about the case.

G.4.2 The Notice of Invitation to serve shall draw the attention of each proposed appointee to Paragraph C.3.1 and shall request confirmation that s/he is willing to accept appointment and that s/he is unaware of any circumstances which in the present case might prevent him/her from serving on the Appeals Commission.

G.4.3 The Invitee shall within 7 days of receipt of the Notice of Invitation serve on the General Secretary a Notice indicating whether s/he is able and willing to accept appointment and, if so, confirming compliance with Paragraph C.3.1.

G.5 G.5.1 The General Secretary shall serve notice on the Parties, setting out the name and office or credentials of each proposed appointee, drawing attention to Paragraphs C.3.1 and C.3.2 and requiring notice of objection to any of the proposed appointees under Paragraph C.3.2 to be served upon the General Secretary within 14 days of the service of the notice given under this Paragraph.

G.5.2 Any such Notice of Objection must state the grounds of such objection.

G.5.3 To ensure that the appeals process is moved along in a timely manner, any Notice of Objection received outside the period allowed will not normally be considered unless very good reason can be shown for its late delivery.

G.5.4 The Officers of the General Assembly shall consider every objection properly notified and shall decide whether to uphold or to reject the objection.

G.5.5 If they reject the objection, the General Secretary shall serve notice thereof on the objector.

G.5.6 If they uphold the objection, the General Secretary shall serve notice thereof on the objector, the person to whom the objection was taken and the other Party on whom the Notice specified in Paragraph G.5.1 was served.



G.5.7 In the event of any objection being upheld, the procedure outlined in Paragraphs G.4 and G.5 of these Rules shall be repeated to complete the appointment of the Appeals Commission and to give notice to the Parties of the person appointed.

G.6 The Convener of the Appeals Commission shall not have a casting vote, unless the Appeals Commission shall, in circumstances arising under Paragraph G.7.1, consist of an even number of members.

G.7 G.7.1 In the event that any member of the Appeals Commission shall be unable to carry out his/her duties on the Appeals Commission, the remaining members shall continue to act as the Appeals Commission, subject to there being a minimum of three members.

G.7.2 In the event that for the reasons stated in Paragraph G.7.1 the Appeals Commission shall consist of fewer than three members at any time after the Appeals Commission has taken any steps in connection with the Appeal, the Appeals Commission so appointed shall stand down and be discharged and a new Appeals Commission shall be appointed in accordance with Paragraphs G.3 to G.7 to hear the Appeal.

G.7.3 Once the Appeals Commission has been validly constituted and has taken any steps in accordance with this Section G, no person shall be subsequently appointed to serve on that Appeals Commission.

G.7.4 If the Moderator of the General Assembly is unable to serve, the remaining members shall, following consultation with the Officers of the General Assembly, appoint a former Moderator of the General Assembly to be the Convener of the Appeals Commission in his/her place.

G.7.5 Notwithstanding that, during the conduct of the appeal, a new person may assume the office of Moderator of the General Assembly, the person previously holding such office shall continue to serve as a member of the Appeals Commission to the exclusion of his/her successor in that office.

G.8 Each member of the Appeals Commission when appointed shall receive from the General Secretary copies of the following:

G.8.1 Notice of the Assembly Commission's decision.

G.8.2 Any statement of reasons given by the Assembly Commission.

G.8.3 Any written warning issued.

G.8.4 Any recommendations or guidance appended to the decision in accordance with Paragraph F.2.3 or Paragraph F.2.4 as the case may be.

G.8.5 The Notice of Appeal, containing the grounds for the appeal.

G.8.6 Any counter-statement received under Paragraph G.2.2 or Paragraph G.2.3.

G.8.7 The body of papers laid before the Assembly Commission in hearing the case.

G.8.8 The Record of the Hearing. (See Paragraph E.12.4)

G.9 The Appeals Commission when constituted shall consider the following matters:

G.9.1 Whether there is or may be new information which has come to light and which could not reasonably have been available to the Assembly Commission before its decision was taken under Paragraph F.2.

G.9.2 Whether any such new information would in its opinion have been material in that, had it been tested and proved to the satisfaction of the Assembly Commission, it might have caused it to reach a different decision.

G.9.3 Whether there may have been some procedural irregularity or breach of the rules of natural justice or serious misunderstanding by the Assembly Commission of the information before it or of any aspect of the Section O Process itself.



G.10 G.10.1 Before reaching its decision on the Appeal, the Appeals Commission shall constitute a Hearing at which the Parties shall attend before the Appeals Commission.

G.10.2 The General Secretary shall consult with the Convener and the other members of the Appeals Commission as to a suitable venue, date and time for the Hearing and, where possible, with the Parties as to a suitable date and time for the Hearing and having so consulted, shall decide thereupon and shall forthwith send a notice to the Parties informing them of the arrangements for the Hearing.

G.10.3 At the Hearing of the Appeal, there shall be no further investigation or re-hearing of the evidence nor any further evidence introduced, except for the purpose of considering whether there are sufficient grounds for referring the case for re-hearing in accordance with Paragraph G.11.7.

G.10.4 The General Secretary shall (unless excluded for the reasons specified in Paragraph C.3.1) attend the Hearing for the purpose of giving such procedural advice to the Appeals Commission as may be appropriate and of keeping a formal record of the Hearing. S/he shall not be present when the Appeals Commission deliberates and decides on the case.

G.10.5 If the General Secretary cannot for any reason be present at the Hearing, the Appeals Commission shall itself appoint such person as it considers appropriate to deputise for him/her for that purpose, ascertaining beforehand that such person is not excluded for reasons specified in Paragraph C.3.1. Such person will carry out the duties set out in Paragraph G.10.4 but shall not be present when the Appeals Commission deliberates and decides on the case.

G.10.6 The General Secretary or his/her deputy appointed under Paragraph G.10.5 shall prepare a summary minute of the proceedings at the Hearing (the Secretary's minute). Where possible, a verbatim record of the proceedings shall also be made by electronic recording or by such other means as shall be directed by the Convener of the Appeals Commission. The Record of the Hearing shall consist of the Secretary's minute together with any such verbatim record.

G.10.7 A representative of the Church's legal advisers shall normally be present at the Hearing in order to advise and address the Appeals Commission on matters relating to procedure, evidence and interpretation and issues arising under Paragraph G.10.3, but s/he shall not take any part in the decision reached by the Appeals Commission, nor shall s/he be present when the Appeals Commission deliberates and decides upon the case.

G.10.8 The conduct of the Hearing of the Appeal is in the hands of the Appeals Commission whose Convener will at the outset of the Hearing read out the decision of the Assembly Commission.

G.10.9 The Convener will then invite the Parties (commencing with the appellant) to make oral representations to the Appeals Commission on the subject matter of the Appeal.

G.10.10 The Hearing will then be concluded.

G.11 The Appeals Commission shall at the conclusion of the Hearing and all together but in the absence of the Parties and of the General Secretary and of the legal adviser consider and arrive at any of the following decisions (which may be taken unanimously or by a majority vote) always having in mind Paragraph 4 of Part I and in particular either Paragraph 2 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union or the second paragraph of Part II of Schedule F to the Basis of Union whichever is relevant:

G.11.1 It may uphold the decision of the Assembly Commission to delete or

G.11.2 It may uphold in its entirety the decision of the Assembly Commission not to delete (whether or not this also includes a decision to issue a written warning to the Minister under Paragraph F.2.2) or

G.11.3 It may uphold the decision of the Assembly Commission not to delete, but in addition may issue a written warning to the Minister in the terms of Paragraph F.2.2 if the Assembly Commission has not itself already done so or

G.11.4 If the Assembly Commission has decided not to delete but has issued a written warning to the Minister under Paragraph F.2.2 the Appeals Commission may uphold the decision not to delete but may direct that the written warning be withdrawn or

G.11.5 It may reverse the decision of the Assembly Commission not to delete or

G.11.6 It may reverse the decision of the Assembly Commission to delete, but may if it considers it appropriate issue a written warning to the Minister in the terms of Paragraph F.2.2 or



G.11.7 It may refer the case for re-hearing by another duly constituted Assembly Commission (but only if it considers that there has been some procedural irregularity or serious misunderstanding by the Assembly Commission of the information before it or of any aspect of the Section O Process itself or if material new information becomes available which could not reasonably have been produced before the Assembly Commission).

G.12 There shall be no appeal from the decision of the Appeals Commission and (unless Paragraph G.11.7 applies) the decision of the Appeals Commission shall bring the Minister's Suspension to an end.

G.13 In recording its decision the Appeals Commission shall comply with the following:

G.13.1 It shall state whether its decision is unanimous or by a majority.

G.13.2 It shall set out any written warning issued to the Minister under Paragraph G.11.2, G.11.3 or G.11.6.

G.13.3 It shall append a written statement of its reasons for reaching its decision, but shall not be obliged (unless it wishes to do so) to comment in detail on all or any of the matters of evidence laid before it.

G.13.4 If the decision is that the name of the Minister shall remain on the Roll of Ministers, whether or not it also decides to issue a written warning, the Appeals Commission may in its written statement (see Paragraph G.13.3) append such recommendations to its decision as it considers will be helpful to moderators of synod, synods, local churches, the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries and others within the Church and also to any relevant Outside Organisation. It is emphasised that any such recommendations must relate to the future ministry of the Minister and that they will be advisory only and are not part of the decision.

G.13.5 If the decision is to delete the name of the Minister from the Roll of Ministers, the Appeals Commission is particularly requested to include in its written statement (see Paragraph F.3.3) appropriate guidance concerning any restrictions which it considers ought to be placed upon any activities involving the Minister after his/her deletion with the object of assisting moderators of synod, synods, local churches, the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries and others within the Church and also any relevant Outside Organisation. It is emphasised that any such guidance is of an advisory nature and does not form part of the decision.

G.13.6 In addition to its power to make recommendations or to offer guidance under Paragraph G.13.4 or Paragraph G.13.5 respectively, the Appeals Commission may if it sees fit endorse, overrule, vary or modify in any way any recommendation made or guidance offered by the Assembly Commission in the case in question. For the avoidance of duplication, the Decision Record shall in every case set out in full any recommendations or guidance issued by the Appeals Commission, even where they simply endorse those issued by the Assembly Commission in their entirety.

G.14 As regards the notification of the decision, the General Secretary shall comply with the following:

G.14.1 S/he shall within 10 days of the date of the decision serve on the Minister and the Mandated Group notice of the decision and of the written Statement of Reasons given under Paragraph G.13 and such Notice shall (unless Paragraph G.11.7 applies) state that the Minister's Suspension ceased on the date of the Appeals Commission's decision.

G.14.2 If the decision is taken in accordance with either Paragraph G.11.3 or Paragraph G.11.6, the General Secretary shall at the same time serve on the Minister the written warning referred to in those Paragraphs and shall send a copy thereof to the Mandated Group.

G.14.3 If the decision is taken in accordance with Paragraph G.11.4, the General Secretary shall at the same time serve on the Minister and on the Mandated Group notice that the written warning issued following the decision of the Assembly Commission is withdrawn.

G.14.4 S/he shall at the same time send to the Minister and the Mandated Group copies of any recommendations or guidance appended to the decision of the Appeals Commission under Paragraph G.13.4 or Paragraph G.13.5 as the case may be.

G.14.5 S/he shall at the same time send to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission, the Moderator of the Synod, the Synod Clerk, the Press Officer, the Secretary for Ministries and the Deputy General Secretary copies of the documents served on the Minister and the Mandated Group under Paragraphs



G.14.1 to G.14.4 and, unless Paragraph G.15 applies, stressing to all the recipients the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used. The Mandated Group shall thereupon comply with Paragraph H.4,

G.14.6 At the time of compliance with Paragraph G.14.5, the General Secretary shall also send to the responsible officer of any relevant Outside Organisation notice of the decision of the Appeals Commission (including, in the event of a decision not to delete, the date of cessation of the Minister's Suspension), together with copies of the Statement of Reasons sent to the Minister and the Mandated Group in accordance with Paragraph G.14.1 and details of any recommendations or guidance issued by the Appeals Commission as appended to its decision which it expressly states to be its wish to pass on to such Outside Organisation, stressing the sensitive nature of the information imparted and the need to exercise care and discretion as to how it is used.

G.15 If the decision is taken in accordance with Paragraph G.11.7, the Notice served by the General Secretary under Paragraph G.14.1 shall constitute a Notice of Reference Back. The Assembly Commission appointed for the re-hearing of the case shall not be given any information relating to the conduct of the previous Hearing but may have sight of the documents, statements and information delivered to the Assembly Commission under the provisions contained in Section E.

G.16 The decision so taken shall conclude the involvement of the Appeals Commission in the Section O Process, except as to the discharge of its responsibilities under Paragraph J.2, and shall have the effect provided for in Paragraph F.7.3.

G.17 The attention of the Mandated Group is particularly drawn to Paragraph H.4

## **H FORMS, SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS and MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS**

H.1 Model forms of Notice have been prepared to assist those concerned with the Section O Process. The forms of Notice may be amended from time to time and new forms introduced. Use of the model forms is not compulsory and minor variations in the wording will not invalidate the Notice being given, but it is strongly recommended that the model forms be used and followed as closely as possible to avoid confusion and to ensure that all relevant information is supplied at the proper time.

H.2 H.2.1 Service of any document required to be served on an individual shall be deemed to have been properly effected in any of the following ways:

H.2.1.1 By delivering the document personally to the individual to be served.

H.2.1.2 By delivering the document or sending it by first class pre-paid post or by Recorded Delivery post addressed to the last known address of the individual to be served in a sealed envelope addressed to that individual.

H.2.1.3 In such other manner as the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission (if service relates to the Appeals Procedure) may direct having regard to the circumstances.

H.2.2 Service of any document required to be served on any Mandated Group shall be deemed to have been properly effected in any of the following ways:

H.2.2.1 By delivering the document personally to that member of the Mandated Group who has been nominated in the Referral Notice to accept service or in the absence of such nomination to the person who signed the Referral Notice, provided that in either case such person is still a member of the Mandated Group when such service is required to be effected.

H.2.2.2 By delivering the document or sending it by first class pre-paid post or by Recorded Delivery post addressed to the person referred to in Paragraph H.2.2.1 at the address specified in such nomination or, in the absence of such nomination, at the address given in the Referral Notice.

H.2.2.3 In such other manner as the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission (if service relates to the Appeals Procedure) may direct having regard to the circumstances.

H.2.3 Service of any document required to be served on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission or on the General Secretary shall be deemed to have been properly served if delivered or sent by first class pre-paid post or by Recorded Delivery post addressed to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission or the General Secretary as the case may be at the address given in the current issue of the Year Book or subsequently notified or (in the absence of any such address in the Year Book) in an



envelope addressed to that person at Church House, 86 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9RT and marked "Section O Process".

H.2.4 All documents required to be served shall be placed in a sealed envelope clearly addressed to the addressee and marked "Private and Confidential".

H.2.5 In the case of service of documents by first class pre-paid post, service shall be deemed to have been effected on the third day after the posting of the Notice.

H.3 Deletion as a result of the Section O Process shall have the effect of terminating any contract, written or oral, between the Minister and the United Reformed Church or any constituent part thereof in relation to his/her ministry.

H.4 Within one month of the conclusion of each case as provided in Paragraph F.7, the Mandated Group shall prepare a written report of its conduct of the case and submit it to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission, who shall, in order to preserve confidentiality, remove from the report the name and address of the Minister, the name of the Minister's church(es) and any other information which might lead to the identification of any individuals involved in the case. The purpose of the report shall be to help those charged with the ongoing review of the operation of the Section O Process to monitor the performance of Mandated Groups and thus to ensure that all appropriate training and assistance is provided and the highest standards are maintained.

*For the avoidance of confusion, there is no Section I, the Rules of Procedure moving directly from Section H to Section J.*

#### **J. REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY, COSTS & RETENTION OF RECORDS AND PAPERS**

J.1 The General Secretary shall report to the General Assembly all decisions reached by the Assembly Commission and the Appeals Commission (other than decisions made by the Special Appeals Body under Paragraph E.5.3) in the following manner:

J.1.1 If a decision of the Assembly Commission is subject to appeal, the Report shall simply state that a decision has been reached in a case which is subject to appeal and shall not name the Minister.

J.1.2 If a decision of the Assembly Commission is not subject to appeal and is to delete under Paragraph F.2.1, the Report shall so state and name the Minister.

J.1.3 If a decision of the Assembly Commission is not subject to appeal and is to allow the name of the Minister to remain on the Roll of Ministers under Paragraph F.2.1 with or without the issue of a written warning under Paragraph F.2.2, the Report shall so state without naming the Minister.

J.1.4 In any case which goes before the Appeals Commission, if the decision is to delete, the Report shall accord with Paragraph J.1.2 and if the decision is to allow the name of the Minister to remain on the Roll of Ministers with or without the issue of a written warning, the Report shall accord with Paragraph J.1.3.

J.2 The cost of operating the Section O Process and the reasonable and proper expenses of persons attending a Hearing and the costs of any reports obtained by or on the authority of the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission or any other costs and expenses which the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission deem to have been reasonably and properly incurred in the course of such process (but excluding any costs of representation) shall be charged to the general funds of the Church, and the Report of each case to the General Assembly shall state the total cost incurred in that case.

J.3 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall be responsible for the keeping of the record of decisions taken by the Assembly Commission and by the Appeals Commission, and for the custody of all papers relating to concluded cases, which shall be kept in a locked cabinet at Church House.

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# MISSION COUNCIL 7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# A6

## Grants and Loans Group

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The Grants and Loans Group (GLG) administers the Church Buildings Fund, which provides grants and loans to churches to assist with improvements/modifications to church buildings, and the Mission Project Fund, which provides grants for mission work. We have continued our policy of giving grants only to synods and churches with the greatest need.

### 2 BUDGET PROVISION

For the year 2007 the budget for grants from the Church Building Fund was approx £117,000. This is the expected income from dividends, deposit account interest and loan interest. This has been used primarily for provision of funds for facilities for the disabled. By the end of the year £58000 had been spent, with £23000 granted but not yet spent and a further £13000 approved at our December meeting. There is always a problem knowing when a grant will be taken up as there are often delays in building work being carried out. If the grant is not taken up within 12 months an extension has to be applied for, but will normally be given. 1 loan of £25000 has been made for work on a church building.

The allocation for the Mission Project Fund was £135000 (including £20000 from Carmichael Montgomery Capital Fund) of which we have spent £108,500. Again we can not always be sure when the grant will be taken up.

### 3 GRANTS FOR FACILITIES FOR THE DISABLED

We are still getting applications for grants towards costs of Facilities for the Disabled. This year we have approved 9 applications, a slight decrease on 2006. 11 grants were paid out and we have a commitment from 2007 for a further 9 grants, totalling £41,000 for 2008. This means that approx. £65,000 will be available next year for grants for building work. Hopefully some of this will be available for work other than on facilities for the Disabled.

### 4 MISSION PROJECT FUND

In 2007 11 applications were received of which 9 were approved, but 5 were for extensions of existing projects. A summary of the projects is given in the appendix. We ask for an annual report from all the mission projects and are very encouraged by the initiative, determination and commitment of the people seeking to be 'church' in their communities. From now on we will be asking for a formal review of a project before granting any extensions.



## 5 REFLECTIONS

GLG believes that the monies it makes available from Central Funds provides a real benefit, both to local churches and communities, and that without it many projects would not get started. I commented last year that the hope was that these projects if successful would become self financing. However it is once again clear that many of the projects, especially those in inner cities, though very successful, will need continued financial support. Following the pilot study of an independent evaluation of their project carried out for us by Marlpool and Langley, we have decided that all applications for extensions to projects must be accompanied by an independent evaluation. Incidentally the Marlpool and Langley review resulted in the application for a grant being withdrawn.

As indicated in last year's report we have found, especially with applications to the Mission Project Fund, that we need a representative from the appropriate synod to be present. I am pleased to say that we now have a full complement of representatives, so we have now agreed that a representative from the appropriate synod must be present for us to discuss any Mission Project application.

In response to the 'Catch the Vision' process we had questioned the future of the Grants and Loans Group and whether our business could not be carried out just as effectively in other committees. We still await a decision on this following the reorganizations that have occurred. There however is some concern within GLG about whether there is a more appropriate forum within the structures now in place to discuss Mission Project applications. Considerable expertise has been built up within GLG for looking at these longer term projects.

## 6 THANKS

I would like to again record my thanks to all the members of the committee and especially to our secretary Graham Rolfe. I would like to also thank Rob Seaman (Finance Office) for all the support he gives us.

Brian Woodhall  
Convenor  
February 2008

## APPENDIX

### 1 SUMMARY OF GRANTS PAID FOR FACILITIES FOR DISABLED

North Western Synod	5 Grants	Total	£25,000
East Midlands Synod	2 Grants	Total	£ 8,000
Eastern Synod	4 Grants	Total	£20,000
South Western Synod	1 Grant	Total	£ 5,000

### 2 SUMMARY OF LOANS

North Western Synod	1 loan	Total	£25,000
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### 3 SUMMARY OF 'MISSION GRANTS AGREED

Openshaw St Pauls with St Johns	£40,000 over 4 years	(NW Synod)
Gamston	£29,500 over 5 years	(E Midlands Synod)
Whetstone	£ 5,000 over 2 years	(E. Midlands Synod)
Groby	£3,000 over 1 year	(E. Midlands Synod)
Sleaford	£25,000 over 5 year	(E. Midlands Synod)
Pilgrim, Plymouth	£19,500 over 3 years	(SW Synod)
Mid Somerset	£9,000 over 3 years	(SW Synod)
Penhill	£14,000 over 5 years	(SW Synod)





## MISSION COUNCIL 7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# B

### London Synod Commission

Following the report of the London Synod Commission to Mission Council in March 2007, it was proposed that more time was needed to clarify the practical details and to answer the questions that had been raised during the consultation with the churches in Thames North and Southern Synods. At the same time the Commission was expanded to include specific representatives from these two Synods as part of the core group. The new Commission started its work in September 2007 and has met three times to consider the present situation and the best way of proceeding, noting that currently no decisions have been made either for or against the proposal of a London Synod - only that further work should be done in order to gather facts and figures and consider the practicalities, costs and possible benefits of re-drawing boundaries.

The second meeting of the Commission followed the Autumn meetings of the two synods and was also attended by the two Moderators. This involved reports on current thinking in relation to the single London Synod idea and also on new developments resulting from the reception of the "Bread to Spare" report (*see appendix*) concerning a possible joint strategy for mission and development across the two synods. Following an in-depth discussion of the issues involved, the Commission concluded that it is not appropriate to pursue the proposal for a London Synod at present, and recommends to Mission Council that the detailed work on the practical implications be deferred for a further period. This recommendation is based on the following considerations:

- a) "Bread to Spare" has been generally well received and the two synods have produced a joint proposal for its implementation through the establishment of a "Partnership Forum" comprising key representatives from both synods, in order to oversee delivery of the strategy across the two synods. This will have a particular emphasis on relating to Greater London as a whole, but will not be confined to the London area;
- b) there is good evidence that local churches are prepared to support this strategy with a degree of energy and enthusiasm; it needs to be given a reasonable time to test out how well the process works;
- c) the "Partnership Forum" proposal for co-operation across the synods could be a way of testing the ground for whether such a joint "Agency" (one of the alternatives suggested in the Commission's initial report) might meet the need for a unified approach to issues relating to Greater London, or whether a stronger and more coherent structure (such as a single synod) might be required in the longer run;
- d) it would not be appropriate to expend time and energy at the present time on working out details of the implications of implementing a London Synod, as this information may well be out of date in a few years time if a delay is agreed.

The Commission therefore recommends:

- (1) that detailed work on the possible implementation of a single London Synod be deferred, pending an assessment of whether co-operative work between the two existing synods might adequately meet the need for developing a coherent strategy for



(a) relating to the Greater London Authority and (b) helping local churches within the London area to deliver effective mission to the city;

- (2) that a final report be brought to Mission Council in time for General Assembly in 2012. In the intervening period the London Synod Commission shall continue to meet annually with the Moderators of Thames North and Southern Synods and representatives of the Partnership Forum, to receive reports on the development of the Forum's work and together to evaluate the implications for the possible formation of a London Synod.

Bill Mahood (*Convenor*); Sheila Brain (*Secretary*); Heather Pencavel; (Southern); Nicola Furley-Smith; Raymond Singh; (Thames North); David Varcoe; Keith Webster;

## APPENDIX:

### Background

#### 1) London Synod Commission

The London Synod Commission was originally established by General Assembly in 2005 to investigate the feasibility of creating a "London Synod" and bring recommendations to General Assembly based on the results of its consultations with relevant people within the two synods and beyond, as well as with local churches. A significant part of this was the major consultation involving all the churches in the two synods during the Autumn of 2006, inviting responses and comments on the alternative options available. There was a 40% response to this, which was statistically quite good for this sort of survey, bearing in mind that a number of churches at a distance from London felt that they were not affected and therefore should or could not comment. But there were still a significant number of London churches which did not respond and it would have been valuable to hear their views as well. The outcome was inconclusive, with no overwhelming preference shown for either of the main two options (for or against a single synod), although there was evident support for the "fall-back" idea of a London-wide agency of some kind, which did give an indication that there is a firm recognition of the need to find some way of dealing with "London issues" and relating to the political reality of the Greater London Authority. The main doubts expressed related specifically to:

- (b) the possible financial cost of change, which had deliberately not been spelt out in the document because this would be dependent on so many different factors and it would have been irresponsible and misleading to speculate
- (c) concern about the exact boundaries and especially the position of churches just "outside" the GLA but within the commuter belt (and the corresponding transport links), whose members thus have a particular London focus to their lives.

In addition, there was a lot of unease about "too much change" going on already, with the loss of Districts and consequent re-organisation of working patterns within the existing Synods.

#### 2) London Strategic Development

In parallel to the Assembly Commission, the two London synods had already jointly agreed to initiate a process to undertake research into the state of the URC presence in London, with a view towards identifying a ten-year strategy for mission and



development. This included a survey of local church life in order to identify resources and to plan how to deploy them for the Gospel, as well as consideration of Greater London issues, looking at the life of the city as a whole. The resulting report "Bread to Spare" was launched at a celebratory event in November 2006 and was well received as providing inspiration and a framework for future work. In particular it has been recognised as a strategy for mission which can be applied right across the two synods and not just restricted to the area of the Greater London Authority. It might perhaps be offered to other synods also.

It has been acknowledged that the fact of the two processes going on at the same time caused some confusion and added to a sense of uncertainty and anxiety about change in the minds of many churches and individuals, which was not helpful. For others, however, there was a recognition that here was an opportunity worth seizing, to combine the vision of renewed mission with that of the possibility of a new structure in order to deliver it.



## MISSION COUNCIL 7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# C

### Church and Society Report

#### 1. Climate Change Resolution – the way forward

Following the acceptance of the Climate Change resolution at last General Assembly, a small task group consisting of Revd Dave Coaker, Charles Jolly, Frank Kantor, and Linda Mead have met to take the resolution forward and bring ideas for discussion. This group felt that rather than trying to emulate the Church of England's 'Shrinking the Footprint' campaign, that a multi-pronged approach should be adopted by the United Reformed Church in responding to this challenge.

This approach acknowledges the good work churches are already doing to lower their carbon footprint and engage with their communities on this issue and seeks to complement what they are achieving rather than produce a different way of working. Our aim is to provide resources that will help churches in their endeavours and not replicate what is already out there. There was a strong feeling that we must give a message of hope and a Christian perspective by showing congregations they can be empowered to make a greener future. We were all in agreement that climate change is a spiritual, environmental and justice issue and one with the United Reformed Church needs to mainstream in all its programmes.

A draft action timetable has been set up for the next year which includes:

- Starting the process to cut emissions at Church House through an environmental audit. If agreed, it is envisaged that this would be launched with a "Green Week" to raise awareness within Church House. We would aim to follow this with regular events and information to keep momentum going.
- We are looking into sharing good practice through the 'Creation Challenge' web page - the Methodist/United Reformed Church Environmental Network. It is envisaged that this will show up to date information on progress both at Church House and beyond. Stories from churches already making changes will be prominent. Links to useful sites which are relevant to churches will also be part of this page.
- The June edition of Reform will have a climate change focus with guest Editor Revd David Pickering assisted by Revd Dave Coaker. This will be an opportunity to tell churches of the progress we have made and to inspire and encourage them as they make changes and gain understanding on the complexities of the subject.
- At this year's General Assembly Mark Dowd from Operation Noah will be a guest speaker on the problems raised by environmental refugees (in keeping with the Moderator Elect's focus pilgrimage). Ideas to complement this subject are in the pipeline.
- We plan to publish a leaflet to help churches to lower their carbon footprint, giving information on suppliers and ways to campaign both nationally and locally.
- The Methodist youth are considering a similar leaflet and Linda Mead will be meeting with Steve Hucklesby to discuss working together. We have also had discussions with Operation Noah to see how we can work together effectively.



- A 'Green Apostles' event is planned for 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008 at Church House. This day will be for Commitment for Life Advocates and those within the Synods for whom this will be of interest. Speakers will inform and inspire action. It is hope from this meeting we will set up a communication network
- We are looking at using one Synod with both rural and urban areas as a pilot to collect energy readings from churches to get a baseline reading. This will work in the same way that volunteers collected information on Fairtrade churches. Time and money needed to collate this over the whole of the country would be a time consuming way of using our limited resources. We need to be aware of where we can have the best effect.
- Alongside these activities we plan to commission papers on the theological and economic perspectives of climate change together with publication of worship materials and a 'myths buster' document, to name but a few ideas.

At present Commitment for Life are collating useful web addresses and producing a database of interested and informed people. We are looking out for those churches already taking steps to make changes, especially through Eco Congregation.

As the news of what has been achieved at Church House and good practice from churches is publicised we would like to encourage the long term outcome of becoming a carbon neutral church.

*Linda Mead – Commitment for Life Coordinator*

## **2. Human Embryology and Early Human Life**

This is a project of the Joint Public Issues Team which was commissioned by Methodist Conference in response to technological and medical developments in issues concerning early human life and the proposed changes in legislation expressed in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill. A joint Working Group on Human Embryology and Early Human Life was formed last year and has now had 3 meetings, including a 24 hour residential. The Working Group's remit is to consider the range of challenges arising from aspects of human life before birth, including but not limited to: abortion, therapeutic cloning, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, and identify current developments in scientific understanding and activity.

The Working Group will suggest ethical and theological principles to guide responses to these and future developments related to embryology and early human life. It will also review the existing statements of the 3 denominations on these issues, and make recommendations as to whether the statements need re-shaping in the light of developments. The Working Group will also commission a study guide for use across the churches exploring some of the ethical, theological and public policy considerations relating to early human life and human embryology.

The first draft of the Working Group's report has now been produced. This will be presented to the Faith and Order Committee and Mission Council of the Methodist Church in March and then to Methodist Conference in July. A summary of this report will be incorporated in the Book of Reports for discussion at General Assembly in July with an accompanying resolution (yet to be drafted) on the United Reformed Church's position on some of the key issues raised.

The study guide will be available in summer 2008 and is aimed at helping small groups within churches to consider these issues.

*Rachel Lampard – Secretary for Parliamentary and Political Affairs, Methodist Church*

## **3. Migration matters – myths and reality**

This project was commissioned by the Management Group of the Joint Public Issues Team in response to the increasingly emotive reporting on migration in the tabloid press. The aim of



this project is to produce a short user-friendly booklet for use by churches which seeks to distinguish the myths from the facts about migration and to highlight good practice by churches and local communities in responding to immigrants based on Biblical reflection. A larger report is also in the process of being produced on the issue of Asylum and Immigration in light of the amendments to the Government's policy which will be incorporated in the Book of Reports for General Assembly. The shorter booklet is to be produced as a downloadable PDF document which will be posted on the JPIT website before the end of March.

*Frank Kantor – Secretary for Church and Society*

#### **4. Review of Nestlé resolution**

The Nestlé Working Group established to review Assembly's 1992 resolution to boycott Nestlé products has met once to receive input from Steve Hucklesby on the rationale for the Methodist Church's decision to engage with Nestlé as a means of monitoring the company's operations. It was agreed at this meeting that additional information was required on Nestlé's current policies and operations and a number of reports have been commissioned to inform the response of the United Reformed Church on this issue.

At a recent meeting of the Church & Society Committee at Windermere, it was decided that any further discussion and debate on this issue should await the report by Church and Society on the broadening of the ethical investment guidelines of the United Reformed Church currently under review. It is hoped that the recommendations from this review will be discussed at the next meeting of Mission Council in October 2008.

*Frank Kantor – Secretary for Church and Society*

#### **5. Living Wage Resolution**

The Church and Society Committee are bringing this resolution to Mission Council based on the call by Church Action on Poverty for churches to pay their employees, lay or ordained a 'living wage' of at least £7.42 per hour in London, and £7.00 an hour elsewhere in the UK from 1 December 2007. The United Reformed Church signed Church Action on Poverty's 'Living Wage' pledge in 2003 and has contributed funding for the production of the 'Just Church' resources. We are also planning to support the proposed campaign to end UK Poverty which is to be launched later this year.

Based on our commitment to social justice and poverty eradication in the UK and our partner countries, we believe it is important to also reflect on the well being of those we employ by paying them a living wage (described as the amount someone needs to be paid in order to ensure they can both maintain a decent standard of living and avoid falling into poverty). A similar resolution is being considered by the Methodist and Baptist churches.

#### **6. Statement on the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Iraq War**

20<sup>th</sup> March 2008 will be the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the war in Iraq. The Church and Society Committee endorsed the attached statement at their residential meeting in January and it is presented to Mission Council for their endorsement.

#### **7. Statement on Zimbabwe**

The on-going crisis in Zimbabwe has posed major challenges for churches in the North in determining an appropriate response based on the political and ethical sensitivities involved. The Presidential and General Elections planned for the end of March 2008 do however, provide an opportunity for the United Reformed Church to express its solidarity with those struggling for peace and justice in Zimbabwe, as well as urging political leaders to place the interests of the suffering people of their country above party political expediency.

The statement is self-explanatory.

*Simon Loveitt – Convener, Church and Society*





The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

MISSION COUNCIL  
7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

C1

Church and Society

Statement on the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Iraq War

Reflecting on the forthcoming 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Iraq war on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008, Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church:

1. Expresses deep sorrow and regret at the devastating consequences of this war and occupation – for the people of Iraq and the families of the coalition forces, reflected in these tragic statistics:
  - An estimated 1.2 million Iraqis have been killed directly and indirectly. As a result of the destruction of infrastructure, tens of thousands experience on-going malnutrition and disease.
  - Since 2003 there has been a mass exodus of people fleeing from the on-going violence and occupation. More than 4.4 million Iraqis have been uprooted from their homes. Some 2.2 million are displaced internally and more than 2 million have fled to neighbouring countries – Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.
  - The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that one in five Iraqi refugees registered in Syria is a victim of violence. Many suffer from chronic illness which is exacerbated as their financial resources run out. Refugee children are falling behind in education, and one UNHCR survey in Syria found 10% of the children of refugee families were working for a living.
  - The minority Christian community has suffered from targeted attacks on churches and Christian leaders. The Iraqi Christian community of 800,000 has been reduced to between 400,000 and 600,000 as a direct consequence of the war.
  - 174 British, 3,923 US and 133 other military personnel have been killed in Iraq between March 2003 and 14 January 2008 and thousands more injured and maimed.
  - According to The Ministry of Defence the UK has spent £5 billion on the war in Iraq over and above the UK's defence budget.
2. Reiterates that entering the War in Iraq in support of US forces before exhausting all other options in contravention of international law was an ill-conceived decision on the part of the British government; it has contributed to the immense human suffering and misery outlined above and was contrary to views of many people of faith in Britain.
3. Repeats its call for leaders to reflect on the root causes of the situation in Iraq and to address these based on the understanding that where conflict and tension abound,

lasting peace and stability are more likely to emanate from a dismantling of structures that perpetrate injustice or division than from violence and aggression.

4. Mindful of the on-going humanitarian crisis, calls on all those with influence and authority to work with renewed urgency and vigour to bring an end to the occupation of Iraq by coalition forces based on the development of sustainable security and livelihoods for the people of this region.
5. Seeks commitment to resolution of conflict through diplomatic means and the use of multilateral institutions in compliance with international law, in order to achieve a lasting basis for peace, not only in Iraq but in the entire Middle East region.





## MISSION COUNCIL 7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# C2

### Church and Society

### Statement on Zimbabwe

Mindful of the on-going humanitarian and governance crisis in Zimbabwe and the immense suffering that this is causing for ordinary citizens as they approach another election, the Mission Council of the United Reformed Church meeting in London Colney from 7-9 March 2008:

1. expresses concern at the fact that despite a mediated agreement between the ruling party and the two main factions representing the opposition parties for the conducting of 'free and fair' elections in Zimbabwe, the terms and the spirit of this agreement have not been complied with as reflected by the following observations of the Christian Alliance :
  - President Robert Mugabe unilaterally called for an election to be held on March 29, under the old and much amended Lancaster House Constitution, to which both the opposition and ruling party recently signed the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment.
  - The time allocated for the inspection of the voters roll is far too short considering that there are new constituencies and wards throughout the country which favour some and disadvantage others.
  - The repressive Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) laws are still in place making it impossible for opposition parties to campaign freely.
  - Armed forces have been politicised and traditional leaders such as chiefs and headmen have been co-opted by ruling party activists.
  - Information has not been properly disseminated and most of the electorate has no access to the media.
  - Serious misgivings have been expressed by civil society organisations about the institutional and management capacity of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to oversee the harmonised elections i.e. General and Presidential at the end of March.
2. Based on these observations, we plead with all the political parties contesting these elections to place the interests of the suffering people of Zimbabwe above political expediency by urgently addressing all the outstanding issues for credible, free and fair elections to take place. If necessary, the elections should be delayed to ensure that these requirements are met as there is a fundamental concern that Zimbabwe cannot afford another discredited election.
3. Expresses solidarity and support in prayer and action for the people of Zimbabwe in their on-going struggle for peace with justice and survival amidst the economic collapse and extreme food and fuel shortages which have become a daily reality for the vast majority of the population.
4. Commits itself to building this solidarity in practical and tangible ways based on engagement with partner churches and aid agencies working in Zimbabwe.
5. Finally, we take courage and hope in this season of Lent that our Lord's journey to Jerusalem did not end with his death on the cross on Friday, but with his resurrection on Easter Sunday. This gives us hope for the restoration and renewal of Zimbabwe as depicted by the 'resurrection bush' found in the Matopo's which appears dead and withered when picked, but springs to life when placed in life-giving water.



# a BIG, BOLD, FAITHFUL dream!

The United Reformed Church loves a big dream...

***“We believe that children and young people are equal partners with adults in the life of the church.”***

Trusting that God wants us to turn this dream into marvellous reality, we will:

Celebrate treasure in our **theology** as we:

- ◆ Enable and encourage people of all ages to share their gifts and speak of God from their experiences as they are welcomed in our congregations
- ◆ Explore and equip evangelism and growing in faith with children and young people amidst our dynamic contemporary cultures

Discover possibilities for **community** as we:

- ◆ Provide the best possible resources to help congregations share God's love with children and young people inside, and way beyond, their walls
- ◆ Encourage sharing through programmes, resources, and events that give everyone the chance to cherish a far bigger Church and a far wider world

Explore wonders in our **worship** as we:

- ◆ Help all ages to read the Bible together and be transformed by God's Word
- ◆ Advocate and resource excellence in our worship that inspires and nurtures people of all ages to grow in faith and service

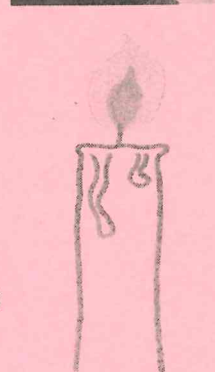
Unlock potential for **communication** as we:

- ◆ Connect and support children, young people and adults across many boundaries using appropriate and helpful ways of sharing information
- ◆ Celebrate what we do well and share knowledge and resources across the URC, ecumenically, and beyond the Church

Share joy in **growth** as we:

- ◆ Encourage children and young people to deepen and share their knowledge of God and nurture future generations of Christians (including leaders)
- ◆ Help congregations to grow and sustain safe and exciting opportunities for mission with children and young people that are fun and effective

*The dream statement at the top of this page  
is adapted from the URC's Charter for Children in the Church.  
It is the guiding vision for the URC's Youth and Children's Work Committee.*

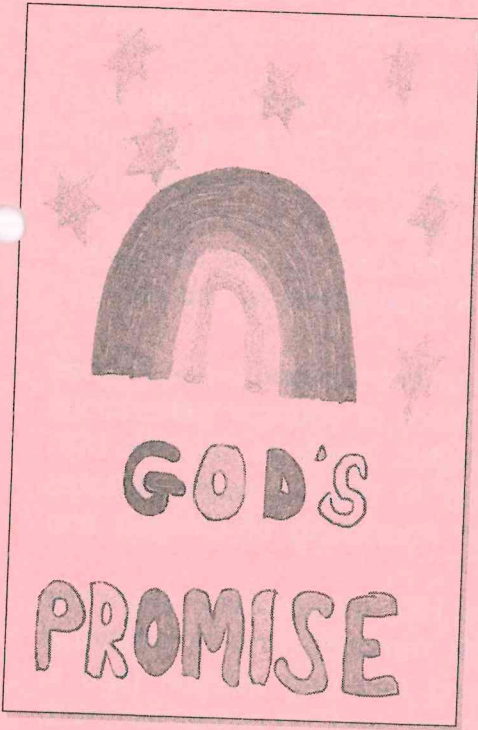




# bringing the **DREAM** to **LIFE**

The Strategy for General Assembly Children's and Youth Work  
in the United Reformed Church

July 2008



## Introduction

The URC's Youth and Children's Work Committee believes we're called to look ahead. We feel the responsibility of resourcing and encouraging work with children and young people across our churches and within our wider communities. We know the huge challenges as well as mighty opportunities of being Christians in today's culture. We are excited by the URC's willingness to put significant resources into this area of mission and ministry. We know these resources need to be wisely deployed, and that Assembly work needs to resonate with, and support, excellent work in Synods and congregations.

We also remember our church's very big dream:  
**"We believe that children and young people are equal partners with adults in the life of the church."**

This statement, adapted from the URC's *Charter for Children in the Church*, has become our guiding vision. We see it as excellent theology because it proclaims an inclusive and hospitable church. We want the URC to be alive with the Spirit's passion, dancing to rhythms that draw us together, collapsing the barriers that divide and dispirit us. We want such blessing for all the children, young people and adults within our congregations. We want such hope for all the generations of the communities we call home.

We intend to bring this vision to life through concentrating our resources and energies around five critical themes: **theology; community; worship; communication; growth**. We offer the objectives that follow as the first pages of a new chapter in URC children's and youth work at General Assembly level. Recognising that this is a living story, driven by the Spirit's power and directed to God's glory, we know that new directions and priorities may be shown to us in the years to come. But let us begin...

"If I could change one thing about church I would ban people from saying, 'it won't work!'"

(Participant at Children's Assembly, 2007)





We will encourage and enable the URC to celebrate treasure in our **theology** as we:

1. Resource and share the theology being explored and articulated within key events and programmes across the URC. These include: the annual gatherings of Voyagers (aged 11-14) and Navigators (aged 15-18) within Pilots (the URC's non-uniformed organisation); insights from synod Regional Pilots Officers (RPOs); the Children's Assembly; FURY Assembly and FURY Forum (for 14-26 year olds); the Youth and Children's Work Training and Development Officers (YCWTDs); uniformed organisations' faith programmes
2. Engage creatively with recent work on URC identity in materials on Eldership, Membership, The Basis of Union and Vision 4 Life. We will help the URC to explore how these vital insights can be brought alive for children and young people. We will help the URC to see its identity through the eyes, voices and experiences of children and young people
3. Pay careful attention to current thinking around issues of human identity and the place of younger generations within society and share insights widely to help the URC play a full and creative part in the big public debates about the participation and flourishing of children and young people
4. Equip and encourage the URC to effectively share the gospel with generations far removed from institutional churches in the exciting and daunting mission field in which we live. We will do major work on evangelism with children and young people, sharing widely the resources and insights of those with experience and expertise within and beyond the URC

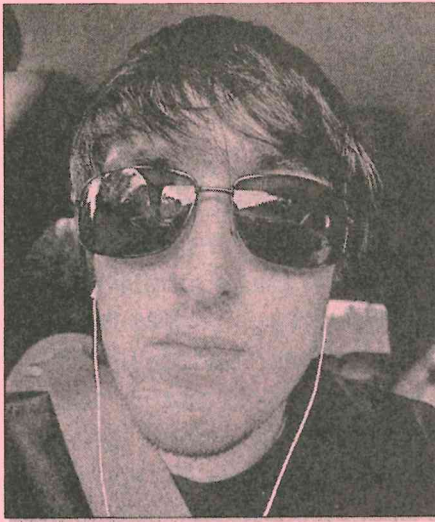
We will encourage and enable the URC to discover possibilities for **community** as we:

1. Prioritise the local church and its people as the prime focus of URC mission in God's world with children and young people
2. Help local churches to discover and respond to appropriate ways of involvement in schools and community activities alongside children and young people. Given that many of the URC's Racial Justice Advocates are aged 18-26 we will continue to support work with congregations in their communities around issues of full inclusion and hospitality
3. Advocate and equip excellence in children's and youth work across the URC by ensuring the latest information

“Our mission is to discover God, to help each other grow in the Christian faith and, through our lives, reflect God's love to all.”

*(FURY's Mission Statement)*



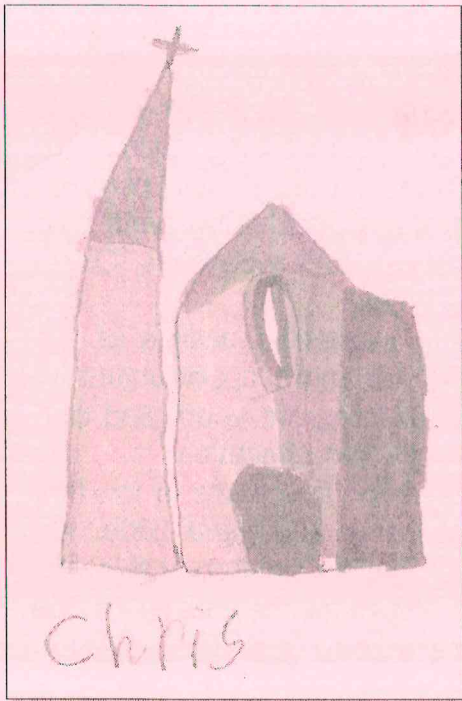


“The enthusiasm that was produced from the youth of both the Churches of Christ [in Malawi] and the URC was overwhelming, and something that I hope to bring back to the URC. It felt amazing to be part of such a memorable experience, and I thank God for giving us the opportunity to be able to have this relationship with fellow Christians 40,000km away.”

*(Zoey)*

- on best practices and relevant legislation is widely shared and supported through appropriate training
4. Tell the URC and the world with passion and praise about all our big children's and youth events, such as Pilots on Safari at Longleat in May, 2008. We will continue to support and advocate invaluable gatherings with children and young people such as GEAR weekends, Cross-fire camp and FURY Theatre Week
  5. Respond creatively to the expressed desires of the members of Pilots and FURY for more opportunities to meet, and explore how best to integrate youth and children's work and Pilots more fully and effectively
  6. Build upon the ground-breaking successes of the first ever URC Children's Assemblies in 2007 and 2008. We want to help the URC to relish having children at this vital gathering, and to listen to them as they listen to the church. We will explore how best to gather children together in the years when there is no General Assembly
  7. Continue to resource and advocate the excellent contribution of FURY at General Assembly through the pre-Assembly What Do You Think? events. We will explore what sorts of gatherings for young people may be best in the years between General Assemblies
  8. Encourage engagement between the URC's children and young people and the wider world through appropriate visits and exposure, including advocacy of opportunities through Belonging to the World Church and the Council for World Mission
  9. Reflect upon the experiences of URC congregations that no longer have regular contact with children and young people, seeking to explore ways in which new bridges between generations might be built and experiments might be encouraged as antidotes to grief and guilt. We want to see if there are possibilities to develop mentoring in which churches without children and young people can support such work, through prayer and people, in nearby places that do have them
  10. Continue to work ecumenically and collaboratively wherever possible in all areas of youth and children's work. This will continue to include: Pilots; uniformed organisations; Peacebuilders (our wonderful collaboration between the URC, Pilots, the Methodist Church and partners in India); FURY in all its forms; the ecumenical CORE training programme for workers with children
  11. Collaborate fully with the relevant structures of the URC (such as the new Mission Committee) to bring the experiences and hopes of children and young people into ongoing explorations of the URC's pilgrimage





We will encourage and enable the URC to explore wonders  
in our **worship** as we:

1. Work closely with the *Vision 4 Life* process to see how best its themes and resources can be explored with, and informed by, children and young people. We will help the URC to resource and inspire children and young people in exploring their faith. We will encourage congregations to bring the Bible to life for all ages, especially within worship. Invite churches to explore contemporary spirituality and worship for children and young people by advocating widely existing resources such as Roots, Godly Play, Open the Book, Hope 08 events, Greenbelt, Spring Harvest, etc.
2. Continue to break open the reality and implications of the fact that much of the URC's worship and life happens with Pilots, FURY, uniformed organisations, and other groups for children and young people on any day and time other than Sunday mornings
3. Explore issues around baptism, communion and church membership for children and young people and share advice and insights
4. Make full use of major URC events (such as Pilots on Safari and FURY Assembly) to showcase the very best of worship with all ages and share the experiences to inspire local experimentation
5. Work closely with Resource Centres for Learning (RCLs) and the Education and Learning Committee to help those preparing to be worship-leaders (lay and ordained) to appreciate the challenges and marvellous possibilities of children and young people sharing fully in worship

We will encourage and enable the URC to unlock the  
potential for **communication** as we:

1. Urgently develop the URC's children's and youth work presence on the internet to create accessible and relevant resources and ways of being informed. We know that communicating effectively is the foundation for almost all of our objectives
2. Build upon the newly established joint Methodist/URC Electronic-news service to offer regular updates on resources for children's work and explore ways in which such a resource can be expanded into other aspects of our work
3. Make full use of existing networks, such as the RPOs, YCWTDOS, Synod Youth Executives and FURY groups to listen carefully to the needs and concerns of local

“[Pilots] is a place  
that we can go and  
learn about God and  
we can also talk to  
God there as well.”

(A Pilot)





“It was encouraging that the adults were listening to what we had to say.”

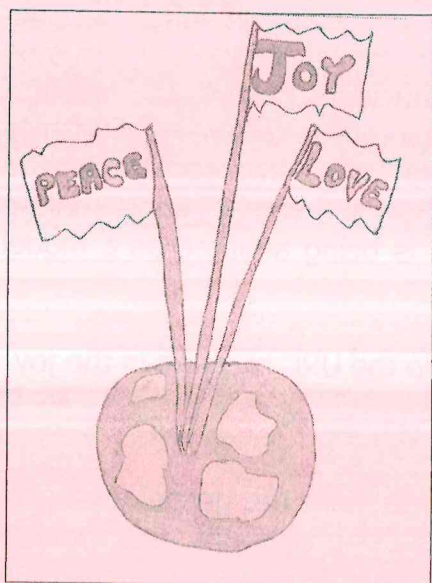
(Participant at Children's Assembly, 2007)

- churches and to share information about our programmes and resources. We will explore how best to hear from, and share with, new Synod structures as they emerge
4. Continue to develop excellent printed materials, such as programme resources and *Bridge* magazine with Pilots and *F2* with FURY, as valuable ways to build community
  5. Compliment electronic communication with an ongoing commitment to printed materials as appropriate to ensure that everyone across the URC has access to excellent resources
  6. Fulfil our obligation to be a clearing house for information by keeping a close watch on resources available for work with children and young people, including theological and worship materials, and offering regular reviews and advice to encourage their use
  7. Work closely with URC Communications and Editorial to maximise the potential for keeping in touch, sharing stories and developing high quality resources (including working with *Reform*). This includes helping and resourcing local churches so they can build creative relationships with local media and spread good news about their life and work with and for children and young people (noting that the Pilots' media pack is being adapted as a model for local URCs)

We will encourage and enable the URC to share in the joy of **growth** as we:

1. Continue to help churches share the gospel with children and young people, seeking relevant and feasible ways in which the journey can be shared with passion and creativity.
2. Ensure that our children and young people, and those who work with them, have appropriate opportunities to experience and share in the Church beyond the local
3. Build upon current ways of encouraging children and young people to explore faith and discipleship (such as FURY's work on contemporary spirituality, diversity in community and exploring the Bible) and work on ways to foster the next generations of URC leadership. This needs to include working alongside those charged with encouraging URC vocations
4. Increase the effective promotion of Pilots and widen knowledge of Pilots across the URC and sponsoring denominations. We will celebrate and highlight the reality that 70% of Pilots are actively drawn into the life of the URC from beyond the church. Pilots is one of our most successful evangelistic gifts and we will grow more Pilots companies within the URC (opening at least 10 new





companies per year for 5 years) and maintain the positive impact of Pilots across the URC. We will invite Pilots' Management Committee (PMC) to suggest corresponding goals across all denominations involved with Pilots. We will increase membership of existing Pilots companies by continuing to provide encouragement, resources and the best possible support for leaders. We also know that Pilots is not the answer for every church, and that we must offer contextual resources

5. Explore different models of being church with particular emphasis upon 18-30 year olds (the age group we tend to lose most) and share ways forward widely. This age group of ex-Pilots have expressed interest in meeting and we see real potential for ongoing growth here
6. Promote the use of the ecumenical *CORE* materials for the training of volunteers with children and young people to ensure we create good and safe practices
7. Maximise the effective use of the YCWTD team, in collaboration with Synod managers and strategies, to lead training and development for children's and youth work across the URC locally
8. Promote and encourage churches to engage with the Child Friendly Church Award scheme by using all available networks and media to share information and identify where awards have been made and where people are working towards an award

## What Next?

We know that this list of objectives is meaningless without clear goals and concrete plans by which to achieve and assess them. The Youth and Children's Work Committee is using these objectives to set goals for all Assembly work that will be SMART:

**SPECIFIC  
MEASURABLE  
ACHIEVABLE  
REALISTIC  
TIME-RELATED**

"[I enjoy] discos, making stuff and having loads and loads and loads and loads and loads and loads of fun."

(A Pilot)

*In all of this we will foster the gifts of children, young people and adults as the URC grows in love and service, making a difference in the world in the power of the Spirit*





MISSION COUNCIL  
7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

D2

## Youth and Children's Work Committee Report

### Review of the Youth and Children's Work Training and Development Programme in the United Reformed Church *Summary of the findings and recommendations for discussion*

#### Context for the Review

During 2000 the Youth and Children's Work Committee of the United Reformed Church (URC) instigated a review of the youth and children's work within the denomination. This included work which was part of the Youth and Children's Work Trainers (YCWT) programme. It was asked "to review the YCWT programme, its synodical management and relationship to the national church, its relationship to the whole work with children and young people, and to make any recommendations for change".

A report was presented to General Assembly in 2002. This report commented positively on the work of the YCWT programme and recommended its continuation. It also suggested that there should be a full review of the YCWT programme in four years' time. Consequently, a review group was set up in the summer of 2007 and was asked to report by the end of 2007.

The 2002 review group recommended that Synods encourage the developmental aspect of the role, and suggested that the word 'Development' be added to the job title. While different titles exist for individuals in different Synods, the preface to the Staff Development Policy refers to the Youth and Children's Work Training and Development Officers (YCWTDs) and this report will follow that lead and refer to the Youth and Children's Work Training and Development (YCWTD) programme and YCWTDs.

The URC has a long standing commitment to working with children and young people and the work is overseen by the Youth and Children's Work Committee (YCBC). The Church currently employs three staff based in Church House for youth and children's work. They are the Children's Work Development Officer, the Secretary for Youth Work, and the Pilots Development Officer. There is a Children's Charter and the URC has been committed to working with ecumenical partners in this area.

Financial considerations have recently become more apparent as the URC has been seeking ways to balance its budget. The YCWTD programme was initiated with funding from the DES and this led to the URC paying 50% of the cost of the programme with Synods paying the other 50%, although most of the work has taken place in Synods (at least 75%) with about 25% available for Assembly tasks. From 2008, Synods in the scheme will pay 75% of the costs with a possible move to 100% in the future.

The 2007 review group is very conscious that the context has changed in other ways since 2002 and is still changing. There is a need to learn from and build on the past and to think about the mission of the church for the next 10 years or so and especially its ministry to children and young people.

The URC has been engaged in the 'Catch the Vision' process which is moving into a new phase – Vision4Life - and it has a new training strategy (agreed at General Assembly in 2006) which is based on the premise that the URC is a learning church involving the whole people of God. This must, by



definition, involve the young as well as those who are older. The URC has created three Resource Centres for Learning (RCL) and ministerial and lay training is also being developed ecumenically in Regional Training Partnerships (RTPs). With all this change, it is appropriate to be discussing the YCWTD programme and the contribution this, or professional officers, could make to the Church in the future.

### The remit of the 2007 Review

This review group was asked to answer the crucial question:

**“What value is the Church gaining from the YCWTD programme?”** and it was also asked to:

- look at the whole YCWTD programme; and
- compare and contrast ways of working across the Synods.

### Summary of the Main Findings of the Review

#### 1. Has the Church gained from the YCWTD programme?

- 1.1. Much has been achieved in children and young people's ministry through the work of the YCWTDs and Synods are generally very supportive of their work although there are significant variations.
- 1.2. At its best, the programme has had a very positive impact on the work of the URC. A large number of adults working with children's and youth groups have received training. 'What do you think' has been a very successful way of helping young people to have their voices heard and to feel part of the wider church. FURY Assembly has helped young people to think about key issues and frame resolutions for Assembly. The first Children's Assembly in 2007, although the initiative of the Children's Work development Officer, utilized the skills of some YCWTDs.
- 1.3. The work of the YCWTDs in their Synods has helped to build up the confidence of younger people as well as the leaders and other volunteers in local churches. Work that was already good has flourished and developed further. Leaders have been well resourced and have received support, guidance and encouragement. Young people have been given a wider view of the church through Synod and/or Assembly events.
- 1.4. Very valuable work has been carried out in Synods in relation to statutory work and the generic job description in the Staff Development Policy states that they should offer advice, support, advocacy and guidance on implementation of the Church's child protection policy in local churches and councils of the church. If the YCWTDs were not employed, the URC would have to pay others to carry out the work and check that the policy was being implemented – or rely on very good volunteers whose work would need monitoring by someone. The YCWTDs carry a heavy responsibility in this respect on behalf of the whole Church.
- 1.5. Work with local churches has usually been appreciated, but many churches are not touched by the work in spite of publicity. One factor may be because the churches say that they have very few or no children and young people on Sundays. There is a need for Synods to consider how they raise awareness about the work of the YCWTD and how they could become more pro-active in engaging with churches.
- 1.6. YCWTDs are valued for their involvement in the whole life of the church and have used their individual skills, for example in ICT, to help their Synods.
- 1.7. The participation of some YCWTDs in the training of ministers of word and sacrament and CRCWs has been appreciated and they could contribute to new patterns of training in the future.
- 1.8. The YCWTD Programme is the envy of ecumenical partners and the wider church has gained much from the cooperative working. The YCWTDs have helped to show churches in other denominations that the URC takes youth and children's ministry seriously and some local churches have said that they have been given a wider ecumenical dimension through the work led by YCWTDs.



## 2. Has the Church obtained 'value for money?'

- 2.1. This is not easy to evaluate but, because of the many positive responses, the answer must, in general, be 'yes'. However, there is scope for improvement in the way the group of YCWTDs work together for the URC as a whole and how their work in Synods relates to agreed strategies there.
- 2.2. Individual officers have many skills and talents and the potential for outstanding work through greater team work is there, but nobody has an overview of their skills and talents, or of areas for development, in spite of the production of three-yearly appraisal reports which are sent to Church House.
- 2.3. Pilots has been very successful and continues to grow. The 2002 Review acknowledged that one Assembly staff was not sufficient and that there should be more paid resources as the work developed. Additional support has been provided by the YCWTDs but this has not been done in a systematic way. More could be achieved if the Pilots Development Officer could call on dedicated time from some YCWTDs.
- 2.4. Overall, the work of the YCWTDs for the whole church has not been as efficient or effective as it could have been mainly because of a lack of strategic planning at Assembly level and because earlier recommendations about the management (in the 2002 report) of the Assembly programme had not been implemented. As a consequence, the YCWTDs do not function as a team. There is a sense in which this is not a 'YCWTD programme' at all but a set of posts with some collaborative work. There is a need to explore how the work could be more cohesive; a comparison with the way Synod Training Officers come together and work collaboratively could be helpful.
- 2.5. The strength of having such professional officers in Synods is that they should be able to come together to work for the whole church but there is a lack of clarity about what constitutes Assembly work. While it is inevitable in some respects that the boundary between Synod and Assembly work is fuzzy, greater clarity would be helpful. Not all YCWTDs spend the same proportion of time on Assembly work so some Synods make greater contributions than others. There are questions about how tasks are allocated to, or chosen by, the YCWTDs and how the work is co-ordinated.
- 2.6. The YCWTDs' 'team' meetings are self-managed and a lack of accountability seems to have led to an air of complacency. Time at the meetings is not used as effectively as it could be for training or sharing ideas. Are the three residential meetings a year, as currently organised, justified from a time and financial point of view? It is not always clear to whom they are accountable for different aspects of their work.
- 2.7. Several Synods have spoken of the difficulty of finding appropriate people as Synod Managers because of pressures on their time. Particular Synod structures also affect the way they operate; some managers are more involved in the general life and decisions in the Synod than others. The recommendation that new Synod managers receive some training has not been implemented although managers are invited once or twice a year by the Secretary for Youth to meet together to share good practice and discuss matters of concern. It would be helpful if there were greater clarity about what was expected of the managers not only from Synods but also from the URC.
- 2.8. The YCWC has a significant role to play but has not always been seen as supportive by the YCWTDs. When, for example, it decided on the last five year plan the YCWTDs were not asked initially to take part in its development. Following a YCWC request some YCWTDs took the initiative and produced a much appreciated DVD. The current YCWC is developing a new strategic plan and intends to ask the YCWTDs, through their managers, to carry out specific tasks.
- 2.9. The YCWTDs are Assembly appointments and they are a relatively expensive resource. The URC, however, has not made as much use of their experience and skills as it could have done. For example, they are not asked to make a report to General Assembly either directly or through the YCWC; they were not involved in early 'Catch the Vision' discussions; and in a recent edition of 'Reform' about the learning church they were not invited to contribute. It is hoped that recent offers to help to produce child-friendly material for Vision4Life will be taken up.
- 2.10. It has been suggested by some that the URC does not get 'value for money' in its ecumenical work as "we give more than we receive".



### 3. Other Issues

- 3.1. Most of the current workers have a background in youth rather than children's work and there is a need to address this imbalance in any future work/appointments. With good overall management and planning, development opportunities for the YCWTDOS could easily be provided within the Assembly programme of work.
- 3.2. The budget for the whole programme is held by the Secretary for Youth. At present there is an imbalance in the funding of children's and youth work, but there is no clear identification of how the money is split. It has been argued that more should be spent on children's work because there are more under-10s linked to the churches.
- 3.3. Two Synods do not have YCWTDOS. One Synod (Northern) has chosen not to be part of the programme because of dissatisfaction in the past and, therefore, does not receive any funding for its (part-time) children's worker and, consequently, she is not involved in the YCWTDOS team meetings or in other communications. Young people from the Synod have, however, been involved in sessions led by the Secretary for Youth, have shared in Youth Executive meetings with the North Western Synod, and benefited from attending FURY Assembly and other events led by YCWTDOS.
- 3.4. The Synod of Wales is currently reviewing the situation but, again, activities have been organised at the request of the Synod by other officers.
- 3.5. The title of Youth and Childrens' Work Development Officer is too complicated; something like Youth and Children's Officer (YCO) would be more helpful.
- 3.6. There is no system in place to ensure that the policy on Safeguarding is up to date, or that the quality of training given in Synods is of an acceptable standard.
- 3.7. The URC has a very helpful Staff Development Policy to guide YCWTDOS and their managers. This includes information about professional and personal development, appraisals and reviews as well as a generic job description which Synods use as a basis for their own. There is a need to raise awareness about this document so that the policies are carried out consistently across Synods. The policy handbook was last revised in 2003 and needs to be reviewed again.
- 3.8. There is a need to have systems that try to ensure that the Church has work of a consistently high quality, and to support colleagues when it is not of the required standard.
- 3.9. It has been suggested by some that the role of a YCO should be considered and recognised as a form of ministry that supports the mission of the whole church.

### 4. Vision for the Future

- 4.1. Most respondents were in favour of continuing with the programme but suggested that this was a time for a significant change because of the evolving needs and priorities of the Church and because of the management problems highlighted earlier. There would need to be changes to current job descriptions and related training and development.
- 4.2. Part of the change would be to explore how the faith is passed on to the next generation, and how adults, even in churches where there are currently no children, can be challenged to think about the role of the church in an increasingly secular society and how it engages with the spiritual dimension of the lives of children and young people.
- 4.3. The work of YCWTDOS initially involved working with adults (youth and children's workers) rather than directly working with the children and young people. Many respondents have suggested that there should be more 'hands on' work with children and young people in the future.
- 4.4. Professional officers are needed to provide inspirational leadership and help others to find new ways of being church. They are said by some to be "vital if the church is to grow" and "central to the life of the church".
- 4.5. Increasing statutory requirements will be placed on voluntary workers in the near future under the government's Every Child Matters agenda and professionals are needed to ensure that the Church and its policies are up to date. It is probable that further checks and training will be required for all URC volunteers working with children, and eventually young people as well. Could the URC afford to rely on well meaning volunteers instead of paid officers?
- 4.6. The YCWC has a key role to play in determining future strategy and implementing it.



## 5. Recommendations

**Recommendation 1: for the future mission of the URC, the Review Group recommends the continuation of a central programme with certain provisos. They are that:**

- there is a clear focus and strategy for youth and children's ministry from the YCWC, to which Synods can link; and
- current ineffective leadership and management issues are resolved.

As part of 'Catch the Vision', and now 'Vision4Life', as well as the new education and learning strategy, it is essential that the URC employs professionals to lead work with children and young people in Synods and across the whole church. It is also essential if the URC is to keep abreast of new and changing statutory requirements. However, there needs to be a rethink of current practice because of changes since the start of the YCWT programme - and because of the changing needs as the URC seeks to be a missionary church in this part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Recommendation 2: a simpler title is used, such as Youth and Children's Officer (YCO)**

**Recommendation 3: the URC takes seriously the need for co-ordinated leadership and management of all youth and children's work and accepts Scenario 1 (in Annex B) and discusses with Synods the possible funding arrangements**

To be effective, Assembly driven work must be co-ordinated and managed centrally with clear lines of accountability. The work must be shared across the YCOs so that their existing skills and experience are used, and also to provide developmental opportunities for them. The Review Group discussed several options (see the related working paper - Annex B) but concluded that the best option (Scenario 1) was that all the staff employed by the URC for youth and children's work, be managed by one person, and that this should not be linked to one of the Church House youth and children's work posts because of the existing work loads. The cost of an overall manager could be shared by Synods, as suggested in Annex B.

Synod management would continue as now with clear links to the Assembly appointed manager, and with relevant induction and training.

**Recommendation 4: in order that recommendations which are accepted by the Church are actually implemented, an action plan be drawn up, giving deadlines and naming responsible people. Progress on its implementation should be monitored.**

**Recommendation 5: there should be one such officer in each Synod, working to Synod priorities but contributing to the whole church on an agreed basis.**

There is no reason why the URC should hold on to the historical reasons for the YCWTD group so it makes sense to involve all employed in Synods for youth and children's ministry to come together as an Assembly team. The funding arrangements will need to be reviewed and revised.

**Recommendation 6: a regular system of updating and training for the YCOs be developed as well as a system of monitoring and evaluating the training on safeguarding issues.**

**Recommendation 7: a small group of, say, three (including a HR person) is asked to draw up a set of minimal standards to be used in the appraisal/review process and sets out a clear mechanism for dealing with work which is not of the required quality.**

**Recommendation 8: the systems being developed in the Church with its new committee structure ensure that there is joined-up thinking across the various departments/committees of the Church so that YCOs are seen as an integral part of the resources for the Church.**

The URC has stated that it wants to be a learning church and the YCWTDs need to feel and be seen as part of the overall provision that the URC has for education and learning. The team's role



should be integral to the whole life of the church; it should be central not sidelined. This means there should be more joined-up thinking across the various departments/committees of the Church.

**Recommendation 9: there is more openness about the budget for youth and children's work.**

The YCWC has not always been as clear as it needs to be about the priorities and sharing of central funding across both youth and children's work, and about how limited funds can best be utilised against strategic plans. This lack of clarity is being rectified.

**Recommendation 10: that the URC and individual Synods decide on the commitment to working with ecumenical partners. Should other Churches pay for the use of the URC's personnel?**

## 6. Evidence Base

- 6.1. The review group looked at the whole YCWTD programme and compared and contrasted ways of working across the Synods. It also sought the views of those Synods which do not have a YCWTD or its equivalent.
- 6.2. Evidence was sought in a variety of ways. Letters were sent to Synods, FURY Executive, ecumenical partners, Synod Pilot Development Officers, the three Resource Centres for Learning and one was placed in Reform inviting responses.
- 6.3. Members of the group have:
  - met with the three Assembly appointed staff in July
  - attended a meeting of Synod Moderators in September
  - attended a meeting of YCWTDs in September, and later met with small groups of YCWTDs in October
  - attended a meeting of the Synod managers in October, which was also attended for part of the time by the Human Resources and Facilities Manager
  - met with the Secretary for Education and Learning in November
  - met with the Deputy General Secretary in December
  - examined the recommendations of the previous review group
  - compared the job descriptions of YCWTDs in different Synods and read responses in a questionnaire from YCWTDs and their managers about work carried out in the previous year
  - read the written responses from Synods, FURY Executive, some ecumenical partners, some Synod Pilot Development Officers, the three Resource Centres for Learning, and some individuals both ministers and lay people

## 7. The Review Group

Kathleen Cross	Convener	NW Synod YCWTD Manager
Suzanne Adofo	Church House	CRCW (Assembly Staff)
Anthea Coates	Member of YCWC	SW Synod YCWTD Manager
Revd Jack Dyce	Synod of Scotland	Principal of the Scottish College
Anne Hatch	NW Synod	Pilots Development Officer
Peter Pay	Wessex Synod Clerk	Wessex YCWTD Manager
Doug Swanney	Methodist Church	Children's Work development Officer
Revd Stephen Thornton	Wessex Synod	
Revd Neil Thorogood	Convener of the YCWC	



### Youth and Children's Work Training Programme

We recommend that:

1. The YCWT programme is continued with its present funding arrangements.
2. Synods encourage the developmental aspect of the role; the word Development could be added to the job title where this has not already happened.
3. Responsibility for the programme, its professional management and co-ordination and its contribution to Assembly programmes should be transferred from the Training Committee to the Youth & Children's Work Committee, and in particular to the job description of the Secretary for Youth Work.
4. The Secretary for Training be invited to participate in the regular meetings of the YCWT team.
5. Synods should continue to manage the local work of YCWTs within an overall strategy for training and for the development of youth and children's work in the Synod.
6. Volunteer managers working with YCWTs in Synods should receive initial training and continue to be advised and resourced by the Secretary for Youth Work.
7. Synods work with the YCWTs to improve advocacy of their role with Districts/Areas and local churches.
8. There should be a full review of the YCWT programme in four years' time.

## Annex B

### Possible future scenarios

This is time for a rethink. These different scenarios assume that the URC has a continued commitment and vision to work with children and young people as part of its mission in the next 10 or so years, and there is a clear strategy for the work and related accountability.

In all cases, scrap the 'team' as now - the YCWTD programme as it was created no longer exists and Government funding disappeared many years ago. Ideally involve all Synods.

Use a simpler title such as Youth and Children's Officer (YCO) for Synod officers. (Drop 'work' as this should be seen as a ministry.)

#### Scenario 1

**Build a new team** with clear management which includes all officers appointed in Synods (including Northern Synod's Children's officer) plus the three Church House officers, who would be seen as Project Managers for particular pieces of Assembly work. This would involve amending job descriptions but should not be difficult.

Each Synod officer would be involved in work for the Church outside their Synod, with an agreed proportion. These specific tasks would normally be managed (on a project management basis) by one of the three Church House based officers if the tasks were part of their agreed programmes. Synods would be consulted/informed before the work was undertaken setting out expectations in terms of objectives, role, timescales and time requirements together with reasons for their involvement; for example, existing expertise or personal development. Reports would also be sent at the end of the project on outcomes and performance. This would build in some level of accountability.

**BUT this will only work (and the URC gets value for money) if someone is appointed to lead and manage the team**, ensuring that Assembly work is carried out as requested; that the strengths of members of the team are fully utilised for the wider church, and that personal and professional development of the officers, and their career development, takes place. This manager should have



a good overview of work with both children and young people and would work closely with the YCWC which determines the overall strategy. Sound management should ensure that the URC as a whole gets very good value for money.

YCOs would have a manager/support person in their Synod, as now, who would also link to the Assembly appointed manager. The Synod line manager would need to ensure that the work and priorities of the YCO are in line with an agreed Synod strategy. This probably means that the manager should be closely integrated into the Synod structure.

### Scenario 2

If the management post for the team cannot be resolved, or afforded, then scrap the notion of an Assembly team and leave it to Synods. YCOs would work in Synods, according to Synod strategies, contributing to Assembly work as requested (as ministers, training officers and others do) and with the Synod's agreement. YCOs would carry out work linked to safeguarding and other legal requirements in their Synods but on behalf of the whole church (URC). [The URC would have to buy in expertise –which would be costly - for such work if it were not carried out by these Synod officers.]

*It is probable that some Synods would not release their Officers for Assembly tasks. There would no longer be much chance of URC-wide strategic planning, oversight, development and accountability. Synods have not always found it easy to provide adequate management and support internally and many have called for stronger (not less) central oversight and support. The whole church would lose out as YCOs may not be available for important work or events which rely on good knowledge of the URC.*

### Scenario 3

The team continues as now, but appoint one of the three Church House based officers to manage the team and the central work, as originally suggested. Management training would be vital for this change of role and emphasis and new job descriptions would need to be drawn up. [It is noted that the Children's Work DO's post expires at the end of 2009 and the Secretary for Youth's post would be reviewed in 2008.]

*Some may see this as an easy solution but if one of the officers were to carry out the management role there would need to be on-going leadership and management training. The relationship between the manager and the YCO team will be very different from that which currently exists, so there need to be very significant changes. The task, if done properly, could take up a significant amount of time. Where does this time come from – and at what cost to the existing, and proposed, tasks?*

## **REPORT ON CONSULTATION ON THIS REVIEW FOR MISSION COUNCIL, March 2008**

The review is being widely discussed across Synods and at Assembly level. It has been considered by the YCWC meeting in February. It will be explored at a meeting of the Synod YCWTDO Managers on 27<sup>th</sup> February, and at the Synod Treasurers' meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February. It will also be discussed at the YCWTDO team meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March. We are very grateful for the willingness and support of many across the URC to explore this work with us and to contribute so fully to our thinking. A number of key discussions will take place immediately prior to Mission Council and the results of these will be tabled at Mission Council.

To summarise feedback received thus far from a number of individuals and from meetings in West Midlands, Northern, Wessex and Eastern Synods:



1. There is widespread agreement that the review is a fair and accurate reflection of reality, albeit with some specific questions of content
2. There is consensus that the YCWTD programme is valuable and should continue because work with children and young people is a core mission priority for the URC and much excellent work is being done and needs to be resourced well
3. There is widespread agreement that there is a need to refocus priorities around the mission realities facing us today, with clear strategic planning from the YCWC and equal focus to children's and youth work
4. There is general, often very strong, agreement with the 10 recommendations, but with the provisos listed at 5 and 6 below
5. There is a clear sense that Scenario 3 is seen as the most suitable way forward rather than Scenario 1 (with some support for Scenario 2)
6. There is some concern that any new job title should hold on to the developmental role.





## MISSION COUNCIL

7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# D2(i)

### Youth and Children's Work Training and Development Officers REVIEW, 2008

Summary of Key Points Arising from Consultation on Draft Report with Synods  
As of 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008

**A. Summing Up Synod Responses to the Report, Recommendations and Scenarios:**

1. Responses have been received to date from 10 Synods. Responses were written in different formats making some summarising difficult. However there is approval from the great majority for the way the review has been conducted and the truthfulness of its reporting
2. 8 Synods explicitly agreed with Recommendation 1. 2 Synods had questions about how well the programme can be managed in order to deliver what is now needed
3. 6 Synods expressing a preference agreed with Recommendation 2. 1 Synod stressed the need to include developmental aspect in title. 1 Synod wanted a title that reflects that this is a ministry and that does not constrain Synod and Assembly initiatives
4. All Synods rejected Recommendation 1 if it was based on Scenario 1. 2 Synods saw Scenario 1 as the ideal, but acknowledged that Scenarios 2 or 3 may be implemented due to financial constraints. 2 Synods emphasised that Scenario 2 would not give the URC-wide cohesion required. 6 Synods were very clear that they wanted Scenario 3, with many commenting upon the need to manage and equip such a change within Church House
5. 7 Synods expressing preferences agreed with Recommendations 4-10, with questions about the practicality of Recommendation 10

**B. Some of the Key Comments from Synods**

1. Would not want to move to 100% Synod funding as this is, in effect, Scenario 2 and is likely to dilute any Assembly strategy and lead to unnecessary duplication and risk of gaps in safeguarding and child protection. 80% Synod, 20% Assembly funding a good point to reach
2. Continue the programme but either funded through Synod resource-sharing or at Assembly level
3. As new structures and plans are put in place we must note need for Synod independence to relate best to differing contexts
4. Line management of person and post should remain within Synods
5. Want Secretary for Youth Work to be the Assembly manager
6. Need greater clarity about direction and agenda-setting, especially if more central control is meeting expectation of increased Synod expenditure
7. Increased emphasis upon children's work essential
8. Line management of YCWTDOS needs to be done in a more effective way. Line managers need to know more about the terms and conditions under which YCWTDOS are employed, including working practice and legitimate expenses; and to be able to set and discuss standard aims and objectives
9. Line managers need to be able to manage in an effective way and means of doing so might be considered at review, which is why at least one line manager should play a part in the process and information as to how this is currently done in Synods should be sought
10. A system of peer appraisal is needed and should be an issue for the review. There might be a role here for the Secretary for Youth Work, in professional development and improvement,



with line managers informed of progress and outcomes. There has to be a context of a development structure within which YCWTDOS work

11. Clear and standard objectives require to be set for the YCWTDOS role
12. There has to be an understanding that all YCWTDOS share effectively in the expected 25% of their work contributed to General Assembly
13. Emphasise the importance of guidance and support from Youth and Children's Committee in establishing synod priorities and look for a flexible way of deploying the Assembly element of each post-holder's work with clear expectations and management
14. Review has not fully explored what youth and children's work actually is and the need to refocus around creating a welcome for children and young people now beyond our churches
15. Need to be more creative in how YCWTDOS can and should be used
16. Why can't the YCWTDOS team manage themselves?
17. A report from the centre cannot strategize on behalf of Synods
18. Probably we aren't getting value for money out of the programme
19. Insufficiently critical appraisals of the work of YCWTDOS currently

### **C. Wider Inter-Synod Meetings:**

#### **C.1 Consultation of Synod YCWTDOS Managers, 27<sup>th</sup> February**

1. The need for clear goals and objectives essential, especially to get best fit between Assembly and Synod work and time
2. Vital to respond to current URC needs, including many churches with no regular children attending
3. Proper introduction of new management requires investment in those asked to do it if go for Scenario 3. We would be creating a new culture which will require good leadership

#### **C.2 Consultation of Synod Treasurers, 28<sup>th</sup> February (*prepared by John Ellis*)**

1. The financial aspects of the Review were discussed at a Consultation of Synod Treasurers on 28 February. They noted:
  - (a) the request of the 2006 Assembly that locally appointed staff should be managed locally;
  - (b) the administrative complexity of the present split funding arrangements between Synods and the central budget;
  - (c) the lack of enthusiasm from most Synods for an additional management post to be created in London.
2. The Treasurers therefore felt there would be no appetite in the Synods for finding extra money for a new central post.
3. They also felt it would be sensible to phase out over the next three years the split funding arrangement for those Synods which choose to have YCOs. This would mean that by 2011 all YCO costs would be paid via Synod funds. The Treasurers felt this shift should be accompanied by:
  - (i) clarity in the YCO Job Descriptions to confirm that a share of their time would still be devoted to Assembly work;
  - (ii) an elimination of the relevant cost line in the central budget so that the M&M request to Synods would be proportionately lower than it would otherwise have been.
4. In the judgement of the URC Treasurer, these proposals from the Synod Treasurers would be welcomed by the Finance Committee.





## MISSION COUNCIL 7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# E

### Communications and Editorial Committee

Communications promised to return to Mission Council with a short report of developments. Although progress has been slower in some respects than hoped, we now give an update on events, as well as sharing our Assembly resolutions.

Our major news is that Kay Parris started with us in January as the editor of our national journal. She is overseeing current guest editors as well as developing a new look **Reform**, to be launched at General Assembly in July. The intention is to print enough copies of the July edition to send to our present subscribers and also to give away as a promotional exercise. By this exercise we aim to reach those who used to buy **Reform** but have stopped subscribing, as well as attracting potential new readers.

We are in the process of replacing our advertising agency and asking design companies to bid for the redesign of the magazine. In the March edition of **Reform** we sent out a questionnaire with each copy, to help us gauge the likes and dislikes of our present readership. Our hope is to keep our present readers happy while attracting a new readership. Kay has made an impressive start and we welcome her to our team. A new sub-editor, James Roberts, has swept in with enthusiasm and creativity. You have probably seen changes already, and you can expect to see more.

We intend bringing to Assembly a resolution **celebrating all that Reform has given to the United Reformed Church over the past 35 years and encouraging everyone to look at the July edition and help our readership to grow.**

**Book publishing and selling** are two closely linked activities which we have to look at closely. The committee has been considering our present work in these areas and researching how we might move into the future. In the past six months, SPCK bookshops have been taken over and are closing down at an incredible speed. The Methodist Publishing House is reviewing its future after seeing huge losses last year. Book producing and selling is undergoing a difficult time and Christian bookselling in particular. We have asked a consultant called William Cole (who managed the Winchester SPCK bookshop for many years) to take an overview of the market and to explore possibilities for our bookshop. His conclusions, which will be available to the committee in the near future, will give us something to work with in forming our ongoing strategy.

We receive a number of manuscripts from writers within the church and we will be bringing a resolution to Assembly outlining the specific areas that we will be interested in publishing in the future:



**As from General Assembly 2008, the Communications and Editorial department will confine its publication of new books by United Reformed Church writers to matters of pastoral care, Reformed theology and history, and liturgy or worship. This policy will be reviewed in three years.**

**Electronic communication** has proved a major headache for us in the last few months. We had hoped to have a new national website by November. This did not happen because the company we employed to do the work let us down. This is not uncommon, apparently, but nevertheless very frustrating. Martin Hazell, our Director of Communications, has had some tough meetings and we are now back on course. He is understandably reluctant to make any more unguarded promises. Suffice to say, the most senior partners of the company are now working with him to keep the project on track.

The company developing the new Church House database unexpectedly lost the Project Manager working on our contract over Christmas and we've been picking up the pieces on that piece of work as well. We have now discovered that several of their staff team are members of URCs (we found this was so when the managing director banged a few desk tops!) and a new team is now working on the project. With both these projects we have to get the outcome right so we ask for everyone's patience.

**Vision4Life** Working with the Vision4Life Steering Group to produce the colourful, attractive, user-friendly booklets for this year's taster material has been a mixture of pleasure and pain. In many ways this exercise has been a model of the sort of co-operative working we want to see much more in the future. Some early responses to the booklets we have heard have been very encouraging.

On the downside, the actual process of ensuring local churches and synods have received copies of the four booklets for their meetings this spring has been a daunting task. At one time, the reception area in Church House was overwhelmed with hundreds of large boxes, many of which were badly damaged and had to be re-packaged before we could send the leaflets out again. All this has been very difficult for the staff but they are coping magnificently. Now local churches should all have two sets of the four booklets and will be able to request further copies from their synods.

The Assembly report, which is in the process of being written, will outline work achieved over the past two years and update Assembly with further developments.

Kirsty Thorpe  
Convener

22 February 2008





## MISSION COUNCIL 7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# F

### Mission Committee

#### 1) First meetings

The Mission Committee met for the first time on Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, January 29<sup>th</sup> 2008 at the Windermere Training Centre. There were 25 attendees (12 core members, the General Secretaries, the Moderator of General Assembly Elect and 5 members of the staff Mission Department).

Our objectives for the first meeting were

- to get to know each other,
- to understand better the current activities/practices/programmes under the Mission "banner",
- to construct a vision for where the Committee was going with 10 year outcomes,
- to look at resources/processes/staff issues/programmes,
- to plot the next steps and
- to raise issues which would be parked for future consideration.

We saw our task as a balancing act between participation and leadership, action and reflection, short term and longer term, and strategy and structure.

We held a second meeting on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> February, largely to finalise this report. Both meetings were successful in enabling people from diverse backgrounds and with varying interests to develop together as more of a 'team' with a shared purpose and understanding.

#### 2) Themes, Outcomes and Principles

In order to understand what the committee was inheriting, we listened to presentations on programmes, dialogues, working groups, networks, finances, the staff team and the new post of Secretary for Mission. We also thought about 4 key themes:

- Staff Team and Resources;
- Empowering Congregations – networks, sharing and outreach;
- Dealing with 'Issues', the role of programmes, projects, working groups, partnerships etc; and
- 'Representation', dialogue, conferences, committees and appointments.

As a first step in defining a 'strategy' for mission which could prioritise existing activities and programmes and identifying new ones, we reflected on a paper on Missiology from Lawrence Moore. We discussed outcomes we would like to see in the next 10 years, the sort of church we hoped to become and what we would need to face to achieve this. Some of the themes that emerged include:

- Telling a new story of ourselves that would celebrate our punching above our weight and our diversity instead of constantly doing ourselves down.
- Building a church relevant to the community in which it is set for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



- Moving from being a one-size-fits-all church to creating congregations of interest with corridors between them.
- Finding ways of working together for God's Kingdom with others, across our own and denominational silos, and of integrating our multi-cultural diversity.
- Building confidence in the gospel and facing our unease in talking about evangelism.
- Nurturing and mentoring a new generation of leaders.
- Moving from being good at paper theory to actually taking the risk.

Alongside potential outcomes we also considered how we build a set of rationales and criteria to shape future priorities. These must be based on a set of principles and what was termed our denominational DNA. Some of these principles were identified as follows:

- conciliar,
- collaborative,
- non-conformist,
- concerned for the ministry of the whole people of God,
- asserting the primacy of the local church,
- flexible in worship and organisation and open-edged to creativity,
- committed to ecumenical relations,
- diverse,
- daring to engage with difference,
- challenging the powers and
- offering radical inclusiveness and a radical welcome.

An Outcomes and Principles Working Group has been formed to build on these initial conversations and develop a more coherent set of outcomes and principles in time for our next committee meeting.

#### 4) Future meetings

The first meeting identified a programme of work for the next 12 months that would lead to the development of a Mission Strategy 2009-12 and work plan for the Mission Department which would run to General Assembly 2010.

March / April 2008	Working Groups on a) Outcomes and b) God is Still Speaking ( see below 6)b )
April / May 2008	2 <sup>nd</sup> Residential Meeting: work/staff update; finalising outcomes; finalising principles and priorities to which we shall work; next steps for processes and resources issues; further consideration of "parked" issues; work on 2008 General Assembly report
May / June 2008	Further Working Groups
July 2008	Report to General Assembly
September 2008	3 <sup>rd</sup> Residential Meeting: work update; follow-up from General Assembly; prioritisation ( according to 'Red', 'Amber', 'Green' ); commissioning 'Reviews'; further work on processes/resources; staff development and co-ordination; looking at lists; representation; "parked" issues 2
Sept / Oct 2008	Further working groups – possibly on Reviews
November 2008	4 <sup>th</sup> Residential Meeting: work update; Mission Department Strategy 2009 – 2012; Mission Department Workplan to General Assembly 2010
December 2008	Report to Mission Council



## 5) Urgent Action

There are particular concerns requiring urgent action now.

### a) Racial Justice Resolution on Representation

Sandra Ackroyd, Acting Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry, will bring a report on the progress towards bringing a resolution on black minority ethnic representation to General Assembly. Mission Committee also considered correspondence from FURY Assembly.

### b) Climate Change Resolution

The Church and Society Report will contain an item on the implementation of the resolution on Climate Change passed at the 2007 General Assembly.

### c) Proposal for a new Joint Reference Group with the Methodist Church on Inter-Faith Relations Work.

On March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> the United Reformed Church and Methodist Inter-Faith Committees will be holding a combined meeting to consider the following suggestion from a joint meeting of their officers: "That the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, in pursuit of their inter-faith relations work, will set up a Joint Reference group, to be a support for staff members and a source of expertise within and beyond our two Churches". Peter Colwell will report on what happened.

## 6) Other initiatives considered

### a) Hope 08

This grass roots initiative for word and deed evangelism has been hailed as the largest ecumenical mission opportunity for some time, seeking to do more, do it together, and do it locally. An enormous amount has already been organised in venues up and down the country. Mission Committee was clear that it was already too late to start organising any particular denominational initiative but equally that we should not berate ourselves for our lack of involvement in central planning since we were operating with a key staff member missing during the decisive phase. We need to hear good stories and opportunities still exist for personal involvement in planned nationwide initiatives such as the "million hours of kindness" which will operate alongside the local focus. What we do feel is deeply appropriate is to endorse Hope 08 warmly and encourage members and Churches to involve themselves across the nation in activities which have already been planned. [www.hope08.com](http://www.hope08.com)

### b) God is Still Speaking

This initiative (the name comes from the original God is Still Speaking campaign run by the United Church of Christ in the United States) is about mission, marketing and evangelism, and arises from work undertaken by two gatherings at Windermere over the last 2 years. It aims to address the situation in a country where many believe in God yet only 8% attend church, where a large segment have little or no church background, where the church is perceived as lacking vision, where some have painful stories of negative personal experience and feeling unwelcome and those who remain often find worship boring and irrelevant. It seeks to increase awareness



of the fact, and make people bold to proclaim, that we are Christ's living presence, a people of hope and possibility, of extravagant welcome and hospitality. Key goals are to evangelise in our communities; to build on the work of Vision 4 Life; to strengthen our Church's distinctive witness; to promote and advertise our values of personal worth, inclusion and social justice; to speak directly to those who seek God, spiritual community, or religious participation in our society; to inspire hope among church members and friends; and to become a catalyst for growth and renewal.

The Mission Committee discussed this initiative and committed to forming a Working Group and commissioning research and development work with colleagues from the US in order to bring further information and a resolution to a later Mission Council (probably December 2008).





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**F1**

## **Inter Faith Relations**

### **Methodist/URC Inter Faith Reference Group - Progress Report**

"The Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, in pursuit of their Inter Faith Relations work, will set up a Joint Reference Group, to be a support for staff members and a source of expertise within and beyond our two Churches"

This proposal is the fruition of many years work.

Both Churches have worked together on inter faith matters for a number of years and with changes in the Committee structures of both churches it seemed appropriate that the two churches pool their expertise for the benefit of both churches.

It would not function as a Standing Committee but would be an advisory group which would reflect within it expertise in the major religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism) and in matters concerning local inter faith engagement and broader public policy.

At the time of writing the precise terms of reference are being worked out but might include some of the following -

1. Act in an advisory capacity to the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church in inter faith related matters.
2. Reflect on inter faith issues on behalf of the two Churches, and where appropriate raise particular issues of concern with the respective Church's structures.
3. Help resource the work of the relevant departments, and staff members of the Methodist and United Reformed Churches where Inter Faith may have relevance (eg. Racial Justice, Mission, Evangelism, Church and Society)
4. Work in close partnership with the Churches Inter-religious Network (CTBI).
5. Give support to the work of the Methodist/URC designated staff persons for Inter faith Relations and resource the Methodist District Inter Faith Advisers and URC Inter Faith Synod Advocates as well as others within the two churches working in the area of inter faith relations.

Revd Peter Colwell  
Convenor, Inter Faith Relations Committee





## MISSION COUNCIL 7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# F2

### Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry

#### Introduction

We request the Mission Council to consider the Resolution set out below in preparation for presentation to Assembly 2008. At Assembly 2007 the RJMM Resolution 58 was debated and then withdrawn. At the final meeting of the RJMM Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2007, a task group was set up to prepare a newly worded resolution and this group comprised Mrs Pat Poinen, Revd Naison Hove, Mr Frank Kantor (Church and Society Secretary) and Sandra Ackroyd. We met and carried out this work on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008. The process we engaged with included consulting with a wide range of people ie. synod moderators, a few synod clerks, the racial justice advocate network, EMLOMA, the FURY Executive and the General Secretary. Below is the preamble and resolution we wish to present.

#### Preamble

Assembly recognises and gives thanks to God for the multicultural composition of the United Reformed Church and British Society. The opportunities afforded by this richness in diversity are manifold and unique. The black and Asian minority communities within the Church continue to experience marginalization and inequality.

During the past 10 years, the most rapid numerical growth in the URC has been among people of Caribbean, African and Asian descent. In some areas of the URC they comprise the majority in URC congregations, in other areas they make up a minority, and there are churches which currently do not have any black or Asian members.

Also, noting the growth in the URC, based on black and Asian communities and recognising their contribution to the life and witness of the Church, we regret that their contribution to church life is not reflected in the governance and structures of the URC.

#### Resolutions

**RJ 1:** General Assembly requests each Synod to include at least one black minority ethnic member in their group of representatives to General Assembly as from Assembly 2010.



**RJ2: General Assembly instructs Mission Council to monitor and review the representation of black minority ethnic members in General Assembly in relation to the growth trends of the URC and report back to the 2012 Assembly.**

**Appendix - Information for Mission Council which could assist the discussion**

By Assembly 2008 RJMM will have collated the information gleaned from the ethnic monitoring sheet, on the annual return forms. We will simply produce a paper showing how many Black Minority Ethnic members and also how many BME Elders/Leaders there are in the churches in each Synod. This may help any debate which is preceded by such comments as, "We don't have any BME people in our Synod" or "I don't know of many BME people in the URC, where are they?"





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**G1**

**Church Related Community Workers  
and the Councils of the Church**

In the process of altering the Structure of the Church necessitated by the changes brought about by Catch the Vision and other revisions to our constitution it has become apparent that there are several places where our constitutional documents are out of date. In particular the recognition by the Church of Church Related Community Work as a ministry within the United Reformed Church has not been matched by an alteration to the Basis and Structure such as would confer membership of Elders Meetings, Area Meetings in Ecumenical Areas, and Synods.

While amendments to the Structure will be needed it is suggested that as a temporary measure the General Assembly be invited to exercise its power under Paragraph 2(5)(A) (xiii) "to appoint at its discretion additional members to serve on synods;" and appoint serving CRCW's to membership of the Synods in which they currently serve.

Resolutions

1. **Mission Council instructs the Clerk of Assembly, in consultation with the Ministries Committee and the CRCW Development Officers, to prepare alterations to the Structure of the United Reformed Church such as to grant membership of the relevant Councils of the Church to Church Related Community Workers.**
2. **Mission Council resolves to move in General Assembly, that "General Assembly appoints all serving CRCW's currently in post or commissioned between this date and the next ordinary meeting of the General Assembly to serve as additional members of the Synod in which they are based.**





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**G2**

**C: Rules of Procedure for the conduct of  
the United Reformed Church**

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**1. General Assembly**

1.1 The Assembly shall meet at least once in every alternate year. The scheduled meeting in each such year, the place and dates of which shall be determined by a preceding Assembly, shall be the Ordinary Meeting of the Assembly. At the completion of the business of the Ordinary Meeting of the Assembly, the Assembly is adjourned. The members of Assembly at any time between Ordinary Meetings of the Assembly remain those who were included on the Roll of Assembly at the constitution of the immediately preceding Ordinary Meeting of the Assembly. Any meeting of the Assembly other than the Ordinary Meeting shall be a special meeting.

1.2 A special meeting of the Assembly may be convened by the Mission Council or by either the Moderator of the General Assembly.

1.3 All meetings of the Assembly shall be convened and held as provided by these rules. The Standing Orders which are printed each year in the Book of Reports to General Assembly shall apply to all meetings of the Assembly and, in so far as they are applicable, to meetings of synods, district councils and their committees.

1.4 The Roll of Assembly shall be made up by the General Secretary. Synods shall send to the General Secretary, the names and addresses of their representatives to the forthcoming Assembly so as to reach the General Secretary not later than fourteen weeks before the meeting of the Assembly. Any necessary amendments to the list shall be notified to the General Secretary not later than two weeks before the meeting of the Assembly, at which time the roll shall be held to be complete.

1.5 When a synod cannot fill all its allotted places at Assembly, its vacant seats bearing in mind the need to balance lay and ministerial representation.

**2. BUSINESS OF THE ASSEMBLY**

2.1 Notice of any meeting of the Assembly shall be sent by post to each member as defined by Article 2 (5) (a) to (j) of the Structure not less than 14 clear days before the date of meeting and shall contain a statement of the business to be transacted and the reports to be received. No business other than that specified in the notice calling the meeting shall be transacted except business accepted by the Assembly on the advice of the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

2.2 The General Secretary shall dispatch to every member with the notice of the meeting a registration card. No member of the Assembly shall speak or vote at the Assembly unless possessing such a card and unless, when required to do so by the Moderator or the Moderator's deputy, displaying it.



2.3 The Assembly shall at its scheduled Meeting appoint the members of the Assembly Committees all of which shall be constituted in accordance with the decision of the Assembly. Each committee shall discharge the functions assigned to it by the Assembly and report to the Assembly

2.4 When a resolution which directly concerns the life, status or witness of a named member or minister of the United Reformed Church, a named local church or a church institution is brought to the Assembly by an assembly committee or synod, and the individual or group feels aggrieved thereby,

2.4.1 the individual or group may request the Clerk, not less than seven days before the opening of Assembly, for a hearing,

2.4.2 the individual or two representatives of the group will be received, will be permitted to speak and will have their travel costs within the United Kingdom paid,

2.4.3 and the time allowance for speaking will be equal in aggregate to that of the persons proposing the motion. Those speaking will follow the proposers at the start of the debate and precede the proposer at the end of the debate.

2.4.4 An individual appellant may be accompanied by one other person whose name and status shall be made known to the Assembly and who may be permitted by the Moderator to speak if the appellant requests this.

### 3. MODERATORS

3.1 The Moderators of the General Assembly shall be elected by ballot in accordance with these Rules. Each Moderator shall serve for two years commencing at the scheduled Assembly in the year following the Annual Meeting at which the report of the election is received in accordance with Rule 3.10. The period of office shall be deemed to begin with the induction of each Moderator and shall continue until that Moderator's successor is inducted into office.

3.2 The Moderators of the General Assembly shall be two in number, a minister or a Church Related Community Worker and an Elder. The Elder may be serving or non-serving but in all cases the names of those persons nominated to serve as Moderator must be included on the membership roll of a local church for that person to be eligible for nomination.

3.3 A nomination for election as Moderator of the General Assembly shall be made by a synod, the consent of the nominee not being required. The nomination shall be in writing under the hand of the clerk of the synod and received by the General Secretary not later than the 31st March immediately preceding the Annual Meeting of the Assembly.

3.4 The General Secretary shall forthwith send to each person nominated a list of the nominations. Any nominee may, within ten days of the receipt of this list, withdraw from nomination by notice in writing to the General Secretary.

3.5 If after 31st March or after the period for withdrawal there shall be no nominations, in either or both categories, the General Secretary shall forthwith notify the clerks of the synods and invite them to request nominations from the executive committees or equivalent of their synods. Such nominations, accompanied in each case by a note of the consent of the person nominated and a brief biography, must be in the hands of the General Secretary by 15th May.'



3.6 In either category if after the period for withdrawal there is only one nomination, this nomination shall be placed before the Assembly and voted upon by secret ballot.

3.7 If the number of those who have been nominated in either category and have not withdrawn is or exceeds two, the election shall be by a secret ballot according to the principle of the single transferable vote. All members of the Assembly shall be entitled to vote. They shall vote by indicating their preference by figures 1, 2, 3 and so forth, but no voting paper shall be invalidated by the absence of alternative choices. If the tellers find that no name has an absolute majority of first choices, the second choices of those who gave as their first choice the name securing the smallest number of such choices shall be added to the first choices for other names. If necessary this process shall continue until one of the names has an absolute majority of votes cast. If the process continues until only two names remain, the person who then has the larger number of votes shall be elected.

3.8 Members of the Assembly shall vote by means of a voting paper containing the name, the usual designation and the church of membership, of each of those accepting nomination which shall be sent by the General Secretary by ordinary post to each such member before the commencement of the Annual Meeting of the Assembly. Brief indication of the reasons for the nomination, as supplied by the synod, may be circulated with the ballot paper. The General Assembly may in any case authorise further means of informing the members about those accepting nomination.

3.9 Normally, the General Assembly shall vote to elect the Moderators of the Assembly by secret ballot as an item of business following prayer on either the second or third day of the meeting of the Assembly. The ballot boxes shall be delivered to the tellers by whom alone they shall be opened. They shall report the result of the ballot to the Assembly at a later session.

3.10 As soon as the voting papers have been examined and the result of the poll ascertained, the voting papers shall be closed up under the seal of the tellers or any two of them, and shall be retained by the General Secretary for one month after the election, and shall then be destroyed.

3.11 At each Ordinary Meeting the Assembly shall appoint, upon the nomination of the Nominations Committee, three tellers to be responsible for the ballot for the ensuing year. The counting of the votes cast shall take place in secret under their supervision and control and they shall:

3.11.1 inform the General Secretary of the name of the persons elected and the General Secretary shall thereupon individually inform those nominated whether or not they have been elected.

3.11.2 report to the Assembly the name of the persons elected, the number of papers received and the number of papers which were invalid.

3.12 If any of the tellers appointed by the Assembly shall become incapable of acting the Moderator shall fill any such vacancy or vacancies and report that action to the Assembly.

3.13 Upon receipt of the report of the tellers by the Assembly the persons elected shall thereupon become the duly elected Moderators for the two years commencing at the next Ordinary Meeting of the Assembly.

3.14 In the event of either or both of the persons elected to serve as Moderator becoming unable to serve, or where the previous General Assembly at its ordinary meeting has failed to elect, the General Secretary shall seek nominations from Synods in the manner prescribed in clauses 3.3 to 3.5 for persons available to serve as Moderator for the coming Assembly. On receipt of those names, the General Secretary will inform all those whose names appeared on the roll of the previous Assembly of the nominations and send them a ballot paper. Those ballot papers shall be returned by



post within five working days of receipt. Thereafter, the General Secretary shall deliver these ballot papers unopened to the tellers for the election of the Moderator who shall open and count the votes cast and report the result of this election to the General Secretary in the same form as would have been reported to the General Assembly had this election been held during the Assembly.

#### **4. GENERAL SECRETARY**

4.1 The General Secretary, who shall be a minister of the United Reformed Church shall be appointed for a period of seven years renewable for the same term or such shorter period as the Assembly may determine. The appointment shall be made according to the following procedure.

4.2 The General Assembly shall constitute a special committee consisting of two representatives appointed by each synod, the Moderator of the General Assembly, the convener of the Nominations Committee and nine persons selected by the Mission Council, five of whom shall be Conveners of Assembly Standing Committees, with authority to make a nomination for appointment as Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary to the Assembly. In any emergency the Mission Council shall be empowered to set up this committee.

#### **5. CLERK OF ASSEMBLY**

5.1 The General Assembly may appoint a Clerk of Assembly as distinct from the General Secretary. In that case the Nominations Committee shall submit a name to the General Assembly for appointment as Clerk, for five years in the first instance, renewable for a maximum additional period of five years, but ensuring an overlap with a period of service of the General Secretary.

#### **6. STRUCTURE**

6.1 In Wales and Scotland there shall in each case be a single synod. The area of the church in England shall be divided into such number of synods as the Assembly on the recommendation of the Mission Council may from time to time determine.

6.2 A synod may constitute such committees and subcommittees as are required for the conduct of its business and may delegate to those committees or subcommittees such of its powers as it considers appropriate.

#### **7. MODERATORS OF SYNOD**

7.1 A moderator for each synod who shall be a minister of the United Reformed Church shall be appointed by the General Assembly and be responsible to it.

7.2.1 Each moderator shall be appointed for such term not exceeding seven years as the General Assembly shall in each case think fit, beginning on a date to be determined by the General Assembly, subject always to the provisions of Rule 7.2.3.

7.2.2 The General Assembly shall have power to determine any such appointment during its term or to renew any such appointment for successive terms of not more than five years each, subject always to the provisions of Rule 7.2.3.



7.2.3 Moderators shall not be eligible to hold office following the elapse of six months from their sixty fifth birthday unless the General Assembly in special circumstances determines otherwise.

7.3 The moderators shall submit an annual report to the Assembly.

## 8. APPEALS

8.1 If any church or church member wishes to appeal against a decision of any council in accordance with paragraph 5(2) of the Structure the rules of procedure set out below shall apply.

8.2 Any church or church member wishing to appeal against a decision of any council shall within ten days of the making of the decision request in writing the secretary of that council to supply a written copy of the minute of the decision. This copy shall be supplied within ten days and within ten days of the receipt of such minute the appellant shall notify in writing the secretary of the body concerned of such desire to appeal.

8.3 Where an appeal is against the decision of any council, its effect shall be to stay the action of the council concerned pending consideration of the matter by the wider council to which it is referred and the decision of that council upon it.

8.4 An appellant shall have the right and may be required to appear at a meeting of the wider council when the matter is under review.

8.5 The council against whose decision there is appeal shall also be represented in support of its decision.

8.6 All appeals shall be accompanied by all relevant records and papers.

8.7 Appellants shall be entitled to see such papers as they deem necessary in order to bring the subject of their appeal before the wider council.

8.8 Councils hearing appeals proceed in the matter in the following order:

8.8.1 call for and read minutes and papers relevant to the case

8.8.2 hear the parties to the difference or dispute, viz.

(a) every appellant,

(b) the appointed representatives of the council whose actions are under question.

8.8.3 give members of the council hearing the appeal an opportunity of putting questions to the parties through the presiding officer.

8.8.4 consider and decide upon the matter in the absence of the parties

8.8.5 the parties being recalled, intimate the decision to them by the presiding officer who asks them whether they acquiesce

8.8.6 through the clerk/secretary supply copies of the decision in writing to the parties.



8.9 Any such difference or dispute may with the consent of all parties concerned be referred to a committee or to the moderator of the synod for decision but if any of the parties refuse to accept such a reference the case must be heard by the full council.

8.10 There can be no appeal arising from decisions of the General Assembly whose decisions are final and binding upon the members and councils of the United Reformed Church.

8.11 The provisions of this Section headed 'Appeals' shall not apply to cases which are being determined by the Assembly Commission under the Disciplinary Process set out in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church.





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**G3**

**Composite Resolution to change  
the Basis of Union and the Structure**  
- coming to Assembly in 2008 for ratification.

**General Assembly ratifies the amendments to the Basis of Union and the Structure approved for the first time by Resolutions 14, 15, 18, 19 and 24 of 2007. This ratifying resolution now comes to Assembly as a composite resolution setting out all the changes made by the 2007 resolutions and, for the sake of completeness, it also includes the structural changes ratified by Assembly in Resolution 10 of 2007 and by Resolution 20 (the change to Paragraph 5(2) only) of 2007.**

1. General Assembly resolves to amend the Basis of Union by deleting the words "District or Area Council" and substituting the term "synod" throughout, save in those cases where such substitution would lead to duplication, in which case the words shall simply be omitted.

1a. General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to the Basis of Union to provide for the Section O Process to include Church-Related Community Workers:

**Paragraph 20**

Add the following sentences at the end of the paragraph:

In the United Reformed Church all ministries within the life of the Church shall be open to both men and women. Appropriate affirmations of faith shall be made by those entering upon all ministries within the life of the Church.

**Paragraph 21**

After the words 'to their office.' add a new sentence as follows:

The ordination and induction of ministers shall be in accordance with Schedules C and D.

After the first paragraph, add an additional paragraph as follows:

The totality of ministers who fall within any of the categories defined within Schedule E, Paragraph 1 and are in good standing may be referred to as the Roll of Ministers. Ministers shall conduct their ministry according to the criteria set out in Schedule E.

**Paragraph 22**

Replace the words 'and are then commissioned and inducted to their office to serve for a designated period' with 'are then commissioned to the office of church related community worker and inducted to serve in a particular post for a designated period'.

**Paragraph 26**

Remove this paragraph as its contents have been transferred to Paragraphs 20 and 21 in the changes proposed above.

**Schedule E, Paragraph 4**

Remove the word 'disciplinary' on the last line.

**Schedule F**

The existing Schedule F to become Schedule F, Part I and a new Schedule F, Part II to be added as follows:



## Part II

Those who have been called to the Ministry of Church Related Community Work and commissioned and inducted to their office in accordance with Paragraph 22 of the Basis of Union shall constitute the Roll of Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) of the United Reformed Church.

CRCWs must conduct themselves and exercise all aspects of their ministries in a manner which is compatible with the unity and peace of the United Reformed Church and the affirmations made by CRCWs at commissioning and induction (Schedule F Part I) and the Statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D) in accordance with which CRCWs undertake to exercise their ministry.

Acting in due exercise of their functions as contained in the Structure of the United Reformed Church, the councils of the Church have authority in certain circumstances (without prejudice to a CRCW's conditions under the plan for partnership in ministerial remuneration) to suspend a CRCW which involves a temporary ban on the exercise of the duties of his/her ministry by the CRCW concerned but not his/her removal from the Roll of CRCWs.

A CRCW under suspension shall not represent him/herself as a CRCW and shall refrain from all activity which may lead others to believe that he/she is acting as such. Suspension also means that the CRCW may not exercise the rights of membership of any council of the Church. Suspension does not remove any of the rights accorded by the process of determining the matter which had led to the suspension.

A person whose name has been deleted from the Roll of CRCWs and who remains a member of the United Reformed Church has the privileges and responsibilities of that membership, but not those of a CRCW and should refrain from all activity which may lead others to believe that he/she is acting as a CRCW. However, should that person be re-instated to the Roll of CRCWs he/she would on being called to a post approved by the United Reformed Church need to be inducted to that post but not commissioned since commissioning is not repeatable.

2. General Assembly resolves to amend the Structure of the United Reformed Church by amending the following sections relating to local churches to read:

### Paragraph 1.(2)(a)

The United Reformed Church in England shall be divided into provinces, each having a synod. In Wales and in Scotland, in recognition of the different status of these nations there shall in each case be a single synod to be known as a national synod. The expression "Provincial synod" when used in the United Reformed Church Acts of 1972 and 1981 shall in relation to property in Wales be read as referring to the national synod of Wales. Each synod shall consist of a single district council as hereinafter defined plus such areas of ecumenical cooperation as the synod shall determine. Each area of ecumenical cooperation shall comprise the geographical area from time to time assigned to it by the General Assembly or by the synod.

Paragraph 1.(2)(b) Throughout this statement of the Structure of the United Reformed Church references to 'Provincial Moderators' shall be read as meaning 'Moderators of Synods' in respect of Scotland and Wales.

Add an additional Paragraph 1(4) as follows:

Unless otherwise expressly stated or clearly excluded by the context, the expressions 'minister', 'ministers', 'ministry' and 'ministerial' when used in the Structure shall refer to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

### Paragraph 2(1)(vii)

to call a minister or a Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) with the concurrence of the synod(s) (see Paragraph 2(4)(A) (vii)); (Where two or more local churches have



formed a group or joint pastorate in accordance with Paragraph 1(1)(b) or (c) above on the decision of synod under its function 2(4)(A)(iii), the church meetings of each church may, with the agreement of the synod and so long as the group constitution or the statement of intent as appropriate shall so provide, join together as a group or joint pastorate church meeting for the purpose of calling a minister or CRCW, in which case this function shall be exercised by the group or joint pastorate church meeting.);

Paragraph 2(1)(x)

to consider, always on advice from the elders' meeting, any application for recognition as a candidate for the ministry or for service as a CRCW and to transmit it, if approved, to the synod;

Paragraph 2(2)(ix)

to consider the suitability of any applicant for recognition as a candidate for the ministry or for service as a CRCW and to advise the church meeting about its recommendation to the synod;

3. General Assembly resolves to amend the Structure of the United Reformed Church relating to district and area councils by deleting the whole of Paragraph 2(3) and replacing it with:

2.(3) The district council shall consist of:

- (a) The moderator of the synod for the time being;
- (b) A president appointed by the synod, who shall perform the functions defined as applicable to the chairman in the United Reformed Church Acts 1972, 1981 and 2000;
- (c) A secretary appointed by the synod;
- (d) Such number of representatives of local churches within the district, (currently four) as the synod shall direct;
- (e) Up to six co-opted ministers or members of local churches, normally elders, as the synod shall direct.

The district council shall meet at least once a year, unless the secretary notifies the members in writing that there is no business for the council to transact.

Functions:

The district council is responsible for exercising the following functions:

- (i) those matters which are the responsibility of the district council under the United Reformed Church Acts of 1972, 1981 and 2000 (including the Schedules to those Acts);
- (ii) such other matters as may be delegated to it by the General Assembly.

4. General Assembly resolves to amend the Structure of the United Reformed Church relating to synods by deleting the whole of Paragraph 2(4) and replacing it with:

2.(4) The synod being representative of the local churches in that province or nation united for the purpose of dealing with matters of wider concern shall consist of:

- (a) All ministers, registered pastors (in Scotland) and church related community workers engaged directly in the service of the United Reformed Church within that synod;
- (b) All missionaries of the United Reformed Church for the time being on furlough and for the time being resident within the province or nation;
- (c) Representatives of local churches within the province or nation who shall normally be members of the elders' meeting of a local church and who shall be appointed by the church meeting of such local church, the number of such representatives to be normally one. A synod may at its discretion vary the number of representatives of local churches so that a local church may appoint two representatives. (where a local church, whether a local ecumenical partnership or a local church organised according to the second sentence of paragraph 1.(1), comprises two or more congregations worshipping in separate locations, the synod may, on the advice of the district council, authorise that local church to appoint representatives to the synod from each



- constituent congregation to such numbers as would be permitted by the above rule as if each congregation were a separate local church);
- (d) An elder or retired minister appointed by the synod as an interim moderator who shall be a full member of the synod for the period of the appointment;
- (e) Such members as shall from time to time be appointed by the General Assembly;
- (f) Such retired ministers who have been appointed by the synod as officers of the synod, for the period of their appointment;
- (g) Such members of local churches, normally elders, not exceeding twelve (or such other number as the General Assembly may from time to time determine) as may be co-opted by the synod;
- (h) Representatives, not exceeding the number approved by the General Assembly, of such other denominations as the synod may from time to time determine;
- (i) Two young people, being members of the United Reformed Church, nominated by the synod's youth forum, committee or equivalent;
- (j) All retired ministers not covered by Paragraph 2(4)(d) or Paragraph 2(4)(f) residing within the province or nation served by the synod, who shall be associate members of the synod having the right to speak but not to vote at meetings of the synod.

The synod shall elect from among its members a clerk, a treasurer and such other officers as it shall from time to time think desirable and shall determine their periods of service. It may also appoint such committees and for such purposes as it from time to time may think desirable and may appoint to any such committee any members of the United Reformed Church notwithstanding that they are not members of the synod.

**Moderators of Synods.** There shall be a moderator for each synod being a minister appointed from time to time by the General Assembly according to its rules of procedure and responsible to the General Assembly.

The moderator shall:

- be separated from any local pastoral charge,
- stimulate and encourage the work of the United Reformed Church within the province or nation,
- preside over the meetings of the synod and exercise a pastoral office towards the ministers, CRCWs and churches within the province or nation,
- suggest names of ministers to vacant pastorates, in consultation with interim moderators of local churches,
- preside, or appoint a deputy to preside, at all ordinations and/or inductions of ministers and at all commissionings and/or inductions of CRCWs within the province or nation,
- fulfil the responsibilities ascribed to the Moderator of Synod under the Section O Process and the Section P Procedure.

The moderators of the synods shall meet together at regular intervals for the better discharge of their duties.

**Functions of synod:**

A) The synod is responsible for exercising the following Functions (subject to the restriction referred to in Paragraph (B) below):

- (i) to take action which supports
- the spreading of the Gospel at home and abroad,
  - the life and witness of the United Reformed Church,
  - the interests of the Church of Christ as a whole,
  - the well-being of the community in which the Church is placed;
- (ii) to encourage church extension within the province or nation, decide upon the establishment of new causes and the recognition of mission projects;
- (iii) to decide upon all matters regarding the grouping, amalgamation or dissolution of local churches;
- (iv) to take appropriate action on matters referred to it by the General Assembly;



- (v) to provide a forum for concerns brought forward by local churches and to advise thereon;
- (vi) to make proposals to and raise concerns for consideration by the General Assembly;
- (vii) to give (or, where deep pastoral concern for the church requires it, to withhold) concurrence in calls to ministers or church-related community workers and, with the moderator of the synod or the moderator's deputy presiding, to conduct, in fellowship with the local church, any ordinations and/or inductions of ministers and any commissioning and induction of church-related community workers within the synod;
- (viii) to appoint, in consultation with the local church, an interim moderator during a pastoral vacancy, such interim moderator normally being a serving minister or a retired minister. In exceptional circumstances an elder may be appointed;
- (ix) to care for all the churches of the synod ensuring that visits are made at regular intervals for consultation concerning their life and work;
- (x) to appoint from time to time such number of representatives to the General Assembly (ministerial and lay in equal numbers) as the General Assembly shall determine. This shall include, when possible, at least two Representatives aged 26 or under. As far as possible all appointments shall be made in rotation from local churches;
- (xi) to appoint from time to time the President, Secretary and members of the district council or councils within its boundaries;
- (xii) to appoint to service on synod:
  - (I) United Reformed Church ministers/CRCWs/lay people serving as
    - (a) full-time chaplains to universities, colleges, hospitals, and workplaces, where their work is seen to be an extension of the ministry of the synod concerned,
    - (b) secretaries and other full-time officials of ecumenical bodies with which the United Reformed Church is in relationship;
  - (II) United Reformed Church ministers/CRCWs giving significant oversight to local churches, under the general direction of the synod concerned;
  - (III) Ministers, CRCWs or members of Diaconal Orders, of other churches appointed to serve on behalf of the United Reformed Church in charge of a United Reformed Church or in an ecumenical group including United Reformed Church interests;
  - (IV) Ministers not in pastoral charge or CRCWs who perform duties within the synod in respect of which the synod has some direct responsibility;
- (xiii) to consider and where appropriate appoint to service on synod
  - United Reformed Church ministers/CRCWs/lay people serving as (a) part time chaplains to universities, colleges, hospitals, workplaces, where their work is seen to be an extension of the ministry of the synod concerned, (b) part-time officials of ecumenical bodies with which the United Reformed Church is in relationship;
- (xiv) to devise strategies which enable and support the exploration of mission opportunities in the region and to encourage in local churches concern for service and a sense of responsibility for the wider work of the Church at home and abroad;
- (xv) to exercise oversight of (i) all ministers falling within any of the categories 2(4) (a), (b),(d) and (f) except moderators of synods who are the responsibility of the General Assembly and (ii) church-related community workers;
- (xvi) to give oversight to candidates for the ministries of word and sacrament and church-related community work and to candidates for any form of full-time service in the Church at home and abroad, and, in the case of candidates for the above ministries, determine their eligibility for a call;
- (xvii) where the synod, acting through its Mandated Group as defined in the Disciplinary Process referred to below, considers that a Minister or church-related community worker is or may not be exercising his/her ministry in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Schedule E or Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II to the Basis of Union, as the case may be, to refer the case of that Minister or church-related community worker to the Commission Stage of the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church and in every such case to suspend the Minister or church-related community worker concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Process (for the avoidance of doubt the calling in of the Mandated Group under that Process in order to fulfil its responsibilities marking the commencement of the Disciplinary Process);



(xviii) to ensure that, where an Assembly Commission or an Appeals Commission following a Hearing under the Section O Process [or a Review Commission or an Appeals Review Commission following a Hearing under the Section P Procedure – *to be added if the resolution to approve the introduction of the Incapacity Procedure is approved by Assembly*] appends recommendations to its decision not to delete the name of a minister from the Roll of Ministers or a church related community worker from the Roll of Church Related Community Workers or appends guidance to its decision to delete the name of the minister or church related community worker from the respective Roll, any such recommendations are brought fully to the attention of those responsible for exercising oversight of the minister or church related community worker in future and that any such recommendations (or guidance, if such be the case) are brought fully to the attention of any others identified under the relevant Process or Procedure as being proper and appropriate persons to receive such Information;

(xix) to appoint, or to concur in the appointment of, non-stipendiary ministers to their particular service and to review this service at stated intervals;

to accredit and provide support and training for lay preachers and worship leaders and, in consultation with the local churches concerned,

(xx) to give authority for appropriate lay persons to preside at the sacraments. Authorisation for lay persons to preside at the Sacraments in ecumenical areas shall only be given after consultation with the appropriate ecumenical partner;

(xxi) to consider the resignation of ministers or church-related community workers not currently the subject of any case within the Section O Process and in consultation with the Moderator of the Synod to decide upon appropriate action (see also Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xviii));

(xxii) to seek to expand the range and deepen the nature of the Christian common life and witness in each local community, and in Scotland and Wales to undertake responsibility for national ecumenical relationships on behalf of the whole United Reformed Church, subject to the final authority of the General Assembly;

(xxiii) to decide upon all matters regarding erection, major reconstruction or disposal of buildings;

(xxiv) to receive, hear and decide upon references and appeals duly submitted;

(xxv) to consider on the recommendation of local churches applications for recognition as candidates for the ministries of word and sacrament and church-related community work and to transmit them, if approved, to the synod for decision;

(xxvi) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the church.

(B) Once the Section O Process has commenced in the case of any Minister or church-related community worker with the calling in of the Mandated Group under that Process, whether by the synod or by the General Assembly, the synod shall not exercise its functions in respect of that Minister or church-related community worker (save only in the provision of such pastoral care as may be appropriate) until the Process has been duly concluded.

(C) No appeal shall lie against the decision by a synod to initiate the Section O Process in respect of any Minister or church-related community worker under Function (xvii) above.

2 (5) The area meeting of each area of ecumenical co-operation being representative of the local churches in that area grouped together for the purposes of fellowship, support, intimate mutual oversight and united action shall consist of representatives of all churches engaged in the area of ecumenical co-operation. The United Reformed Church membership of the area meeting in each area of ecumenical co-operation (hereinafter referred to as the United Reformed Church Committee) shall consist of the Moderator of Synod, all ministers, church related community workers and registered pastors (in Scotland) engaged directly in the service of the United Reformed Church within the area, representatives of local churches within the area, and such other persons as determined by the constitution of each area meeting as approved by resolution of the synod.

(A) The synod shall delegate to the area meeting the following functions (subject to the restriction referred to in Paragraph (B) below), unless by agreement with the relevant



ecumenical partner it is felt that some of these functions should be reserved to the synod, and it shall be the responsibility of the area meeting

- (i) to exercise oversight of all ministers and church related community workers falling within any of the categories 2(4)(a), (b), (f) and (g) except Moderators of Synods who although members of the area meeting are responsible to the General Assembly;
- (ii) to give (or, where deep pastoral concern for the church requires it, to withhold) concurrence in calls to ministers and church related community workers and, with the Moderator of the Synod or the Moderator's deputy presiding, to conduct, in fellowship with the local church(es), any ordinations and/or inductions of ministers or commissionings and/or inductions of church related community workers within the area of ecumenical co-operation;
- (iii) to appoint, or to concur in the appointment of, non-stipendiary ministers (and church related community workers) to their particular service and to review this service at stated intervals;
- (iv) to appoint, in consultation with the local church(es) and the moderator of the synod, an interim moderator during a pastoral vacancy, such interim moderator normally being a serving minister or a retired minister. In exceptional circumstances an elder may be appointed;
- (v) to care for all the churches of the area meeting and to visit them by deputies at regular intervals for consultation concerning their life and work;
- (vi) to consider on the recommendation of local churches applications for recognition as candidates for the ministries of word and sacrament and church-related community work and to transmit them, if approved, to the synod for decision;
- (vii) to accredit lay preachers;
- (viii) to consider resignations of ministers or church-related community workers not currently the subject of any case within the Section O Process and, in consultation with the Moderator of the Synod, to decide upon appropriate action (see also Paragraphs 2(4)(A)(xxi) and 2(6)(A)(xviii);
- (ix) from time to time to recommend to synod such number of representatives to the General Assembly as the synod shall determine;
- (x) to engage in study concerning the Church's mission in the region and to encourage in the local churches concern for youth work and social service and a sense of responsibility for the wider work of the Church at home and abroad;
- (xi) to promote church extension within the area and to submit proposals to the synod for the establishing of new causes and the recognition of mission projects;
- (xii) to make recommendations to the synod in consultation with the churches concerned and to act on behalf of the synod in consultation with the moderator on all matters regarding the grouping, amalgamation or dissolution of local churches;
- (xiii) to make recommendations to the synod in consultation with the churches concerned and to act on behalf of the synod on all matters regarding erection, major reconstruction or disposal of buildings;
- (xiv) to provide a forum for concerns brought forward by local churches and to advise thereon;
- (xv) to hear and make decisions upon appeals brought forward by local churches and church members;
- (xvi) to take appropriate action on matters referred to the council by the synod or General Assembly, and to initiate or transmit proposals for consideration by those bodies;
- (xvii) to maintain contact with ecumenical and missionary work in the area;
- (xviii) to ensure that, where an Assembly Commission or an Appeals Commission following a Hearing under the Section O Process [or a Review Commission or an Appeals Review Commission following a Hearing under the Incapacity Procedure – *to be added if the resolution to approve the introduction of Section P is approved by Assembly*] appends recommendations to its decision not to delete the name of a minister from the Roll of Ministers or a church related community worker from the Roll of Church Related Community Workers or appends guidance to its decision to delete the name of the minister or church related community worker from the respective Roll, any such recommendations are brought fully to the attention of those responsible for exercising oversight of the minister or church related community worker in future and that any such recommendations (or guidance, if such be the case) are brought fully to the attention of any others identified under the relevant Process or Procedure as being proper and appropriate persons to receive such information.



(B) Once the Section O Process has commenced in the case of any minister or church-related community worker with the calling in of the Mandated Group under that Process, the United Reformed Church Committee/area meeting shall not exercise its functions in respect of that minister or church-related community worker (save only in the provision of such pastoral care as may be appropriate) until the Process has been duly concluded.

(C) Such functions as relate solely to the work of the United Reformed Church may be discharged by the United Reformed Church Committee of each area meeting.

5. General Assembly resolves to amend the Structure of the United Reformed Church relating to the General Assembly, by deleting Paragraph 2.(5) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church from its beginning to "The General Assembly may appoint to any such committee members of the United Reformed Church who are not members of the General Assembly." and substituting:

2.(6) The General Assembly which shall embody the unity of the United Reformed Church and act as the central organ of its life and the final authority, under the Word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, in all matters of doctrine and order and in all other concerns of its common life shall consist of:

(a) Such number of representatives of synods (ministerial and lay in equal numbers) as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine. These numbers shall be calculated proportionately to the total membership of each synod, as recorded in the year book of the United Reformed Church (at present this calculation shall be such as to produce a total of synod representatives not exceeding 250.);

(b) among the representatives of synods shall be included at least two from each synod aged 26 or under, at the date of appointment. Should a synod prove unable to make such an appointment it may appoint from another synod but these persons must be 26 or under at the date of appointment;

(c) The moderators of the General Assembly and of the synods, and such other officers of the General Assembly as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine (The Assembly has determined that the Clerk of Assembly, the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary shall be members of Assembly.);

(d) Where the moderator of synod is an officer of the Assembly, a committee convener or otherwise entitled to membership of the Assembly, the synod concerned shall appoint a substitute as its representative;

(e) The convener of each of the standing committees of the General Assembly;

(f) A staff representative and a student representative, being members of the United Reformed Church, from each of such recognised theological colleges as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine;

(g) Such number of representatives from the partner churches of the United Reformed Church outside of Britain and Ireland as the Assembly shall from time to time determine;

(h) Such other ministers, church-related community workers and members of the United Reformed Church as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine (the Assembly has added to its membership one serving United Reformed Church chaplain to the forces, nominated each year by the Organising Secretary of the United Board, in consultation with the three Principal Chaplains, six representatives of the synod of Scotland);

(i) The two most immediate past moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church;

(j) Two in total from the following: former moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, past chairmen of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, past presidents of the Congregational Church in England and Wales, former moderators of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, former chairmen or presidents of the Annual Conference of the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, former presidents of the Annual Conference of the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, provided that such former officers are members of the United Reformed Church and that they shall have been elected by a college consisting of all such past



and former moderators, presidents and chairmen as are members of the United Reformed Church;

(k) Such number of representatives of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth, being members of the United Reformed Church, as the Assembly shall from time to time determine (at present two);

(l) Representatives of other denominations in the United Kingdom as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine;

(m) A representative of the Council for World Mission;

(n) Such number of Assembly-appointed staff as the General Assembly may from time to time determine;

The General Assembly shall at its biennial meeting elect one Minister of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Worker and one Elder of the United Reformed Church to serve jointly as moderators, and such other officers as it shall from time to time think desirable. (The Assembly has appointed the following to serve as officers with the moderators: the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Clerk of Assembly, The Treasurer and the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee.) It shall also appoint a Mission Council with power to act in its name between meetings of the General Assembly and to discharge such other functions as the General Assembly may from time to time direct. The General Assembly shall appoint standing committees which subject to the General Assembly shall have charge of the continuing interests of the church. It may also appoint special committees which subject to the General Assembly shall have charge of such matters as the General Assembly may assign to them from time to time. The General Assembly may appoint to any such committee members of the United Reformed Church who are not members of the General Assembly.

5a. General Assembly agrees to renumber the whole of Paragraph 2(5) so as to become Paragraph 2(6). Assembly further agrees to make the following changes to:

Paragraph 2(6)(A)(v)

Alter the words 'adequate ministerial training' to 'adequate training for ministers and church-related community workers'.

Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xi)

Add the words '... and Part I of the Incapacity Procedure referred to in Paragraph [ ] of the Structure.'

Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xviii)

After the words 'Roll of Ministers' add ' and the Roll of Church-Related Community Workers'. Replace the words 'the Disciplinary Process referred to in Function (xxiii) below' with the words 'the Disciplinary Process referred to in Function (xxiii) below or the Incapacity Procedure referred to in Paragraph [ ] of the Structure.'

Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xix)

After the word 'ministers' add a comma and the words 'church-related community workers'.

Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xxii)

Replace the existing 2(6)(A)(xxii) with the following:

To provide for the setting up of an Appeals Commission in accordance with the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church for the hearing of appeals under that Process.

Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xxiii)

Replace the existing 2(6)(A)(xxiii) with the following:

In the absence of any reference into the Section O Process by the appropriate synod (the case of any minister who is a Moderator of Synod being necessarily dealt with under this provision) and where the General Assembly (or Mission Council acting on its behalf), acting through its Mandated Group as defined in the Section O Process, considers that a minister or church-related community worker is or may not be exercising his/her ministry in accordance with



Paragraph 2 of Schedule E or Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II to the Basis of Union, as the case may be, to refer the case of that minister or church-related community worker to the Commission Stage of the Section O Process and in every such case to suspend the minister or church-related community worker concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Process (for the avoidance of doubt the calling in of the Mandated Group under that Process in order to fulfil its responsibilities marking the commencement of the Section O Process);

Paragraphs 2(6)(A)(xxiv) and (xxv)

Add new Paragraphs 2(6)(A) (xxiv) and (xxv) as follows:

Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xxiv)

'To make and (if necessary) to terminate all appointments to the Standing Panel and to any administrative office under the Incapacity Procedure (the Section P Procedure) and to exercise general oversight and supervision of the operation of that Procedure (save only that decisions in individual cases taken in accordance with that Procedure are made in the name of the General Assembly and are final and binding).'

Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xxv)

'To provide for the setting up of an Appeals Review Commission in accordance with the Incapacity Procedure for the hearing of appeals under that Procedure.'

Renumber the existing Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xxiv) as (xxvi)

Identify the Paragraph immediately after the General Assembly Functions as 2(6)(B)

5b. General Assembly resolves to replace the existing Paragraph 2(5)(B) with the following:

Paragraph 2(6)(B)

Once the Section O Process has commenced in the case of any minister or church-related community worker, whether by the General Assembly or by one of the other Councils of the Church, the General Assembly shall not exercise its functions in respect of that minister or church-related community worker (save only in the provision of such pastoral care as may be appropriate) until the Process has been duly concluded.

6. General Assembly resolves to amend the following parts of the Structure of the United Reformed Church relating to Constitutional amendments to read:

Paragraph 3.(1)(c)

The General Assembly shall, if such motion to approve the proposal is passed, refer the proposal to synods and may, if it deems appropriate, in exceptional cases also to local churches.

Paragraph 3(1)(e)

If by such date notice has been received by the General Secretary from more than one third of synods (or, if it has been so referred, more than one third of local churches) that a motion 'that the proposal be not proceeded with' has been passed by a majority of members present and voting at a duly convened meeting of such body, then the Assembly in its concern for the unity of the church shall not proceed to ratify the proposal.

Paragraph 3(1)(h)

For the purposes of this paragraph 3(1), only synods, and local churches in existence on the date set for responses to be made shall be counted in the calculations.

7. General Assembly resolves to amend Paragraph 5(2) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church to read:

The procedure for dealing with reference and appeals falling outside paragraph 5(1) or paragraph 5(3) is as follows:

A local church or any member thereof or elders' meeting may appeal to the synod upon which the local church is entitled to be represented for the resolution of any dispute or difference and may appeal from any decision of such synod to the General Assembly.



A synod may refer any dispute or difference, whether or not the same shall have come before it on a reference or appeal, to the General Assembly.

The decision of the General Assembly on any matter which has come before it on reference or appeal shall be final and binding.

8. General Assembly agrees to introduce the following as a new Paragraph of the Structure to be numbered [ ]:

[ ].1 The provisions of this Paragraph [ ] shall apply to cases proceeding under the Incapacity Procedure (to be known as the Section P Procedure) where those responsible for initiating it in respect of any particular minister or church related community worker consider that s/he is or may not be exercising the ministry of Word and Sacrament or the ministry of Church Related Community Work as the case may be in accordance (in the case of ministers) with Paragraph 2 of Schedule E of the Basis of Union and (in the case of CRCWs) with Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II thereto and perceive the issue as relating to the incapacity of the minister or CRCW on account of (i) medical and/or psychiatric illness or (ii) psychological disorder or (iii) addiction.

[ ].2 No right of appeal shall lie against the decision taken in accordance with Paragraph [ ].1 above to initiate the Section P Procedure in respect of any minister or CRCW.

[ ].3 The decision reached in any particular case (whether or not on appeal) under the Section P Procedure shall be made in the name of the General Assembly and shall be final and binding.

[ ].4 As soon as any minister or CRCW becomes the subject of a case under the Section P Procedure, none of the Councils of the Church shall exercise any of its functions in respect of that minister or CRCW in such a manner as to affect, compromise or interfere with the due process of that case, provided that the provision of such pastoral care as shall be deemed appropriate shall not be regarded as a breach of this paragraph.





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**G4**

**Proposed amendment to the Rules of Procedure:**  
**The General Secretary.**

The current procedures laid down for the appointment of a General Secretary are found in paragraph 4 of the Rules of Procedure. Closely paralleling the procedures originally followed for the appointment of Moderators of Synod they were not revised when the procedures for the appointment of Moderators of Synod were modified and simplified in 2006. Experience of the process as used following the resignation of Dr Cornick has shown the current process to be difficult and slow to implement.

It is therefore suggested that a new process, closer to that used in the appointment of Moderators of Synod be adopted. The current rule and the suggested amendment are both printed below.

Mission Council, if it agrees with the proposed change will need to decide whether this rule should also apply to the deputy General Secretary. At present we have no formal rule concerning that post.

**4. GENERAL SECRETARY**

4.1 The General Secretary, who shall be a minister of the United Reformed Church shall be appointed for a period of seven years renewable for the same term or such shorter period as the Assembly may determine. The appointment shall be made according to the following procedure.

4.2 The General Assembly shall constitute a special committee consisting of two representatives appointed by each synod, the Moderator of the General Assembly, the convener of the Nominations Committee and nine persons selected by the Mission Council, five of whom shall be Conveners of Assembly Standing Committees, with authority to make a nomination for appointment as Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary to the Assembly. In any emergency the Mission Council shall be empowered to set up this committee.

**Proposed Amendment**

4.2 "The General Assembly shall constitute and maintain a special committee, consisting of the Moderators of General Assembly, one of whom shall act as convener, the Clerk of Assembly, who shall act as secretary, the Convener of the Nominations Committee and ten persons selected by Mission Council, with authority to make a nomination for appointment as General Secretary (or deputy General Secretary). In the event of the General Secretary (or the deputy General Secretary) giving notice of resignation or being unable to continue in office, there being no meeting of the Assembly in the forthcoming six months, the Mission Council shall receive the report of the special committee and act upon it."





## MISSION COUNCIL 7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# H

### The Treasurer's Report

#### Dissolution of the Grants and Loans Group

##### Key Point

1 Mission Council is invited to dissolve its Grants and Loans Group (G&LG) and agree revised financial arrangements to honour the Group's previous objectives.

##### Background

2 Over the years, various mechanisms have been set up to provide central funding to a limited range of local church projects. One of the more recent forms has been the Mission Council's G&LG, whose latest annual report forms Paper A6.

3 The Group believes that developments elsewhere in the Church's structures, notably the evolution of Synod Resource Sharing mechanisms, mean that their objectives can be more efficiently achieved without the Group continuing.

4 The Finance Committee agrees with this view and has worked with the G&LG and some members of the Resource Sharing Task Group in bringing proposals for a way forward.

##### Funds Affected

5 The G&LG administers grants from the Church Buildings Fund on behalf of the Finance Committee. A Restricted Fund provides investment income of around £100kpa, which is used principally to provide grants to building projects in the less wealthy Synods. The total of building grants from Synods is around £2mpa. It is proposed that the modest central supplement to what Synods already give in grants should be added to the resources available to the Synod Resource Sharing process and distributed by that process.

6 The G&LG also administers a Mission Project Fund. This is funded by a Restricted Fund, which provides income of around £25kpa, and by a slice of the Ministry and Mission Fund income, currently £110kpa. It provides term grants to a number of significant projects each year. The criteria are not obviously different from the criteria used by the Resource Sharing process in



accepting bids from Synods for grants for particular projects. It is therefore proposed that this money is also allocated to the Synod Resource Sharing process to supplement their general resources.

7 These proposals would initially increase the money available to Synod Resource Sharing by around a quarter. If Mission Council agrees the principle, it would be helpful if the Resource Sharing Task Group considered what amendment to their processes would be necessary. One option might be to invite a member of G&LG to join them for a period to ensure experience in scrutinising building projects is not lost. In every case presented to Synod Resource Sharing, however, the sponsoring Synod would be expected to have already considered the proposal in the context of mission priorities.

### **Use of Ministry and Mission Fund**

8 The current level of funding for the G&LG from the M&M Fund of £0.1mpa is small in the context of the overall sums now moving from the richer to the poorer Synods. The work of Synod Resource Sharing represents a movement of around £0.5mpa. The effect of the deployment of stipendiary Ministers and CRCWs being spread across Britain independently of where M&M money is raised creates a further transfer of resources worth around £2m-£3m pa.

9 In this context it seems an unnecessary complication to continue to take a relatively small sum from the M&M giving, collected via Synods, only to hand it to the Resource Sharing process to give it back to the Synods. The Finance Committee therefore proposes that this part of the M&M budget is phased out with a consequent reduction in the amount needing to be raised by Synods for the M&M Fund.

### **Resolutions**

- A. Mission Council, while thanking all those whose work on its Grants and Loans Group has assisted the mission of the Church, agrees that the Group should now be dissolved.**
- B. Mission Council resolves to phase out by 2012 the demand on the Ministry and Mission Fund to provide funding for the former purposes of the Grants and Loans Group.**

John G Ellis  
Treasurer

4 March 2008





The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

## MISSION COUNCIL 7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

# H1

### Update on the Windermere Centre Development

#### Key Point

- 1 Mission Council is invited to:
  - (i) clarify its funding intentions with regard to the regular budget of the Windermere Centre; and
  - (ii) agree the process for continuing progress on the proposed link building.

#### Background

- 2 A full review of the Windermere Centre was undertaken in 2002-3 but the agreed recommendations were only partly implemented at the time.
- 3 In October 2007 Mission Council received a paper from the Finance Committee explaining attempts to revitalise and progress the 2003 Assembly agreement to expand the facilities of the Windermere Centre. The paper proposed three strands of work:
  - (i) improvements in the financial management processes of the Windermere Centre;
  - (ii) a financial settlement between the denomination on the one hand, and the Carver Church and NW Synod on the other, to secure for the denomination the freehold of the Centre and set out financial arrangements for the increased use of the church by the Centre; and
  - (iii) the construction of a link building between the Carver Memorial Church and its church halls, funded by the denomination, to enhance the facilities available to the Centre.
- 4 After full discussion, Mission Council endorsed these proposals and instructed the Finance Committee, in conjunction with the Education and Learning Committee, to undertake the necessary detailed negotiations. This paper provides an update on progress.

#### Financial Management

- 5 Detailed discussions have taken place between representatives of the Finance and Education & Learning Committees, the Windermere Advisory Group (WAG), the Centre staff and their advisers, most notably at Windermere over three days in February.
- 6 The longstanding concern about budgets not being met has not recurred in 2007. The key determinant of budget out-turn is bednights and in 2007 the number of bednights was 99.4% of the budget number.



7 The process for setting budgets has been clarified and a budget for 2008 agreed between the Centre, WAG and the Finance Committee. Central support will amount to around £90k.

8 The processes for monitoring financial data locally and in the Finance Office have been improved and the internal management arrangements at the Centre assessed afresh by WAG.

9 In any operation the size of the Centre, the dependence on a very small number of key staff remains a risk. Overall, however, the representatives of the Finance Committee directly involved believe Mission Council can be assured that much progress has been made. The full Finance Committee will review this at their next meeting and will certainly continue to monitor matters closely.

10 In working with the Centre, the Finance Committee takes account of the explicit Assembly commitment to provide regular support to the Centre from the central Church budget; but the Assembly has never quantified what sort of amount it intended. After researching the background to Assembly's commitment, the Finance Committee has developed an informal guideline that the central support should broadly equate to the full costs of the Director plus some additional subsidy to allow for courses which are important but not popular. By analogy with the costs of a staff secretary in Church House, plus PA support (say £75kpa) the Committee has deemed these factors together to justify a subsidy of between £50k and £100k each year. Resolution 1 offers Mission Council an opportunity to express its view if it so wishes.

### **Financial Settlement**

11 A representative group of the local and Synod interests, convened by the Rev Rachel Poolman, has been working with representatives of the Finance Committee and URC Trust to develop the fine print of a financial settlement. While there are further details to be settled and legal checks to be completed, there is every reason to suppose a mutually satisfactory outcome will emerge.

### **Link Building Project**

12 In the light of progress with the financial and management questions, the Finance Committee has felt confident about progressing the building project as well.

13 An architect well known to the Centre and the wider URC – Clifford Patten - has been appointed to undertake a feasibility study. He has been given outlines of what is required. After full consultation with the Carver Church, the Centre and others he will offer costed plans. These may be available in April.

14 No plans would of course go ahead unless they were acceptable to the local church, the Synod, the Centre, WAG, the Finance and Education and Learning Committees and the URC Trustees. Ideally they would then come to Mission Council for confirmation. However the next Mission Council is not until December, which might introduce considerable delay into the project and mean the 2009 Windermere programme had to be finalised before any decision was made. The Carver Church has already delayed other structural work awaiting a decision on this link building.



15 In the light of these circumstances, Mission Council Advisory Group (MCAG) agreed it would be appropriate to suggest that the Council delegates authority to MCAG to sign off on the agreed plans if they are within a reasonable budget limit. At the October Council a highly approximate ballpark figure of £200k for the project was offered. Resolution 2 tests the mind of the Council on this point of process.

## **Resolutions**

- 1 Mission Council believes that the annual financial support for the Windermere Centre revenue budget should normally be in the range £50k-£100k at 2008 prices.**
- 2 Mission Council delegates to MCAG authority to approve the link building at Carver Memorial Church provided that:**
  - (i) the plans have the support of the Carver Church Meeting, the NW Synod Trust, the Windermere Advisory Group, the Finance Committee, the Education & Learning Committee and the URC Trustees; and**
  - (ii) the total cost to be met by grants from central funds is not more than £250k.**

John G Ellis  
Treasurer

19 February 2008





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**J**

**Ministries Committee**

**Resolution M1**

**Challenge to the Church**

**General Assembly**

- i) believes that each congregation and mission group has a need of its own local leader to work in partnership with the elders' meeting to challenge, enable and equip the saints and be a focus of Christian presence in the local community, and**
- ii) affirms the value of team pastorates in providing pastoral support, encouragement and training for those in local leadership,**
- iii) therefore requests Synods**
  - a] to identify and quantify the leadership needs of each local situation,**
  - b] make arrangements for the recruitment, training, calling and support of local leaders, and**
  - c] to encourage the development of team pastorates to provide pastoral support, encouragement and training.**

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**Context:**

1     The *Equipping the Saints* report called on the Church to explore new patterns of ministry and service within the Church to enable and equip the people of God to be a creative and effective force in their communities. It particularly looked for imagination and flexibility in the best use of Ministers of the Word and Sacraments, and for development and extension to build on the successful experiments and effective forms of Local Church Leadership to create a flexible framework for the pastoral care of local congregations.

2     The *Catch the Vision* process has encouraged the councils of the Church at all levels to take seriously that God has a future purpose for the United Reformed Church, and that obedient discipleship involves a deepening of our spirituality, radical changes in the patterns of our life, witness and worship, and the exploration of how to bring the treasures of our Reformed heritage to bear on the current national and community scene in order to make a difference.

3     Mission Council has given Ministries Committee the task of overseeing the process whereby minister numbers are made to track the movement of membership numbers. The current presumption is that this means a reduction of approximately 3% p.a. on the current number base which was accepted uncritically in 1998.

3.1    It is anticipated that, in the course of the next 10 years, the number of ministers will actually decline at a faster rate than that. This will be particularly affected by a larger-than-normal number of expected retirements in 2012 and 2013.

3.2    Therefore, in order to maintain the life and operation of the Church as currently perceived, there will be the need for some strenuous recruitment. Encouragement of vocations undertaken in the course of 2007 will not start to deliver people into ministry much before 2013. So the committee has already agreed to



offer a number of certificates of eligibility whereby ministers of other Churches are admitted to the roll of ministers of the United Reformed Church.

4 The Ministries Committee believes that there is an inconsistency between the imaginative thinking involved in *Equipping the Saints* and *Catch the Vision* on the one hand and the task with which it has been entrusted. The committee does not wish to oversee the management of decline. We prefer to challenge the United Reformed Church to develop new patterns of ministry in order to enable and deliver a vision of God's tomorrow in line with the challenge and opportunities offered by *Vision4Life*.

#### **Reflection:**

5.1 We have drawn on research that suggests that congregations which are creative and growing tend to have something of a mix of the following four factors in common:

- quality of worship and depth of spirituality
- a small group culture that nurtures members and helps develop skills of individual leadership and mutual care
- clarity of purpose
- strong local leadership, often where the church is the sole responsibility of one person.

5.2 Our listening to Synod Moderators and the *Catch the Vision* task group indicates that churches want effective local ministry, usually identified as a need for a minister.

5.3 We have shared the anxiety of many in the Church about the pressure on full-time stipendiary ministers to manage ever-larger pastorates. Too often this means that ministers do not have the time and space to think and reflect, to dig deep into the treasures of theology and biblical studies. Consequently their ability to enable and challenge members of their congregations to plumb the depths of faith and spirituality is significantly reduced.

5.4 We have heard something of the rich experience of ministry teams where ordained ministers work in collaboration with local church leaders, lay preachers and those who lead local congregational worship groups. Such teams are a particular feature of some sister Reformed Churches in other parts of the world where they are the source of energy for development and growth.

#### **A challenge to the Church:**

6 We are looking for a strategy within the Church that would

- i] support, encourage and develop local churches that are currently vibrant and growing,
- ii] create fresh patterns of Christian presence both by recasting the life and work of less lively churches, and by establishing new groups or networks of people.

In each case this would require provision of ministry that equips and enables the congregation or group:

- a] to support and nurture each other through worship, prayer, study and care;
- b] to present a corporate witness and service to the place where they are set;
- c] to make a difference as the dispersed church where each member exercises a Christian presence in the workplace, leisure place, community involvement or neighbourhood.

7.1 Therefore we propose that there should be provision of appropriate local church leadership in each congregation or group which is the focus of Christian



presence, on the basis of a strategy created by the Synod for identifying the needs and opportunity for the provision of such leadership.

7.2 Such provision would be delivered in team pastorates with a flexibility of leadership patterns. This would involve team working of full-time and part-time ministers, local church leaders, lay preachers and worship groups.

7.3 There should be a challenge for calling and recruitment of i] people to offer as local church leaders to serve congregations in worship, nurture, witness and service; and ii] for ministers who would provide pastoral and oversight ministry towards a grouping of congregations and groups and local leaders from a well-based skill set of theology, biblical studies, training and leadership abilities.

8.1 Synods will encourage the development of team pastorates of local churches and other recognised mission opportunities. They will establish the criteria for scoping and identification of the level of ministerial input appropriate for each local situation and for the appointment of team pastorate ministers.

8.2 Synods will arrange for a process of regular review as part of the ministerial development of all ministers and local church leaders serving team pastorates or local churches or projects.

9 Subject to the approval of General Assembly for these outline proposals, the Assessment Board and the Ministries Committee will prepare criteria for the recruitment and assessment of candidates for training for the range of ministries in the Church.

#### **Timescale**

July 08	General Assembly consideration
October 08	Synods report on their assessment of needs regarding: i] the numbers of stipendiary ministers required for service as team pastorate ministers, and to serve in local pastorates, ii] the number of part-time stipendiary posts required iii] the number of local church leaders required
Nov 08	Ministries Committee will establish the base number of full time equivalent stipendiary ministers of word and sacrament required to provide appropriate leadership in team and local pastorates
Jan 09	Deployment consultation between Ministries Committee, Synod Moderators and other representatives of Synods to confirm the base number and agree appropriate sharing of ministerial numbers between Synods. Launch of recruitment programme for candidates for self-supporting ministry, part-time stipendiary ministry and local church leaders
March 09	Report to Mission Council on the nature of the process and progress to date.
Jan 10	All plans for the recruitment and calling of ministers should be within the context of team ministry within team pastorates as described in the proposals.
July 10	Report to General Assembly of nature of the process and progress to date.





MISSION COUNCIL  
7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008

J1

**Ministries Committee  
Report and Resolution from the  
Retired Ministers Housing Society**

**Resolution M2: A fairer and more affordable system for helping Ministers in retirement with Housing**

**General Assembly accepts the revised guidelines (Appendix 1) for the provision of Retired Ministers Housing and their staged implementation over 10 years from September 2008.**

**The Background**

1. As a committee, and on behalf of the whole Church, the RMHS's responsibility is to help ministers/CRCWs with any financial shortfall they might have in providing for adequate housing in their retirement, within the constraints of available resources. We would want at the outset to assure ministers/CRCWs who have little or no financial resources of their own that we will continue to help and support them as much as we can but we need the whole Church to face up to the challenge of how we can sustain such help into the future. We have sought to partner with individuals, churches and synods in rising to this challenge but we need our ministers/CRCWs to understand more fully our current situation, future projections and the solution we think most fair to sustain our operation in the long term.
2. It is the view of the Committee that the current system of help we offer to retiring URC Ministers/CRCWs is unsustainable. The survey of 2007 showed that a least 60% of serving stipendiary ministers/CRCWs will need help and this at a level which would require some £2 million p.a. at today's prices in liquid capital on average over the next 20 years. Of course some of this will be financed by the profit on the sale of existing properties and legacies/donations but realistically we have to say this is very uncertain. We understand that the Church at General Assembly level would find it difficult to go beyond its £10 million of financing at present because of other Mission priorities and a shrinking membership base. The URC has never financed this operation directly through its budget and continues its policy of charging interest on part of the capital borrowed (£207K in the first nine months of 2007).



3. As a Committee we believe that God provides but we also need to be good stewards of that provision. We are therefore faced with difficult choices: either we find a new income source (e.g. a substantial supplement to the Ministry and Mission Fund) or we focus our resources more specifically on the most needy people.
4. The circumstances of younger ministers/CRCWs are different today from those of their predecessors when the scheme began. Then typically ministers were ordained young without ever having owned property, served 40 years, and throughout their ministry were the sole breadwinner in the manse. The current scheme was designed for such ministers and has worked well. Thus at present all ministers / CRCWs having completed the minimum qualifying period (15 years) are treated the same, and the full benefits of the Society made available, where required. However, few ministers/CRCWs ordained/commissioned recently have lived according to this traditional pattern and the assumptions underlying the scheme need to be revisited. Those now reaching retirement who have served the full 40 years on the traditional pattern need to be fully protected, but the same arrangements are less obviously the best use of limited funds for many who retire after, say, 20 years in their own career (and house) and 20 years in the ministry.

#### The way forward - Revisions to Paragraph 4 (2)

5. We suggest the fairest approach now would be to link the money made available to the number of years of service. The Guidelines (Appendix 1) have been extensively reviewed and updated and we are proposing a new system of calculating the resources we make available (if needed) based on the number of years served over 15 (as at present). The crucial difference from the current system is that the resources made available are proportionate to the years served rather than, as at present, a minister serving 15 years and one serving 40 years being treated the same.

#### Implementation of new guidelines and revised system (paragraph 4 (2) Guidelines):

6. Given existing expectations, we would want to move gradually towards the new scheme and we therefore seek to implement the new guidelines over the next 10 years from September 2008. Any minister / CRCW who has served for 40 years or more will always have 100% of the Society's County Ceiling (the maximum available in a particular area) made available where needed.

It is important to remember that the Society will always sympathetically consider the case of any minister / CRCW who will have difficulties in becoming satisfactorily housed as a result of these changes.



By 2018 retiring ministers / CRCWs would be fully within the new arrangements which would be as follows:-

Years of service completed	Proportion of 40 years served	Help from Housing Society
15	15 / 40	37.5% of county ceiling
20	20 / 40	50.0% of county ceiling
30	30 / 40	75.0% of county ceiling
40	40 / 40	100 % of county ceiling

In 2008 all retiring ministers / CRCWs having served from 15 years to 40 or more will receive help at 40/40 or 100% of the county ceiling as now.

In 2010 the new arrangements will have gently begun and the position will be as follows:-

Years of service completed	Proportion of 40 years treated as served	Help from Housing Society
15	36 / 40	90 % of county ceiling
20	36 / 40	90 % of county ceiling
30	36 / 40	90 % of county ceiling
40	40 / 40	100 % of county ceiling

Each year the 'guarantee' reduces and by 2015 the new arrangements would be approaching completion as follows:-

Years of service completed	Proportion of 40 years treated as served	Help from Housing Society
15	23 / 40	57.5 % of county ceiling
20	23 / 40	57.5 % of county ceiling
30	30 / 40	75.0 % of county ceiling
40	40 / 40	100 % of county ceiling

In other words, during this implementation period the actual years of service are supported where needed by a gradually reducing guaranteed number of years of service in order to smooth the introduction of the new arrangements.

An example would be as follows:

A minister/CRCW retires having completed 25 years full time service: If retiring in 2010 his/her guaranteed years of service would exceed his/her actual years and so he/she would be treated as having served 36



years and would therefore be 'entitled' to 36/40 of the County Ceiling. If retiring in 2015 his/her actual 25 years is higher than the guaranteed years of service of 23 years and he/she is therefore 'entitled' to 25/40 of the County Ceiling.

7. Extensive research has been undertaken before offering this significant change. The 2007 survey of ministers suggests an exceptional need for funding between 2012 -2014 of around £8.5 million. Research into those who have retired in the past ten years suggests that if the new system had been in operation during that period the Society would have had to have provided £14.3m compared to the £16.2m it did: a saving of £1.9m. We believe this to be a fairer system with our limited resources.
8. The current review of the Manse system being undertaken by Mission Council highlights the need for better financial advice to be given at the time of ordinands entering theological training and we believe this to be essential.
9. The Society has always worked on the basis of special cases being presented to the Committee and we would stress this route especially during the initial period. Our belief is that the Church would wish us to lean our resources towards those who have little or no provision for their retirement and we will continue to make decisions sympathetically on this basis with our limited resources.

(Should this be acceptable to be debated at Assembly we would plan to write to all serving ministers/CRCWs via the May payslip to let them know of the proposed change.)

10. In our estimation should this proposal be unacceptable to the Church we would need to provide an annual capital sum to be calculated in advance from the central budget and paid for from M&M contributions.

**Resolution M3: Retired Ministers Housing - Synod partnership**

**General Assembly requests that conversations begin with the Synods about possible partnerships in the provision of Retired Ministers Housing.**

One of the challenging areas of our finances in the URC is that much of our capital is held at Synod level. This applies especially in the area of housing for ministers/CRCWs. Such money was originally given to ensure adequate housing for those who serve our churches full-time. With decreasing numbers of full-time servants of the church, manses are becoming redundant and being sold: the proceeds held at either local church or synod trust level. It is right and proper



that existing manses be to the Assembly agreed standards and if new manses are required for new work they be purchased. However beyond those needs it would be helpful to consider whether any surplus could be utilised for housing retired ministers. We are really grateful to the Synods (4 of them so far) who have agreed to give 10% of the proceeds of the sale of redundant Church property and would like to hold conversations on this 'second mile' solution.

## **APPENDIX 1.**

### **THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH RETIRED MINISTERS' HOUSING COMMITTEE PROVISION FOR HOUSING RETIRED MINISTERS AND CRCWS ("THE GUIDELINES") FINAL DRAFT**

#### **1. Preamble**

At the 1979 General Assembly the United Reformed Church accepted a moral obligation to provide housing for retired ministers and ministers' widows who could not otherwise be adequately housed. The relevant clauses of the resolution read as follows:-

"The United Reformed Church delegates to its Finance and Administration Department the responsibility for providing housing for retired ministers and ministers' widows and this it exercises through the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited, an independent Company operating within the Finance Department.

The Church regards it as a matter of integrity that retired ministers and ministers' widows should be adequately housed and supports the Housing Society in its appeal for funds and its objects.

The Assembly approves the appointment of a 'Retired Ministers Housing Committee' within the Finance and Administration Department to have oversight of matters concerned with the provision of retirement housing for ministers and ministers' widows and to manage the properties held on behalf of the United Reformed Church."

These Guidelines were produced and have been revised periodically including a major revision in 1985. An Appeal to the whole church was made in 2006 to secure further funds.

2. By this action Assembly did not institute an entitlement to retirement housing as of right. A Minister and his/her spouse who have the finance necessary to provide for housing in their retirement (whether completely or as an equity share) may reasonably be expected to do so. Given our limited liquid capital position, the provision of housing by the Housing Society is for those who would not otherwise have any way of being adequately housed, and policies regarding use of capital are thus heavily weighted in that direction.

#### **3. Parameters of the Scheme**



The Ministers covered by this Scheme are Ministers of Word and Sacraments and CRCWs who are on the URC Roll and in receipt of a Stipend.

#### **4. Ministers**

Normally an applicant must be a minister of the URC and must meet the following conditions:-

**(1)** All applicants must be in the stipendiary service of the Church at

EITHER **(a)** age 65

OR **(b)** less than age 65, but having completed 40 years service since ordination and been allowed to retire on pension without early retirement deduction

OR **(c)** less than age 65, but having been permitted to retire early on grounds of physical or mental incapacity, duly certified by a Medical Practitioner to the satisfaction of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee.

**(2)** The Housing Committee will meet at least annually to decide a ceiling for each county or comparable area. This will be the maximum amount which the Society can make available for housing to the applicant, subject to their need being established. At the time of retirement, a minister, having served a minimum of 15 years and needing housing assistance will be offered 1/40 of that sum multiplied by the years of his/her service, up to the maximum. This will be introduced gradually during the 10 years to 2018. Ministers can apply directly to the Housing Society for special consideration if their financial circumstances mean that they could not be housed using this formula.

**(3)** Where a minister satisfies the requirements above but moves into part-time service immediately upon ceasing full-time service, the entitlement to consideration for assistance will be carried forward until final retirement.

**(4)** Equivalent full-time service is pro rata part-time service (i.e. 10 years of 50% scoped service is equivalent to 5 years full-time service)

**(5)** An application from any minister whose service falls just outside these guidelines may be considered nine months before retirement in the light of the merits of the case and the resources available at the time.

**5.** Service for this purpose will be full-time and stipendiary in an appointment for which the terms of service include the provision of housing by the Church or other body, and within one or more of the following categories:-

**(1)** Service with the United Reformed Church (URC) AND/OR the Congregational Church of England and Wales AND/OR the Presbyterian Church of England AND/OR the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ and their predecessors, AND/OR The Congregational Union of Scotland from 2000, either in pastoral charge, in an Assembly, Synod or District appointment or in a special ministry.



(2) Service in a national ecumenical council OR agency in the United Kingdom (UK) in which the URC is directly involved and in which the terms of service are comparable to those of ministers in the URC. Normally such service shall not exceed ten years.

(3) Service with a county OR regional ecumenical body in the UK in which the URC is directly involved either as full-time service or as part-time service coupled with service in a URC Pastorate. Normally such service shall not exceed ten years.

(4) Service in a Local Ecumenical Project (LEP) in which the URC is a full participant: such LEP being duly registered as a local congregation or group of congregations in the British Council of Churches or the successor bodies' registers and recorded as a Local Church in the URC.

(5) Service overseas since July 1977 through the Council for World Mission OR through the Ecumenical Committee of the URC, as full-time ministerial service.

(6) Service as a chaplain in hospitals, schools, colleges or universities, industry or the armed forces which is full-time ministerial service on terms which are comparable with those of full-time URC ministers and in which the URC is directly involved. Normally such service shall not exceed ten years.

(7) Service with Mansfield, Northern, The Queen's, Westminster and Scottish Congregational Colleges on terms comparable with the conditions of service of full-time URC ministers.

(8) Such other service rendered by a URC minister as may from time to time be agreed by the Retired Ministers Housing Committee to constitute qualifying service.

It is in the interest of a minister, who is considering taking up an appointment involving service as outlined in sub-paragraphs (2) to (7) above OR in any other activity and at retirement will require assistance with housing, to consult the Secretary of the Retired Ministers Housing Committee.

## **6. Widows and Widowers**

(1) The widow, widower or registered civil partner of a minister who dies in retirement as a tenant of a Society property will be granted the transfer of the tenancy on the same terms as the deceased minister providing that the marriage/registration took place before the minister's 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, or the date of retirement if later.

(2) The widow, widower or registered civil partner of a minister who dies in full-time service and whose service meets or could have met the requirements of paragraph 4(1) above by his or her 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, will be assisted with housing (except where personal financial resources are sufficient to provide for this).

(3) In all other cases the needs of a minister's widow, widower or registered civil partner will be considered in the light of the circumstances of each case.

## **7. Part-time Pastorates**



(1) It is not the responsibility of the Society to provide housing for ministers in part-time stipendiary pastorates. Therefore, a minister who moves from a full-time to a part-time stipendiary pastorate at the age of 65 or later can have no expectation of assistance with retirement housing at this stage, but will be considered for retirement housing when finally retiring from pastoral charge, subject to the qualifying service requirements in sections 4 and 5 above being met.

(2) Should a retired minister who is already a tenant of the Society, or of a property managed by the Society on behalf of the URC, be called to a part-time stipendiary pastorate, or his/her period of charge be extended beyond that initial call, the Society will consider continuation of the tenancy subject to consideration by the pastorate making the call to pay the rent surcharge appropriate to that property if possible.

February 2008





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**J2**

## **Ministries Committee**

### **Resolution M4**

### **Capability Procedure**

**General Assembly approves the following Capability Procedure for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers.**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers of the United Reformed Church, as office holders, relate to the Church in terms of the performance of their vocation through the three Councils of the Church. The whole Church through **General Assembly** sets the doctrinal framework, the Basis of Union, within which all Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers agree to serve, and decides stipend levels and terms of service through the Plan for Partnership. The **Synod** gives support and oversight to the Ministers and CRCWs serving within its geographical boundaries. The local **Church Meeting** identifies the particular role it wishes individual Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers to carry out, and provides for local expenses in relation to the pastorate/post. The ethos of the relationship between the Councils of the Church and Ministers and CRCWs is one of mutual support and accountability.

1.2 The United Reformed Church is committed to introducing best practice in relation to terms and conditions of service for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers.

1.3 The Capability Procedure is designed to provide a clear framework of support to all Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers called to serve in the United Reformed Church, and as such should be set alongside the Grievance Procedure for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers.

#### **2. Definition of Capability**

2.1 The term capability refers to two key areas:

##### **a) Underperformance**

This is where it is believed that the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker is not meeting the role descriptions, individual performance standards and expectations of where he/she is called to serve. This may be due to the Minister or Church Related Community Worker lacking the necessary skills and aptitude.

The Capability Procedure needs to be read in conjunction with **The Disciplinary Procedure/Section O** where it is believed that the poor performance is due to misconduct. Where the problem may be a result of the Minister/ Church Related



Community Worker being physically or mentally unable to do his/her job (incapacity), the Incapacity on the Grounds of Ill Health Procedure will need to be followed.

### **b) Health-related underperformance**

If underperformance is due to an identifiable and relatively short term, health related matter the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker should be encouraged to take sick leave and may become a responsibility of the Assembly Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee.

2.2 The URC recognises the various roles a call to ministry encompass not least the sacramental, prophetic, community development and leadership roles set within the context of pastoral relationships and responsibilities. It therefore accepts that when addressing issues of underperformance, these areas will be considered as part of the overall performance level of the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker concerned. It will be for the pastorate/post, together with the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker, to identify, and agree, the particular expectations it requires of its Ministers/ Church Related Community Workers. These expectations can be found under the following criteria:

- the individual pastorate/post's objectives or mission;
- within the above, the agreed role description of the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker; and
- individual agreed performance objectives assigned to the role of the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker.

2.3 The Ministers/ Church Related Community Workers cannot be expected to improve on performance if they are not aware of what is expected of them.

## **3 Purpose and Scope of the Procedure**

3.1 This procedure is designed to give Ministers/ Church Related Community Workers, who are not performing to a satisfactory level, the opportunity to improve their performance to an acceptable standard, for them to be formally advised of the effects upon their pastorate/post, and the potential consequences should there be no improvement.

3.2 It is essential that **every attempt** be made to determine the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker's ability to perform the duties, responsibilities and expectations of their calling.

3.3 The Capability Procedure is not a 'quick fix' remedy to address issues of underperformance; it is in place to be used as a tool for working collaboratively with churches, Ministers/ Church Related Community Workers through an agreed process to achieve the best outcome for all concerned.

3.4 If managed correctly underperformance issues may take between 3 and 12 months to resolve. This is not to put an unnecessary burden on the church, Minister/ Church Related Community Worker but to demonstrate that the United Reformed Church is committed to addressing underperformance issues within a system that promotes consistency, impartiality, equality and fairness. At all times throughout the process pastorates/posts are reminded to respond sensitively respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the Minister or Church Related Community Worker in question.



3.5 The URC believes in the necessity to advise those called to serve of the existence of the procedure and the implications thereof should underperformance be identified. It is therefore the Church's responsibility to inform their Ministers/CRCWs about the procedure and how it is used.

#### **4. Procedure for Handling Capability Issues**

##### **4.1 Informal Action**

4.1.1 If a pastorate/post has concerns with a Minister/ Church Related Community Worker's current level of performance over a period of time, this shall initially be dealt with informally.

4.1.2 The pastorate/post where the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker serves should discuss the identified shortcomings. A member of the Elders' meeting, or a trusted friend of both pastorate/post and Minister/Church Related Community Worker, should be designated to act as Convener for a meeting between pastorate/post and Minister/ Church Related Community Worker. At this meeting the following should be achieved:

- the pastorate/post should identify the required standard of performance;
- the pastorate/post should clearly outline the shortcomings in performance to the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker;
- the pastorate/post and the Minister/Church Related Community Worker discuss the possible causes for the shortcomings in performance levels;
- the pastorate/post and the Minister/Church Related Community Worker discuss potential remedies e.g. re-training, break form service/retreat and any changes that might help address the areas of concern, (bearing in mind any additional financial costs, which the church may have to incur);
- the pastorate/post and the Minister/Church Related Community Worker agree a plan of action which should include the following;
  - agreement on timetable for remedial action to take place (recommended time span of up to 3 months);
  - training and development plan; and
  - the frequency of monitoring and the review date (recommended once every 3 weeks).

4.1.3 The Minister/Church Related Community Worker should be informed that failure to improve could lead to formal action being taken. This could lead to the Minister/Church Related Community Worker's removal from the pastorate/post following a church meeting decision to that effect. At this stage the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker may wish to receive impartial pastoral support from a Synod Moderator.



4.1.4 A note of the discussions and plan of action should be given to the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker. Copies should be retained by the pastorate/post and a review should follow within or at 3 months. If the informal review process has worked, no further action will be required and the Minister/Church Related Community Worker will continue serving the pastorate/post.

## **4.2 Formal Meetings**

4.2.1 Where there has been no improvement during the review period, then formal proceedings will need to be invoked. The pastorate/post in question may need to liaise with the Synod Clerk and appropriate Synod committee for further advice at this stage and shall inform the Synod Moderator.

4.2.2 The Synod Moderator will ensure that the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker has adequate pastoral support during the period of the formal meetings. The Moderator however will have no further part in the proceedings as he/she may be responsible for setting up, and taking the decision in any future Appeal.

4.2.3 The formal meetings should be arranged and conducted by the Synod. The purpose of the this stage of the procedure is to ensure that the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker is formally made aware of the problems that their performance is causing, to provide them with an opportunity for improvement and to make clear the consequences if their performance does not improve.

4.2.4 14 days before the formal meeting, the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker will receive a written detailed account of concerns raised by their performance, so that they may prepare the answers they will give at the meeting. The Minister/ Church Related Community Worker is entitled to be represented by a recognised Trade Union or a colleague. Representation does not extend to legal representation.

4.2.5 All Ministers/Church Related Community Workers shall have the right of appeal against any decisions taken at the formal stages of the Capability Procedure.

## **4.3 First Formal Review Meeting**

4.3.1 The meeting will be confirmed in writing and a date for a second formal review meeting will be scheduled.

4.3.2 The objectives of the meeting will be to:

- formally outline the performance problem;
- identify the gap between performance and the expected standard;
- review provision of support, assistance and training needs;
- outline why current levels of performance are unacceptable;
- discuss why levels of performance have not been met;
- consider any further support and assistance;



- set targets for future performance and;
- The Minister/Church Related Community Worker may be given a written warning that failure to improve will lead to further action that may lead to their termination of service with the local pastorate /post or a recommendation that adjustments be made to their ministry or they be transferred to a more suitable pastorate/post.

The Minister/Church Related Community Worker will be notified of the decisions of the meeting within 10 days. The second review meeting should take place 3 months after the first formal review (providing the Minister/Church Related Community Worker with another opportunity of reaching the performance levels of the role).

#### **4.4 Second Formal Review Meeting**

The process as above will be repeated. At the end of this review a final written warning may be given that failure to improve will lead to further action that may lead to their termination of service with the local pastorate /post or a recommendation that adjustments be made to their ministry or they be transferred to a more suitable pastorate/post.

The Minister/Church Related Community Worker will be notified of the decisions of the meeting within 10 days.

#### **4.5 Final Formal Review Meeting**

4.5.1 Where a Minister/Church Related Community Worker has been formally reviewed on two occasions and there has not been an acceptable level of progress, the Synod should call a further meeting. The meeting should follow the procedure described for the first formal meeting (4.3)

4.5.2 If the Minister/Church Related Community Worker's explanation, for his/her continued gaps in performance levels, is unacceptable, the Synod will to consider alternative options. These options will be:

- a period of further training/retreat/sabbatical for the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker,
- provide advice and assistance to the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker to seek another pastorate/post more suited to their abilities,
- a recommendation to the Church Meeting that it should consider the termination of service,
- recommend that the Moderator initiate the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure or the Section O Process on the grounds that non-compliance within the Capability Procedure was either the result of mental or physical incapacity or misconduct constituting a breach of the ordination/commissioning promises. If either of these courses is taken the final sanction of removal from the Roll of Ministers of Word and Sacraments or List of Church Related Community Workers could be imposed.



The Minister/Church Related Community Worker and the pastorate post will be notified of the decisions of the meeting within 10 days.

## 5. Right of Appeal process

5.1 Ministers/Church Related Community Workers wishing to appeal against the decision taken and of the formal stages of the Capability Procedure must write to the Moderator of their Synod submitting his/her reasons for the appeal within 7 working days of receiving the decision.

5.2 The Moderator will set up an appeal hearing which will include members of the Synod Executive who had no part in the formal hearings and will seek to agree a date and time. The appeal hearing will take place as soon as possible after the receipt of the notice of appeal and normally within one calendar month.

5.3 Whilst the appeal is in process any action as a result of a decision taken in the last formal meeting shall be held in abeyance

5.4 The pastorate/post, in question will be required to submit a **statement of case** outlining the facts of the circumstances surrounding the Minister/CRCW's underperformance. This should be submitted within 7 days of the notification of the date of the appeal hearing .

5.5 Ministers/Church Related Community Workers may provide a written submission to the appeal panel should they wish to do so. This should be submitted within 7 days of the notification of the date of the appeal hearing .

5.6 Both the Minister/Church Related Community Worker and pastorate/post will receive all the necessary paperwork pertaining to the Minister's/Church Related Community Worker's underperformance and any other relevant paperwork, 7 days before the appeal hearing date. The Minister/Church Related Community Worker will be invited to attend the appeal hearing along with his/her Trade Union representative or colleague/member of the URC.

5.7 The Moderator and Synod Executive will give due consideration to the information presented. The decision of the Moderator and Synod Executive will be final. The Minister/ Church Related Community Worker and his/her representative will be notified in writing no later than 10 working days after the conclusion of the appeal.





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**J3**

**Ministries Committee**

**Resolution M5**

**Grievance Procedure for Ministers of  
Word and Sacraments and Church Related  
Community Workers**

**General Assembly approves the Ministerial Grievance Procedure which  
replaces the current grievance procedure approved by General Assembly 1990**

**1 Introduction**

The United Reformed Church recognises the need for good practice and natural justice when resolving grievances from Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers. Ministerial grievances could arise as a result of any matter that the minister is dissatisfied with in relation to Ministry and could involve problems within the local church/post, between ministerial colleagues or between the minister and the Synod Moderator or Synod Officers. The aim of this procedure is to provide an effective means by which the grievance can be aired and where possible, resolved fairly, swiftly and as near as possible to the source of the grievance.

It is hoped that most issues will be capable of being resolved *informally*. It is in the interest of both the United Reformed Church and the Minister/Church Related Community Worker raising the grievance to reach an informal solution to a problem. Grievances will be investigated fairly and impartially respecting the confidentiality of information that is provided during the course of any proceedings.

**2 Scope of the procedure**

This grievance procedure applies to Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers.

**3 General Principles**

Nothing in this procedure prevents a minister from informally raising a matter of concern and an informal discussion can often resolve a problem informally without the need for a written record to be made if a more formal solution was sought. It is therefore encouraged that where a minister has a grievance, in the first instance, the matter should be resolved *informally* with the person(s) involved if possible.



#### **4 Assistance to Ministers/Church Related Community Workers**

The minister has the right to representation within the grievance process and may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at any stage of the grievance process.

#### **The Grievance process**

##### **Stage 1**

If a Minister/Church Related Community Worker has an issue with any matter relating to their ministry, and the matter cannot be resolved informally, the minister should raise the issue in writing with their Synod Moderator. If the issue(s) involves the Synod Moderator then the Minister/Church Related Community Worker should write to the General Secretary.

The Synod Moderator or General Secretary, where the grievance is against a Moderator, will seek to resolve the matter as *promptly as possible*. The Minister/Church Related Community Worker will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss and fully investigate the issue. Other parties who have involvement in the matter may also be asked to attend the meeting to give their views on the matter. This stage of the process remains informal and pastoral with the aim of seeking a resolution of the issue. The Moderator or General Secretary will however confirm the outcome of the meeting to the Minister/Church Related Community Worker in writing within 10 working days of the meeting.

##### **Stage 2**

If the Minister/Church Related Community Worker is not satisfied that the grievance has been resolved at Stage 1, they may appeal in writing no later than 7 working days (from receiving written confirmation of the outcome of the Stage 1 Hearing) to the Synod Moderator or General Secretary who will inform the appropriate Synod Committee authorised to deal with pastoral concerns within the Synod, or the Clerk to the Assembly where the grievance is against a Moderator, and give instruct for an appeal to be conducted. The Synod Moderator or General Secretary will take no further part in the appeal process concentrating on the provision of pastoral support for the Minister/Church Related Community Worker.

The Minister/Church Related Community Worker will supply the Synod Committee or Clerk to the Assembly with a written outline of the grievance and the reasons why they do not feel there has been a satisfactory outcome following the Stage 1 Hearing indicating their intention to appeal. The Synod Committee/ Clerk to the Assembly will give further consideration to the issue within *14 working days* of receiving the minister's written outline. During this time the Synod Committee/Clerk to the Assembly will seek a written report from those against whom the complaint has been made. The Minister/Church Related Community Worker will be invited to attend a meeting. Those other parties that attended the Stage 1 Hearing may also be invited to attend as may be required by the Synod Committee/ Clerk to the Assembly. Following the meeting the Synod Committee/ Clerk to the Assembly will confirm the outcome of the appeal meeting to the Minister/Church Related Community Worker in writing within 10 working days of the appeal. This decision will be final.



# **MISSION COUNCIL**

**7 – 9<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2008**

# J4

Resolution

## **The Ministerial Working Week**

General Assembly approves the guidelines on the Ministerial working week, which sets out as principle;

- a) that there is more clarity in defining working ours than 'days off'
  - b) the working week, translated into hours per month, shall be more than 160 hours and not more than 192
  - c) A note on the working week shall be included in the Plan for Partnership and the rationale for the working week, set out as supporting text for this resolution, shall be available on request from the Ministries office.
- 1 Paragraph 7.1 of the Plan for Partnership sets out holiday provision for Ministers and CRCWs but the Plan contains no definition of the working week. This can lead to two extreme assumptions, that those in ministry work only one day a week or that they are available 24/7.
  - 2 Custom and practice means that those in ministry have for some years been encouraged to have a day a week 'off' and congregations are instructed to check that this is happening. However, this suggests that ministers have a six day working week and begs the question 'Is there any common agreement about the length of the ministerial working day?'
  - 3 Part of the remit of the Ministries Committee is a concern for central care and conditions of service of Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers, and in the exercise of that concern the Committee believes that some guidance should be given about the ministerial working week.
  - 4 Any guidance on the working week arising from a wholly admirable desire to care for the Minister/CRCW and his/her family is set within the context of ministerial status being that of office holder with all the flexibility and autonomy that implies. Such guidance must also take account of the unpredictability of ministerial life in which some weeks are filled with crises and others are as eventful as the minister cares to make them.
  - 5 Furthermore, such guidance must take note of the vocational life which leads individuals to respond instinctively to the needs of others, whenever that need arises. However, such an instinct needs to be treated with immense care in order to safeguard the health and well-being of individual Ministers/CRCWs and their families. Ministry is not only a series of tasks (e.g. writing the sermon; arranging community events) which can be finished, but is focused on the life of the congregation and/or community and therefore, in a very real sense, can never be finished or quantified.



- 6 Nevertheless, the Ministries Committee feels it right to offer guidelines on the ministerial working week, in order to take seriously the concept of work/life balance and leave the Minister/CRCW with time for family and friends as well as free to give voluntary time to any cause about which he/she feels passionate but which is not part of the local church's planned vision and mission. In this respect the church may be seen to be 'counter-cultural', challenging the working ethos of much of our society.
- 7 Rather than talk of 'days off', we believe it is more appropriate to talk in terms of hours over and above which Ministers/CRCWs should view themselves as within their own time; time to be used as they want without any sense of guilt. Because ministry does not fit easily into a routine working week the hours should be treated with flexibility, possibly dealt with in monthly blocks and managed by the Minister/CRCW who alone will know the complexity of his/her ministry.
- 8 In order to set guidelines for the ministerial working week there is no reason why the Church cannot be guided by the working time regulations.

"For the purposes of the Working Time Regulations (WTR) 1998, organisations are required to monitor the hours of their employees to ensure that individuals do not work in excess of an average of 48 hours per week over a 17 week period unless by mutual agreement".

The mutual agreement is set out as a waiver in the contracts issued to lay staff in Church House.

"For the purposes of the WTR you agree that the average weekly 48 hour limit shall not apply in your case indefinitely, provided that you may, at any time, on giving not less than two months prior written notice to The United Reformed Church House (Human Resources Office), withdraw your agreement to this waiver. You also agree that if you withdraw your agreement in this way, thereafter the reference period over which your working time will be averaged in relation to the said 48 hour limit will be successive periods of 17 weeks".

The standard full-time working week at Church House is 35 hours.

- 9 A standard full-time ministerial working week could therefore be anything up to 48 hours a week, though secular standard working weeks are probably between 35 and 42 hours. The Ministries office would suggest a minimum of 40 hours a week. This includes Sunday and does not preclude the practice of a designated day off. The Ministries Committee also recommends that highest average number of working hours of 48 hours per week in any month (192 hours per month). This would allow for the weeks of extreme business and for those ministers who are currently working much longer hours to cut down gradually.
- 10 If guidance on the working week is accepted by the Church, there is no suggestion that the Minister/CRCW fills out a 'time sheet' to submit to the Elders. Equally, there is no reason why a Minister/CRCW should not inform the Elders or a support group of the hourly elements of the working week. Indeed, it ought to be part of the Elders' responsibility to the Minister/CRCW and local pastorate or post to ensure that the Minister/CRCW does not regularly overwork to the detriment of individual health. It may be illuminating for the congregations to know the breadth of the ministerial task. The most important factor is the relationship between Minister/CRCW and pastorate or post. Where the Minister/CRCW is felt to be fulfilling his/her role within the total life of the congregation most church members will not think in terms of the time a Minister/CRCW gives.



- 11 In setting clear guidelines for 'working time' several factors need to be borne in mind.
  - 11.1 For some ministers their local ministry is their only passion. That has to be accepted, although open to being questioned by the Elders or by the appraisal partner in the accompanied self-appraisal element of the ministerial review.
  - 11.2 An essential part of the minister's work is reflection, prayer and study. This is not additional to, but an integral part of, the working time. Frenetic activity is counter-productive.
  - 11.3 Ministry also has a creative quality about it and the creative process is notoriously difficult to quantify. It is the end result of time spent in apparent inactivity that is important.
  - 11.4 A clear working time will not prevent the majority of those in ministry being 'on call'. But it may enable them to decide how to respond to any request and to feel able to take time off after a particularly busy or stressful period.
  - 11.5 Setting clear guidelines about the hours which form a reasonable working week should help reduce stress in those ministers who are diligent. It might also help those dealing with ministers who do not seem to pull their weight. But we may also need to address, perhaps more stringently in the assessment process, those who 'need to be needed'. This need can produce levels of over-commitment to others which eventually places considerable strain upon the individual minister as well as others. Such stress can lead to a sense of being put on, which may manifest itself in grievance. Over-commitment on the part of some ministers also creates quite unrealistic expectations in congregations of the responsibilities of the average minister.





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**K**

## **Nominations Committee Report**

- 1. Conveners Elect (for appointment at General Assembly 2008)**  
Assessment Board Dr Graham Campling  
Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee A name is being actively pursued.

**2. Trustee**

It is anticipated that by the time of Mission Council agreement will have been given by the Trustees and the Nominations Committee to the nomination of Mrs Claudette Binns as a Trustee. Mrs Binns has been an elder of Elmwood United Reformed Church, Birmingham, since 1986 and is currently co-church secretary; she has experience in a range of banking services and as a magistrate. Satisfactory references have been provided. She will fill the remaining Mission Council position which relates to ensuring adequate ethnic representation.

**Resolution: Mission Council agrees to appoint Mrs Claudette Binns as a Trustee to serve forthwith and until General Assembly 2014.**

**3. Eastern Synod Moderator**

It is hoped that by the time Mission Council meets it will be possible to bring the nomination for the post of Moderator of Eastern Synod.

**4. Secretary for Ministries**

It is hoped that by the time Mission Council meets it will be possible to bring the nomination for the post of Secretary for Ministries.

**5. Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry**

It is hoped that by the time Mission Council meets it will be possible to bring the nomination for the post of Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry.

**6. Think-tank on Mission and Spirituality**

Following Mission Council's agreement in January to the remit, composition and method of appointment of the Think-tank, further work has been done towards nominating an initial group. However, it has become clear that since this (a) will not be a standing committee of Assembly, and therefore not be appointed by Assembly or be answerable to Assembly or Mission Council, (b) will have no authority or official place within the structures of the church and (c) will act as a ideas group for the current Assembly Moderator and Mission Council, the details of the method of appointment perhaps need to be rethought. The suggestion is that the membership of the initial group should be left to the three "current" Moderators, with support from the Nominations Committee, particularly in relation to balance. In future, new people would be added to the group, on rotation, at the nomination of the co-Moderators Elect. In other words, the initiative would rest with the Moderators rather than with Nominations Committee. Agreement is sought for this slight refinement of the process.



## 7. Work in progress

7.1 Exploration continues towards finding ways of making committee vacancies more widely known to the whole of the church. Progress will be reported in due course.

7.2 Discussion has been initiated on the length of committee appointments. Again, a report will be made later.

7.3 All committees are being approached in an endeavour to find and share good practice regarding the induction and training of new committee members.

7.4 Preliminary work has been done on the composition of the proposed Standing Panel for the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure which will be needed if Assembly gives its approval to the Procedure.

## 8. Church membership requirement

It has been a normal expectation up to now that membership of Assembly committees is confined to those currently in membership of a local United Reformed Church. However, on occasions, people are being nominated who are not currently in membership. Sometimes these people are actively involved in synod life or they may be even more widely known. Sometimes they come through FURY channels - in fact this was the case with most of the FURY nominations in 2006. At the same time these may be people who are very committed to and experienced in the life of our church but who for particular reasons are currently attending, and are sometimes members of, a church of another denomination. It is also possible, for instance, that a Methodist from a URC/Methodist LEP might be considered as someone having something significant to contribute as if they were a URC member and therefore might be invited to serve on a committee. In all these circumstances it is felt that some flexibility is sometimes appropriate at the discretion of the Nominations Committee. Approval is sought for this policy.

## 9. Changeover date for committees 2009

Membership of committees normally takes effect from the conclusion of General Assembly. In other words, once committees have made their report to Assembly and new membership has been agreed, the new committees take up their responsibilities as soon as Assembly finishes. Since committee changes will need to continue on an annual rather than biennial basis in future, a decision needs to be made about a clear transition date in odd numbered years. The suggestion is that this should be following the summer Mission Council or on 1st July, whichever is the later. The July date is suggested because Mission Council for 2009, for instance, is in May, whereas July would give committees a full twelve months after one Assembly and before the next.

**Resolution: Mission Council agrees that, in years when there is no normal meeting of General Assembly, the transition date for committee membership shall be the end of the summer meeting of Mission Council or 1st July, whichever is the later.**





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**K1**

## **Nominations Committee Supplementary Report**

### **1. Eastern Synod Moderator**

The Appointing Group, convened by Mr Simon Rowntree, recommends to Mission Council that the Revd Paul Whittle, currently Area Minister in Birmingham and minister at Cotteridge LEP, Bournville and Weoley Hill United Reformed Churches in Birmingham, be appointed as Moderator of Eastern Synod from 1st July 2008 to 30th June 2015.

**Resolution:** Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints the Revd Paul Whittle as Moderator of Eastern Synod from 1st July 2008 to 30th June 2015.

### **2. Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Faith and Order**

The Review Group, convened by the Revd Fleur Houston, following careful consideration of all aspects of his work, recommends to Mission Council that the Reverend Richard Mortimer be invited to serve for a second period as Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Faith and Order, from 1st August 2008 to 31st July 2013.

**Resolution:** Mission Council re-appoints the Revd Richard Mortimer as Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Faith and Order, from 1st August 2008 to 31st July 2013.

### **3. Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry**

The Appointing Group, convened by the Revd Francis Ackroyd, recommends to Mission Council that the Revd Dr Michael Jagessar, currently a tutor at Queens Foundation College, Birmingham, be appointed as Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry from 1st September 2008 to 31st August 2013.

**Resolution:** Mission Council appoints the Revd Dr Michael Jagessar as Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry, from 1st September 2008 to 31st August 2013.





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**



**QUESTIONS for Group Work**

**Saturday Morning**

**Groups A to D:**

Please look at the Ministries Committee's paper 'Challenge to the Church' (**PAPER J**), do you believe the argument is well made? Does the Paper commend itself to you? Are there any matters which you believe to be important which have not been addressed by the paper? What are they?

**Groups E to H:**

Please concentrate on Papers D, D1, D2 and D2 (i)

1. **Beginning with the Dream Documents (Papers D and D1):** How do you respond to what is presented here? Are there ways in which these documents could be improved before presentation to Assembly?
2. If time, please look at the Review of Youth and Children's Work Development Officers (**Papers D2 and D2(i)**), and in the light of feedback from the consultations, how do you respond to the 10 Recommendations and 3 Scenarios?

Is there anything further you feel the Youth and Children's Work Committee needs to bear in mind in bringing this review to General Assembly?



## Saturday Evening

### **Groups A to D:**

1. Please look at one or more of **Papers J1 (Retired Ministers' Housing), J2 (Capability) and J3 (Grievance)**: do you think the papers are clear and well-argued? Are there any significant factors which have not been considered or which need further attention before bringing this to *General Assembly*?

2. If time, please scrutinise the Resolutions in **Paper ASS** - are they clear? Do you have any advice for the committees in terms of presentation of these matters to *General Assembly*?

### **Groups E to H:**

1. Please begin by looking at **Paper ASS** - are the resolutions and accompanying text clear? Do you have any advice for the committees in terms of presentation of these matters to *General Assembly*?

2. Please look at one or more of **Papers J1 (Retired Ministers' Housing), J2 (Capability) and J3 (Grievance)**: do you think the papers are clear and well-argued? Are there any significant factors which have not been considered or which need further attention before bringing this to *General Assembly*?





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**7-9<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**ASS**

**Assembly Committees' Draft Resolutions  
for General Assembly**  
*(requiring Mission Council's scrutiny rather than approval)*

**1. Church and Society**

**Resolution for Churches to pay a Living Wage**

The Church and Society Committee meeting at the Windermere Centre on 22-23 January 2008 reflected on the call by Church Action on Poverty (CAP) for churches to pay a living wage to their employees. This call comes 5 years after their research on 'A Living Wage Church' in the greater Manchester area which revealed disturbing trends related to the payment and conditions of employment of church staff.

The United Reformed Church was a signatory of the 'Living Wage' pledge in 2003 and provided funding for the production of the 'Just Church' resources launched this year. We have also expressed support for the proposed campaign to end UK poverty which is to be launched later this year.

It is believed that complying with this resolution will bring benefits to both employer and employee and will greatly enhance the credibility of the United Reformed Church as we engage in campaigning for an end to UK Poverty and Homelessness and continue to support campaigns such as 'Stamp Out Poverty.'

**Resolution:**

**The Church and Society Committee calls on all the United Reformed Church's Synods and churches:**

- 1. to support Church Action of Poverty's call for churches to pay a living wage of at least £ 7.42 an hour in London and £7.00 elsewhere in the UK.**
- 2. to ensure that all employees have a written contract of employment.**
- 3. for the terms and conditions of employment of employees to at least comply with the minimum legal requirements stipulated.**
- 4. to develop an equal opportunity policy if one does not already exist, and**
- 5. where contract or agency staff are employed, to engage with contractors and agencies on the payment of their employees to ensure compliance with this resolution**



## 2. Ministries

### Resolution M6

### Certificates of Limited Service

**General Assembly agrees that Certificates of Limited Eligibility should be renamed Certificates for Limited Service.**

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1 Confusion frequently arises between Certificates of Eligibility and Certificates of Limited Eligibility, approved by Assembly in 2002, because of the very similar wording used. They are, in fact, quite different in nature. It would help the church if the latter could be renamed Certificates for Limited Service. We ask the endorsement of General Assembly for this change.

### Resolution M7

### Extension of Certificates for Limited Service

**General Assembly extends the scope of Certificates of Limited Eligibility (hence to be known as Certificates for Limited Service) to be applied in exceptional cases to fixed termed appointments.**

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1. The Accreditation sub-committee seeks to apply this provision for the benefit of local churches and posts, and has come to the realisation that the time limit of one year that was originally set can work against the interests of the church. Although applications can be made for Certificates of Limited Eligibility to be renewed for a further period this causes unnecessary administrative work for the local church, the Synod and Accreditation sub-committee. In 2008 two applications were made for Certificates of Limited Eligibility for fixed term appointments which, for the reasons already stated the sub-committee approved. We ask the endorsement of General Assembly for this more flexible approach.

### Resolution M8

### Amendments to the Plan for Partnership

**General Assembly agrees the following changes to the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration.**

Deletions are shown in [square brackets] and additions are shown in *italics*.

#### [2. Principles of the Plan

2.1 The whole ministry of the URC is to be made available to the whole of the Church, and the financial responsibility for this ministry is to be shared throughout the whole of the Church. It is recognised that the extent and type of ministry will vary in different situations.



- 2.2 Payment to ministers/CRCWs of a basic stipend and other payments provided for by the Plan will be charged to the Ministry and Mission Fund, which will be funded from local church contributions.]

2. ***Principles of the Plan***

- 2.1 *The whole ministry of the United Reformed Church is to be made available to the whole of the Church and the financial responsibility for this ministry is to be shared throughout the whole of the Church.*
- 2.2 *The General Assembly has agreed that the ministers and Church Related Community Workers of the Church should be deployed by Synods in ways that respond to the many different mission opportunities in different places. There will be no one pattern and the patterns that emerge should not be constrained by the availability of local finance.*
- 2.3 *The complementary commitment of local churches is to contribute to the costs of the whole Church's ministry according to the congregation's means. This payment is the first charge on the local church's income. The contributions of local churches will be paid into the Ministry and Mission Fund, from which the stipend of ministers and CRCWs, and other payments detailed in the Plan, will be drawn.*
- 2.4 *Consistent with this approach to funding ministry, the General Assembly discourages the payment of local stipend supplements.*

**Sickness Provision**

[6.1.2 Payment during sickness: remuneration shall be paid during sickness for such periods and in such sums as shall be determined from time to time by the MoM Sub-Committee, which will take into account the regulations and benefit schemes of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

6.1.2.1 Ministers/CRCWs who are unable to work because of sickness or accident shall be paid full stipend (less any Incapacity Benefit Long-term or Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit received) for a period of six months. However, any sickness arising in the twelve months prior to the first day of a new period of illness will be taken into account in the calculation of those six months. At the appropriate times after the beginning of any illness, the MoM Sub-Committee shall take steps to determine, in consultation with the Synod Moderator, what further help, if any, should be given when the entitlement to full stipend comes to an end. Ministers/CRCWs who are unable to work for more than three days are required to advise the MoM Office as soon as possible during their illness in order that the necessary records can be maintained.

6.1.2.2 Ministers/CRCWs who are sick for periods in excess of twenty eight weeks will claim Incapacity Benefit Long-term from the DWP and should notify the MoM Office of the amount of benefit received in order that the next available stipend payment may be reduced.]

6.1.2 *Payment during sickness: stipend shall be paid during periods of sickness in such sums as shall be determined from time to time by the MoM Sub-Committee and will take into account the regulations and benefit schemes of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).*



6.1.2.1 *Ministers/CRCWs who are unable to work because of sickness or accident shall be paid full stipend (less any Incapacity Benefit Long-term or Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit received) for a period of six months. However, any sickness arising in the twelve months prior to the first day of a new period of sickness will be taken into account in the calculation of those six months. At the appropriate time after the beginning of any sickness, the MoM Sub-Committee shall determine, in consultation with the Synod Moderator, what further help, if any, should be given when the entitlement to full stipend comes to an end.*

6.1.2.2 *Ministers/CRCWs who are unable to work for more than three days because of sickness must advise the MoM Office as soon as possible to ensure that the necessary records can be maintained. The first seven days of sickness may be self certified (by letter, email or telephone) but after that all continuing sickness must be covered by a doctor's certificate, ensuring that the date of return to work is advised. If a period of sickness extends for more than twenty eight weeks ministers/CRCWs will be able to claim Incapacity Benefit Long-term from the DWP. Any benefit received when in receipt of full stipend should be advised to the MoM Office for it to be deducted from the next available stipend payment.*

**Maternity/Adoption/Paternity provisions:**

6.1.3 *Maternity/Adoption/Paternity provisions: [details of arrangements for parental leave and pay can be obtained from the MoM office] ministers/CRCWs are entitled to statutory pay and leave and full details of the arrangements can be obtained from the MoM office. Although office holders are not entitled to additional maternity/adoption leave and Keeping in Touch (KIT) days, the General Assembly has agreed that these provisions should be extended to ministers/CRCWs.*

**Broadband provision**

6.3.5 **Expenses:** the local church or other appropriate body shall reimburse the minister/CRCW for the cost of postage, telephone, *broadband internet connection*, stationery and any other expenses necessarily incurred on church business. This may well include expenses relating to the use of a computer and in some instances the provision of a computer. The reimbursement of expenses will be on the basis of actual cost incurred, and not by a predetermined lump sum.

**Resettlement Grants** The text will be included when finalized

9.1.1 Every stipendiary minister/CRCW, whether full-time or part-time, shall be entitled to a [full] resettlement grant (see Appendix A) upon settling into their first pastorate and each subsequent pastorate or into an appointment paid under the terms of the Plan and upon final retirement; always provided that the settlement involves a change in the place of residence and that the grant shall not be payable more than once in any period of three years.

9.1.2 Except at the time of a minister/CRCW's initial induction (when a full resettlement grant is payable) where the pastorate is part-time the grant shall be pro rata according to the scoping of the pastorate to be served. [A full retirement resettlement grant will be paid to ministers/CRCWs who have completed 10 years service up to their retirement. The grant will be reduced



pro rata where the minister/CRCW has not been in stipendiary service for 10 years, or the years of service have not been full-time.] *Upon retirement the resettlement grant shall be calculated based on the last ten years of service up to age 65 or earlier retirement. The grant will be reduced pro rata where the minister/CRCW has not been in the stipendiary service of the Church for all of those ten years or those years of service have not all been full-time.*

## APPENDIX C - REMOVAL COSTS

The receiving local church is responsible for paying the costs of removal (see para 6.3.3). Where the removal is within the United Kingdom reimbursement of up to 50% of the cost incurred (subject to a maximum reimbursement of [£1,000] £1,500) is available from the Ministry and Mission Fund and application should be made via the MoM Office. Where a minister/CRCW is called from abroad reimbursement from that Fund to the local church will be based on the removal costs from the port of entry.

For ministers/CRCWs called to the URC under the Overseas Recruitment programme in conjunction with the Ministries Committee, 75% of the cost of removal of themselves, their families, and their baggage from abroad to the pastorate in the UK, up to a maximum of £2,000, will be reimbursed from the Ministry and Mission Fund. A similar reimbursement will be made for their return on termination provided that the period of service has continued for more than three years.

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1 The Plan for Partnership is a substantial document which sets out the entitlements of Ministers and Church Related Community Workers, as agreed by past Assemblies. This resolution tidies up some wording, removes any ambiguities and updates the Plan for existing practices.

### 2 **Parental leave and Pay**

As self-employed office holders, ministers are entitled to receive statutory benefits by virtue of their payment of Class 1 National Insurance contributions (NICs) deducted from stipend payments. Statutory benefits paid by the Church cover

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP),  
Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP),  
Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP),  
Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP).

Recent changes in legislation have increased the parental pay which is automatically available to ministers and also extended the leave period attaching to these benefits to 52 weeks. However such additional unpaid leave, beyond the statutory pay period, is not applicable to office holders.

Legislation has also introduced 'Keeping In Touch' (KIT) days. This enables women to undertake some paid work during the maternity pay period without losing SMP for that week, up to a maximum of 10 KIT days.



To provide best practice Terms and Conditions of Service, the option of additional unpaid leave and the provision of KIT days will be extended to Ministers and CRCWs.

- 3 Revenue & Customs has confirmed that where the broadband internet connection is provided by the employer on the understanding that this is primarily for business purposes with minimal personal use, no taxable benefit will arise.

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**Resolution M9            United Reformed Church Recognition for lay preachers**

**General Assembly requests Synods to:**

- a) recommend to General Assembly, through the Ministries Committee, the names of those lay preachers who have completed appropriate training for Assembly Accreditation,**  
**b) keep lists of lay preachers who are locally recognised.**

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The Committee has considered the most appropriate new title for those who were, in the past, District recognized lay preachers, now that Assembly has upheld the suspension of Districts. This has produced much correspondence and discussion across the country as various Synods had different ideas on the subject. The committee recommends that the term 'locally recognized' would be more appropriate than 'Synod recognized' which could give rise to misinterpretation and confusion with Assembly Accredited lay preachers.



## Local Church Constitution and the changes to Charity Law

With the membership of Mission Council changing gradually I trust that those who have already heard part of this saga will forgive me if I begin at the beginning. Some here may remember the Flanders and Swan song, "It was on a Monday morning that the gas-man came to call..." You may recognise some similarities in this story. But, we begin with a request, that would come in from time to time, for a copy of the URC Constitution. Local Churches seeking to join their local Council for Voluntary Service or other body which required sight of a constitution would write to the Assembly Office and were generally unimpressed to be told that the Constitution of the United Reformed Church consists of three acts of parliament, one statutory instrument, the Basis and Structure of the United Reformed Church, the Rules of Procedure and the Standing Orders of the General Assembly. The usual response was to say "But we want the short version!" and you can imagine their reaction on being told, "That is the short version."

Therefore a shorter document was produced that could serve for these purposes, but it was never ideal. It was still far too long and the Catch the Vision changes rendered it completely out of date.

But, the changes to the law on Charities and the forthcoming abolition of excepted status made it necessary for us to have something that could be used by Local Churches in order that they might register with the Charity Commission.

A small group, myself, Janet Knott, our Legal Advisor, and Rachel Greening, the West Midlands Trust Officer, began, in close consultation with the Charity Commission, to draft a suitable document. This went through several drafts and version 8 was brought to an earlier Mission Council for approval in principle. Eventually a final version, version 12, was completed and after a last brief argument with the Charity Commission about one sentence sent on its way to the Commission for final approval. Such approval being needed for the document to be acceptable as a means of fast-tracking applications to register.

The Charity Commission acknowledged the document and we were informally advised that at a meeting to discuss the registration of Synods which was to be held on February 13<sup>th</sup> the Local Church Constitution would be agreed. This did not happen. At that meeting a senior legal advisor to the Charity Commissioners indicated that he no longer accepted the need for this document.

Now at this point I may have got confused. What the legal advisor to the commissioners appeared to say at that point was that the Commission was not concerned with regulating the Local Churches (or indeed, the URC at any level). The Charity Commission was, he said, interested only in the Church's assets and the charitable trusts upon which they are held. They were concerned with the assets of the Church which were held by the Synod Trust Bodies all of which are companies limited by guarantee and most of which are already registered as charities in their own right. He is of the opinion that, not only the Churches, Halls and Manses, are being held on the trusts set out in the URC Act but also the working funds of the Local Church. We have always been of the opinion that the trusts in the Act relate only to land and not, for instance, the Plate collection after services. Understandably we were somewhat taken aback and asked for his views to be put in writing.

When the letter came the ground had shifted. Now we were being told that the significant body was the Local Church. That the assets of the Local Church would be deemed to include Churches, Hall and Manses which previously we had seen as held



by the Trust bodies. And furthermore that a local Church Constitution was not required because in order to fast track registration all we would need to produce was “three acts of parliament, one statutory instrument, the Basis and Structure of the United Reformed Church, the Rules of Procedure and the Standing Orders of the General Assembly”.

Although we appear to have come round in a complete circle, we have more work to do. As you might imagine we are disputing the Charity Commissioners interpretation of the URC Acts, both interpretations. We hold them to have misunderstood the Act and have already raised the matter with the Churches Main Committee. We have a number of meetings planned in the next few weeks to organise our response and I hope to have a more positive report for the Assembly in July.

J. B.

06 March 2008





## MISSION COUNCIL 7-9 March 2008

### **Emergency Resolution on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip**

Events in recent days heighten concern regarding the situation in Israel/Palestine. A report from Christian Aid and a consortium of agencies\*, published on Thursday March 6<sup>th</sup>, said: "the situation for 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip is worse now than it has ever been, since the start of the Israeli Occupation in 1967". Since Thursday, the attack on a religious school in Jerusalem increases the likelihood of spiralling retaliatory violence.

Reflecting on the deepening humanitarian crisis, Mission Council:

- i. Expresses a sense of outrage at the impact of the continuing violence on the civilian populations.
- ii. Calls on the Israeli government and Palestinian armed groups to cease all attacks against civilians.
- iii. Supports the call by Christian Aid and other agencies for international efforts to be directed towards ending the blockade of Gaza, which is causing enormous hardship to ordinary women, children and men.
- iv. Appeals to Palestinian and Israeli leaders to draw from their faith traditions, that which respects all people created in God's image, and to work towards achieving peace and justice in both Israel and Palestine.

Mission Council asks the Church and Society committee to ensure that this resolution is sent to:

- i. Her Majesty's Government.
- ii. Christian Aid
- iii. United Reformed Church project partners in the region, assuring them of our prayerful support.
- iv. Israeli Embassy

\*'The Gaza Strip: A Humanitarian Implosion' published by Crisis Action



Thanks to Stephen :-

an educationist  
I know you as an historian, and as an administrator. What we have discovered this year is that your primary calling is that of a minister of WTS. You have expended the word with us, you have kept our eyes on God's horizon, but above all you have loved for us - ~~what~~ I personally have been grateful for that, altho' I know that some of my decisions this yr have increased your already formidable workload. <sup>192 hrs a mth</sup> What number of me would have seen <sup>in</sup> the amount of time you have spent moving you wisdom and insight <sup>in</sup> pastoral matters and the great support you have lent to the Central Secretariat.

But it is on behalf of HC that I must thank you - for your judicious & sensitive chairing, your ministry of the word & your love of harmony - and also for your wise choice of our <sup>an</sup> ~~prime~~ <sup>chaplain</sup> ~~holy~~ <sup>who has led our worship</sup> with such imaginative and passion. What you have both given us will remain with us for a very long time.



Elizabeth Caswell (Moderator of Eastern Synod and past moderator of Assembly)  
Elizabeth Welch (Moderator of West Midlands Synod)

Lucy Brierley (Chaplain)  
The General Secretary will thank the Moderator

12.30p.m.

Closing Worship

The Chaplain

1.00p.m.

*Lunch*

Depart



# Catch the Vision of God's Tomorrow

## Introduction from the Moderator

*Elizabeth Welch*

'Catching the vision of God's tomorrow' is both exciting and disturbing.

It's exciting because it affirms our trust in God for the future. We aren't just the people who are 'waiting for the church to see me out'. We believe that God has a future for us, because God has, in Christ, offered the church as a gift for the fulfilling of his eternal purposes.

It's disturbing, because, with our limited human vision, we can't see clearly the bigger picture of what God has in store for us. And what God has in store will mean that we need to be shaped differently, as individuals and as Christian communities, as we grow more fully into Christ and are more open to the power of the Holy Spirit.

The 126 visits that the Synod officers and Area Representatives have made to United Reformed Churches and LEP'S across the West Midlands have been looking at where God is already at work in our churches and what the needs of the churches are.

We have been impressed by the stories that we have heard and heartened by the many ways in which God is present in our diverse communities. This booklet tells some of the findings from the visits. The first purpose of the visits was to listen to the churches.

prayer and Bible study (22) and a need to be trained for outreach and a concern to develop the skills for evangelism (17). One particular aspect of this was the expressed need to find how to make appropriate links (pastoral, outreach) with the huge number of people who use our local premises in ways that do not regard them as a 'captive audience' or an 'easy target'.

## Training

Other requests for training included: leadership skills (15), music (10), and financial (10) and property matters (10).

## The Wider Church

There is need to strengthen links across the churches of the Synod and how to balance local (often ecumenical) links with denominational ties. Also the Synod was requested to help with the issue of how Local Ecumenical Partnerships can maintain links with the United Reformed Church where the main connection is with another denomination (13).

Interestingly there were also 57 other specific and contextualised issues noted.

## WHERE NEXT?

As we look to God's tomorrow, we want to move forward:

- in celebration of God's goodness seen through God's grace in Jesus Christ at work in our churches
- in commitment to trusting in God's power through the Holy Spirit, re-energising and renewing
- through being attentive to the needs identified on the visits and ways in which the Synod can respond to these needs



- in the ongoing development of the Synod theme 'treasure in clay jars' through a focus (in 2008) on healing and teaching and re-gaining confidence in God
- through the Assembly programme 'Vision4Life' with its focus on the Bible, prayer and evangelism (from 2008 to 2011)
- through the development of the Synod web-site
- in the offering of study material on 'being United and being Reformed'

**Together ... we can catch the vision of God's tomorrow**

*All the reports and the summary of the findings from the visits have been archived and are available at the Synod Office, for consultation.*

*We wish to record our grateful thanks to all who took part in the visits and made reports. We wish to say thank you, especially to the Revd. John Marsh for all the time and hard work he put in to the work of collecting and collating the reports and wish him God's blessings in his task as Assembly Moderator over the next few years.*

November 2007

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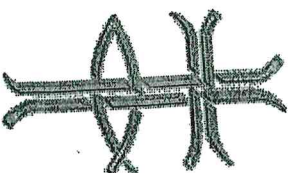
# Catch the Vision of

# God's Tomorrow

West Midlands Synod

Summary of the findings  
from the visits  
to the Churches in the Synod

2007





## Mission Council

1.1 Mission Council's task is to take a comprehensive view of the work of General Assembly; to decide on priorities; and to encourage the United Reformed Church at all levels in its engagement with the world. The scope of this engagement ranges from the local to the international arena, and includes relationships with ecumenical partners in the U.K. and overseas. While Mission Council services and maintains the work of General Assembly from one year to the next, it is principally concerned about the Church's future direction and the support of all its members.

1.2 Members: The officers of the General Assembly, the past Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the Legal Adviser, the conveners of the Assembly standing committees (except the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee), the synod moderators, two representatives from the FURY Advisory Board, and three representatives from each synod.

1.3 Mission Council Representatives appointed by synods (in March 2008) were:

Northern Synod	Miss Elaine Colechin, Revd John Durell, Mr Justice Semuli
North Western Synod	Revd Rachel Poolman, Ms Marie Trubic Revd Alan Wickens
Mersey Synod	Miss Emma Pugh, Mr Donald Swift, tba
Yorkshire Synod	Mr Roderick Garthwaite, Revd Pauline Loosemore, Mrs Val Morrison
East Midlands Synod	Revd Jane Campbell, Mrs Margaret Gateley, Mrs Irene Wren
West Midlands Synod	Mrs Adella Pritchard, Revd Anthony Howells, Mr Bill Robson
Eastern Synod	Mr Mick Barnes, Mrs Joan Turner, Revd Cecil White
South Western Synod	Mrs Janet Gray, Revd Roz Harrison, Revd Stephen Newell
Wessex Synod	Revd G Cliff Bembridge, Mrs Margaret Telfer, Mr Peter Pay
Thames North Synod	Mr David Eldridge, Revd John Macaulay, Revd David Varcoe
Southern Synod	Dr Graham Campling, Mrs Maureen Lawrence, Mr Nigel Macdonald
National Synod of Wales	Revd Dr Peter Cruchley-Jones, Revd David Fox, Mrs Liz Tadd
National Synod of Scotland	Miss Irene Hudson, Revd John Sanderson, Mr Patrick Smyth

1.4 Mission Council acts on behalf of General Assembly, taking decisions which are considered to be urgent or time-sensitive, and which need action between meetings of the Assembly. Mission Council may also be asked to undertake a piece of work on General Assembly's behalf. In such cases, the action is reported to a following Assembly, as in paragraphs 3 to 4.3.7 of this report.

1.4.1 Mission Council also acts on its own behalf, taking advice from its advisory groups (e.g. Ethical Investments, Grants and Loans, Staffing Advisory, Section O) which report to its meetings, and which may bring resolutions. These groups have access to General Assembly only through Mission Council, hence the reports at paragraphs 6.1 to 6.5, and Resolutions **MC-1** to **MC-5** (with their alternative resolutions **MC6** to **MC8**) on pages **pq-rs**.

1.4.2 Mission Council may from time-to-time instigate work, appointing a special task group or ask several Assembly committees to co-operate in undertaking a piece of work on its behalf. It is also often asked to be a sounding board for committees shaping new policies before bringing them to General Assembly. Paragraphs 5.1 and 5.16 reflect some of these different ways in which Mission Council works.

## 2. Our meetings

2.1 Since last General Assembly, Mission Council has met twice residentially and once for a one-day meeting. These occasions were chaired by the Moderator and worship was conducted by the Moderator's chaplain, the Revd Lucy Brierley.

2.2 Mission Council has received reports of changes in synod structures which resulted from the *Catch the Vision* process which General Assembly agreed last year. Mission Council has also monitored



proposals to create a Mission Committee and Mission Team to coordinate work done previously by five Assembly committees: Ecumenical (including International Relations); Church and Society (including 'Commitment for Life'); Life and Witness; Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry; and Inter Faith Relations.

2.3 Under the leadership of the General Secretary, Mission Council approved the next stage of *Catch the Vision*, called *Vision4Life*. This initiative seeks to enable the renewal of local churches through their re-engagement with the bible, prayer and evangelism. Initial presentations were made about *Vision4Life* at autumn synods; materials were sent out to all local churches in February; and an interactive website has been established. It is hoped that *Vision4Life* will be adopted by local churches for use by Advent 2008.

2.4 Mission Council has received a number of papers over the past two years by the Doctrine Prayer and Worship Committee on the United Reformed Church's ecclesiology. Its most recent paper, *Our Life Together*, is a commentary on the Basis of Union prepared by the Revd Dr Robert Pope. This was discussed and commended to the Church by Mission Council.

2.5 Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, accepted the resignation of the Revd Dr David Cornick as General Secretary on his appointment as Secretary of Churches Together in England from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008. The Moderator expressed the Assembly's gratitude to Dr Cornick for his outstanding service to the Church during the past seven years, and presented him with a gift on behalf of the 13 synods and the Assembly. Mission Council also ratified a revised process for appointing his successor.

### **3 Action taken on previous Assembly resolutions which referred matters to Mission Council From Assembly 2005:**

**3.1 Resolution 6: General Assembly, in accepting the Declaration towards a Safe Church instructed all Assembly Committees to operate within it; and urged synods, district councils and local churches to affirm the declaration, resolve to apply it in all aspects of their life and work; and synods to report their responses to Mission Council by March 2006.**

Mission Council took action on this resolution in several ways:

- 3.1.1 Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Mission Council accepted a document 'Policy and Procedures in response to alleged incidents of sexual harassment and abuse against adults' as fulfilling the Declaration of a Safe Church and instructed Synods and Assembly officers to implement the 'Policy and Procedure', subject to scrutiny by the legal advisers.
- 3.1.2 Mission Council established a Sexual Ethics Advisory Group to monitor all sexual ethics work in the church, to be made up of a Synod Moderator, one representative each from the Education and Learning Committee, the Ministries Committee and a synod safe church representative; and other expertise as needed.
- 3.1.3 Mission Council accepted a proposal that a Pastoral Response Team be established as fulfilling the Declaration of Safe Church, in relation to ministerial misconduct; and instructed the Deputy General Secretary to take the necessary steps to establish the PRT system. This needs suitable people to be identified and trained at synod and Assembly level. The newly-appointed Sexual Ethics Advisory Group, convened by the Revd Carla Grosch-Miller, will monitor the co-ordination and support of these teams.
- 3.1.4 Synod advisers met on several occasions to consider how to help churches think through the implications of the Resolution (paragraph 3.1 above) for their congregations. They worked on a revision of the Declaration (**Document MC-C**) and produced a booklet *Relating Together* which is



a resource for local churches considering their response to sexual abuse and harassment. It is intended to be used with *Life Together* (paragraphs 3.2 and 3.2.1 below) and worship material (*Worshipping Together*). These three documents were sent to all synods in time for distribution to local churches at their Spring 2008 synod meetings.

#### From Assembly 2006:

**3.2 Resolution 40: instructed 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.**

3.2.1 A Mission Council task group, convened by Mrs Rosemary Johnston, produced resource material called *Life Together*, to help local churches consider their response to the abuse of adults in the church. (see 3.1.1 above)

#### From Assembly 2007:

**3.3 Resolution 1: General Assembly instructed Mission Council and the Nominations Committee to do such further work as is necessary to create a 'think-tank' on mission and spirituality.**

This work is ongoing.

**3.4 Resolution 5: General Assembly resolved that as from 2008 it would elect two Moderators at its biennial meeting, one a minister of Word and Sacraments or a Church Related Community Worker, and one an Elder, to serve together for the following two years.**

**Resolution 5a: General Assembly asked Mission Council to review the whole process for the nomination and election of Moderators of General Assembly.**

3.4.1 Mission Council had to consider these resolutions urgently, so that nominations could be brought to the 2008 Assembly. The Council was aware of the difficulty of changing the system, and therefore agreed to the suggestion that the Revd John Marsh continue to serve as sole Moderator, with assistance from his predecessors, for the whole period from 2008-2010, and that at the 2008 Assembly a minister/CRCW should be elected to serve as Moderator between 2010 and 2012, and that an elder be elected at the same Assembly to serve for the same period.

#### **4 Actions taken on behalf of General Assembly**

##### **4.1 Appointments:**

Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Mission Council appointed

4.1.1 the Revd Roberta Rominger as General Secretary from a date to be agreed with the Thames North Synod for a seven year period.

4.1.2 Mr Frank Kantor as Secretary of Church and Society from 1 October 2007;

4.1.3 Ms Francis Brienen as Secretary for Mission from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008;

4.1.4 the Revd Dale Rominger as Secretary for World Church Relations from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007 until 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012;

4.1.5 the Revd Paul Whittle as Moderator of Eastern Synod from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015;

4.1.6 the Revd Dr Michael Jagessar as Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry, from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2013.

4.1.7 the Chairperson of the United Reformed Church Trust to be a member of General Assembly and of Mission Council.

4.1.8 Mrs Claudette Binns to serve as a Trustee forthwith until General Assembly 2014.



#### 4.2 Reappointments:

Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Mission Council, reappointed

- 4.2.1 the Revd Richard Mortimer for a further term of service as Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Faith and Order, from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013.
- 4.2.2 the Revd Nigel Uden as Moderator of the Southern Synod for a period of five years from 1 September 2008 to 31 August 2013.
- 4.2.3 the Revd Peter Noble as Moderator of the National Synod of Wales for a period of five years from 1 September 2008 to 31 August 2013;

- 4.2.4 Mission Council, received reports of the reviews of two synod moderators, and noted their recommendations that the Revd Adrian Bulley be re-appointed to serve as Moderator of Wessex synod from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014;
- 4.2.5 and that the Revd Terry Oakley be re-appointed to serve as Moderator of the East Midlands Synod from 1st September 2010 to 31 May 2012. (**Resolutions M9 and M10 on pages nm**).

#### 4.3 Resolutions on behalf of General Assembly

- 4.3.1 Mission Council set the basic ministerial stipend for 2008 at £21,060.

##### 4.3.2 Ministers Pensions Fund:

4.3.2.1 a) Valuation: A periodic valuation by professional advisers estimated on 1 January 2006 that there was an actuarial deficit. The 2006 General Assembly agreed, by Resolution 23, to increase the Church's rate of contribution to the Pension Fund, with part of the extra money intended to close the Fund deficit by 2017.

4.3.2.2 The extra money the Church would pay to the Fund was expressed as a percentage contribution per active member of the Fund (7.3% of stipend). When the calculations were done, they implicitly assumed that the number of stipendiary ministers in active service would stay constant between 2006 and 2017. In fact it is expected that the number of ministers will decline and so the amount of money raised by this formula will not be sufficient to cover the deficit.

4.3.2.3 For the part of the Church's contribution to the Pension Fund that relates to covering the deficit, the sum paid per year until 2017 should be a sum fixed in real terms and not related to the number of active stipendiary ministers, for as long as their numbers continue to decline. In addition a retrospective payment should be made to offset the under-payment since the Assembly resolution came into force.

4.3.2.4 Consequently, Mission Council resolved that with respect to the Church's contributions to the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund:

- (i) from 1 November 2007, the active members' monthly stipend to be used in calculating the monthly payments to meet the shortfall in funding will be calculated based on the greater of a) the total active members' stipend roll in force in each particular month, and b) one twelfth of £11,895,208 indexed in line with the percentage increase in the level of a Minister's stipend between 1 January 2006 and the particular month; and
- (ii) that an additional payment be made to the Fund to make up the difference between the shortfall funding payments made for the period from 1 January 2007 to 31 October 2007 and the payments that would have been made if the formula in (i) above had been in operation during that period.

##### 4.3.3 b) Amendment to the Rules

4.3.3.1 Mission Council amended paragraphs 6.4 and 6.4.4 of the Rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund so that they read as follows:



#### 6.4

“The Pension Trustee may, in the manner which it thinks fit and as if it were absolutely and beneficially entitled, use the whole or any part of the Fund to invest in, acquire, dispose of, lend or otherwise deal in or undertake to deal in any property, assets, rights, options, assurances, contracts or interests (whether or not such transactions involve liability, produce income or are authorised by law as investments for trust assets). Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing provisions trust money may be invested or applied as follows:”

#### 6.4.4

“In the purchase of assets of a non-income producing nature and any transaction calculated in the opinion of the Pension Trustee to offset or reduce any risk of loss to the Fund, or to facilitate efficient portfolio management (including the reduction of cost or the generation of additional capital or income with an acceptable level of risk), and so that the Pension Trustee may deal in foreign currencies (either at the official rate of exchange or any other rates), contracts for differences and other derivatives (exchange traded and non-exchange traded) for present or future settlement.”

4.3.4 Membership of the Pensions Executive: Noting that (a), the Convener of the Pensions Executive is appointed by General Assembly and has always been a professional actuary, (b), the Treasurer is an *ex officio* member of the Executive, and (c), the Executive also seeks suitable representatives of the Church’s two main pension schemes to serve, Mission Council resolved that the Pensions Executive should include within its membership three people appointed by General Assembly, one of whom should be appointed as the Convener.

4.3.5 Optional Deferral of Ministers’ retirement dates: Mission Council reaffirmed General Assembly’s policy that Ministers in full time stipendiary service should normally retire in the month of their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday but resolved that, with the agreement of the synod and of the pastorate/post concerned, this retirement could be deferred for a period of up to six months. For the avoidance of doubt, Mission Council reaffirmed the 2006 Assembly’s decision (Resolution 26 ‘Duty to Consider’: extension of full-time stipendiary service) for cases where a minister wishes to extend a period of full-time service beyond the six months after his or her 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

4.3.6 Regeneration Agency Mission Council noted with gratitude the work already undertaken on the development of the Regeneration Agency, and encouraged its further development as part of the mission of the United Reformed Church.

4.3.7 Statement on Burma: Mission Council expressed its deep concern for the suffering of the people of Burma and supported the worldwide international demonstrations on October 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 against the suppression of freedom in that country. It instructed the Mission Department to convey this message to our partner churches in Burma.

## 5 Other Actions

Mission Council passed a number of resolutions concerning

### Committee reorganisation:

- 5.1 It agreed that the Stewardship sub-committee become a sub-committee of the Finance Committee, and that existing members of the sub-committee who wished to continue join those members appointed by the Finance committee.
- 5.2 It established a Law and Polity Advisory Group to advise on such constitutional and legal matters as the Council shall remit to it. Its first convener is to be the Revd Prof. David Thompson;
- 5.3 It appointed a Faith and Order Reference Group;
- 5.4 It agreed to the setting up and the composition of a Mission Committee;



- 5.5 Mission Council agreed that, in years when there was no ordinary meeting of General Assembly, the transition date for committee membership should be the end of the summer meeting of Mission Council or 1<sup>st</sup> July, whichever was the later.

#### The appointment and review of Assembly-appointed staff

- 5.6 Mission Council agreed to increase the number of members on the Panel for the Appointment and Review of Synod Moderators to twenty-four, and to limit their service to six years.
- 5.7 It agreed that up to 50% of the ministry of the Revd James Breslin which relates to his work as Assembly Clerk should be funded from the General Assembly budget for the remaining period of his appointment until the close of General Assembly 2012.

#### Financial and legal matters

- 5.8 Mission Council accepted the budget for 2008.
- 5.9 and agreed to the creation of a designated Legacy Fund within the central accounts of the Church.
- 5.10 Mission Council agreed to the proposal of its Grants and Loans Group that the Group now be dissolved; developments elsewhere in the Church's structures, notably the evolution of Synod Resource Sharing mechanisms, meant that the Group's objectives could be more efficiently achieved elsewhere. The Finance Committee agreed with this view. Mission Council also resolved to phase out by 2012 the demand on the Ministry and Mission Fund to provide funding for the former purposes of the Grants and Loans Group.

#### Ministers and Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs)

- 5.11 Mission Council resolved to establish a Working Party on Housing Provision for Ministers and CRCWs with the membership to include a minister in stipendiary service appointed by Mission Council, two members nominated by both the Finance and Ministries Committees, and one nomination each from the Retired Ministers Housing Sub-committee and the Provincial Legal and Trust Officers (PLATO) to report in time for the 2010 General Assembly.
- 5.12 Mission Council instructed the Clerk of Assembly, in consultation with the Ministries Committee and the CRCW Development Officers, to prepare alterations to the Structure of the United Reformed Church such as to grant membership of the relevant Councils of the Church to Church Related Community Workers.
- 5.13 Mission Council also resolved to move in General Assembly that 'General Assembly appoints all serving CRCWs currently in post or commissioned between this date and the next ordinary meeting of the General Assembly to serve as additional members of the Synod in which they are based.' **(Resolution MC 11)**

5.14 London Synod Commission: The 2005 Assembly instructed Mission Council to appoint a Commission of Assembly to investigate the feasibility of creating a London synod. The Commission, convened by a former Assembly Moderator, the Revd Bill Mahood, reported to Mission Council in March 2007. Mission Council asked the Commission to do further work on the mission justification for a London synod, on synod boundaries, the division of resources, financial and staffing implications, synod offices and Trusts. Two representatives from Thames North and Southern synods were to be co-opted on to the Commission.

5.14.1 Mission Council also set a timetable, asking that initial proposals be brought to the synod meetings in Spring 2009, so that, if agreed, final proposals could be brought to Mission Council and General Assembly in 2010. If approved, a London Synod could then be fully operative by General Assembly in 2012.

5.14.2 In March 2008 the Commission came back to Mission Council with the recommendation that the detailed work on the practical implications be deferred for a further period. This recommendation was based on the following considerations:

- a) a parallel process had been initiated to undertake research into the state of the United Reformed Church presence in London, with a view towards identifying a ten-year strategy for mission and development. The resulting report "Bread to Spare" had been generally well received and the two



synods had produced a joint proposal for its implementation through the establishment of a “Partnership Forum” comprising key representatives from both synods, in order to oversee delivery of the strategy across the two synods. This would have a particular emphasis on relating to Greater London as a whole, but will not be confined to the London area;

- b) there was good evidence that local churches were prepared to support this strategy with a degree of energy and enthusiasm; it needed to be given a reasonable time to test out how well the process works;
- c) the “Partnership Forum” proposal for co-operation across the synods could be a way of testing the ground for whether such a joint “Agency” might meet the need for a unified approach to issues relating to Greater London, or whether a stronger and more coherent structure (such as a single synod) might be required in the longer run;
- d) it would not be appropriate to expend time and energy at the present time on working out details of the implications of implementing a London Synod, as this information might well be out of date in a few years time if a delay was agreed.

5.14.3 Mission Council accepted that detailed work on the possible implementation of a single London Synod be deferred, pending an assessment of whether co-operative work between the two existing synods might adequately meet the need for developing a coherent strategy for (a) relating to the Greater London Authority and (b) helping local churches within the London area to deliver effective mission to the city; and agreed that a final report be brought to Mission Council in time for General Assembly in 2012.

5.14.4 In the intervening period the London Synod Commission would continue to meet annually with the Moderators of Thames North and Southern Synods and representatives of the Partnership Forum, to receive reports on the development of the Forum’s work and together to evaluate the implications for the possible formation of a London Synod.

#### 5.15 Windermere Centre:

Mission Council endorsed proposals for developing facilities at the Windermere Centre in partnership with the Carver Memorial Church and instructed the Finance Committee, in conjunction with the Education and Learning Committee, to undertake the necessary detailed negotiations on behalf of the Assembly. The Council delegated to the Mission Council Advisory Group the authority to approve the proposed link building at Carver Memorial Church provided that the plans had the support of the Carver Church Meeting, the North Western Synod Trust, the Windermere Advisory Group, the Finance Committee, the Education and Learning Committee and the United Reformed Church Trustees; and that the total cost to be met by grants from central funds would not be more than £250,000.

5.15.1 Mission Council accepted that the annual financial support for the Windermere Centre 2009 revenue budget should be in the range £50k-£100k at 2008 prices.

#### 5.16 Emergency Resolution on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip

Mission Council passed a resolution which was sent to the U.K. Government, Christian Aid, United Reformed Church project partners in the region, and the Palestinian National Authority, expressing outrage at the impact of the continuing violence on the civilian population in Gaza; support for international efforts to be directed towards ending the blockade of Gaza, and an appeal to Palestinian and Israeli leaders to draw from their faith tradition to work towards achieving peace and justice in both Israel and Palestine.

#### 5.17 Statement on the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Iraq War on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008

Mission Council, on this anniversary, expressed its deep sorrow at the devastating consequences of this war and occupation for the people of Iraq and for the members and families of the coalition forces; it called on those with influence and authority to bring an end to the occupation of Iraq; advocated the resolution of conflict through diplomatic means. The statement also paid tribute to, and offered prayers for, the work of forces chaplains whose calling was to provide spiritual support and comfort to service women and men.



## 6 Reports of Advisory Groups to Mission Council

### 6.1 Resource Sharing Task Group

6.1.1 The Resource Sharing Task Group (RSTG) and the Inter-Synod Resource Consultation continue to meet. All meetings have been conducted in a good spirit with openness and transparency being essential elements. The work towards achieving the goal of greater sharing of resources between synods continues. Those involved in the process are always seeking new ideas and ways to improve what has already been achieved. To those synods who contribute substantial funds each year for sharing amongst synods a very grateful thanks is extended, not only from General Assembly but also from the synods receiving financial help.

6.1.2 The quartet and quintet groups have met in accordance with the existing arrangements. The continual exchange of ideas and information on all manner of topics has proved to be extremely useful and beneficial to all concerned. It is clear there is a greater understanding of the various problems faced by individual synods and the solutions to them.

6.1.3 The following are some of the more important issues raised:

- the use of capital receipts from the sale of redundant properties for use on mission projects;
- the implications of the new Charities Act 2006, with reference to the new accounting methods for churches having to register;
- Ministry and Mission payments relative to Local Ecumenical Projects;
- the proposed model Synod 14;
- the dissolution of district and area councils;
- the need for more accountability with regards to expenditure on buildings;
- the increasing burden of costs being devolved to synods following the decisions taken about the funding of the YCWT programme;
- the proposal that synods should contribute 10% of sale receipts of redundant properties to the Retired Ministers Housing Society.

6.1.4 Work has continued on the proposal to develop a blue-print of a model synod; it is currently referred to as Synod 14. The recent work has been looking at Core Tasks and Core Staff. Core Tasks are based on the manual and are seen as a framework on which to build. Core Staff are not prescribed in any way and it is evident synods deal with this issue in many different ways and this is to be expected. It is hoped to complete the work in the near future.

6.1.5 The RSTG has held two meetings since General Assembly in 2007. The General Secretary and Mr John Ellis Honorary Treasurer attended the RSTG meeting held on 2 October 2007. Mr Ellis also attended the full Consultation meeting held on the 9 October 2007.

6.1.6 There is still much work to be done in encouraging synods to work more closely together and to look at other ways of sharing resources. There appears to be some willingness to move in this direction but some synods are still reticent and remain to be convinced of the possible benefits.

6.1.7 Mr Tom Woodbridge (Scotland) and the Revd Elizabeth Caswell (Eastern) and Convener are due to stand down from their duties with the RSTG in October 2008. Both have made significant contributions to the whole process over the years they have been involved and the United Reformed Church is indebted to them for their valuable service. Replacements are being sought and they will be reported in due course.



## 6.2 Ethical Investment Advisory Group

6.2.1 The Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) has been involved in the following activities and discussions since the last Assembly:

6.2.2 **Synod investments** – the EIAG continued to communicate with Synods on their investments portfolios with a view to greater sharing of information and good practice across the United Reformed Church. Most recently, John Ellis has written to Synods in his capacity as Treasurer requesting information on the performance of Synod investments and this information is awaited.

6.2.3 **Oikocredit** – following discussion on the services offered by Oikocredit at their October meeting, the EIAG supported the idea that an article be written in Reform explaining Oikocredit's activities. This appeared in the January 2008 edition of Reform and the EIAG has endorsed the decision to follow this up with a mailing to all churches publicising Oikocredit which was agreed at a follow-up meeting with Patrick Hynes, the UK representative of Oikocredit, in December.

6.2.4 **Extension of ethical investment guidelines** – the EIAG has commissioned Church and Society to undertake a review of the United Reformed Church's ethical investment guidelines to incorporate the social, environmental and governance impact of companies operations in addition to the existing policy guidelines. These guidelines will be developed in conjunction with ecumenical partners but the United Reformed Church will take the lead on this important initiative with the view to submitting these guidelines to Mission Council at their December meeting.

6.2.5 **Review of Nestle' boycott** – the working group established to review the decision taken at Assembly in 1992 to boycott Nestle' products met last year and has commissioned a number of reports to guide their response on this complex issue (including the extended ethical investment guidelines and analysis of the Methodist Church's decision to engage with Nestle'). An update report will be incorporated in the General Assembly reports.

6.2.6 **Climate Change** – reflecting on the impact of companies operations on climate change (recently debated by the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility); the EIAG endorsed the decision for this issue to be included in the extended investment guidelines of the United Reformed Church. It also endorsed the proposal by Richard Nunn that the United Reformed Church affiliate with the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change which is to be put to the Pension Trust and Trust Investment Committee at their next meetings.

6.2.7 **Ethics of United Reformed Church's Auditors** – following a question at Assembly, concerns had been followed up with PricewaterhouseCoopers, who undertook to look at issues thrown up by aspects of PwC's African operations. PwC noted however that they are not a multinational company and the British Partnership responsible for our audit is quite distinct from those operating abroad.

## 6.3 Section O Advisory Group

6.3.1 All documents relating to Section O (Disciplinary Process) need revision because of changes to the Church structures, cross references to the separate Incapacity Procedure (Section P) and because Church Related Community Workers now come within the scope of Section O. Among other changes we have provided for information to be given to the church's Press Officer at the start of a case and at other stages. The reason for this is, of course, so that s/he is able to respond appropriately to any approaches from the media. The Press Officer will not initiate contact with the press about a case.

6.3.2 This work has constituted a major task, not least because errors in our documents could lead to miscarriages of justice. It is essential that any who need to use Section O ensure that they have the most up-to-date version of the schedules and guidelines.



6.3.3 We have reviewed the way that training and support should be given to Mandated Groups who have the onerous responsibility of investigating allegations and where appropriate preparing and presenting a case for an Assembly Commission hearing. Each Synod has now appointed one person to be a member of a Joint Panel from which one member will be selected to lead in the work of a Mandated Group. We hope that the measures we are taking will give greater confidence to those concerned.

6.3.4 We have also liaised with Synod Moderators about the support that they need in the operation of Section O.

6.3.5 We have prepared eight resolutions of which a maximum of five will be presented to the Assembly. Resolution **MC1** ratifies the decision taken under Resolution 12 of 2007 to introduce a Procedure (the Section P Procedure) for dealing with cases of incapacity involving ministers or Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs). (This Procedure was formerly known as the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure and it has been renamed to reflect the inclusion of CRCWs.) If this resolution is passed by the Assembly then Resolutions **MC2, MC3, MC4** and **MC5** will be taken and Resolutions **MC6, MC7** and **MC8** will be withdrawn. Resolution **MC2** puts in place the Rules of Procedure (Part II) for the Section P Procedure, Resolution **MC3** would ratify Resolution 16 of 2007 which adopted a new Part I of Section O, Resolution **MC4** puts in place a new Part II for Section O and Resolution **MC5** provides indemnity for those within the church who fulfil their functions under the Section O Process and the Section P Procedure. If Resolution **MC1** is not passed, then Resolutions **MC2, MC3, MC4** and **MC5** will be withdrawn and Resolutions **MC6, MC7** and **MC8** will be presented instead. These are comparable to Resolutions **MC3, MC4** and **MC5** respectively but without references to the Incapacity Procedure (Section P).

6.3.6 N.B. Resolution 18 of 2007 makes changes to the Basis of Union and Resolutions 14 of 2007 (with or without the reference to the Incapacity Procedure), 15 of 2007 (if Resolution **MC1** is passed) and 19 of 2007 make changes to the Structure. All need to be ratified by the 2008 Assembly. They will be included in a composite resolution number [?] which will include all the changes to the Basis and Structure due to be ratified this year. The references to the Structure contained in the headings and Paragraphs 2 of the respective Parts I set out in Resolutions **MC1, MC3** and **MC6** have been corrected in accordance with these changes.

#### 6.4 The Grants and Loans Group

6.4.1 The Group (GLG) administers the Church Buildings Fund, which provides grants and loans to churches to assist with improvements/modifications to church buildings, and the Mission Project Fund, which provides grants for mission work. We have continued our policy of giving grants only to synods and churches with the greatest need.

6.4.2 Budget Provision: For the year 2007 the budget for grants from the Church Building Fund was approx £117,000. This is the expected income from dividends, deposit account interest and loan interest. This has been used primarily for provision of funds for facilities for the disabled. By the end of the year £58,000 had been spent, with £23,000 granted but not yet spent and a further £13,000 approved at our December meeting. There is always a problem knowing when a grant will be taken up as there are often delays in building work being carried out. If the grant is not taken up within 12 months an extension has to be applied for, but will normally be given. 1 loan of £25,000 has been made for work on a church building. The allocation for the Mission Project Fund was £135,000 (including £20,000 from Carmichael Montgomery Capital Fund) of which we have spent £108,500. Again we can not always be sure when the grant will be taken up.

6.4.3 Grants for facilities for the disabled: We are still getting applications for grants towards costs of Facilities for the Disabled. This year we have approved 9 applications, a slight decrease on 2006. 11 grants were paid out and we have a commitment from 2007 for a further 9 grants, totalling £41,000 for



2008. This means that approx. £65,000 will be available next year for grants for building work. Hopefully some of this will be available for work other than on facilities for the Disabled.

6.4.4 Mission Project Fund : In 2007, eleven applications were received of which nine were approved, but five were for extensions of existing projects. A summary of the projects is given in the appendix. We ask for an annual report from all the mission projects and are very encouraged by the initiative, determination and commitment of the people seeking to be 'church' in their communities. From now on we will be asking for a formal review of a project before granting any extensions.

6.4.5 Reflections: The Group believes that the money it makes available from Central Funds provides a real benefit, both to local churches and communities, and that without it many projects would not get started. I commented last year that the hope was that these projects if successful would become self financing. However it is once again clear that many of the projects, especially those in inner cities, though very successful, will need continued financial support. Following the pilot study of an independent evaluation of their project carried out for us by Marlpool and Langley, we have decided that all applications for extensions to projects must be accompanied by an independent evaluation. Incidentally the Marlpool and Langley review resulted in the application for a grant being withdrawn.

6.4.5.1 As indicated in last year's report we have found, especially with applications to the Mission Project Fund, that we need a representative from the appropriate synod to be present. I am pleased to say that we now have a full complement of representatives, so we have now agreed that a representative from the appropriate synod must be present for us to discuss any Mission Project application.

6.4.5.2 In response to the 'Catch the Vision' process we had questioned the future of the Grants and Loans Group and whether our business could not be carried out just as effectively in other committees. We still await a decision on this following the reorganizations that have occurred. There however is some concern within GLG about whether there is a more appropriate forum within the structures now in place to discuss Mission Project applications. Considerable expertise has been built up within GLG for looking at these longer term projects.

6.4.6 Thanks: The Group would like to record its thanks to its Convener (Dr Brian Woodhall) and its Secretary, Mr Graham Rolfe, and to Rob Seaman (Finance Office) for all the support he has given.

## **1 SUMMARY OF GRANTS PAID FOR FACILITIES FOR DISABLED**

North Western Synod	5 Grants	Total	£25,000
East Midlands Synod	2 Grants	Total	£ 8,000
Eastern Synod	4 Grants	Total	£20,000
South Western Synod	1 Grant	Total	£ 5,000

## **2 SUMMARY OF LOANS**

North Western Synod	1 loan	Total	£25,000
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## **3 SUMMARY OF 'MISSION GRANTS AGREED**

Openshaw St Pauls with St Johns	£40,000 over 4 years	(NW Synod)
Gamston	£29,500 over 5 years	(E Midlands Synod)
Whetstone	£ 5,000 over 2 years	(E. Midlands Synod)
Groby	£3,000 over 1 year	(E. Midlands Synod)
Sleaford	£25,000 over 5 year	(E. Midlands Synod)
Pilgrim, Plymouth	£19,500 over 3 years	(SW Synod)
Mid Somerset	£9,000 over 3 years	(SW Synod)
Penhill	£14,000 over 5 years	(SW Synod)

## **6.5 Listed Buildings Advisory Group**

6.5.1 The Listed Buildings Advisory Group coordinates the work of the Synod Listed Buildings Advisory Committees in the promotion of mission, focusing on the role of the historic church building as a mission resource. Church buildings are centres of God's work, resources for mission, and they need to be continually seen in this light. The historic church buildings we have inherited are a priceless asset. Regardless of what the law requires, future generations will not thank us if we have unreasonably changed them for short term benefit without taking account of the wider picture. Nevertheless, as mission changes, so buildings have to change to reflect it or, on occasion, may even have to be disposed of. However, where the churches' mission demands it there are usually ways of both retaining the best and providing suitable resources for the future. The challenge is to manage the tension between preserving the best of what is and creating premises which support lively and vibrant church communities, which in their turn minister to a wider community. If we do this well, our buildings can go on serving us while continuing to tell us about who we are and how we come to be what we are.

### **The work of the year**

6.5.2 The group met twice in the year. It has revised and agreed with the Department of Culture Media and Sport the control procedure by which Synods manage the denomination's Ecclesiastical Exemption arrangements. Now on the Church's website, it reflects the new structure of the United Reformed Church and incorporates for the first time provision for appeals.

6.5.3 The Group continues to foster relations with other denominations and bodies with similar concerns where these will benefit the Church's work. In 2007 these have included:

- Attendance at the English Heritage Places of Worship Forum
- Mutual cross-representation at Listed Buildings Advisory Committee meetings with the Baptist Union of Great Britain to share best practice
- Attendance at the annual Roman Catholic conference on the management of historic church buildings

6.5.4 On behalf of the Church the Group monitors developments in the legislative and regulatory framework affecting historic church buildings. It undertook a detailed study of the government's Heritage White Paper which proposes changes in the way historic buildings are recorded and managed, and prepared a response which included expressing concern about the implications for local churches and their officers. Similarly the group responded to new proposals from English Heritage on Conservation Principles, Policy and guidance urging the need to provide assistance to church officers in preparing the documentation proposed. In particular, statements of significance are rapidly becoming standard currency in any official discussion of historic buildings, but there are no proposals to help churches acquire the skills required to prepare them.

6.5.5 The Group has received advice from the Charity Commission that the Historic Chapels Trust is entitled to acquire (and trustees enabled to dispose of) redundant places of worship at less than the market value, subject to a Charity Commission scheme.



## Mission Council Resolutions

### Resolution **MC 1:** Ratification of Incapacity Procedure (Section P Part I)

**General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision taken under Assembly Resolution 12 of 2007 to introduce a Procedure for dealing with cases of incapacity involving Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church-related Community Workers (CRCW) who are regarded as being incapable of exercising, or of continuing to exercise, their respective ministries on account of (i) medical and/or psychiatric illness and/or (ii) psychological disorder and/or (iii) addiction and approves the Introduction and Part I of that Procedure in the form set out below:**

#### SECTION P

#### **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CASES OF INCAPACITY INVOLVING MINISTERS OR CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS**

*The Introduction which follows does not form part of the text of the Incapacity Procedure*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Procedure which follows allows the Church to deal with the cases of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) who are regarded as being incapable of exercising, or of continuing to exercise, their respective ministries on account of (i) medical and/or psychiatric illness and/or (ii) psychological disorder and/or (iii) addiction. It is not a disciplinary process and will only be invoked in situations where the Assembly Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee, if that committee has been involved, has said that it can do no more.

Whilst considered as a last resort, the Incapacity Procedure will nevertheless enable the Church to take decisive action in cases where the continued exercise of ministry would undermine the promises made by the Minister at ordination or, in the case of a CRCW, at his/her commissioning.

**PART I** – subject to Paragraph 3(1) of the Structure

(governed by General Assembly Function 2(6)(a)(xi) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church)

Note: The words and expressions marked \* (the first time they appear) are defined in Part II of this Procedure.

1. Under the provisions of this Incapacity Procedure (herein called “the Incapacity Procedure\*”) a Review Commission\* and, in the event of an appeal, an Appeals Review Commission\* shall operate under the authority of the General Assembly for the purpose of considering and deciding upon cases properly referred to it in which Ministers\* or Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs)\*, whilst not perceived to have committed any breach of discipline, are nevertheless regarded as being incapable of exercising, or of continuing to exercise, ministry on account of (i) medical and/or psychiatric illness and/or (ii) psychological disorder and/or (iii) addiction.
2. The Review Commission, the Standing Panel\*, the Appeals Review Commission, and all aspects of the Incapacity Procedure 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(6) of the Structure\* to amend, enlarge or revoke the whole or any part of this Incapacity Procedure, save only that, as long as that Procedure remains in force, the decision reached in any particular case (whether or not on appeal) and any orders made in accordance

with the Incapacity Procedure shall be made in the name of the General Assembly and shall be final and binding on the Minister or CRCW and on all the councils of the Church\*.

3. Subject only to Section H of Part II, when the case of any Minister or CRCW is being dealt with under the Incapacity Procedure, it must be conducted and concluded entirely in accordance with that procedure and not through any other procedure or process of the Church.

4. The Incapacity Procedure shall not be initiated in respect of any Minister or CRCW if his/her case is currently being dealt with under the Disciplinary Process, save only where the Incapacity Procedure is initiated as a result of a recommendation from the Disciplinary Process, giving rise to a short transitional overlap between the commencement of the case within the Incapacity Procedure and the conclusion of the Disciplinary Process in relation to that Minister or CRCW.

5. Although the operation of the Incapacity Procedure is not based upon the conscious breach by the Minister or CRCW of the promises made at ordination or commissioning, the Review Commission or, in the event of an appeal, the Appeals Review Commission shall, in considering the matter and reaching its decision, in every case have full regard to the Basis of Union\* and in particular (in the case of Ministers) Paragraph 2 of Schedule E thereto and (in the case of CRCWs) Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II thereto which state the responsibilities undertaken by those who become Ministers and CRCWs of the Church and the respective criteria which they must apply in the exercise of their ministries.

6. Save only as provided in Paragraph 7, this Part I of the Incapacity Procedure is subject to Paragraph 3(1) of the Structure.

7. Mission Council acting in the name of General Assembly has 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 Incapacity Procedure as are, on the advice of the legal advisers to the Church, required to bring that procedure into line with the general law of the land consequent upon any changes in legislation and/or case law and any such changes as are made under this Paragraph shall be reported to the next annual meeting of the General Assembly.

*If Resolution **MC1** is passed by the Assembly then Resolutions **MC2, MC3, MC4** and **MC5** will be taken and Resolutions **MC6, MC7** and **MC8** will be withdrawn.*

*If Resolution **MC1** fails then Resolutions **MC2, MC3, MC4** and **MC5** will be withdrawn and Resolutions **MC6, MC7** and **MC8** will be taken.*

**Resolution MC2:**

**Rules of Procedure for the Incapacity Procedure  
(Section P Part II)**

**General Assembly resolves to adopt the Rules of Procedure for the Incapacity Procedure (Part II of Section P) contained in Document MC-A (page aa)**

**Resolution MC3:**

**Ratification of replacement of Section O (Part I)**

**General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision taken under Assembly Resolution 16 of 2007 to replace the whole of the existing Part I of Section O with the following:**



## **SECTION O**

### **PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH CASES OF DISCIPLINE INVOLVING MINISTERS AND CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS**

**PART I** – Substantive Provisions (governed by General Assembly Function 2(6)(A)(xi) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church)

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 or a church-related community worker (CRCW) 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 CRCWs as the case may be 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 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 or CRCW 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 or CRCW involved in a case within the Section O Process relates to or involves a perceived incapacity on the part of that Minister or CRCW which might render him/her unfit to exercise, or to continue to exercise, the ministry of Word and Sacrament or the ministry of Church Related Community Work on account of (i) medical and/or psychiatric illness or (ii) psychological disorder or (iii) addiction, 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 Incapacity Procedure (as defined in Section A of Part II) be initiated in respect of the Minister or CRCW 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 Incapacity Procedure was initiated, whereupon the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission shall make a further Order declaring the Disciplinary case to be concluded, subject only to the continuation of the Minister’s or the CRCW’s Suspension until the issue of his/her Suspension has been resolved in accordance with the 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 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(6) 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 or the CRCW 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 or CRCW if his/her case is currently being dealt with under the Incapacity Procedure.

3.2 The Section O Process may be initiated in respect of a Minister or CRCW as a result of a recommendation issuing from the Incapacity Procedure, in which case there may be a short transitional overlap between the commencement of the Disciplinary case and the conclusion of the case within the 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 (in the case of Ministers) Paragraph 2 of Schedule E thereto and (in the case of CRCWs) Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II thereto which state the responsibilities undertaken by those who become Ministers and CRCWs of the United Reformed Church and the respective criteria which they must apply in the exercise of their ministries.

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 or CRCW occurring prior to his/her ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament or his/her commissioning to the ministry of Church Related Community Work as the case may be which, in the Commission's view and when viewed in the light of Schedule E or Schedule F to the Basis of Union, would have prevented, or was likely to have prevented, him/her from becoming ordained or commissioned, where such conduct was not disclosed by the Minister or CRCW to those responsible for assessing his/her candidacy for ordination or commissioning.

5. 5.1 A Minister or CRCW may appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission to delete his/her name from the Roll of Ministers or CRCWs 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 or CRCW from the Roll of Ministers or CRCWs 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 or CRCW.

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.

**Resolution MC 4: Replacement of existing Section O Process (Part II)**

**General Assembly agrees to replace the existing Part II of the Section O Process with that included as Document MC-B (page bb)**

**Resolution MC 5: Indemnity for the Section O Process and Section P Procedure**

**General Assembly resolves that the United Reformed Church shall provide a full indemnity for those persons who either as members of any Church-related Panel, Commission, Committee, Council or Group or by virtue of the office held by them within the Church are called upon to fulfil any function within or related to the Disciplinary Process set out in Section O of the Church's Manual or the Incapacity Procedure introduced by virtue of Resolutions MC1 and MC2 and to be set out in Section P of the Manual or who are appointed by Mission Council to any voluntary role within or related to either of these.**

*The following Resolutions MC6, MC7, and MC8 shall be put to Assembly ONLY if Resolution MC1 fails.*

**Resolution MC 6: Ratification of replacement of Section O (Part I)**

**General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision taken under Assembly Resolution 17 of 2007 to replace the whole of the existing Part I of Section O with the following:**

**SECTION O**

Process for dealing with cases of discipline involving Ministers and Church-Related Community Workers.

**PART I – Substantive Provisions**

(governed by General Assembly Function 2(6)(A)(xi) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church)

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 or a Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) 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 CRCWs as the case may be or alternatively whether a written warning should be issued to him/her. Under the 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.

1.2 Once the disciplinary case of any Minister or CRCW 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(6) 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 or CRCW 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 (in the case of Ministers) Paragraph 2 of Schedule E thereto and (in the case of CRCWs) Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II thereto, which state the respective responsibilities undertaken by those who become Ministers or CRCWs of the United Reformed Church and the criteria which they must apply in the exercise of their ministries.

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 or CRCW occurring prior to his/her ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament or his/her commissioning to the ministry of Church Related Community Work as the case may be which, in the Commission's view and when viewed in the light of Schedule E or Schedule F to the Basis of Union, would have prevented, or was likely to have prevented, him/her from becoming ordained or commissioned, where such conduct was not disclosed by the Minister or CRCW to those responsible for assessing his/her candidacy for ordination or commissioning.

4. 4.1 A Minister or CRCW may appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission to delete his/her name from the Roll of Ministers or CRCWs 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 or CRCW from the Roll of Ministers or CRCWs 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 or CRCW.

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.

**Resolution MC 7:**

**Replacement of Section O (Part II)**

**General Assembly agrees to replace the existing Part II of the Section O Process with that included as Document MC-B with the following differences:**

**A.5.2** Replace the words “(i) the Assembly Commission or (ii) the Special Appeals Body” with “the Assembly Commission”.

**A.5.11, A.5.29, B.3.4, B.7.4, D.5, E.5.3** in its entirety. All deleted.

*[Later sub-paragraphs to be re-numbered as a consequence of these deletions. ]*

**F.1.2** Delete the words “,in the absence of a decision to refer under Paragraph E.5.3,”.

**G.2.2, G.2.3** On the first line of these two paragraphs, the reference will be to Paragraph 4 of Part I, not Paragraph 5.

**J.1** Delete the words “ (other than decisions made by the Special Appeals body under Paragraph E.5.3)”.

**Resolution MC 8:**

**Indemnity for Section O Process**

**General Assembly resolves that the United Reformed Church shall provide a full indemnity for those persons who either as members of any Church-related Panel, Commission, Committee, Council or Group or by virtue of the office held by them within the Church are called upon to fulfil any function within or related to the Disciplinary Process set out in Section O of the Church's Manual or who are appointed by Mission Council to any voluntary role within or related to Section O.**

**Resolution MC 9:**

**Reappointment of the Revd Adrian Bulley  
as Wessex Synod Moderator**

**General Assembly re-appoints the Revd Adrian Bulley to serve as Moderator of the Wessex Synod from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014;**

**Resolution MC 10:**

**Reappointment of the Revd Terry Oakley  
as East Midlands Synod Moderator**

**General Assembly re-appoints the Revd Terry Oakley to serve as Moderator of the East Midlands Synod from 1st September 2010 to 31st May 2012.**

**Resolution MC11:**

**General Assembly appoints all serving Church Related Community Workers currently in post or commissioned between this date and the next ordinary meeting of the General Assembly to serve as additional members of the Synod in which they are based.**