

Minutes of the Mission Council **held at St Albans Pastoral Centre March 9th – 11th, 2010.**

Tuesday March 9th,

Opening: The Moderator, the Rev John Marsh, constituted the meeting and invited his chaplain, Rev Mary Buchanan to lead opening worship during which the Moderator led Bible Study.

Session 1.

The Moderator welcomed new members of Mission Council, Mrs Linda Harrison Eastern Clerk / Rep; Mr David Harvey, FURY Moderator; Mrs Sarah Lane-Cawte, South Western Rep; Mr Clifford Patten, Eastern Rep; Mr Christopher Reed, Yorkshire Rep; Mr Arthur Swift, Mersey Rep; Mrs Jill Turner, East Midlands Rep; Rev Mary Thomas, Wessex Rep; Mrs Adella Pritchard, West Midlands Rep; Mrs Val Phillips, West Midlands Rep.; Mrs Margaret Marshall, West Midlands, deputising for Bill Robson.

He welcomed those in attendance: Rev Dr James Coleman, Chaplain to Val Morrison, Moderator Elect; Rev Dr Susan Durber, Principal, Westminster College; Rev Elizabeth Gray-King, Education & Learning; Mrs Elizabeth Lawson, Convener Ministerial Housing Task Group; Rev Elizabeth Nash, Consensus adviser; Rev John Waller, Human Sexuality Task Group.

Apologies were received from : Rev Kay Alberg, Yorkshire Rep; Mrs Karen Bulley, Pilots Dev. Officer; Miss Elaine Colechin, Northern Rep; Mrs Sarah Dodds, Secretary of Nominations; Mr David Harvey, FURY Moderator; Michelle Marcano, Head of HR; Mr Bill Robson, W. Midlands Clerk; Mr Justice Semuli, Northern Rep; Rev Alison Tomlin, Methodist Rep; Mrs Iris Williams, Wales Rep; Ms Jo Williams, Children's Work Dev. Officer.

The Moderator gave notice of the change in order of business for Wednesday afternoon.

10/01 The minutes of the meeting 16th -18th November 2009 were approved and signed by the Moderator.

10/02 Matters Arising

09/52 Bi-lateral Dialogue with the Church of England – pressure of work meant that the paper was not yet ready and would not be presented to the General Synod before the autumn.

09/53 Emergency Debate on the Financial Crisis. The Prime Minister has responded to the letter sent following the last Mission Council meeting.

09/54 Electronic communication. MCAG suggests that those who wish to receive their papers 'electronically' should notify the Deputy General Secretary or his PA.

10/03 General Assembly 2010

Dr. David Robinson, Mrs Val Morrison and Rev Kirsty Thorpe outlined the developing plans for the forthcoming General Assembly. The cost is also higher than hoped. Business will be centred around the themes of Vision4Life, God is still speaking, Vision 2020 and Equipping People for Service. Members will be seated

'cafe style' to facilitate sharing and discussion. A Children's Assembly will again run alongside the adult gathering, where possible everyone will meet together. In response to a question it was stated that the total number of people attending the Assembly will not be significantly reduced and this together with the rise in university prices accounts for the higher than expected costs. Some disquiet was expressed about this.

10/04 World Communion of Reformed Churches (additional business,)

The Clerk introduced the resolution;

Mission Council, noting with thanksgiving the 135 years of partnership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and its predecessor bodies by the United Reformed Church and its parent denominations, and looking forward to a continuing relationship with the newly formed "World Communion of Reformed Churches", resolves that from June 18th 2010 all references to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches contained in any of its rules, regulations or guidelines shall be understood to refer to the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

The Clerk and Revd Elizabeth Nash gave further explanation.

The resolution was approved unanimously.

Session 2

The Deputy General Secretary gave some notices and also announced the death and funeral arrangements for the late Raymond Clarke.

10/05 Assembly Moderators' Think Tank

Rev Dr Kirsty Thorpe spoke to Paper G. Assembly agreed the creation of a Moderator's Think Tank as part of Catch the Vision. However, the two moderators elect felt that its 'mission and spirituality' remit was already covered in other places and that its size would be unwieldy. They suggest a much smaller group (5- 10) to identify suitable, sustainable and realistic strategies for the United Reformed Church's resources over the next five to ten years.

Mission Council discussed in buzz groups.

Following Kirsty's responses to the concerns raised, support for such a group was shown by a large majority of consensus cards.

10/06 Nominations (Papers E, E1 & E2) (see Appendix 1)

The Convenor of the Committee, Rev Malcolm Hanson, introduced the report and introduced the resolutions.

1.Resolution: Director of URC Ministers' Pension Trust LTD

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints the Rev Roger Woodall to serve as a Director of the URC Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd forthwith and until 2016.

Resolved by majority vote.

2.Resolution: United Reformed Church Trust

Mission Council agrees that the proposed membership of the United Reformed Church Trust shall be presented to General Assembly for approval .

Resolved by majority vote.

3. Resolution: Consequent on moving to biennial assemblies

Mission Council agrees:

- (a) **To the proposals brought by the Nominations Committee for changes to terms of service of various officers;**

Resolution (a) resolved by agreement.

- (b) **That the proposals for the extension of the appointments of the Honorary Treasurer, the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee and Mr Andrew Perkins as a member of the URC Ministers' Pension Fund shall be presented to General Assembly for approval.**

Resolution (b) resolved by consensus

Mr Hanson explained that for the first time the Nominations Committee has prepared a comprehensive list of committees, subcommittees, task groups and representatives to other bodies.

4. Resolution: The status of paper E1

Mission Council agrees in general terms to the listing of committees and groups as set out in Paper E1

Resolved by consensus.

5. Responsibility for remits for Task Groups

Mission Council agrees that the General Secretariat be responsible for overseeing the remits of advisory and task groups, and that the membership of such groups should be nominated by Nominations Committee which will also be responsible for listing them in its annual report.

Resolution resolved by consensus.

6. Mission Council agrees that the final listing of committee membership and other appointments made through the Nominations Committee which is normally published in the Assembly Record, should, in years when there is no meeting of General Assembly, be published with the Financial and Trust report; Mission Council further agrees that the possibility of publishing the list on the website should also be explored.

Following discussion it was agreed to amend the resolution. Revised wording would be offered later in the meeting.

7. Secretary of Nominations Committee:

Mission Council agrees that the secretary of the Nominations Committee shall be invited to be 'in attendance' at meetings of Mission Council.

Resolved by consensus

8. Resolution re Westminster college not previously reported to Mission Council

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, reappoints the Rev John Proctor as Director of New Testament Studies at Westminster College, Cambridge, with effect from 1st September 2010 to 31st December 2017, subject to review.

Resolved by consensus.

The process had begun to identify people to serve on committees from 2011. Members of Mission Council were urged to help by communicating the need in their localities.

Revd Nigel Uden suggested that messages of appreciation for their inspired and sustained work at Westminster College be sent to Janet Tollington and John Proctor on their reappointment for continuing service. The Moderator will write to these colleagues.

10/07 EMU in Scotland

Revd John Humphries spoke enthusiastically about EMU (Episcopal, Methodist and United Reformed) co-operation between the denominations in Scotland. Work is ongoing on church & society and education issues. A pack called "Towards the Round Table Church" addressed collaborative ministry.

Session 3

MCAG Vacancy. The Deputy General Secretary gave notice of a vacancy on MCAG due to Rev Rachel Poolman's completion of her term of service. He asked for nominations to fill the post.

10/08 Nominations. Remaindered resolution.

Rev Elizabeth Nash offered an amended form of words:

6. Mission Council agrees that the list of committee members and other appointments made through the Nominations Committee should be published annually in the same format. This format should include the URC website; the Communications team are asked to look for an appropriate way of publishing it on paper.

Resolution resolved by consensus.

10/09 God is still speaking: Lawrence Moore and Denese Chikwendu, gave a presentation of work to date. Mission Council was invited to respond in groups to the request on Paper L. "Please tell us about a time when you have felt most passionate or excited about something the URC has said or done." Each member was asked to submit his/her paper.

Closing worship.

The Moderator's Chaplain, Rev Mary Buchanan, led closing prayers.

Wednesday 10th March

The Moderator's Chaplain, Rev Mary Buchanan, led opening worship

Session 4

10/10 Vision 2020

The convenor of Mission Committee, Rev Ed Cox, presented Paper A. He was grateful for the feedback received from local churches and committees and the paper includes changes based on suggestions received. He emphasised that Vision 2020 was a framework with suggested statements and indicators. Churches can also

write their own indicators. A number of constructive comments were received from Mission Council members, to which the convenor responded warmly.

He undertook to confer with Equal Opportunities Committee to hear its views as well as to continue work with all other committees to discuss how committee work and staff members might collaborate to support the work of the local churches and synods. Mission Council discussed the possible presentation of Mission Committee business to General Assembly. The options would be: a single enabling resolution; a series of individual resolution; or a resolution drawn up after discussion on the floor of Assembly.

Comments warmed to the possibility of drawing up resolutions on the floor of Assembly as a new and exciting way of working; however, it was also recognised that the business of the Mission Committee would be a complicated place to try it out.

Session 5

God is still speaking.

Time was allowed for questions and comments from group discussion to Lawrence Moore who responded.

10/11 Ethical Investment

Paper F was introduced by the treasurer, John Ellis.

He proposed the resolution:

Mission Council

- 1. welcomes the statement of principles for the use of the United Reformed Church in making investment decisions;***
- 2. requests a investment policy statement based on them be drawn up for the use of investment managers;***
- 3. resolves to recommend to the 2010 General Assembly a report of this work for endorsement.***

Resolution resolved by consensus.

10/12 Nestle:

John Ellis introduced Papers F1 and F2 on behalf of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group and responded to questions from the floor. The clerk asked the Moderator to rule whether Mission Council should come to a mind on the subject as to whether 'the boycott of Nestle products' be lifted or whether to leave it for a resolution at General assembly. The Moderator ruled that Assembly should decide.

Mr Ellis proposed on behalf of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group:

Mission Council

- 1. agrees that Nestle should no longer be treated on a different investment basis from all other companies***
- 2. recognises that this means URC bodies may consider engagement with Nestlé through the selective purchase of shares if and when the appropriate investment managers deem such purchase appropriate. This will facilitate better engagement with Company policies and practices from within; and***
- 3. instructs that this decision and its context be reported to those entrusted with investment decisions on behalf of the URC as well as Nestlé management and the Church Investors Group.***

Resolved by consensus.

Mr Ellis continued with his report

10/13 Windermere Centre.

Mr Ellis reported on the progress towards the creation of the new entrance to Carver Church to provide access from the Windermere Centre. Building of the link between the church and the hall is due to start in April. As the estimate is lower than the budget agreed, this will allow the construction of a walkway between the church hall and the Centre.

10/14 Minister's Pension fund.

Ten Synods have responded or plan to respond to the appeal for extra finding to the pension fund. The ongoing discussions with the Pensions Regulator are proving both difficult at the end of the year and complicated and legally expensive. Discussions are underway regarding pension benefits and it is expected to report to Mission Council next year.

10/15 Accounts for 2009.

A surplus of £200,000 at the end of the year compared well with the budgeted deficit of £100,000. This was largely because there had been fewer ministers than had been budgeted for. Synods met the pledges made for contributions to M&M. For the coming year 11 synods have pledged increases less than the rate of inflation.

10/16 MIND

The Clerk introduced Papers D/D1/D2.

The clerk proposed:

Consultant for Ministers:

Mission Council resolves to appoint the Rev David Skitt to serve as a consultant for Ministers and CRCWs who are the subject of the Disciplinary Process.

Resolved by consensus.

The clerk proposed:

Membership of MIND Advisory Group.

Mission Council resolves to add the Convenor of the Incapacity Procedure Standing Panel to the membership of MIND Advisory Group.

Resolved by consensus.

The Clerk explained the resolutions to be brought to General Assembly. (Appendix 2)

Session 6

10/17 Ministerial Housing Task group.

The Convenor, Miss Elizabeth Lawson Q.C., introduced Paper B.

She explained the options the task group identified as alternatives to the provision of housing for ministers. After much discussion and research, the group concluded that the present system remains the best option. The task group commended the Synods which have a central manse policy, enabling houses to be provided where the need for mission is greatest. The group recognised the desire of some ministers to own or part-own their homes and in those cases a scheme of shared equity might be possible.

However, it was noted that ownership of property could be a significant barrier to moving to another pastorate.

Comments were received about the real needs of 'trapped' ministers and it was hoped that more work might be taken to enable people to retire from service with dignity. Some disappointment was expressed that more work had not been done to explore possible shared equity. After being dependent for his whole working life a minister felt that in retirement he was being made to remain equally dependent. Shared equity would minimise the dependency culture.

A consensus card show indicated a large majority in favour of retaining the present system. There was no majority for pursuing more work on a shared equity scheme. The Moderator thanked Elizabeth Lawson and her group for all their hard work.

10/18 Ministerial Working Week.

Rev Peter Poulter, convener of Ministries Committee, presented Paper C. The committee recognised that caring people working together in local places would be the best locus for working out agreements about working practices. The draft resolution was provided with the intention of bringing it to General Assembly in July.

General Assembly approves the following as the principles governing the Ministerial working week,

- a) *There should be more clarity in defining working hours.*
- b) *The working week, translated into hours in a four week period, shall be not less 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*

Peter thanked everyone who commented and undertook to look at the language of the resolution as well as considering the vocational premium relating to Ministry.

Session 7

10/19 Westminster College Development Plan

The Principal of Westminster College, Rev Dr Susan Durbar presented Paper N. She presented the vision for Westminster in the 21st century: to be a resource centre for learning for the whole people of God; and to provide quality space for prayer, meeting, learning and research by offering quality accommodation and teaching spaces, library, technological and catering facilities both for resident students and visitors and for a range of learning experiences.

Considerable discussion followed, many favourable comments were heard and Mission Council was happy to support the new vision for Westminster. The treasurer was also supportive and was willing to seek ways in which the church might assist Westminster raise the considerable sums that will be required (£6,000,000).

The Westminster Business Plan was available for members of Mission Council to study; it will need to pass scrutiny by the Finance Committee and the URC Trust before any proposal is put before General Assembly.

Mission Council learned that Westminster has valuable 'treasures' which it is willing to sell to support its plan. Mr Brian Long had been engaged to chair the fundraising committee and Westminster is ready for the great challenge before it. Mission Council could bring a resolution to Assembly asking for support for a General Assembly appeal for funding to support the project. A large majority of 'orange cards' supported this suggestion.

Mr John Ellis proposed that:

Mission Council commends to General Assembly that the Westminster College Development Plan be the subject of an Assembly Appeal to the whole United Reformed Church.

Resolved by consensus.

He further proposed:

Mission Council requests the Finance Committee to bring specific proposals to the General Assembly on funding options from central resources to contribute towards the costs of the development plan.

Resolved by consensus.

10/20 Human Sexuality Task group

The Convenor of the Task Group, Rev John Waller, introduced Paper M. He gave an update of work done since the last Mission Council. He identified areas where work had been done on the eleven issues identified by Assembly 2007 and where more work needed to be done. The theology question is still with the Faith and Order Reference Group and a response is awaited from the Methodist Church regarding legal implications. He believes Section 3 of the report, Unity through Diversity, is the area which invites discussion amongst those who feel the desire to discuss and pointed to further work the Group hopes to complete before Assembly 2012. The Task Group was unhappy with the wording of one of the clauses in the Standards of Ministry document agreed at the previous Mission Council and was working to find a new form of words. There was much discussion as to whether an agreed document could be changed. To enable the necessary revision Rev Dr Stephen Orchard moved that :

Mission Council rescinds Resolution 09/36 of the November Mission Council.

Following further comments the moderator ruled that the resolution be put. It was resolved by agreement.

Ministries Committee would work with the Task Group to bring a revised document to General Assembly.

Mr Waller referred to an amendment made in the House of Lords to the Equality Bill indicating that Civil Partnerships may be celebrated in places of worship. Questions could be asked at General Assembly and he suggested that the Task Group (consulting as necessary) should consider how the matter might be handled at Assembly.

A show of orange cards showed Mission Council's agreement.

Session 8

10/21 Changes to structure

The clerk introduced Paper J to bring Mission Council under the standing orders of General Assembly. Changes to rules and procedures (Section C of the Manual).

1. 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 in the Book of Reports to General Assembly shall apply to all meetings of the Assembly and the Mission Council and, in so far as they are applicable, to meetings of synods, district councils and their committees.

Resolved by consensus

Changes to the Structure (section B of the Manual)
Constitutional Amendments to go to General Assembly:

3.(1) ~~No exercise by the General Assembly~~ of the function of constitutional amendment contained in 2.5.xi shall have effect unless the following procedure has been followed:

(a) The proposal for the amendment shall be made in accordance with the Standing Orders of the General Assembly.

(b) Either the General Assembly or, in years when the General Assembly does not meet, the Mission Council shall vote on a motion to approve the proposal which shall require a majority of two-thirds of the members present and voting to pass.

~~The General Assembly shall, If such motion to approve the proposal is passed the General Assembly or the Mission Council, as the case may be, shall refer the proposal to synods and may, if it deems appropriate, in exceptional cases also to local churches.~~

~~The General Assembly shall in making any such reference set a final date for responses to be made, which shall normally be at an appropriate time before the next annual Assembly.~~

(d) If the proposal has been agreed by the General Assembly it shall set a final date for responses to be made, which shall normally be at an appropriate time before a meeting of the Mission Council not less than nine months after the meeting of the General Assembly at which the proposal was agreed.

(e) If the proposal has been agreed by the Mission Council it shall set a final date for responses to be made which shall normally be at an appropriate date before the next ordinary meeting of the General Assembly.

(f) 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 two-thirds majority of members present and voting at a duly convened meeting of such body, then the Assembly or the Mission Council, as the case may be, in its concern for the unity of the church shall not proceed to ratify the proposal.

(g) If by such date such notice has not been received, a motion to agree the proposed amendment shall come before the General Assembly at its next meeting or before the Mission Council at a meeting specified by the General Assembly. Such a motion shall require a two thirds majority of the members present and voting to pass. In its concern for mutual understanding within the life of the church, before voting on such a motion the General Assembly or Mission Council shall invite a representative of any synod from

which the General Secretary has duly received notification under 3.(1)(e) to present the main reasons for its objection.

(h) If such a motion is passed by such a majority the amendment shall have effect.

(i) For the purposes of this paragraph 3(a), only synods and local churches in existence on the date set for responses to be made shall be counted in the calculations.

3(2) In the case of motions which would have the effect of terminating the separate existence of the United Reformed Church, or of a synod within it, by union with other churches, the voting process to be used shall be not less stringent than in 3(1) and that process shall be determined by a single vote of the General Assembly which shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting to pass. In the case of a proposed union affecting only Scotland or Wales no action will be taken by the General Assembly until a decision in favour of union has been taken by the relevant synod.

Following discussion it was resolved by agreement:

Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly agrees that a two-thirds majority should be achieved for changes to the structure to be effected, at both General Assembly and Mission Council, regardless of the order of the two meetings.

10/22 Local Church Constitution

The Clerk introduced Paper K. This is for local churches to use or adapt as they wish. It applies to churches in England and Wales. Scottish churches do not require a constitution and further advice is required for churches in the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands.

It was resolved to adopt the document, subject to further legal advice.

This was achieved by consensus.

The clerk responded to questions and suggestions and undertook to take further advice regarding the status of such a document in the Channel Islands. Churches wishing to avail themselves of the document should make application to the General Secretary's office.

10/23 Listed Buildings

The Deputy General Secretary introduced Paper H. He commented upon the change of attitude of English Heritage during the last few years and drew attention to the suggestions the LBAG offer to Mission Council.

The Listed Buildings Advisory Group invites Mission Council to:

Note the potential for developing mission from historic church buildings discussed above

Agree to the development of a United Reformed Church policy on the role of the historic church building in mission;

Invite the Listed Buildings Advisory Group to prepare a draft.

Discussion followed during which it was noted that English Heritage is not active in Wales. Possibilities for mission were thought to be the most important objectives for

churches to pursue and it was felt that this area was well served by the work of One Church 100 Uses and a Methodist/URC Buildings Think Tank currently meeting. No decisions were taken.

Evening Prayers were led by the Chaplain. Rev Mary Buchanan.

Thursday March 11th.

Members of Mission Council met together to share Holy Communion, led by the chaplain during which the moderator gave the address.

Session 9

The Deputy General Secretary announced that the Rev. Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor would be the new member of MCAG.

10/24 Vetting and Barring

The Moderator invited Rev Craig Bowman to speak.

Child protection cards were available for anyone who would like to take them for distribution in their churches.

Vetting and Barring is likely to be introduced from July, and be a legal requirement by later in the year. Advice to churches should be sent out in April.

Mr Bowman responded to a number of questions and concurred with Rev Rob Weston that the safety of children and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance.

10/25 London Olympics - Rev Martin Hazell encouraged churches to look for opportunities that 2012 will bring. Many visitors will be in the country to share in the Olympic Games and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. There will be possibilities for hospitality especially in and near to the Olympic venues.

10/26 The General Election – Frank Kantor drew attention to materials available on the CTBI website and the work of the JPI Team in the run up to the election. He reminded Mission Council of the Charity Commission guidance about use of church premises for election meetings.

10/27 Pilots Event

Rev Rob Weston drew attention to the event at Warwick Castle for Pilots, their friends and families on May 15th. The new deadline for applications is 31 March.

10/28 Biennial Assembly final thoughts from Val Morrison

Matters likely to arise for the programme from Mission Council have been noted.

Work is ongoing regarding the practicalities of two moderators and two chaplains.

Not everything will be right!

10/29 Next Mission Council – joint meeting with the Methodist Council Oct 13-15 at Swanwick. The General Secretary asked members to keep November 20th free for a Mission Council meeting if required after the joint meeting in October.

10/30 Thanks and Farewells

The Moderator thanked all those who service at Mission Council will be completed before the next Council meeting: Rev Cliff Bembridge Wessex Rep.; Rev Jane Campbell, East Midlands Rep.; Mr Roderick Garthwaite, Yorkshire Rep.; Dr Anthony Jeans W. Midlands Deputy Clerk / Rep.; Rev Malcolm Hanson, Convenor of Nominations; Ms Morag McLintock Convenor of Equal Opportunities; Mrs Val Morrison as Yorkshire Clerk; Rev Dr Stephen Orchard, Past Moderator; Rev Peter Poulter Convenor of Ministries; Ms Marie Trubic, North West Rep. He offered special thanks to his Chaplain, Rev Mary Buchanan, for her personal support during his period as Moderator and for her sensitive leading of worship.

The General Secretary thanked the Moderator Rev John Marsh, for all he had been and done for the United Reformed Church during a period of transition and change; she wished him well for his coming visit to Zimbabwe.

Closing Worship. Rev Mary Buchanan thanked the Moderator for the privilege of being his chaplain and then led the final act of worship.

Appendix 1 Nominations

1. Convener Elect (for appointment at General Assembly 2010)

The following has agreed to serve:

- 3.4.1 Pilots Management Sub-Committee (Convener elect)
Mrs Soo Webster

2. Other appointments

Review/Appointing Group Convener

The Revd Deborah McVey has agreed to convene the Review/Appointing Group for the Moderator of the Synod of Scotland.

The Revd David A L Jenkins has agreed to convene the Sexual Ethics Advisory Group forthwith until 2014.

4.8 The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd

The Revd Roger Woodall has accepted nomination for a casual vacancy from 2009 to serve as a Director of the URC Ministers' Pension Fund. In accordance with a request from the Pension Trust it is suggested that he be appointed forthwith to serve until 2016.

1. United Reformed Church Trust

(cf para 3 of Paper E)

1.1 Having followed the procedures for the nomination of suitable candidates to fill three impending vacancies on the URC Trust and after discussions with the present Board, the following is recommended as the composition of the Trust for agreement by General Assembly.

Chair: Mr Alan Small (*elected by members of the Trust*)

Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones

Deputy Secretary: Mr Tony Bayley

Directors: *Group 1 -*

Mr Alan Small (3) [2012]

Dr David Robinson (4) [2014]

Mr Andrew Atkinson * (1) [2016]

Group 2 -

Dr Augur Pearce (12) [2012]

Mrs Rachel Wakeman (6) [2014]

Revd Richard Gray * (8) [2016]

Group 3 -

Revd Prof David Thompson (7) [2012]

Mr John Woodman (7) [2014]

Revd Michael Davies * (11) [2014]

Mission Council nominated Directors:

Mrs Claudette Binns [2014]

Vacancy for FURY nominated young person

Co-opted Directors:

Miss Joyce Bain ** [2014]

Mr Brian Woodhall ** [2014]

Ex-officio:

Moderators of General Assembly

General Secretary

Deputy General Secretary

Honorary Treasurer
Clerk to General Assembly
Convener of Investment Committee

In attendance:

- * - these are newly nominated Directors, all of whom have submitted satisfactory references.
- ** - these are new co-options on the basis of the need for valuable expertise and continuity.

Listing of Assembly and Mission Council committees, groups, etc.

The table below lists the committees and groups appointed by General Assembly or Mission Council, incorporating the task and advisory groups, most of which have not previously been listed in the Nominations Committee report, together with the list of bodies to which representatives are appointed. It may not be totally accurate or complete - any corrections would be gratefully received. The intention is that this should become the basis for the Nominations Committee report to General Assembly. It will also form the basis for the working spreadsheet which will be used to enable the work of the committee and of the church.

The key to understanding the roles and relationship of committees is as follows, for example:

2. 1. **MISSION COUNCIL** - a Council or Department of the church in sections 1 - 4; otherwise, in section 5 onwards, the heading of a list of representatives.
 - 1.1 **MISSION COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP** - a Group or Committee which reports directly to Mission Council and General Assembly, or which stands alone.
 - 1.1.1 Housing Provision Task Group - a Group or Sub-Committee which reports to its parent body, in this case Mission Council Advisory Group (MCAG) as above.
- 3.

No.	Committee/Group
1	MISSION COUNCIL
1.1	MISSION COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP
1.1.1	Housing Provision Task Group
1.1.2	Staffing Advisory Group
1.2	Ministerial Incapacity Procedure and Disciplinary Process Advisory Group
1.3	Resource Sharing Task Group
1.4	Law and Polity Advisory Group
1.5	Sexual Ethics Advisory Group
1.6	Human Sexuality Task Group (2008)
1.7	London Synod Task Group
2	MISSION DEPARTMENT
2.1	MISSION COMMITTEE
2.1.1	Faith and Order Reference Group
2.1.2	International Exchange Reference Group
2.1.3	Commitment for Life Reference Group

No.	Committee/Group
2.1.4	Methodist/URC Interfaith Reference Group
2.1.5	Joint Public Issues Team Management Group
2.1.6	Rural Strategy Group (URC/Methodist)
2.1.7	Vision4Life Steering Group
2.1.8	God is Still Speaking Steering Group
2.1.9	Vision 20/20 Steering Group
2.1.10	Mission Responsibility through Investment Group
3	MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH DEPARTMENT
3.1	MINISTRIES COMMITTEE
3.1.1	Ministries - Accreditation Sub-Committee
3.1.2	Ministries - CRCW Programme Sub-Committee
3.1.3	Ministries - Leadership in Worship Sub-Committee
3.1.4	Ministries - Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee
3.1.5	Ministries - Retired Ministers' Housing Sub-Committee
3.1.6	Assessment Board
3.1.7	Criminal Records Bureau (Churches' Agency for Safeguarding) Advisory Group
3.2	DISCIPLINARY PROCESS - Commission Panel
3.3	EDUCATION AND LEARNING COMMITTEE
3.3.1	Windermere Management Committee
3.3.2	Education for Ministry Phase 2 and 3 (EM2/3) Sub-Committee
3.3.3	Education and Learning Finance Sub-Committee
3.4	YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK COMMITTEE
3.4.1	Pilots Management Sub-Committee
4	ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
4.1	ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE
4.1.1	Tellers at Assembly 2010 for the election of the General Assembly Moderators 2012-2014
4.2	COMMUNICATIONS AND EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
4.3	EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
4.4	FINANCE COMMITTEE
4.4.1	Stewardship Sub-Committee
4.4.2	Ethical Investment Advisory Group (<i>Also reports to Mission Committee</i>)
4.5	NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE
4.5.1	Panel for General Assembly appointments (<i>NB Suggested name change</i>)
4.6	PASTORAL REFERENCE AND WELFARE COMMITTEE
4.6.1	Standing Panel for the Incapacity Procedure
4.7	THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST
4.7.1	Church House Management Group
4.7.2	Listed Buildings Advisory Group
4.8	THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION TRUST Ltd
4.9	PENSIONS EXECUTIVE
4.10	INVESTMENT COMMITTEE
5	REPRESENTATIVES TO MEETINGS OF SISTER CHURCHES
5.1	Presbyterian Church in Ireland
5.2	General Synod of the Church of England
5.3	Methodist Conference
5.4	Congregational Federation
5.5	General Assembly of the Church of Scotland
5.6	United Free Church of Scotland
5.7	Scottish Episcopal Church

No.	Committee/Group
5.8	Methodist Church in Scotland
5.9	Baptist Union of Scotland
5.10	Presbyterian Church of Wales
5.11	Union of Welsh Independents
5.12	Church in Wales Governing Body
5.13	Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church
6	REPRESENTATIVES ON ECUMENICAL CHURCH BODIES
6.1	Council for World Mission (CWM) Assembly 2008-2011
6.1.1	CWM European Region Meeting 2008-2011
6.2	World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) General Council
6.3	World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee
6.4	WCC Faith and Order Commission
6.5	Conference of European Churches Assembly
6.6	Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) Church Leaders' Meeting
6.6.1	CTBI Senior Representatives Forum
6.6.2	CTBI Environmental Issues Network
6.6.3	CTBI Church and Society Forum
6.6.4	CTBI Churches' Criminal Justice Forum
6.6.5	CTBI Churches' International Student Network
6.6.6	CTBI Consultative Group on Ministry amongst Children (CGMC)
6.6.7	CTBI Inter-Religious Network
6.6.8	CTBI Racial Justice Network
6.6.9	CTBI Churches' Network for Mission
6.6.10	CTBI China Forum
6.7	Churches Together in England (CTE) Forum 2009-2012
6.7.1	CTE Enabling Group
6.7.2	CTE Coordinating Group for Local Unity
6.7.3	CTE Churches Together for Healing
6.7.4	CTE Churches' Committee on Funerals and Crematoria
6.7.5	CTE Free Churches' Education Committee
6.7.6	CTE Churches' Joint Education Policy Committee
6.7.7	CTE Group for Evangelisation
6.7.8	CTE Churches' International Students Network
6.7.9	CTE Spirituality Co-ordinating Group
6.7.10	CTE Churches' Rural Group
6.7.11	CTE Minority Ethnic Affairs Group
6.8	Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) Members Meeting
6.9	National Sponsoring Body for Scotland
6.10	Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN)
6.11	Commission of Covenanted Churches
6.12	Joint Liturgical Group
6.13	European Churches' Environmental Network
6.14	Churches' Refugee Network
6.15	Fresh Expressions
7	REPRESENTATIVES ON FORMAL BILATERAL AND MULTI-LATERAL COMMITTEES
7.1	Methodist/United Reformed Church Liaison Committee
7.2	Roman Catholic - United Reformed Church Bilateral Dialogue
7.3	Church of England - United Reformed Church Bilateral Dialogue ("God's Reign and our Unity")
7.4	Anglican/Moravian Contact Group
7.5	Tri-lateral Conversation of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the URC

No.	Committee/Group
8	REPRESENTATIVES ON GOVERNING BODIES OF THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES, ETC
8.1	Northern College
8.1.1	Luther King House Educational Trust
8.2	Westminster College Board of Governors
8.2.1	Cheshunt Foundation
8.2.2	Cambridge Theological Foundation
8.3	Homerton College Trustees
8.4	The Queen's Foundation
9	GOVERNORS OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS WITH WHICH THE URC IS ASSOCIATED
9.1	Caterham School
9.2	Eltham College
9.3	Walthamstow Hall
9.4	Milton Mount Foundation
9.5	Silcoates School
9.6	Taunton School
9.7	Wentworth College
9.8	Bishops Stortford College
10	MISCELLANEOUS
10.1	Arthur Rank Centre
10.2	Churches' Legislation Advisory Service
10.3	Congregational Fund Board
10.4	Congregational Memorial Hall Trust
10.5	Discipleship and Witness Board of Trustees
10.5.1	Discipleship and Witness Publications Development Group
10.6	English Heritage's Places of Worship Forum
10.7	Guides' Religious Advisory Panel
10.8	Lord Wharton's Charity
10.9	Retired Ministers' and Widows' Fund
10.10	Samuel Robinson's Charities
10.11	Scouts' Religious Advisory Group
10.12	United Reformed Church History Society Council
10.13	Westhill Endowment Fund

Appendix 2 Changes to the Ministerial Disciplinary Process & Incapacity Procedure

RESOLUTION 1

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to Part I of the Disciplinary Process (Section O):

Paragraph 1.1

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

In the final sentence, after the words "**is also able to**" remove the words "**make recommendations (other than recommendations under Paragraph 1.3) and**".

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

Paragraph 1.3.1

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

Paragraph 1.3.2

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

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

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

Paragraph 1.3.3 and Paragraph 1.3.4

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

Paragraph 2

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

Paragraph 7.2

After the words "**case law**" add "**and/or official statements of good practice issued by a government department or agency**".

RESOLUTION 2

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to Part I of the Incapacity Procedure (Section P):

Paragraph 1.1 The existing Paragraph 1 to become 1.1.

Paragraph 1.2 Add a new paragraph as follows:-

"The Review Commission may also decide to make a recommendation/referral in accordance with Part II Section H. The Review Commission or, in the event of an appeal the Appeals Review Commission, is also able to make recommendations (other than recommendations under Part II Section H) and offer guidance, but only within the limits prescribed in Part II Sections K and L"

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

Paragraph 7 After the words "case law" insert "and/or official statements of good practice issued by a government department or agency".

RESOLUTION 3

General Assembly agrees to make the following change to Part I of the Disciplinary Process (Section O):

Paragraph 7

Remove this paragraph in its entirety.

RESOLUTION 4

General Assembly agrees to make the following change to Part I of the Incapacity Procedure (Section P):

Paragraphs 6 and 7

Remove these two paragraphs in their entirety.

RESOLUTION 5

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to the Structure of the United Reformed Church:

Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xi) Remove the words "Part I of the Statement of the Ministerial Disciplinary Process referred to in Function (xxxiii) below, and Part I of the Incapacity Procedure referred to in Paragraph 6 of the Structure."

Paragraph 3.(1) Change the reference in the text from "Paragraph 2.5.xi." to "Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xi)".

Paragraph 5.(2) Change the reference in the text from "Paragraph 5(3)" to " Paragraph 6".



The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT, United Kingdom
Deputy General Secretary: *The Revd Richard Mortimer*

To: Members of Mission Council
and staff in attendance

22 February 2010

Mission Council
Tuesday 9th to Thursday 11th March 2010
All Saints Conference Centre, London Colney, nr St Albans, Herts AL2 1AF
Tel: 01727 822010; email: conf.office@allsaintspc.org.uk

Dear Colleague

This is the second mailing of papers for Mission Council which meets at All Saints, London Colney from Tuesday 9th March. My previous letter, dated 21st January, contained information about accommodation and meals, transport and directions to All Saints and a list of members. If you did not receive these, please contact Krystyna Pullen immediately – krystyna.pullen@urc.org.uk – or tel: 020 7916 8646.

Registration will take place from 12.00. – 1.00 p.m. Room keys will be available upon arrival. Lunch will be served at 1.00 p.m.

Please find enclosed the following papers:

- The Agenda
- A list of Discussion Groups
- Papers **A, B, C, D, D1, D2, E, E1, F, F1, F2, G, H, J, K, L, N, N1**. Paper M will be tabled

We look forward to welcoming a number of new synod representatives to Mission Council. We hope that the balance in the agenda of worship, presentations, formal and informal discussions will give everyone the opportunity to feel that they have contributed and learned from each other, as we all share our experience of faith and our insights about the life and mission of the Church. Having said that, it seems clear that this Mission Council is going to be a new and somewhat different experience for everyone. This is the last Mission Council before the first ever biennial General Assembly of the United Reformed Church. Just as we have been (and still are) learning a new way of proper preparation for a biennial General Assembly, so this last Mission Council in the run-up may well be different from its predecessors when there was a General Assembly each year. May we treat each other with grace as we rise to the challenge.

With best wishes as ever

Yours very sincerely

Richard Mortimer

Deputy General Secretary



The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT, United Kingdom
Deputy General Secretary: *The Revd Richard Mortimer*

To: Members of Mission Council
and staff in attendance

21 January 2010

Mission Council: Tuesday – Thursday 9 – 11 March 2010
All Saints Conference Centre, London Colney, nr St Albans, Herts AL2 1AF
Tel: 01727 822010; email: conf.office@allsaintspc.org.uk

Dear Colleague

I look forward to welcoming you to the next Mission Council which will meet at All Saints Conference Centre, London Colney, nr St Albans, Herts from 9 – 11 March 2010. This will be the last Mission Council before the first ever biennial General Assembly and so we may well need to be open to discovering new ways of helping the preparation of Assembly business. To ensure that our arrangements are completed in time, I would ask you to supply us as soon as possible with the information we need about your requirements for accommodation and meals.

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

Some preliminary papers are enclosed:

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

Rooms are not ensuite so please bring soap/towel/dressing gown etc.

Approximate timings for Tuesday 9th, subject to minor adjustments, are

Registration 9 th :	12.00 – 1.00 p.m.
Lunch:	1.00 - 2.00 (definite)
1 st Business session:	2.00 – 3.30 p.m.
Tea:	3.30 – 4.00 p.m.
2 nd business session:	4.00 – 6.30 p.m.
Evening meal:	6.30 – 7.30 p.m. (definite)
3 rd business session:	7.30 – 9.00 p.m.
Evening Prayers:	9.00 – 9.15 p.m.
Bar	9.15 - 10.30 p.m.

Breakfast is served at 8.30 a.m.

Morning refreshment is served at 10.30 a.m.

Mission Council will close with lunch on Thursday 11 March.

telephone: +44 (0)20 7916 2020
direct line fax: +44 (0)20 7916 1928

direct line telephone: +44 (0)20 7916 8646
email: richard.mortimer@urc.org.uk

The next meeting dates are:

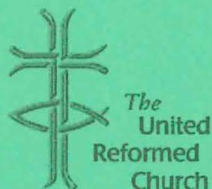
Days	Dates From / To	Venue	
Wednesday - Friday	13 th – 15 th October 2010 Joint meeting with Methodist Council (replacing 19-21 Nov 2010)	The Hayes, Swanwick	
Tuesday – Thursday	17 th – 19 th May 2011	High Leigh, Hoddesdon	
Friday – Sunday	25 th – 27 th November 2011	The Hayes	
Wednesday – Friday	21 st – 23 rd March 2012	High Leigh	
Friday – Sunday	30 th November – 2 nd December 2012	The Hayes	
Monday – Wednesday	13 th – 15 th May 2013	High Leigh	
Friday – Sunday	08 th – 10 th November 2013	The Hayes	

With good wishes

Yours sincerely



The Revd Richard Mortimer
Deputy General Secretary



MISSION COUNCIL

9 – 11 MARCH 2010

Tuesday – Thursday

MEMBERS & REPRESENTATIVES

The Moderator
General Secretary
Deputy General Secretary
Clerk
Legal Adviser

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

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

Assembly Standing Committees

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

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

FURY Advisory Board Representatives

Mr David **Harvey** - Moderator
Miss Jane **Hoddinott**

URC Trust

Mr Alan **Small** - Chair

13 synod Moderators, plus 3 representatives from each synod

1 N	Rev Rowena Francis	Miss Elaine Colechin	Rev John Durell	Mr Justice Semuli
2 N.W	Rev Richard Church	Mr George Grime	Rev Rachel Poolman	Ms Marie Trubic
3 Mer	Rev Howard Sharp	Miss Emma Pugh	Rev A. Gordon Smith	Mr Arthur Swift
4 York	Rev Kevin Watson	Rev Kay Alberg	Mr Roderick Garthwaite	Mr Chris Reed
5 E.M	Rev Terry Oakley	Rev Jane Campbell	Mr Duncan Smith	Mrs Jill Turner
6 W.M	Rev Roy Lowes	Mr Bill Robson	Mrs Val Phillips	Mrs Adella Pritchard
7 E	Rev Paul Whittle	Revd Catherine Ball	Ms Linda Harrison	Mr Clifford Patten
8 S.W	Rev David Grosch-Miller	Rev Roz Harrison	Mrs Sarah Lane-Cawte	Rev Stephen Newell
9 Wex	Rev Adrian Bulley	Mr Peter Pay	Mrs Margaret Telfer	Rev Mary Thomas
10 Th.N	Rev Dr Andrew Prasad	Mr Simon Fairnington	Rev Maggie Hindley	Rev David Lawrence
11 S	Rev Nigel Uden	Rev Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor	Rev Chris Parker	Rev Zam Walker
12 Wal	Rev Peter Noble	Rev Dr Peter Cruchley-Jones	Rev Shelagh Pollard	Mrs Iris Williams
13 Scot	Rev John Humphreys	Mrs Barbara Bruce	Miss Irene Hudson	Rev John Sanderson

In attendance

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

Communications
Ecumenical Relations
Education & Learning
Finance
Human Resources
Ministries

Mrs Irene **Wren**
Rev Mary **Buchanan**
Miss Jo **Williams**
Mr Frank **Kantor**
Mrs Suzanne **Adofo**/
Mr Stephen **Summers**
Rev Martin **Hazell**
Rev David **Tatem**
Rev Fiona **Thomas**
Mr Andrew **Grimwade**
Ms Michelle **Marcano**
Rev Craig **Bowman**

Mission
Pilots Development
Press Officers
Racial Justice & Multicult
'Reform' Editor
Rural Consultancy
Windermere Centre
World Church Relations
Youth Work
Methodist Representative

Ms Francis **Brienen**
Mrs Karen **Bulley**
Ms Alex **Klaushofer**/
Ms Gill **Nichol**
Rev Dr Michael **Jagessar**
Ms Kay **Parris**
Rev Graham **Jones**
Mr Lawrence **Moore**
Rev Jane **Rowell**
Mr John **Brown**
Rev Alison **Tomlin**

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

<p style="text-align: center;">A WALDO</p> <p>John Ellis Stephen Newell Susan Durber Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor Malcolm Johnson Val Morrison Rachel Poolman Terry Oakley Chris Reed Steve Summers Margaret Telfer</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">B LEICESTER</p> <p>Stephen Orchard John Brown Suzanne Adofo James Coleman Sarah Lane Cawte Clifford Patten Jane Rowell Howard Sharp Kirsty Thorpe Marie Trubic Nigel Uden</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">C FITZ REINER</p> <p>Peter Pay David Tatem Malcolm Hanson Martin Hazell Jane Hoddinott John Humphreys Roy Lowes Margaret Marshall Shelagh Pollard Roberta Rominger Justice Semuli Jill Turner</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">D AVELINE</p> <p>Morag McLintock David Lawrence Barbara Bruce Francis Brien Sarah Dodds Maggie Hindley Richard Mortimer Peter Noble Neil Robinson Alan Small Arthur Swift Paul Whittle</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">E BROWNLOW</p> <p>Elizabeth Nash George Grime Jane Campbell Ed Cox Peter Cruchley Jones Andrew Grimwade David Grosch-Miller Linda Harrison Irene Hudson Andrew Middleton Chris Parker</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">F BOURNE</p> <p>Roz Harrison John Durell Anthony Bottoms Craig Bowman James Breslin Simon Fairnington Rowena Francis Peter Poulter Adella Pritchard Duncan Smith Zam Walker</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">G MAIN HALL</p> <p>Kevin Watson Catherine Ball Adrian Bulley Roderick Garthwaite Elizabeth Gray-King Michael Jagessar Lawrence Moore John Marsh Kay Parris Emma Pugh Mary Thomas Rob Weston</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">H MAIN HALL</p> <p>Fiona Thomas Richard Church Ray Anglesea Mary Buchanan Jane Hoddinott Graham Jones Frank Kantor Val Philipps Andrew Prasad David Robinson John Sanderson Gordon Smith</p>

WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH <i>(amended)</i>		
8.30 – 9.15am	<i>Breakfast</i>	
9.15 – 11.00am	SESSION 4	
	Worship	
	Vision 2020 & Mission Committee	PAPER A
11.00 – 11.30am	<i>Refreshments</i>	
11.30 – 1.00	SESSION 5	
	Ethical Investment	PAPER F
	Nestle	PAPERS F1 & F2
	Oral Report	Treasurer
	MIND	PAPERS D, D1 & D2
1.00 – 2.00pm	<i>Lunch</i>	
2.00 – 3.30pm	SESSION 6	
2.00 – 3.00pm <i>(approx)</i>	Ministerial Housing Task Group	PAPER B
3.00 – 3.30pm	Ministerial Working Week	PAPER C
3.30 – 4.00pm	<i>Refreshments</i>	
4.00 – 6.30pm	SESSION 7	
4.00 – 4.45pm <i>(approx)</i>	Westminster College Development Plan	PAPER N
4.45 – 5.30pm	Westminster College Business Plan	PAPER N1
5.30 – 6.30pm <i>(approx)</i>	Human Sexuality Task Group	(to be tabled) PAPER M
6.30 – 7.30pm	<i>Evening Meal</i>	
7.30 – 9.00pm	SESSION 8	
	Changes to Structure	PAPER J
	Local Church Constitution	PAPER K
	Listed Buildings	PAPER H
9.00 – 9.15pm	Worship	

THURSDAY 11 MARCH 2010

<i>8.30 – 9.30am</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	
9.30am	Communion	
<i>11.00 – 11.30am</i>	<i>Refreshments</i>	
11.30 – 1.00pm	SESSION 9	
	Uncompleted Business	
	Any Other Business	
	Final thoughts on first ever biennial General Assembly	
	Farewells	
12.45 – 1.00pm	Closing Worship	
<i>1.00 – 2.00pm</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	
	Departures	



**MISSION COUNCIL
09 - 11 MARCH 2010**

**AGENDA AND
TIMETABLE**

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

TUESDAY 9 MARCH		
12.00 – 1.00pm	Registration	
1.00 – 2.00pm	Lunch	
2.00 – 3.30pm	<p>SESSION 1</p> <p>Opening Worship and Constitution</p> <p>Bible Study</p> <p>Welcomes:</p> <p><u>New Members</u></p> <p>Mrs Linda Harrison Eastern Synod Clerk (attended November MC as an alternate)</p> <p>Mr David Harvey FURY Moderator (apologies because of exams)</p>	

Mrs Sarah Lane-Cawte South Western Synod Rep

Mr Clifford Patten Eastern Synod Rep

Mr Christopher Reed Yorkshire Synod Rep (new
Synod Clerk succeeding Val Morrison)

Mr Arthur Swift Mersey Synod Rep

Revd Mary Thomas Wessex Synod Rep

Mrs Jill Turner East Midlands Synod Rep

Alternates

Mr Neil Robinson Yorkshire Synod for Revd Kay
Alberg (who is unwell)

Mrs Margaret Marshall West Midlands Synod for
Mr Bill Robson West Midlands Synod Clerk

Welcome back to Mrs Adella Pritchard West
Midlands Synod Rep

Also in attendance

Revd Dr James Coleman Chaplain to Moderator
Elect

Mrs Sarah Dodds Secretary, Nominations
Committee

Revd Dr Susan Durber Principal, Westminster
College

Revd Elizabeth Gray-King Education and Learning

Miss Elizabeth Lawson Convenor, Ministerial
Housing task Group

Revd Elizabeth Nash Consensus Advisor

Revd John Waller Convenor, Human Sexuality
Task Group

Apologies (Richard will give these)

Revd Kay Alberg, Mrs Karen Bulley, Miss Elaine Colechin, Mr David Harvey, Ms Michelle Marcano, Mr Bill Robson, Revd Alison Tomlin, Ms Marie Trubic, Mrs Iris Williams, Ms Jo Williams, Mr Justice Semuli

Please will the Moderator announce that, owing to the availability of those presenting Reports, items scheduled under Session 6 will be taken at Session 7 and vice versa. Therefore the Ministerial Housing Task Group and the Ministerial Working Week will be taken in the Session commencing at 2.00.p.m. on Wednesday and Westminster College and the Human Sexuality Task Group in the Session commencing at 4.00.p.m.

Approval of November 2009 Minutes

Matters Arising

Church of England United Reformed Church Bilateral Dialogue Richard will report a) Paper not yet quite ready b) agreement that as far as possible progress through each Church's system should track the other and pressure of business means it cannot go to the General Synod before the autumn at the earliest.

General Assembly 2010: Invite Roberta, Kirsty and Val to share thoughts. Also you might then ask David Robinson, as Convenor of the Assembly Arrangements Committee if he has anything he wishes to share.

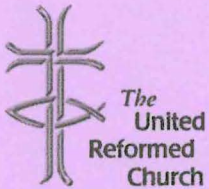
3.30 – 4.00pm	Refreshments	

4.00 – 6.30pm	SESSION 2	
	Moderatorial Think Tank: Kirsty and Val to speak	PAPER G
	Nominations The Revd Malcolm Hanson, Convenor	PAPERS E, E1 & E2
6.30 – 7.30pm	<i>Evening Meal</i>	
7.30 – 9.00pm	SESSION 3	
	God Is Still Speaking: Invite Denese Chikwendu and Roberta to introduce this.	PAPER L
	Groups on question in Paper L	
8.30.p.m. ish	Groups to return and share	
9.00 - 9.15pm	Closing Worship	
WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH (amended)		
8.30 – 9.15am	<i>Breakfast</i>	

2.00 – 3.30pm	SESSION 6	
<i>2.00 – 3.00pm (approx)</i>	Ministerial Housing Task Group Miss Elizabeth Lawson, Convenor	PAPER B
<i>3.00 – 3.30pm</i>	Ministerial Working Week Revd Peter Poulter, Convenor, Ministries Committee	PAPER C
<i>3.30 – 4.00pm</i>	<i>Refreshments</i>	
4.00 – 6.30pm	SESSION 7	
<i>4.00 – 4.45pm (approx)</i>	Westminster College Development Plan Revd Dr Susan Durber, Principal and Professor Anthony Bottoms	PAPER N
<i>4.45 – 5.30pm</i>	Westminster College Business Plan It may well be that both the Development Plan and the Business Plan should be considered together	PAPER N1
<i>5.30 – 6.30pm (approx)</i>	Human Sexuality Task Group Revd John Waller, Convenor	(to be tabled) PAPER M
<i>6.30 – 7.30pm</i>	<i>Evening Meal</i>	

7.30 – 9.00pm	SESSION 8	
	Changes to Structure <i>The Assembly Clerk</i>	PAPER J
	Local Church Constitution <i>The Assembly Clerk</i>	PAPER K
	Listed Buildings <i>Richard</i>	PAPER H
9.00 – 9.15pm	Worship	
THURSDAY 11 MARCH 2010		
8.30 – 9.30am	<i>Breakfast</i>	
9.30am	Communion	
11.00 – 11.30am	<i>Refreshments</i>	
11.30 – 1.00pm	SESSION 9	
	Item from Ministries Committee: Update on Barring & Vetting, ISA etc <i>Revd Craig Bowman, Secretary for Ministries</i>	
	The Olympics <i>Martin Hazell, Director of Communications</i>	

	Uncompleted Business	
	Any Other Business	
	Final thoughts on first ever biennial General Assembly	
	<p>Farewells</p> <p>Revd Cliff Bembridge Wessex Synod-already gone</p> <p>Mr Roderick Garthwaite Yorkshire Synod</p> <p>Dr Anthony Jeans West Midlands Deputy Clerk- in absentia</p> <p>Ms Morag McIntock Convenor, Equal Opportunities</p> <p>Mrs Val Morrison Yorkshire Synod Clerk, returning as Co-Moderator</p> <p>Revd Dr Stephen Orchard Past Moderator</p> <p>Revd Peter Poulter Convenor, Ministries Committee</p> <p>And Revd John Marsh, Moderator of General Assembly</p>	
12.45 – 1.00pm	Closing Worship	
1.00 – 2.00pm	Lunch	
	Departures	



MISSION COUNCIL 9th - 11th March 2010

A

Vision 2020

Section 1 – Background

In 2006, General Assembly resolved to bring together the work of six Assembly Committees through the formation of Mission Committee with a clear mandate to reappraise both what and how Assembly resources the mission priorities of the denomination. Since then considerable progress has been made particularly in relation to the operation of staff secretaries as a 'Mission Team' and also in identifying a series of work priorities for 2009 and 2010.

At General Assembly 2008, Mission Committee introduced the notion of a denominational 'mission strategy' founded upon a series of 10-year 'outcomes'. The Mission Committee report received warm approval and small group discussions about the outcomes indicated significant enthusiasm for the broad thrust of the approach. The primary concerns expressed by members of Assembly related to the need for any strategy to avoid being imposed from the centre; and for it to take greater account of issues of spirituality and worship.

During 2009, Mission Committee led an extensive consultation with local churches, Synods, other Assembly Committees and ecumenical and international partners concerning what has become known as *Vision2020: planning for growth in the URC*.

This paper to Mission Council sets out in some detail the Vision2020 strategy as we plan to present it to General Assembly 2010. We are seeking Mission Council's help in shaping the approach and wording ready for General Assembly. It also seeks feedback from Mission Council about the kind of resolution that might be brought to General Assembly.

Section 2 – Feedback from the Vision2020 Consultation

Consultation about Vision2020 took place in two phases, throughout 2009. The first phase focused on local congregations and took place in the spring and summer; the second phase involved Synods, other networks and ecumenical partners and started in the autumn of 2009. Local churches were asked to give their feedback on the two core ideas: the statements of our mission and purpose; and local mission pledges. 538 forms were returned, which represents over a third of all local congregations. The highest number of responses came from the West Midlands, North Western, Yorkshire and Southern Synods.

There was a largely positive response to the statements of our mission and purpose. Three out of every four churches indicated that they think the current statements outline the main areas that the church should prioritise in the next 10 years. The majority of churches (69%) further indicated that they would find the idea of 'Local Mission Pledges' helpful and 64% agreed that such pledges would help Synod and Assembly staff plan the kind of support they can offer local churches.

The consultation highlighted a significant number of churches who are clearly engaged in wide ranging mission activities already and who use their resources creatively for this purpose. We wish to affirm the wonderful work that many United Reformed Churches are engaged with and re-state our intention that Vision2020 should support and build upon these positives.

The consultation revealed a number of key issues. Significant patterns emerged in response to the statements' themes; these included concern about the lack of reference to children and young people; suggestions to enhance references to Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Bible; a range of strong views about the statement on diversity; and a sense that the statements were too wordy and that some of the language was too technical.

A number of churches questioned the quantitative nature of many of the suggested activities and in particular the notion of numerical church growth being seen as a measure of success. A number of churches also felt that the phrase "*In the next 10 years ...*" which introduces each statement was unhelpful, indicating delayed action for some and an unrealistic time frame for others.

Many churches used the consultation exercise to express their sense of vulnerability and weakness. In some cases concern focused on small numbers, in others the fact that the congregation is ageing. Lack of capacity was frequently raised and it became clear to us that

we did not communicate clearly enough that local churches would not be expected to do everything but to choose one or two things to 'pledge' as part of their local mission plans.

We have taken on board the issues and concerns raised and will address them throughout this report.

The consultation with Synods focused on the link between the Vision2020 statements and the Synods' own priorities, and how local mission pledges can help Synods with their mission planning and enabling. Five Synods felt that Vision2020 integrates well with their own plans and another six saw potential for integration but were not yet clear how this would be done in practice. Only one Synod responded negatively and one has not responded at all. Some Synod responses reiterated local churches' concerns about some of the statements such as the lack of emphasis on the Bible, and concern over the diversity statement. They further expressed the need to consider the implications of Vision2020 for Local Ecumenical Partnerships and for smaller churches.

Feedback from Assembly Committees has been mixed. Those that have engaged with the material – not least the Ministries and Education & Learning Committees - have generally been very positive but a number of significant Committees have yet to provide detailed feedback. It is our intention to have a further round of consultations with the Committees following this meeting of Mission Council. Feedback from international and ecumenical partners has not yet been received and is being actively followed up.

Section 3 – The Theological Basis for a URC Mission Strategy

The Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church speaks of the church's responsibility to offer itself and the world to God in worship; to receive and express the renewing life of the Holy Spirit in each place and in its total fellowship; to declare the reconciling and saving power of Jesus Christ, to live out Christ's ministry of caring, forgiving and healing love; and to bear witness to Christ's rule over the nations. Though not explicitly mentioned, it is clear that mission is fundamental to the existence of the church.

A much stronger focus on mission is visible in the *Growing Up* report, adopted by the 1999 General Assembly. The United Reformed Church was expressing its intention to focus on faithful participation in God's mission, rather than on the future of the URC as a Church. *Growing Up* attempted to reawaken the church to the fact that it is mission-shaped and that in the words of Emil Brunner, it "exists by mission as a fire exists by burning". This found

further expression in the strapline of the *Catch the Vision* process in 2004: "called to be God's people, transformed by the Gospel, seeking to make a difference".

Vision2020 builds on the understanding of mission and the church's role in it in *Growing Up* and *Catch the Vision*. It takes as its fundamental starting point that mission is God's activity and entails all that God is doing to transform this world into the reign of God. It is a mission that finds its ultimate expression in Jesus and continues throughout history through the Spirit. The focus and scope of God's mission is the transformation of all of created reality into what God intended in creation.

The church is called, sent and empowered by God, through the Holy Spirit, to join in God's mission of transformation. It is the Church-in-mission that is recognisably the community of the followers of Jesus.

God's mission is to be understood as all that God is doing to transform the world into the Kingdom, therefore mission has a comprehensive character. The *Growing Up* report expressed this in the Five Marks of Mission. Vision2020 builds on these in its ten statements of mission and purpose.

If mission is God's mission and is all that God is doing to transform this world, then mission is contextual. It is the Holy Spirit who helps us discern how God is at work in each place. It is in the power of the Holy Spirit and through constant reflection and prayer that we are enabled to give shape to the Good News in ways that address directly the lives of the people around us. This is reflected in the ten statements, in Vision2020's principles and approach and in the concept of the local mission pledges.

The Mission Committee and Mission Team have sought to express these principles in the Mission Creed (see Annex 1).

Challenges and tensions

As with much theological endeavour, our engagement in mission is not without questions, challenges and apparent contradictions. These have been made explicit in a number of ways as churches, Synods and Committees have engaged with the Vision2020 materials. Whilst much of the Vision2020 consultation feedback can be reflected in changes to our statements and plans, there are some more fundamental tensions and challenges which cannot be

easily resolved. These are challenges that we need to 'live with' and explore as we journey together in God's unfolding mission. Here we highlight three:

a) Faithfulness or fruitfulness

Vision2020 aims to help the United Reformed Church plan for growth. Growth takes many forms. Every local church will be able to tell a story of how it has developed over the years, how its members have grown in faith, how it has grown part of its neighbourhood. This growth in 'faithfulness' is a key part of what we mean by growth. However, Vision2020 is also concerned about numerical growth, not only because of institutional survival but out of the conviction that a church defined by mission ought to long to increase its shared fellowship in Christ. The growth of communities of faith which are centres of worship of God and where the reign of God is made visible – our fruitfulness - is a key concern in mission. We are called to be both faithful and fruitful.

b) Qualitative or quantitative measures

Vision 2020 seeks to enable churches to be more intentional in their mission planning and engagement. One of the weaknesses identified in the *Growing Up* process was that no clear targets were set. Vision2020 has sought to address this by adding 'indicators' to each of the statements of our mission and purpose. It clearly recognises, however, that key to a church's involvement in mission is the quality of its church life and not the number of activities carried out or people attending. Therefore, when we identify indicators to help us see where we are on the way, this is done in the recognition that these are only 'signposts on the journey towards greater corporate Christ-likeness' (Robert Warren, 2004). Our involvement in mission is as much about the being of the church as its doing.

c) Unity and mission

The United Reformed Church was founded on a vision of unity and many regarded it as a temporary stage on the way to the visible unity of the Christian Church. For some the fact that it still exists is a sign of its failure to live out its founding vision. Both the *Growing Up* report and *Catch the Vision* sought to forge a new identity for the church in the belief that it has something distinctive and vital to contribute. Vision2020 builds on this belief and seeks to help churches develop an identity that is strongly rooted in God's mission: we are called to be God's people, transformed by the gospel, making a difference for Christ's sake. The renewed emphasis on our identity, however, needs to be balanced with our continuing search for visible unity. Our ecumenical division falls far short of Jesus' own vision of the unity of the church and the need for the continued witness of the URC to the hope and goal of Christian unity remains. The aim of Vision2020 is to balance the church's commitment to the unity of all God's people with a similar commitment to share in God's mission. As with fruitfulness and faithfulness, unity and mission are not mutually exclusive goals; indeed they must be nurtured hand in hand.

Section 4 – Links to other URC Programmes

One of the most common concerns expressed during the consultation was that churches are suffering from 'initiative overload' (although very few local churches expressed this view directly themselves). At the heart of these concerns are four initiatives: Vision4Life, Vision2020, God Is Still Speaking and Challenge to the Church. Following numerous discussions with the General Secretary, Committee Convenors, working groups and Synod Moderators a clear pattern has been established as to how these programmes relate.

The primary focus for local church activity until Advent 2011 is Vision4Life. We are presently in the second year of Vision4Life with its theme of Prayer. In December 2010 we will move into the Evangelism year during which God Is Still Speaking will be launched which, with its focus on evangelism, will act as a resource for and complement to Vision4Life. At present, God Is Still Speaking and Vision4Life steering groups are working together to ensure these initiatives are joined up.

Vision2020 is an over-arching framework within which URC mission planning at Assembly, Synod and local levels can be promoted and understood over a ten year period. Whilst it will have its own branding and relevant resource materials, these will cross-reference other Assembly programmes such as Vision4Life, God Is Still Speaking and Commitment for Life and these resources will be designed to be tailored by Synods and local churches to address their regional and local situations. (See Section 11 for more details).

There is a strong hope that Vision2020 will provide a framework and resource for Synods to develop and adapt their own Synod Mission Strategies and that local churches will use Vision2020 and Synod Mission Strategies as a stimulus for making their own Local Mission Pledges. It is also hoped that there is a clear relationship between Synod Mission Strategies and Synod ministerial deployment planning that forms part of the Challenge to the Church process. (See Section 9 for more details).

Section 5 – Vision2020 Principles and Approach

Whilst described as a 'strategy', Vision2020 recognises the autonomy of local churches, gathered as Synods, to determine their own priorities and plans. The development of a denominational strategy represents an attempt to inspire, encourage and co-ordinate and not to coerce or control. To this end, a number of principles have been – and will continue to be – important to our mission planning.

First, the Vision2020 strategy must be seen as a **process rather than a document**. Whilst the different parts of the church will necessarily need to set out their aims, objectives, priorities and programmes in forms of words, the importance of strategic planning will be as much about the process of discussing, deciding and implementing ideas as it will any finely worded document.

Secondly, in-keeping with our denominational tradition, the starting point of any mission strategy must be **the local congregation**. Whilst there is a place for Assembly to suggest broad frameworks and for Synods to encourage and guide, this must be a strategy that serves, inspires and is inspired by the local congregation.

To this end, the third principle is that any strategy must be **permissive rather than prescriptive**. The Vision2020 strategy will be the sum of all of the local plans, developed in an organic and inclusive way, the Synod strategies and Assembly Committee priorities – each must have its place as part of a coherent whole. That is not to say that there is no place for an Assembly ‘framework’ but that part of the strategy must be to inspire and to guide and not to dictate.

Finally, the URC Mission Strategy must be driven by a **clear set of values** and not a strategy for its own sake. Our Reformed tradition and nearly forty years of history suggest that our strategy must be distinctive and, whilst enabling some clear decisions and plans to be made, it must also tell a story of who we are as a denomination and where we are going. We believe that the theological basis, as set out above, with the Mission Creed and the Statements of Mission Purpose, together present a sound basis from which mission planning can develop.

With these principles in mind, the diagram in Annex 2 is one portrayal of how different processes within the United Reformed Church might operate together in order to enable a more effective approach to mission. But, just as a body with many parts, an effective mission strategy requires the co-operation of these different parts, from Local Mission Pledges, through Synod Mission Strategies to the overarching Assembly Framework. (See Sections 8-10 for more details).

Section 6 – Statements of Mission Purpose

At the centre of the Vision2020 strategy are a set of ten ‘statements of our mission purpose’ which describe the kind of denomination we hope the URC will be in the future. Each statement is followed by a short paragraph of additional explanation and a series of ‘indicators’.

There has been much detailed feedback on these statements and a number of significant issues have been raised including a concern about the lack of reference to children and young people; suggestions to enhance references to Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Bible; a wide range of views on the statement on diversity; and a sense that the statements were too wordy and that some of the language was too technical. Many of these issues have been taken on board and the revised statements appear as Annex 3. A decision has been taken not to include a separate statement about children and young people but to ensure reference to the importance of children and young people is woven into each theme, particularly through the 'indicators' (see Section 7 below).

Concerns were also raised about the relationship between the proposed statements and the Five Marks of Mission. It is the view of the Mission Committee that the two sets of statements are entirely complementary but that the more detailed set of 10 statements set out in Vision2020 will be helpful for churches in their mission planning.

In the *Hearing Your Views Vision 2020* consultation booklet each statement began with the phrase: "In ten years time ..." This has proved confusing for some people for two reasons: first it suggests that we are not already some way along the journey to becoming the kind of church the statement suggests; and secondly it seems to reduce the sense of urgency that is required to drive the changes we need to transform our denomination. We are suggesting then that we drop that introductory phrase and emphasise the following things:

Statements of Mission Purpose

- a) Our statements of mission purpose are designed to set out a vision for the development of the URC for the next 10 years and beyond. They arise from – and act as a complement to – the Five Marks of Mission.
- b) As statements of purpose we can see many of them working already in all aspects of the life of the URC. In this we can rejoice. But they remain both a challenge and an inspiration as beacons on a journey we must make together over the coming decade.
- c) With the coming decade in mind, we see them as statements which can motivate and guide us until at least 2020, but recognise that the mission task is much more urgent. Unless we act immediately, the life and witness of our denomination as we know it is unlikely to thrive beyond the next decade at all.

Section 7 – Indicators: steps along the way

An indicator is a sign or signal that we are making progress towards our desired outcome – it is a milestone on a journey. Whilst it can be very helpful for an indicator to be measurable in some way it is not the same as a 'target' as a target is normally seen as an end in itself or something by which we are judged or monitored.

During the Vision2020 consultation we have been struck by the reaction to suggested indicators, not least the apparent fear of using numerical measures. In a culture of targets and league tables which has sometimes led to unnecessary bureaucracy, perverse incentives and unhappy workplaces this reaction is perhaps understandable. But there is a danger of throwing the baby out with the proverbial bathwater and not facing up to our fears. Measurable indicators can be a helpful tool for both celebration and reflection.

Another concern raised during the consultation was that churches would be expected to address every statement and it would be too much for many to bear. This was never the intention. The idea of having multiple statements and indicators is that churches can use them to help identify a small number of mission priorities which are particularly pressing or relevant to their own context. For smaller churches, the idea of having a range of indicators is that they might pick just one or two to help guide their work.

The examples of indicators set out in the table in Annex 3 are intended to act as prompts for discussion and planning. They have been developed by members of Mission Committee drawing on their own experiences of church life. They are divided into three groups depending upon the 'level' of the church at which they might be best applied. They are also separated out by the ten Vision2020 statements. But they are not designed to be used in a rigid fashion. Though we hope some churches and Synods might use them as they are, the intention is that they can be adapted to suit different contexts.

As these are largely 'newly developed' they will need further testing and discussion before they are included in any report to General Assembly or subsequent Vision2020 resources.

Section 8 – Local Mission Pledges

Vision2020 recognises local mission to be the most important priority for the United Reformed Church. The mission activity of our local congregations represents the

cornerstone of our denominational ethos and our future hope. To this end, the Vision2020 consultation indicated significant levels of support for the notion of the 'Local Mission Pledge'. Many local congregations expressed their enthusiasm for identifying one or more activities that might give direction to their mission and a number of Synods indicated that they would find it helpful to gather and analyse local church priorities with a view to offering appropriate support where possible.

There was a strong feeling that Local Mission Pledges would be best made by local churches as part of their biennial process of Local Mission & Ministry Review (LMMR). Each Synod is currently developing plans as to how LMMR needs to be implemented but it is suggested that some form of 'guidance', developed in consultation with Synods, might be produced which suggests a unified process for LMMR and the development of Local Mission Pledges.

In summary:

Local Mission Pledges

- a) Each local congregation will be encouraged to make one or more Local Mission Pledge.
- b) A Local Mission Pledge will be a short statement expressing the mission priority of the local church.
- c) A Local Mission Pledge will be made as part of the biennial process of Local Mission & Ministry Review.
- d) A Local Mission Pledge might be stimulated by one or more of the Mission Statements and Indicators set out in the Vision2020 Framework but may be adapted to suit a local mission context.
- e) Together, Local Mission Pledges represent a process of covenanting between churches in a Synod.
- f) Synods may gather and use Local Mission Pledges to guide and direct their own mission planning.

Section 9 – Synod Mission Strategies

Vision2020 seeks to support and build on Synod mission strategies. Feedback from the consultation with Synods suggests that there is great diversity not only in the stages of development of Synod mission strategies, but also in the understanding of their nature and function.

Some Synods feel that their mission strategy is to encourage, enable and support local churches in their own stated mission priorities. They therefore see no need for the Synod to formulate Synod mission priorities. These Synods suggest that the Vision2020 document might be a point of reference or complementary tool for local churches in their reflection on mission in their own context. Though this approach offers limited scope for engagement with Vision2020, one Synod reported that it uses a particular process which encourages churches to make an action plan and these could form the basis for making Local Mission Pledges.

Other Synods are at the beginning of formulating a Synod mission strategy and are using Vision2020 to help shape this process. Feedback received suggests that the ten mission statements in particular are being used to help Synods identify their own mission priorities. These Synods are seeking to link their work on a Synod strategy with Vision2020 from the beginning, to ensure that they mutually encourage and support one another. They see the development of Local Mission Pledges as a positive tool in this process.

The majority of Synods have done significant work on identifying mission priorities and in some cases this has resulted in fully formulated mission strategies. Where Synods have identified their own mission priorities most indicate that there are clear links between those and the statements in Vision2020. Some have actively incorporated Vision2020 in their strategies, while others see significant potential for the two strategies supporting one another. They are intending to integrate the concept of Local Mission Pledges in their work on LMMR and the revision of parsonage profiles.

It is entirely appropriate for each Synod to adopt its own approach to mission planning. However, Mission Committee believes there are already clear benefits in those Synods where there is a positive and proactive commitment to integrating their own plans with the Vision2020 process.

Without wanting to suggest any form of prescription, the following box is intended to indicate how a Synod Mission Strategy can become an effective, joined-up mission planning tool.

Some elements of a Synod Mission Strategy might include:

- a) A series of clear mission priorities for the Synod with explicit reference to their relationship with the wider Vision2020 framework.
- b) A series of Synod-level indicators which can be used to celebrate and reflect on progress in relation to mission priorities and might act as a 'covenant' between Synods and with the wider Assembly (these indicators could simply be a 'collation' of all the Local Mission Pledges).
- c) A clear relationship between Synod mission priorities and the priorities of local churches – as expressed through their Local Mission Pledges.
- d) A clear relationship between Synod mission priorities and deployment planning.
- e) A clear relationship between Synod mission priorities and Synod personnel, programmes, training and resources.
- f) A regularly updated Synod mission action plan.

Section 10 – Assembly Framework

Clearly the Vision2020 strategy also has significant implications for the URC as a whole. At the simplest level, the Vision2020 strategy provides a framework or context for the work of Mission Committee. As we move away from the old committee structures the themes of the statements need to guide the work of the Mission Team at Church House. This will involve Mission Committee – informed by Synods and local church experiences – reshaping the Mission Team work programme and introducing new programmes of work such as Fresh Expression and God Is Still Speaking to support the different statements of mission purpose. In 2010, for example, it will shape the Review of Ecumenical Relations and the new Vision2020 Mission Grants Programme. It will also shape any revision of staff secretary posts.

Whilst it has been driven by Mission Committee and has specific relevance to Assembly's Mission Department, it has often been made clear that 'mission' is not the sole domain of Mission Committee but underlies all other aspects of denominational life. Throughout this document, references have been made to Challenge to the Church, Synod deployment planning and Local Mission & Ministry Reviews. These all lie within the scope of Ministries Committee and Department and we are beginning to work through the implications of

Vision2020 in that regard. Similarly, Education and Learning Committee have initiated conversations about the impact of Vision2020 on their work: for the Resource Centres for Learning, the TLS programme, for EM1/2/3 and for Elders. We hope to give more of a flavour of these plans through presentations at General Assembly.

Finally, for Vision2020 to offer any coherence or inspiration to the different levels of the denomination it needs to have a strong identity and relevant resource materials. It is proposed that we maintain the Vision2020 logo, supported by the successful 'look and feel' of the Hearing Your Views booklet which itself is based upon the communications approach developed by Vision4Life. The URC website will also be an important 'repository' for stories, discussions and web-based resources in the coming decade. However, whilst maintaining the unifying logo, statements and overall approach, it is hoped that Synods and local churches will themselves adopt, develop and expand Vision2020 according to their own situations.

In summary:

The Vision2020 Assembly Framework

- a) Vision 2020 is not another resource intensive programme of Assembly activity but rather a deliberate and systematic attempt to shape – and go on re-shaping – existing and developing programmes of activity in every council and committee of church life.
- b) The Assembly Framework is the combination of the statements of mission purpose, the guiding principles and the resources produced through Mission department to guide and steer the Vision2020 decade.
- c) It will be supported by the annual Mission Committee Workplan and the activities of the Mission Team and its programmes but its real strength will lie in how far it nurtures and enables mission planning and action in local churches and Synods.
- d) A series of Assembly-level indicators can be used to celebrate and reflect on progress and might act as a denominational 'covenant' (these indicators could simply be a 'collation' of all the Synod indicators).

Section 11 – Implementation / Resources / Communications

The implementation of Vision2020 needs to follow the principles set out in the sections above, not least the challenge to every council and committee of the church to work out for itself the implications of the Vision2020 statements of mission purpose for its own context.

As stated above, all of the work of the Mission Department will be gradually re-orientated around the Assembly Framework and already, for example, the variety of grants that the Committee had oversight for has been restructured as a Vision2020 Mission Grants Programme.

To this end the first priority for Vision2020 implementation will be:

- a) To work with each Synod and each Assembly Committee to help them devise their own response to Vision2020.

Beyond this, key aspects of implementation are as follows:

- b) A Vision2020 Steering Group will be formed to guide, monitor and evaluate the implementation of Vision2020 throughout the councils and committees of the church. Terms of reference for the group will be developed following General Assembly and it will report to Mission Committee.
- c) A simple 'feedback' leaflet will be produced thanking those that have participated in the Vision2020 consultation and informing them of the decision of General Assembly and the Vision2020 Assembly framework.
- d) Rather than producing a single communications resource about Vision2020 a series of web-based resources will be developed depending on the needs and demands of Synods and local churches. These might include:
 - Further reflections and resource materials in relation to each of the statements of mission purpose;
 - Resources to help churches think through their Local Mission Pledges;
 - Stories and case studies from local churches and Synods about how they are engaging with Vision2020.
- e) As well as these central web-based resources, a small communications budget will be allocated to each Synod for it to decide how best to communicate Vision2020 amongst its own churches. Mission Committee core members and Mission Team Synod links will work closely with each Synod to explore how best to do this.

- f) Mission Committee and Ministries Committee will work together on further 'guidance' and resources for Synods and local churches relating to the Local Mission & Ministry Review process and the next steps for Challenge to the Church.

Section 12 – General Assembly Resolution(s)

Mission Committee is keen to seek endorsement for the Vision2020 strategy at General Assembly 2010. There appear to be three ways of doing this:

- a) Bringing a single resolution adopting the whole approach – this is simple and clear but in pre-empting the mood of Assembly it lends itself to criticism for being 'top-down' and to endless amendments attempting to change its tone. It might also compromise those who like the general approach but have concerns about specific elements
- b) A series of resolutions on different elements – this has the same flaws as a single resolution but at least gives the opportunity to General Assembly to discuss each element in turn but could be lengthy process. This approach also raises the risk of adopting some aspects of the strategy but not all which would significantly undermine the deliberately joined-up, holistic nature of the approach.
- c) Ask General Assembly to write its own resolutions based upon its level of support for the different elements of the strategy. As General Assembly will be meeting around tables for the first time, the idea is that each table could be tasked with writing a resolution about different elements which try to capture the mood of the debate. These draft resolutions would then be gathered up by a small group who can then draw together a set of resolutions which best reflect the mood of Assembly whilst maintaining the joined-up, holistic nature of the approach.

We would be keen to get Mission Council's views on our approach to resolutions.

Annex 1: The Mission Creed

We believe in God's mission:

Beginning at creation
with a word of possibility
and a promise of abundance.

Breathing us into existence
to delight in creation
and to tread carefully.

We are creatures of the earth,
reflecting God's diversity,
interconnected and interdependent.

We believe in God's mission:

Bringing good news in person,
starting where others need to begin
and finding holiness in every encounter.

Bursting through the walls of our churches,
to reach out to the marginalised
with unconditional love.

We are called to be a people of resurrection,
sojourners in this generation,

dependent on the generosity of God.

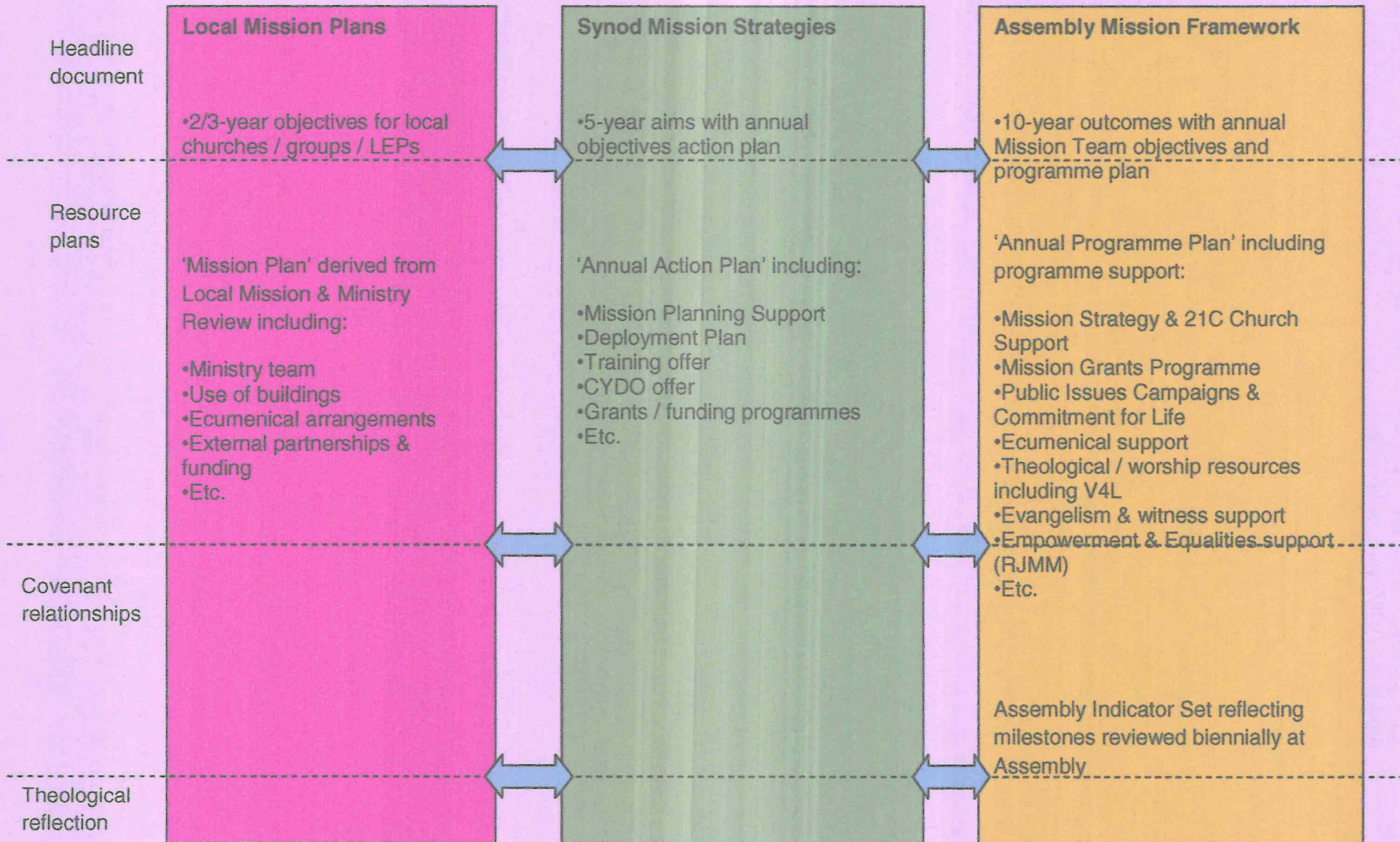
We believe in God's mission:

Challenging complacency,
and calling for action,
through contemplative love.

So that we might be at one
with each other
and at peace with the world.

We are commissioned by God,
Creator, Saviour, Holy Spirit,
Source of the mission we seek to fulfil.

Annex 2: Vision2020 Mission Strategy Overall Framework



Annex 3 – Revised Statements of Mission Purpose and Indicators

Statement 1: Spirituality and Prayer

We will grow in our practice of prayer and spirituality, nurturing strength for our witness to Jesus Christ, and developing our discernment of where God is and what God is calling us to do by reading and studying the Bible and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our faith must be at the heart of all we do. Faith is nurtured by worship and prayer, by reading and studying the Bible, by the life of our church community and by how we practice it from day to day. We must therefore seek to engage more deeply with Bible study and prayer, seek to develop worship that is engaging and joyful, seek to live faithfully and hopefully as a church community and as individuals, confident that God still talks to us and shows us how to live.

Some suggested indicators:

Local Indicators	Synod Indicators	Assembly Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities for prayer and Bible study in small groups and in a variety of styles. • The number of people for whom prayer and Bible study is a natural habit – not just on Sunday. • Directly involving children and young people in prayer, Bible study and leading worship. • How far we see all we do as an 'act of worship'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far worship, prayer and Bible study forms a part of all Synod meetings and committees. • The number of churches supported and resourced to develop their spirituality and prayer. • The number of churches taking part in specific initiatives to engage more deeply with spirituality and prayer e.g. Vision4Life. • Demonstrating clear links between policies and plans and spirituality, Bible study and prayer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far worship, prayer and Bible study forms a part of all Synod meetings and committees. • The number of churches supported and resourced to develop their spirituality and prayer. • The number of churches taking part in specific initiatives to engage more deeply with spirituality and prayer e.g. Vision4Life. • Demonstrating clear links between policies and plans and spirituality, Bible study and prayer.

Statement 2: Identity

The URC will be a church where every local congregation will be able to say who they are, what they do and why they do it.

One of our greatest strengths is our diversity and flexibility which allows our churches to serve so creatively and effectively across a wide variety of contexts. However, constant pragmatism can lead to a lack of identity, focus and purpose. Our identity in Jesus Christ is central to our mission. We want to encourage local churches to develop mission plans specific to their local contexts, which are owned by the membership of the church, allowing them to articulate clearly to friends, colleagues and neighbours 'who they are, what they do, and why they do it.'

Some suggested indicators:

Local Indicators	Synod Indicators	Assembly Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having a clear 'mission plan' understood and owned by all members.• Having an up to date 'Welcome Pack', noticeboard and website – including resources for children.• Offering a warm space, warm coffee and warm welcome to people from any background.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of churches with a clear mission plan – expressed through a Local Mission & Ministry Review.• Provision of resources to support, enable and encourage local churches to develop their local mission plans.• Demonstrating clear links between policies and plans and 'who we are' as a denomination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of churches taking part in Vision4Life and God Is Still Speaking programmes exploring URC faith and mission.• Demonstrable support to Synods to nurture and develop their own regional and national identities.• Demonstrating clear links between policies and plans and 'who we are' as a denomination.

Statement 3: Christian Ecumenical Partnerships

We will be more confident in our identity, valuing the treasures of our tradition, discerning when to seek ecumenical partnerships, and when and how to seek the further unity of the church.

A lot has developed ecumenically since our unions in 1972, 1981 and 2000; the focus has changed from seeking further union, to forming a wide variety of partnerships - at local and national levels. Whilst our instincts remain deeply rooted in seeking further unity, we do not believe our dreams are served well by lacking in confidence, purpose and identity. Being confident in ourselves and working with others are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, empowered by the Holy Spirit, celebrating and offering our many gifts will make our partnerships stronger and may speed the way to further union.

Some suggested indicators:

Local Indicators	Synod Indicators	Assembly Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing people, finances and buildings with other local churches, e.g. youth work.• Regular opportunities for worship, prayer and reflection with other local churches for people of all ages.• Hosting or supporting Christian activities and churches not part of mainstream denominations.• Coming together with other churches to run local mission projects.• Speaking with confidence about the gifts of our URC tradition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of ecumenical partnerships appropriate to the Synod's context.• Opportunities provided to learn about our different traditions with Christian ecumenical partners.• Activities for children and young people to meet with others from different Christian traditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities provided to learn about our different traditions with Christian ecumenical partners.• The amount of Assembly-level activity and resourcing carried out in partnership with ecumenical partners.• Demonstrating clear links between our national, European and international ecumenical partnerships and the ministry and mission of our local churches.

Statement 4: Community Partnerships

We will be a church that is more active in the life of local neighbourhoods.

Many churches already have strong and long-standing links with their local communities – but others have become gathered congregations with little connection to the places where they meet to worship. An incarnational understanding of mission calls us to shape – and to be shaped – by the communities in which we worship and serve. We want to encourage local churches to get involved in their local neighbourhoods in new ways, being creative and taking risks in forming active partnerships with other local agencies, working with people of other faiths in the area to seek the benefit of those that live or work in the area.

Some suggested indicators:

Local Indicators	Synod Indicators	Assembly Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playing an active role to run or support a local community project.• The number of members actively involved in local civic and political life.• Support given to members working or volunteering in local community-based organisations.• Playing an active role in work with children and young people 'outside' of the church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of churches running some form of community project or working in partnership with other local agencies.• Direct support through grants, training or other resources for community-based mission.• Involvement with other regionally-based initiatives addressing wider social, economic and environmental issues, e.g. Regional Development Agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct support through grants, training or other resources for community-based mission.• Involvement with other national initiatives addressing wider social, economic and environmental issues, e.g. community development networks.

Statement 5: Hospitality and diversity

We will be a church committed to becoming even more welcoming and hospitable, and embracing all people equally.

Our story is one of a people from rich and diverse journeys. Differences, not similarities, are the source of our vitality and strength in our common faith in Jesus Christ. This includes our church heritages, theologies, cultures, national heritages and life experiences. As a multicultural church we are building on a biblical understanding of God's mission to which the gospel calls us to living God's word, embodying God's love and promoting God's justice as we aim to include, affirm and welcome all. We will continue to live our calling of prophetic witness to hope and reconciliation, as we seek greater participation of all to reflect our rich and diverse journeys in all of our life together as a Church.

Some suggested indicators:

Local Indicators	Synod Indicators	Assembly Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The involvement of children and young people in all aspects of church life.• The extent to which the congregation reflects the make-up of the local community.• The extent to which the congregation recognises and affirms other aspects of diversity, including theological diversity.• The number of members who have undertaken 'training' about diversity and inclusiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of training and awareness activities about diversity and inclusiveness.• The number of churches who regularly monitor their membership and eldership to ensure inclusiveness.• Representation and <i>participation</i> of black and minority ethnic groups on key councils, committees and task groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An increase in the diversity of the denomination (measured through church Annual Returns).• Appropriate numbers of black and minority ethnic ministers, church-related community workers, staff and candidates.• Representation and <i>participation</i> of black and minority ethnic groups on key councils, committees and task groups.

Statement 6: Evangelism

We will be more confident to engage in evangelism, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God with friends, families and strangers, through story and action.

We need to re-claim an understanding and practice of evangelism. Learning to tell the Christian story and our ever evolving stories of faith needs to be a regular part of church life so that disciples of all ages are equipped and encouraged to share the good news of Jesus Christ in their daily lives. Equipped with a robust and reflective knowledge of the Bible and a commitment to openness, our churches will be communities where faith is explored and the questions of the present day engaged with. The call to 'go' into the world and 'make' new disciples (Matthew 28:19) being heard and taken up with imagination and creativity inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Some suggested indicators:

Local Indicators	Synod Indicators	Assembly Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning and carrying out activities whose primary function is to share the gospel.• Ensuring that worship regularly includes some form of call to faith.• The number of local church activities which attract and involve children and young people from outside the church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of churches drawing on Synod resources for evangelism training and networking.• The number of churches actively engaging with Vision4Life and God Is Still Speaking programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of churches drawing on Assembly resources for evangelism training and networking.• The number of churches actively engaging with Vision4Life and God Is Still Speaking programmes.

Statement 7: Church Growth

We are committed to being a growing church with an increasing membership.

The numerical decline of the United Reformed Church is unsustainable. And yet a significant number of local congregations are growing in number – and other denominations are experiencing local growth points too. Whilst our growth must be qualitative in terms of our spirituality and fellowship (our faithfulness), we should be bold enough to seek quantitative growth too (our fruitfulness). With resources such as the *Vision4Life* evangelism year, *God is Still Speaking* and *Fresh Expressions* at our disposal we have every reason to be hopeful that our denomination can grow again. We must also explore and embrace new forms of the emerging church.

Some suggested indicators:

Local Indicators	Synod Indicators	Assembly Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The numbers of new people attending church and returning for a second time.• The number of new church members.• The number of children and young people who are actively involved in church life.• Developing a 'fresh expression' or new way of doing church.• An increased profile and awareness of the church in local media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of new church members and adherents across the whole Synod.• The number of churches supported to explore Fresh Expressions or new ways of doing church.• The number of new 'communities of faith' within the Synod.• The number of people involved in TLS and similar programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The growth in URC membership by 2020.• The number of people candidating to be ministers and church-related community workers.• An increased profile and awareness of the URC in national media.• The number of churches supported to explore Fresh Expressions or new ways of doing church.

Statement 8: Global Partnerships

We will be a church that is an active partner in God's global mission with other churches around the world.

We will continue our active participation in the world church, knowing that together we will more faithfully discern God's action and call, and that by sharing our resources we will be able to respond obediently and effectively in the costly struggle for peace with justice.

Some suggested indicators:

<i>Local Indicators</i>	<i>Synod Indicators</i>	<i>Assembly Indicators</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An active and regular link with a church overseas.• Active participation in the Commitment for Life programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of churches involved with Commitment for Life.• The reach and impact of the Synod's Global Partners programme.• Development of a regular 'youth exchange' programme with a global partner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of churches involved with Commitment for Life.• The take-up of resources to enable children and young people to engage with the world church.• The number of Synods and churches supported to link up with global partners.

Statement 9: Justice and Peace

We will be a church committed to peacemaking and reconciliation that keeps faith with the poor and challenges injustice.

The kingdom of God is a realm in which compassion, justice and peace prevail. The gospel summons us as peacemakers and calls us to work against poverty and the structures that keep people oppressed. Together with our ecumenical partners we need to influence those in power and equip local congregations to take action against everything that undermines or destroys fullness of life. If the church, local, across the UK, and international, is to be part of a movement for change in our world, it will need to discern and understand the contexts in which we live and the issues which affect us. Only by developing a sound reputation for intelligent critique and co-ordinated action will we be able to challenge unjust structures and seek economic justice from the local to the global marketplace.

Some suggested indicators:

Local Indicators	Synod Indicators	Assembly Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a group which meets regularly to discuss and act on issues of justice and peace. • Active participation in a particular activity or campaign addressing an issue of justice. • Support to individuals – especially children and young people - who are involved in particular campaigns. • Integrating justice issues within worship in a planned and regular way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of churches actively participating in a Synod or Assembly-promoted activity or campaign addressing an issue of justice. • Endorsement, implementation and monitoring of the revised ethical investment policy of the URC. • The number of churches supported and equipped to address issues of justice and peace in the local community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of churches actively participating in a Synod or Assembly-promoted activity or campaign addressing an issue of justice. • The demonstrable impact of Mission Council or General Assembly resolutions on justice issues. • Children and young people supported and equipped to address issues of justice and peace through involvement in Children's Assembly, FURY etc.

Statement 10: The Integrity of Creation

We will be a church that has taken significant steps to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

The changing climate and its consequences for all life on planet earth cannot be over emphasised as the most significant underlying issue of our time. Being an intergenerational community of faith that trust in the God of creation past, present and to come, it is vital that the church recognizes the reality and fear present in environmental debates and lives hopefully in the present climate. Too often the 'prophets' who see the truth and challenge for change are outside the church. Our churches, reflecting faith in God the creator and sustainer of life in all its fullness, must discover the radical voice of care for the earth that is supported by the way we live.

Some suggested indicators:

Local Indicators	Synod Indicators	Assembly Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carrying out an environmental audit and implementing the resulting action plan.• Giving voice to the God whose life and love is expressed in all creation through worship, Bible study and prayer.• Involving children and young people in activities focusing on care for the environment.• Production of a piece of community artwork celebrating the Creator God.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of 'eco-congregations' or churches with clear environmental action plans.• Developing and implementing plans to become an 'eco-Synod'.• The number of churches receiving training and support on issues of climate justice and environmental care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant year-on-year cuts to the URC's carbon footprint.• The development of a FURY strategy responding to the challenge of climate change.



MISSION COUNCIL 9th - 11th March 2010

B

FINAL REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON HOUSING PROVISION FOR MINISTERS AND CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS

Introduction

1. On 26th January 2008 Mission Council received and considered a report from a working party established by the Ministries Committee¹ arguing for a change to the present manse system. A copy of their report is attached at Appendix 1. Their conclusion was "that there are grounds for a detailed plan to be prepared for a new system in which it would not be the norm for ministers to be housed in manses" Mission Council decided to establish this working party to examine the financial, practical and pastoral implications of such a change together with a full implementation programme. The membership of the committee is listed at the end of this report.
2. We held eight meetings over a period of over a year. We made use of resources supplied to us by Rachel Wakeman (formerly Greening) and PLATO² and sabbatical research by the Revd Michael Spencer into the views of serving ministers about their housing. We decided to undertake a further survey to assess the current position, and in particular whether some of the assumptions upon which the different arguments are based are correct. We are very grateful to the Revd Nigel Appleton and his team for devising the questionnaire and collating the results, details of which are set out below³.
3. With many propositions "the devil is in the detail" and the proposal to change the manse system is no exception. As we began to examine the proposal, we were not persuaded that the previous report had fairly considered the advantages of the manse system. We therefore invited the chairman of that working party, the Revd Geoffrey Roper, (who has, through various working parties of the URC, been arguing for this change since 1979) to explain further the thinking behind the recommendations, and to answer questions, which he graciously agreed to do.
4. We confess that despite our best endeavours, we have been unable to carry out our brief. We have looked at the main advantages and disadvantages of changing the manse system and set out the issues and our conclusions below⁴. We have examined a number of options for change and concluded that the only practicable option is to retain the present manse system, but improve the

¹ Autumn 2007. The members of the working party were Geoffrey Roper, Ruth Whitehead, Helen Matthews, Guy Morfett and John Ellis. Staff: Christine Craven.

² Property Legal Administrative and Trust Officers

³ The full report "Report on a survey of ministers receiving a stipend and of CRCWs" can be found on the URC's website.

⁴ For simplicity we use the words "minister" and "ministers" to mean Stipendiary Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers. The masculine includes the feminine.

practice in order to ensure that manses can be provided where they are needed and are properly maintained.

The options

5. The options for change (some of which are variations on the same theme) that we have identified are:

(i) Keep the present manse system, but improve the practice in order to ensure that manses can be provided where they are needed and are properly maintained.

(ii) Consolidate the stock of manses and manage them through a housing association that would act as managing agent;

(iii) Create an incentive scheme that would encourage ministers and their families to build up an equity holding in a consolidated stock of manses;

(iv) Over time, withdraw from the provision of tied housing entirely, and instead invest the proceeds of sale in managed property funds, from which housing allowances would be paid to ministers;

(v) Quantify the benefit represented by the manse, grossed up to allow for tax and National Insurance liability, which would be paid as a housing allowance, leaving the minister free to choose whatever accommodation he can afford;

(vi) Liquidate part of the stock of manses, to create a fund from which mortgages at preferential rates would be granted to those ministers who either already owned or who wished to acquire an interest in a property;

(vii) Establish some form of shared equity scheme between the denomination and those ministers who wish to participate.

The present legal framework

6. Section 8 (1) of the United Reformed Church Act 1972 provides that:

“All land which immediately before the date of formation is held on trust for or for the purposes of or in connection with a uniting church (whether alone or jointly with one or more other uniting churches or uniting congregations) or a uniting congregation (whether alone or jointly with one or more other uniting congregations) shall on or from that date, and in accordance with the following provisions of this section, be held in trust for or (as the case may be) for equivalent purposes of or in connection with the uniting church or uniting congregation in question.”

7. It is unfortunate that this section is no longer reproduced in the Manual, because it makes clear that, so long as the local congregation continues, the property is held for its benefit, and not for the general benefit of the denomination. Neither the Trustees nor Synods are entitled to deal with the manse except in accordance with the wishes of the local congregation (although the church meeting in reaching its decision must have regard to any recommendations of other councils of the church).

This is the case regardless of the superior wisdom of those who can always find a better use for someone else's money, or the advantages that might accrue to the denomination if the local church chose a different course.

The case for change

8. The concerns identified as the background to the setting up of the previous working party were:
 - (i) the financial costs of providing retired ministers' housing to those who would not otherwise be adequately housed in retirement.
 - (ii) "trapped ministers" that is those who have lost their sense of vocation and would choose to leave the ministry if it were not for the fact that it would make their family homeless.
9. The Retired Ministers' Housing Society faces a typical shortfall of one or two houses per year, with a larger prospective gap in several of the years over the next decade because over half of the ministers currently in service are due to retire in the next ten years. Thereafter the problem will probably resolve, as numbers become more manageable. None of the possible changes to the manse system which might be introduced is likely to deliver the sort of funds necessary to meet the shortfall within ten years. Most Synods have responded generously to the RMHS's appeals for financial support, and have so far given or pledged over £1m. We consider that they should be encouraged to maintain this support in the future.
10. The problem of "trapped ministers" is a serious problem for a relatively small number of ministers. Estimates suggest that as many as 10% of ministers have experienced such a crisis of vocation. We are not persuaded that the scale of the problem is itself a reason for changing the whole system, and believe that some other method could be devised for dealing with this problem. Ministers owning their own homes, whether in whole or in part, are just as likely to feel trapped by a whole complex of ties to a local area, including negative equity, a partner's job or the children's schooling. We did devise a possible way forward to mitigate the financial hardship, but have concluded that the problem is primarily a pastoral one and needs consideration by a more widely based group.
11. It soon became apparent that those who advocate change actually want to achieve different objectives. These are:
 - (i) To ensure that the provision of housing is in harmony with and not running counter to the denomination's mission and deployment objectives. Many small congregations retain manses dating from the one church one minister era, which no longer meet the needs of joint pastorates, and they are considered to be using this capital without regard for the wider needs of the denomination.
 - (ii) To ensure that we remove the embarrassing and pastorally unacceptable fact of a minority of manses not being at the approved manse standard and the degree of control some local churches retain on the quality and frequency of work done in manses.
 - (iii) To meet the aspirations of those ministers who wish to own their own home, reflecting what is now the norm in our society. This would give them capital to fund or help to fund their retirement housing. It is argued that most other organisations that used to provide tied housing no longer do so, and the denomination should do the same. The manse system creates a culture of dependency.

There is no single solution that can meet all these objectives. As will be seen, solutions which

promote objective (iii) are generally inconsistent with objective (i).

12. To achieve any of these objectives would require radical change, including the amendment of section 8(1) of the United Reformed Church Act 1972, so that the control of manses (and arguably church buildings as well) would pass from the local church to the denomination for it to use to meet whatever priorities it chooses for mission and ministry.
13. In considering possible reform we have borne in mind that funding for housing comes either from the existing property held by local churches and Synods, the income generated from that property, or the direct giving of a declining number of church members, many of whom are themselves on limited incomes. Money diverted from these sources into retired ministers' housing reduces the funds available for the remuneration of serving ministers and for other projects. There is no hidden pot of cash.

The case for keeping the manse system

14. The Church has an inherited housing stock of over 800 manses⁵ which would be impossible to replace if sold off. The distribution is as follows:

Synod	No. of Manses (Approximate)	No. of Churches (as at 13/11/2008)	No. of Ministers & CRCWs
1 Northern	52	82	35
2 North Western	69	143	61
3 Mersey	41	90	31
4 Yorkshire	50	108	42
5 East Midlands	59	144	47
6 West Midlands	71	137	57
7 Eastern	84	144	51
8 South Western	80	124	44
9 Wessex	70	141	50
10 Thames North	91	141	64
11 Southern	87	165	79

⁵ It is not always obvious when a manse is properly classified as such. This has led to variations between Synods asked for this information.

12	Wales	33	115	28
13	Scotland	26	53	38
	Total	813	1587	627

In most Synods there is roughly one manse for every two churches. On average there are roughly four manses for every three ministers⁶. There needs to be a surplus in order to facilitate the transfer of ministers from one pastorate to another, but arguably not on this scale. In every Synod except Scotland, there are more manses than there are ministers. We deal with the explanation for Scotland's position in paragraph 27 below.

15. Within the statutory framework some Synods have now developed successful strategic manse policies with the consent of local churches. These encourage the local churches to hand over to the Synod Manse Fund the proceeds of sale of a manse that is no longer needed to house a minister and the rent from a vacant manse, on the understanding that if and when they call a minister, they will be provided with a suitable manse. The Synod (often through its Trust Company) provides financial and other assistance with the cost of repairs and maintenance which remain the responsibility of the local church. Not all Synods have chosen to develop a strategic manse policy along these lines.
16. Those synods that currently operate a strategic manse policy have found that they normally need to sell two manses that do not meet the required standard in order to purchase one that does. Any surplus is reinvested. The value of manses held by churches is not confined to their disposal value. Voluntary labour in local churches for their own identified church property (even for manses held by synods) has significant value across the denomination which would be lost, and would be a substantial additional cost if the beneficial interest in those manses were "compulsorily" transferred to the denomination.
17. The Assembly manse standard guidelines specify a three/four bedroomed house with a lounge and dining room (preferably separate) and a study (downstairs is recommended). The present housing stock means that there are suitable manses, even in expensive areas of the country. Whatever the other merits of changing the manse system we do not think such change will increase mobility or ensure that the church has the ministers it needs where and when it needs them. If the denomination comes out of the provision of tied housing in favour of paying an increased stipend, there will be some parts of the country (south of the Severn- Thames line) where it is unlikely that any minister would be able to afford to rent or buy a property of that standard. The church would have no real say in whether or not the chosen property was suitable. It might be all that was affordable. The mobility of ministers would be seriously curtailed if assets had to be realized by selling a house every time a minister sought to move pastorate. There would also be a significant financial cost for the minister involved in moving home, which might deter some from changing pastorate.

⁶ This calculation does not include ministers already living in their own property.

18. A minister is required to live in a manse "for the better performance of his duties". This emphasises that the manse is a resource for the job and not simply a home for the minister. It is also key to the tax treatment of manses.
19. The present system of housing ministers in manses is tax efficient, as that requirement means that it is not regarded as a taxable benefit. A housing allowance would be. We have calculated that every £1,000 net paid to a minister in housing allowance would gross up to £1,450 at basic rate of tax, and including additional National Insurance. Furthermore as employer there would be an extra £186 of National Insurance contribution. That means an extra £636 would go directly to the Inland Revenue for every £1,000 put into ministers' hands in housing allowance. If the intention is to pay some form of 'rent' to help with mortgage payments and the running costs of the property an average of £12,000 does not seem unreasonable. At that level the extra tax cost per minister is £7,632 per annum. If all ministers wanted to do that it comes to £5m per annum!
20. The Church would have to pay ministers a sufficiently high level of stipend for them to be able to buy or rent a property in the area in which they are to minister. Since property costs are the most variable element in any household budget, it is unlikely that the current policy of paying the same stipend throughout the country would be sustainable. Some method would have to be devised to pay a weighted figure depending on the property costs in the area.

The research evidence

21. The Revd Mike Spencer carried out a sabbatical survey in 2005 into the views of serving ministers about their housing. The response rate was over 79%. His results showed that most manses were an acceptable size but that over one third were not considered to be in good condition when the minister arrived. A substantial majority was in favour of centralised management of manses, regardless of whether they themselves had experienced difficulties in relation to the repair and maintenance of the manse. About 75% of respondents were interested in some form of housing association to enable ministers to build up their share of property ownership throughout their ministry. One third already owned a property.
22. We decided to undertake a further survey to assess the current position, and in particular whether some of the assumptions upon which the different arguments are based are correct. We are very grateful to the Revd Nigel Appleton and his team for devising the questionnaire and collating the results. The response rate was high at 71% of the total number of serving ministers, spread across all the Synods. The full report, which includes an executive summary, can be found on the URC website.
23. Nearly 13% of respondents live alone. The overwhelming majority (78%) are living with a partner or with a partner and children who are still in education. A striking finding is that almost 46% either owned property outright or were buying one with a mortgage before they entered the ministry. Half do not currently own a property, but the rest either own some form of property or left this section blank.
When asked what they would like if the manse system were to be modified 20% would like to provide their own property with financial help from the denomination and a further 19% would like to do so but do not think it will be possible. This is strongest among those entering the ministry in their 20s and 30s. The majority continue to expect to be provided with a manse and with housing in

their retirement.

24. It is also right to mention that awareness that our working party was looking at possible change to the manse system has also caused anxiety to some who are dependent on the present arrangements continuing.

Experience of other denominations and in Scotland

25. We have made some enquiries of our ecumenical partners as to their present practice. Methodists provide a manse as the norm although some do have a housing allowance. Baptist churches are independent and therefore housing provision will vary. Their standardised housing allowance is £5,600.
26. The Church of England Pensions Board undertook a major review of retirement housing with a consequent exploration of the housing issues for serving clergy. The final report was published in 2009. The board now offers two distinct services to ministers seeking housing in retirement. Although various other possibilities for assisting serving ministers to enter the property market were raised by the report, some of these have been ruled out as unfeasible, whilst others are not seen to be viable financially at the present time. The one proposal that has been developed is encouraging ordinands and those in the early years of ministry to become more financially educated in order that those ministers can make better informed decisions regarding their future housing needs. While the United Reformed Church may not wish to do this formally, it is important that any advice given to ordinands is soundly based.
27. The legal and fiscal treatment of manses in Scotland is different. Council tax for ministers housed in their own properties is paid directly by the church, and is not treated as a taxable benefit. Manses are mostly owned by local churches. There is a shortage of manses. Over the years before union with the URC manses were sold by local churches to provide resources to keep the church going. Thus they have churches that have ministers with their own houses who would be unable to call a minister who would require a manse, and churches that are vacant or soon will be that have no manse. In 2004 the Synod had sufficient resources to buy two manses, only one if the vacancy was in Edinburgh, but that would have left the Synod with no cash at all so that was not an option. Since then the Synod has been creating a manse fund to replenish stock. The Synod adheres to the procedure as set out in the United Reformed Church Act 2000 in relation to acquisition and disposal etc. of manses. Where the church is continuing then it is a matter of the resources from disposal funding a replacement but otherwise they aim to build up a Synod Manse Fund.
28. The Revd Craig Bowman has made enquiries of ecumenical partners in the USA and Canada. The United Methodist Church there still provides manses but the Presbyterian Church USA and the United Church of Christ do not have a consistent policy of doing so, not least because congregations have sold off a lot of their properties and cannot afford to replace them. In the United Church of Canada, each pastoral charge deals with the matter differently. Where a housing allowance is paid it must be at least 20% of salary. It is not easy to translate their practice to the UK situation.

Possible ways forward

29. We have identified these in paragraph 5 above, and shall now consider them in more detail. Before doing so, we should acknowledge the disappointment felt by those on our working party who had hoped that we might adopt a more radical solution to the problems that have been identified. That we have not felt able to do so is in part a reflection of the different areas of expertise we have brought to the working group, but it is also a testimony to the difficulty we have had in considering these issues. The debate on the manse system is only part of much wider issues about the nature of ministry; whether the URC can continue with its present pattern of small congregations stretching ministerial resources and controlling substantial financial resources; and the future of the URC over the next ten years. We have to decide whether we should hold to the traditional theological basis of remunerating ministers or move to a system which recognizes their aspirations to own property as one which the denomination for pastoral reasons should try to meet.
30. Fundamentally the issue is whether local churches have the collective will to make a change to the remuneration system and, if so, how radical they are prepared to be. In our view, it matters very little whether a group like ours or Mission Council or even General Assembly decides that a particular change is desirable or not. Our ecclesiology does not allow the imposition of this sort of policy change from the centre. There would have to be a "hearts and minds" exercise, which is likely to take a long time.
31. **Option (i): Keep the present manse system, but improve the practice in order to ensure that manses can be provided where they are needed and are properly maintained.**

The majority of the group favour this option for the following reasons:

- a) The benefits of the manse system outlined in paragraphs 14 to 20 above.
 - b) The experience of those denominations that have sold off their manses has not led to better provision of ministerial housing.
 - c) There is little evidence that local churches would support any of the proposals for a more radical change, and without that support it would be virtually impossible to get the statutory amendments required. The time and energy involved would arguably be better used elsewhere.
 - d) Moving away from the manse system would be wasteful of resources, both of money and peoples' time. The denomination has other major financial problems facing it, e.g. the deficit in the ministers' pension fund and the problems facing the RMHS. It should not be dissipating resources on this contentious and divisive issue.
 - e) The main beneficiary of a wholesale move away from the manse system is likely to be the Inland Revenue.
32. It is usually part of the terms of settlement that suitable ministerial housing can or will be made available. Some Synods go further and do not allow a vacancy to be declared unless that is the case. At the very least, no minister should have to move into substandard accommodation, and the terms of settlement and the Synod scrutiny of them should ensure this.
33. **How do we improve the maintenance of manses?**

Most Synods are now working towards strategic manse policies which will give financial help with repairs to churches whose manses are within the policy, and ensure that the local church has a manse available when it wishes to call a minister. It has been a slow process for the Synods with

well-regarded manse policies to get to that position. Other Synods have encountered considerable resistance to the policy and have some reservations about its operation in practice. Making the policy work successfully is very time consuming and labour intensive. Generally, however, Synods rely upon local churches to ensure that the repairs are carried out.

34. Our enquiries suggest that whether or not the manse is within a Synod policy or remains under the control of the local church, the problems in carrying out repairs lie in the following areas.

a) Sometimes it is simply that the local church does not do the repairs it should, either because it does not inspect the property and see what needs to be done, or because it lacks the funds to carry them out. The church may expect the minister will tell them what needs to be done. This does not happen, often because the minister knows that the church has genuine financial difficulties.

b) The second situation is where the church is willing to carry out the repairs, but the minister objects to the works being carried out. Other problems arise when the minister makes excessive demands about what needs to be done.

c) There are also those situations where there is a disagreement about whose responsibility it is to carry out certain repairs.

35. We believe that some of these difficulties could be dealt with by this issue being addressed clearly in the terms of settlement. Manses should be inspected and put into a proper state before a vacancy is declared, or there should be a clear plan for ensuring that it is in a fit state before a minister moves in. Synods now have responsibility for these matters and should share good practice in relation to this. They should also be responsible for mediating any disputes between the minister and the local church.

36. **Option (ii) Consolidate the stock of manses and manage them through a housing association that would act as managing agent.**

We have considered both the option of using an existing association and the establishment of a new association. The perceived advantage of this system is that it would provide professional management of the stock, so that there would be less variation in the carrying out of repairs. It would also provide ministers and their families with the legal protection afforded to tenants. From the point of view of flexible deployment of ministers that may not be an advantage. From the ministers' point of view it would provide continuity of tenancy for those wishing to move out of ministry or into retirement, and they might acquire reciprocal rights to other property managed by the association. Since most housing associations operate shared ownership schemes, this would also allow ministers who wish to do so to own property.

37. We have rejected this option for the following reasons:

a) It shares many of the disadvantages of other alternatives to the manse system

b) It is expensive compared with the present way of managing manses because much of what is now done by voluntary labour would have to be paid for.

c) The regulation and registration of housing associations is different in each of the three nations served by the URC.

38. The remaining options

Options (iii)-(vi) are all variants on the same theme. They are different ways of allowing ministers to provide their own housing. This has been the most divisive issue for our working party. We are not agreed that this is an aspiration that the denomination should seek to meet. It raises issues about the nature of the call to ministry, as well as practical problems for pastorates, if the retiring minister remains living in the immediate area. It does not ensure that ministers are where the denomination needs them, but rather in areas where they wish to live.

39. **Option (iii): Create an incentive scheme that would encourage ministers and their families to build up an equity holding in a consolidated stock of manses.**

This and some of the other options involve over time transferring some assets of local churches and the denomination to ministers and their families. Those who argue in favour of it do not see this as a problem, because they do not think the denomination is making the best use of its assets at the moment and believe the overall remuneration package for ministers is less than generous. If we are also living in the “end times” for the denomination, we will die rich, without having made any effort to do better for our ministers.

40. We have rejected this particular solution because we think that there are already existing property funds in which ministers who wish to do so may invest.

41. **Option (iv) Over time, withdraw from the provision of tied housing entirely, and instead invest the proceeds of sale in managed property funds, from which housing allowances would be paid to ministers;**

We reject this option as a waste of resources. We have set out in paragraph 19 above some of the financial implications of making this change. The money to fund this could only come from increasing the churches’ Ministry and Mission contributions or the sale of property. On one calculation, if all the existing manses were sold and the money used to fund housing allowances at the level set out in paragraph 19, the money would last for about 30 years. The biggest beneficiary would be the Inland Revenue.

42. **Option (v): Quantify the benefit represented by the manse, grossed up to allow for tax and National Insurance liability which would be paid as a housing allowance, leaving the minister free to choose whatever accommodation he can afford.**

We reject this option. The church cannot afford it if it is to have a long-term future with a similar number of ministers to that at present. We think it is unlikely that the denomination would be able to pay the sort of sums that would be necessary to fund the purchase or rental of suitable property. If the decision is to pay an increased housing allowance to allow those who wish to purchase a property, we do not think it should be grossed up.

43. **Option (vi): Liquidate part of the stock of manses, to create a fund from which mortgages at preferential rates would be granted to those ministers who either already owned or who wished to acquire an interest in a property;**

This option is not necessarily an alternative to the manse system, since it could be used by those who are living in a manse as well as those who are not. We reject it for the reasons already given.

44. Option (vii): Establish some form of shared equity scheme between the denomination and those ministers who wish to participate.

The Revd Nigel Appleton prepared for us an outline of a model shared ownership scheme, and we are indebted to him for this. It would be open to those ministers who had capital resources (either owned or borrowed) to put towards the purchase of a property. The minister would identify a suitable property, in consultation with Synod. This would not necessarily have to meet the standard for manses but living in that property would be a condition of concurrence in a call. The balance of the purchase price would be funded by Synod and the equity in the property would be held in proportion to the respective contributions of the minister and Synod. The minister would pay rent to the Synod on the balance. The minister could purchase an increased share in the equity at a later stage, with a corresponding adjustment to the rent. This basic scheme is capable of being refined in a number of ways. The outline proposal is attached as Appendix 2 for those who wish to consider it in more detail.

45. This scheme has the advantage over the other options that it could be done without the necessity for statutory change if Synods were to utilise funds from redundant manses. It would meet the aspirations of serving ministers to own, in part at least, their own property, and give them resources to provide their own accommodation in retirement, thus relieving pressure on the Retired Ministers' Housing Society.
46. This proposal has the support of a minority of the committee, who believe that the denomination should do something to meet those aspirations, and that this is the least contentious way of achieving a step in the right direction. The majority, however, consider that there are a number of major difficulties in implementing such a scheme. If it were Synod based, it would depend on Synods providing resources both financial and administrative to make the scheme work. The ability of Synods to do this would vary, and some might not be able to do it at all. Such a scheme would therefore create inequalities between ministers depending where their ministry was exercised. It would cut across the principle of a uniform scheme of ministerial remuneration throughout the denomination. The alternative would be to establish a tri-national scheme, or enter into an agreement with an existing housing association to do so, but the legal and other complexities (some of which we have referred to above) of doing so would be considerable.
47. Such schemes can be very difficult and disproportionately time-consuming to administer and there are many possible pitfalls, about which the minister would have to take independent advice. Property values can go down as well as up, and this can cause difficulties if a minister needs to move at a time when property values are low and the capital sum realised is less than expected. Repairs are another area of potential difficulty. Many of the problems highlighted in paragraph 17 would apply to this scheme as well.
48. If Mission Council wishes to do something to meet the aspirations of those ministers who would like to own their own homes at least in part, this would be a way of doing it, provided that the difficulties we have identified can be addressed.

Elizabeth Lawson Q.C. (Convenor)	Church Secretary at St Paul's Bayswater URC
Revd Ray Adams (until December 2008)	Deputy General Secretary
Revd Nigel Appleton	Principal of Contact Consulting and Associate Minister Cumnor URC Oxford.
Revd Craig Bowman	Secretary for Ministries
Margaret Carrick Smith	Wessex Synod Trust and Finance Committee
Revd David Coote	Hull area team ministry; member of Yorkshire Synod Finance Committee
John Ellis	Treasurer of the URC
Rachel Wakeman (formerly Greening)	Trust and Property Officer, West Midlands Synod, Convenor of PLATO.
Brian Hosier	Member of Assembly Finance Committee; Treasurer Thames North Synod
Revd Richard Mortimer (from December 2008)	Deputy General Secretary
Revd Michael Spencer	Retired Ministers Housing Society
Graham Stacy	Former URC Treasurer

Manse System Working Party autumn 2007

Members: Geoffrey Roper, Ruth Whitehead, Helen Matthews, Guy Morfett and John Ellis (who was present for the second meeting only)
Staff: Christine Craven

1 The background to the setting up of the working party

In recent years two major concerns have been identified:

- 1) the financial costs of the policy of providing retired minister's housing to those who would not otherwise be adequately housed in retirement.
- 2) 'trapped ministers', that is those who have lost their sense of vocation and would choose to leave the ministry if it were not for the fact that the tied housing which is the manse system means they and their families would be rendered homeless.

2 The principal conclusion

The Working Party took the view that there are grounds for a detailed plan to be prepared for a new system in which it would not be the norm for ministers to be housed in manses. A sufficient period for its implementation would have to elapse to allow for those currently in manses and approaching retirement with the expectation that the denomination would find them retirement homes.

The Working Party favours a change to paying stipends sufficient for ministers/CRCWs to arrange their own housing (by renting or on a mortgage) while pastorates/poss would be responsible for providing the minister's office.

The pros and cons of minister-arranged housing (rented or owner occupied) are set out as follows:-

Pros	Cons
Living 'off the patch' allows ministers/CRCWs to detach from any stress in the pastorate, reflect and recharge and so may prevent 'burnout'.	The minister/CRCW may be less inclined, less financially able to move to pastorates/posts anywhere in the URC
Owning one's own house removes the dependency culture that the manse system can engender.	Ministers'/CRCWs' houses may no longer be perceived as such a welcoming meeting place for others.
The family has its own space.	
Minister/CRCW and family may be more secure from unwelcome visitors.	
Ministers/CRCWs are no longer the victims of the vagaries of local practice.	
Minister/CRCW and family have property provision for retirement.	
Terms and conditions for stipendiary ministers/CRCWs approximate more closely to those for all the other ministries in the URC	With the manse system, stipendiary ministers/CRCWs can allow the sense of call to predominate because they are free to move to any locality.

3 A Sine Qua Non

It was agreed that when church does not provide a manse it must provide an office for the minister and meeting rooms to replace any at a manse.

4 Restricted nature of the Working Party's decision

Although the Working Party included people with various kinds of experience and expertise, the members did not all feel capable of the further work involved in designing a new system nor of planning the transition phase (which would necessarily be a long one). They therefore request that the further consideration they recommend should be carried forward by a differently constituted group, or groups. The group's conclusion is quite clear: that a detailed plan should be prepared and the denomination ought to then to be asked for agreement to implementing it. The group recognized that the decision would not simply require a resolution of Assembly and action from the centre but widespread support from Synods and churches, the places where trusteeship and care of manses is currently exercised.

5 Some Synods have recently changed the manse System

Some Synods (four to our knowledge) have in recent years taken a new approach to their trusteeship of manses. This means they

- take more control over the manse funds and proceeds,
- enforce manse guidelines and where necessary purchase new manses which meet guidelines
- in some cases pay pastorate regular sums to keep maintenance up to date
- re-allocate manses to meet current deployment to pastorate groups and
- forbid pastorates to 'live off' manse fund interest or rentals.

6 Disparities between regions and Synods need bearing in mind

In addition to the obvious differences between prices of residential property in different parts of Britain there is also the variation between the wealth of Synods, which is addressed by Resource Sharing. A change to minister-arranged housing could require further attention to this aspect. As far as the obvious problem of ministers confronting a big problem when considering a call to an area of more expensive housing, the Working Party suggest ministers/CRCWs and their families should face it as do others who move from one area to another. They may decide to reduce their requirement for residential space when moving to an expensive area. Given that the minister will not be expected to provide a study/office not to give 'church hospitality' or hold interviews at home, a couple in ministry might decide to move to a flat rather than live in a typical manse-style property. The Working Party assume that Synods would offer shared-equity arrangements to ministers/CRCWs so one option when moving to a more expensive area would be to increase the church share of the equity and reduce the minister/CRCW's. Synod resources to finance such arrangements would accrue from manse sales. Some couples including ministers/CRCWs might decide to rent rather than buy - which would be their personal decision.

7 The pros and cons of the present manse system

While the Working Party believe the balance of argument favours a change to minister-arranged housing, they set out the pros and cons of the present system before reaching that view. They also took account of the fact that the manse system was

devised when the assumption was that the minister would be the sole 'breadwinner' of the family:-

Pros	Cons
Removing the financial considerations of house prices allows the minister to live in the local community whatever the status of that community.	It can produce a dependency culture amongst the ministers and their families.
The manse is a 'public space' which can enrich and broaden the horizons of a ministers family.	May be a negative factor in times of ministerial bereavement or marital breakdown.
The 'manse' allows the community outside the church to identify where the minister lives.	May be less relevant to the practice of ministry to a group pastorate when a minister needs to relate to several communities.
The manse system will allow churches in a group pastorate to decide the most strategic location for the minister to live.	Having a manse can lead a church into set ways of thinking about ministry.
There are positive tax implications for ministers who live in manses.	Church is obliged to provide retired ministers housing for those who will not be adequately housed when they leave active service.
	Because ministers and churches may have different perceptions about the adequacy of the manse provided, ministers may be identified as 'difficult' if they complain about the house.

8 Retired Ministers' Housing

The Retired Ministers Housing scheme is perhaps a victim of its own success. It has given great security to those ministers who at retirement have had no resources of their own with which to purchase a house. However the demand for retired ministers housing might be fed by the fact that those going into ministry have not always been given the best advice about houses they might own. The question of how mortgages are to be maintained during years of residential training needs to be addressed. Ordinands should be discouraged rather than encouraged (as they often have been) over selling their houses. No more new ministers should be given the false impression that retirement housing is a right (sometimes wrongly assumed to apply regardless of what years or type of service given to the United Reformed Church).

9 Issues the Working Party have addressed

The policy for ministerial housing ought to:-

- serve the needs of the ministers and local churches of URC.
- serve the contemporary and future mission of the Church,
- be flexible related to the context of each pastorate/post, therefore in some cases where presence at a particular place has high priority exceptions could be made and housing provided

In the light of all the above considerations the Working Party recommend future detailed work on the finances and practicalities of a change to the present system of manse provision be undertaken.

The above report relates equally to the housing of ministers and CRCWs. Those statements in the report which only use the words 'minister' or 'ministerial' are so phrased for stylistic reasons and are not intended to exclude application to CRCWs as appropriate.

Appendix 2

A system of shared equity for serving ministers and CRCWs in the URC

Understanding the model

Shared Equity schemes are not new. Housing Associations have been offering them, with varying degrees of encouragement from both Conservative and Labour governments, for more than twenty years. Their purpose has been to offer access to homeownership for people whose low level of income would otherwise prevent them from choosing that tenure.

The basic model is that the sale value of the property is fixed. The purchaser opts to buy a share in the equity of the property in return for a payment equal to the corresponding proportion of the sale value. This purchase will generally be funded by a mortgage. The purchaser will pay rental to the Housing Association on the unpurchased share of the property. There is an expectation that the purchaser may “staircase up”, buying a further share of the equity as their circumstances improve. In some variants of the model the government funds the unpurchased share on behalf of the Housing Association so that no rental is paid by the occupant who will have only the mortgage to find (in addition to the normal household expenses and charges of course).

Typically a purchaser will buy a 50% or 75% share, although other proportions are possible. The aspiration is that, over time, they will acquire 100% ownership but some may never achieve this. The model is particularly attractive to first time buyers who have an expectation that their circumstances will improve: children will start school releasing a partner to full-time work, or career progression will bring enhanced income, and so on.

Worked example

The property is valued at £200,000

The “social rent” would be approximately £120 per week or £520 per calendar month

The purchaser takes a 75% share

To fund this they provide a 5% deposit of £10,000

They take a mortgage of £140,000 over 25 years at 5% (slightly above current rate offers)

Their monthly mortgage payment is £818-43

Their monthly rental payment for the remaining 25% share is £130

Total outgoings on mortgage and rent £948.43

Monthly mortgage on £190,000 (valuation less deposit) would be £1,110-72

Appreciation in total value of property over ten years at 3% annual rate of uplift would be £268,783.

(Historically levels of appreciation have been significantly higher over most periods of ten years in the last forty years.)

Share of capital appreciation at 75% share would be £20,158, added to the proportion of equity purchased through the mortgage after ten years of approximately £30,000.

Those taking an equity share have generally moved to full ownership at the point of moving to another property when the equity they have built up through their mortgage provides a lump sum to invest in the new property.

Another variation has been applied to older people wishing to release tranches of equity to fund care or lifestyle choices in old age by "staircasing down" as they surrender a share of equity for cash. Although this has never attracted much support the current plans set out by Government in its Green Paper on the future of care services may give it greater acceptance.

Applying this to the situation of serving ministers

The survey shows us that a significant number of serving ministers have resources that would allow them to contribute to the provision of their own housing whilst serving. Even more came into ministry with

some equity and might have been minded to invest in their housing whilst serving, if that had been practicable.

The inhibitions felt by the majority of those in the Working Group about the transfer of capital assets from the Church to individual ministers involved in a scheme that replaced the provision of manses with a system of cash allowances might be moderated by a shared equity scheme.

The variation between synods in the current pattern for holding and managing manses means that such a scheme could probably only be promoted at a synod level. This would offer the advantage that it could be piloted in one synod before being offered more widely.

In outline the scheme might offer a minister moving to a new pastorate the opportunity to provide their own accommodation on a shared equity basis.

The minister would identify a property, in consultation with the synod, but perhaps with a less rigorous or more flexible approach to what might constitute a suitable property than most current manse policies. The "condition of residence" implicit in the current terms and conditions of ministers would be varied so that the requirement would be to live in the property provided (a manse), or in a property acceptable to the synod as a condition of its concurrence in the call.

The minister would calculate the proportion of the purchase price they could fund (whether by application of the proceeds of sale from other property, family resources or a mortgage) leading to the identification of a share of the purchase price (including fees and related charges). For administrative convenience this might be in 5% increments of the value. It would be sensible to agree a minimum share that would qualify for this arrangement and that might be 25%.

The synod would make an investment in the property equivalent to the balancing share in the purchase costs of the property and fund this from within a fund for the provision of manses. Clearly the circumstances in synods varies greatly and where there is no common holding of manses this might be difficult, unless the proceeds of some manse sales were allocated to this purpose.

Over the period of the ministry both parties would benefit from any appreciation in the value of the property proportionate to the share they hold.

Should the minister resign or retire from ministry they would have the option of purchasing the synod's share of the property. Should they decide not to exercise that right the synod would decide whether to retain the property (and buy out the minister's share on the basis of an agreed valuation) or to sell the property and divide the proceeds according to the shares held.

To support the minister in the servicing of any borrowing to fund their share the synod may pay a form of reverse rental as an addition to current housing allowances. This would be calculated as equivalent to the income on a capital sum equal to the proportion of the cost of purchase met by the minister.

This can best be understood by looking at a worked example.

Purchase price of property £200,000

The Minister takes a 50% share funded by a mixture of proceeds from the sale of a holiday property (or other family resources) and a small mortgage.

The synod, which would otherwise have invested the whole £200,000 in the purchase of the property invests £100,000 in the property and the balance in a fund paying, say, 4% annually which it pays as an allowance to the minister, less a handling charge of 2% of the allowance.

The Minister receives an annual housing allowance toward the capital costs of the property of £3,920. This would of course be taxable so the net benefit to the Minister would be around £3,100; sufficient of itself to service a twenty-five year repayment mortgage of around £45,000, in addition to any mortgage funded from stipend or income from a partner for example.

By this arrangement the Minister is able to build a proportion of equity, the synod retains its capital (and if invested in funds that offer income plus capital growth, may even enhance it).

Whilst it would be challenging to operate the scheme in areas of highest property value it offers an option not currently available to meet the aspirations of some ministers.

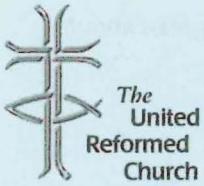
It presumes that synods are able to access and manage the capital resources represented by the current stock of manses and this may be a large presumption.

The figures offered in illustration are, of course, averages and represent current circumstances qualified by a longer term view concerning the direction of interest rates, returns on investment and property prices.

It is offered to the Working Group as the basis for discussion.

Nigel Appleton

15th October 2009



MISSION COUNCIL
9th - 11th March 2010

C

The Ministerial Working Week

General Assembly approves the following as the principles governing the Ministerial working week,

- a) There should be more clarity in defining working hours.
- b) The working week, translated into hours in a four week period, shall be not less 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 in Ministerial Remuneration sets out holiday provision for Ministers and Church Related Community Workers, 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/ Church Related Community Worker 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/ Church Related Community Workers 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/ Church Related Community Worker 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', it might be more appropriate to talk in terms of hours over and above which Ministers/ Church Related Community Workers 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 four weekly blocks and managed by the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker 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 35hrs.

9 A standard full -time ministerial working week could therefore be anything up to 48hrs a week, though secular standard working weeks are probably between 35 and 42 hrs. The Ministries Committee would suggest a minimum of 40

hrs. a week. This includes Sunday and does not preclude the practice of a designated day off. The Ministries Committee also recommends that the highest average number of working hours should be 48 hours per week in any four week period (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/ Church Related Community Worker fills out a 'time sheet' to submit to the Elders. Equally there is no reason why a Minister/ Church Related Community Worker should not inform the Elders, or a support group, of the hourly element of the working week. Indeed it ought to be part of the Elders' responsibility to Minister/ Church Related Community Worker and local pastorate or post to ensure that the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker 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/ Church Related Community Worker and pastorate or post. Where the Minister/ Church Related Community Worker is felt to be fulfilling their role within the total life of the congregation most church members will not think in terms of the time a Minister/ Church Related Community Worker 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 counterproductive

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. Furthermore, over- commitment on the part of some ministers also creates quite unrealistic expectations in congregations of the responsibilities of the average minister.

February 2010



MISSION COUNCIL
9th - 11th March 2010

D

MIND Advisory Group - report to Mission Council, March 2010

Notes concerning the draft report of the MIND Advisory Group to Assembly

The first two resolutions would make changes to Part I of the Disciplinary Process and the Incapacity Procedure respectively. Most of these changes have already been seen by Mission Council. The only new change this time is in Resolution 1. It is the second change to Paragraph 1.1 which will remove the provision for making recommendations. (It is hoped that resolutions which will remove this provision from Part II will be presented to the Mission Council by means of a later paper.) There is, perhaps, a need for explanation concerning Paragraph 7 of both Section O and Section P. Resolutions 1 and 2 propose changes to these Paragraphs, then Resolutions 3 and 4 proceed to delete them. If the Assembly passes Resolutions 3 and 4 (and indeed Resolution 5), then of course in each case Paragraph 7 will fall, so the change would have been rendered unnecessary. However, should the Assembly fail to pass Resolutions 3 and 4 (and ratify that decision in 2012) it will have been necessary to make the changes noted. At this stage, therefore, it is right to present all the resolutions.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the MIND Advisory Group which have been accepted by Mission Council included among the list of members "the Procedures Consultant(s)". This expression referred to the Revd Alison Davis, appointed by Mission Council as a consultant who can help Mandated Groups with the legal aspects of their work. We allowed for the possibility of making it plural because we were hoping to appoint someone to help ministers going through the Process. The Group is very pleased now to be able to report that the Revd David Skitt is willing to act in a similar capacity to Alison, giving comparable support to Ministers/CRCWs.

We therefore present the following resolution to Mission Council:

"Mission Council resolves to appoint the Revd David Skitt to serve as a consultant for Ministers and CRCWs who are the subject of the Disciplinary Process."

It follows from this appointment that the brackets around the "s" in the list of members should be deleted, giving the definite plural form.

We also ask that Mission council agrees to add the Convener of the Incapacity Procedure Standing Panel (currently Donald Swift) to the list of members. In the case of the Disciplinary Process, both the Convener and the Secretary of the Assembly Commission are members of the Advisory Group. We believe it would be right to make a similar provision in the case of the Incapacity Procedure. We expect that it will not always be necessary for both of these officers to attend meetings, but it would be good if they could be there when required. We therefore present the following resolution to Mission Council:

"Mission Council resolves to add "the Convener of the Incapacity Procedure Standing Panel to the membership of the MIND Advisory Group."

MCS

09/02/10



MISSION COUNCIL
9th - 11th March 2010

D1

MIND Advisory Group Report to General Assembly

DRAFT 08/02/10

The MIND (Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline) Advisory Group was so renamed by Mission Council to take account of the fact that we have been asked to give oversight to the operation of the Incapacity Procedure (*Section P in the Manual*) in addition to the Disciplinary Process (*Section O*).

The documents relating to these need constant revision to take account of both experience in their use and changes to legislation and employment practice. It is, therefore, vital that any who need to use Sections O or P ensure that they have the most up-to-date version of all documents available on the Church's website. Since the last Assembly we have produced a comprehensive set of Guidelines. We have also produced a simpler general introduction to the Disciplinary Process which will, we trust, help people get a basic understanding of the Process before they address the more technical, but essential, documents. Consultations are being held about the relationship between the Disciplinary Process and the Incapacity Procedure for which guidelines and formal documents are also needed.

We liaise with Synod Moderators about their experiences in the operation of the Disciplinary process, in particular addressing problems that have arisen from the making of Recommendations by Assembly Commissions as there is no formal way of ensuring that such Recommendations are followed. Steps are being taken to resolve this issue.

We have also been working on proposals to establish a formal Graduated Entry into disciplinary action to address issues significant in themselves but not necessarily sufficiently serious to merit being brought into the current Disciplinary Process. This requires detailed work which will not be complete in time for the meeting of the Assembly. However, because we are advised of the need to align our Disciplinary Process more closely with the secular employment law it will not be possible to delay this action until the meeting of General Assembly in 2012. It will therefore be necessary for the changes to the Disciplinary Process to be approved by the Mission Council, probably later in 2010.

We have held a number of well-attended Training Days for those nominated by Synods to serve on Assembly Commissions and to be members of the Joint Panel to lead Mandated Groups. Each Synod has now been asked to appoint two Joint Panel members and early indications are that the revised way of working, in that the Joint Panel members train those who will form a Mandated Group with them, are proving helpful. We already had a consultant who can help

Mandated Groups with the legal aspects of their work and are happy to have been able to appoint another consultant who can give comparable support to Ministers/CRCWs.

On behalf of Assembly Mission Council has made changes to Part II of both the Disciplinary Process and the Incapacity Procedure. Mission Council has also approved a number of changes to Part I of the Disciplinary Process and Incapacity Procedure. These are now presented to the Assembly at Resolutions 1 and 2.

It is of concern to the Advisory Group that, although these changes are important and some were identified as being necessary early in 2009, because changes to Part I are "Constitution Changes" and so require presentation at two Assemblies as well as consultation with Synods they cannot now be implemented before July 2012 at the earliest. The decision to hold biennial assemblies has thus created a well-nigh impossible situation. In the interests of justice and for the avoidance of inconsistencies between Parts I and II, it is essential that in future Part I changes can be made promptly, and this simply cannot be achieved under the new arrangements. The Disciplinary Process has now been up and running for 15 years or so and, whilst we are continually having to revise the Rules of Procedure, the general principles set out in Part I are well settled. Consequently, it is felt that Mission Council, with the guidance of the MIND Advisory Group, can properly have authority over these just as it does over Part II. It is of course always acting with delegated authority from General Assembly. Although the Incapacity Procedure is of more recent origin, the same concerns over the inability promptly to make necessary changes apply, and so it is proposed that Part I of this Procedure be similarly treated, noting that all changes will be under the jurisdiction of Mission Council which will be guided by the Advisory Group, as with the Disciplinary Process. To that end, we propose Resolutions 3, 4 and 5. If the Assembly passes these resolutions the Advisory Group will carry out the necessary drafting work to enable the new wording of both the Disciplinary Process and the Incapacity Procedure to be placed before the Assembly when it ratifies the original resolutions. This new wording would, in each case, integrate the current Parts I and II into a single entity.

Christine Craven and Helen Brown have retired from their positions as Secretary for Ministries and Convener of the Assembly Commission Panel respectively. Both gave so very much to this unglamorous side of our Church's life for which all should be grateful. In their place we have welcomed Craig Bowman and Kath Cross; we have also welcomed Heather Kent and Donald Swift to the Group as the Secretary and the Convener of the Incapacity Procedure Review Commission respectively.

RESOLUTION 1

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to Part I of the Disciplinary Process (Section O):

Paragraph 1.1

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

In the final sentence, after the words "is also able to" remove the words "make recommendations (other than recommendations under Paragraph 1.3) and".

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

Paragraph 1.3.1

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

Paragraph 1.3.2

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

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

Remove the words "or the Appeals Commission".

Paragraph 1.3.3 and Paragraph 1.3.4

Remove the words "or the Appeals Commission".

Paragraph 2

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

Paragraph 7.2

After the words "case law" add "and/or official statements of good practice issued by a government department or agency".

RESOLUTION 2

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to Part I of the Incapacity Procedure (Section P):

Paragraph 1.1 The existing Paragraph 1 to become 1.1.

Paragraph 1.2 Add a new paragraph as follows:-

"The Review Commission may also decide to make a recommendation/referral in accordance with Part II Section H. The Review Commission or, in the event of an appeal the Appeals Review Commission, is also able to make recommendations (other than recommendations under

Part II Section H) and offer guidance, but only within the limits prescribed in Part II Sections K and L"

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

Paragraph 7 After the words "case law" insert "and/or official statements of good practice issued by a government department or agency".

RESOLUTION 3

General Assembly agrees to make the following change to Part I of the Disciplinary Process (Section O):

Paragraph 7

Remove this paragraph in its entirety.

RESOLUTION 4

General Assembly agrees to make the following change to Part I of the Incapacity Procedure (Section P):

Paragraphs 6 and 7

Remove these two paragraphs in their entirety.

RESOLUTION 5

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to the Structure of the United Reformed Church:

Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xi) Remove the words "Part I of the Statement of the Ministerial Disciplinary Process referred to in Function (xxxiii) below, and Part I of the Incapacity Procedure referred to in Paragraph 6 of the Structure."

Paragraph 3.(1) Change the reference in the text from "Paragraph 2.5.xi." to "Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xi)".

Paragraph 5.(2) Change the reference in the text from "Paragraph 5(3)" to "Paragraph 6".

{Note: The 2nd and 3rd of these changes are in order to correct errors in the current Structure.}



MISSION COUNCIL
9th - 11th March 2010

D2

MIND ADVISORY GROUP

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

MEMORANDUM TO MISSION COUNCIL – FEBRUARY 2010

At its meeting on 4 February 2010, the Advisory Group resolved to advise Mission Council to remove from Assembly Commissions and Appeals Commissions the power to make recommendations when reaching their decisions in Disciplinary cases. If this advice is accepted, Mission Council will need to make the following changes to Part II of the Disciplinary Process:

A.4.1 Remove the words "recommendations or"

A.5.20 Remove the words "the particular recommendation(s) or" and insert the word "any" before the word "guidance".

E.9.3 Replace the words "and/or to append recommendations to its decision under Paragraph F.2.3 or where, of its own accord, it might have it in contemplation to adopt either or both of those courses" with the words "or where, of its own accord, the Assembly Commission might have it in contemplation to adopt that course".

F.2.3 Delete entirely.

F.2.4 Renumber as F.2.3.

F.5.2 Remove the words "recommendations or" and "or Paragraph F.2.4".*

F.6.4 Remove the words “recommendations or”.

G.8.4 Remove the words “recommendations or” and “or Paragraph F.2.4 as the case may be”.*

G.13.4 Delete entirely, renumbering the subsequent subparagraphs of G.13

G.13.6 (to become G.13.5) Replace the existing paragraph with the following:

“In addition to its power to offer guidance under Paragraph G.13.4, the Appeals Commission may if it sees fit endorse, overrule, vary or modify in any way any 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 guidance offered by the Appeals Commission, even where this simply endorses that offered by the Assembly Commission in its entirety.”

G.14.4 Remove the words “recommendations or” and “or Paragraph G.13.5 as the case may be”.*

G.14.6 Remove the words “recommendations or”.

J.1.5 Remove the words “Recommendations or” and give the word “guidance” a capital G.

***Note:** At present, Paragraphs F.2.4 and G.13.5 relate to the power to issue guidance and, at first sight, it may therefore appear incorrect to remove the references to those paragraphs. However, with the deletion of the immediately preceding Paragraphs F.2.3 and G.13.4 (see above), the “guidance” paragraphs move up to become F.2.3 and G.13.4, so the references above are correct.



MISSION COUNCIL
9th - 11th March 2010

E

Nominations Report

1. Convener Elect (for appointment at General Assembly 2010)

The following has agreed to serve:

- 3.4.1 Pilots Management Sub-Committee (Convener elect)
Mrs Soo Webster

2. Other appointments

Review/Appointing Group Convener

The Revd Deborah McVey has agreed to convene the Review/Appointing Group for the Moderator of the Synod of Scotland.

The Revd David A L Jenkins has agreed to convene the Sexual Ethics Advisory Group forthwith until 2014.

4.8 The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd

The Revd Roger Woodall has accepted nomination for a casual vacancy from 2009 to serve as a Director of the URC Ministers' Pension Fund. In accordance with a request from the Pension Trust it is suggested that he be appointed forthwith to serve until 2016.

Resolution:

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints the Revd Roger Woodall to serve as a Director of the URC Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd forthwith and until 2016.

3. United Reformed Church Trust

It is hoped to bring nominations for three impending vacancies on the URC Trust to the Mission Council meeting. Discussions between Nominations Committee and the Board about these appointments are currently well in hand.

4. Clerk of General Assembly

It is hoped that by the time Mission Council meets it will be possible to bring the recommendation of the nominating group for the next Clerk of General Assembly. This will be for transmission to General Assembly for approval.

5. Mersey Synod Moderator

The Group appointed to review the post of Moderator of the Mersey Synod, convened by the Revd Nanette Lewis-Head, recommends the reappointment of the Revd Howard Sharp for a further term from 1 February 2011 to 30 June 2014. A resolution will be brought to General Assembly.

6. Biennial meetings of General Assembly

We are now approaching the first of the biennial Assemblies. Nominations Committee has reviewed a number of consequences of this change and offers the following report and recommendations.

6.1 It seems likely that Mission Council will be increasingly responsible for making appointments on behalf of General Assembly. However, whenever possible it seems desirable that Assembly should continue to make its own appointments, particularly of Assembly Officers.

6.2 To that end, consideration has been given to changing some appointment dates to fit in with the dates of Assemblies. Some appointments will be lengthened so that those serving in these posts can relate to a reasonable number of Assemblies. The following details are recommended.

6.2.1 There should be no change from the present pattern of **annual appointments** to committees; it is not thought practical or beneficial to change the pattern to biennial appointments.

6.2.2 It should be noted that the appointments of **Moderators of General Assembly** and the **Clerk to Assembly** have already been adjusted to a two yearly pattern.

6.2.3 The **General Secretary** and the **Deputy General Secretary** appointments are currently for seven years renewable for another seven years. Their present appointments are due to terminate as follows -

General Secretary	30 June 2015
Deputy General Secretary	31 December 2015

Despite the proximity of these dates and the fact that they do not readily relate to the dates of General Assembly, no changes are currently being suggested, although it might well be appropriate to consider new terms when fresh appointments are made.

6.2.4 **Synod Moderators** are appointed for seven years renewable for five. Because of the difficulty of trying to coordinate their appointments with the dates of Assembly, even if their terms were changed, for instance to six + six years, no changes are proposed.

6.2.5 The **Honorary Treasurer** is currently appointed for four years, ideally having served for one year as Assistant Treasurer. The current Treasurer's term is due to be completed in 2011, which means that Assembly 2010 should appoint his successor. However, (a) this is not a good moment to be changing Treasurers, particularly in relation to the complex developments regarding the Ministers' Pension Fund and the current development of longer term strategies in an uncertain financial setting; (b) four years is a relatively short period in which to expect a Treasurer to operate; (c) the current Treasurer is willing to continue beyond 2011 if asked. It is therefore proposed that -

(i) the post of Treasurer should be for six years initially, if possible preceded by one year as Assistant Treasurer, the post to be renewable for a further four years, subject to review;

(ii) the present term of service of Mr John Ellis as Honorary Treasurer of the United Reformed Church, due to end on 30 June 2011, be extended to 30 June 2013;

(iii) that a review and nominating group be set up in 2011 with a view to making a recommendation to the Assembly in 2012.

If a new appointment were to be made at that point, the officer would then serve as Assistant Treasurer from 2012 - 2013, and as Treasurer from 2013 - 2019, with a review commencing in 2017 for decision by Assembly in 2018.

6.2.6 The **Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee** is currently serving until 2012, which could mean that his successor should be appointed by Assembly 2010, to allow time for shadowing the whole process. However, at that stage the Convener will not yet have served even one Assembly.

It is proposed therefore that instead of a four year appointment, this should be a six year appointment, i.e. two years as Convener-elect plus six years as Convener, thus allowing two years, including one Assembly, for shadowing, plus service at three

Assemblies, with the possibility of renewal for a further four years, subject to review.

The current Convener is willing to continue to the 2014 Assembly if so invited.

It is further proposed therefore that the present term of service of Dr David Robinson as Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee be extended from

Assembly 2012 to include Assembly 2014.

An appropriate recommendation would then need to be brought to the Assembly of 2012 (or to a subsequent Mission Council).

6.2.7 The Directors of **The United Reformed Church Trust** are already subject to appointment on a two-yearly basis to coincide with General Assembly. For various practical reasons it is proposed that the Assembly-appointed members of the Ministers' Pension Trust should be appointed on the same pattern. Only one member of the Board is due to retire in 2011.

It is proposed that the appointment of Mr Andrew Perkins as a Director of the URC Ministers' Pension Trust be extended to 2012.

Mission Council will be invited to accept this report and proposals, and to pass the suggested resolutions to General Assembly for approval.

Resolution:

Mission Council agrees that the proposals brought by the Nominations Committee for changes to terms of service of various officers consequent upon the change to biennial Assemblies shall be presented to General Assembly for approval.

7. Past Moderators of General Assembly

The newly adopted process by which the "college" of former Moderators of General Assembly nominate two of their number to attend the next General Assembly is well under way. The outcome should be known shortly.

8. Publication of Nominations Committee Report

Much of the work of the Nominations Committee is naturally taken up with nominating people to serve the church in a wide variety of capacities - on groups, boards and committees, and as representatives. It is important for the work of the committees, for the individuals concerned and for the whole church that this list is as accurate as possible and that it is readily accessible. Up to now the definitive version has been that published each year in the Record of Assembly. With the move to biennial Assemblies there is a question about how the list should be published in the interim year when Mission Council approves the list and when committees change on 1st July. Issuing the list as an appendix to the Mission Council minutes and making it available only via the website, as was done in 2009, has not proved adequate. The Committee recommends that consideration be given to -

- (a) publishing the list as a separate document or along with the Financial and Trust report, at least in the intervening year between Assemblies, and

(b) making the list available via a direct link on the website, with the list updated on a monthly basis as necessary.

Resolution:

Mission Council agrees that the final listing of committee membership and other appointments made through the Nominations Committee which is normally published in the Assembly Record, should, in years when there is no meeting of General Assembly, be published with the Financial and Trust report; Mission Council further agrees that the possibility of publishing the list on the website should also be explored.

9. Mission Council Advisory Groups, Task Groups, etc.

It seems desirable for the appointment of Mission Council groups to become the responsibility of the Nominations Committee. The commissioning and the remits of these groups should remain the responsibility of the General Secretariat, but the appointment of conveners and members should fall to Nominations, with, as always, the help and advice of those most concerned. A separate paper sets out the current list of these special groups and indicates how they might be structured into the main report (see also para 10 below). Once complete, the list of committee members and any relevant notes, such as the date by which a task group is expected to have completed its work, will be included under each heading. Agreement is needed for this transfer of responsibility.

Resolution:

Mission Council agrees that the General Secretariat be responsible for overseeing the remits of advisory and task groups, and that the membership of such groups should be nominated by Nominations Committee which will also be responsible for listing them in its annual report.

10. Listing of Committees

A supplementary paper lists the committees, advisory and task groups which are currently appointed in the name of General Assembly and which form the structures of the church centrally - as these are currently understood by Nominations Committee. The intention is that this list should form the basis of the report to Assembly. Confirmation is therefore sought for the details within this paper and in general that this is an accurate outline of our current structures. Work is currently in hand to consolidate all information about committees and representatives within a spreadsheet format as an aid to the Committee's work and as a more permanent and flexible resource.

Resolution:

Mission Council agrees in general terms to the listing of committees and groups as set out in paper E1

11. Monitoring

Monitoring of the composition of committees and of responses from those invited to serve is now a routine part of the Committee's work. That could be described as a process of assessment and comparison. More actively, every effort continues to be made to achieve balance as names are considered for all committee vacancies. That part of the process, of course, has to be in conjunction with finding the best available people for each situation. When people are invited to serve, they are also invited to return a response form indicating, among

other things, any reasons which influenced their decision to accept or decline. The return of these forms over the past year has been an impressive 84%. These immediately show very large variations year on year, which is no doubt partly due to the relatively low numbers involved statistically. Spread over the next five years (from the base year of 2008) some trends may become identifiable. However, some observations can be made now:

- some 20% of invitations are declined;
- refusals seem to be spread relatively evenly across the categories;
- the age profile of those serving is not as young as we would wish, but inevitably reflects people's availability;
- there is still an under-representation of black and minority ethnic members, although every effort is being made to include them; there have been some recent improvements in numbers here; the greater involvement of BME members at local and synod level should help to provide a more natural and healthy balance;
- total committee membership has increased by 14% over the past year, due largely to the completion of committees and groups following the Catch the Vision process; the total committee membership is nevertheless 13% below that for 2006.

12. Secretary's attendance at Mission Council

On the basis of the growing complexity of the work of Nominations Committee and to provide support to the Committee and to Mission Council, the Committee brings the following proposal -

Resolution:

Mission Council agrees that the Secretary of the Nominations Committee shall be invited to be 'in attendance' at meetings of Mission Council.



MISSION COUNCIL
9th - 11th March 2010

E1

Nominations Committee supplementary paper

Listing of Assembly and Mission Council committees, groups, etc.

The table below lists the committees and groups appointed by General Assembly or Mission Council, incorporating the task and advisory groups, most of which have not previously been listed in the Nominations Committee report, together with the list of bodies to which representatives are appointed. It may not be totally accurate or complete - any corrections would be gratefully received. The intention is that this should become the basis for the Nominations Committee report to General Assembly. It will also form the basis for the working spreadsheet which will be used to enable the work of the committee and of the church.

The key to understanding the roles and relationship of committees is as follows, for example:

- 1. **MISSION COUNCIL** - a Council or Department of the church in sections 1 - 4; otherwise, in section 5 onwards, the heading of a list of representatives.
- 1.1 **MISSION COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP** - a Group or Committee which reports directly to Mission Council and General Assembly, or which stands alone.
- 1.1.1 **Housing Provision Task Group** - a Group or Sub-Committee which reports to its parent body, in this case Mission Council Advisory Group (MCAG) as above.

No.	Committee/Group
1	MISSION COUNCIL
1.1	MISSION COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP
1.1.1	Housing Provision Task Group
1.1.2	Staffing Advisory Group
1.2	Ministerial Incapacity Procedure and Disciplinary Process Advisory Group
1.3	Resource Sharing Task Group
1.4	Law and Polity Advisory Group
1.5	Sexual Ethics Advisory Group
1.6	Human Sexuality Task Group (2008)
1.7	London Synod Task Group
2	MISSION DEPARTMENT
2.1	MISSION COMMITTEE
2.1.1	Faith and Order Reference Group

No.	Committee/Group
2.1.2	International Exchange Reference Group
2.1.3	Commitment for Life Reference Group
2.1.4	Methodist/URC Interfaith Reference Group
2.1.5	Joint Public Issues Team Management Group
2.1.6	Rural Strategy Group (URC/Methodist)
2.1.7	Vision4Life Steering Group
2.1.8	God is Still Speaking Steering Group
2.1.9	Vision 20/20 Steering Group
2.1.10	Mission Responsibility through Investment Group
3	MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH DEPARTMENT
3.1	MINISTRIES COMMITTEE
3.1.1	Ministries - Accreditation Sub-Committee
3.1.2	Ministries - CRCW Programme Sub-Committee
3.1.3	Ministries - Leadership in Worship Sub-Committee
3.1.4	Ministries - Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee
3.1.5	Ministries - Retired Ministers' Housing Sub-Committee
3.1.6	Assessment Board
3.1.7	Criminal Records Bureau (Churches' Agency for Safeguarding) Advisory Group
3.2	DISCIPLINARY PROCESS - Commission Panel
3.3	EDUCATION AND LEARNING COMMITTEE
3.3.1	Windermere Management Committee
3.3.2	Education for Ministry Phase 2 and 3 (EM2/3) Sub-Committee
3.3.3	Education and Learning Finance Sub-Committee
3.4	YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK COMMITTEE
3.4.1	Pilots Management Sub-Committee
4	ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
4.1	ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE
4.1.1	Tellers at Assembly 2010 for the election of the General Assembly Moderators 2012-2014
4.2	COMMUNICATIONS AND EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
4.3	EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
4.4	FINANCE COMMITTEE
4.4.1	Stewardship Sub-Committee
4.4.2	Ethical Investment Advisory Group (<i>Also reports to Mission Committee</i>)
4.5	NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE
4.5.1	Panel for General Assembly appointments (<i>NB Suggested name change</i>)
4.6	PASTORAL REFERENCE AND WELFARE COMMITTEE
4.6.1	Standing Panel for the Incapacity Procedure
4.7	THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST
4.7.1	Church House Management Group
4.7.2	Listed Buildings Advisory Group
4.8	THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION TRUST Ltd
4.9	PENSIONS EXECUTIVE
4.10	INVESTMENT COMMITTEE
5	REPRESENTATIVES TO MEETINGS OF SISTER CHURCHES
5.1	Presbyterian Church in Ireland

No.	Committee/Group
5.2	General Synod of the Church of England
5.3	Methodist Conference
5.4	Congregational Federation
5.5	General Assembly of the Church of Scotland
5.6	United Free Church of Scotland
5.7	Scottish Episcopal Church
5.8	Methodist Church in Scotland
5.9	Baptist Union of Scotland
5.10	Presbyterian Church of Wales
5.11	Union of Welsh Independents
5.12	Church in Wales Governing Body
5.13	Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church
6	REPRESENTATIVES ON ECUMENICAL CHURCH BODIES
6.1	Council for World Mission (CWM) Assembly 2008-2011
6.1.1	CWM European Region Meeting 2008-2011
6.2	World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) General Council
6.3	World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee
6.4	WCC Faith and Order Commission
6.5	Conference of European Churches Assembly
6.6	Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) Church Leaders' Meeting
6.6.1	CTBI Senior Representatives Forum
6.6.2	CTBI Environmental Issues Network
6.6.3	CTBI Church and Society Forum
6.6.4	CTBI Churches' Criminal Justice Forum
6.6.5	CTBI Churches' International Student Network
6.6.6	CTBI Consultative Group on Ministry amongst Children (CGMC)
6.6.7	CTBI Inter-Religious Network
6.6.8	CTBI Racial Justice Network
6.6.9	CTBI Churches' Network for Mission
6.6.10	CTBI China Forum
6.7	Churches Together in England (CTE) Forum 2009-2012
6.7.1	CTE Enabling Group
6.7.2	CTE Coordinating Group for Local Unity
6.7.3	CTE Churches Together for Healing
6.7.4	CTE Churches' Committee on Funerals and Crematoria
6.7.5	CTE Free Churches' Education Committee
6.7.6	CTE Churches' Joint Education Policy Committee
6.7.7	CTE Group for Evangelisation
6.7.8	CTE Churches' International Students Network
6.7.9	CTE Spirituality Co-ordinating Group
6.7.10	CTE Churches' Rural Group
6.7.11	CTE Minority Ethnic Affairs Group
6.8	Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) Members Meeting
6.9	National Sponsoring Body for Scotland
6.10	Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN)
6.11	Commission of Covenanted Churches
6.12	Joint Liturgical Group

No.	Committee/Group
6.13	European Churches' Environmental Network
6.14	Churches' Refugee Network
6.15	Fresh Expressions
7	REPRESENTATIVES ON FORMAL BILATERAL AND MULTI-LATERAL COMMITTEES
7.1	Methodist/United Reformed Church Liaison Committee
7.2	Roman Catholic - United Reformed Church Bilateral Dialogue
7.3	Church of England - United Reformed Church Bilateral Dialogue ("God's Reign and our Unity")
7.4	Anglican/Moravian Contact Group
7.5	Tri-lateral Conversation of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the URC
8	REPRESENTATIVES ON GOVERNING BODIES OF THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES, ETC
8.1	Northern College
8.1.1	Luther King House Educational Trust
8.2	Westminster College Board of Governors
8.2.1	Cheshunt Foundation
8.2.2	Cambridge Theological Foundation
8.3	Homerton College Trustees
8.4	The Queen's Foundation
9	GOVERNORS OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS WITH WHICH THE URC IS ASSOCIATED
9.1	Caterham School
9.2	Eltham College
9.3	Walthamstow Hall
9.4	Milton Mount Foundation
9.5	Silcoates School
9.6	Taunton School
9.7	Wentworth College
9.8	Bishops Stortford College
10	MISCELLANEOUS
10.1	Arthur Rank Centre
10.2	Churches' Legislation Advisory Service
10.3	Congregational Fund Board
10.4	Congregational Memorial Hall Trust
10.5	Discipleship and Witness Board of Trustees
10.5.1	Discipleship and Witness Publications Development Group
10.6	English Heritage's Places of Worship Forum
10.7	Guides' Religious Advisory Panel
10.8	Lord Wharton's Charity
10.9	Retired Ministers' and Widows' Fund
10.10	Samuel Robinson's Charities
10.11	Scouts' Religious Advisory Group
10.12	United Reformed Church History Society Council
10.13	Westhill Endowment Fund



MISSION COUNCIL 9th - 11th March 2010

E2

Nominations

Supplementary Report 2

1. United Reformed Church Trust

(cf para 3 of Paper E)

1.1 Having followed the procedures for the nomination of suitable candidates to fill three impending vacancies on the URC Trust and after discussions with the present Board, the following is recommended as the composition of the Trust for agreement by General Assembly.

Chair: Mr Alan Small (*elected by members of the Trust*)

Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones

Deputy Secretary: Mr Tony Bayley

Directors: *Group 1 -*

Mr Alan Small (3) [2012]

Dr David Robinson (4) [2014]

Mr Andrew Atkinson * (1) [2016]

Group 2 -

Dr Augur Pearce (12) [2012]

Mrs Rachel Wakeman (6) [2014]

Revd Richard Gray * (8) [2016]

Group 3 -

Revd Prof David Thompson (7) [2012]

Mr John Woodman (7) [2014]

Revd Michael Davies * (11) [2014]

Mission Council nominated Directors:

Mrs Claudette Binns [2014]

Vacancy for FURY nominated young person

Co-opted Directors:

Miss Joyce Bain ** [2014]

Mr Brian Woodhall ** [2014]

Ex-officio:

Moderators of General Assembly

General Secretary

Deputy General Secretary

Honorary Treasurer

Clerk to General Assembly

In attendance:

Convener of Investment Committee

* - these are newly nominated Directors, all of whom have submitted satisfactory references.

** - these are new co-options on the basis of the need for valuable expertise and continuity.

1.2 It is not proposed to seek a further “balancing nomination” from Mission Council given that the new membership is 12M and 6F.

1.3 The membership criteria have been revised and incorporated in the new Memorandum and Articles. These changes are reflected in the above. A new document to replace the Governing Document agreed by General Assembly in 2007 is being prepared.

Resolution:

Mission Council agrees that the proposed membership of the United Reformed Church Trust shall be presented to General Assembly for approval.

2. Past Moderators of General Assembly

(cf para 7 of paper E)

Paragraph 2.(6) (j) of the Structures of the United Reformed Church sets out the basis for appointing two former Moderators of General Assembly (or former Moderators, Chairmen or Presidents of previous equivalent bodies) as members of the coming Assembly.

Accordingly, all those eligible have been canvassed as an electoral college. They have elected the following to serve:

Revd John Waller and Revd Elizabeth Welch

Some other former Moderators may also, of course, be attending in another capacity.

Where this was known, and also when people withdrew their names for any reason, they were excluded from the list of potential nominees.

3. Director of OT Studies, Westminster College

A group appointed to review the post of Director of Old Testament Studies at Westminster College, Cambridge, and convened by Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms, recommends the reappointment of The Revd Dr Janet Tollington until her retirement in approximately six years' time. A resolution, including relevant dates, will be brought to General Assembly.



MISSION COUNCIL 9th - 11th March 2010

F

ETHICAL INVESTMENT

PRINCIPLES FOR THE USE OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

(DRAFT)

1. The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church (URC) considers investment decisions to be an integral part of the Church's mission and witness and is committed, as far as it is legal and practical, to expressing Christian responsibility through investment decisions. Towards this end, Assembly requests that those responsible for investment decisions on behalf of the URC and its Trust bodies are guided by the principles set out below.
2. Assembly wishes the basic, aspirational ethical principles outlined below to inform all investment decisions:
 - Mission integrity – the URC will, in all investment related activities, aim to avoid undermining the credibility, effectiveness and unity of its mission and witness.
 - Stewardship – those entrusted with responsibility for investment decisions on behalf of the URC, its Trust bodies and their agents will exercise due diligence and care in the exercise of their duty to ensure that mission and fiduciary responsibilities are creatively and effectively balanced.
 - Legality - all investment decisions will comply with the legal requirements for trustees as outlined in the Charity Acts and other legislation.
 - Sustainability – investment decisions will be guided by the principle of financial and environmental sustainability with a view to the long term maintenance of well-being for the economic, social and natural environments.
 - Solidarity – investment decisions will be guided by the Biblical principle of solidarity with those who are poor and marginalised and seek social justice as expressed in Statement 9 of the URC's Mission framework.¹
 - Accountability – URC trustees, working in liaison with fund managers, will aspire to the highest level of compliance with this policy which can be achieved.
 - Transparency – reputational risk will be minimised by ensuring openness and transparency in reporting on URC investment portfolios and compliance with this policy.
 - Partnership – the URC recognises the value of collaborative action in terms of effecting change in companies' policies and practices and commits to working with the other members of the Church Investors Group (CIG), the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) and other ecumenical agencies to engage with companies and, where relevant, to act in support of their initiatives.

¹ See p.22 of the *Vision 2020 – planning for growth in the URC* booklet for details - http://www.urch.org.uk/what_we_do/mission/images/vision2020_booklet_colour.pdf

3. Expression will be given to these principles through both negative and positive screening of companies as well as through selective direct engagement with companies. Each of these investment strategies is outlined below and should be considered as part of an integral approach to ethical investment by the URC.
4. The existing URC Ethical Investment policy will be developed to guide our investments in terms of negative screening. This policy states:

General Assembly recommends that trustees and all those with investment responsibilities connected with the United Reformed Church should avoid any investment in:

- a) companies directly engaged in the manufacture or supply of weapons of destruction;*
- b) companies a significant part of whose business is in the supply of alcoholic drinks or tobacco products or military equipment (other than weapons of destruction); or the provision of gambling facilities; or the publication or distribution of pornography.*

General Assembly notes that the definition of these activities, or of what constitutes a significant part of a company's business, requires judgement and the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) of Mission Council is available to offer advice. In general, EIAG will deem "significant" to mean where the share of turnover derived from the activity concerned is more than around 10-20% of the company's total turnover.

General Assembly recognises that this policy can only be advisory as the responsibility of specific investment decisions remains with each body of trustees.'

However, in addition to the criteria listed above, the URC's investment bodies are encouraged to avoid investment in companies whose management practices are deemed to be unacceptable or whose operations are deemed to:

- contribute to the oppressive nature of regimes which are guilty of gross human rights violations;
 - contribute to a harmful impact on the social or natural environment;
 - harm the society in which they operate more than they benefit it;
 - promote injustice.
5. Positive screening and 'best in class/sector' strategy – URC trustees are encouraged to support companies that seek to develop their businesses successfully and sustainably in the long term interests of shareholders and other stakeholders. The URC will seek to invest in companies which have an active commitment to the following:
 - responsible employment practices;
 - equal opportunities policy and practice;
 - good practice in terms of corporate governance;
 - environmental sustainability expressed by comprehensive environmental and climate change policies and audits;
 - positive attitudes to customers and active monitoring of employment practices across the supply chain;
 - openness in reporting to stakeholders;

- sensitivity towards communities in which they operate;
 - integrity in all their dealings; and
 - the promotion of human rights, especially in countries with oppressive regimes.
6. Engagement and dialogue with companies – the URC endorses the strategy of direct engagement with companies through correspondence, face-to-face meetings and shareholders' attendance at AGMs as a means of influencing the practices of these companies. This is based on an understanding of the theological and moral duty to monitor the policies and practices of companies in which a URC body is a direct shareholder and to raise concerns with a company if we are not fully satisfied with its business.
7. Project or socially-directed investment – in addition to the positive screening, the URC will continue to set aside a proportion of its capital for investment where the return is principally social rather than financial. This echoes the Church's mission strategy.² The following social investments have considerable overlap with ethical investment portfolios and may sometimes offer market rate investments:
- community land and reinvestment trusts;
 - ecological building projects;
 - organic food and fair trade initiatives; and
 - micro-credit based social development programmes.
- In supporting any such initiative, URC Trust bodies should be satisfied that effective governance monitoring is in place.³
8. Disinvestment – as a last resort, the URC will consider selling its shares in a company on ethical grounds in cases where a company fails to amend its operating policies and practices after engagement and dialogue over an extended period of time. Such action will generally be taken in conjunction with ecumenical partners through the CIG (or similar body) based on advice from the EIAG. However, such decisions will be subject to periodic review in the light of these principles to maintain the integrity and credibility of the policy.
9. Monitoring of policy – The monitoring of these principles on behalf of the URC is principally the task of Mission Council's Ethical Investment Advisory Group. EIAG is required to report on issues of concern and develop policy statements on various issues related to ethical investment as necessary. However, every investment body and officer within the URC family (whether at Assembly, Synod or local church level) needs to share in this responsibility to ensure the Church retains its mission integrity.

² See *Vision 2020 – planning for growth in the URC* at http://www.urch.org.uk/what_we_do/mission/images/vision2020_booklet_colour.pdf

³ Cited in EIRIS/UKSIF Charity Project, *Responsible Investment Approaches to Non-Equity Investments: An Introduction for Charity Trustees*, 2006, www.charityysri.org

Mission Council

- i. welcomes the statement of principles for the use of the United Reformed Church in making investment decisions;**
- ii. requests a investment policy statement based on them be drawn up for the use of investment managers;**
- iii. resolves to recommend to the 2010 General Assembly a report of this work for endorsement.**

February 2010



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Ethical Investment Advisory Group

Nestlé Review Report

Background

1. The United Reformed Church (URC) adopted a motion to boycott Nestlé products at General Assembly in 1992 based on concerns highlighted by Baby Milk Action (BMA) related to the company's policy of marketing and distributing of breast milk substitutes to mothers in Third World countries. This motion called for *'Church and Society to set up a working party to monitor the situation to enable the motion to be reviewed at the General Assembly 1993'* – see **Appendix 1** for copy of motion.
2. The Church and Society (C&S) Committee expressed its continued support for BMA's campaign to continue boycotting Nestle products in its report to Assembly in 2001. This was based on the case that Nestlé *'contributes to the unnecessary death and suffering of infants by aggressively marketing breast milk substitutes in ways that violate the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant resolutions adopted by the World Health Assembly.'* The report ended by calling for *'the Church to continue to express practically its feelings about Nestlé's practice of prioritising its own interests before the health and lives of babies in the developing world'* – see attached **Appendix 2**.
3. The Methodist Church released a statement on 25 November 2005 saying that its Joint Advisory Committee on Ethical Investment (JACEI) had cleared the way for its Central Finance Board to invest in Nestlé, if it so wished. The committee said that *'whilst there were still areas of ethical concern relating to the marketing and promotion of breast milk substitutes, there was no suggestion that the nature of Nestlé's business was inherently unethical, and there were insufficient reasons to avoid investment on ethical grounds'* – see **Appendix 3** for a copy of this statement.
4. In response to this statement, the C&S Committee (in conjunction with the Commitment for Life sub-committee) released a statement in December 2005 saying that whilst *'some in the URC may feel, as the Methodist Church does, that the option of making a financial investment would enable the Church to press Nestlé further than it could by other means; Others would no doubt believe that the best way of working for change is for the boycott to remain - or that a token investment would not necessarily be incompatible with a continuing boycott.'* The statement also made reference to the fact that *'the URC Assembly resolution has remained in force since 1992; any proposed change would have to be considered by the Church's committees and, ultimately, by General Assembly.'*
5. In the C&S Report to General Assembly in 2006 the Committee expressed the view that in light of the decision by the Methodist Church to allow its investment agency to invest in Nestlé, the URC *should continue to recommend a boycott of Nestlé products; however the committee endorses the possibility of a selective purchase of shares in companies to enable campaigning from within.'* This decision was also endorsed by the Commitment for Life Sub-Committee who whilst endorsing the 1992 General Assembly decision to boycott Nestlé products, also stated that they *'would not be*

against a selective purchase of shares in Nestlé, as long as this was used to enable campaigning from within.'

6. A detailed briefing paper on Nestlé was prepared by the Secretary for Church and Society ahead of the C&S Committee meeting in January 2007 - see *Appendix 4*. Unfortunately, time did not permit discussion to be held on this paper and it was referred to the Commitment for Life sub-committee for discussion at their next meeting. Following this meeting a Nestle working group was established to consider whether Nestle had done enough in factual terms to warrant lifting the boycott of its products and whether engaging with the company was an option.
7. The first meeting of the Nestlé working group took place on the 10 October 2007 at which Steve Hucklesby explained the rationale for the Methodist Church's decision to engage with the company. Discussion followed on the merits of the URC continuing with its boycott of Nestlé products and the case of investment and engagement in light of the changes made by the company and a follow-up meeting was scheduled for January 2008. Unfortunately, this meeting did not take place due to the non-availability of some of the members of the working group. However, at the January 2008 meeting of the C&S Committee, it was proposed that the review of the Nestlé boycott be left in abeyance until the proposals for broadening the URC's guidelines for ethical investment were completed to allow balanced debate on this issue based on objective criteria. This decision was endorsed by the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) at their meeting in April 2008.

Revised Ethical Investment Policy

8. Guiding principles for a revised Ethical Investment Policy for the URC have now been developed and were discussed together with this briefing document at the last meeting of the EIAG on the 4th February 2010 meeting. These guiding principles have been informed by the report of a theology working group established by the Mission Committee to consider the issue of expressing Mission responsibility through investment as well as the ethical policies of our ecumenical partners.
9. Key issues highlighted in these guiding principles include the desire to achieve a better fit between the mission and fiduciary responsibilities of the URC, the inclusion of positive screening criteria and the criteria for engagement with companies (and divestment when deemed necessary). The URC's response to Nestlé will be considered in terms of these criteria and will provide an interesting test case for the revised ethical policy when this is debated at General Assembly in July 2010.

Meeting with Nestlé Management

10. A meeting between the Church Investors Group and senior Nestlé management was hosted by CCLA on 4 December 2009 to engage on issues of ethical concern related to their marketing of baby milk substitutes and compliance with the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (International Code)* – see *Appendix 5* for a copy of the notes of this meeting. Five representatives from the URC were invited to attend this meeting – Richard Nunn (Chair of the URC Investment Committee), John Ellis (Treasurer), Simon Loveitt (URC spokesperson on public issues), Val Morrison (Co-Moderator Elect), and Linda Mead (Commitment for Life Coordinator). A briefing meeting was held at URC House ahead of this meeting where issues of concern identified and discussed. The following 3 questions emerged from this meeting;
 - a. What specific changes have been made by Nestlé in terms of its marketing of breast milk substitutes and compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk

Substitutes to warrant recommending that the boycott of their products by the URC be ended?

- b. Is Nestlé planning to apply for listing with the FTSE4Good Index?
- c. What actions was Nestlé taking to regulate their supply chain and to ensure that the human rights of employees were upheld?

In response, at the meeting, Nestle affirmed that:

- The WHO code on BMS drives their operations in the BMS business. Allegations of non compliance are investigated thoroughly. Where necessary, corrective is action taken immediately
- They have been enthusiastic supporters of FTSE4Good and now that it is more focussed upon the developing world market rather than the whole world they would embrace whatever was required to comply.
- They promote shared values with their customers, suppliers as well as shareholders as they see their role as being long term providers of nutrition solutions rather than seeking shareholder value as fast as possible
- They now actively support independent assessments of their activities and its impact upon local communities. These have been highly favourable

11. There was general agreement from the URC representatives who attended this meeting that in light of this engagement, a proposal be made to the EIAG for consideration at their February 2010 meeting that the boycott of Nestlé products by the URC be ended and that a formal proposal outlining the rationale for this decision be forwarded to Mission Council in March together with the revised Ethical Investment Policy for joint consideration. Mission Committee also considered this proposal at their January meeting but decided that they first needed to review the revised Ethical Investment Policy of the URC before being in a position to review the decision to boycott Nestlé products. See **Appendix 6** for a list of the responses of the URC representatives who attended the meeting with Nestlé management.

Assessment of Nestlé marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes and compliance with the *International Code* and subsequent, relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions

12. In seeking to take this proposal forward, it is important that an independent assessment be made of Nestlé's current practices related to the marketing of breast milk substitutes and compliance with the relevant international health codes and resolutions. It is not, however the intention of this briefing paper to present a detailed analysis of the alleged violations of the *International Code* and child rights posited by the Baby Milk Action campaign and the response by Nestlé management . The Methodist Church has already engaged in this type of analysis based on in-depth engagement with the key stakeholders culminating in the release of their statement on Nestlé on the 25th November 2005 alluded to in Point 3 above. The briefing note from the Central Finance Board and reports on this process are well documented on the Methodist Church website by following this link <http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=openworld.content&cmid=1826>
13. Rather, this briefing paper seeks to assess Nestlé's current marketing practices and compliance to international codes based on the criteria outlined in the revised Ethical Investment Policy of the URC – see **Appendix 7**, the draft FTSE4Good inclusion criteria for marketing of breast-milk substitutes – see **Appendix 8**, and the information provided by the highly respected Ethical Investment Research and Information Service (EIRIS) in their latest company profile on Nestlé on their marketing of breast-milk substitutes – see **Appendix 9**.

Proposal for consideration by Mission Council

14. The following findings and recommendations can be made based on this assessment:

- i. In terms of the proposed principles for ethical investment for the URC, Nestlé remains in breach of the principle of *solidarity*¹ based on EIRIS' recording of a number of instances where Nestlé has been found to be in partial compliance with, or total or substantial violation of the International Code of Marketing Breast-Milk Substitutes in developing countries – particularly those countries which have a UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) of less than 0.5. The countries concerned are as follows: HDI of less than 0.5 (but more than 0.25) - Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria & Senegal.
- ii. However, EIRIS notes that Nestlé demonstrates systems for investigating and responding in a timely manner to alleged non-compliance reported by governmental bodies, professional groups, institutions, NGOs or other individuals from outside the Company - in response to IBFAN's 2007 Breaking the Rules report, Nestlé has produced a report: Nestlé Investigation of Reported Non-Compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. This lists the allegations and Nestlé's response to them. In addition, the Company has indicated that queries and allegations from NGOs and other external sources are routinely investigated and responded to, both at country level and at headquarters level.
- iii. Nestlé is rated as having a high exposure to the issue of marketing of breast-milk substitutes by EIRIS based on estimates that the Company derives £750m of turnover from breast-milk substitutes i.e. 2.9 % of total turnover. It is assessed as *inter-mediate* by EIRIS based on the fact that *'the Company has the policy and management systems elements in place required for an assessment of 'good' but as the Nestlé Instructions re-interpret certain articles of the WHO Code, the Company is not able to achieve an assessment above intermediate.'* The aspects of the WHO Code which Nestlé re-interprets is summarised in **Appendix 9** (see pages
- iv. Nestlé has responded to EIRIS on these points and has provided an explanation of the differences between the Nestlé Instructions and the equivalent articles of the WHO Code and why it believes its policy is aligned with the WHO Code.

Based on this assessment and the reporting and management systems which Nestlé has put in place to monitor and track alleged violations of the International Code, the EIAG now concurs with the November 2005 statement of JACEI which states that *'whilst there were still areas of ethical concern relating to the marketing and promotion of breast milk substitutes, there was no suggestion that the nature of Nestlé's business was inherently unethical, and there were insufficient reasons to avoid investment on ethical grounds'*

¹ Investment decisions on behalf of the URC are to be guided by the Biblical principle of solidarity with those who are poor and marginalised and social justice as expressed in Statement 9 of the URC's Mission framework.

Proposed resolution for Mission Council

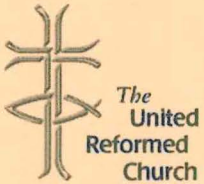
15. *Having conducted a thorough review of Nestlé's reporting and management systems related to the marketing of breast-milk substitutes and compliance with the relevant international health codes and resolutions based on:*
- a. the guiding principles for the revised Ethical Investment Policy of the URC;*
 - b. the latest EIRIS Profile Report on Nestlé (December 2009);*
 - c. the engagement with Nestlé management and CIG members on 4 December 2009; and,*
 - d. the commitment by Nestlé's management to continue engaging with the FTSE4Good inclusion criteria for marketing of breast-milk substitutes;*

The Ethical Investment Advisory Group recommends the following resolution:

Mission Council

- i. agrees that Nestle should no longer be treated on a different investment basis from all other companies*
- ii. recognises that this means URC bodies may consider engagement with Nestlé through the selective purchase of shares if and when the appropriate investment managers deem such purchase appropriate. This will facilitate better engagement with Company policies and practices from within; and*
- iii. instructs that this decision and its context be reported to those entrusted with investment decisions on behalf of the URC as well as Nestlé management and the Church Investors Group.*

February 2010



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APPENDICES 1-9

- APPENDIX 1 - General Assembly Resolution**
- APPENDIX 2 - Church & Society Assembly Report 2001**
- APPENDIX 3 - Methodist Church Statement on Nestlé (November 2005)**
- APPENDIX 4 - Briefing paper on Nestlé for C&S Committee (January 2007)**
- APPENDIX 5 - Notes of meeting between CIG representatives and Nestlé management (December 2009)**
- APPENDIX 6 - Responses from URC representatives at meeting with Nestlé management**
- APPENDIX 7 - Ethical Principles for the URC (Draft)**
- APPENDIX 8 - FTSE4GOOD inclusion criteria for marketing of breast milk substitutes**
- APPENDIX 9 - EIRIS Profile on Nestlé (December 2009)**

APPENDIX 1
General Assembly Resolution on Nestlé

Assembly resolution 1992

Nestle products

The Assembly directs the Mission Council to take steps:

1. to alert Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches to the Baby Milk Action Coalition;
2. to encourage Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches to boycott the purchase of Nescafe and other Nestle products;
3. to write to the Managing Director of the Nestle Company at St George's House, Croydon, Surrey CR9 1NR expressing deep concern at their policy in providing free baby food to mothers in Third World countries and instructs Church and Society to set up a working party to monitor the situation to enable the motion to be reviewed at the General Assembly 1993;
4. to consult our CWM partner churches about this and similar issues.

APPENDIX 2
Church & Society General Assembly Report 2001

Nestlé products

In 1992, Assembly passed a resolution alerting Synods, District Councils and local churches to the Baby Milk Action Coalition. It encouraged them to boycott the purchase of Nescafe and other Nestlé products and to write to the Managing Director of the Nestlé Company expressing deep concern at their policy in providing free baby food to mothers in Third World countries.

The case against Nestlé is basically that it contributes to the unnecessary death and suffering of infants by aggressively marketing breast-milk substitutes in ways that violate the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant resolutions adopted by the World Health Assembly. Promoting baby milk to mothers, it is argued, undermines breastfeeding by hindering the establishment of the mother's own milk which provides the nutrients necessary for infant growth as well as unique anti-infective properties which protect the baby against common childhood illnesses. Even in wealthy countries the use of baby milk can deny babies the best start in life, but where water is unsafe an artificially-fed child is up to 25 times more likely to die as a result of diarrhea than a breastfed child. According to UNICEF, reversing the decline in breastfeeding could save the lives of 1.5 million infants around the world every year. It is difficult not to see Nestlé's approach as a naked 'profits before health' one. There are, of course, many other companies producing and marketing breast-milk substitutes, but Nestlé is particularly targeted because it controls about 40% of the world market in these products and uses its influence to undermine controls on marketing activities.

Church and Society continues to support Baby Milk Action, and in fact increased significantly its donation towards its work this year. Because the boycott has been running so long - more than twenty years - it has not always attracted as much publicity as other 'one-off' campaigns (like that in 2000 on fuel), but it is in fact supported in the UK by over 100 church, health and consumer groups, more than 90 businesses, 80 student unions, and many local authorities, trade unions and individual politicians and celebrities. Thousands more organisations and individuals in 18 other countries also play a part. In the spirit of the 1992 resolution Church and Society encourages the Church to continue to express practically its feelings about Nestlé's practice of prioritising its own interests before the health and lives of babies in the developing world.

APPENDIX 3

Methodist Church Statement on Nestlé

The Methodist Church's Joint Advisory Committee on Ethical Investment (JACEI) has cleared the way for the Church's investment agency the Central Finance Board to invest in Nestlé if it wishes to do so. The Committee said that, while there are still areas of ethical concern relating to marketing and promotion of breast milk substitute issues, there is no suggestion that the nature of Nestlé's business is inherently unethical, and there are insufficient reasons to avoid an investment in Nestlé on ethical grounds. The decision of the Committee does not mean that CFB will make an immediate investment in Nestlé.

Anthea Cox, Methodist Co-ordinating Secretary for Public Life and Social Justice, said, 'We do not believe that Nestlé are perfect by any means. But we think that the option of making a financial investment in the company will enable CFB to press Nestlé further than the Church could achieve by other means.'

The Methodist Church has sought to listen to and engage positively with both Nestlé and campaigners such as Baby Milk Action. For example, the Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF) has in the recent past given grants to Baby Milk Action to support specific projects, and Anthea Cox paid tribute to its work. 'Baby Milk Action and other groups have performed a great service in researching Nestlé's activities and keeping this issue in the public eye,' she said. 'If CFB did invest, one consequence would be to allow closer scrutiny of Nestlé.'

The Committee recommended that the CFB should seek to meet the CEO of Nestlé, and also that it should have annual meetings with senior executives to continue addressing the company's record. The CFB, which is independent of the Church and has funds of about £1 billion under its control, pursues a policy of active engagement as part of its ethical investment, under which it uses its position as a shareholder to demand improvements in companies' attitudes towards development, fair trade, the environment and workers' rights.

After initiating a review process in 2002, the Committee held a consultation in November 2004 to consider the ethical suitability of holding shares in Nestlé. As part of its work, the Committee heard submissions from both sides of the debate. Both Nestlé and Baby Milk Action took part in the consultation, offering their advice and response to the briefing paper and the committee is grateful for their contributions.

Anthea Cox: 'This is not a decision the Committee made lightly or without thorough investigation. We are fully aware of Nestlé's record in the past, and that, despite improvements, there are still reported violations of the WHO Code on the sale and marketing of baby milk. But companies are accountable to their shareholders, and if CFB invests it will, as usual, use that actively to press the company not only on the issue of baby milk, but in other areas as well. We encourage people to continue to be aware of the issues and to act accordingly. In our continued work on this issue we will consult with a number of groups and as a member of the Interagency Group on Breastfeeding Monitoring.'

APPENDIX 4
Briefing Paper to C&S Committee

1. General Assembly, in 1992, encouraged synods, districts and local churches to boycott the purchase of Nestlé products, because of the way in which Nestlé marketed baby milk substitutes in poorer countries, discouraging breast feeding.
2. The Methodist Church encouraged a similar boycott until 2000, when this stance was reversed. In November 2005 the Methodist Church's Joint Advisory Committee on Ethical Investment (JACEI) went further and recommended that there was sufficient recent evidence of responsiveness by Nestlé to campaign pressure and investor dialogue, to warrant engagement, and that there was no longer sufficient reason for the Methodist Church to avoid investment in Nestlé on ethical grounds. This was accepted by Methodist Conference in June 2006.
3. Our Church and Society Committee, a year ago, noted the change in the Methodist stance, but felt that the URC should continue to recommend a boycott of Nestlé products. When the Church and Society report was placed before General Assembly, one speaker asked that the Committee re-visit the issue and since then the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) has agreed that the issues should be kept under review.
4. To inform, and to offer the opportunity for further debate, I have re-produced the findings of an extensive review process undertaken by the Methodist Joint Advisory Committee on Ethical Investment which included a full day consultation in November 2004. Both Nestlé and Baby Milk Action took part and attended separately; my predecessor, Andrew Bradstock, was present as an observer. Below is the essential content of the minutes of the November 2004 meeting, followed by part of a policy statement subsequently issued by JACEI.

Minutes (edited) of meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment held to discuss the ethical suitability of Nestlé as a potential investment, held on Monday 22 November 2004.

Those present included:

Baby Milk Action: Mr Mike Brady (Campaigns Co-ordinator) and Ms Gabrielle Palmer (nutritionist based at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

Nestlé UK: Ms Hilary Parsons (Head of Corporate Affairs); Ms Beverley Mirando (Senior Policy Advisor) and Mr Sunil Sinha (Emerging Markets Economics).

Baby Milk Action's Presentation

Overview of Baby Milk Action's Position

Mr Brady began his presentation by thanking the Committee for inviting BMA to address it. He tabled a number of BMA statements and other printed background material to support BMA's case. He stated that BMA felt the consultation was a useful opportunity to try and set the record straight and bring clarity to an issue that BMA believed was deliberately muddled up by Nestlé. Indeed he accused Nestlé of 'extreme dishonesty' on the subject. He queried how much could be achieved in the short time and said BMA has proposed to Nestlé that a public tribunal be held before an independent panel of experts, over several days if necessary, where experts could be called, to ascertain the truth. Nestlé had so far rejected this idea and he invited the Methodist Church to add its voice to those calling for Nestlé to accept the

proposal. He claimed that Nestlé's strategy was to portray the issue as purely a dispute between Nestlé and Baby Milk Action. However, he believed that this was false. Baby Milk Action's role was simply to monitor and defend the International Code of Breast-Milk Substitutes and subsequent, relevant Resolutions adopted by the World Health Assembly (WHA) and that Nestlé's failure to comply can be evaluated objectively. He provided a document entitled *Nestlé and the International Code: Where do they Differ*, giving a legal analysis of the difference between Nestlé's policies and the Code and Resolutions and a letter from UNICEF's Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, to Nestlé's Chief Executive Officer, Peter Brabeck-Letmathé, setting out some of the areas where Nestlé's policies are out of step with the Code and Resolutions. All but one of the issues in the November 1997 letter remain unresolved and the one where there has been progress, the age of use on complementary foods, took a nine year international campaign before Nestlé agreed to make changes, Mr Brady explained. Mr Brady pointed out that BMA had made a complaint to the UK's Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) after Nestlé claimed in an anti-boycott advertisement that it markets infant formula 'ethically and responsibly', and in 1999 the ASA had upheld all BMA's complaints after a two-year investigation.

BMA's opinion of the Status of Code

The second area where he wanted to set the record straight related to the Code, which applies globally and has status in international law since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child – indeed, he said, the UK government has been instructed by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to implement the Code as it has so far failed to do so fully. He said it was not for Nestlé and Baby Milk Action to negotiate over interpretation of the Code; such questions were addressed by subsequent Resolutions adopted through the World Health Assembly. He quoted the text of the Code and Resolutions to show that these are a minimum requirement to be implemented in their entirety by all countries and that companies are required to abide by them independently of government measures. He noted that UNICEF is mandated under Article 11.1 of the Code to provide advice on interpretation and distributed to the panel a letter from UNICEF's Legal Officer on one disputed area, whether companies are permitted to make contact with pregnant women and mothers if this is for products other than infant formula, such as complementary foods, which Nestlé argues is the case. UNICEF said in its letter to Mr Brady that 'The prohibition is absolute'. He also aimed to refute Nestlé's repeated assertion that the Code is simply a recommendation to governments and had no authority if not implemented in national law by referring to Article 11.3 of the Code, which states:

"Independently of any other measures taken for implementation of this Code, manufacturers and distributors of products within the scope of this Code should regard themselves as responsible for monitoring their marketing practices according to the principles and aim of this Code, and for taking steps to ensure that their conduct at every level conforms to them."

Allegations of Code Breaches by Nestlé

The third point Mr Brady made was to rebut what he called, 'the intense public relations offensive' by Nestlé that they are marketing breast milk substitutes in accordance with Code. He referred to BMA's most recent monitoring report, *Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2004*. The report was published by the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), which consists of over 200 groups in more than 100 countries. Monitoring results from 69 countries are included in the report, with over 2,000 violations documented and over 700 pictures of the companies' own materials. He claimed that this report documented in detail, and with numerous examples, how Nestlé and other baby food companies were in breach of the Code and Resolutions through dubious marketing practices and idealising their products. Idealisation means suggesting that the products are equivalent or superior to breast milk, in direct

contravention of the Code. He said Nestlé was found to be responsible for more violations than any other company.

Defamatory Statements

Mr Brady pointed out that BMA had made statements about Nestlé that might be viewed as defamatory if they could not be substantiated. For example, he said: 'Nestlé does not tell the truth. This is not about misunderstandings or questions over interpretation. It is systematic and institutionalised malpractice'. He noted that the company, which he claimed was notoriously litigious, had never sued BMA for defamation over these claims. He argued that its failure to do so showed that it knew it would lose as BMA could substantiate its allegations, as had already been demonstrated before the Advertising Standards Authority.

Proper Use of Infant Formula

Ms Palmer then discussed the use of breast-milk substitutes. She noted that BMA was sometimes accused of being 'single issue' fanatics who were against the use of breast-milk substitutes under all circumstances. She pointed out that this was not true. BMA's position is that companies should abide by the International Code and Resolutions, which prohibit promotion and limit companies to providing scientific and factual information to health workers. The Code gives responsibility to health workers for advising parents and also includes labelling requirements, which are intended to benefit all mothers. The over-riding principle is that mothers have the right to make decisions on infant feeding based on correct and independent information free from commercial pressure. On the specific issue of medical need for breast-milk substitutes, she said this was over-stated as evidenced by the high breastfeeding rates in some countries. While acknowledging cultural and practical issues, she said the advantages of breast feeding were so overwhelming that breast-milk substitutes should ideally only be used in extreme cases, for example where a mother had a mastectomy and a wet-nurse could not be found or as one of the options for mothers infected with HIV. She criticised the CFB note for stating that the main problems involving breast-milk substitutes occurred in developing countries. While the CFB had been correct to state that preparation of breast-milk substitutes in conditions of poverty was a major risk to child health in these countries, she argued that the increased risk of illness for artificially-fed infants applied in all countries. She cited a study from Dundee, which demonstrated increased risk of gastro-enteritis if infants were artificially-fed rather than breastfed and commented that in countries without the same access to health care such infants would be more likely to die. She agreed with the point made in the CFB's note that breastfeeding was positive for children in all countries in terms of supplying babies with their mother's antibodies to defend against possible infections. However, she argued that the benefits of breastfeeding, even in developed countries, went far beyond that. These included: lowering a child's blood lipid level, which reduced the chances of heart attacks later in life; significant reductions in childhood allergies such as asthma; psychological benefits and lowering a mother's risk of breast cancer. With regard to developing countries, she referred to a Lancet study 'How many child deaths can we prevent this year?' which demonstrates that breastfeeding as a preventative intervention can prevent more under-5 child deaths (13%) than vaccination (7%) or provision of safe water, sanitation and hygiene (3%).

Question and Answer Session with BMA

After a brief recess, the BMA team returned for a question and answer session. The following points were discussed:

What is the Key Point at Issue?

In BMA's opinion, the key point at issue is that Nestlé is breaking the International Code of Breast Milk Substitutes and subsequent, relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly by improper practices such as marketing directly to mothers. They also accused it of opposing legislation to implement the Code nationally and at international fora such as the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which sets food standards. Mr Brady added that the main thrust of BMA's work is for the implementation of the Code and Resolutions in legislation and that where this has been achieved and enforced, violations are effectively stopped and breastfeeding rates are increasing. Elsewhere violations remain widespread. In Taiwan he accused Nestlé as being one of the companies making payments to hospitals for the right to provide free supplies of formula to mothers, a blatant violation of the Code and Resolutions. Mr. Brady commented on how Nestlé has promoted its Pelargon formula used in HIV interventions in Botswana with a pamphlet claiming that it counteracts diarrhoea, an idealizing claim that is disputed by health experts and even a member of Nestlé's own Nutrition Institute. Such claims encourage use of the formula in cases of diarrhoea.

Role for Infant Formula

BMA denied that they were a 'single-issue' pressure group whose 'hidden agenda' was to prohibit the production and sale of infant formula as such. BMA stresses that the International Code and subsequent, relevant Resolutions are intended to protect mothers who artificially feed their infants as well as to protect breastfeeding. Much of BMA's work is aimed at improving labelling and composition of baby foods. In response to recent deaths in Europe linked to Enterobacter Sakazakii contamination of powdered formula, BMA is campaigning for better warnings and instructions, which are being opposed by the industry. Mr. Brady also referred to work BMA has done with UNICEF on designing labels for infant formula used in pilot projects in Africa examining strategies for reducing mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Ms Palmer added that Nestlé often argued that increased female participation in the workforce in developing countries necessitated the use of infant formula. She stated that this was not inevitable. If breastfeeding mothers did not have access to crèche facilities and breastfeeding breaks, they could express their breast milk and store it for carers to give it to the baby as needed, even where refrigeration was not available.

HIV/AIDS

The question of nursing children whose mothers were HIV positive was discussed, noting that there was risk of transmission of the virus from mother to child via breast-milk. BMA cited the comments of UNICEF that in the context of HIV the International Code and Resolutions are more important, not less. BMA referred to Resolutions adopted by the World Health Assembly and its Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding, which say the risk of HIV transmission and the risks of artificial feeding should both be considered. If replacement feeding is feasible, this is the preferred option. If not, exclusive breastfeeding is to be preferred. Evidence from South Africa suggests exclusively breastfed infants of HIV infected mothers have no more risk of being infected than exclusively formula-fed infants. The increased risk occurs when there is mixed feeding. World Health Assembly Resolutions and the Global Strategy stress a mother should make her decision on infant feeding free from commercial pressure. The references are available on the Baby Milk Action website. (In its comments on the CFB briefing paper on the Ethical Issues Concerning the Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, and Other Ethical Issues Relating to Nestlé, BMA had taken issue over the quoting of a Wall Street Journal report which was critical of UNICEF's approach to HIV and infant feeding and said: "If you are going to refer to the Wall Street Journal article, it is recommended that to give some balance, reference should also be made to a follow-up article in the British Medical Journal 6 January 2001 'The milk of human kindness: How to make a simple morality tale out of a complex public health issue'.")

Were BMA Prejudiced Against Nestlé?

BMA denied that they were prejudiced against Nestlé. They pointed out that Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2004 criticised all the major baby food companies, with profiles on the 16 biggest. Nestlé was found to be responsible for more violations than any other company and so received special attention, being the target of an international boycott launched by groups in 20 countries. Other companies were targeted with media and letter writing campaigns.

Age of Complaints

The panel raised the point that many, perhaps the majority of the complaints in the Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2004 report were quite old. BMA disputed this. The report was published in May 2004 and the monitoring results were gathered in the period January 2002 to April 2004. Mr. Brady commented that the purpose of the monitoring report was not to fulfil Nestlé's obligations under Article 11.3 – it was the company's own responsibility to ensure its activities at every level complied with the Code and Resolutions. The monitoring report was to evaluate whether companies were fulfilling their obligations. In many cases national IBFAN groups had reported the violations already directly to Nestlé and/or the national authorities in their countries. Despite this, Nestlé head office had requested further details on many of the complaints in the report to identify where their own advertisements and materials had been placed. IBFAN had provided this (BMA left a copy of IBFAN's response with the panel). No response had since been received from Nestlé.

Technical Breaches?

The panel suggested to BMA that many of the alleged breaches were highly technical and did not constitute substantive Code breaches. BMA disagreed, saying many of the violations are blatant. Mr. Brady showed a baby grow given to mothers in Armenia. This had the Nestlé Blue Bear mascot positioned in such a way that the slogan on it reads 'I love my Nestlé mum'. Under Article 5.4 of the Code, gifts to mothers are prohibited. The 'highly technical disputes' cited in the CFB briefing paper, were not seen as such by BMA, which gave detailed comments in annotated notes attempting to address the confusion. Mr. Brady did comment that the courts are where disputes over interpretation can be tested, which is why BMA works for legislation, and that Nestlé has been successfully prosecuted. Mr. Brady commented that Nestlé Chief Executive, Peter Brabeck, claims to investigate any hint of a violation. BMA has registered violations without receiving a response or receiving an inadequate response. When Nestlé appointed an Ombudsman, BMA wrote asking for these past reports to be reviewed. No response has been received. Mr. Brady also commented that they had been unable to obtain a reply from Nestlé on where it had conducted audits of its national operations. The only audit that was publicly known took place in Pakistan, for which Nestlé contracted the company Emerging Market Economics. This was inaccurately referred to as an independent audit. When announced, BMA said it wrote to Nestlé's Head of Corporate Affairs, Hilary Parsons, offering to provide evidence to the auditors. This offer was not passed on. The auditors were instructed that they could not contact NGOs, or Syed Aamar Raza (a Nestlé whistleblower) and instead were given a list of doctors they could interview. Hilary Parsons and Nestlé Vice President, Niels Christian, visited Pakistan in advance of the audit to make preparations. The terms of reference used for the audit were Nestlé own instructions rather than the Code and Resolutions. When this was examined at a public hearing at the European Parliament in 2000, UNICEF's Legal Officer commented on some of the ways Nestlé's instructions fall short. Nestlé declined to send a representative who could respond to these issues. The BMA delegation ended their case by saying that Nestlé deliberately set out to deceive people on this issue. They felt that a good example of this was a 180-page hard-bound book that Nestlé's Chief Executive had sent out around the world, containing what Nestlé claimed were letters giving 'official verification' that Nestlé was complying with the Code. Mr. Brady

provided a briefing paper analysing the contents of the book, showing that many letters did not refer to Nestlé's marketing practices and were simply thanking the company for attending a meeting, for example. Mr. Brady said the book had become an expensive public relations disaster for the company as it had to apologise for misrepresenting some of the letters. For example, the Danish government letter simply explained how the Code and Resolutions had been implemented in Denmark and said nothing about Nestlé's policies or practices and had been used in the book without permission.

Finally Mr. Brady wished the panel luck in their meeting with Nestlé and commented that if Nestlé contradicted information he had provided then it was most likely misleading the panel and he encouraged panelists to look closely at the documentary evidence and references he had provided. He said he didn't envy the panel in trying to get to the bottom of the issue in such a limited time and said if they are confused at the end of it, perhaps they would encourage the Methodist Church to support the call for a public tribunal where the evidence could be set out until the truth of each and every issue had been resolved. He also urged the panel in their reporting of the consultation to take care not to make statements that Nestlé could use to undermine the campaign, which, he said, is helping to save lives and prevent suffering around the world, though there is still much to do.

Nestlé's Presentation

This was in three parts. Ms Parsons outlined the issues, Ms Mirando explained how Nestlé worked to market infant formula in practice, and Mr Sinha from Emerging Markets Economics described his work as an independent auditor.

History of Code and General Background

Ms Parsons described infant formula in relation to Nestlé and the history of the issue. She pointed out that Nestlé was one of the world's largest food companies. A breakdown of sales was as follows: confectionery 16%; non-alcoholic beverages 27%; ice cream 27%; other consumer products 18%; pet care 12%. Nestlé had indicated that infant formula sales were less than 2% of group turnover. She claimed that Nestlé was a leader in terms of corporate social responsibility, for example it was a founding member of the Global Compact.

History of Infant Formula Controversy

Nestlé agreed that infant formula had been directly marketed to the public on a significant scale in the 1960s and 1970s. When this was done in developing countries they accepted it had resulted in some adverse health consequences, but she argued that the food industry was not alone in regretting the way it had done business in such countries thirty to forty years ago. The issue of infant formula marketing became a hot issue in the US in the 1970s as a result of a critical report by the consumer activist group Social Audit. This was followed by global controversy, culminating in the establishment of the Global Code by the World Health Authority in 1981. Ms Parsons stressed that when renewed controversy broke out in the late 1980s, it was really confined to the UK through the activities of BMA and a few of its overseas supporters. She claimed that the issue was no longer controversial in the US, where it originally started in the 1970s, nor was it contentious in emerging markets where the problems actually occurred. It was only 'live' in the UK owing to a small but highly visible and active pressure group.

Nature of the Code

Ms Parsons ended her presentation by asserting that the legal status of the International Code of Breast Milk Substitutes was quite clear, i.e. it was a set of guidelines, and nothing more. In her opinion, it was up to the government of each country to implement it as they saw fit in accordance with their own local

situation. She noted that the US and Canada had declined to follow the Code on the grounds that their own policies were superior. She argued that this proved that the Code was not an internationally binding legal treaty, as BMA claimed. The Code was passed as a recommendation rather than a regulation and this is set out quite clearly in the Code document itself- indeed Nestlé quoted from this in the notes they sent before the meeting. From this you will see that the WHO Executive Board debated the issue of whether the Code should be a recommendation or a regulation (which is stronger) and came down in favour of a recommendation.

Role of Infant Formula in Developing Countries

Ms Miranda explained the complex role of infant formula in developing countries. She argued that in many countries it was not a simple question of choosing between breast milk and infant formula. Many women could not breast feed full time, either because of health reasons, or due to economic pressures. In these cases the carers of a young baby often had a choice between giving it infant formula, or something much worse such as nutritionally inappropriate rice water, tea, and unpasteurised goats or cows milk. She stressed that Nestlé never questioned that breast milk was better than infant formula. However, she did wish to make the point that when properly prepared infant formula was quite safe, and nutritionally designed to meet a young baby's needs. Hence she argued that if you banned infant formula, as she claimed BMA seemed to wish, you would be condemning babies to much inferior breast milk substitutes. She quoted surveys that among the poor of Bolivia, only 25% of women exclusively breastfed, of the rest only 6% used just infant formula, while the remaining 69% used water, tea, goat's milk etc. Similarly in India, only 31% of new mothers breastfed, with only 4% using just infant formula, and 65% other materials.

Female Empowerment

Ms Miranda commended the CFB note for noting the massive rise in female empowerment that had occurred in many developing countries. She argued that this was only possible because of infant formula, and if it were banned, it would put the clock back for women workers. She agreed with the CFB note that in poor agricultural societies, where the vast majority of men and women work on the land and live nearby, breastfeeding is a relatively easy option. Once women commute to work in nearby cities, leaving their babies at home with relatives to be fed on infant formula was the only practical alternative. In such communities, crèche and nursery facilities are likely to be minimal, whilst maternity leave legislation often does not exist. She also stated that 600,000 women each year are unable to breastfeed.

Infant Formula Marketing in Developing Countries

Ms Miranda concluded by claiming that Nestlé was scrupulous about abiding by the Code. This meant no public promotions or advertising leaflets aimed at the public, no free samples were given to mothers. The company even adopted a restrictive policy on the provision of free formula for evaluation by health professionals, who were only allowed a couple of samples during their professional lifetime. In other words, communication to mothers about infant formula in developing countries was left completely up to health professionals. She ended her part of the presentation by speaking on a personal note for a moment. Speaking as a Sri Lankan woman, she felt that it was up to developing countries themselves to decide how infant formula should be marketed in their country. She argued that there was no pressure whatsoever coming from either health professionals or governments in emerging markets to ban infant formula, and she regretted the arrogance of BMA, a small UK pressure group, telling them what to do.

Auditing and Supervision

Mr Sinha from Emerging Markets Economics described the auditing and management methods used by Nestlé to ensure that it was in compliance with the Code. He stressed that he was not a Nestlé employee, but an independent auditor brought in when required. He said that the importance of infant formula marketing to Nestlé was demonstrated by the fact that the group Chief Executive, Peter Brabeck, personally supervised it. All reports of Code violations were sent to his office for assessment. Nestlé was a tightly run company, which operated its business using 150 Quality Assurance metrics. Exactly the same principles were adopted to manage and monitor infant formula sales. Nestlé was now rolling out in Africa a new management system for infant formula sales based upon ISO 9000, the global standard for checking and controlling subsidiary procedure. Nestlé carried out annual audits on Code compliance with a sample of Nestlé companies each year. The company also investigated any substantial claim of Code violation made by external groups such as BMA. Thus a Head Office team at Vevey had exhaustively gone through the BMA report Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2004. It was rare for Nestlé to discover evidence that its staff had deliberately violated the Code, but if evidence of this were found, the staff concerned would suffer disciplinary action. He added that BMA's claims about improper marketing in Thailand had been investigated and found to be groundless. Although some supplies had been given to mothers, this had been done by retailers, and definitely not by Nestlé. He did accept that there had been some problems with Nestlé Pakistan, but argued that the company was working hard to put them right.

Question and Answer Session with Nestlé

After a brief recess, the Nestlé team returned for a question and answer session. The following points were discussed:

Having a Good Policy on the Code Was One Thing, but How Did Nestlé Ensure Compliance?

Ms Parson agreed that anybody could have a policy, but making sure that it worked 'in the field' was much harder. Nestlé ensured that all employees either newly recruited into its infant formula marketing department, or transferred from other areas of the company, were fully trained about the Code and the importance of abiding by it. They were all given, and tested upon, 'Nestlé's Core Business Principles'. At a more senior level, Code compliance was a feature of every infant formula manager's annual review, i.e. it would affect both his annual bonus and his chances for promotion.

How Independent Was EME?

EME is a global economics consultancy specialising in developing countries. It is used by a wide range of international bodies such as the OECD and DFID. Nestlé only accounts for between 2% and 3% of turnover

Explain the Marketing Claim that Perlagon (Infant Formula) Combats Diarrhoea?

Nestlé itself has never marketed Perlagon on the basis that it combats diarrhoea. Some governments have publicised the fact that Perlagon's infant formula is better than some other infant feeds in this respect, but it certainly is not an anti-diarrhoea medicine.

Why Doesn't Nestlé Sue Baby Milk Action?

They replied that the history of large corporates suing NGOs showed this to be a disastrous strategy. [Presumably they were thinking of McDonalds.] In their opinion, no matter how objectionable the

accusations, they had to 'grin and bear it', as legal action only gave the NGO the additional publicity they craved.

JACEI Statement on Nestle November 2005

1. Preamble

1.1 In July 2002 the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment (JACEI) initiated a review process in order to help it advise the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church(CFB) on the ethical suitability of holding shares in Nestlé. This culminated in November 2004 with a full day consultation in which both Nestlé and Baby Milk Action agreed to take part.

1.2 In preparation, the CFB produced a major briefing paper that addressed the ethical issues concerning Nestlé with particular emphasis on breast-milk substitutes. Nestlé and Baby Milk Action both responded in writing to the briefing paper and answered a related questionnaire.

1.3 An advisory panel was convened consisting of members of JACEI and JACEI's Staff Preparation Group. An independent nutritional expert and an observer from the United Reformed Church were in attendance. In the morning, Baby Milk Action made a presentation to the panel. They then withdrew whilst the panel had a private discussion before returning for a question and answer session. The format was repeated with Nestlé in the afternoon. The day concluded with the panel holding a private discussion. Baby Milk Action and Nestlé were sent draft minutes and each party agreed the minutes of their part of the meeting.

1.4 The JACEI Chair concluded the consultation by reminding the panel that the objective of JACEI was not to rule on the subject of breast milk substitutes, but to advise the CFB on whether it felt that Nestlé was an acceptable investment on ethical grounds.

2. Application of Food Safety Policy Statement and Other Ethical Precedents

2.1 Breast milk substitutes have an important life-saving role in certain circumstances. This would indicate that these products are not inherently unethical and therefore an exclusion policy based on their manufacture and sale is not appropriate.

2.2 Nestlé state that infant and follow-on formula represent around 2% of the company's total business. Even if breast milk substitutes were considered inherently unethical, precedent would indicate that they would need to be considered in a worse light than tobacco for an exclusion policy to be justified.

2.3 The marketing of breast milk substitutes in developing countries has attracted particular criticism and calls into question the ethical acceptability of the company.

2.4 There have been regular allegations of violations of the WHO Code over a number of years. Nestle has introduced measures aimed at reducing the incidence of such breaches. In JACEI's view this has resulted in progress in reducing the more serious breaches of the Code.

2.5 The CFB must not apply different standards to Nestlé than it would to other companies. The CFB owns shares in other multinational companies that may breach codes of conduct, environmental or other regulatory standards from time to time. For exclusion to be appropriate, violations in relation to breast milk substitutes would need to be considered worse than other code or regulatory violations. Alternatively, the CFB policy in relation to such violations may need to be hardened.

2.6 There are other ethical issues in relation to the company's behaviour that need to be considered. These include, disputes with local communities over water, allegations of human rights abuses in Colombia, legal action initiated by the company in Ethiopia and fair trade. Taken in isolation each issue would seem to indicate active dialogue with the company (engagement) rather than avoiding it as a possible investment (exclusion).

2.7 Although no single issue may warrant exclusion, the possibility that this may still be an appropriate response when they are aggregated must be considered.

3. General Principles

3.1. There are occasions when the appropriate response to an ethical issue is to disinvest from or avoid investment in the company involved.

3.2. There are other occasions when the appropriate response to an ethical issue is to engage with the company in expectation that concerns will be heard and appropriate changes will be instigated.

3.3. The behaviour of some companies regardless of the business in which they are engaged may be considered incompatible with Methodist aims and values. If, when challenged, there appears no prospect that such companies will alter their behaviour then investment would be ethically inappropriate.

3.4. JACEI has a policy statement entitled *Ethical Issues Relating to the Food Industry*. It has applied this policy to Nestlé and it will inform JACEI's continuing assessment of the company.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. There are some products whose manufacture and sale may be considered incompatible with Methodist aims and values. The opinion of JACEI is that breast milk substitutes manufactured and sold by Nestlé do not fit into this category.

4.2. There is sufficient recent evidence of responsiveness from Nestlé to campaign pressure and investor dialogue to make engagement an appropriate approach for the CFB.

4.3. Based on the information received and the three year evaluation process, JACEI advises the CFB that there are presently insufficient reasons to avoid an investment in Nestlé on ethical grounds. JACEI makes the following recommendations:

- the CFB should seek a meeting with the chief executive of Nestlé to discuss the ongoing response of the company to the areas of ethical concern;
- the CFB should seek an annual meeting with senior company executives to discuss outstanding ethical issues;
- the CFB should continue to monitor closely Nestlé's ethical performance, not only with regard to alleged WHO Code violations, but also its support for fairly traded products, provision of safe and fair working conditions for workers; use of food advertisements aimed at children and other ethical issues as they arise.
- the Methodist Church should continue to listen to the views of other groups with particular knowledge of areas of potential concern.

APPENDIX 5

CHURCH INVESTORS GROUP

NESTLÉ: MEETING NOTE

4 December 2009 at CCLA Investment Management Ltd

Niels Christiansen	Vice President Nestlé SA
Ian Rayson	Director of Communications & Corporate Affairs, Nestlé UK
Sam Fulton	Head of Public Affairs, Nestlé UK
Zelda Wilson	Corporate Healthcare Relations Manager, Nestlé UK

Bill Seddon	Chief Executive, CFB Methodist Church (Chair)
Russell Sparkes	CFB Methodist Church
Steve Hucklesby	Methodist Church, Connexional Team
Keith Aldred	Methodist Church Ethics Advisory Committee
Chris Moorhouse	Methodist Church Ethics Advisory Committee
Richard Nunn	United Reformed Church
Rev Val Morrison	United Reformed Church
Linda Mead	United Reformed Church
Simon Loveitt	United Reformed Church
John Ellis	United Reformed Church
Rev Martin Poole	Baptist Union of Great Britain
Edward Mason	Church of England, Ethical Investment Advisory Group
Deborah Fisher	Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth
Paul Scola	Roman Catholic Diocese of Nottingham
Stephen Power SJ	The Society of Jesus
Sr. Daphne Norden	Medical Mission Sisters
Christine Davis	Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
Neville White	CCLA Investment Management Ltd & CIG Secretary

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and thanked Nestlé for their time; the meeting was an important opportunity to learn more about the infant formula business, to listen to, and question in depth Nestlé's approach to implementing the WHO Code, and, more widely, to hear about other issues pertinent to the sustainability and health and well-being agenda of a trans-national food company.

Mr Christiansen (NC) prefaced his introduction with some background information on his career working in Colombia on nutrition programmes, and his personal commitment and interest in issues touching malnutrition. He said that working with faith investors was an important part of Nestlé's engagement, and noted that US churches had recommended an end to the boycott in 1984. The infant or baby milk business, the founding product of the Nestlé corporation, now makes up just 2% of global sales. The Group is operational in some 84 countries with revenues of CHF110bn (2008). Half of all production is located in the developing world. Nutrition, Health and Well-being is now the company focus across its brand ranges. The Group's philosophy of slow but steady growth has seen it positively avoid a listing in New York as quarterly filings would be required; a time scale considered too frequent for its overall philosophy of creating value for shareholders over the long-term, coupled with value for society. In the

UK, Nestlé has had a presence since 1868, and, with 70 brands, is one of the best performing markets. Coffee and confectionery businesses constitute the major product areas (the UK is a major exporter of the former to Europe).

Globally Nestlé's business units are subdivided into: milk products and ice cream (19%); meals, bouillons and soups (19%); coffee and other beverages (18%); confectionery (12%); pet-care (12%); waters (11%) and nutrition (9%).

Infant Formula

Henri Nestlé introduced his revolutionary infant formula in 1867 as a life saving product for the elderly, infirm and infants where there were digestive or health problems; this was the only product for the first 40 years of Nestlé's corporate life. It provided a balanced and nutritional alternative to a range of solids for those target groups. The WHO Code of 1981 stresses infant formula as the *only* suitable alternative to breast milk in circumstances when breast milk is unavailable, but it mandates that "all things being equal" breast is best. It replaces dangerous breast milk alternatives such as rice water, sugar water and whole cow's milk. The Code introduced a series of guidelines for manufacturers to abide by that would promote the WHO message of natural feeding. Nestlé was the first company to apply the Code in developing countries, and to go beyond national standards where these were weaker than the Code. As a result, Nestlé has lost market share to rivals (especially in some Asian markets) from c40% in the 1980s to c23% now (it is still marginally the Global No 1 – but only by c1%). Nestlé's business works best in jurisdictions where there are tough local regulations, e.g. Brazil, South Africa, and India. Where there is poor enforcement e.g. Thailand and China, Nestlé has lost market share by implementing the Code provisions more stringently than local rivals.

Nestlé's WHO Code Management system at a policy level rests with the CEO, but Code provisions are translated into operational instructions for staff in the field, and these are publicly available. Training and testing of staff are part of the operational management system, and remuneration for relevant personnel is to an extent linked to delivering compliance with the Code.

The company applies a "pyramid" approach of (from the top down) policies; procedures; work instructions; training and measuring/monitoring. As well as applying the specific Code elements e.g. no free samples or marketing and labelling restrictions, the company investigates all breaches raised by IBFAN (the International Baby Food Action Network) and employs an internal whistle-blowing procedure to alert management to potential or actual breaches.

There is a detailed internal audit process covering c9-20 countries per year, with findings and/or violations reported to the CEO and senior management, and corrective action additionally to the Audit Committee. External country audits are undertaken by *Bureau Veritas* on a rolling basis covering every aspect of the Code – BV selects countries for audit based on a selection provided by the company with the intention of auditing all high-risk countries as part of a rolling programme of audits. 20 countries per year are generally audited; violations are brought to the attention of senior management and the CEO. BV has assessed that "*there are no systemic shortfalls in the implementation of Nestlé's instructions*". There has also been country certification, Malaysia, for instance, has affirmed that Nestlé was the only manufacturer in compliance with the Code. IBFAN in its latest submission brought 85 allegations of breaches in the developed world and 84 in the developing world markets of Africa, Asia and South America. Of the 85, two were found to be genuine breaches when investigated, and of the 84, seven were found to be valid, largely concerned with labelling; all have been corrected. There were no valid breaches connected to marketing.

Of those not upheld as valid the issues related to non-breast milk substitutes (i.e. products relating to 6 months+), scientific or medical information to health care workers, items not viewed as constituting a financial inducement given to health workers (e.g. pens and calendars) and other unsubstantiated issues not in Nestlé's control (e.g. retail outlets).

Nestlé argued that objective and impartial "level playing field" regulation is needed which covers all companies and requires active investigation, reporting and remediation.

Nestlé provided an additional example of the company's contribution towards child nutrition, via products that are designed to foster a balanced diet from an early age (this contributes to UN Millennium Development Goal 4, which aims to reduce the prevalence of underweight 0-5 year olds from 34% to 17% by 2015). In the Philippines, for example, there is a dramatic increase in underweight-for-age children after the first year, and a similar increase in "stunting" in children aged 1+. This is linked to a significant drop in milk intake after 12 months with more than half of children aged 1-5 in the Philippines having insufficient milk in their diet. Nestlé's fortified milk products (e.g. NIDO) are specifically formulated for "at risk" countries to provide, an affordable contribution towards the well-being of young children.

Creating Shared Value

NC touched on Nestlé's approach to business, known as *Creating Shared Value*, which centres on doing business in a sustainable way with a particular focus on nutrition, rural development and water. This includes the strong emphasis within the product range of health, well being and tackling obesity. Nestlé is also powerfully focused on reducing and managing water use. Whilst production had increased 80% in the period 1998-2007, Nestlé had cut water consumption by c58% per tonne of product over the same period, and calculated per tonne of product. The Nestlé Water Management Report can be accessed at: www.nestle.com/Resource.axd?Id=F7879D21-0C3F-4099-AF79-6BA10BF5A5B4

Nutrition related sales had now reached CHF10.4bn.

A global food business is at the heart of local agriculture, and Nestlé works with farmers to improve husbandry and yield – over 600,000 farmers supply into Nestlé globally, with 111,800 benefiting from training and skills enhancement in 21 countries; a commitment has been made to extend this to a further 130,000 coffee and cocoa farmers over the next ten years. A new commitment on cocoa was about to be announced in which KitKat in the UK (initially the four finger version) would be certified Fair Trade from January (impacting 6,000 farmers). The global Cocoa Plan represents an investment of £65m over ten years that will directly improve the livelihoods of farmers in Cote d'Ivoire, from where the majority is sourced, by investing in improved husbandry, plant science, and technological know-how.

Finally, reputation was touched on remarking that in many developing markets Nestlé achieves high ratings for trust and reputation for its contribution to society, which is in marked contrast to developed markets where it can be very low (such as the UK). The example of the Philippines where a 77% positive rating has been achieved, compared to the UK of -1% was highlighted.

Q&A

There was a lengthy and detailed Q&A session following the presentation:

- *how does the company go about investigating allegations to achieve objectivity?* The external audit process plus cross validation via thorough investigation on the ground is seen as the best way to understand the nature of any breach, and if substantiated, putting it right.

- *one delegate asked about infant formula being sold "made up" rather than in powder form given the problems of insanitary water.* In some markets infant formula is sold as a solid (e.g. the US), but this adds significantly to costs. Insanitary water is an endemic problem, but general advice is issued to boil water before use. Nestlé has contributed to clean well projects, in partnership with organisations such as the Red Cross in some markets (e.g. Rwanda) which has helped. Globally there has been some improvement in sanitation, but it remains a systemic problem.

- *it was noted that other food companies' reputational ratings were generally stronger than Nestlé's in markets like the UK. What was the reason for this?* Infant formula issues remain a strong delineator in the UK, but not elsewhere on the whole. The sticking point, given the rigour with which the Code is applied, is that infant formula is not viewed as a legitimate alternative in some quarters, and so criticism continues. IBFAN fundraising to some extent relies on maintaining a continued scepticism of infant formula in general, and highly critical of Nestlé in particular.

- *Nestlé was asked if the UN Special Rapporteur had been involved in the debate on breast milk substitutes?* The Code was a recommendation passed by the WHA in 1981. Every two years WHO files a report on how the Code is being applied globally, however the Special Rapporteur is not involved to their knowledge.

- *one delegate commenting on the presentation remarked that in her opinion the South African website contained some marketing material which could be construed as in breach of the Code, and asked for clarification.* NC said this would be looked at, but had no specific knowledge of the detail.

- *Nestlé was asked for its views on infant formula and HIV/AIDS.* Nestlé will sell infant formula at cost to HIV organisations, turning down a request by the WHO to provide supplies free to agencies working with orphan infants because they did not want to be accused of breaching the Code by providing free samples, even though the request had come directly from the WHO.

- *the URC delegates indicated they would be having a process to review their stance on Nestlé and asked from the company's perspective whether engagement ever worked?* Very positive benefits had been achieved from dialogue and engagement with a variety of parties, and they would be very willing to engage with the URC as part of their process.

- *there was much discussion and comment on the cocoa project and the welcome development of fair trade products being available.* Nestlé's commitment to Cote d'Ivoire was strong, but ensuring a sustainable supply, whilst improving farming standards had been challenging. Trafficking of children was potentially still a problem from neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso, but the company works with anti-slavery NGOs and sees improved education and livelihoods as the major win-win over time. The Partners Blend coffee, launched in the UK, is now available in 10 countries and is also Fairtrade certified.

- it was noted that FTSE4Good criteria on infant formula were changing and would they wish to engage with FTSE in meeting the new criteria? NW explained that these had been worked on by the expert sub-committee after FTSE had recognised the bar had been set too high by excluding all manufacturers. They were developing thinking around high-risk and low-risk countries. NC confirmed he would want to talk to FTSE4Good about the new criteria, and would take this forward.

- one delegate representing both the Methodist Church (which had had an engagement and policy change process, and the URC, which was commencing one), noted that, in his view the Methodist change in policy had been used by the company and misrepresented them. Could Nestlé provide assurances that any decision the URC makes will not be similarly misused? NC gave assurances that it is not in the company's interest to misrepresent the views of investors or to capitalise on a policy shift. If that had happened, it was regrettable and would be looked into. Nestlé is keen to inform the URC process with the facts as part of a constructive engagement process, but would not seek to promote any decision in the company's own public relations interests.

- Nestlé was asked how it was responding to climate change? The company's main focus is on water management and improving efficiency to reduce emissions. Water will be a focus for drought, conflict and migration unless the world manages supply more equitably and efficiently. In terms of food, Nestlé among others is at the forefront of thinking how the planet can feed and sustain a likely population of 9bn by 2050.

- and on child obesity? Nestlé is part of a coalition that has made five commitments to the WHO on child obesity, including sugar reduction, the availability of fruit juices and waters in schools in preference to sugar drinks and reducing consumption of sugary products.

- finally one delegate asked NC what, in his view, were the most significant changes within the company towards this issue over the time he has been involved with it? Undoubtedly, the clear articulation of transparent and straightforward policies to prevent Code breaches in the first place, the tracking and monitoring of infant formula supplies (there had historically been inadequate inventory management, which had compounded breaches via the issue of complimentary gifts), quality assurance, audit and reporting.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm, and Nestlé was thanked by the Chair for the open and candid manner in which the debate that been held. He said that members of the CIG greatly appreciated the opportunity to hold the meeting. In turn Nestlé thanked the CIG for being able to engage with the churches in such detail.

APPENDIX 6
Responses from URC Representatives

Richard Nunn

- 1 They look like a company which tries to obey the rules and have a tight culture of not wanting to be caught breaking them. They have been around 140 years and were the developers of the first viable breast milk substitute for children who would otherwise have died. The average term of employment is high suggesting a strong corporate culture and an unwillingness to upset the apple cart.
- 2 Their growth pattern is modest -GROW SLOW-getting the nutrition right to ensure that older children (over 6 months) get proper nutrition rather than rice water or cow's milk. In many parts of the world after breast milk stops, the popular alternative is *Tang* an orange flavoured sugar drink which has little, if any, nutritional value.
- 3 They have tried to work with BMA and IBFAN and had all overtures rejected. In Philippines they were told that dialogue was impossible as this would undermine UK funding of IBFAN which is based upon targeting Nestle - the world's largest food producer. CCLA have found BMA impossible to talk to constructively.
- 4 They don't like long lists of alleged compliance failures which go back several years. If there is a problem they would like to know about it immediately so that any corrective action can be taken quickly .
- 5 It doesn't look as though the two NGOs are interested in resolving issues merely throwing mud. Most of the accusations are quite old and suggest implicit failures rather than actual abuses of the codes.
- 6 It looks as though BMA have pushed some interpretations of the code to the limit in order to create a story and generate funding.
- 7 Many of problems quoted have little or nothing to do with Nestle. They are commercially most successful in highly regulated environments. Other manufacturers who have far worse credentials get away with abusing the systems
- 8 They are the only company that has fully signed up to the WHO code. This has decimated their market share in China where non compliance by competitors is rife
- 9 They seem active in developed world to build good relations with the local communities - sourcing locally, creating jobs in manufacturing units, looking after the environment (clean water resources) and have high public appreciation levels in those countries. In UK the overall appreciation level is negative!
- 10 Their carbon and packaging reduction record is impressive
- 11 All bulk supplies like bottled water are sourced locally to reduce transport issues (and cost)
- 12 They DO NOT donate BMS to hospitals anywhere in the world to avoid it being passed out gratuitously to young mothers
- 13 They do not offer a BMS product in the UK 12. In 1984 American Churches recognised the good work being done by Nestle and lifted their ban . BMA action in UK caused UK to implement ban in early 90s
- 14 Between 1984 and 1997 Nestle had a high level of frustration in that we were only listening to BMA. This meant that Nestle almost gave up trying to get positive message over. In that time there was no issue of BMS and Nestle mentioned in the US whatsoever suggesting propaganda was focussed on UK

- 15 They are heavy investors in the UK and support many employees generate considerable export earnings .
- 16 They want to be involved in FTSE4Good and with their culture they will readily comply.
- 17 They are heavily involved in many worldwide bodies supporting and encouraging child health
- 18 Since 1992 - they have increased internal audits of their operations, introduced new systems including reward which penalizes employees non compliance (including sackings), added social auditing to ensure there is no adverse local impact of their operations.
- 19 In conjunction with John Sentamu they have sought and started a Fairtrade initiative in the Ivory Coast which will lead to the launch of a Fairtrade Kit Kat in January . This will become wholly Fairtrade when supplies build up. Ivory Coast is a more challenging environment where heavy investment has been committed to help the cooperatives generate sufficient cocoa.
- 20 They are very keen to keep talking to us and would address Mission Council if we want them to do so.
- 21 Overview - As a very large company I'm sure that their attitude to being audited by others was a challenge in the 70s, 80s and 90s and the NGO criticisms made them over sensitive and defensive. This has changed and they are far more open to external overviews and will work with others who want to deal with them constructively. My impression is that Nestle are far closer to the ideal 'Ethical Company' than many in which we invest. I am sure that Joseph Rowntree Trust and the Baptists are now seriously thinking about their position. I doubt that anyone could be more open in their intentions than Nestle. If we agree to drop the embargo I am sure that they will respect our desire that they do not exploit it for marketing purposes. We could make this a specific requirement.

John Ellis

- 1 To my mind there is now no logical or just argument for treating Nestle as the worst company in the world, which is the effect of having it as the one and only company the URC will not invest in on grounds of its behaviour as opposed to on grounds of its products. The meeting on Friday showed that they have moved on from when they shunned engagement and they are now willing to engage with investors and gave us evidence of the way that form of pressure has influenced them.
- 2 Therefore I favour a reasoned recommendation to end the outdated boycott to come to both the EIAG and Mission Committee in January, with a view to a joint recommendation to March Mission Council for General Assembly. It would stress the importance of active engagement through CIG etc. It might take up Nestlé's offer to attend e.g. . . Mission Council to answer questions.

Simon Loveitt

Based on the discussions at this meeting I would support the decision that the URC review its decision to boycott Nestlé products based on the fact that there has been a significant improvement in the way that they advertise and market breast-milk substitutes (which is the specific issue which the initial decision to boycott Nestlé was based on).

Val Morrison

- 1 They have clearly moved on from where they were when Assembly passed the original resolution and from that point of view I think we have a good reason for lifting the boycott. I confess to having an inbuilt suspicion of organisations which are wealthy and powerful and know that it is quite

possible to tell a good story which is in fact full of holes. For instance when asked about their plans to increase their fair-trade coffee range the response was to say that they would when 'consumers demanded it' and I wonder what pressure we might be able to bring to bear on such matters as a result of/as a part of our changing our policies.

- 2 As far as the Baby Milk issue is concerned I think we can probably feel reasonably comfortable with bringing a resolution to lift the boycott, as far as investments are concerned this would presumably then put them into the same place as other multi-nationals and maybe the fair trade issue is bound up with all the other fair trade issues with all the large companies concerned rather than singling out this one.

Linda Mead

Carole Elphick, who is a URC minister wrote this. I feel this needs to be included in our summary as it will be typical of many - indeed it reflects my own views. It is a good step forward but is it enough?

Having spent years and years boycotting Nestle, encouraging congregations in my charge to do the same, educating people about the strategies of the baby milk companies, disagreeing strongly with organisations in our own church and in others who revoked their participation in the boycott (to my mind entirely prematurely) and therefore being deprived of (amongst other things) Kit Kat, my heart leapt this morning when I saw the new packaging.

BUT my memories of the ways Nestle were promoting baby milk in Bangladesh when I was there, the ways they are still pushing it in parts of India and in poor areas in particular suggest that sticking a new label on that shows a few thousand farmers are being helped is not going to cut it.

Hooray for the progress we have made over the years in getting Fairtrade issues to the forefront of the public mind and into the shops (and do not be shy about taking some of the credit). Hooray for the fact that increasingly large numbers of farmers in the Two Thirds World ARE being helped and are now paid a fair price for their produce. But do not be deceived into thinking that the baby milk issue is solved by this small change of heart by a company that has ducked and dived over its advertising policies for baby milk over many years and it appears will continue to promote itself to people at their most vulnerable just so long as there is profit to be made..

APPENDIX 7
Ethical investment principles for the use of
The United Reformed Church

(DRAFT)

1. The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church (URC) considers investment decisions to be an integral part of the Church's mission and witness and is committed, as far as it is legal and practical, to expressing Christian responsibility through investment decisions. Towards this end, Assembly requests that those responsible for investment decisions on behalf of the URC and its Trust bodies are guided by the principles set out below.
2. Assembly wishes the basic, aspirational ethical principles outlined below to inform all investment decisions:
 - Mission integrity – the URC will, in all investment related activity, aim to avoid undermining the credibility, effectiveness and unity of its mission and witness.
 - Stewardship – those entrusted with responsibility for investment decisions on behalf of the URC, its Trust bodies and their agents will exercise due diligence and care in the exercise of their duty to ensure that mission and fiduciary responsibilities are creatively and effectively balanced.
 - Legality - all investment decisions will comply with the legal requirements for trustees as outlined in the Charity Acts and other legislation.
 - Sustainability – investment decisions will be guided by the principle of financial and environmental sustainability with a view to the long term maintenance of well-being for the economic, social and natural environments.
 - Solidarity – investment decisions will be guided by the Biblical principle of solidarity with those who are poor and marginalised and seek social justice as expressed in Statement 9 of the URC's Mission framework.¹
 - Accountability – URC trustees, working in liaison with fund managers, will ensure the highest level of compliance with this policy which can be achieved.
 - Transparency – reputational risk will be minimised by ensuring openness and transparency in reporting on URC investment portfolios and compliance with this policy.
 - Partnership – the URC recognises the value of collaborative action in terms of effecting change in companies' policies and practices and commits to working with the other members of the Church Investors Group (CIG), the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) and other ecumenical agencies to engage with companies and, where relevant, to act in support of their initiatives.
3. Expression will be given to these principles through both negative and positive screening of companies as well as through selective direct engagement with companies. Each of these investment strategies is outlined below and should be considered as part of an integral approach to ethical investment by the URC.
4. The existing URC Ethical Investment policy will be developed to guide our investments in terms of negative screening. This policy states:

'General Assembly recommends that trustees and all those with investment responsibilities connected with the United Reformed Church should avoid any investment in:

¹ See p.22 of the *Vision 2020 – planning for growth in the URC* booklet for details - http://www.urc.org.uk/what_we_do/mission/images/vision2020_booklet_colour.pdf

- a) Companies directly engaged in the manufacture or supply of weapons of destruction;
- b) Companies a significant part of whose business is in the supply of alcoholic drinks or tobacco products or military equipment (other than weapons of destruction); or the provision of gambling facilities; or the publication or distribution of pornography.

General Assembly notes that the definition of these activities, or of what constitutes a significant part of a company's business, requires judgement and the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) of Mission Council is available to offer advice. In general, EIAG will deem "significant" to mean where the share of turnover derived from the activity concerned is more than around 10-20% of the company's total turnover.

General Assembly recognises that this policy can only be advisory as the responsibility of specific investment decisions remains with each body of trustees.'

However, in addition to the criteria listed above, the URC's investment bodies reserve the right to avoid investment in companies whose management practices are deemed to be unacceptable or whose operations are deemed to:

- contribute to the oppressive nature of regimes who are guilty of gross human rights violations;
- contribute to the systematic or harmful impact on the social or natural environment;
- harm the society in which they operate more than they benefit;
- promote injustice.

5. Positive screening and 'best in class/sector' strategy – URC trustees are encouraged to support companies that seek to develop their businesses successfully and sustainably in the long term interests of shareholders and other stakeholders. The URC will seek to invest in companies which have an active commitment to the following:
- responsible employment practices;
 - equal opportunities policy and practice;
 - good practice in terms of corporate governance;
 - environmental sustainability expressed by comprehensive environmental and climate change policies and audits;
 - positive attitudes to customers and active monitoring of employment practices across the supply chain;
 - openness in reporting to stakeholders;
 - sensitivity towards communities in which they operate;
 - integrity in all their dealings; and
 - the promotion of human rights, especially in countries with oppressive regimes.
6. Engagement and dialogue with companies – the URC endorses the strategy of direct engagement with companies through correspondence, face-to-face meetings and shareholders' attendance at AGMs as a means of influencing the practices of these companies. This is based on an understanding of the theological and moral duty to monitor the policies and practices of companies in which a URC body is a shareholder and to raise concerns with a company if not fully satisfied with its business. Such practice should only take place when there is a realistic possibility of change taking place as a result of URC investment and, to that effect, will normally be done in conjunction with partners and on the advice of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG).

7. Mission-related and social (or socially directed investment) – in addition to the positive screening, the URC would also support the strategy of mission related or social investment which seeks to generate a social as well as a financial return. In light of the newly developed mission strategy of the URC,² we believe we have an obligation to demonstrate our commitment to economic, environmental and social justice through our investments. The following investments have considerable overlap with ethical investment portfolios when considering market rate investments and include:
- community land and reinvestment trusts;
 - ecological building projects;
 - organic food and fair trade initiatives; and
 - micro-credit based social development programmes.
- In supporting any such initiative the URC Trust Bodies should be satisfied that effective governance monitoring is in place³
8. Project or socially-directed investment – in addition to the positive screening, the URC will continue to set aside a proportion of its capital for investment where the return is principally social rather than financial. This echoes the Church's mission strategy.⁴ The following social investments have considerable overlap with ethical investment portfolios and may sometimes offer market rate investments:
- community land and reinvestment trusts;
 - ecological building projects;
 - organic food and fair trade initiatives; and
 - micro-credit based social development programmes.
- In supporting any such initiative, URC Trust bodies should be satisfied that effective governance monitoring is in place.⁵
9. Disinvestment – as a last resort, the URC will consider selling its shares in a company on ethical grounds in cases where a company fails to amend its operating policies and practices after engagement and dialogue over an extended period of time. Such action will generally be taken in conjunction with ecumenical partners through the CIG (or similar body) based on advice from the EIAG. However, such decisions will be subject to periodic review in the light of these principles to maintain the integrity and credibility of the policy.
10. Monitoring of policy – The monitoring of these principles on behalf of the URC is principally the task of Mission Council's Ethical Investment Advisory Group. EIAG is required to report on issues of concern and develop policy statements on various issues related to ethical investment as necessary. However, every investment body and officer within the URC family (whether at Assembly, Synod or local church level) needs to share in this responsibility to ensure the Church retains its mission integrity.

² See *Vision 2020 – planning for growth in the URC* at

http://www.urc.org.uk/what_we_do/mission/images/vision2020_booklet_colour.pdf

³ Cited in EIRIS/UKSIF Charity Project, *Responsible Investment Approaches to Non-Equity Investments: An Introduction for Charity Trustees*, 2006, www.charityysri.org

⁴ See *Vision 2020 – planning for growth in the URC* at

http://www.urc.org.uk/what_we_do/mission/images/vision2020_booklet_colour.pdf

⁵ Cited in EIRIS/UKSIF Charity Project, *Responsible Investment Approaches to Non-Equity Investments: An Introduction for Charity Trustees*, 2006, www.charityysri.org

Mission Council:

- (i) welcomes the statement of principles for the use of the United Reformed Church in making investment decisions;**
- (ii) requests an investment policy statement based on these principles be drawn up for the use of investment managers;**
- (iii) resolves to recommend to the 2010 General Assembly a report of this work for endorsement.**

February 2010

APPENDIX 8

Draft FTSE4Good Inclusion Criteria for the Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes

Risk Categories

HIGH RISK COUNTRIES

A number of countries will be considered as "High Risk" in terms of levels of infant mortality and morbidity. Countries will be considered as "High Risk" if they meet either of the following criteria:

- More than 10 per 1000 under 5 mortality rate
- More than 2% acute malnutrition (moderate and severe wasting) in under-5s

NOTE: the FTSE4Good BMS Committee wanted to get wider detailed stakeholder input ideally including from WHO, on sense checking the above and wanted to get a final FTSE proposal with the details on which countries would fall either side of the threshold.

LOW RISK COUNTRIES

All other countries will be considered "Low risk".

Criteria Requirements

POLICY CRITERIA

Company policy should include:

1. Acknowledgement of the importance of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, and subsequent relevant WHA resolutions⁶, hereafter referred to as "the Code"⁷.
2. Naming the person responsible at Corporate Executive Board level or Executive Management level and at the individual country level for the implementation and monitoring of the policy.
3. Acknowledgment that, independently of any other measures taken by governments to implement the Code, manufacturers are responsible for monitoring their marketing practices according to the principles and aim of the Code, and for taking steps to ensure that their conduct at every level conforms to their policy in this regard.

Additional Policy Criteria with Regards to Company Operations in High Risk Countries:

⁶ The subsequent resolutions are; WHA 39.28 (1986), WHA 45.34 (1992), WHA 47.5 (1994) WHA 49.15 (1996), WHA 54.2 (2001), WHA 55.25 (2002)

⁷ These are all found on http://www.who.int/nut/documents/code_english

4. Acknowledgment that the adoption and adherence to the Code is a minimum requirement for these countries and where national legislation or regulations implementing the Code are more demanding than the Code, the company will follow the national measures in addition to the Code.
5. Explicit confirmation that there will be no advertising or promotion of infant formula, follow-on-formula products, or delivery products (i.e. teats and bottles) in these countries.
6. Explicit confirmation that complementary (weaning) foods and drinks will not be promoted for the use of infants under the age of six months in these countries.

Additional Policy Criteria with Regards to Company Operations in Low Risk Countries:

7. Commitment to follow all national regulations in relation to the marketing and promotion of breast milk substitutes.

Note that these requirements for low risk country operations will be reviewed by the FTSE4Good BMS Committee within a period of 5 years for revisions to bring them, over time, in-line with high risk requirements.

CORPORATE PUBLIC POLICY AND LOBBYING OF REGULATORS

Companies have a valid and important role in the development of effective and appropriate legislation. They should have clear, openly-stated and enforceable policies on the objectives and practice of their political lobbying regarding government's implementation of the Code, and specifically companies must:

1. Be open about their objectives, and make position papers publicly available to demonstrate consistency and;
2. Seek to ensure that the trade associations and industry policy groups to which they belong, operate to the same high standards with membership of such organisations being disclosed.

The assessment of a company against these criteria will take into account any credible evidence that a company has deliberately and consistently attempted to undermine public policy frameworks that aim to implement the Code in any country.

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

FTSE propose that companies should clearly demonstrate the presence and application of the following management systems:

1. Clear communication of the company policies, procedures for its implementation throughout the production and marketing processes, and provision of training in its application, to senior management and all relevant marketing staff operating in the high risk countries.
2. Clear accountability and responsibility within the Company for the implementation of systems for compliance at all levels.

3. Whistle-blowing procedures that allow employees to report outside their normal management reporting line potential non-compliance with company policy in a way that protects them from possible negative consequences of such reporting.
4. On-going systematic internal monitoring of compliance.
5. Systems for investigating and responding in a timely manner to alleged non-compliance reported by governmental bodies, professional groups, institutions, NGOs or other individuals from outside the Company.
6. Systems for taking, as well as tracking, corrective action on all sustainable non-compliance cases, both internally and externally reported.
7. Regular external verification to provide evidence of well functioning Policy compliance management and monitoring systems, conducted by a suitably qualified external expert.
8. In addition to management reviews, the production of annual summary reports to the Board of Directors on internal monitoring, external reporting and corrective actions taken regarding non-compliance.

Additional Policy Criteria with Regards to Company Operations in High Risk Countries:

9. In addition for operations in high risk countries companies must provide to the FTSE BMS Committee, on request, copies of all related marketing literature and product labelling and inform the Committee.

EXTERNAL REPORTING

Adequate company reporting procedures should include making annual summary reports available on adherence to policy, non-compliance, and corrective action taken.

VERIFICATION

There also needs to be external verification regarding evidence of well-functioning Code compliance management and monitoring systems, conducted by auditors or expert assurance providers.

NOTE this area will be further investigated and developed by FTSE with the intention of creating a specific assurance framework and commissioning audits against this.

GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

FTSE will maintain a small Expert Committee, comprising academics and experts on the industry, which will review company reports, and other information they deem appropriate, to assess whether companies adhere to the FTSE4Good criteria and to make recommendations to the FTSE4Good Policy Committee as to the continuing eligibility of companies.

Any company which is found to be systematically not complying with its policy, will be given notice that they will be removed from the index at the sole discretion of the FTSE4Good Policy Committee.

APPENDIX 9
EIRIS Profile Report (December 2009)

Marketing breast-milk substitutes (pages 46-52 of Report)

Nestle is considered to have a **high exposure level** to the issue of marketing of breast-milk substitutes.

Company overview

- exposure level is based on estimates that the Company derives **over GBP 750m of turnover from breast-milk substitutes**. Nestle has indicated that in 2006 it generated turnover of approximately CHF 4.6bn (GBP 2.9bn) from the sale of infant formulas (starter and follow-on), infant cereals, baby foods and growing-up milks. It has indicated that infant cereals and other complementary foods represent less than 2% of Nestlé's total sales. The Company has disclosed to EIRIS that 2.9% of total Company turnover is generated from breast-milk substitutes.
- the Company markets infant formula - including the brands Alfare, AL110, Alsoy, Alpren, Bear Brand, Beba HA, Beba Pre, Beba Sensitive, Good Start, Lactogen, Guigoz, Nan, Nan AR, Nan HA, Nan Soya, Pre Nan, Nestogen, Nidal, Nidina and Pelargon
- the Company markets complementary foods - including the brands Alete, Baby Menu, Cerelac, Nestle Cereal, Nestum, Sinlac. In 2007, the Company acquired Gerber which produces complementary foods.
- the Company markets these products in the following countries: it markets these products worldwide

Assessment

Nestlé's response to the issue of marketing of breast-milk substitutes is assessed as **intermediate**. The Company has the policy and management systems elements in place required for an assessment of 'good' but as the Nestle Instructions re-interpret certain articles of the WHO Code, the Company is not able to achieve an assessment above intermediate.

Policy and Responsibility

The Company:

- supports the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes, and subsequent relevant WHA resolutions - the Nestle Instructions state that: 'Nestle has publicly stated its support for the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes'. The Company has also stated that it has voluntarily adopted the 2001 resolution in developing countries which indicates that complementary foods should not be introduced until six months of age.
- commits to apply the Code to all products within the scope of the Code - Nestle applies the Code to both infant formula and complementary foods in developing countries. The Nestle Instructions apply to the marketing of infant formula and follow-up formula products. In

developing countries it follows the 2001 resolution which changed the recommended duration of exclusive breastfeeding from four to six months to six months. In these countries it has changed its complementary food labels to reflect this.

- commits to adopting and adhering to the WHO Code as a minimum requirement and where national legislation or regulations implementing the Code are wider in scope and application than the Code, the company commits to follow the national measures in addition to the Code - Nestle has stated that: 'in any given country, we begin with the WHO Code and then look for the local implementing regulations, where they exist. If there is a local code, we analyse it carefully against the WHO Code and adopt whichever requirement is stronger.'
- names the person responsible at Corporate Executive Board level or Executive Management level for the implementation and monitoring of the policy - Nestle has indicated that at the executive board level, the CEO takes an active lead and that the executive vice-president heading Nestle Nutrition is accountable for Code violations. In addition it has an ombudsman at executive board level.
- names the individual responsible at country level for the implementation and monitoring of the policy - at country level, the country CEO is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the policy. The Head of the Market is also held accountable. In addition, it has an ombudsman in developing countries.
- provides information on how the policy is integrated into the Company's marketing policy - Nestle has provided a copy of its Corporate Business Principles which includes a summary of the Nestle Infant Formula Marketing Policy. This policy indicates that it forbids its operating companies from permitting staff whose responsibilities include the marketing of infant formula to make direct contact with mothers except in response to consumer complaints. Operating companies are also forbidden from giving incentives to their infant food marketing personnel based on infant formula sales. The Company has also stated that the Nestle WHO Code Quality Assurance System embeds the fulfilment of the Code into marketing systems.

The Company does not:

- commit to apply the Code in all Member States of the WHO, in accordance with their legislative and social framework - in developing countries, Nestle voluntarily applies the Code as translated into detailed operational guidelines in the Nestle Instructions. In developed countries, Nestle follows national codes, regulations or other applicable legislation relating to the marketing of infant formula rather than the Code itself.
- commit to monitor its own marketing practices according to the principles and aim of the Code, independently of any other measures taken by governments to implement the WHO Code, and commits to take steps to ensure that its conduct at every level conforms to the Code in agreement with policy points 5 and 6 - the Company has stated the following: 'At Nestle, we believe governments carry out the only legitimate interpretation/implementation of the WHO Code and therefore the only legitimate monitoring is based on national measures taken to implement the Code. We fulfil our obligations by monitoring our marketing activities according to national measures or (if such measures do not exist) the WHO Code and our Instructions to implement it.'
- commit to apply the Code in all countries, whether or not governments have taken action to completely implement the Code - Nestle applies the Code in developing countries but in developed countries Nestle follows governments' implementation of the WHO Code. It has stated that the Nestle Instructions basically aim at complementing national regulations in developing countries that are either missing or weaker than the WHO Code provisions. In

developed countries, where law-making and regulatory systems can be deemed mature, it follows whatever legislation is enacted to give effect to the recommendations of the WHO Code and the relevant subsequent WHA resolutions.

- include its commitments in a policy document which is publicly available - the Nestle Instructions have been made available to EIRIS but are not publicly available. Nestle has indicated that it has provided its WHO Code Implementation Instructions to any organisation which has asked for it, including leaders of the IBFAN organisation. Nestle has stated that a summary of its infant food marketing policies is in the widely distributed Nestle Corporate Business Principles and that a summarised version of its Instructions is publicly available on its website. However, the Nestle Instructions need to be published in full on the Company's website in order to meet this element.

In addition, the Nestle Instructions re-interpret certain articles of the WHO Code. For example:

Article 5.5 of the WHO Code states that 'marketing personnel, in their business capacity, should not seek direct or indirect contact of any kind with pregnant women or with mothers of infants and young children.' The equivalent section of the Nestle Instructions refers to pregnant women or mothers of infants below six months.

- Article 7.3 of the WHO Code states that 'no financial or material inducements to promote products within the scope of this Code should be offered by manufacturers or distributors to health workers or members of their families...' The equivalent section of the Nestle Instructions indicates that 'low-cost items of professional utility or token gifts may be given to health workers on an occasional basis if and as culturally appropriate.' They also indicated that 'No such donations should be used as a sales inducement.'

- Article 7.4 of the WHO Code states that 'Samples of infant formula or other products within the scope of this Code, or of equipment or utensils for their preparation or use, should not be provided to health workers except when necessary for the purpose of professional evaluation or research at the institutional level.' The equivalent section of the Nestle Instructions indicate that samples of formula may be provided to individual health workers for the purpose of professional evaluation in the following instances: to introduce a new formula product; to introduce a new formulation of an existing product; and to introduce its formula range to a newly qualified health professional.

- Article 7.5 of the WHO Code states that 'manufacturers and distributors of products within the scope of this Code should disclose to the institution to which a recipient health worker is affiliated any contribution made to him or on his behalf for fellowships, study tours, research grants, attendance at professional conferences or the like.' The equivalent section of the Nestle Instructions does not specifically mention disclosure to the institution.

- Article 8.1 of the WHO Code states that 'in systems of sales incentives for marketing personnel, the volume of sales of products within the scope of this Code should not be included in the calculation of bonuses, nor should quotas be set specifically for sales of these products.' The equivalent section of the Nestle Instructions does not mention quotas.

- Article 8.2 of the WHO Code states that 'personnel employed in marketing products within the scope of the Code, should not, as a part of their job responsibilities, perform educational functions in relation to pregnant women or mothers of infants and young children.' The equivalent section of the Nestle Instructions states in addition: 'However company personnel may provide information on weaning practices and complementary feeding to mothers of infants beyond six months of age, subject to their emphasizing that breastfeeding should continue for as long as possible after introduction of complementary feeding.'

Nestle has responded to EIRIS on these points and has provided an explanation of the differences between the Nestle Instructions and the equivalent articles of the WHO Code and why it believes its policy is aligned with the WHO Code.

Management Systems

The Company:

- demonstrates clear communication of company policy on the marketing of products within the scope of the Code - the Company has indicated that it regularly communicates its policy to importers, distributors and major retailers of Nestle infant formula. The Company provides a summary of its policy for employees, medical contacts, distributors, and the public through the Nestle Charter which is translated into many languages. It has also indicated that Code compliance is prominently featured in its Corporate Business Principles and other key reference documents.
- demonstrates procedures for implementation of company policy throughout the production and marketing processes - for example its policy is communicated to importers, distributors and major retailers of Nestle infant formula. Its marketing personnel are trained and tested on their knowledge of the Code.
- demonstrates provision of training on application of the policy to senior management and all relevant marketing staff - on its website it indicates that it undertakes education and training of its staff on WHO Code implementation. It has also indicated that it trains its marketing personnel on an on-going basis on Code compliance and has indicated that these personnel are periodically tested on their knowledge of the Code. Their incentives are based on this knowledge rather than on the sales results of infant formula.
- demonstrates clear accountability and responsibility within the Company for the implementation of systems for compliance at all levels - Mr Richard Laube, Executive Vice President and head of Nestlé's Nutrition business has responsibility for ensuring that the principles of the WHO Code are incorporated into Nestle Nutrition's modus operandi. Internal monitoring of Code compliance falls under the responsibility of Executive Vice President, Mr Francesco Castaner. Mr Castaner is the central WHO Code Ombudsman, who oversees the network of WHO Code ombudsmen located in the Company's subsidiaries at country level. Both Mr Laube and Castaner report directly to Nestlé's CEO. At the country level, the country CEO is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the policy.
- demonstrates whistle-blowing procedures that allow employees to report potential non-compliance with company policy, in a way that protects them from possible negative consequences of such reporting, outside their normal management reporting line - on its website it indicates that it has an internal WHO Code Ombudsman System allowing any Nestle employee to raise concerns about Code compliance in a confidential way, outside of line management.
- demonstrates on-going systematic internal monitoring of compliance - the Company has indicated that it has put various procedures in place to ensure compliance with National regulations and the WHO Code. These procedures include regular audits on a worldwide basis of its marketing practices relating to infant formula. Corporate headquarters carries out nine to 25 audits on Code compliance each year worldwide. It has also indicated that its subsidiaries' formula marketing practices are audited on a routine basis by internal auditors. These local audits are periodically complemented by audits performed by corporate auditors coming from the Company's headquarters in Switzerland. External audits are also used when required. For example, it has a system of ongoing, independent audits by external social auditing companies.

- demonstrates systems for investigating and responding in timely manner to alleged non-compliance reported by governmental bodies, professional groups, institutions, NGOs or other individuals from outside the Company - in response to IBFAN's 2007 Breaking the Rules report, Nestle has produced a report: Nestlé Investigation of Reported Non-Compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. This lists the allegations and Nestlé's response to them. In addition, the Company has indicated that queries and allegations from NGOs and other external sources are routinely investigated and responded to, both at country level and at headquarters' level.
- demonstrates systems for taking, as well as tracking, corrective action on all non-compliance cases - it has indicated that it has systems in place for investigating all accusations of non-compliance with the WHO Code, provided that it has sufficient details to do so, and will swiftly correct them when necessary. Audit reports, both internal and external, are scrutinised by the Public Affairs Department at headquarters' level and audit procedures include a post-audit check of corrective action. Line management and the corporate audit department monitor the follow up closely and only close out a report once the corporate audit department is fully satisfied with the follow up.
- demonstrates regular external verification to provide evidence of well functioning Code compliance management and monitoring systems, conducted by a suitably qualified external expert - Nestle has indicated that it has established a policy of commissioning independent external audits where there have been cases of multiple, broad-scale allegations about Nestlé's adherence to the Code. It has indicated that external audits have been conducted by Emerging Market Economics in Pakistan, Thailand, Uganda, and Nigeria. In its 2005 Commitment to Africa report, Nestle reports on Bureau Veritas's review of its infant food marketing in South Africa, Nigeria and Mozambique. This review included assessing implementation and compliance with the Nestle Instructions (but not the WHO Code). Bureau Veritas has also undertaken verification of the WHO Code management system in South Africa and Indonesia.
- produces annual summary reports to the Board of Directors on internal monitoring, external reporting and corrective actions taken regarding non-compliance - the Company has indicated that annual summary reports are provided to the audit committee of the board of directors. These audit reports cover the findings by corporate auditors on local staff's compliance with its policy. They include a commitment by the responsible line managers to remedy the non-compliance cases immediately. For cases where a specific deadline for remedial action is necessary, the audit procedures include a systematic follow-up process by the auditors on implementation of the corrective action. The Company has also indicated that its international auditors verify adherence to the International Code by each company in all developing countries where it has operations. All negative findings are brought to the personal attention of the CEO of Nestle S.A.

The Company does not:

- demonstrate clear communication of the WHO Code to employees - the Nestle Instructions differ in places from the WHO Code. Nestle has indicated that all Nestle Nutrition personnel dealing with infant foods are required to understand the WHO Code. Marketing personnel are trained on an on-going basis on Code compliance and are periodically tested on their knowledge of the Code. In order to meet this element, Nestle would need to provide information on how and to which employees it communicates the WHO Code, including how often this communication takes place.

Reporting

The Company:

- reports publicly on external verification regarding evidence of well-functioning WHO Code compliance management and monitoring systems, conducted by auditors or expert assurance providers - Nestle has published Bureau Veritas' audit opinion in its Commitment to Africa report which covers some of Nestlé's African operations. Its report, Investigation of Complaints Regarding Compliance with the WHO Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, contains an independent evaluation of Nestle Thailand's policies and procedures by Emerging Market Economics Ltd. On its website it has published an independent assurance statement by Bureau Veritas on Nestle Lanka's compliance with the WHO Code. This is based on assurance conducted in Sri Lanka in December 2007. In 2009, Nestle published independent assurance statements by Bureau Veritas on the compliance of its Malaysian and Indonesian operations with the WHO Code.

The Company does not:

- make its annual summary reports on adherence to policy, non-compliance, and corrective action taken available on request or publicly available - the Company has indicated that annual reports are produced for shareholders and set out its policy on compliance with the Code. Auditors' reports are made available to the audit committee of the board of directors. These annual summary reports cover internal monitoring, external reporting and corrective actions taken regarding non-compliance. All negative findings are brought to the personal attention of the CEO. However, it has stated that 'as a general policy and as is normal practice for companies, we have chosen not to disclose any internal audit findings, irrespective of the area or of the external stakeholder concerned, in view of risks of inconsistency and unequal treatment that selective disclosures would lead to.'

[Nestle Commitment to Africa report, 2004] [IBFAN Breaking the Rules report, 2004] [Nestle Instructions, July 2004] [Baby Milk Action website, 09/02/2006] [Communication from Company, 10/02/2006] [Infant and Child Nutrition: At the Heart of Nestle, October 2006] [Company website, 28/02/2007] [Communication from Company, 27/04/2007] [Communication from Company, 22/05/2007] [Communication from Company, 19/06/2007] [CSR report, 31/12/2007] [Social survey response, 23/05/2008] [Company website, 12/08/2008] [Communication from Company, 09/09/2008] [Company website, 17/03/2009] [Company website, 08/07/2009]

Third world

EIRIS has recorded the following instances where this Company has been found to be in partial compliance with, or total or substantial violation of the International Code of Marketing Breast-Milk Substitutes:

INVOLVEMENT: in substantial violation of seven of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes requirements

SOURCE: International Baby Food Action Network (01/06/2009)

INVOLVEMENT: IBFAN has identified Nestle as being in violation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent resolutions.

SOURCE: International Baby Food Action Network (01/11/2007)

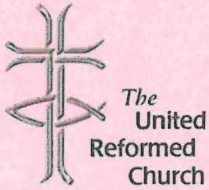
PART OF COMPANY: Gerber

INVOLVEMENT: in substantial violation of two, in partial compliance with one, in unknown compliance with one of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes requirements

SOURCE: International Baby Food Action Network (01/06/2009)

The Company has interests in countries which have a UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) of less than 0.5 - the countries concerned are as follows:

- HDI of less than 0.5 (but more than 0.25): Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria & Senegal



MISSION COUNCIL 9th - 11th March 2010

G

Assembly Moderators' 'think-tank'

One aspect of the Catch the Vision process yet to be acted on, is a proposal agreed by General Assembly at Manchester in 2007. The Steering Group's final report proposed a 'think-tank' of 15 to 20 people who would help to focus a new concentration on mission and spirituality. Meeting at Windermere for at least two 24-hour gatherings a year, this group would provide a space for dreaming dreams and seeing visions. It was envisaged the Moderator of General Assembly would call together a group of theologians, Biblical scholars, and practitioners, in consultation with the Nominations Committee, to focus on the renewal and spiritual refreshment of the church.

Although this 'think tank' has not come into being yet, the last three years have seen a large number of other initiatives with things to say about mission and spirituality. Consequently, until quite recently neither of us as Moderator Elect saw any strong need to act in this area. During the past year, however, we have both been in meetings around the church where concerns have been expressed about the right use of resources and appropriate ways of evolving new patterns. There is an emerging tension, largely unaddressed, between the need to sustain the United Reformed Church's existing way of being church and the call to be creative on the margins. Most of the denomination's income, through the Ministry and Mission fund, is raised by people in congregations which might be called 'traditional' models of church. As new ways of being church emerge, and other ministries continue to evolve (CRCW's and evangelists for instance) the denomination has no agreed strategy for prioritising where its resources should go. Consequently, any dreams and visions are at risk of running on far ahead of the church's ability to finance and service them, while those people in local churches on whose financial support so much depends may feel undervalued and unconnected with events beyond their congregation.

If current patterns of national income gathering and expenditure remain unchanged, this way of sustaining the denomination could have a limited life. Any growing sense of confidence in God's mission, and rediscovery of spirituality, needs to link with the freeing up and prioritising of resources, as well as the consideration of what holds us together. Unless these matters are addressed then the new life the church so much hopes to nurture runs the risk of disappearing again very quickly and the sense of distance between people will grow.

We would now like to form a small 'think-tank' (five to 10 people) to identify suitable, sustainable and realistic strategies for the United Reformed Church over the next five to 10 years. These discussions must include financial issues but would also relate to matters of ministry, mission and spirituality. The aim is to produce coherent plans, in positive terms and language, which are framed within an appropriate time scale. These will need to be properly resourced, attainable in relation to our skills and competencies, and affordable from within our resources.

Resolution 1 from Manchester 2007 envisaged a large group looking at specific issues. What we now propose is a smaller group, with a more flexible pattern of meetings, addressing a broader range of interlinked concerns. We seek Mission Council's agreement to this adjusted remit. The Nominations Committee, in its report to General Assembly at Edinburgh in 2008, suggested leaving the choice of members for the group with the Assembly Moderators. If Mission Council agrees, we will call together a group of people with varying skills and perspectives, to establish a 'think-tank' and report back through the councils of the church with proposals in due course.

Val Morrison and Kirsty Thorpe (Moderators of General Assembly Elect)



MISSION COUNCIL 9th - 11th March 2010

H

Report of the Listed Buildings Advisory Group

Historic Church Buildings: Heritage and Mission

There is little doubt about the increased awareness of history and heritage matters in the public mind. Consider the response to the annual Heritage Open Days; the frequency of history programmes on television: (in one week in January, when this paper was being prepared, there were eight major history series on the five principal channels); the popularity of any National Trust or English Heritage property on a fine day; heritage trails that ramble through most cities; privately owned stately homes (Blenheim Palace, Bamburgh Castle) tell interested visitors about the families that have occupied them.

Furthermore, there is also little doubt that the attitude of government and government agencies has changed. English Heritage, for example, once reputed to be indifferent or negative to the needs of churches now comes forward with offers of help, requests for information or proposals for collaborative projects. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport actively seeks consultation with the churches on projected legislation and other measures concerning the regulation of heritage protection nationally.

The Anglicans in particular have noticeably responded to this changed national mood, and the Roman Catholics are not far behind. Both draw down millions in public money which supports their mission through the maintenance and interpretation of their historic buildings. For example, in North Yorkshire recently, a Heritage Lottery Fund project produced leaflets, and placed interpretation displays in many parish churches. The churches involved report not only an increase in visitors but more attending worship and taking an active part in parish affairs. Guides in cathedrals such as Ripon or Durham undoubtedly believe that presenting the life of the building and its people over centuries to visitors is part of the church's present-day mission. The Churches Conservation Trust actively promotes church buildings in its care as a community resource. The Roman Catholics are using public money to assess and describe what is significant about Roman Catholic church buildings in all dioceses; it is part of establishing a new presence for the Roman Catholic church in their communities. Both churches are using their historic buildings in a modern way to drive forward the mission of the Church. The Methodists, too, have a strong record for developing historic buildings to serve their present-day communities and can demonstrate from numerous examples how greater community use, a renewal of mission and a wider local regeneration can follow sensitive re-ordering and thoughtful modernisation.

In this changed context, a church which ignores the increased public awareness, or is insensitive to the value of heritage, risks attracting adverse publicity. But there are also positive reasons for being alive to the changing public mood. Historic church buildings are a significant asset in mission terms, and can be used imaginatively to present the church and the gospel to

the world. Many United Reformed Church buildings occupy prime positions in their communities: in some situations they are more favourably located than the Anglican church. Their constant presence proclaims the Christian message to the passing world. If they have been there a long time, they speak of the strength and continuity of faith over many generations: we can take encouragement from them, and learn something of how we come to be as we are as a church. For, if we don't know where we come from, we don't know who we are.

Historic church buildings are therefore not, as some would have it, museum pieces to be preserved at all costs, but unrivalled assets, demonstrating the continuing vitality of our tradition of faith. Each has a story to tell. Here are three northern examples but there will be many similar instances throughout the country.

In 1690, the Independents built a chapel high on the Swaledale hillside above Low Row. By 1809 it was no longer suitable for their needs so they built a new church in the valley which continues to this day as a flourishing centre of worship and mission. At an annual ceremony, their present-day successors celebrate this heritage and draw strength from the commitment of their forefathers, because, as David Peel told a full church recently, over generations they were driven by their faith, strongly believing in the priesthood of all believers, determined to pass on what they had received to a committed succession. The present minister, Julie Martin, is proud to say that she is the 28th minister in line of succession since 1690, the 20th in the new building.

Denholme Shared Church stands in a spectacular position high on the moors between Bradford and Keighley. It a gem of a Georgian style independent meeting house although dating from 1843. Formerly one of a number of churches in a village where textiles and quarrying were the main occupations, it is now the only church and one of only two remaining large public spaces. It successfully provided a home for the Baptists some years ago, when the listed building was sensitively altered to install a baptistry. It is now sharing with the Anglicans whose abandoned building is to be demolished.

Early contact with the Synod's Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (always desirable) and its continuing involvement (also helpful) has resulted in the successful and sensitive installation of two treasured late Victorian Gothic stained glass windows from the Anglican building into the round-headed windows of the Georgian-style meeting house. As a result, the building at the same time celebrates the village's diverse Christian heritage and provides a worthy springboard for its ecumenical future.

Even so, Judith Drake, the deeply committed and hardworking church secretary at Denholme, has been heard to admit that it has taken her a long time to appreciate fully the value of their historic building as an asset in the village and as a resource for mission.

The story of Longcauseway Church in Dewsbury is the story of a church that re-invented itself as a town centre church when a new shopping centre surrounded it. Saved from demolition by its listed status, the impressive 1884 building (the third on the site since 1815) dominates its surroundings, rising directly out of the pedestrian precinct. Prominent in many photographs of the town, it is one of the most striking among many distinguished Victorian buildings in Dewsbury and has been suitably altered by stages since 1999 the better to meet the requirements of its new situation. Exterior stonework cleaned, inside redecorated, organ refurbished, it now not only ministers to the many weekday passers-by, but it is also the natural centre for the town's ecumenical activity and the home for an active and growing worshipping congregation. As Doris Gledhill, the church's historian puts it: 'The members of the church today

are proud of its history, and humbly yet confidently accept the challenge of using our heritage, the wonderful building and impressive site, to tell others the Good News of Jesus Christ.'

Synod Listed Buildings Advisory Committees have found themselves responding to this change in perception. Fifteen years ago, when the present Ecclesiastical Exemption scheme was new, most churches and most Listed Buildings Advisory Committees were content to be reactive, as described in the Control Document, and deal with applications as and when they were received. Practice has changed over time and now most committees find themselves being asked for pre-application advice - indeed they encourage early dialogue. Under new government regulations currently under consultation with the churches among others, early consultation will be required. The role of the building in support of mission is an essential part of any discussion. Members and officers of the national Listed Buildings Advisory Group are in regular contact with others in the heritage field and become increasingly aware of developments potentially beneficial to churches, and there are new opportunities for them to be pro-active in their work.

Yet the suspicion is that United Reformed Churches in general and the regional and national Councils of the Church have been slow to appreciate the changes that have taken place in the public mood, and the potential for mission that historic church buildings now provide. Listing is still regarded by many as a millstone, rather than positively as an opportunity for mission.

The challenge for today is always, 'How can we best use the advantages given us by each historic church building and the story it embodies to promote our mission in the modern world.' The time has come for the United Reformed Church to develop a position on the place of historic church buildings in mission. A national policy which recognised the potential of the United Reformed Church's historic buildings and celebrated them could transform local opinion and encourage more members to be proud of their heritage, and more confident in mission.

The Listed Buildings Advisory Group invites Mission Council to:

- Note the potential for developing mission from historic church buildings discussed above
- Agree to the development of a United Reformed Church policy on the role of the historic church building in mission;
- Invite the Listed Buildings Advisory Group to prepare a draft.
- Resolve to return to the question at the next meeting.



MISSION COUNCIL
9th - 11th March 2010

J

**Proposed changes to the Structure of the United Reformed Church
and the Rules of Procedure**

These amendments are proposed from discussions in Mission Council about the roles of Mission Council and Assembly arising from the change to a biennial Assembly. The changed words are underlined. Changes to the Rules of Procedure are effected by a simple majority vote at one Assembly. Changes to the Structure are subject to the "two Assembly" rule and will need to be referred to the synods and confirmed by a final vote in Assembly 2012.

Change to the Rules of Procedure (section C of the Manual)

1. 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 the Mission Council and, in so far as they are applicable, to meetings of synods, district councils and their committees

Changes to the Structure (section B of the Manual)

Constitutional Amendments

3.(1) No exercise ~~by the General Assembly~~ of the function of constitutional amendment contained in 2.5.xi shall have effect unless the following procedure has been followed:

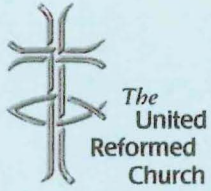
- (a) The proposal for the amendment shall be made in accordance with the Standing Orders of the General Assembly.
- (b) Either The General Assembly or, in years when the General Assembly does not meet, the Mission Council shall vote on a motion to approve the proposal which shall require a majority of two-thirds of the members present and voting to pass.
- (c) The General Assembly shall, if such motion to approve the proposal is passed the General Assembly or the Mission Council, as the case may be, shall refer the proposal to synods and may, if it deems appropriate, in exceptional cases also to local churches.
- ~~(d) The General Assembly shall in making any such reference set a final date for responses to be made, which shall normally be at an appropriate time before the next annual Assembly.~~
- (d) If the proposal has been agreed by the General Assembly it shall set a final date for responses to be made, which shall normally be at an appropriate time before a meeting of the Mission Council not less than nine months after the meeting of the General Assembly at which the proposal was agreed.
- (e) If the proposal has been agreed by the Mission Council it shall set a final date for responses to be made which shall normally be at an appropriate date before the next ordinary meeting of the General Assembly.
- (f) 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 or the Mission Council, as the case may be, in its concern for the unity of the church shall not proceed to ratify the proposal.
- (g) If by such date such notice has not been received, a motion to agree the proposed amendment shall come before the General Assembly at its next meeting or before the Mission Council at a meeting specified by the

General Assembly, Such a motion shall require a simple majority of the members present and voting to pass. In its concern for mutual understanding within the life of the church, before voting on such a motion the General Assembly or Mission Council shall invite a representative of any synod from which the General Secretary has duly received notification under 3(1)(e) to present the main reasons for its objection.

(h) If such a motion is passed by such a majority the amendment shall have effect.

(i) 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.

3.(2) In the case of motions which would have the effect of terminating the separate existence of the United Reformed Church, or of a synod within it, by union with other churches, the voting process to be used shall be not less stringent than in 3 (1) and that process shall be determined by a single vote of the General Assembly which shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting to pass. In the case of a proposed union affecting only Scotland or Wales no action will be taken by the General Assembly until a decision in favour of union has been taken by the relevant synod.



MISSION COUNCIL
9th - 11th March 2010

K

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR
LOCAL CHURCHES

4th February 2010

INTRODUCTION

The United Reformed Church was formed in 1972 by the union of the Congregational Church in England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England. Since then the United Reformed Church has continued to express its deep commitment to the visible unity of the whole Church. In 1981 it entered into union with the Re-formed Churches of Christ and in the year 2000 with the Congregational Union of Scotland. The United Reformed Church is in frequent dialogue on unity with other traditions and has more than 400 Local Churches united with other denominations.

Though one of the smaller of Britain's 'mainstream' denominations, the United Reformed Church stands in the historic Reformed tradition, whose member denominations make up the largest single strand of Protestantism with more than 70 million members world-wide.

Along with other Reformed churches the United Reformed Church holds to the Trinitarian faith expressed in the historic Christian creeds and finds its supreme authority for faith and conduct in the Word of God in the Bible, discerned under guidance of the Holy Spirit. The United Reformed Church's structure also expresses its faith in the ministry of all God's people through the structure of Councils by which the Church is governed.

Notes about this Model Constitution Document:

There is an increasing expectation that Local Churches will have a written Constitution. The Charity Commission does not wish to see it as part of the registration process but has indicated it would expect to have sight of one if problems arise in the future. Also, grant funders and even banks are asking for details of how Local Churches are constituted to verify their collective identity and that of their signatories and better understand their governance. Not only to satisfy the outside world, but also to make the Church's workings transparent to new members and to obviate later disagreement within the fellowship, it is helpful to have a clear stated understanding of how local decisions are taken and appointments made.

This document has been prepared with the benefit of legal advice and it is therefore commended to Local Churches. However, it has been drafted according to the law of England and Wales and churches in Scotland, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man will need to take further legal advice on its adoption in those jurisdictions.

Local Churches may already have their own written rules of operation, or established but unwritten 'custom and practice', on some or all of the matters covered in this model. Those whose rules are written are encouraged to compare them with this model; some Churches may wish to incorporate useful material from the model into their own rules, others to adopt a version of the model in place of their old rules. Those whose rules are unwritten are urged to consider adopting a version of this model (incorporating local practices when appropriate). If a written constitution exists it is important that people should be able to rely on it; so once adopted it will prevail over any inconsistent unwritten custom. Subject to the Scheme of Union, which prevails over local practice whether written or not, Local Churches decide for themselves how they will operate and are free to adopt this model as it stands or with variations; however there are reasons for everything contained in the model and Churches are urged not to amend it without careful consideration and competent advice.

In a few cases a Local Church may have appointed persons other than the members of the Elders' Meeting to serve as charity trustees of the Church's general funds. The Church does not now recommend this practice and would encourage those Congregations which have a designated group of Trustees to adopt the pattern of governance agreed with the Charity Commissioners and approved by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, where separate groups

of trustees exist references to trustees contained in this document should be taken to refer to those bodies.

The Manual of the United Reformed Church which contains full details of the Basis of Union; the Structure of the Church; Rules of Procedure; Baptism; Ministries; the Disciplinary Procedure for ministers and Church Related Community Workers and other aspects of the Church's work can be accessed on the Church's website at www.urc.org.uk under the heading "Our work".

INDEX OF CLAUSES

- 1. THE LOCAL AND THE WIDER CHURCH**
- 2. BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS**
- 3. PROPERTY TRUSTS AND ADMINISTRATION**
- 4. MEMBERSHIP**
- 5. LEADERSHIP**
 - 5.1 Ministers**
 - 5.2 Church Related Community Workers**
 - 5.3 Elders**
- 6. HONORARY OFFICERS, REPRESENTATIVES AND COMMITTEES**
- 7. EMPLOYEES AND PAID CONTRACTORS**
- 8. AMENDMENT**
- 9. CLOSURE AND DISSOLUTION**
- 10. INTERPRETATION AND MISCELLANEOUS**

The members of Anytown United Reformed Church assembled in Church Meeting on (date) have adopted the following Constitution:

1 THE LOCAL AND THE WIDER CHURCH

Anytown United Reformed Church ('the Church') is a local association for the public worship of God, Christian witness and service in accordance with the principles and usages of the United Reformed Church ('the URC'). Admission to the full responsibilities and privileges of membership confers membership simultaneously in the Church and in the URC. The Church supports the wider councils of the URC through giving and participation, and may share in activity with other faith communities on an ecumenical basis.

2 BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS

2.1 As a local church of the URC, the Church is governed by the Scheme of Union of the URC ('the Scheme of Union') and those constitutional decisions of General Assembly binding on Local Churches. This constitution supplements the provisions of these as they affect the Church. In the event of any conflict between those provisions and this constitution, those provisions prevail.

2.2 The Scheme of Union:

	Principal provisions of the Basis of Union (B) or Structure (S)	Related clauses of this constitution
a) assigns the immediate oversight of the Church to the Church Meeting and the Elders' Meeting	S1(3), 2(1), 2(2)	6
b) provides for the membership and functions of the Church Meeting (in particular, in the Call of a Minister) and for non-voting attendance	S2(1)	5
c) provides for the membership and functions of the Elders' Meeting	S2(1)(viii), 2(2)	5 and 6

d) provides for councils of the wider church, for the Church's direct or indirect representation upon them and for appeals from more local councils to a council having wider responsibility	S1(2)(a), 1(3), 2(1)(vi), 2(3), 2(4), 2(6) and 5	
e) provides for consultation in decision-making	S4	--
f) contains (in the Basis of Union) a statement concerning the Faith of the United Reformed Church	B10, 12-18	--
g) provides for the celebration of the Gospel sacraments	B14, 15; S2(2)(ii), 2(4)(A)(xx)	--
h) provides for the ministry of Word and Sacrament, for the ministry of other Elders, and for Ministers' and Elders' ordination and induction	B19, 20, 21, 23, 25; S2(1)(vii), 2(2), 2(4)(A)(vii)	5
i) provides for the ministry of Church-related Community Workers and for their commissioning and induction	B19, 22; S2(1)(vii), 2(2), 2(4)(A)(vii)	--
j) provides for the admission of baptised persons to the full privileges and responsibilities of church membership	B14; S2(1)(ix), 2(2)(vi)	4

This constitution makes further provision for these matters in the clauses indicated.

3. PROPERTY TRUSTS AND ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Property is held upon trust for purposes which include the charitable purposes of the Church. This includes:

a) land and buildings governed by trusts set out in Schedule 2 to the United Reformed Church Acts 1972 and 1981 ('the URC Acts'), which provide that the statutory power of appointing new trustees and certain powers of direction are vested in the Church Meeting¹.

b)

[Use this wording if your general funds are registered as a charity and the Church Meeting has passed the declaratory resolution agreed with the Charity Commission for that purpose]

The general funds of the Church, governed by trusts declared in a resolution of the Church Meeting on *(date)*, which provides that the qualified members of the Elders' Meeting are charity trustees² and that Trustees are to act in accordance with procedures laid down by the Church Meeting

[Use this wording otherwise]

The general funds of the Church, comprising all assets and funds held by and on behalf of the Church (other than land and buildings held under the trusts declared in Schedule 2 of the URC Acts and those held on other specifically declared trusts), which are held upon trust for the advancement of the Christian faith for the benefit of the public in accordance with the Scheme of Union and whose charity trustees are the members of the Elders' Meeting qualified to serve as such, acting in accordance with procedures laid down by the Church Meeting.

3.2 The Church Meeting, after considering the recommendations of the Elders' Meeting and any guidance issued under the authority of councils of the wider URC, will review

a) the uses to be made of the property in 3.1.a, and

b) procedures for proper administration of the general funds of the Church

3.3 The charity trustees of the general funds of the Church are responsible for presentation of an annual set of accounts to the Church Meeting and, where Charity registration has been completed, for preparation and submission of the annual Trustees report.

¹ A small number of properties are held by Local Churches on special trusts which fall outside the URC Acts. If in doubt, Churches should contact their Synod Office for advice.

² Consult your Synod Trust office for advice if this is not the case

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1. There shall be a Roll of Members on which persons admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership in the Church, whether on profession of faith or by transfer, are to be entered. Names are to be removed from this roll

- a) on transfer to another church of the URC;
- b) at the written request of a member wishing to relinquish membership;
- c) by resolution of the Church Meeting on advice from the Elders' Meeting
- d) on death.

4.2 Admission to membership of the Church by transfer takes place when a person

- a) is a member of another local church of the URC, or of a Church with which the URC General Assembly has declared pulpit and table fellowship and
- b) is accepted by the Church Meeting or (by delegation) by the Elders' Meeting.

A member by transfer shall be welcomed in public worship at an early opportunity but enjoys the full privileges and responsibilities of membership from the passing of the accepting resolution.

4.3 Admission to membership of the Church on profession of faith takes place when a person

- a) is not eligible for admission by transfer;
- b) is considered by the Elders' Meeting of an age to make a meaningful profession of faith;
- c) has received preparation that the Elders' Meeting considers adequate;
- d) is accepted by the Church Meeting on the advice of the Elders' Meeting;
- e) makes during public worship the profession of faith prescribed in the Basis of Union; and
- f) if not previously baptised, is baptised.

5. LEADERSHIP

The exercise of the total caring oversight by which Christ's people grow in faith and love is the special concern of elders and ministers, which may be complemented by the work of a Church Related Community Worker ['CRCW']. Before a call can be issued by a Church Meeting to a Minister of Word and Sacrament or a CRCW the procedures to be followed shall have been agreed by the Church Meeting after considering the recommendations of the Elders' Meeting and any guidance issued under the authority of councils of the wider United Reformed Church.

5.1 MINISTERS

A Local Church may, at any one time, have one or more ministers in pastoral charge; these are called to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

5.2 CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS

A Local Church may at any one time have one or more Church Related Community Workers. They are called to a ministry of caring, challenging and praying for the community.

5.3 ELDERS

5.3.1 Alt. 1 The church meeting shall adopt such methods of electing Elders as it shall from time to time see fit and determine how long elected Elders shall serve and whether or not there must be an interval between the completion of a period of service and election for a subsequent period.

Alt.2 *churches may, if they wish, as an alternative to the above set out here the detail of their procedure for electing elders, length of service etc.*

5.3.2.

Alt 1 [The Church Meeting/the Elders] shall make such rules and regulations relating to the calling and conduct of Elders Meetings as they shall from time to time think fit.

Alt 2 *Churches may, if they wish, as an alternative to the above set out here in detail how Elders Meetings are to be called and conducted.*

6. HONORARY OFFICERS, REPRESENTATIVES AND COMMITTEES

6.1 The Church Meeting shall:

- a) consider the candidates nominated by the Elders' Meeting for the office of Church Secretary, and by the charity trustees of the Church's general funds for the office of Treasurer. If the candidate for Church Secretary is not acceptable to the Church Meeting then a fresh nomination is to be sought from the Elders' Meeting.
- b) elect a Church Treasurer
- c) elect a person or persons to represent the Church on the Synod. These shall normally be members of the Elders' Meeting
- d) elect such other honorary officers and representatives to external bodies as it sees fit;

6.2 The Church Meeting and Elders' Meeting may each establish such committees or ministry groups as they see fit, prescribing their method of appointment, terms of reference and frequency of reporting to the parent body. The Church Meeting may determine to which council of the church (itself or the Elders' Meeting) any committee or group established by it is to report.

6.3 Control of a delegated budget, with or without the competence to sign cheques drawn on church funds, may be delegated by the charity trustees of the funds concerned to committees, ministry groups or individual officers.

7. EMPLOYEES AND PAID CONTRACTORS

7.1 To avoid doubt, this clause does not apply to the appointment of stipendiary ministers or church-related community workers.

7.2 Appointment to any employed position in the service of the Church will be made by the charity trustees of the church funds from which the employee is to be paid. The charity trustees of the relevant funds will also be party to any contract with an independent contractor for services to the Church. Unless the services to be rendered are solely to assist the trustees in their function as such, the following rules will apply:

- a) The creation of a new permanent employed position or its permanent abolition requires a resolution of the Church Meeting acting on advice from the Elders' Meeting.
- b) The selection of an employee, the decision to vary contractual terms or terminate an employment (except for disciplinary reasons) or the decision to contract or terminate a contract with an independent contractor are matters for the Elders' Meeting, on whose directions the charity trustees are to act.
- c) Another church committee may act in lieu of the Elders' Meeting under the foregoing paragraph but only by express delegation from the Elders' Meeting.
- d) The charity trustees are to scrutinise the terms of any contract of employment or for services before it is concluded, and may defer acting on a direction in order to allow the relevant Meeting or committee time to consider any concerns the charity trustees have.
- e) The charity trustees are at liberty to take, without receiving explicit directions, such other measures in relation to employees as good employment practice may indicate.

7.3 Charity trustees who employ or may employ staff on behalf of the church will adopt and from time to time review, subject to the approval of the Church Meeting, written procedures for disciplinary cases and for the settlement of employee grievances. Disciplinary procedures are to provide for warnings when appropriate, emergency suspension when appropriate, a hearing if an employee so requests and for an appeal procedure.

7.4 Charity trustees may decline to act upon a direction to employ one of their own number or to contract with a charity trustee for the supply of goods or services, They may only act upon such a direction if all requirements of charity law in relation to the remuneration of trustees are satisfied.

7.5 A charity trustee must be absent from the part of any meeting at which his or her employment or remuneration, or any matter concerning a contract to which he or she is party other than as a trustee (including his or her performance in that employment or the performance of the contract) are discussed. He or she must not vote on any matter relating to his or her employment or the contract and must not be counted when calculating whether a quorum of charity trustees is present for that item of business.

8. AMENDMENT

Alterations of, or additions to, this constitution may be made by the Church Meeting, normally on the recommendation of the Elders' Meeting. They must be consistent with charity law and relevant trust instruments where applicable and with the provisions mentioned in clause 2.1 that affect the Church, and must receive the support of at least 75% of the members present and voting at the session of the Church Meeting.

9. CLOSURE AND DISSOLUTION

9.1 Any resolution to close the Church must be passed by the Church Meeting and approved by the appropriate wider council of the URC. When approved the resolution will have the effect of dissolving the Church as an association, at the date agreed between the Local Church and the Synod.

9.2 A direction may be given by the Church Meeting for unrestricted monies held as part of the general funds of the Church to be applied after the satisfaction of debts and liabilities, in a specific manner determined by the Church Meeting (within the charitable objects set out in the relevant trust instrument).

9.3 If no such direction is given the Church Meeting shall be deemed to have directed the trustees to apply the unrestricted monies held as part of the general funds of the Church, after the satisfaction of debts and liabilities, as determined (within the charitable objects set out in the relevant trust instrument) by the Synod.

10. INTERPRETATION AND MISCELLANEOUS

In this constitution:

'Elder' refers to a serving Elder but 'ordained Elder' refers to any person ordained to the Eldership and includes ministers of word and sacrament who are on the Roll of Members but currently hold no active office in the URC. 'Minister' refers also, where the context allows, to the Interim Moderator during any vacancy.

'Synod' refers to the Synod of the URC on which the Church is, or was last, represented.



MISSION COUNCIL
9th - 11th March 2010

L

GOD IS STILL SPEAKING

TOWARDS UNITED REFORMED CHURCH IDENTITY

For Group Work:

- Please tell us about a time when you have felt most passionate or excited about something the URC has said or done or been.



MISSION COUNCIL 9th - 11th March 2010

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Human Sexuality Task Group (2008)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Assembly returns to the subject of human sexuality from the base point of the Commitment it adopted and commended to synods and churches in 2007. For any who may have forgotten that Commitment, it is printed as an appendix at the end of this report. It is also worth recalling the advice given to that Assembly to the effect that the process of further discussion needed to take place without the pressure of deadlines. "It is imperative that the whole church is given space to be and to reflect".

In addition the Assembly of 2007 asked Mission Council to set up a task group to take forward the process of continuing discussion, as well as addressing certain specific concerns which had been identified. A group was established towards the end of 2008 with the following membership: John Bradbury, Cecily Boulding (ecumenical observer), Lucy Brierley (secretary), Richard Church, Doreen Daley, Claire Gouldthorp, Val Morrison and John Waller (convener). The task group has reported regularly to Mission Council and this report is the result of its work so far.

2. MATTERS REFERRED FROM 2007 ASSEMBLY

A part of the report which was presented to the 2007 Assembly identified eleven issues that needed further exploration. The issues are repeated below with, in each case, the response that has been made to Mission Council.

Theology. *Among several theological issues to be addressed, a coherent and comprehensive theology of same-sex partnerships is urgently needed as a basis for any further decisions. Ideally, as with earlier work, this should be set within the context of human sexuality, marriage and relationships in general as well as our understanding of gender.* The task group understands that the request is for a theology of same-sex partnerships and not a specifically United Reformed Church one, and that the need therefore is to identify existing theological statements which will satisfy the request and be reasonably easily accessible. At some point it may be necessary to relate such a theology to the ecclesiology of the United Reformed Church. The group has asked the Faith and Order Group for advice. The second sentence of the request should fall within the plans detailed in section 4 of this report.

Advocacy. *Related to this is the need for clarity about the church's teaching on matters of sexual relationships. What do we actually affirm and teach about marriage, singleness, celibacy and same-sex relationships, for instance? Within this, how does the church cope with two incompatible sets of teaching, one of which says that same-sex practice is wrong and the other of which says that it can be life-affirming? Do we say that our church teaches both?* The United Reformed Church understanding of marriage is reflected in the marriage service in the Service Book. Beyond that, no specific statements have been agreed on sexual relationships: it is the intention of the task group to create opportunities for further discussion of this whole area in the next two years. In so doing, the group believes that the discussion is most likely to be fruitful in groupings where people are used to speaking together and it believes that sexuality needs to be seen as a gift rather than as a problem. On the question of how the church copes with two incompatible sets of teaching, more will be said under the heading of unity through diversity. For the time being, those who wish to know the church's position must be pointed to the Commitment.

Standards in ministry. *What are acceptable patterns of life within ordained ministry? What standards are expected of ministers and members in relation to different expressions of sexuality? How are we to understand a minister's promise to lead a holy life?* The Ministries Committee was already working in this general area and the task group asked it to consider whether issues of sexuality could be included within its work. The Committee agreed to this request and those who want to pursue this matter should refer to the papers on Standards of Conduct for ministers, Church Related Community Workers and elders, which have been approved by Mission Council. Meanwhile the task group is considering tabling an amendment to the sentences in the papers relating to sexual relationships.

Discipline. *Recognising that there are ordained ministers within the church in openly same-sex relationships, are they under similar disciplinary constraints as heterosexual and single ministers? If so, what do we understand those constraints to be?* This has been referred to the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure and Disciplinary Process Advisory Group (MIND) as the body which oversees matters of ministerial discipline. It has responded that in its opinion ministers in openly same-sex relationships are under similar constraints as heterosexual and single ministers. It further defined those constraints in the following way: "It is important to remember that the standards by which ministers are measured under the Church's Disciplinary Process (Section O) are those defined by the vows made at ordination and promises made on induction (or commissioning in the case of Church Related Community Workers). When disciplinary cases are considered it will therefore be breaches of the promises to live a holy life and to seek the well-being, purity and peace of the church which will be considered. Any action or omission of a minister will be considered in this light. When individual cases are considered it may well be that Assembly Commissions will find it helpful also to be mindful of the 'Standards of Conduct for Ministers' which includes a constraint on sexual conduct which reads: "Not to enter a sexual relationship with anyone within a professional relationship who is not their partner" ".

Legal implications. *Some recent legislation carries implications for the church. These need to be reviewed both in terms of what is required of the church and the church's own response. It would be good to do this work ecumenically, and particularly in the light of*

recent work in the Methodist Church. The group is not aware of any specific issues that require legal advice at the moment, and it does not recommend seeking such advice unless such issues do arise. However, noting that the Methodist Church has done work in this area, the group has asked if it can share any relevant outcomes.

Blessing of partnerships. *What attitude should the United Reformed Church take regarding the blessing of civil partnerships? Do the present guidelines need to be reviewed, and should they be subject to debate and decision in General Assembly?* The group looked at the advice produced by Mission Council in 2006 and made available to local churches since then. It did not believe that this was the right time to consider other than minor changes which resulted from the adoption of the Commitment by the Assembly. These changes have been accepted by Mission Council, which was not minded to subject them to debate in the General Assembly.

Unity. *Believing that the unity of the church is a gospel priority, how much internal diversity is tolerable before that unity is contradicted? Clearly there is much diversity within the present church over many issues, but would it ever be acceptable in the name of unity to have such a diversity of beliefs and practices that members and ministers denied the actions and beliefs of others and where some ministers were totally unacceptable in some parts of the church?* Very early in its discussion the group recognised that this is a key issue, not only in regard to human sexuality but also in very many aspects of the church's life. Later in this report it sets out some thoughts on the subject which are intended to encourage discussion rather than point to any particular conclusions. Any group which has such a discussion is welcome to send any conclusions to the Secretary of the task group, Lucy Brierley.

Practical implications of diversity. *We need to look carefully at the implications of the kind of diversity envisaged in the previous point. Might the acceptance of mutually exclusive interpretations living side by side lead all too painfully to the "clustering" of churches and ministers of similar views? What does it mean for a minister to be called locally but recognised nationally, particularly if different criteria seem to be used in different parts of the church? Might some candidates for ministry and some existing ministers seeking pastorates need to look for areas of the country where they might be more readily accepted than in others? If such pressures arise, how do we maintain the integrity of the church?* The task group recognises that this issue is closely linked to the previous one on a theological level. In practical terms it has considered this issue under the heading of Pastoral issues (see below).

Stereotyping. *How do we overcome the dangers of stereotyping, which need to be challenged wherever they come from?* The group is aware that this is a danger in all human relationships, and not only in regard to sexuality. The clothes a person wears, the way they speak, or the colour of their skin can as easily lead to stereotyping as can their perceived theological position. The group believes that this is not an issue which needs further study or debate. It requires each of us constantly to look at ourselves, our attitudes and our behaviour, and to ask whether we are seeing in the other a person made in the image of God. In the church we should not assume that difference makes another person any less a follower of Jesus.

Pastoral issues. *How should the church respond to those whose orientation is other than heterosexual and those in same-sex relationships and civil partnerships? How should the church respond to those who find such relationships and partnerships unacceptable and offensive in a Christian context? There is also potential for a wide range of issues of principle to arise from pastoral situations. Such things as a person's reorientation of gender could affect a minister. Situations like this need to be looked at now so that when they do arise they can be addressed with understanding and care.* The task group realised at an early stage that the Commitment was bound to result in practical and pastoral questions, some of which could be very serious indeed and have a deep impact on individuals and churches. With that in mind it has asked the Synod Moderators to indicate their experience without actually quoting any particular cases. This showed that the number of issues that have arisen so far is fairly small, that some are complex and stressful, and that sometimes what was a problem in one instance proved quite straightforward in another. Overall it does not seem that there is need for further action at the present time. However, the group wants to observe that any ethical position taken by the church will inevitably produce practical consequences for which provision had not (and maybe could not have) been made, or which require pastoral judgements to be made in the light of the particular circumstances. No amount of definition is going to be able to alter this fact. It is therefore of primary importance that the church in all its councils has those to whom such situations can be referred, and that such persons and groups are accorded the trust of the whole body. This seems to the group to be part of the essential nature of a Christian community, and therefore it does not propose to take this particular issue any further unless it becomes clear that there are aspects which are causing serious damage or difficulty.

3. UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY

The Commitment which the Assembly has adopted recognises that there is a considerable diversity of view on matters of human sexuality held within the United Reformed Church. It ends with the commitment "to stay together, to work and pray together, to treat one another with respect, and to seek God's gifts of unity, harmony, wisdom and deeper understanding". However, serious questions remain. How much diversity is possible before unity loses its meaning? Does the desire for unity mean that truth and conviction have to be subjected to it? What is the basis on which the church is united?

Although human sexuality is the issue which has given rise to these questions, they actually apply across the whole range of Christian faith and life. Therefore, in encouraging groups to think about this subject, the task group advises that it should be done in general terms and not related to one particular issue. It may help sometimes to consider particular examples in order to give focus to the discussion, but any conclusions could be tested by relating them to other aspects of faith and life. There is a need for consistency in whatever conclusions we may reach.

In the following paragraphs issues of unity and diversity are considered in a variety of contexts and in each case some questions are posed. No attempt has been made to explore the issues in depth: it is left for individuals and groups to do that for themselves in whatever ways they find helpful.

- 3.1 Unity in the New Testament.** Unity is the essence of the Christian community. "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6) "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all participate of the one bread" (I Corinthians 10:17). Unity is the subject of the prayer of Jesus that they all may be one (John 17: 20-23). It is based on the word of Jesus that disciples are chosen by him; they do not make the choice (John 15: 16). It is based on the entreaty of Jesus that disciples should love one another as he loves them (John 15:12). Paul expresses the whole mission of Jesus in terms of the bringing together of all things (Colossians 1: 15-20). Can you think of other texts that support this understanding of unity? How is it experienced in your local church or pastorate?
- 3.2 Diversity in the New Testament.** Diversity is also the essence of the Christian community. Jesus deliberately called a remarkably diverse group of people to be his first disciples (and that created problems, as in Matthew 20: 20-28 and Mark 10: 35-45). The Pauline image of the church as the Body of Christ maintains that diversity is a necessity: the church cannot function effectively without different gifts and understandings (Romans 12:3-8, I Corinthians 12). It is in their diversity that disciples constitute a complete whole. What sorts of diversity are needed in a local church for it to function effectively? Can you think of instances where diversity has been (a) helpful and (b) unhelpful in local church life?
- 3.3 Diversity, disunity and division.** These three words describe situations which may follow on from one another but which in practice often overlap one another. From the beginning of the church's life diversity has caused disunity and sometimes led to division. The obvious example is in the distinction between Jews and Gentiles (Acts 15: 1-35, but see also Galatians 1 and 2). A difference on mission strategy led to sharp disagreement and division as described in Acts 15: 36-41). The Corinthian church was noted for its disunity: over personalities (I Corinthians 1: 10-17), over sexual immorality (I Corinthians 5), over food sacrificed to idols (I Corinthians 8), over the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11: 17-22) and so on. How do you judge when diversity is leading to disunity and division in the church's life? Is it possible or desirable to set boundaries to diversity?
- 3.4 Another reaction to diversity.** There is another strand within the New Testament which suggests that where there is disagreement in the church, those causing the problem should be cut off in order to preserve the purity and unity of the body. Some texts which seem to support this attitude are Matthew 5: 29-30, 18: 8-9, Mark 9: 42-48, II Corinthians 6 : 14, II Thessalonians 3 :14, Titus 3: 9-11. Is this an alternative view, or is it suggesting what should only be done in extremis? Can you

suggest in what circumstances it might be right for a Church Meeting to decide to end a person's membership?

- 3.5 Unity based on a creed.** The United Reformed Church and its uniting traditions have been reluctant to ask people to subscribe to a single creed as an expression of their unity. A reason behind this can be seen by looking at the simple Trinitarian formula: I believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Some will feel that this is what unites them to Christians of all traditions and all ages and at the same time places the United Reformed Church within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church: others will see it as an excessively male-dominated statement to which they cannot subscribe. What does it say to us when the same words both unite and divide us? Are there simple statements of faith to which we all ought to be able to subscribe?
- 3.6 Unity and the Basis of Union.** The set of words that describe the unity of the United Reformed Church, and its place within the one holy, catholic and apostolic church, are those of the Basis of Union. Yet it is phrased in such a way as to be capable of a variety of interpretations and it specifically allows individual members the right of personal conviction, unless that is exercised to the injury of the peace and unity of the church. Is the church any less a united fellowship if there are different interpretations and sometimes-different convictions? How important is it for the church to describe its identity and for its members to accept it?
- 3.7 Unity and the Reformed tradition.** The history of the Reformed tradition is very much one of division and conflict: over papal power, over the status of priests, over state control of the church, over the place of the Bible, over the place of the laity, and so on. Those familiar with the history of Presbyterianism in Scotland will know that very often Reformed churches themselves have split into fragments over doctrinal disputes. In England and Wales one of the proud titles of our predecessors was that of Dissenters. As inheritors of that tradition, are there issues on which we have to take a stand and on what basis do we make such a decision?
- 3.8 Unity and the ecumenical movement.** 2010 marks the centenary of the beginning of the ecumenical movement, in which Reformed Churches have played a major part. In seeking the unity of churches and people the movement has sought to cut through some of these divisions caused by old disputes and past history. The United Reformed Church has seen itself as in the vanguard of the movement in this country. In your experience, how successful has the ecumenical movement been in achieving the unity of Christians and churches? Are there lessons to be learned from the experience? Is there a danger that we may create new divisions to replace the old ones, with the same sorry result?
- 3.9 Unity and the missionary situation.** There is little doubt that mission is a priority for the church and that the situation is one in which a significant part of our society is ignorant of the Gospel and either apathetic or resistant to it. In such a situation, is it foolish for the church to spend time debating different understandings of truth when the need is to show the essential core of the Gospel, or is it important to be

able to present the Gospel with clarity and unanimity? What is the right relationship of unity and mission in 21st century Britain?

3.10 Unity and culture. There is an extent to which the way we express our faith, and the principles by which we live as Christians, arise from the nature of our religious experience, the church which nurtured us, the people who have influenced us and the culture in which we feel at home. Some of our diversity arises from this fact. Have you explored this angle with others who you find it difficult to understand? Is it a good or a bad thing that local churches attract people of similar theology, social class or ethnic background?

3.11 Unity and Communion. It is at the Lord's Table that many people have their greatest sense of the unity of the fellowship. We get caught up in the wonderful grace of God offered to all who come in faith, and whatever differences we may have with others in the church on other matters do not concern us. How do you connect that experience to the times in meetings when you find yourself in a position of diversity or division?

3.12 Unity and Unity can be looked at from any number of angles. Are there others that are as significant, or more significant, to you? Can you draw your thinking about unity and diversity into a coherent statement?

4. HUMAN SEXUALITY; THE NEXT STAGE. The task group sees the next stage as the two years leading up to the Assembly of 2012. The focus of that time will be human sexuality, but not limited to same-sex relationships, and being careful to see sexuality primarily as God's gift rather than as an ecclesiastical problem. This will be a theological exploration and so attention will need to be given to the way we do our theology and the use we make of the Bible.

The first step will be to have a theological consultation for people with some expertise in the various aspects of the subject. Arising from that, the intention is to produce a DVD and discussion material in a form which can be used by groups in local churches or in any other forum where people are used to discussing and listening to each other.

Whilst it is too early to say what direction the 2012 Assembly might take, at the moment the thought is that it could review the Commitment and decide, in the light of the general discussion described above, whether or not it wants to move from the Commitment in any way or whether it believes other steps should be taken.

Appendix: 2007 ASSEMBLY COMMITMENT

As the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church,

we recognise that –

- *Many of the issues and views surrounding human sexuality can seem to be intractable and irreconcilable;*
- *Despite lengthy debates, much study and many reports, opinions have not changed sufficiently for us to be of one mind;*
- *This is a deeply emotive and potentially divisive issue;*
- *Human sexuality and the language we use about it raises many complex questions, not least in the area of biblical interpretation.*

While it is not possible to do full justice to the variety of views represented within the church, we recognise that the range includes –

Some people who feel that the debate on human sexuality has become a wrong focus and has received too much attention, believing that:

- *Faithful living and worship should take priority over controversy about human sexuality;*
- *Participation in God's mission and Christ's ministry in the world demands all the energy of God's people;*
- *This is not a matter over which policy decisions imposing a universal rule are necessary or appropriate;*
- *The church's existing assessment procedures are appropriate for discerning the call of God;*
- *Responses to pastoral situations involving people in same-sex relationships are best determined within the local church;*
- *Working and sharing fellowship with people of very different views can create painful tensions, though it may also offer opportunity for growth and development.*

Some other people who feel that this debate is a necessary focus because it concerns the Word of God, and for them is a passionately held matter of holiness, purity and obedience to God's commands in scripture, believing that:

- *God's creation plan is for the complementarity of man and woman, and that sexual relations apart from that are therefore disordered;*
- *Scripture and the traditions of the church teach that the only legitimate pattern for sexual relations is between a man and woman within the commitment of marriage;*
- *All scriptural references to same-sex activity are explicit in their condemnation;*
- *Same-sex activity is an affront to Christian morality and offensive to many people of other faiths and of none;*
- *People in sexually active same-sex relationships should not be accepted for ministry;*
- *The acceptance of same-sex (civil) partnerships on the part of society and the state is a matter to be resisted;*
- *The character and teaching of Jesus requires that both grace and truth must be embodied in dealing with this issue and with the people concerned;*

- *Working and sharing fellowship with people of very different views and practice creates painful tensions.*

Some others again who feel that this debate is a necessary focus because it is a passionately held matter of God's unbounded grace, justice, the work of the Spirit and faithfulness to God's revelation in Christ and in scripture, believing that:

- *God's will is for newness of life for all people in Christ, regardless of any human distinctions, including sexual orientation;*
- *It is God's creative intent that there are people whose innate sexual orientation and its fulfilment are directed towards others of the same sex;*
- *Some people are called by God into committed, loving, same-sex relationships, including their sexual consummation, and that such relationships can be judged by the fruits of the Spirit that result;*
- *Whilst most scriptural references to same-sex activity seem negative, they are not relevant to the contemporary understanding of same-sex relationships; emphasis needs to be given to the scriptural themes of grace, love and faithfulness;*
- *Where vocations to ministry of those in committed same-sex relationships are discerned through the processes of the church to be the work of the Holy Spirit, such vocations should be upheld;*
- *This is an issue of justice, and the church should celebrate changes made to address unjust structures in society as, in part, the work of the Spirit;*
- *The church should welcome the creation of civil partnerships and support such unions pastorally;*
- *Working and sharing fellowship with people of very different views and practice creates painful tensions.*

Recognising this very wide range of views, we –

- *Acknowledge this diversity;*
- *Accept that these views are all held with integrity and often with passion;*
- *Acknowledge that those who are sisters and brothers in Christ are so through God's calling rather than personal choosing;*
- *Believe that Christ calls us to strive to live together;*
- *Realise that this can only be done by reliance on the grace of God to enable mutual respect, love and continuing exploration together;*
- *Agree to continue to explore these differences in the light of our understanding of Scripture and under the Holy Spirit's guidance for our individual and shared life in today's world.*

In love and submission to Christ who holds us together, we therefore commit ourselves to stay together, to work and pray together, to treat one another with respect, and to seek God's gifts of unity, harmony, wisdom and deeper understanding.



MISSION COUNCIL
9th -11th March 2010

N

Westminster College

Development Plan

1. Introduction

In July 2008 the Westminster Governors affirmed a document setting out strategic objectives for Westminster for the following four years. That document began with these words:

'Westminster College is committed to serving the United Reformed Church and to responding to the challenge our denomination has given us to be a resource centre for the learning of the whole people of God. We will need to do this in new ways and we have been given freedom and encouragement to be imaginative. We have many resources already. We are part of an ecumenical partnership in the Cambridge Theological Federation through which we also have a partnership with two universities in Cambridge. We have excellent teaching and support staff. We have a wide and now more dispersed and diverse community of those who learn through Westminster. We belong to several significant networks; denominational, confessional, ecumenical and international. We have a physical site and building with chapel, library, meeting space, accommodation, catering and hospitality, and grounds.

'We need to resist being bound by the building we have inherited and we need to develop Westminster as an intentionally diverse and dispersed community which has a meaning beyond these walls. We need to test the practicability of making this building work for a renewed purpose. We must be realistic and business-like about this, and be prepared to be visionary about new possibilities for our late-Victorian building'.

The Management Committee was given the task of thinking about how the site and buildings of Westminster might be renewed and redeveloped to serve a new purpose. In November 2008 the Committee presented an interim strategic plan for the future of the Westminster buildings. There was wide consultation among governors, staff and students and a design brief, based on this consultation, was given to our architect. Our plans have also been shared in outline with our partners in the Cambridge Theological Federation, who have given us their support and encouragement.

In June 2009 the architect presented his proposals for the development of Westminster (based on the design brief) to the Governors and it received their general approval. The plans were then refined in the light of further suggestions by governors and others. In November a full Development Plan was submitted to the Governors, including drawn plans, a quantity surveyors'

report giving an estimated order of cost, and reports by structural and building services engineers.

The Governors approved the Development Plan and decided that, provided funding could be obtained, it should be implemented as a single project (subject to appropriate phasing).

After careful consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of doing so, the Governors also decided to instruct the architect to complete and submit the requisite planning application without further delay. Amongst the reasons for reaching this decision was the view that planning approval would establish the project's feasibility; we were also advised that an early planning application would reduce exposure to changing planning regulations and consequential cost increases.

This report

- summarises the strategic aims of the Development Plan;
- sets out the Plan's key design features and the estimated order of costs, and
- considers the steps that should be taken to seek the necessary capital funding.

2. Strategic Aims

For the future, and in order to fulfil our purpose as a Resource Centre for Learning within the United Reformed Church, we have the following strategic aims.

We want to make Westminster a centre for learning, prayer, meeting and hospitality for a wide range of people within the United Reformed Church. This needs to be done both by Westminster staff going out into the churches and communities where people invite us, but also by providing a welcoming, well-resourced place here in Cambridge for people to come to pray, to meet, and to learn.

We want Westminster to continue to play a full part in the life of the Cambridge Theological Federation, contributing teachers, teaching space and facilities, as we in turn receive these things for our own students from other partners.

We therefore need to make the building a place which fits the purpose we believe it has within our church and within the Federation. It needs to offer appropriate meeting and teaching spaces; beautiful, uncluttered, appropriately equipped. It needs to offer spaces for worship and prayer that express the best of our Reformed tradition in terms of beauty, simplicity and welcome. It needs to offer appropriate resources for all kinds of learning; days for church groups, space and books for those doing TLS or short courses, library collections for research in our specialisms, a working library for theological education for ministry, as well as spaces and equipment for those who learn by 'doing' or by talking with others, all supported by excellent and contemporary IT and AV facilities. It needs to offer good hospitality in terms of bed and board, of such quality and welcome that people will want to come again. It needs to be a

gateway to the opportunities of Cambridge and to make the best use of our location and grounds.

We also need to house and provide teaching, research and work space for (at least) five full time theological educators who are actively involved in a wide range of Education and Learning activities both in Cambridge and out in the three nations of the denomination. They need to work effectively as a team and to have the equipment they need to do their work. We need to provide them with well equipped teaching rooms and offices.

We need to open up and make truly accessible the treasures of our traditions that are housed at Westminster so that they can be properly appreciated, researched and made available for any who want to know more of our story. This means providing proper care, security and, where appropriate, display for valued documents and books and a good service to help people research and study, whether classic Reformed texts or local church history.

The original building dates from 1899, with the chapel added in 1921. The roof was completely replaced in 1970-72. The building is, for its age, in excellent condition, but it now urgently needs this major redevelopment for new times. The residential accommodation needs to be brought up to today's high standards. The kitchens need to be able to provide good food to a growing and more varied community. The configuration of rooms and uses needs to have a clear rationale, so that the building has more clearly defined areas for accommodation, teaching, worship and hospitality. The whole building needs to be 'lifted' in appearance and comfort, so that it can provide the welcome and facilities that people rightly expect today.

There are also some structural repairs to do, so that the life of the building is secured for future generations.

3. Key Design Features

Reference to the architect's report dated October 2009, and the accompanying report of the quantity surveyors may be found helpful at this stage

a) Overview

The proposed works will provide attractive, modern accommodation and facilities, well able to meet the needs of the Church in the 21st century. They will also equip Westminster to generate increased income from conferencing and catering services.

The proposals provide for:

- 38 rooms in the residential wing, up-graded to modern standards, including en suite facilities in every unit, and two self-contained suites in the grounds, making a total of 40 rooms available for students, conference delegates and guests.
- Two refurbished students' flats
- increased teaching space with up-to-date audio-visual equipment

- improved teachers' studies
- extended and improved library and archive facilities
- new space for informal discussions and social activities
- a modern kitchen
- a light, airy reception area
- a new prayer chapel and an art studio
- essential structural repairs to below-ground ducts
- replacement of the ageing heating and electrical systems
- re-location of the Henry Martyn Centre

b) The Principal's Lodge

An important feature of the proposals is the provision of accommodation for the Principal outside the main building; this will allow the Lodge area to be redeployed for the needs of the whole Westminster community. All academic staff will be based here, with space for individual conversations and small group meetings, and two new plenary teaching rooms. There is also an archivist's room and space for archive storage. The ground floor provides meeting and teaching space, and a function room for private dining, serviced from the main kitchen. Two self-contained flats on the second floor, suitable for long-term students and accessible from within the building, will be refurbished. A lift will serve ground and first floors, and the unsightly external stairway will be removed.

Westminster has had, for some years now, a developing relationship with the Henry Martyn Centre, a partner within the Federation, with specialisms in Mission and World Christianity. The Centre has office and library space within our building and the new development gives us an opportunity to create more appropriate accommodation for their present and future needs. Library, archive and office accommodation for the Henry Martyn Centre is provided on the ground floor and basement; at their request, the space is significantly greater than at present. The related capital investment is fully reflected by a rent calculated on fair, commercial terms. Negotiations on the rent and other conditions are proceeding.

c) The Central Area

The kitchen is long overdue for modernisation; the proposals will enable staff to cater flexibly and economically, either for small numbers of our own core students or for up to 200 covers when a large group, or several different groups, are using the College at the same time. Specialist consultants have advised on the equipment required. Transfer of the servery to a separate area will enlarge dining room accommodation, and an external terrace will provide an informal 'break-out' area. Offices for administration staff will be moved from the residential wing to the first floor above the kitchen.

The Healey-Elias Room will remain the College's largest teaching room, but will be enhanced by the removal of the partition and surrounding book-cases. Books (and,

where acceptable in conservation terms, bookcases) will also be removed from the Cheshunt Room and Reformed Studies Centre; the former will become a social area (served, when needed, by a mobile bar) and the latter an access library and informal discussion room. The Common Room/Lounge will be refurbished, whilst the small rooms adjacent to the main entrance will be opened up as an attractive and welcoming reception area.

New building on the ground floor will provide a Prayer Chapel, a temperature- and humidity-controlled archive store and toilet accommodation.

Displaced books will be transferred to the east end of the Library, vacated by the Henry Martyn Centre, to which there is disabled access from the lift in the adjacent residential wing; however, the door at the west end of the Library will remain the principal entrance. The Senatus Room will be re-furnished and sensitively equipped as a teaching room.

We have known for several years that the structure of the service ducts below the ground floor was seriously defective and that it has compromised the integrity of the terrazzo flooring in the main corridor and elsewhere. The proposals provide for the structure to be repaired.

d) The Residential Wing

There will be 38 accommodation units of four types, all with en-suite facilities:

• Twin disabled study suites	2
• Double study suites	4
• Single study suites	11
• Single bed-sitting rooms	21

Study suites will also be provided with sufficient kitchen facilities for self-catering, whilst single bed-sitting rooms will have tea- and coffee-making facilities. For students occupying the latter, a shared kitchen on the first floor will offer cooking facilities and a space to eat. The lift will serve ground, first and second floors.

The loft already contains the Buick Knox archive room, and there will also be provision for a computer server room. There will be room in the south end of the loft for further storage space, although it is unlikely that this will be needed for the time being. The loft is already linked to the second floor by an existing spiral staircase.

e) Peripheral Buildings

Since the Principal's present accommodation in the Lodge will be given over to the Henry Martyn Centre and to new teaching facilities, it will be replaced by no. 3 The Bounds, a detached house in the College grounds, which is to be re-furnished for the purpose.

The Annexe on the northern boundary has for many years provided two low-quality flats, generally occupied by sabbatical visitors. The Annexes are to be insulated and refurbished to a higher standard and retained for the same purpose.

A new, timber-clad art studio will be built on a suitable site nearby.

f) Estimated Order of Costs

The quantity surveyors' report gives a comprehensive cost estimate of the works described above. The total of £5.3 million includes:

- building and engineering costs
- furniture, fittings and equipment
- professional fees
- an inflation allowance to the end of 2011

In addition allowances must be made for loss of income during the construction period, and for VAT.

i. Loss of income

The construction work will be phased over a period of up to two years in such a way as to allow the College to function; nevertheless, room rents and conference income will be significantly reduced during that period. We estimate the reduction in net income at £204,000.

The following is a table of costs excluding VAT:

Construction costs	4,040,000
Furniture, fittings & equipment	481,000
Professional fees	687,000
Provision for inflation	122,000
	<hr/>
	5,330,000
Loss of income during construction	204,000
	<hr/>
	£5,534,000
	<hr/> <hr/>

ii. VAT

VAT at 17.5% on expenditure of £5.33m would amount to £933,000. Not all the expenditure will attract VAT: listed buildings and certain work on student accommodation are zero-rated, but the rules are complex and we are taking advice from PricewaterhouseCoopers in order to quantify the cost. We expect to receive their report within two months. In the meantime, and as a working hypothesis, we have taken the VAT exposure at two-thirds (£622,000) suggesting an overall cost for the project of some £6,200,000.

4. Implementation of the Plan

The Governors view the Plan as a single entity, believing that there is little permanent benefit to be gained by implementing only certain parts of it; moreover, the overall cost would be considerably greater if it were tackled piecemeal. Accordingly, they have accepted the architect's recommendation that a decision to proceed with the Plan should embrace it in its entirety.

In accordance with the Governors' decision to apply for planning permission, the application will be submitted in early February; since the buildings are listed Grade II, there will also be an application for listed building consent. We are advised that decisions on both may be expected in the first half of April.

5. Capital Funding

The College has spendable reserves of some £550,000. It also has some realisable assets, which the Governors have in principle agreed to sell. The first sale has recently been agreed and will produce £363,000; other sales might bring the total up to £2,000,000. The timing of these sales is uncertain, but we hope it might be possible to complete them within two years. The remainder of the project cost will need to be raised by a fund-raising appeal. The following table shows the pattern of funding required.

	£
Overall project cost	6,200,000
Less funds immediately available	567,000
	<hr/>
	5,633,000
Less realisable assets (approx)	2,000,000
	<hr/>
To be raised by appeal	<u>£3,633,000</u>

If the Plan is to go ahead the College must inevitably look first to the Church, although we intend also to appeal to grant-making trusts beyond the Church and to individuals. The Governors will be asked at their meeting in late February to establish a Fundraising Committee.

6. Conclusion

The way in which Westminster of the future will operate, and the attendant financial consequences are set out in the accompanying Business Plan.

The Governors have taken great care in defining Westminster's strategy and in matching the Development Plan to that strategy. We believe that, if it can be carried through, Westminster life in all its aspects will be revitalised and its future as a major resource for the Church will be secured. On the other hand, if it should prove impossible to carry out the re-development in the way proposed, we fear that Westminster will be increasingly hampered in meeting the Church's needs by the limitations of its fabric and by financial constraints. We therefore commend the Plan to the Trust with confidence, and with the hope that you will share our vision of what might be achieved.

We believe that we have inherited a great gift, and we give thanks to God for the generosity and vision of our founders and forebears, and in particular to the 'Sisters of Sinai' who gave so much to make Westminster possible. The call and challenge now is to fit Westminster for new times and a faithful church. It would be vanity to want to preserve historic buildings for our own glory or to 'keep' the past, but that is not what we want to do. We believe that God is calling us to respond to the challenge of stewarding this gift for the church, for today and for the future. We are open to God's will and leading and ask you to help us both to seek and to fulfil this vocation.

The Revd Dr Susan Durber, Principal

Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms, Convenor of Governors

Canon Brian Long MBE, Convenor of the Management Committee



MISSION COUNCIL
9th - 11th March 2010

N1

Westminster College

Business Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In November 2009 the Governors approved proposals for the redevelopment of the College, subject to securing the requisite funding. This Business Plan has been developed to show how the College would be administered, and with what financial consequences, after implementation of the Development Plan.
- 1.2. Westminster College is funded by the United Reformed Church to teach not only students studying for ministry of word and sacraments, but people on sabbatical and people preparing for lay leadership roles in the Church; it also offers courses for independent students and short courses, conferences and events for church groups.
- 1.3. The Grade II listed buildings remain today much as they were when the College was opened in 1899. The residential accommodation no longer meets accepted standards of comfort and privacy, and the central heating and electrical systems have reached the end of their effective lives. Moreover, although it is a beautiful building, many parts of it are drab or poorly lit, tending to make it seem unwelcoming.
- 1.4. Limitations on Church funding have for many years required the College to generate income from its spare capacity, which is becoming increasingly difficult because of its out-moded premises.
- 1.5. The Development Plan directly addresses the present shortcomings and, by equipping Westminster to operate more cost-effectively, will secure its long-term future as a centre of learning within the Church. The following consequences of the Development Plan are particularly relevant to the Business Plan:
 - Residential accommodation will have en suite facilities throughout for the first time.
 - The space devoted to teaching, meeting and discussion rooms will be increased by over 70%, providing greater flexibility (see Appendix 2).
 - Lift access will be provided to all residential, teaching and library areas.
 - A newly designed kitchen will have the capacity to serve several functions at the same time, and service will be available for longer hours. The dining room will be

equipped for both self-service and served meals, and there will be direct access to the garden for summer catering.

- Modern heating, lighting, IT and other technical services will be installed.

1.6. We are only too conscious of the substantial investment required for the proposed re-development of the College; equally, we realise that this Business Plan will change the way in which the College operates. But we are convinced that we cannot continue as we are, even for our core business: 'no change' is not an option, and the only question is what change? These are our proposals for that change.

2. BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

2.1. It is first necessary to define the term 'Business' in this context. Westminster is a centre of learning for the whole church, and also contributes to teaching within the Cambridge Theological Federation: that is our core business, and our key objective must be both to carry out that business now and to sustain it into the future. The improved accommodation and increased teaching space will help us to do that, but we must also increase our income to provide financial security.

2.2. Grants received from the URC and the Cheshunt Foundation finance teaching stipends and ministerial training costs, and contribute to running costs, catering, housekeeping and administration; but they cannot be expected to meet the whole cost of running and maintaining a large listed building. It is therefore our responsibility to generate supplementary income to meet the shortfall and thus to sustain the core business of the College.

2.3. We already generate income from external organisations who use our premises for conferences and other events, but the building's limitations restrict the income so derived. We believe that net income can be increased significantly by exploiting the improvements embodied in the Development Plan, for both our own and external use.

3. OPERATING FORECAST

3.1. The Operating Forecast (Appendix 1) has been constructed by superimposing onto the College's 2010 operating budget the changes in income and expenditure expected to occur as a consequence of running the College with the benefit of the improvements described in the Development Plan. The changes in the scale and manner of operation will take some months to bed down; therefore the Forecast should be regarded as a representation of achievement in the second year after completion of construction. No attempt has been made to provide for inflation, although pricing reflects improved standards of accommodation in the context of today's market.

3.2. URC and Cheshunt grants generally cover academic input to ministerial training, TLS training, ministers' refreshers and indeed all the other short courses and events which the College teaching staff provide for the church, both on and off the premises. For present purposes we have assumed that the URC's block grant of £300,000 will be

replaced by a grant structure that contributes to agreed types of expenditure. In total, grants included in the Forecast amount to £347,000; it is assumed that in addition, the Church will meet the cost of EM1 students' accommodation and their academic fees.

3.3. The Forecast shows first what we consider to be a realistic achievement, and has then been flexed to compare the consequences of two alternative sets of assumptions, or 'Key Drivers': a break-even statement and an optimistic forecast that would begin to stretch our capacity. The Key Drivers are set out in Appendix 3.

3.3.1. Short courses and conferences

We use the term "short courses" to refer to church-related residential activities of the sort listed in the Key Drivers table. Such events accounted for 1,000 bed-nights in 2009, but external (ie commercial) conferences added only about 500. Conference Cambridge (the Colleges' Consortium for handling conference enquiries) issues a weekly list of forthcoming events; typically it offers over 50 events from small day-seminars to large 12-day conferences. Given the planned facilities, we expect to be able to bid for between 80% and 90% of these, but at present we can only occasionally offer what is needed. For example, most conference organisers insist on en suite residential accommodation, which we do not have.

3.3.2 Occupancy levels

There are separate occupancy levels for term-time (when we have only 16 rooms available) and vacation (when we have 40). The occupancy levels relate to the number of available rooms, so that they ignore those used by long-term students during term-time. Being a small college cuts two ways: on the one hand, we are competing with larger institutions with more comprehensive facilities; on the other, colleges with many rooms to fill may find it harder to recover fixed costs, whereas a conference of 20 makes a big contribution in our case.

Volume assumptions for short course participants are shown in the Key Drivers table whilst, for external conferences, we have taken account of recognised activity fluctuations during vacation periods. Occupancy also depends on church-related short courses, which hitherto have occurred almost entirely during vacations. Our policy will be to run these courses for most of the year, and the Forecast assumes that 60% will occur in vacations and 40% during term-time.

3.3.3 Day-time events

Forecasting our ability to attract day-conferences and receptions is tricky and we have challenged the Head of Administrative Services and the Domestic Manager quite hard to justify their estimates. The truth is that we can do little more than guess, based on the quite high level of opportunity evident from Conference Cambridge. In the plan presented we have taken a conservative view of the day-conference level in all but the most optimistic forecast. There should be no problem about our capacity, given the significant increase in meeting space and

kitchen capacity entailed in the Development Plan. It is recognised that it will be necessary to stagger lunch-times or (where it is required) to serve an informal, buffet meal in order to spread the load. With good planning and skilful management, events on the scale proposed can be successfully handled, given the additional staff provided for.

3.3.4 Pricing

The same pricing assumptions apply to all three forecasts. Accommodation and boarding prices for church-related activities include a small profit, but are generally 25% to 30% below prices charged for external business. External boarding and bed-and-breakfast rates have been compared with the tariffs of a number of other colleges and found to be competitive across the board. It has been less easy to compare cover prices for day-conferences and receptions because catering levels vary so much according to clients' needs, but we assessed them carefully and consider them to be realistic.

3.3.5 Costs

Increased activity will require more staff, reception office hours will be extended and night cover will be introduced. Appendix 4 gives a comparison of current and 'realistic' forecast staff levels; they have been adjusted in the comparative forecasts to reflect lower, and higher, volumes.

We expect the capital investment arising from the Development Plan to increase the depreciation charge six-fold; that has been taken into account in the Forecast, and will produce a cash stream for asset replacement in due course.

4. CONCLUSION

We recognise that this business plan represents some radical changes in the way that Westminster will operate. It will mean much more use of the buildings by church and external groups, both in term and in vacation. It will mean a busier Westminster with much more use of all kinds of rooms. It will mean a Westminster with a much more varied programme and with a wider range of users. We believe that we can make this possible in such a way that everyone who comes here will feel welcome and well catered for. We positively welcome a Westminster in which those preparing for ordained ministry will learn alongside church and external groups. We welcome a Westminster in which there is a lively level of activity, but also spaces where quietness for reflection can be found. We welcome a Westminster that will be a place of welcome, encouragement, prayer, meeting and learning for the United Reformed Church.

SD
AEB
BWL

1 February 2010



World
Communion
of Reformed
Churches

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches is the largest of the International Confessional Bodies which bring together Reformed Christians across the world. The United Reformed Church is currently one of 215 Churches across 107 countries which are members of the World Alliance. The Presbyterian Church was one of 21 Churches which in 1875 founded the body then called "the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian Order" but always known as "the Presbyterian Alliance" and in 1891 the Congregational Union was one of the founders of the "International Congregational Council". In 1970 these two bodies united to form the "World Alliance of Reformed Churches" with a total membership of over 75 million people. Membership of WARC is referred to in several places in our various rules and regulations. The Westminster College Lewis and Gibson Scholarships, the Accreditation Sub-Committee guidelines and doubtless several other places as well.

In June 2010 the World Alliance after 5 years of careful negotiation will unite with the second largest of the Reformed Confessional Bodies, "The Reformed Ecumenical Council" to form the "World Communion of Reformed Churches". The Reformed Ecumenical Council which was founded in 1946 has 41 member Churches in 25 Countries with a total membership of about 12 million.

There is already a considerable overlap of membership between the two bodies, about ¾'s of the REC Churches are also members of WARC so after union the new body will have about 80 million members and the United Reformed Church will be one of its member Churches.

This means that all references in our various rules and regulations to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches need to be changed to refer to the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The simplest and safest way to do this is by a blanket resolution and it is therefore moved:

Mission Council, noting with thanksgiving the 135 years of partnership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and its predecessor bodies by the United Reformed Church and its parent denominations, and looking forward to a continuing partnership with the newly formed "World Communion of Reformed Churches", resolves that from June 18th 2010 all references to The World Alliance of Reformed Churches contained in any of its rules, regulations or guidelines shall be understood to refer to the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

Prop: James Breslin, Clerk

Sec: Roberta Rominger, General Secretary.

BUSINESS PLAN

OPERATING FORECAST

APPENDIX 1

INCOME	REALISTIC		BREAK-EVEN			OPTIMISTIC			
Academic Services									
URC Grants									
- Academic stipends	177,000		177,000			177,000			
- Bursary grant	25,000		25,000			25,000			
- History & archive grant	25,000		25,000			25,000			
Academic Fees	49,000		49,000			49,000			
Supervision and Preaching Fees	6,000		6,000			6,000			
		282,000		282,000			282,000		
College Accomodation & Catering									
Let property rents	32,670		32,670			32,670			
College flat rents	18,600		18,600			18,600			
College room rents	46,380		46,380			46,380			
College boarding	28,965		28,965			28,965			
Short courses & visitors: room and board	115,650		100,350	-15,300	-13%	134,850	+19,200	+17%	
Miscellaneous catering sales	7,500		7,500			7,500			
Rent - Henry Martyn Centre	25,000	274,765	25,000	259,465		25,000	293,965		
External Conferences & Events									
Conferences - residential	135,500		115,520	-19,980	-15%	156,750	+21,250	+16%	
Conferences - day	101,250		67,500	-33,750	-33%	135,000	+33,750	+33%	
Dinners	55,000		35,000	-20,000	-36%	63,000	+8,000	+15%	
Receptions	24,750		19,800	-4,950	-20%	27,480	+2,730	+11%	
Weddings	33,000		16,500	-16,500	-50%	44,000	+11,000	+33%	
Bed & breakfast	68,560		56,648	-11,912	-17%	69,600	+1,040	+2%	
Room rents: Lodging Students	12,600		25,200	+12,600	+100%	0	-12,600	-100%	
		430,660		336,168			495,830		
Other Income									
URC Grants									
- Distinctiveness grant	120,000		120,000			120,000			
Chesunt grants									
- Chesunt stipend	32,000		32,000			32,000			
- Chesunt office support	17,000		17,000			17,000			
Investment Income (unrestricted)	2,000		2,000			2,000			
Chair Endowments	18,000		18,000			18,000			
Donations/Legacies	0		0			0			
Sundry Income	4,000		4,000			4,000			
		193,000		193,000			193,000		
		1,180,425		1,070,633	-109,792	-9%	1,264,795	+84,370	+7%

OPERATING FORECAST

EXPENDITURE	REALISTIC		BREAK-EVEN			OPTIMISTIC			
Academic Services									
Senatus Stipends	164,600		164,600			164,600			
Univ./CTF Fees	35,000		35,000			35,000			
Pastoral & Internship Prog.	10,000		10,000			10,000			
Senatus travel	2,000		2,000			2,000			
Chaplaincy Costs	250		250			250			
Library maintenance	4,000		4,000			4,000			
Speakers	1,000		1,000			1,000			
Senatus Training and Book Grants	5,000		5,000			5,000			
Bursaries granted	25,000		25,000			25,000			
Sundry Academic	2,000		2,000			2,000			
		248,850		248,850			248,850		
Governors & Committees	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000		4,000	4,000		
College Running Costs									
Staff Costs	425,000		413,514		+11,486	+2%	435,000	-10,000	-2%
Archivist	25,000		25,000				25,000		
College Council tax	4,000		4,000				4,000		
College Utilities	45,000		45,000				45,000		
Insurance	22,000		22,000				22,000		
Houses & Flats	8,000		8,000				8,000		
Sundries & licences	1,500		1,500				1,500		
		530,500		519,014				540,500	
Pr									
College									
Contracts (planned maintenance)	20,000		20,000				20,000		
General Maintenance	30,000		30,000				30,000		
Tools and Equipment	500		500				500		
		50,500		50,500				50,500	
Let Properties									
Contracts (planned maintenance)	1,000		1,000				1,000		
General Maintenance	8,000		8,000				8,000		
		9,000		9,000				9,000	
Catering & Housekeeping									
Catering									
- College activities	38,779		36,254		+2,525	+6%	41,947	-3,168	-8%
- External conferences & events	55,672		39,538		+16,134	+29%	68,196	-12,524	-22%
Kitchen Repairs/Maint.	3,000		3,000				3,000		
Housekeeping	20,000		20,000				20,000		
		117,451		98,792				133,143	
Administration									
Office costs	12,000		12,000				12,000		
Computers	6,000		6,000				6,000		
Telephones	3,000		3,000				3,000		
Repairs/Maint./Equip. Rental	2,000		2,000				2,000		
Travel	500		500				500		
Advertising & promotion	13,000	36,500	13,000	36,500			13,000	36,500	
Other Costs									
Depreciation	69,600		69,600				69,600		
Irrecoverable VAT	30,000		30,000				30,000		
Sundries	4,000		4,000				4,000		
		103,600		103,600				103,600	
		1,100,401		1,070,256	+30,145	+2%	1,126,093	-25,692	-2%
Surplus / Deficit		80,024		377	-79,647	-100%	138,702	+58,678	+73%

KEY DRIVERS

APPENDIX 3

		REALISTIC	BREAK-EVEN	OPTIMISTIC
Church-related activities				
Short courses				
Church groups (3 nights)	number of events	10	8	10
TLS (3 nights)	number of events	5	4	6
Lay preachers (3 nights)	number of events	3	3	4
Ministers' refreshers (4 nights)	number of events	2	2	3
Church committees (1 night)	number of events	6	5	7
Short-course bed-nights		1,855	1,600	2,175
External business				
Residential conferences				
Easter	bed-nights	260	225	310
July	bed-nights	460	390	500
August	bed-nights	180	150	220
September	bed-nights	500	435	570
Conference bed-nights		1,400	1,200	1,600
Bed & breakfast				
term-time	bed-nights	280	224	300
Easter & summer vacations	bed-nights	720	600	720
Day conferences	number of events	135	90	180
Receptions	number of events	50	40	57
Formal dinners	number of events	55	35	63
Weddings	number of events	6	3	8
Lodging students		5	10	0
Staff Costs		£0	-£12,000	+£10,000
Room occupancy				
Term-time (excluding residential students)		34%	29%	39%
Vacation		66%	56%	74%
Operating surplus		£80,024	£377	£138,702

STAFF LEVELS

APPENDIX 4

	CURRENT	ADDITIONS	FORECAST
Head of Administration	1		1
Heads of department	3		3
Kitchen	3	3	6
Hospitality	1	1	2
Housekeeping	4	1	5
Office	2	1	3
Night cover	0	2	2
	<hr/> 14	<hr/> 8	<hr/> 22



World
Communion
of Reformed
Churches

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches is the largest of the International Confessional Bodies which bring together Reformed Christians across the world. The United Reformed Church is currently one of 215 Churches across 107 countries which are members of the World Alliance. The Presbyterian Church was one of 21 Churches which in 1875 founded the body then called “the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian Order” but always known as “the Presbyterian Alliance” and in 1891 the Congregational Union was one of the founders of the “International Congregational Council”. In 1970 these two bodies united to form the “World Alliance of Reformed Churches” with a total membership of over 75 million people. Membership of WARC is referred to in several places in our various rules and regulations. The Westminster College Lewis and Gibson Scholarships, the Accreditation Sub-Committee guidelines and doubtless several other places as well.

In June 2010 the World Alliance after 5 years of careful negotiation will unite with the second largest of the Reformed Confessional Bodies, “The Reformed Ecumenical Council” to form the “World Communion of Reformed Churches”. The Reformed Ecumenical Council which was founded in 1946 has 41 member Churches in 25 Countries with a total membership of about 12 million.

There is already a considerable overlap of membership between the two bodies, about $\frac{3}{4}$'s of the REC Churches are also members of WARC so after union the new body will have about 80 million members and the United Reformed Church will be one of its member Churches.

This means that all references in our various rules and regulations to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches need to be changed to refer to the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The simplest and safest way to do this is by a blanket resolution and it is therefore moved:

Mission Council, noting with thanksgiving the 135 years of partnership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and its predecessor bodies by the United Reformed Church and its parent denominations, and looking forward to a continuing partnership with the newly formed “World Communion of Reformed Churches”, resolves that from June 18th 2010 all references to The World Alliance of Reformed Churches contained in any of its rules, regulations or guidelines shall be understood to refer to the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

Prop: James Breslin, Clerk

Sec: Roberta Rominger, General Secretary.

Independent Safeguarding Authority – Vetting and Barring Scheme

Youth and Children's Work & Ministries Committees Mission Council 9th-11th March 2009

1. The introduction of the Independent Safeguarding Authority's Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) for England and Wales will affect those working with children, young people or vulnerable adults within the United Reformed Church both locally and in the wider church. Although it is still a little unclear exactly what the final shape of the scheme will be the Youth and Children's Work and Ministries Committees have been working together to understand the implications for us in two areas.
 2. First, we need to give advice to local churches and synods regarding their duties under the new scheme.
 - 2.1 Two mailings have already been sent to churches in England and Wales to update them on the new scheme. A third mailing will be sent to Synods and Church Secretaries in mid April, offering further guidance including
 - the timescale for introducing the scheme
 - information on the sorts of roles which will need to be checked
 - concrete examples for common roles (e.g. junior church leader)
 - how to register workers
 - and advice on Safer Recruitment
 - 2.2 Church house officers have also set up a new email account (safeguarding@urc.org.uk) to support local churches through the changeover. This will be the central point for ISA information and inquiries. We will also offer a facility to help those churches which do not have internet access to check a person's ISA registration
 - 2.3 Separate guidance will be issued to our Scottish churches once the timescale for the introduction of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme is clear.
 3. Second, the United Reformed Church needs to agree a policy regarding the checks necessary for those General Assembly appointees and other denominational staff who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
 - 3.1 The introduction of VBS will mean that certain General Assembly appointees and others undertaking roles for the denomination, including ministers, will be deemed to be engaging in 'Regulated Activity' and therefore will require ISA registration in order to do so. It will become a criminal act to employ someone new to undertake such work without making the necessary check, and in due course it will also be necessary to check those who are currently undertaking such work.
 - 3.2 It is our intention to present to General Assembly this year a list of the roles that we believe are covered by this necessity, as well as giving guidance as to what should be considered when any new post or role is created in order to determine whether ISA registration is required for anyone taking up such a post.
 - 3.3 In this area we are taking our guidance from 'Recruiting Safely' produced by the Children's Workforce Development Council, which 'applies to everyone employed in a role (paid or volunteer) within an organisation working with children, who is likely to be seen by the

children as a safe and trustworthy adult.’ We would also apply the principles of this guidance to work undertaken amongst vulnerable adults. This guidance and the practice of our ecumenical partners indicates that it will also be necessary to seek Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) disclosures for those whose role is identified as requiring ISA registration.

- 3.4 We shall also, therefore be asking General Assembly, to support this policy as an indication of our desire to have in place the best protection policies as well as procedures that will satisfy the demands of the law and the expectations of our insurers.
- 4 It needs to be said that we are disappointed that the introduction of VBS has not done away with the need for ongoing CRB disclosures, but are hopeful that the planned PVG scheme for Scotland looks like being more integrated and, if it works well may influence what happens in England and Wales in the future.