

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?

17/02/2014

Monday 10th March 2014		
		PAPER/S
11.00 – 12.00	Introduction session for new Mission Council members	
12.00 – 12.45pm	Registration	
1.00 – 2.00pm	<i>Lunch</i>	
2.00pm	<i>Room keys available</i>	
2.00 – 4.00pm	<p>Session 1</p> <p><i>Worship and Bible study</i></p> <p>Welcomes and introductions</p> <p>The agenda before us</p> <p>Minutes – please add Keith Webster’s name to the list of visitors.</p> <p>Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda</p> <p>p.13, 13/40 When Bridget Fosten’s name was presented for appointment as clerk to the Governors of Westminster College, there was uncertainty as to whether this should be an action of Mission Council or simply be noted. It is now clear that Mission Council should have made the appointment. A resolution is needed: <i>Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Mission Council agrees to appoint Mrs Bridget Fosten as clerk to the Board of Governors of Westminster College.</i></p>	

	Medium Term Strategy Group		S1
4.00 – 4.30pm	Tea		
4.30 – 6.30pm	Session 2		
	Cutting edges: Faith and Order Committee		
6.30 – 7.30 pm	Dinner		
7.30 – 9.00 pm	Session 3		
	Medium Term Strategy Group: the role of the synod moderator		S2
	Prayers		

Tuesday 11th March 2014

8.15 – 9.15am	Breakfast		
9.15 – 11.00am	Session 4		
	Prayers		
	Cutting edges: Mission Committee		
	Assembly-appointed posts		M1
	Clerk		M2
	Law and Polity Advisory Group: update on briefing sessions held January to February 2014		

11.00 – 11.30	Coffee	
11.30 – 1.00pm	<p>Session 5</p> <p>Cutting edges: Communications and Editorial</p> <p>Nominations Committee</p>	verbal
(No later than) 12.50pm	En bloc items (as listed in the cover letter)	
1.00 – 2.00pm	Lunch	
2.00 – 3.45 pm	<p>Session 6</p> <p>On the invitation of the Faith and Order Committee, the Revd Dr Alan Sell will deliver a paper entitled, “How does the URC discern God’s will?” Discussion to follow</p>	
3.45 – 4.30pm	Cream Tea	
4.30 – 6.30pm	<p>Session 7</p> <p>Cutting edges: Education and Learning</p>	
6.30 – 7.30pm	Dinner	
7.30pm – 9.00pm	<p>Session 8</p> <p>Election of Mission Council Advisory Group members</p> <p>Future of General Assembly</p>	<p>M4</p> <p>Y1, Y2, A</p>
9.00pm	Prayers	

Wednesday 12th March 2014

<i>8.15 – 9.15 am</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>		
<i>9.15 – 11.00 am</i>	<p>Session 9</p> <p>Cutting edges: Ministries</p> <p>Consensus decision making</p> <p>Additional and remaindered business</p> <p>Feedback and proposals arising from previous discussions</p> <p>Farewells</p>	M3	
<i>11.00 – 11.30 am</i>	<i>Coffee</i>		
<i>11.30 – 12.45pm</i>	<p>Session 10</p> <p>Holy Communion</p>		
<i>1.00 – 2.00pm</i>	<p><i>Lunch</i></p> <p>Departures</p>		
<i>2.00 – 3.00</i>	<i>Meeting of committee conveners</i>		

Education & Learning Committee: Safer Sacred Space training

D

Agreed by Mission Council on 12 March 2014

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Revd Fiona Thomas fiona.thomas@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council agrees that URC-approved Safer Sacred Space training should be mandatory for every minister of Word and sacraments and church related community worker according to the provisions outlined in Paper D.

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To institute mandatory training which raises the awareness of ministers/CRCWs to appropriate boundaries in interpersonal relationships within the Church
Main points	Appropriate training, by the URC or other approved providers, should be mandatory. The purpose, content and outcomes of the training are given. Sanctions are listed.
Previous relevant documents	General Assembly resolution 16 (Book of Reports p. 250) Preserving the Integrity of the Body (May 2006) Mission Council Resolution, November 2013: Minute 13/35
Consultation has taken place with...	Synod Training & Development Officers, Head of Children and Youth, Secretary for Ministries, synod moderators

Summary of Impact

Financial	Training costs will be covered in the usual way.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Courses offered by ecumenical partners may be authorised to fulfil the requirement for URC ministers/CRCWs.

EM3 Mandatory Training

Safer Sacred Space (safe sexual boundaries) Implementation Plan

1.1 Introduction: Mandatory Training

1.1.1 At General Assembly 2012, the United Reformed Church agreed the resolution:

1.1.2 “General Assembly accepts that it will sometimes be appropriate to make certain additional training mandatory under our EM3 provisions for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers. It will be for Mission Council to agree the nature, expected outcomes, and monitoring of such training.” (General Assembly 2012, Book of Reports, Resolution 16)

1.1.3 All ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers serving in URC pastorates or other recognised posts in the URC shall be required to undertake Education for Ministry Phase 3 (EM3) Mandatory Training, as has been agreed by Mission Council.

1.2 Introduction: Safer Sacred Space background and training

1.2.1 The Sexual Ethics Steering Group (SESG) was formed in January 2006 with a remit to oversee the implementation of recommendations passed by Mission Council and published in *Preserving the Integrity of the Body: Sexual Ethics within the United Reformed Church* (May 2006). In August 2007, the final meeting of the All-Synods Group for Declaration of a Safe Church was held. The initial meeting of the Sexual Ethics Advisory Group (SEAG) was held in June 2008 with the remit “to oversee all the systemic (not individual case-based) sexual ethics matters in the church, focused on all levels of the church.” It anticipated setting up systems and training, working toward activities to be incorporated into URC structures. Mission Council in May 2013 accepted the final Report of SEAG, setting out that each person within the URC shall be made aware of safe sexual boundaries and should pursue best practice.

1.2.2 The name given to the overall issue is Safer Sacred Space, indicating a desire that all sacred space becomes safer sacred space. This document sets out the kind of training required for all EM3 ministers to fulfil the requirement of training towards Safer Sacred Space. The requirement is that EM3 ministers should receive training and updates at regular intervals.

1.2.3 It is not required that this training is either created or delivered by members of the URC, but that EM3 ministers engage with training which is approved by the URC as that which meets the requirements following.

2. Safer Sacred Space Purpose and Outcomes

This section sets out the intention of any Safer Sacred Space education and learning as that of encouraging best practice in behaviours for the widest possible benefit. It clarifies that the learning is not only for the improved practice of the minister, but also for improved practice from those with whom ministers share ministry in every possible situation. This would include the local pastorate, schools where a minister works, places where a minister is regarded as chaplain, community groups with which a minister is engaged; wherever the minister exercises ministry, it is hoped that with Safer Sacred Space issues embedded in the ministers' practice, the minister will feel empowered to raise those issues as appropriate.

It may be helpful to explain and discuss this section with groups of people - ordained, commissioned and lay. Safer Sacred Space learning is not designed to be a URC burden against people's will, but a trusted process to ensure that all those who share in any aspect of the life of the URC and its ministries may expect honourable and holy encounters.

This section includes information for timing of education and updating. It is important to understand that if an EM2 minister has not received Safer Sacred Space issue education in EM1, then the EM2 minister should engage in this as soon as possible in EM2.

*** A potential outcome of Safer Sacred Space issue training may be that the EM3 minister encounters triggers within the training which raise personal 'boundary injury' issues. Any sensitive course will allow the learner to leave the learning environment to manage their response. However, if the absence amounts to more than 25% of the course content, the course may not have been effectively delivered for that learner. It will be up to the Synod EM3 Officer and the EM3 minister to make arrangements for any counselling and any renewal of learning.

Framework	Guidelines and Implementation
2.1 Learning Purpose is to	<p>An EM3 Minister is a person in a recognised place of ministry, including non-URC ministers in posts or partnerships recognised by the URC.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The place of ministry may be recognised by a Synod, by General Assembly, by another organisation as employer (for instance in a chaplaincy or academic post) or by another organisation managing volunteers with responsibility (for instance, by a charity). 2. The place of ministry may be stipended, salaried or voluntary. 3. The minister may be formally retired, but in a Synod or area named and recognised post. 4. Though the mandatory framework does not apply to those well into retirement who work in churches in ad hoc ways, it is considered good practice to include them in any ministerial training.
2.1.1 Understand safe sexual boundaries so that the EM3 minister exercises best practice	
2.1.2 Understand safe sexual boundaries in order that EM3 minister's place of ministry exercises best practice	
2.1.3 Understand safe sexual boundaries in order that, where influence is possible, best practice is exercised within the EM3 minister's wider community and the wider URC	
2.1.4 Understand safe sexual boundaries and their impact upon the URC, including the risk to the URC of a minister not undertaking this training and any potential negative consequences of failure to exercise best practice in observing	

safe sexual boundaries	<p>5. From time to time, Moderators may recommend that specific ministers undertake Safer Sacred space issues training.</p> <p>6. Where a minister from another denomination is serving the United Reformed Church, it will be for the Synod Moderator to decide if it is appropriate for them to be encouraged to undertake Safer Sacred Space training.</p>
<p>2.2 The expected outcome will be for the EM3 minister to gain</p>	
2.2.1 A better understanding of safe sexual boundaries and potential personal behaviour change	<p>The core outcome is that the minister is aware of boundaries and of the need for appropriate identification of such boundaries. The minister will be aware of what to set in place for protection of self and others and will be aware of how to encourage a church culture of appropriate sacred spaces.</p>
2.2.2 Increased understanding of URC and non-URC support for safe sexual boundaries	
2.2.3 Strategies to manage safe sexual boundaries within the local pastorate, within the wider URC and where possible, within the wider community	
2.2.4 Strategies to manage safe sexual boundaries within URC procedures	
2.2.5 Important professional development	
<p>2.3 Frequency</p>	
<p>2.3.1 EM3 ministers must have engaged in Safer Sacred Space training within the first four years of recognised ministry, provided that they received training within their EM1 learning. If they have not received training within EM1, Ministers will engage in Safer Sacred Space training during their EM2.</p>	<p>If Safer Sacred Space issue training is first taken up in EM2, it will supersede normal EM2 requirements.</p> <p>If Safer Sacred Space issue training has already been taken up by an EM3 minister currently in post, that training must have been completed no more than four years prior to the institution of EM3 Mandatory Safer Sacred Space training. Prior learning must fulfil the EM3 Mandatory Safer Sacred Space framework, Section 3 (The Nature of Safer Sacred Spaced Education)</p>
<p>2.3.2 Updates of training are required at no more than four year intervals.</p>	

3. The Nature of Safer Sacred Space Education

This section gives detailed information about the recommended education and learning content, delivery and provision. It will be for Synod EM3 Officers to understand the nature of the recommended learning so that they will be able to assess whether a particular course fulfils the criteria. Course information should have details including those listed in this section with full information about accreditation/authorisation of the course and content as well as information about the quality of the leadership/educators. It is anticipated that courses may be delivered by education authorities, hospital trusts, universities and colleges as well as by church denominations and faith groups.

This section also includes information about finance. The URC provides funding for EM3 and also sets criteria for where that funding will be spent. Claims will be made in the usual way, with expenses covered as is customary within each EM3 minister's Synod and pastorate.

Framework	Guidelines and Implementation
3.1 Learning Content areas	
3.1.1 Awareness of the importance of boundaries in pastoral care	These content areas are not the only content which may be delivered within a Safer Sacred Space issues training event, but are the core content expected for any course.
3.1.2 The practical and emotional effects of poor or good boundaries	
3.1.3 Boundaries in specific pastoral situations including an understanding of transference and counter-transference	
3.1.4 Models of pastoral care and their implications for power and vulnerability in pastoral contexts	
3.1.5 Self awareness and understanding of personal and theological issues relating to boundaries, power and vulnerability within a pastoral setting	
3.1.6 Listening and responding skills.	
3.2 Learning outcomes:	
3.2.1 An understanding of the importance of effective boundaries, and the consequences when boundaries break down	Fundamental to this training is that the EM3 minister improves personal self awareness and as a consequence, their own ability to note and to sensitively manage boundaries for themselves and for others.
3.2.2 An ability to reflect on their own practice in pastoral care, and their own areas of strength and vulnerability.	
3.2.3 An awareness of participants' own emotional needs, and the	

motivations which they bring to pastoral care.	
3.2.4 A basic understanding of the concepts of projection, transference and dual/multiple relationships in the pastoral context	
3.2.5 Listening and responding skills	
3.3 Existing training available to EM3 Ministers	
3.3.1 URC Safer Sacred Space Training modules	These are modules available from and commissioned by the Education & Learning Committee. The modules may be used in a variety of ways, over a range of time frames and can be delivered by people with the attributes described in Section 3.5 of the framework.
3.3.2 Safe Space Training created by other denominations and faith groups	Other denominations (Methodists, Quakers, Salvation Army) have excellent training material and training programmes. Provided that they meet at least the criteria and guidelines at Sections 3.1 and 3.2, these are appropriate courses.
3.3.3 Other safe sexual boundary training which meet the URC requirements	Local Authorities, large employers, hospitals, colleges, universities and independent organisations run safe sexual boundary training to varying degrees. Where necessary, appropriate additional theological reflection may be required (guideline, Section 3.1).
3.4 Recommended training delivery methods and materials	
3.4.1 Module One Pastoral Boundaries from the training programme Creating Safer Sacred Space for Pastoral Encounter, commissioned by the URC from the face2face project, Holy Rood House.	Education & Learning will distribute the Safer Sacred Space for Pastoral Encounter training modules to people identified as Preferred Trainers, as given in Section 3.5.
3.4.2 Other training delivery and modules which meet URC requirements.	The Education & Learning Programme Officer will review alternative courses against the Learning Content areas and Learning Outcomes described in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 and provide a list of appropriate alternative providers.
3.5 Preferred Trainers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognised trainers with a background in Safer Sacred Space issue training 	It is important that any trainer understands the learning context and the variety of church life experience. There are a range of URC and non-URC trainers who

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognised trainers with a background in boundary issue training of any kind 	<p>could deliver such courses. Synods may independently contract recognised trainers from the church or the secular world. Courses delivered by non Church providers need to demonstrate the quality of their trainers.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognised trainers with experience in boundary protection with churches 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognised trainers with a personal resilience and vocation to boundary integrity 	
<p>3.6 Learning Structure areas and Alternative Providers</p>	
<p>3.6.1 Course length should be substantial enough to deliver content in a meaningful way to optimise EM3 engagements.</p>	<p>1. The preferred method of training is group work, rather than distance learning or one-to-one training. The dynamics of group work ensure that the learner fully engages with the content, often at a difficult level.</p>
<p>3.6.2 Courses should be interactive with the provision of support if sensitive issues arise. It is not recommended that course delivery is by distance or e-learning.</p>	<p>2. Ideally (but not absolutely), the first course (not the updates courses) should be four 1.5 hour sessions. These could be delivered in one day within a Synod, or delivered in separate sessions through a longer period of time.</p>
<p>3.6.3 Alternative training to URC training is acceptable provided that</p>	<p>3. If a training provider is not from a theological background, evidence of some theological reflection from the learner will be required. A small paper (a few sides of A4) should be presented with the selected course’s learning evidence to the Synod Officer for final receipt of the URC Certificate for Mandatory Training.</p> <p>4. If a training provider is not from a church background and therefore does not use the phrase ‘pastoral care’, the course needs to demonstrate its content around formal and informal relationships, particularly where no formal contract guides the relationship.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The suggested course meets the URC outcomes 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Learning Provider was accredited/authenticated by the provider’s relevant accrediting/authenticating body 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presenters/teachers/facilitators were shown to have relevant expertise, knowledge and skills 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The subject information was up-to-date and accurate 	
<p>3.6.4 Prior learning by the EM3 minister is acceptable as long as it has met the criteria in 3.1 and 3.2.</p>	<p>If prior learning was more than four years before the date of the EM3 mandatory requirement, training must be updated.</p>
<p>3.7 Finance</p>	
<p>3.7.1 The cost of any course or training will be set by the course provider.</p>	<p>In most cases Safer Sacred Space training can be delivered within Synods in the usual process for Synod Training days, including sub-contracting of external trainers. In this case, the course is paid for within Synod and not a draw on a</p>
<p>3.7.2 EM3 ministers will agree appropriate courses and costs with</p>	

<p>their relevant Synod EM3 Officer. Course payments may also be met through other sources (chaplaincy or other employer funds, for example). Individual EM3 allowances may be used if a Synod – run course is not available.</p>	<p>minister’s EM3 funding.</p>
<p>3.7.3 EM3 minister expenses costs will be met by the usual procedures for EM3 funding which may include a non-URC employer, a local pastorate or placement, or a Synod.</p>	<p>It is expected that Safer Sacred Space issues training will be given priority within the Assembly EM3 funding framework.</p>

4. Monitoring of Safer Sacred Space Training

This section details that records will be kept and that monitoring is anticipated. Records of training undertaken and learning outcomes will be kept in the customary way for each Synod, and encouragement to learn will be exercised in the customary way for each Synod.

General Assembly in 2012 passed a resolution on mandatory EM3 training, and Mission Council in November 2013 designated Safer Sacred Space training as an appropriate subject for mandatory EM3. Therefore lack of engagement with Safer Sacred Space training can be considered to be a disciplinary matter. It will be for the Synod EM3 Officer to report lack of engagement with Safer Sacred Space training to the Synod Moderator.

Framework	Guidelines and Implementation
4.1 Evidence of Safer Sacred Space training will be kept in	
4.1.1 Synod Records	Records will be kept within the Training records of a Synod, as well as in a Minister’s File.
4.1.2 EM3 Minister Records	A data base within Education & Learning will hold records of all certificates of completion of EM3 Mandatory Safer Sacred Space issue training.
4.1.3 Assembly Records	The URC core database will keep completed Safer Sacred Space issue training records within the whole of ministers’ records.
4.2 Effectiveness of learning will be seen by	
4.2.1 Initial Feedback, reflection and evaluation with the course provider	Evaluation will be conducted at each Safer Sacred Space training event and it will be anticipated that reflection on boundary issues will be raised in EM3 reflection (development meetings, MASA)
4.2.2 Follow up reflection and evaluation at intervals throughout ministry, especially at refresher/update courses	

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

<p>A</p>	<p>Catherine BALL <i>Leader</i> Simon WALKLING <i>Reporter</i> Andrew BRADSTOCK Stephen BROWN Ruth GEE Rita GRIFFITHS Michael JAGESSAR Carol ROGERS Jill TURNER Elizabeth WELCH Andrew WESTON</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>Andrew PRASAD <i>Leader</i> Tracey LEWIS <i>Reporter</i> Joan COLWELL Dick GRAY Linda HARRISON Colin McBEAN Tim MEADOWS Andrew MIDDLETON Chris REED Roberta ROMINGER</p>
<p>C</p>	<p>Clare DOWNING Gethin RHYS Connie BONNER Derrick DZANDU-HEDIDOR John ELLIS Margaret MARSHALL Lawrence MOORE Howard SHARP Duncan SMITH Marie TRUBIC</p>	<p>D</p>	<p>Richard CHURCH Fiona THOMAS Andrew EVANS George FARIS David GROSCHE-MILLER Peter MEEK Karen MORRISON Shelagh POLLARD Melanie SMITH David THOMPSON</p>
<p>E</p>	<p>Jacky EMBREY John DURELL Suzanne ADOFO Kath CROSS John GORDON John HUMPHREYS Gwen JENNINGS Cliff PATTEN Kirsty THORPE Nigel UDEN</p>	<p>F</p>	<p>David TATEM Val MORRISON Matthew BARKLEY Dougie BURNETT Margaret CARRICK SMITH Andrew GRIMWADE Judith HAUGHTON Lis MULLEN Alison TERMIE Paul WHITTLE Alistair WILSON</p>
<p>G</p>	<p>Elizabeth NASH Kevin WATSON Francis BRIENEN Simon FAIRNINGTON Robert JONES Roy LOWES Morag MCLINTOCK David ROBINSON Mike WALSH Ruth WHITEHEAD</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>Michael HOPKINS Jenny POULTER Craig BOWMAN Nicola FURLEY-SMITH Ruth HENRIKSEN Jenny MILLS Simon PETERS Danny PIGEON Edward SANNIEZ John SMITH</p>

Paper F1

Ordained Local Ministry
Faith and Order Committee

United Church 2014
Church 2014
Reformed
Church 2014
Church



Paper F1

Faith and Order Committee: Ordained Local Ministry

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Elizabeth Welch, convener of Faith and Order Committee minister@theroundchapel.org.uk
Action required	Discussion of proposals consequent upon resolution 35 of General Assembly 2012 on ordained local ministry.
Draft resolution(s)	There is no resolution, but there are three options, with the one favoured by Faith and Order Committee highlighted.
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	This paper explores the concept of ordained local ministry and whether the URC should move in this direction.
Main points	The Faith and Order Committee would like to propose that the URC take another look at elders, as already an ordained local ministry, to see if slightly re-configuring this ministry would meet the expressed need.
Previous relevant documents	Resolution 35 of General Assembly 2012.
Consultation has taken place with...	Ministries and Education and Learning committees; the Synod of Scotland by visit; the other synods by email consultation.

Summary of Impact

Financial	There might be financial implications regarding training.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	The URC would need to consider the impact in terms of our ecumenical partners of authorising elders to preside at the sacraments.

Ordained Local Ministry

“The Lord Jesus Christ gives particular gifts for particular ministries and calls some of his servants to exercise them in offices duly recognised within his Church.” (1)

Summary

The Faith and Order Committee (FAOC) has been asked to respond to Resolution 35 of General Assembly 2012 concerning the possibility of ordained local ministry being of use to the United Reformed Church. This paper considers the idea of adding an additional category of ministry to what is already recognised within the United Reformed Church. However, it notes that we inherit from our parent traditions differing views on the interpretation of the phrase “pastoral necessity” and the value of lay presidency at communion. It also recognises concerns that it could be construed as ordination “by the back door” and lead to unaccountable local leadership as well as some practical difficulties in the way of ordained local ministry. A brief examination both of past resolutions brought on this topic to Assembly and of feedback at synod level lead to the possibility that, instead of either an extra category of ordained ministry or a blanket approval of lay presidency, the URC should explore further use of that local ordained leadership we already value: the eldership.

1 The issue

1.1 Given the demography of the United Reformed Church, it is not uncommon for members of our smaller churches to feel they have insufficient contact with ordained ministers, either when wishing to celebrate communion or in terms of local leadership more generally. Attempting to address this difficulty, Resolution 35 of the 2012 General Assembly, brought by Wessex Synod, states that:

General Assembly requests the Ministries Committee and the Faith and Order Committee to consider whether some form of locally ordained ministry would be helpful to the mission of the United Reformed Church and to report back to Mission Council with a view to further discussion and a decision at General Assembly 2014 (2).

1.2 This resolution noted that “there are many lay preachers, and some elders, who are regularly presiding at sacraments, usually with appropriate authorisation, often in a reasonably small number of churches which they visit fairly regularly. In practice such people are already exercising a ministry of Word and sacraments. We believe that it would be far better theologically to ordain such people to a ministry of Word and sacraments. We also believe our ecumenical partners would find this easier to understand” (3).

1.3 David Thompson puts the case cogently:

“The principle here is the philosophical one, that if something looks like a minister, acts like a minister, and does the things that ministers do, then it is reasonable to suppose that it is a minister. Moreover, if they are ministers, why should they not be ordained?” (4)

1.4 This had also been the perspective of the Faith and Order Reference Group (FORG – now an Assembly Committee, FAOC) when this question was previously brought to our attention. In 2011, as the result of initiatives from the Synods of Scotland and the West Midlands, the general secretary requested FORG to consider whether lay presidency at Communion could be theologically affirmed as a gift to other churches. Reference was made in FORG’s discussions at that stage to the Church of Scotland’s recent development of an order of Ordained Local Ministers: assessed, trained [to Certificate level] and qualified for the Ordained Local Ministry (OLM); deployed locally with a remit for preaching,

sacramental ministry and pastoral care; serving under the direction of an Ordained National Minister; normally in a non-stipendiary role, but able to be paid if circumstances dictate this is the best option. (5)

1.5 However, from the Synod of Scotland perspective, OLM was not necessarily the answer. It was felt that the transition from Churches of Christ presiding elders (see Appendix A1) to auxiliary ministers, with all the demands of training (now essentially identical to those for stipendiary ministry) on what are now “non-stipendiary ministers”, had discouraged many from offering a local ministry of word and sacrament. The demands of extra training inherent in the Church of Scotland OLM model could equally jeopardise the relationship between lay preachers and the local congregations whom they have got to know well over the years, and put off others from developing such relationships, thus repeating the mistake originally made when presiding elders morphed into ministers. Age might also prove a bar for such transitions to be feasible.

1.6 Papers were exchanged between FORG and the Synod of Scotland. A meeting held between representatives of each concluded that “We all recognise that the United Reformed Church has a problem; that the pattern of our ministry is not fitting the needs of the churches, and indeed the communities we serve.” (6)

2. The difficulty

2.1 But though the difficulty was easily recognised, as with many other questions, we in the United Reformed Church hold in good faith a spectrum of views as to how to categorise or resolve it. While the Wessex resolution exemplifies the desire of many in our churches to do things “decently and in order”, the discussion above, catalysed by the Synod of Scotland, demonstrates an equally strong desire to take seriously the role of the laity in sacramental leadership.

2.2 The interpretation of the phrase “pastoral necessity” in the current criteria for authorisation of lay presidency at communion (Resolution 10 ratified by synods and Assembly in 1998 (7) exemplifies the tension between different understandings of “normal” practice within our churches. “A pastoral dimension has been understood to mean a) in cases of pastoral need and b) by those who had a pastoral relationship with the Church concerned. In some parts of the United Reformed Church the necessary pastoral dimension in lay presidency has been interpreted more in terms of the pastoral need (which has made it an exception) and in other parts of the Church more in terms of the pastoral relationship (which has made it more commonplace)”. (8)

3. The history

These conflicting understandings of what is “normal” have deep roots in our pre-union traditions (for a brief treatment of this, see Appendix A). While the Statement of the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church makes it clear that we are not bound by the past, but must follow Christ wherever he leads, yet without some understanding of our different histories it is much harder to take into consideration the viewpoints of others.

4. The theology

4.1 All Church traditions claim a biblical pattern for the forms and orders of ministry that they establish. One key text in all our traditions has been Ephesians 4. Of the gifts that are given, “some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”... From this text, Calvin argues that pastors and teachers are those “whom the church can

never go without” (9). To this, he adds the ministries of elder and deacon. Whilst there is a claim of a biblical pattern for this ministry, others will argue that there is a sense of pragmatism within the reformed tradition and would therefore see that the ordering of our ministries is in principle flexible and contingent to a certain extent (10).

4.2 The FORG response when this was first discussed in February 2011 highlighted the following points: “The sacraments should be available to God’s people in a way that corresponds to our theological inheritance and Reformed faith; there is a need to involve the wider church in an affirmation of the suitability of those who preside; there is a sense in which presidency at the sacraments is a discipline and it is reasonable to expect that those who preside should be under orders” (11).

4.3 John Bradbury helpfully brings in the perspective of our European colleagues in the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), where the question of locally ordained ministers has also been explored: “It [CPCE] maintains that where the ministry to be exercised is one of Word and Sacrament, ordination is appropriate and necessary. The text states that: ‘The decisive factor for ordination is whether or not the service in question is a ministry of word and sacraments. If it is, the person to serve should be ordained [as a minister of word and sacraments], regardless of the time frame and geographical limitations that have been set for the particular service’” (12).

4.4 However, we cannot forget that recognition of the vocation and ministry of the laos, the whole people of God, is also a theological imperative held dear among some in the United Reformed Church. “In the Churches of Christ, presidency at communion was always the function of the elders of the local congregation. However, it was never the custom for the same person to preside and preach, even if the minister was the preacher. Hence the function of the elders (who were understood in the earliest days to be the bishops of the congregation on New Testament lines) as presidents was never in doubt” (13).

4.4 Could such apparently conflicting positions be reconciled? It seemed sensible to find out more about how the issue played out at grassroots level. Could any points of confluence be determined?

5. Voices from the synods

5.1 These questions have, of course, been raised and debated before, exhaustively. However, “when in 1995 proposals for Moderating Elders and Local Ministers were brought to Assembly, these were both defeated, the first by a large majority and the second by a clear majority. A compromise resolution encouraging Mission Council to explore the possibility of new forms of local leadership was approved (14). The result has been a variety of patterns developed in different synods” (15). It therefore seemed right for FAOC to canvass the current views of the synods, through the moderators, in order to explore how the situation is currently experienced.

5.2 The Wessex resolution showed a clear desire in that synod for the development of ordained local ministry; Thames North indicated some support for this. The Synod of Scotland showed an equally strong desire to affirm lay presidency; West Midlands also showed interest in this way forward, in light both of the increasing disparity between the number of ministers and of churches and that synod’s historical appreciation of lay presidency.

5.3 However, a different point of view from either of these was raised in unanimity by six further synods: “We already have local ordained ministry. We have Elders.” While further questions can properly be raised about the distinction between the United Reformed Church’s ordination of ministers of word and sacrament and of Elders (see below 7.1.2), this groundswell of opinion was worth closer examination.

6. A solution?

6.1 Elders have already been highlighted within FAOC discussions about the future of the United Reformed Church and ecumenical conversations as one of the gifts of the United Reformed Church to the wider church. What is the point, synods argued, of creating another category of ministry beyond that which we already have? South Western Synod expanded: “URC ecclesiology bestows upon the local church the authority to elect elders and to invite whomsoever they wish to preach; it offers authorisation to preside to those not on the Roll of Ministers and allows us to be flexible in interpreting pastoral necessity. Inventing new categories of ministry will not change these.”

6.2 Concerns were expressed about the possibility of unsuccessful candidates for ordained ministry being ordained by the “back door” of local ministry; about the relationship of an ordained local ministry to the existing leadership team of elders; about possible disciplinary issues if people rise to leadership without understanding the conciliar nature of the local and wider church in the United Reformed Church; and the difficulty of holding such leaders accountable, when the local church may prefer an unaccountable leader to none at all. It was pointed out that elders are accountable to the Church Meeting directly. Moreover, the Ministries committee has already worked out guidelines for elders’ conduct paralleling those to which ministers have assented (16).

6.3 Positively, several synods described the efforts already being put into “encouraging and equipping our elders to embrace and fulfil their calling to give spiritual leadership to the church” (Yorkshire Synod).

7 Yes, but...

7.1 FAOC is painfully aware of the complexities of this issue, covering theological, pastoral and practical aspects cutting to the heart of what we believe it means to be the United Reformed Church. Questions of both principle and practice remain to be resolved if we are to take this path.

7.1.1 It could be argued that this is an old set of arguments, less relevant in the developing context of pioneer ministries, Fresh Expressions and our growing relationships with some of the new churches in which boundaries between lay and ordained leadership are less significant. Certainly questions of church order are looking different these days with some dialogue partners. Yet this question will not go away if we ignore it, for the balance between order and freedom, pragmatism and inspiration still needs to be struck.

7.1.2 During the compilation of this paper systematic-theological questions in need of further work by FAOC or others have arisen.

For example:

- Is it the need for lay presidency or for local leadership, or both, that really lie at the heart of this problem? How can we decide?
- Does good order necessarily imply ordination?
- How does the ordination of elders differ from that of ministers of word and sacrament yet remain ordination?
- Would the recognition of some elders as fitting celebrants of the sacraments be a

pragmatic response to felt need, or a discernment of the Spirit's gifting? How can we tell the difference, and how can the church agree on this?

7.1.3 Practical-theological issues have also emerged from our discussions thus far, highlighting the lack of hard evidence, beyond the anecdotal, concerning conditions on the ground in our churches. The Basis of Union promises that the United Reformed Church shall "take steps to ensure that *so far as possible* ordained ministers of the Word and Sacraments are readily available to every local church" (17) [my italics]. But what proportion of congregations in different synods still have regular access to what level of ministerial oversight? What is the best use we can be making of all those – CRCWs, elders, ministers of word and sacrament, lay preachers, local leaders and others – who are leading the churches? What are the implications for their training?

7.2 What if we were to decide to move forward in this direction? Careful development of good process would be necessary in order to support and guide elders who felt called to this ministry, as well as their congregations. Here are just a few of the considerations that might arise.

7.2.1 Since FAOC would not argue that every elder has the gifting and call to become what one might label (for the sake of argument), a celebrating elder, a call/discernment process would still be required. How would this be done? Within the local church? Through synod pastoral committees? At Assembly level? Would already celebrating elders need to go through further training initially, or regular refresher courses, in a parallel way to Assembly-accredited lay preachers (18)? Would the Church have the authority to insist on this, or the money to fund it? How would celebrating elders in a congregation with little or no ministerial oversight receive support in their leadership beyond the local level?

7.2.2. Questions of power and accountability must also be tackled. For example, if a lay preacher who is not an elder has a regular relationship including celebrating communion with a church other than their own, and under this scheme they are ordained celebrating elder, in which congregation should their eldership be rooted – their "home" church, or in one of those in which they exercise this aspect of their ministry? And to which congregation are they answerable?

7.3 Finally, to acknowledge the practicalities of the situation obtaining in each of our nations, if not every congregation can even find enough serving elders, is it naïve to expect a sufficient supply of celebrating elders to emerge, even from the pool of regular "lay celebrants" whom we know already exist within some of our synods? Age and the rigours of training requirements (considered in 1.5), may also prove dissuasive factors.

7.4 This has been no easy debate for FAOC. Significant questions of principle remain unanswered or contested and as a committee we would hesitate to claim full unanimity in our conclusions. However, we feel that the time has come to test the mind of the Church.

- Do we rest content with the current situation: lay presidency variously authorised under an elastic definition of "pastoral necessity"?
- Do we decide that ordination to the ministry of word and sacrament for all who preside is necessary for the good order of the church?
- Or do we explore further dimensions of the gift of eldership already given to the United Reformed Church?

We seek the Spirit's guidance through the councils of the Church.

APPENDIX A

A1 “The Churches of Christ had both Deacons and Elders but only the Elders were ordained to Word and Sacrament. Under the Union [in 1981], Elders became Auxiliary Ministers gradually morphing into the present title of Non-stipendiary Minister. In the Churches of Christ, elders were elected by the congregation and formed part of a Team Ministry, leading worship including presiding at Communion and involved in the pastoral care of the congregation” (19).

A2 Moreover, in the Congregational tradition, lay presidency at the sacraments had been exercised and received as a gift to congregations for decades by the time the United Reformed Church was formed. There were different historic reasons for this: “In the nineteenth century – the period of most rapid growth – the celebration of the sacraments was very much less frequent than it subsequently became... In the twentieth century, however, a gradual change took place... in the incorporation of communion into the main service, rather than being an ‘after-service’ for the faithful few. Thus by the 1960s the expectation that lay preachers would preside, assisted by the publication of service books from the 1930s onwards, had grown” (20).

Footnotes

- 1 Basis of Union, The Manual A.20, The Manual Of The United Reformed Church, URC Publication, London.
- 2 Record of Assembly 2012, 41.
- 3 Reports to Assembly 2012, 268.
- 4 Thompson, David, ‘Lay preachers: a ministry in search of a theology’, unpublished paper, 2012.
- 5 2010 Church of Scotland Ministries Council report to that church’s General Assembly – p.3/27, Blue Book.
- 6 From notes of a meeting between representatives of the United Reformed Church’s Faith and Order Reference Group and representatives of the pastoral committee of the National Synod of Scotland on the question of Presidency at the Sacraments – May 14th 2012.
- 7 Record of Assembly 1998, 10.
- 8 Mortimer, Richard, unpublished paper submitted to FORG, June 2010.
- 9 John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion 1559, Bk 4, III, 4, Westminster John Knox, Louisville, 1960, 1057.
- 10 Bradbury, John, ‘Local Ordained Ministry: A discussion paper for the Faith and Order Committee of the United Reformed Church’, Nov 2012.
- 11 Pope, Robert, ‘Presidency at the Sacraments’, unpublished paper for FORG, 2011.
- 12 Bradbury, ibid quoting Ministry, Order and Episkope, CPCE 2012, 66
- 13 Thompson, David, ‘Some notes on Eldership in the United Reformed Church’, unpublished paper, 2011.
- 14 Record of Assembly 1995, 44-47.
- 15 Thompson, David, ibid, 2012.
- 16 http://urc.org.uk/images/Ministries/Ministries%20Committee/Toolbox/guidelines_elders.pdf
- 17 Basis of Union, The Manual A.24, The Manual Of The United Reformed Church, URC Publication, London.
- 18 <http://www.urc.org.uk/lay-preachers.html#four>
- 19 Barr, Mary, paper prepared for Synod of Scotland meeting September 2011 and submitted to FORG, August 2011.
- 20 Thompson, David, ibid, 2012.

Paper F2

United Reformed Church
Ecumenical Future

Faith and Order Committee



Paper F2

Faith and Order Committee: United Reformed Church Ecumenical Future

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Elizabeth Welch, convener of the Faith and Order Committee minister@theroundchapel.org.uk
Action required	Discernment regarding the Church's ongoing engagement with and contribution to the constantly changing ecumenical scene, especially in light of current discussions about the future of the Church.
Draft resolution(s)	None
Alternative options to consider, if any	None

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Out of our ongoing discussions about the future of the Church and the distinctive characteristics of the United Reformed Church we seek to understand our place within the wider Church and to seek the Spirit's leading.
Main points	The ecumenical scene has changed since the formation of the United Reformed Church. Some questions must be asked continually. Are we still committed to the ecumenical movement? How do we envision visibly unity? How should our commitment be expressed? What are the distinctive characteristics we bring to the wider scene?
Previous relevant documents	The 2007 statement regarding the nature of our ecumenical engagement is attached. Also attached is the October 2013 World Council of Churches' unity statement. The documents resulting from Mission Council's discussions on the future of the church are all relevant.
Consultation has taken place with...	Mission Council and the Faith and Order Committee

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	The nature and character of our engagement with ecumenical partners.

United Reformed Church ecumenical future

“What is the Spirit saying to the churches?”

1 Introduction

1.1 In 1972 the United Reformed Church celebrated the birth of a dream, of a new united church, between the Congregational Church of England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England, that was to be a prelude to a wider uniting with other Churches in the UK. The dream was realised in union with two other Churches, the Churches of Christ and the Scottish Congregational Church. This dream is foundational to the Basis of Union and has been reaffirmed at previous Assemblies. The most recent significant discussion was in the 2007 General Assembly which resulted in the adoption of the Statement on the Nature of the United Reformed Church’s Ecumenical Engagement (see appendix 1). There was also a discussion in Mission Council as recently as November 2011 with the review of URC ecumenical relations.

1.2 However, 42 years later, the URC has not seen wider realisation of the early dream. While the URC has a well-regarded commitment to the ecumenical journey, other factors affecting the life of the Church in the UK have come to the fore. There has been a growth of secularisation, leading to a retrenchment of many historic denominations as they have sought their own survival. There has been a blossoming of new Churches, both home grown and those fuelled by immigration, with their own sense of identity and their desire for that identity to flourish. Some have perceived there to be a lack of confidence in the Gospel across the United Reformed Church, (described by some as “functional atheism”) which has resulted in diffidence about sharing the faith both within the Christian community and in the wider community.

1.3 The March edition of *Reform* has brought together four helpful and challenging reflections on ecumenism which outline some of the settings, both local and international, of the debate on the future of the ecumenical journey and its particular nature. The World Council of Churches general secretary refers to the unity statement adopted at the Assembly in Busan in 2013, which is offered to the Churches as a stimulus to further thought on the nature of unity that is God’s desire for God’s people (appendix 2). The Faith and Order Committee is considering this document alongside the WCC “Common Vision” statement to see how best to engage the United Reformed Church in responding.

1.4 The Faith and Order Committee has been looking at a range of issues with regard to the future of the Church and brought papers for discussion to both meetings of Mission Council in 2013. In May 2013, five scenarios were offered in order to stimulate discussion, imagining different futures for the Church. In November 2013, the Faith and Order Committee drew out two topics from the May discussion that had emerged as priorities for further prayer and reflection: conciliarity and the church meeting, and the issue of “living” or “dying” – whether Mission Council envisaged a future for the United Reformed Church and, if so, what shape that future would take. One of the issues that arose out of the November discussion was the ecumenical calling of the United Reformed Church. The Faith and Order Committee now wishes to bring this issue to Mission Council, with a view to both re-affirming the particular calling of the United Reformed Church to be at the ecumenical cutting edge of Christian life in the UK today, and also affirming the need for a renewal of the nature

and understanding of the URC's Reformed identity. The committee believes that the URC's particular contribution to the life of the Church in the UK at the present time will lie in its grasp of its Reformed identity and that this has the potential to lead to the renewal of the Church and its outreach into the world. Building on the discussion at Mission Council, the Faith and Order Committee will bring a further report to General Assembly for reflection.

2 The scenarios

2.1 The Faith and Order Committee brought five scenarios to Mission Council, to which a sixth scenario was subsequently added. These scenarios are available on the URC website (under URC Resources; Mission Council May 2013 paper A1). The scenarios and the resulting discussion at Mission Council are summarised below:

1. "Steady as she goes, being realistic about ongoing decline" – i.e. more or less staying the same. This scenario gained the least support from Mission Council.

2. The Uniting Churches of/in Great Britain – Anglicans, Methodist and United Reformed Church uniting across the three nations, leading to a major sell-off of buildings and the development of new vibrant congregations. There were strongly divided views on this scenario. Some folk were very much in favour. Others were against, feeling it to be unrealistic and leading to a loss of United Reformed identity.

3. Encouraging local unions in each place. It was felt by some that this would lead to a loss of United Reformed identity. There were varying views expressed at Mission Council.

4. The development of "pastorate churches", grouped into five new synods, with pastorates organised into 10 to 15 congregations. Each pastorate would have one central church building hosting a monthly united service. For the rest of the month the congregations would function as cell groups. Funds from the sale of church buildings would be released to support staff and a lively programme at the central church. In parallel with this, there would be the development of "a Reformed order within the wider Church". Views on this one were mixed, with a strong resistance to a major structural re-organisation.

5. Local incarnations: the development of new forms of Christian communities such as Fresh Expressions and "de-branded" churches, leading to a great range of different churches, with only a handful left with a recognisable United Reformed identity.

6. "Cyber-church" – dependent on development of social networking and new technology, creating the possibility of on-line communities. (This was explored in the subsequent Faith and Order meeting.)

2.2 There was a lively discussion on the scenarios, with a range of responses. In discussions in Mission Council it has become clear that structural re-organisation, whether within the United Reformed church or with ecumenical partners, is not felt to be the primary way forward in terms of renewing the life of the Church. Rather there is a desire to re-focus on spirituality, embracing the renewal of prayer and worship; theological reflection, giving time to consider the particular gifts of the URC's Reformed heritage and the way they shape and invigorate our shared life today; and practical local initiatives, reaching out together to people and places of need in each community.

2.3 What follows is a summary of the issues raised with regard to the United Reformed Church's ecumenical commitment, some practical suggestions that have been made to move the Church forward, and some questions for Mission Council to reflect on.

3 Issues:

3.1 Context and realism

The United Reformed Church is seeking its particular identity in a time of ecumenical struggle in which it is perceived that there is a limited desire from other Christian traditions to engage meaningfully with the United Reformed Church. In this context, we want to hold the significance of the ecumenical drive. Through our clarity about what we offer from our own identity to the ecumenical scene, we will be realistic. We will not be discouraged when our gifts are not received by others, nor will we complain about them. Rather, living with our own integrity, we will see where the Spirit is speaking to the Church and leading across the Churches. As one Mission Council respondent put it in the November 2013 meeting: “What does faithfulness to our calling mean? Not beating others up, but quietly raising the ecumenical dimension, seeking partners where they may be found, but not being deterred from doing pieces of work if we’re on our own.”

3.2 Distinguishing the marks of the United Reformed Church

Mission Council worked on identifying a range of these characteristics, as follows:

- Semper Reformanda – reserving the right to change in the light of experience of the Holy Spirit and openly and intentionally stating our readiness to change;
- the particular interpretation that the United Reformed church gives to the priesthood of all believers;
- elders who are ordained and set apart to share leadership with each other and the minister of Word and sacrament;
- the church meeting, in which people together discern the leading of the Holy Spirit, and through which power is shared;
- the ability, in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to develop policies that embraces diversity e.g. in recognising both infant and believers baptism;
- upholding the rights of personal conviction;
- the strong sense of social justice & action, freedom in worship, centring on Scripture;
- valuing the local church.

One group at Mission Council described United Reformed Church identity as being about a distinctive combination of characteristics, like a recipe or a culture. It is not that the United Reformed Church has characteristics which are not individually shared with other Churches; it is that the particular combination of these characteristics in the United Reformed Church offers this Church’s distinctive identity.

3.3 Conciliarity

This is being addressed in a separate paper on conciliarity and church meetings.

3.4 Structure and institutions verses movement

More work needs to be done on the kind of structures that are helpful to the flourishing of denominations in the future. What sort of need is there for the Church in the changing age in which we find ourselves, where institutions and structures are often bypassed by looser networks created by, for example, social media?

3.5 Receiving other Churches’ gifts

What can we learn from other parts of the Christian tradition that would benefit our life? More work needs to be done on exploring the gifts of other traditions and our openness to receiving these.

3.6 Local ecumenical partnerships

There is a need to celebrate the gifts of these partnerships, as well as exploring where the

future of such partnership lies. There will be a fringe meeting at General Assembly on local ecumenical partnerships; there is a Churches Together in England working group, which includes the United Reformed Church's secretary for ecumenical relations, David Tatem, looking at issues with regard to LEP's, how they work and their future.

3.7 Balance of ecumenical engagement between local and regional and national

In a Church in three nations, committed to the importance of the local congregation in each place, there is a need to look at the capacity for developing ecumenical relationships that will differ depending on the locality, the region and the nation.

3.8 Developing new partnerships

There is a range of new partners springing up from outwith the historic churches who bring with them new and different possibilities for shared life and work.

3.9 Building up spiritual life

There is a need to discern the spiritual gifts of the Reformed tradition, the ways in which these can renew the lives of individuals and congregations, together with the gifts of other traditions.

3.10 Discerning the Holy Spirit

At the heart of the Church's life is the prayerful discernment of the Holy Spirit, both within and between congregations and churches. Resourcing this discernment will help the life of the Church to flourish.

4 Practical approaches

4.1 Put together a collection of stories where the URC is contributing ecumenically, contributing good things.

4.2 Identify the issues and attitudes that block ecumenical growth and development and devise ways of addressing these.

4.3 Look for signs of resurrection – identifying where God is present in and between our Churches and celebrating this presence.

4.4 Look at the Cumbria covenant and the model it offers for producing an ecumenical county.

4.5 Look at a “denominational” URC membership scheme for those who are in LEP's or who live at a distance from their nearest URC and are therefore going to a church of another tradition, but who want to retain their URC link.

4.6 Ask synods to target ecumenical possibilities and put their resources into these.

5 Questions for Mission Council:

5.1 In view of the current ecumenical climate, does the URC want to continue to affirm our ecumenical identity as a key part of our life?

5.2 If so, what are the particular Reformed emphases which we treasure and which give us life, will we want to offer in ecumenical conversations and life? What are the gifts we look to receive?

5.3 How far and in what ways do we wish to affirm God's life-giving call to all God's people to be one?

5.4 Would it be helpful to open up a conversation, in co-operation with the range of ecumenical partners with whom we are surrounded, about the nature of visible unity and what it might look like, so that we can be renewed in the vision that God holds in front of us?

APPENDIX 1

Statement of the Nature of the United Reformed Church's Ecumenical Engagement (General Assembly 2007)

The challenge

Where should we focus our limited resources for ecumenical initiatives?

To answer that question, the Ecumenical committee has tried to get a clearer picture of how our current ecumenical engagement needs to look.

Where are we?

1. A lot has happened in the last ten years. In the 1990s the Called to Be One process replaced Councils of Churches with Churches Together groups and drew Roman Catholics into full involvement. It said nothing about inter-faith or environmental/ecological issues, though, whereas today both are centre stage.
2. The Anglican – Methodist Covenant has been a real cause for rejoicing, laying to rest the damaging myths held in each tradition about the other's history. However, it has shown how difficult it will be to bring about further visible, structural unity. More immediately attainable goals are needed, though not as substitutes for the ultimate prize.
3. The recent Methodist – United Reformed Church document Peacemaking: a Christian vocation has been hailed as an excellent example of modern ecumenical collaboration – a short, intense study on a focussed area, co-opting experts to do a particular piece of work. Many younger ecumenists see their most natural outlet as the single-issue pressure group on concerns such as trade justice, refugees and asylum issues, or the environment.
4. The United Reformed Church is still firmly committed to ecumenical activity. We give thanks for courageous witness and painstaking hard work in Local Ecumenical Partnerships, intermediate forums and national ecumenical instruments. We rejoice at ever-growing membership of ecumenical bodies. The bad news is that we have to recognise, honestly, the many problems of relating in several directions at the same time, the frustration caused by lack of progress, and the sometimes bewildering complexity of relationships.
5. Today the ecumenical movement can be very varied. It is also building bridges to those in non traditional churches, outside the Churches Together structures – notably Pentecostals, New Churches and Fresh Expressions of Church.
6. One focus for the ecumenical debate is about responding to diversity in unity. This arises because:
 - a) Many ecumenical partners find themselves threatened by potentially church-dividing issues, especially around human sexuality. They are confronted with the question: "How do

we hold together those within our own number who in all integrity disagree?”

b) Some see God calling us to new, emerging ways of being church or fresh expressions, and ask how to hold together more traditional and more experimental forms, while encouraging a thousand different flowers to bloom.

c) Those pondering the shape of global Christianity wonder how to hold together the forms it takes in the North and West with those emerging from Southern cultures.

d) Some traditions worldwide stress their particular roots. Others are forming united or uniting churches across historic divides. Both these witnesses need to be heard.

The other focus for debate is about how we live with our differences. As well as the reasons already given, this arises because:

a) There are concerns over how to relate to Islam, and whether the debate about multiculturalism is shifting from how to get people a place at the table, to how to manage the debate they then have.

b) It has been said that the theme of the Kingdom of God in the New Testament is universal in scope, while its content is particular to individual lives and specific situations. If so, the ecumenical task is to affirm this universal scope against a fast-expanding background of different settings, ways of talking and sets of ideas. Can we recognise it when we share a common goal, or search for the same truth, but use different language to describe it?

c) To do our theology in a wide range of different contexts is a big challenge. We have to be even-handed in dealing with others. We also have to struggle with whether God is calling us to work with what we find or stand over against it for the sake of the Gospel.

d) Contemporary thinking about evangelism affirms the value of each person's search and story, rather than stressing the need for common ground. Emerging church thinkers plead for the treatment of everyone as individuals, so we can all learn and even teach.

8. Some people respond to the current state of affairs by doubting whether we can hold together; they predict new schisms – and alliances. It is easier to identify possible schisms than to foresee the shape of any new alliance. Those who agree about the public issues which should concern the church also disagree just as strongly on the nature of the church, so if the church split it could fracture into small pieces rather than being able to form new groupings.

9. There is an emerging debate about ecumenical core values. At an ecumenical officers' conference in 2006, it was suggested that full visible unity was a last gasp of late Enlightenment utopian thinking which has no place in the 21st century.

10. In a recent poll Christian Aid emerged as the most hated charity and the Salvation Army the third most hated, because they were “religious” rather than “spiritual”. Although there are some questions about how the poll was done, it does seem that people now associate something “religious” with being old, boring and disconnected – whilst something “spiritual” is compelling, different, creative and fresh.

Four Ways Forward

11. The United Reformed Church still upholds the definition of organic unity offered by the Second World Conference on Faith and Order at Edinburgh in 1937: A Church so united that the ultimate loyalty of every member would be given to the whole body and not to any part of it. We would see certain elements of such a Church as non-negotiable, such as the ordination of women to all forms of ministry, but we believe organic unity remains important for good reasons:

a) because it is based on the prayer of Jesus that his followers should be One;

b) because we believe that in the last century those who went before us heard God's renewed call to be One and we must witness to their insight;

- c) because of its symbolic value for work in healing and reconciliation;
- d) because if God is One in Trinity, and there is one earth for which we all share responsibility, then for us to be divided in our response to one another, to our environment and to God is a denial of that oneness;
- e) because when the Church is called to new ways it matters how we put things to rest. Drawing a line under our shared history of persecution and martyrdom may be a powerful response to sectarianism and encourage good community relations;
- f) because we live in the transition between the modern world of the 18th to 20th centuries and the post modern 21st century world. It is too easy to say that everything which went before is irrelevant now;
- g) because even if it was starry eyed to dream about a future with one church, we may be called to hold on to that vision while others lose it, even if we have to redefine and revalidate our arguments in terms of the world we live in now.

12. The United Reformed Church is committed to recognising ecumenical partners as people of worth, made in the image of Christ and part of his body the Church. In the past, we have tended to recognise what we share with other Christians, and suggest renewed unity with them on that basis. Now, we may be starting to see that there are still differences between us, and we had assumed more similarity than was there. If part of our new focus needs to affirm the diversity in our unity, then holding together with others despite our differences is a pressing challenge. We shall need to affirm as a core value our recognition of others and the presence of God in them, their gifts and their creativity. This will help us to witness to the truth we share as Christians in the face of our culture, which increasingly challenges the Church by alternative ways of understanding and portraying the reality around us.

13. The United Reformed Church bears witness to living with differences. We acknowledge a common starting point, but accept that this works out locally in different ways. For us, the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for our faith and conduct. In each local church the gathered fellowship of believers seeks God's help to carry out their witness in the place where they are. In making decisions on such historic issues as administering baptism, on whether or not to remarry divorced people, or on our attitudes to warfare and weaponry, we have lived out our differences. We will need to continue reflecting on the ways we use the Bible and hear its message, and on what theology and spirituality teach us about the richness of God, if we are to prevent our standard core from becoming a lowest common denominator.

14. The United Reformed Church will explore ecumenically the theme of space. This is important because:

- a) God's gift of space and time permits hospitality, encounter and exploration. The practice of ecumenism demands a radical hospitality towards other people, an openness to what emerges and the gift of space – not least for those with no background in the Christian faith or others wanting to re-engage.
- b) Exploring how to inhabit and use space opens up questions of how to live together peacefully in a divided global family.
- c) As Catch the Vision moves on to spirituality, we will consider the ecumenical dimension in inviting God to inhabit the silence and stillness we seek within us, which used to be full of our own concerns.
- d) As we build bridges to fresh expressions of Church, we will need to find common ground with growing virtual and online communities, especially of younger believers, in their search for God.

e) To hold ourselves together, across our diversity, we will need to set aside reverent space for God in word, text and pixel, as well as in hospitality, community, church council meeting and shared discernment.

f) Space allows room to unfold and is therefore crucial to the concept of growth, which would seem to be one of God's central concerns. The first things God places on this earth after creation are those that grow and bear fruit.

15. We see this statement deepening the theoretical basis of the Three Ecumenical Principles agreed at General Assembly 2001:

a) To expand the range and deepen the nature of the Christian common life and witness in each local community.

b) To proclaim more clearly, in word and deed, that in Christ we are one World Church family living in a world which God loves, and to celebrate the rich diversity of cultures, languages and church traditions, and to seek, as appropriate, to work with members of other faith communities for the promotion of biblical values of love, peace and justice.

c) To persevere in the search for the visible and organic unity of the Church through church-to-church conversations on matters of faith and church order so that sinful, and sometimes death-dealing, divisions may be healed and the Christian message of reconciliation be proclaimed with integrity.

APPENDIX 2

Unity Statement of the World Council Assembly – Busan 2013

God's Gift and Call to Unity - and our Commitment

1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1)." Creation is a gift from the living God. We celebrate creation's life in its diversity and give thanks for its goodness. It is the will of God that the whole creation, reconciled in the love of Christ through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, should live together in unity and peace (Eph.1).

Our experience

2. Today, the whole creation, the world and its people, live in the tension between the profoundest hope and the deepest despair. We give thanks for the diversity of human cultures, for the wonder of knowledge and learning, for the enthusiasm and vibrancy of many young people, for communities being rebuilt and enemies reconciled, for people being healed, and populations fed. We rejoice when people of different faiths work together for justice and peace. These are signs of hope and new beginnings. But we grieve that there are also places where God's children cry out. Social and economic injustice, poverty and famine, greed and war ravage our world. There is violence and terrorism and the threat of war, particularly nuclear war. Many have to live with HIV and AIDS and suffer from other epidemics; peoples are displaced and their lands dispossessed. Many women and children are victims of violence, inequality and trafficking as are some men. There are those who are marginalised and excluded. We are all in danger of being alienated from our cultures and disconnected from earth. Creation has been misused and we face threats to the balance of life, a growing ecological crisis and the effects of climate change. These are signs of our disordered relations with God, with one another and with creation, and we confess that they dishonour God's gift of life.

3. Within churches we experience a similar tension between celebration and sorrow. There are signs of vibrant life and creative energy in the growth of Christian communities around the world with rich diversity. There is a deepening sense among some churches of needing one another and of being called by Christ to be in unity. In places where churches experience anguish and constant fear of persecution, solidarity between Christians from different traditions in the service of justice and peace is a sign of God's grace. The ecumenical movement has encouraged new friendships forming a seed bed in which unity can grow. There are places where Christians work and witness together in their local communities and new regional agreements of covenanting, closer fellowship and church unions. Increasingly, we recognize that we are called to share with, and learn from, those of other faiths, to work with them in common efforts for justice and peace and for the preservation of the integrity of God's beautiful but hurting creation. These deepening relationships bring new challenges and enlarge our understanding.

4. We grieve that there are also painful experiences of situations where diversity has turned into division and we do not always recognise the face of Christ in each other. We cannot all gather together around the table in Eucharistic communion. Divisive issues remain. New issues bring sharp challenges which create new divisions within and between churches. These must be addressed in the fellowship of churches by the way of consensus discernment. Too easily we withdraw into our own traditions and communities refusing to be challenged and enriched by the gifts others hold out to us. Sometimes we seem to embrace the creative new life of faith and yet do not embrace a passion for unity or a longing for fellowship with others. This makes us more ready to tolerate injustice and even conflicts between and within the churches. We are held back as some grow weary and disappointed on the ecumenical path.

5. We do not always honour the God who is the source of our life. Whenever we abuse life through our practices of exclusion and marginalization, our refusal to pursue justice, our unwillingness to live in peace, our failure to seek unity, and our exploitation of creation, we reject the gifts God holds out to us. Our shared scriptural vision.

6. As we read the Scriptures together, under the guidance of the Spirit, our eyes are opened to the place of the community of God's people within creation. Men and women are created in the image and likeness of God and given the responsibility to care for life (Gen. 1:27-28). The covenant with Israel marks a decisive moment in the unfolding of God's plan of salvation. The prophets call God's covenanted people to work for justice and peace, to care for the poor, the outcast, and the marginalized, and to be a light to the nations (Micah 6:8; Isaiah 49:6).

7. God sent Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God (John 1). Through his ministry and through his death on the cross Jesus destroyed the walls of separation and hostility, established a new covenant, and brought about genuine unity and reconciliation in his own Body (Eph. 1:9-10 and 2:14-16). He announced the coming Kingdom of God, had compassion on the crowds, healed the sick and preached good news to the poor (Matt. 9:35-36; Luke 4:14-24). He reached out to the despised, the sinners, the alien, offering acceptance, and redemption. By his life, death and resurrection, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus revealed the communion of the life of God the Holy Trinity, and opened to all a new way of living in communion with one another in the love of God (1 John 1:1-3). Jesus prayed for the unity of his disciples for the sake of the world (John 17:20-24). He entrusted his message and his ministry of unity and reconciliation to his disciples and

through them to the Church, which is called to continue his mission (2 Cor. 5:18-20). From the beginning the community of believers lived together, were devoted to the apostolic teaching and fellowship, breaking bread and praying together, caring for the poor, proclaiming the good news and yet struggling with factions and divisions (Acts 2:42; Acts 15).

8. The Church, as the Body of Christ, embodies Jesus' uniting, reconciling and self-sacrificial love to the world on the cross. At the heart of God's own life of communion is forever a cross and forever resurrection – a reality which is revealed to us and through us. We pray and wait with eager longing for God to renew the whole creation (Rom. 8:19-21). God is always there ahead of us in our pilgrimage, always surprising us, calling us to repentance, forgiving our failures and offering us the gift of new life.

God's call to unity today

9. On our ecumenical journey we have come to understand more about God's call to the Church to serve the unity of all creation. The vocation of the Church is to be: foretaste of new creation; prophetic sign to the whole world of the life God intends for all; and servant spreading the good news of God's Kingdom of justice, peace and love.

10. As foretaste, God gives to the Church gracious gifts: the Word, testified to in Holy Scripture to which we are invited to respond in faith in the power of the Holy Spirit; baptism in which we are made a new creation in Christ; the Eucharist, the fullest expression of communion with God and with one another, which builds up the fellowship and from which we are sent out in mission; an apostolic ministry to draw out and nurture the gifts of all the faithful and to lead the mission of the Church. Conciliar gatherings too are gifts enabling the fellowship, under the Spirit's guidance, to discern the will of God, to teach together and to live sacrificially, serving one another's needs and the world's needs. The unity of the Church is not uniformity; diversity is also a gift, creative and life-giving. But diversity cannot be so great that those in Christ become strangers and enemies to one another, thus damaging the uniting reality of life in Christ.

11. As prophetic sign, the Church's vocation is to show forth the life that God wills for the whole creation. We are hardly a credible sign as long as our ecclesial divisions, which spring from fundamental disagreements in faith, remain. Divisions and marginalisation on the basis of ethnicity, race, gender, disability, power, status, caste, and other forms of discrimination also obscure the Church's witness to unity. To be a credible sign our life together must reflect the qualities of patience, humility, generosity, attentive listening to one another, mutual accountability, inclusivity, and a willingness to stay together, not saying "I have no need of you" (1 Cor. 12:21). We are called to be a community upholding justice in its own life, living together in peace, never settling for the easy peace that silences protest and pain, but struggling for the true peace that comes with justice. Only as Christians are being reconciled and renewed by God's Spirit will the Church bear authentic witness to the possibility of reconciled life for all people, for all creation. It is often in its weakness and poverty, suffering as Christ suffers, that the Church is truly sign and mystery of God's grace.

12. As servant, the Church is called to make present God's holy, loving and life affirming plan for the world revealed in Jesus Christ. By its very nature the Church is missionary, called and sent to witness to the gift of communion that God intends for all humanity and for all creation in the Kingdom of God. In its work of holistic mission – evangelism and diakonia done in Christ's way – the Church participates in offering God's life to the world. In the power of the Spirit, the Church is to proclaim the good news in ways that awaken a response in different contexts, languages and cultures, to pursue God's justice, and to work

for God's peace. Christians are called to make common cause with people of other faiths or none wherever possible, for the well-being of all peoples and creation.

13. The unity of the Church, the unity of the human community and the unity of the whole creation are interconnected. Christ who makes us one calls us to live in justice and peace and impels us to work together for justice and peace in God's world. The plan of God made known to us in Christ is, in the fullness of time, to gather up all things in Christ, "things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:9-10)".

Our commitment

14. We affirm the place of the Church in God's design and repent of the divisions among and within our churches, confessing with sorrow that our disunity undermines our witness to the good news of Jesus Christ and makes less credible our witness to that unity God desires for all. We confess our failures to do justice, to work for peace, and to sustain creation. Despite our failings, God is faithful and forgiving and continues to call us to unity. Having faith in God's creating and re-creating power, we long for the Church to be foretaste, credible sign and effective servant of the new life that God is offering to the world. It is in God, who beckons us to life in all its fullness that joy, hope, and a passion for unity are renewed. Therefore, we urge one another to remain committed to the primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches:

"to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe."

We affirm the uniqueness of our fellowship and our conviction to pursue the visible unity of the Church together, thankful for our diversity and conscious of our need to grow in communion.

15. In faithfulness to this our common calling, we will seek together the full visible unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church when we shall express our unity around the one table of the Lord. In pursuing the unity of the Church we will open ourselves to receive the gifts of each other's traditions, and offer our gifts to one another. We will learn to commemorate together the martyrs who witnessed to our common faith. We will continue theological conversations, giving attention to new voices and different methods of approach. We will seek to live out the consequences of our theological agreements. We will intensify our work for justice, peace and the healing of creation, and address together the complex challenges of contemporary social, economic and moral issues. We will work for more just, participatory and inclusive ways of living together. We will make common cause for the well-being of humanity and creation with those of other faith communities. We will hold each other accountable for fulfilling these commitments. Above all, we will pray without ceasing for the unity for which Jesus prayed (John 17): A unity of faith, love and compassion that Jesus Christ brought through his ministry; a unity like the unity Christ shares with the Father; a unity enfolded in the communion of the life and love of the Triune God. Here, we receive the mandate for the Church's vocation for unity in mission and service.

16. We turn to God, the source of all life, and we pray:

O God of life,
lead us to justice and peace,
that suffering people may discover hope;
the scarred world find healing;
and divided churches become visibly one,
through the one who prayed for us,
and in whom we are one Body,
your Son, Jesus Christ,
who with you and the Holy Spirit,
is worthy to be praised, one God,
now and forever. Amen.

Paper H

Resourcing our Elders
Ministries Committee



Paper H

Ministries Committee: Resourcing our Elders

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Revd Craig Bowman ministries@urc.org.uk
Action required	For discussion
Draft resolution(s)	None
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Resourcing Our Elders
Main points	A brief introduction and an example of the revised Eldership Training materials
Previous relevant documents	A Course for Elders
Consultation has taken place with...	Education and Learning Committee, Ministries Committee, training and development officers

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	A renewed attention to the role of elders within the United Reformed Church may challenge those ecumenical partnerships which do not have elders but will also provide resources for equipping local leadership regardless of the exact pattern found in each place

Resourcing Our Elders

Introduction

There is much to say about elders and eldership. This is an attempt to put together some resources to help elders or prospective elders to think about some of the important issues. The areas of learning can be taken in any order, used in whole or in part and be used with either a local church eldership or a synod or in a more localised training event. The idea is to provide a range of resources which people can dip into.

The areas are:

1. **Exploring eldership:** the role of elders in the URC, shadowing and mentoring, what it means to be called and ordained, how things might work in ecumenical contexts.
2. **God calls elders:** the historical and biblical examples of eldership, what we mean by spiritual leadership, the gifts and graces elders need.
3. **A team of elders:** working as a team, building a team of elders, diversity, confidence and humility.
4. **The work of elders in mission:** what is the local church? what are the vision2020 mission priorities?
5. **Pastoral care:** the elder as pastor, pastoral teams and oversight, Good Practice.
6. **Prayer and spirituality:** nurturing your faith, praying with others, supporting the church's worship. Praying as an eldership.
7. **Next steps:** becoming a supporting elder (this would be a replacement term for non serving elder), further learning, legal and other support from the synod (including trustee issues).

We would like to thank all those who have been part of putting this resource together, specifically the synods and synod training officers (or equivalents) and Westminster College

Ruth Whitehead, Peter Ball
On behalf of Education and Learning and Ministries Committees, 2013

Resourcing our elders

Area 6. Prayer and Spirituality

A Bible Study on 1 Timothy 3: 1-7

“It is true that anyone who desires to be a church official wants to be something worthwhile. That’s why officials must have a good reputation and be faithful in marriage. They must be self-controlled, sensible, well-behaved, friendly to strangers, and able to teach. They must not be heavy drinkers or troublemakers. Instead, they must be kind and gentle and not love money. Church officials must be in control of their own families, and they must see that their children are obedient and always respectful. If they don’t know how to control their own families, how can they look after God’s people?”

“They must not be new followers of the Lord. If they are, they might become proud and be doomed along with the devil. Finally, they must be well-respected by people who are not followers. Then they won’t be trapped and disgraced by the devil.”

(Contemporary English Version)

It is interesting that when Paul states who should be a church official (overseer, elder, pastor) it seems to depend not so much on qualifications, gifts and abilities, but on character. An elder should command the respect of others, in the church, in the family and in the wider world. He or she should also be a person who is in control of themselves, whilst being a servant of the church and of the gospel.

Question 1: How does this list of demands on the character of an elder strike you?

The United Reformed Church has produced this document, *Guidelines on conduct and behaviour for elders*

1. Introduction

This paper sets down expectations of elders in relation to Ministers of Word and Sacraments and church related community workers (CRCWs) within the United Reformed Church. Parallel papers about the expectations of ministers and CRCWs are to be read alongside this document.

2. Basis of Union

The foundation for the conduct of ministers is in the Basis of Union, summarised in Schedule E paragraph 2, “Ministers must conduct themselves and exercise all aspects of their ministries in a manner which is compatible with the unity and peace of the United Reformed Church and the affirmation made by ministers at ordination and induction (Schedule C) and the Statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D) in accordance with which ministers undertake to exercise their ministry.”

The relevant promises in Schedule C are:

- a) “to live a holy life and to maintain the truth of the Gospel whatever trouble or persecution may arise”,
- b) “to fulfil the duties of your charge faithfully, to lead the church in worship, to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, to take your part in the councils of the Church, and to give leadership to the Church in its mission to the world, and;
- c) as a minister of the United Reformed Church “to seek its well-being, purity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church”.

Elders “share with ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the local churches, taking counsel together in the elders’ meeting for the whole church and having severally groups of members particularly entrusted to their pastoral care. They are ‘associated with ministers in all the councils of the church’. Elders promise at their ordination to ‘accept the office of elder of the United Reformed Church’ and promise ‘to perform its duties faithfully”.

Elders and members receive ministers at their induction or CRCWs at their commissioning “as from God” to serve among them and with them in the world. They promise to pray for the minister/CRCW, to seek together the will of God and “give due honour, consideration and encouragement, building one another up in faith, hope and love.”

Members promise, “in dependence on God’s grace, to be faithful in private and public worship, to live in the fellowship of the Church and to share in its work”, and to give and serve, as God enables them, “for the advancement of his kingdom throughout the world”. They also promise “by that same grace, to follow Christ and to seek to do and to bear his will” all the days of their life.

3. Standards of Christian Behaviour

3a *Personal integrity and health*

- To live a Christian life as persons of prayer and integrity.
- To be committed to growing in faith and discipleship and developing the gifts each has been given.
- To be aware of the need of ministers, elders and members to have appropriate boundaries that safeguard personal and spiritual health and welfare, to promote healthy relationships with others and not to do anything to undermine the spiritual health of another.
- To recognise the need for ministers, elders and members to have a healthy lifestyle and to balance demands on ministers’/CRCWs’ availability and accessibility with respect for ministers’/CRCWs’ time for family and friends, personal renewal and rest and spiritual growth.
- To maintain strict confidentiality of all matters shared in confidence, except when required by law to do otherwise, e.g. with regard to the safety of children, and to respect ministers’ needs to maintain that same confidentiality.
- To exercise care and sensitivity when seeking counsel from others and in discussion about pastoral concerns, in order that the identity of any person shall not be revealed unless permission has been granted.
- To refrain from using privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material.

3b *Relationships with ministers*

- To work collaboratively with ministers/CRCWs and elders and members in all aspects of the life of the pastorate.
- To support the ministers/CRCWs, through prayer, encouragement and partnership, including honouring the terms of settlement with regard to holidays, financial benefits and continuing training.
- To regard all persons with equal respect and concern and not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation, including ministers/CRCWs.
- To honour the ministers/CRCWs currently called to serve and not invite or encourage other ministers to be involved in the life of the church or to offer pastoral care without the ministers’/CRCWs’ consent.
- To refrain from raising pastoral issues with a previous minister/CRCW.

- To respect the work of previous ministers/CRCWs and deal honourably with their record.
- To welcome retired ministers/CRCWs as members and worshippers in the pastorate.

3c Relationship with elders, members and others

- To regard all persons with equal love and concern.
- To uphold values of faithfulness, trust and respect.
- To share leadership and pastoral care with others called to these purposes.
- To work collaboratively and safeguard the contribution of the whole church in decision-making processes.
- To seek advice from others if in doubt about one's competence to deal with any issue or situation.
- To consider very carefully taking any position of responsibility and to support the direction of church life initiated through the ministers/CRCWs, elders and church meetings.
- Not to enter a sexual relationship with anyone in their care.
- Not to be alone with a child or children or young people in a place quite separate from others.

3d Relationship with Councils of the church

- To recognise that the pastorate is part of the wider United Reformed Church and that the ministers/CRCWs are committed to play their part in the wider councils of the Church and in ecumenical relationships.
- To engage positively with all the councils of the church.
- To participate in Synod's consultation and review of the pastorate as appropriate.

Question 2: Do you see any relationship between St Paul's list and the *Guidelines for the conduct of elders*?

St Paul believes that the character he describes is not produced by force of will, but by "growing up into Christ" (Ephesians 4:15). There is a link between our characters and the respect others have for us, and our life of prayer and openness to the Spirit. Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit in terms of character traits or behaviour (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) and concludes: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the spirit" (Galatians 5: 25).

Question 3: Can you think of ways in which your own character has been shaped by your discipleship as you have 'grown up into Christ'?

Question 4: What has been most helpful to you in your spiritual growth?

Question 5: What most challenges you in this passage?

Question 6: Does the whole group feel the same way?

Question 7: Are there ways in which you think Christians can strengthen and encourage one another in their lives of prayer and spirituality? Confidentiality?

Mission Council March 2014

Report from the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee

The Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee (PRWC) was given the responsibility by the 2012 General Assembly, through resolution 38, for seeking personal and collective reconciliation in the United Reformed Church, following the resignation of Lawrence Moore as moderator elect. The committee brought a report to the November 2013 meeting of Mission Council of a 24 hour meeting facilitated by members of a reconciliation agency. What follows is a statement following a second such meeting held at the end of February 2014.

Lawrence Moore, Roberta Rominger, Val Morrison and Howard Sharp (who is Lawrence's line manager and a member of the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee) met at Holy Rood House, Thirsk, with Hugh Donald and Sandra Black of the Church of Scotland's mediation service, "Place for Hope". This was our second meeting as part of the process of collective reconciliation requested by General Assembly 2012 in resolution 38 as a result of the events that culminated in Lawrence's resignation as moderator-elect at the March 2012 meeting of Mission Council.

It was a time of honest and difficult heart searching. We recognised that elements of the events that led to Lawrence's resignation served neither Lawrence nor the Church well, and this is a matter of regret.

We recognised too that we were all caught up in processes in which we found ourselves at times without precedent or adequate procedures. We discovered, through committed and careful listening to one another, that all of us acted and behaved in ways that contributed to the breakdown in relationships and procedural failures, despite our intentions to the contrary. Acknowledging the hurt and damage caused, and offering and receiving forgiveness and regret, has been a liberating and healing experience in which we have discovered the reality of the reconciling power of the Gospel that we so often preach.

We offer this experience to the Church both as part of our service and commitment to its peace and unity and in the conviction that brokenness and destruction do not need to be the last word about who we are as disciples of Jesus and the community of resurrection faith.

Paper A

Factual background on General Assembly

Assembly Arrangements Committee

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2014



Paper A

Assembly Arrangements Committee: Factual background on General Assembly

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Dr David Robinson drobinson3@virginmedia.com
Action required	None
Draft resolution(s)	None
Alternative options to consider, if any	n/a

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	This paper should be read alongside Papers Y1 and Y2. It offers further information to help Mission Council to consider the two synod resolutions concerning General Assembly.
Main points	Financial and other practical information made explicit
Previous relevant documents	Paper G of Mission Council October 2012, resolutions 43 and 44 of 2005 General Assembly, and resolutions 51 and 52 of 2006 General Assembly.
Consultation has taken place with...	No one, because this paper is only giving information.

Summary of Impact

Financial	None from this paper, but significant additional expenditure if some of the resolutions which this paper informs are passed.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	n/a

Factual background on General Assembly

N.B.: This paper should be read alongside Papers Y1 and Y2. It offers further information to help Mission Council to consider the two synod resolutions concerning General Assembly.

1 This paper does not seek to address the substance of the issues raised by the Wessex and Wales Synods. Indeed, individual members of the Assembly Arrangements committee have different views on them. Rather, it provides factual information to the Church to enable it to make an informed decision. We are aware that the Medium Term Strategy Group recommended to Mission Council that one more biennial Assembly should be held in 2014 before there is a review on the future arrangements for, and frequency of, meetings of General Assembly.

2 Children's Assembly

The decision not to hold a Children's Assembly was made by Mission Council in October 2012. The 2012 General Assembly decided to cut the budget for General Assembly by one third, and asked Mission Council to agree the shape and form of the 2014 General Assembly. The Assembly Arrangements committee is a servant of the Church and arranges General Assembly as the Church instructs it. If the Church wishes to hold a Children's Assembly in 2016 the Assembly Arrangements committee will be very happy to organise one, providing the Church gives us the money with which to do that. The Church may wish to know that the venue provisionally booked for the 2016 General Assembly (Southport) has more than adequate space suitably and safely to accommodate a Children's Assembly, if that is requested. Costs of the Children's Assembly were £25,000 in 2008 and £33,000 in 2010, in both cases for about 50 children. In 2012 there were only 27 children and the cost was around £20,000.

3 Other matters cut from the General Assembly

The same principles apply to other matters cut from Assembly, such as the greeting of Jubilee Ministers. In 2012 travel and accommodation costs for 25 Jubilee Ministers and their spouses totalled around £3,000, and 2010 for 42 was around £5,000.

4 Move to biennial smaller Assemblies

These decisions were made by the General Assembly within the Catch the Vision process. The factors below provide further information to enable the Church to consider how it responds to the resolution from Wessex Synod.

5 Finance

5a One of the biggest issues is financial. Currently each General Assembly has a budget of £200,000. As members will find in 2014, this has not been spent profligately; indeed, those who have been to previous Assemblies will feel a distinct atmosphere of austerity in the arrangements.

5b For 2014, travel costs will be paid by Assembly members. The major elements in the Assembly budget are:

Accommodation and Meals	£70,000
Hall and Facilities	£60,000
Printing, Preparations, Equipment, Admin	£40,000

5c There may be scope for further savings. For example, reducing substantially the subsistence allowance would save around £40,000. However, given the unpopularity of such moves so far it cannot be assumed that proposals for further cuts would be passed.

5d Mission Council's decision was simply that accommodation would not be booked and paid for centrally. Synods which have chosen to make block bookings for their representatives did so on their own initiative.

5e A shorter Assembly would reduce the accommodation and hall hire costs, but not all other costs.

5f Because Assembly meets every two years, but the Church runs an annual budget, the £200,000 budget for General Assembly is spread across two years in the accounts, meaning that the figure shown is £100,000 per year. Those who read a budget showing this should not be under the erroneous illusion that an Assembly can be delivered for £100,000. In essence, a return to annual Assemblies means the Church will need to find about £100,000 per year by cutting that from other areas of the budget.

6 Staffing

6a Up to, and including the 2004 General Assembly, four paid staff were responsible for organising the Assembly, namely the office and personnel manager, his PA, the facilities manager, and the general secretary's PA. The office and personnel manager's post was reorganised and the Assembly lost the services of his successor (solely responsible for HR) and PA. The general secretary and deputy general secretary came to share a PA, who also worked for the Assembly moderators, and so did not have time for General Assembly work. Thus we have moved from four staff members responsible for General Assembly to one, whose primary responsibilities are in other areas.

6b One reason for the move to biennial Assemblies was precisely because of staff pressures. Indeed, even now we have had to recruit a temporary member of staff for part of each Assembly year, funded from within our budget. Were the Church to return to annual Assemblies, staffing would have to be addressed as part of that decision. We are blessed with a very able Assembly organiser, but it is worth bearing in mind that were we to be in the position of needing a new staff member (something we hope not to be for a long time) the skills for event organisation do not automatically go with those for facilities management.

7 Numbers attending

7a Were Assembly to become annual, consideration would need to be given to the numbers attending. If there were fewer representatives, this would increase the range of venues possible, and hence should decrease venue hire costs. It is worth noting that some synods appear to be struggling to fill their places while others have a waiting list.

7b A number of costs are fixed, regardless of the number of people attending, so a reduction in costs would not be proportional to the decrease in number of representatives. For instance, the cost of microphones and projection systems, and venue hire, is the same whether 300 or 400 people are in the room. If the Church does not wish to cut numbers attending, it needs to be aware that it will be hard to reduce the cost.

8 The role of Assembly moderators

The Church will need to consider how many moderators serve and for what term.

9 The “work cycle”

One criticism of annual Assemblies was that committees felt their work could only really begin after the summer in September and had to be finished by March for presentation to Assembly. This led to some committees reporting only in alternate years. The Church would need to consider what it expected of its committees.

Paper G1

Draft management accounts 2013

Finance Committee

United Church 2014
Church 2014
Reformed
Church 2014
Church



Paper G1

Finance Committee: Draft management accounts 2013

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	John Ellis, Treasurer john.ellis@urc.org.uk
Action required	Information
Draft resolution(s)	None
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To report on 2013 budget out-turn
Main points	The summary table of unaudited numbers shows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total MandM Fund giving in 2013 was above budget but still 2% lower than in 2012 • Total stipend and related costs for local ministers were below budget by £147k as a result of fewer ministers than expected • With income above budget and expenditure below budget, the predicted deficit of £161k turned into a small surplus of £86k
Previous relevant documents	Budget papers presented to Mission Council Oct 2012 (Paper K) and Nov 2013 (Papers G1 and G2).
Consultation has taken place with...	

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Draft Income and Expenditure account to Dec 2013

Department/ Project	2012		2013		2014
	Actual	Actual	Budget	Variance	Budget
	£	£	£	£	£
Income					
Ministry and Mission contributions	(20,230,406)	(19,839,200)	(19,752,000)	(87,200)	(19,550,000)
Pensions - additional funding	(1,050,603)	(659,229)	(600,000)	(59,229)	(300,000)
Investment and other income					
Dividends	(660,220)	(657,903)	(652,000)	(5,903)	(678,000)
Donations	(7,341)	(3,237)	0	(3,237)	0
Specific legacies	(589)	(694)	0	(694)	0
Grants/Income - Memorial Hall Trust/Fund	(223,911)	(220,280)	(213,000)	(7,280)	(230,000)
Interest - New College Trust /Fund	(23,785)	(5,629)	0	(5,629)	0
Net other interest	(51,399)	(30,151)	(40,000)	9,849	(50,000)
Other income, including property rentals/costs	(20,625)	5,727	(20,000)	25,727	(10,000)
	(987,871)	(912,166)	(925,000)	12,834	(968,000)
Total income	(22,268,881)	(21,410,595)	(21,277,000)	(133,595)	(20,818,000)
Expenditure					
A Discipleship					
A1 Ministry					
Local and special ministries and CRCWs	16,490,943	15,770,494	15,918,000	(147,506)	15,181,000
Synod Moderators - stipends and expenses	590,702	693,766	633,000	60,766	640,000
Ministries department	311,678	266,523	259,068	7,455	260,900
Pastoral & welfare	1,897	5,699	2,000	3,699	2,000
	17,395,220	16,736,482	16,812,068	(75,586)	16,083,900
A2 Education & Learning					
Initial training for ministry	634,516	683,088	628,000	55,088	657,500
Continuing training for ministry	156,648	132,137	105,000	27,137	104,000
Resource Centres support	538,131	454,909	459,500	(4,591)	466,000
	1,329,295	1,270,135	1,192,500	77,635	1,227,500
Windermere RCL - net support	128,071	139,531	110,500	29,031	112,240
Training for Learning & Serving - net support	94,736	117,135	85,700	31,435	99,500
Lay preachers support	5,577	8,007	10,000	(1,993)	10,000
Education & Learning department	156,529	159,306	162,000	(2,694)	172,900
	1,714,208	1,694,113	1,560,700	133,413	1,622,140
A3 Children's and Youth Work					
Staff costs	243,549	207,130	203,640	3,490	201,600
Management, resources and programmes	78,326	67,702	100,000	(32,298)	100,650
	321,875	274,832	303,640	(28,808)	302,250
A4 Safeguarding					
Safeguarding policy and practice	26,296	38,773	35,000	3,773	52,200
B Mission					
Mission dept staff and core costs	0	370,996	405,500	(34,504)	416,500
Mission programmes and memberships	689,129	221,255	269,500	(48,245)	271,500
	689,129	592,251	675,000	(82,749)	688,000
National Ecumenical Officers	28,199	33,107	35,000	(1,893)	35,000
	717,328	625,358	710,000	(84,642)	723,000
C Administration & Resources					
Central Secretariat	356,635	366,524	409,800	(43,276)	421,800
URC House costs	249,740	254,210	285,000	(30,790)	286,500
IT Services	152,186	148,355	155,800	(7,445)	154,100
Finance	524,917	487,163	499,400	(12,237)	516,400
Communications & Editorial	402,450	373,982	361,800	12,182	344,800
	1,685,928	1,630,234	1,711,800	(81,566)	1,723,600
D Governance					
General Assembly	144,674	100,000	100,000	0	100,000
Mission Council	65,447	64,516	44,000	20,516	46,000
Professional fees	166,359	100,070	105,000	(4,930)	99,000
Other	65,185	60,044	56,000	4,044	60,000
	441,664	324,630	305,000	19,630	305,000
Total expenditure	22,302,519	21,324,421	21,438,208	(113,787)	20,812,090
NET (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT	33,638	(86,173)	161,208	(247,381)	(5,910)

Note: variances are adverse/(favourable)

Paper G2

Plan for Partnership amendments
Ministries and Finance Committees

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2014



Paper G2

Ministries and Finance Committees: Plan for Partnership amendments

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	John Ellis, Treasurer john.ellis@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council agrees the amendments to the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration set out in Paper G2.
Alternative options to consider, if any	None

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To amend The Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration
Main points	Two amendments are required to ensure that all grants paid under the terms of the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration are calculated on the same basis. The amendments are set out in the attached document.
Previous relevant documents	Current Plan for Partnership: available on URC website in the Finance section.
Consultation has taken place with...	

Summary of Impact

Financial	None
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None

Proposed Amendments to The Plan for Partnership

inserts shown in italics

deletions shown in bold

10.3 **Reasonable** *Removal* costs within the United Kingdom shall be paid on the first removal of a minister/CRCW following final retirement from a pastoral charge or from an appointment paid under the terms of the Plan (or to the spouse of a minister/CRCW who dies before retirement) provided that at least two estimates have been obtained. **Normally** The cost of the lowest estimate will be met *up to the maximum shown in Appendix A.*

APPENDIX C – REMOVAL COSTS

The receiving local church is responsible for paying the costs of removal (see para 6.3.3). Where the removal is within the United Kingdom reimbursement of up to 50% of the cost incurred (subject to a maximum reimbursement shown in Appendix A of £1,500) is available from the Ministry and Mission Fund and application should be made via the MoM Office. Where a minister/CRCW is called from abroad, reimbursement from that Fund to the local church will be based on the removal costs from the port of entry.

These amendments are required to ensure that all grants paid under the terms of the Plan for Partnership will, in future, be calculated on the same basis.

If these changes are agreed, it is intended that the relevant figures in Appendix A for 2014 would be £3,317 with regard to 10.3 and £1,659 with regard to Appendix C

Paper I

The United Reformed Church and
the centenary of the First World
War 2014-18:
How do we respond?
Mission Committee

United Church 2014
Church 2014
Reformed Church 2014
Church 2014

Paper I



Mission Committee: The United Reformed Church and the centenary of the First World War 2014-18: How do we respond?

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Francis Brienen francis.brienen@urc.org.uk
Action required	Discussion
Draft resolution(s)	None
Alternative options to consider, if any	None

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To consider how the URC acknowledges the anniversary of the First World War
Main points	During the next 4-5 years our thoughts as a nation will turn often to the events of the First World War. A vigorous debate about how it should be remembered is already under way and historians, politicians and many others are offering their interpretation of events and suggesting how – and why – we should call them to mind. Churches, faith communities and individual believers will also be involved in the ‘commemoration’. What can and should our local churches do during the period of remembering? What can and should we say as the United Reformed Church? This paper attempts to explore some of the basic issues around these questions and suggest possible ways forward.
Previous relevant documents	None
Consultation has taken place with...	Mission Committee

Summary of Impact

Financial	Covered by Mission Committee budget
External (e.g. ecumenical)	There will be opportunities for working ecumenically and on an inter-faith basis, but also occasions where the URC may feel it should ‘go it alone’

The United Reformed Church and the centenary of the First World War 2014-18: How do we respond?

1 Introduction

1.1 During the next 4-5 years our thoughts as a nation will turn often to the events of a hundred years ago, that moment in our history we know as the Great War or First World War.

1.2 The ‘whys’ and ‘wherefores’ of that event are still hotly debated, so it is no surprise that a vigorous debate about how it should be remembered is already under way. Historians, politicians, military figures, journalists, writers, comedians, all are offering their interpretation of events and suggesting how – and why – we should call them to mind.

1.3 Churches, faith communities and individual believers will also be involved in the ‘commemoration’. Local congregations and ministers will be organising or invited to participate in civic events, and churches and faith leaders nationally will be expected to contribute to public discussion and thinking. What can and should our local churches do during the period of remembering? What can and should we say as the United Reformed Church? This paper attempts to explore some of the basic issues around these questions and suggest possible ways forward.

2 Local church action

2.1 It is likely that in most villages, towns and cities plans for commemorative events are well in hand. A number of Christian denominations, organisations and coalitions – for example, Bible Society, HOPE, Youth for Christ, ‘churches together’ networks – are producing resources for individual churches or groups of churches to use, including prayers, worship material and study guides. In terms of helping churches to think ahead, a short paper produced by Capt Jim Currin of the Churches Group for Evangelisation, circulated by Churches Together in England in December 2013 (at Appendix B), contains a useful summary of the issues churches might consider, together with ten helpful ‘pointers’ to enable churches do some concrete planning. We might want to ensure that this paper is circulated among our churches, together with a list of websites offering background material and worship resources. We may also wish to prepare worship resources of our own.

2.2 Some churches will be holding special services or other events on Remembrance Day this year (and perhaps in future years): for example, churches in Merseyside are opening their doors on 11 November specifically to invite people in to pray for ‘peace’ in all its aspects, and we will want to encourage other churches to consider doing likewise. While many churches will be used to working with forces organisations such as the British Legion to plan annual services of remembrance, it is possible that ministers or churches will be asked to host extra – or different kinds of – events during the centenary years, and we may feel it wise to remind them of this in advance so that they can prepare their responses.

2.3 While there are no longer any soldiers who fought in the War still alive there will be, within many families, strong memories of those who fell or were injured or bereaved. We may therefore wish to underline, in any communications with local churches and ministers, the ‘pastoral’ dimension to this period of remembrance.

3 Speaking out as the United Reformed Church

3.1 We need to think carefully about how we respond ‘institutionally’ to the challenges and opportunities presented by this anniversary. As a rule churches should speak publicly only when they have something worthwhile and distinctive to say, not because it is expected that they will speak; and they will want to avoid merely repeating what others are saying, whether from a religious or non-religious perspective. This having been said, as followers of One called the ‘Prince of Peace’ who are ourselves called to be ‘peacemakers’, it would be odd, if not a denial of our calling, if as a Church we did not feel we had anything to contribute at this time. More positively, we might want to see this as a God-given opportunity to offer distinctively ‘Christian’ insights to the nation at a time when many are reflecting in a particular way upon matters of life, death, sacrifice, courage and solidarity.

3.2 Assuming that we do want to speak publicly, what should our contribution look like? Should we adopt a ‘line’ and stick to it, or be open to fresh interpretations and insights as we go? What principles, theological and other, should we consider when speaking as a Church into the public square on an issue such as this?

3.3 Good public theology includes the following.

3.3.1 being well-informed about the issue – which in this case is not easy, given both the complexity and contested nature of the narrative. Unlike the Second World War, there is little consensus among scholars as to the cause of the War (or even whether it had ‘a cause’), nor regarding responsibility for the unspeakable bloodshed and slaughter it generated. It would be well for churches and members to reacquaint themselves with the origins and history of the War, but they are unlikely to come to a ‘common mind’ on any aspect of it.

An important point that historians are making is the need to distinguish between the myths that have grown up about the War and differing interpretations of events. As Professor Margaret MacMillan of Oxford University has recently written,

there is a key difference between myths, which can be disproved by evidence, and interpretations, which take the evidence into account... The trouble in this debate... is that one person’s myth is another one’s incontrovertible truth.’ (The Guardian, 10 January 2014)

We should also be wary of judging decisions made in vastly different contexts according to criteria appropriate for today. As Professor Sir Richard J Evans of Cambridge University reminds us, a hundred years ago war was generally viewed as ‘positive’, ‘cleansing’ and ‘an assertion of masculine honour’, and colonial expansion was much less negatively perceived than it is today (‘Before the war’, *The New Statesman*, 17-23 January 2014, pp. 25, 27). This is not to suggest that the virtues of conflict resolution, co-operation, restorative justice, creative non-violence and peacemaking (as advocated by Jill Segger in her recent piece ‘What a Great War’, *Reform*, February 2014, pp. 31-2) should not be promoted at this time; rather it is to remember that, in an age in which duelling was still an accepted and common way of avenging slights to a man’s honour, war was seen as the ‘inevitable’ way to resolve disagreements more than it is today (Evans, p. 25).

3.3.2 being strategic in our approach and clear in our aims – which involves discerning when to speak and when to remain silent, when we might be saying too much and when we need to be more outspoken, and what we hope to achieve by our public contributions. We may wish to time our statements to coincide with days of remembrance, anniversaries of particular battles or other landmarks in the War (a calendar of main events over the next 5-6 years is included at Appendix C), or we may be attentive to significant moments in the church's year (or all of the above). We may want to suggest that it would be more appropriate for society to mark the end rather than the start of the conflict. We may want to draw attention to the extraordinary unofficial 'truce' that broke out during the first Christmas of the War, when soldiers on both sides exchanged food and souvenirs, conducted joint burial ceremonies, sang carols and played soccer. We shall need to decide when to speak on our own, and when joining with ecumenical and inter-faith partners (and 'secular' organisations) would have more impact. Our professional media and communications colleagues will provide advice and assistance in this respect.

3.3.3 rooting what we say in 'sound' theology – which will require serious, informed engagement with both the biblical text and current scholarship. It will also require much careful and prayerful groundwork, since it is imperative that we make clear, as a Christian body, the principles guiding our thinking and the basis upon which we claim our right to speak.

Among the questions we may wish to consider are how the teaching of Jesus about 'loving our enemies' and 'turning the other cheek' might have relevance to a period of reflection on an event like the First World War; how those references in the Hebrew Scriptures depicting YHWH sanctioning the wholesale slaughter of nations and peoples, or to the Psalmist calling down God's wrath upon his enemies, are to be understood; and how attention might be drawn to the enormity of the personal tragedy involved in the War, the fact that every one of the millions who died was made in the image of God and somebody's child, parent or spouse, without sounding pious, irrelevant or 'obvious'.

The Oxford theologian Nigel Biggar argued in a journal article last year that, when measured against 'just war' criteria, Britain's decision to go to war with Germany in 1914 was 'morally justified' ('Was Britain Right To Go To War In 1914?', *Standpoint*, September 2013): would we want to bring the Just War theory into play (others inevitably will) and make that kind of judgment, or rather, as David Tatem hints in his paper 'Commemorating World War 1' (at Appendix A), seek the 'de-legitimisation' of the concept of war in order to promote a fresh kind of dialogue for the future? Might we not even want to question the credibility of attempting to co-opt the Jesus we encounter in the New Testament in support of any endeavour that involved the taking of life, let alone the scale of killing seen in World War One, however 'morally defensible' the reason?

Good theology is often as much about promoting conversation and asking questions as providing ready answers (witness Jesus' response to many of the enquirers he entertained), and probing some of the 'deeper' issues around for example 'nationhood', 'sacrifice', 'duty', 'service' and so on may be a singular role the Church could adopt. Challenging received wisdom and 'accepted norms' also has a solid biblical precedent, and taking seriously the issues David Tatem raises in his paper about the language which will be used during the period of remembrance would seem to be vital. David encourages a profound questioning of the use of terminology like 'those who gave their lives' in the context of the anniversary of the War; and the specific adoption of Jesus' words in John 15.13, 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends' (NRSV) will also seem problematic to many. (We might note that the HOPE Christian network is building its whole programme to help churches remember the Great War around this verse, in the hope, as its executive director has said, that the Church will use it to point 'to the "Greater Love" Jesus has for us.')

would it look like, David asks, if those killed in World War One were described as ‘those who had their lives taken from them’? Even how the period 2014-18 is described – ‘celebration’, ‘commemoration’, ‘time of remembrance’ or whatever – is hugely important, as Jim Currin points out in his paper. There will be keen sensitivities around these issues, but David Tatem makes the important point that part of the responsibility of the church is to say that there are no boundaries beyond which it is not right to ask questions about causes and responsibilities and consequences.

3.3.4 being as wise as serpents as well as harmless as doves – which is linked to the points above and involves not being naïve to the potential this anniversary has to be an extremely ‘hot potato’. In this respect we might note the strong impulses coming from some politicians and sections of the press to see all who choose a career in the military as ‘heroes’, and the readiness of certain opinion-formers to denigrate those whose opinions they dislike as ‘haters of their country’. How comfortable are we that some £50m has been allocated for what the Prime Minister has called ‘truly national commemorations’ to mark this anniversary; or with Mr Cameron’s comparison of these events with the Diamond Jubilee celebrations; or with his indication that their aim will be to stress our ‘national spirit’? (Interestingly, the Peace Pledge Union, the pacifist organisation which promotes white poppies, has been given £95k of Heritage Lottery money to stage an event honouring conscientious objectors executed during the War.) How do we respond to the statement made by the Minister for the First World War Centenary, Helen Grant, that while the Government won’t be shying away from the fact that the outcome of the War was an absolutely vital victory for us that changed the course of world history in countless ways ... we won’t be ‘celebrating’ that fact or sounding triumphant fanfares... The tone has to be right – not four years of gloom and misery, but no dancing in the street either. (Helen Grant, ‘How we will honour the fallen...’, *The Lady*, 7 February 2014, p.19)?

What do we think about this anniversary being considered of sufficient moment to warrant its own Government minister? Could we ask whether similar respect will be accorded other significant anniversaries occurring during this period, such as the sealing of Magna Carta (2015), the Balfour Declaration (2017), and the Acts enfranchising women and permitting their election to Parliament (2018)?

While we will want to emphasize the need for lessons to be learnt from the events of 1914-18, we will also be alert to attempts to draw our memory of those events into current political debates, to interpret those events to suit the purposes of the present. While we will want to ‘remember’ (as we do every Remembrance Day), we will also want to be attentive, as David Tatem says, to the values which will be promoted alongside that remembering. As Jim Currin notes, already people in the churches are expressing discomfort with the idea that the anniversary might involve a celebration of ‘heroes’, and with the adoption of the language of ‘For God and Country’ in this context. A recent poll conducted by the think tank British Future found that 80% of people interviewed supported ‘a centenary focused on preserving peace through commemorating the sacrifice of those who lost lives.’ (Richard Woodall, ‘Greater Love’, *Idea Magazine*, Jan/Feb 2014). Jill Segger argues that we should not expect politicians to encourage a spirit of repentance and sorrow for what happened in past wars because power requires the people to be diverted into acquiescence by sentiment deformed into sentimentality, by the easy emotion of spectacle and tendentious rhetoric [and that] if this is to continue, each new generation must be recruited into complicity...’ (‘What a Great War’ Reform, February 2014, p. 32).

If we want to introduce the language of repentance and sorrow for what has gone before, or even suggest that these values should inform the tone of the whole ‘commemoration’,

this will not be easy. Finding language that will honour the fallen and the cause for which they believed they were fighting, while being authentic to the Gospel's radical avowal of 'shalom', will be a challenge. Knowing when and how to make a prophetic witness, to discern what 'must' be said in the cause of truth even when it is likely to provoke public ridicule and pillorying, has always called for deep spiritual wisdom and courage.

3.3.5 seeking to see that all are included, especially those likely to be marginalised or forgotten – including women, black and Asian people, and members of faith traditions other than Christianity. A list of websites giving information about combatants from the Caribbean, India, Africa and other parts of the world can be found via the Compton History link below (Appendix E), and Faiths Forum for London has co-launched a project called 'We Remember Too' to highlight the contribution of the millions of Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and people of other minority faiths who served in the British armed forces in both world wars (also see web link at Appendix E). Although it was largely men (and boys) who fought and died, we will want to ensure that the role of women is honoured too, including those who served in – and in some cases directed – medical units in parts of Europe and those who made an invaluable contribution at home.

3.3.6 ensuring we are understood – in other words, speaking authentically from a theological perspective but in a way that is comprehensible to the people we want to reach. This is not an excuse to drop the language of 'repentance', 'forgiveness', 'generosity of spirit', 'reconciliation' and so on, especially since there may be few outside of the churches and faith communities using it; rather it is to underline the importance of ensuring that the full radical import of those terms as they are rooted in our faith tradition, including the particular Judaeo-Christian meaning of 'peace', is communicated and understood.

4. Practical recommendations

4.1 In order to co-ordinate its response to the World War One anniversary the United Reformed Church, perhaps through the offices of the General Secretary or Mission Council, may wish to consider convening a small 'task group'. This group, which would be 'housed' within the Mission Committee, could meet in person and 'virtually' throughout the next four years to plan and oversee a strategy for the Church's engagement in the anniversary timetable. Among its terms of reference might be: to monitor developments in the media, Parliament, the churches and elsewhere; undertake theological reflection and historical study; collect relevant stories from around the world, particularly the 'forgotten stories', those of people drafted in from the colonies and of women; circulate material to, and gather material from, synods; help to resource and (as invited) advise local churches; and brief and prepare materials for the Moderators and other public spokespeople for the Church. Such a group might include people with specialist knowledge of history, theology, the media and public issues; a representative of the Church's Peace Fellowship; a military chaplain; and be chaired by a senior respected figure in the denomination. Some part-time administrative support may be necessary for this group.

4.2 Given the complexity of the issue and wide range of views that will be held among its members, the United Reformed Church might consider it advisable to consult its churches and membership to obtain a sense of the Church's mood and what members might expect their leaders to say on their behalf. Such a consultation could be one of the first exercises the 'task group' undertakes. The task group should also, in its early stages, ascertain what plans synods have made with respect to the anniversary.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Whether our images of the First World War come from half-forgotten history lessons, grainy newsreel footage in TV documentaries, the reminiscences of long-departed relatives or even the last series of *Blackadder*, the most abiding are always of suffering and death on an unimaginable scale carried out for a vaguely-definable end. Yet whatever we think of it, the War was a hugely significant event, not only on account of the many millions of (mostly young) lives it devoured, the ‘cream of a generation’, but its role in helping to redraw the political and social map of Europe and reshape cultural attitudes, including with respect to women. Despite being heralded as ‘the war to end all wars’ it also provided a seedbed for the 1939-45 conflict.

5.2 The planned commemoration of the War, spanning the next four or more years, provides an unprecedented opportunity to influence public thinking and, in particular, promote radical alternatives to violence, and the Gospel values of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation – values which are not only at the heart of our faith but which have proven practical worth. Unlike the Anglican Church – which may find itself to a degree restricted in what it can say on account of its role as our ‘state church’ (though the Falklands service of 1982 shows how its unique position can be used in counter-cultural ways) – the United Reformed Church has the freedom to speak when and as it feels appropriate. To capture the attention of the media and people generally it will need to be imaginative, credible, informed and clear in what it says. As it considers its key messages it may want to reflect, not only on the importance of being truthful about the past and of learning from it, but how it can help to ensure that this anniversary, coming as it does at a time of continuing international tension, is used as an opportunity to highlight the non-necessity of war and promote peace, harmony and international co-operation.

APPENDICES

A A paper David Tatem, October 2013 Commemorating World War 1

- 1 The concern I have developed regarding the forthcoming commemoration of the start of World War 1 was triggered by a letter from the government to faith communities inviting them to be involved. The letter specifically referred to a proposed event on August 4th in Westminster Abbey but of course by extension invited faith communities to be involved with the whole period of commemoration. This was placed on the agenda of the Free Churches Group meeting in April 2013 just after the letter was received.
- 2 Government initiatives have developed since then but the focus remains on encouraging as many parts of society as possible to join in the commemoration, including making it possible for school children to visit the battlefields. There are places where a museum exists including part of a trench still kept as it would have been along with collections of equipment, photographs and so on. On one level it is clear that children will have the chance to discover what being involved in the war was like and will be given the statistics of loss of life just as the rest of us are reminded year by year on Remembrance Sunday but what values will be promoted alongside this? The focus of the commemoration is not simply on the educational aspect for children however and from a rigorous Christian point of view it is surely essential that we approach the forthcoming period with great caution and rigorous theology.
- 3 There will, as I have said, be an emphasis on the terrible loss of life that was experienced, no one could get away with not acknowledging that but there will be a number of agendas focussed in a variety of ways on national pride and identity and down that path lay many temptations and dangers.
- 4 What I found myself focussing on very quickly was the importance of the use of language.
 - 4.1 Is this a commemoration and what does that mean? What about the language of victory or defeat and how might that become loaded with idea of one side right and the other wrong? What about the deeper meanings of peace, justice and reconciliation and how open are these terms and others to accidental or deliberate manipulation?
 - 4.2 The most obvious use that I have recognised so far and which I questioned at the meeting of the Free Churches Group was a use that has been common recently, the phrase ‘those who gave their lives’. Sometimes that is more neutrally put as ‘those who lost their lives’. But it is important to reflect on when ‘lost’ is used and when ‘gave’ is used and when a switch may reflect or may be intended to create a subtle shift in emphasis.
 - 4.3 A few years ago I watched a performance of ‘Oh! What a lovely War’ in which my son played General Haig and I remember being focussed on the thought that there were millions of young men who rather than giving their lives had actually had their lives taken away from them and I reflect that it was not popular then and is not popular now to put it that way. There are deeper question of how the whole thing might have been avoided and whose responsibility it was and of how it is possible to change a culture that allows politicians and military leaders to be able to think only in strategic terms, like a chess player who may sacrifice a pawn or two in order to win the game and there are those who would rather those who would rather those questions were not asked.

- 4.4 I will be surprised in the commemorations if we hear the phrase ‘lives taken away’ used rather than ‘lives lost’ or ‘lives given’ so the challenge for the church and for other faith groups is to do what the Churches eventually succeeded in doing with the abolition of slavery, to de-legitimise the use of certain terms and certain concepts.
- 4.5 I cannot help but reflect on what happened when Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire with the resulting of the legitimisation of certain concepts and the de-legitimisation of others. We must discuss the theology of the Just War and whether it is still fit for purpose as a legitimisation of the whole military culture of the present time. It is a question for deep and serious discussion with huge implications for the development of weapons technology among other things.
- 4.6 But I want to return to the question of language and the use of language. There is of course more to be said about it because there were many thousands of young men who enthusiastically signed up on a wave of patriotic fervour, spurred on by the language of the posters and politicians appealing to their patriotism. Perhaps the argument could be made that no one really grasped what kind of war it might become, neither in the villages and towns of Britain nor in the government offices of Westminster but that response is not good enough. There was plenty of experience around already of ‘modern’ warfare to know what kind of carnage it could produce and from a Christian perspective, just how difficult any application of Just War principles had already become. In popular culture, however, the idea of serving your country was and remains strong along with the strong sense of approval and love of country that goes with it and the approbation that goes with appearing to be disloyal. Recently we can see the attempts to describe Ralph Miliband as someone who hated the country that had given him sanctuary and the disreputable way in which this kind of language has been used. All of this ‘dynamic’ is used to take precedence over any careful theological or humanist reflection on the exercise of responsible power over people’s lives or deaths.
- 4.7 I am sure that there will be a good deal of careful use of language in the commemorations that will be engineered in certain quarters to create the desired balance of regret at the huge loss of life on the one hand but admiration for all those heroes who gave their lives in defence of their country on the other and deeper questions beyond certain boundaries will be discouraged. Surely part of the responsibility of the church is to say that there are no boundaries beyond which it is not right to ask questions about causes and responsibilities and consequences.
- 4.8 Change the language to ‘lives taken away’ and it becomes much more uncomfortable. Who took them away? Was it the enemy or the politicians and strategists who simply played with numbers and refused to see human beings, who were concerned with power politics and their own advantage or disadvantage and did not see themselves in any real sense as servants of ordinary people rather than being in control?
- 5 It is dangerously tempting to say that we have come a long way since 1914-1918 and made progress because in some senses we have. We no longer execute people for cowardice in battle. We understand the problems of post traumatic stress disorder but we still exclude disabled soldiers from victory parades in case it spoils the effect just as Margaret Thatcher did at the end of the Falklands campaign, just as Elizabeth I had done after the defeat of the Spanish Armada where the maimed and dying sailors were packed on the streets of the Plymouth Barbican while the partying went on up the hill and the priests gave thanks to God for the victory.

- 6 It would be good to believe that the Church has got better at choosing what to bless and what not to bless but it can be patchy. At the end of the Falklands campaign, though, the service in St Paul's reputedly infuriated Margaret Thatcher because it had a tone of reconciliation rather than victory and regretted the loss of life on both sides. Once again that was a lot to do with the use of language and again I want to say that the most important role that the churches can play in this period of commemoration will be to keep asking awkward questions about the use of language and the adequacy of the depth of discussion the language take us to. What do we mean by reconciliation and peace? Does it simply mean saying sorry and being able to live together again or does it actually mean understanding what created the conflict and violence in the first place and digging deep into issues of power, the sharing of resources, the dynamics of national identity and so on and properly understanding them and then making appropriate decisions that may cost us money or affect our lifestyle but won't in the end cost us untold lives or take us into a morality where we can shut our eyes to what we are doing because we are doing it using drones or getting our machines to fight our wars for us. Do we confine our reflection to the period of the war without applying it in our present time?
- 7 One of the results of the impact of the First World War has been for strategists and military technicians to work at creating means of delivering mayhem that do not mean that our side has to be brought home in body bags but at the same time not caring how many body bags the other side needs. We might say that the development of nuclear weapons is an example of that, especially as they were used at the end of the Second World War but that is such an exceptional example that it stands in a category of its own with a unique set of issues especially relating to the concept of deterrence. Better examples are the well known and currently hotly debated issue of the use of drones as weapons and not simply for reconnaissance. A less well known example is of the development of the BLU-82 daisy cutter bomb. This is an explosive device that explodes on a more or less two dimensional plain and will obliterate everything over a 600 yard diameter area. It was first used in Vietnam and has formed a significant component of the 'shock and awe' military philosophy. What can one say from a Christian point of view except, 'how in heavens name does such a weapon fit within the Just War concept' and 'so much for loving your enemy'?
- 8 It seems to me that as we prepare resources for this period, one of the things that is needed is a comprehensive overview of how all the relevant aspects interconnect and then from a Christian point of view, what the theological input is to the discussion.
- 9 I mentioned nationalism / national security / national identity as one of the factors and that is a high profile issue one way or the other these days and is a very good example of where the use of terms actually demands deep and careful understanding. I have sometimes wondered what future generations might look back on our time and say 'how could they possibly have seen that as important?' and I hope that one of the things they will say that about will be our obsession with national pride before our sense of being one race on one world.
- 10 We have a significant challenge and opportunity during the period that is approaching almost effectively to restate many of the core values of the Christian faith, to really be the salt for the world that Jesus told his followers they should be. If we do it properly we will not make ourselves popular but to be true to the gospel of peace and to the Prince of Peace, it is a challenge we must not shirk.

B Jim Currin's paper Remembering World War One: a feature paper from www.cte.org.uk

This is a personal paper from Capt. Jim Currin, Church Army, the Secretary for Evangelisation, Churches Together in England. It is written to aid discussion, prayer and planning for local groups of churches.

- 1 2014-2018 is going to be a significant time for these islands as we remember and reflect on the First World War.
- 2 The Government are encouraging schools to research their local community history, while cities, towns and villages are beginning to plan events and renovate war memorials that are in need of repair. The main media companies plan many hours coverage of all the major events as each centenary date comes around. National publishers and local history societies are producing books and booklets in readiness for the interest anticipated from the beginning of next year.
- 3 The Bible Society is committed to producing material, and has been asking for stories associated with Bibles given to soldiers in WW1. Books about 'Woodbine Willie', 'Tubby Clayton', and Padres given the Victoria Cross have been also written. National denominations and 'Churches Together' are writing resources for individual and groups of churches to use 2014-2018 including prayers, liturgical resources and group discussion notes.
- 4 Some significant civic churches are planning a service on the date Britain declared war (August 4th) to reflect on the phrase, 'the lamps are going out all over Europe'. This is a date / theme many local churches may replicate.
- 5 HOPE (www.hopetogether.org.uk) is collating a network of Christian agencies planning to provide resources which speak 'hope' in to the forthcoming moment of national history. There will be resources for churches, schools, and community groups from a variety of sources and traditions, as well as material on (www.christianity.org.uk) for enquirers. It is anticipated that this time will raise questions about faith, conflict, suffering, and loss, as well as peace, reconciliation, hope and mutual respect.
- 6 This paper is intended to get local groups of churches thinking, praying and planning for what might be most appropriate locally. The resources mentioned above will be helpful later on in the in the process, but now is the time to start working on possibilities. There are many things which could be done over the 4 year period, so here is a suggested list of ten topics to stimulate discussion.
 - a Raise this subject at the next meeting of churches together and compare notes about any plans already being discussed, e.g. churches, schools, Council, Royal British Legion etc.
 - b Contact the leader of your Local Authority to compare notes and offer help as and when plans progress. Are Civic events planned or Memorials being renovated?
 - c Check with local schools if they have begun to think what they are planning – are there any visits to battlefield sites being organised yet?
 - d Ask any local history society what work they might be doing to tell the story of soldiers named on graves, war memorials, bell 'Peal' boards etc. Are booklets being written?
 - e Consider what issues are likely to arise, especially if you have a high profile

- presence like a military base nearby. Are there Cadets / ATC etc.? If so, discuss with the Chaplains.
- f Remember the pacifist response to World War I. The Quaker movement have produced a paper about this (www.cte.org.uk/Articles/355647/Churches_Together_in/News_Events/News/Quaker_statements_re.aspx). Discuss various Christian traditions reflected in your own locality.
 - g Become familiar with 'Just War' principles. Discuss these in relation to your own context, especially if you have soldiers killed recently and people asking ethical questions.
 - h Consider producing your own local resource which reflects on some of the above eg Bible Study course, leaflet, series of speakers (Chaplain / Quaker), newspaper article etc .
 - i Begin to pray for how the national and local community will remember World War I – especially in our own very different context. Consider how the local community might pray.
 - j Keep focussed on Christian perspectives – celebrating our diverse views – in the quest for peace and the 'common good'. Reference www.christianity.org.uk on anything for enquirers.
- 7 Resources to help with all of the above will be coming, but now is the time to start praying and planning at a local level. Please note, a number of church leaders have suggested we avoid using the word 'Anniversary' and keep to 'Commemoration' or 'Remember and Reflect' as watch words for the process.
- 8 Let me end with an observation and two comments.
- 9 First, I have been struck by the strength of feeling many Christians have to avoid any celebration of 'heroes' and 'For God and Country', remembering that soldiers did not give their lives as much as have it taken from them.
- 10 Second, there is much to engage with 'the war to end all wars' in our current context, and we do well to help people reflect and pray for peace everywhere as we remember 1914-1918. This is one of those times to pray with the Bible in one hand a newspaper in the other.
- 11 Third, war is a relevant topic the churches have spoken in to in many ways before, from providing Bibles and Chaplains to being pacifists and offering hospitality. We have preached, produced art, written poetry, offered prayer and given practical help. How could / should we speak in to this issue, as Christians and churches together, again as we prepare for 2014-2018 today?

C Key events and anniversaries, 2014-2020

2014

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 15 May | International Conscientious Objectors Day event at the Tavistock Square memorial |
| 4 August | Anniversary of Great Britain entering the war |
| | service to recognize the Empire contribution to the War – Glasgow Cathedral |
| | non-religious event of remembrance at St Symphorien, near Mons, Belgium |
| | silent vigil by Christian peace groups, St Martin-in-the-Fields |
| | candle-lit vigil in Westminster Abbey |
| 23 August | Anniversary of the Battle of Mons |
| 5-9 Sept | Anniversary of the Battle of the Marne |
| 12 Oct-11 Nov | Anniversary of the First Battle of Ypres |
| 9 Nov | Remembrance Sunday |
| 25 December | Anniversary of the unofficial Christmas ceasefire in ‘no man’s land’ |

2015

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 22 April-25 May | Anniversary of the Second Battle of Ypres |
| 25 April | Anniversary of the Gallipoli landing |
| 17-22 Sept | URC/Church of the Pfalz consultation (including ‘public day’ 20 Sept) Cambridge |
| 24 October | 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations |
| 8 Nov | Remembrance Sunday |

2016

21 Feb	Anniversary of the Battle of Verdun
31 May	Anniversary of the Battle of Jutland
5 June	Anniversary of the death of Kitchener
1 July-13 Nov	Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme
13 Nov	Remembrance Sunday

2017

12 March	Anniversary of the Russian Revolution
6 April	Anniversary of the United States of America entering the war
31 July	Anniversary of the Third Battle of Ypres
Oct-Nov	Anniversary of Passchendaele
12 Nov	Remembrance Sunday

2018

3 March	Anniversary of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
11 Nov	Remembrance Sunday / Anniversary of the signing of the Armistice by Germany

2019

18 Jan	Anniversary of the Paris Peace Conference
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2020

10 Aug	Anniversary of the first meeting of the League of Nations
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Network for Peace (www.networkforpeace.org.uk) is compiling an e-list of events organised by peace groups to coincide with the anniversary of WW1.

D Further reading (some recent books on the First World War by reputable historians)

- Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (2013)
- Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (new ed., 2009)
- Martin Gilbert, *The First World War: A Complete History* (2000)
- Peter Hart, *The Great War: 1914-1918* (2013)
- Max Hastings, *Catastrophe: Europe Goes to War 1914* (2013)
- Adam Hochschild, *To End All Wars* (2011)
- Nigel Jones, *Peace and War: Britain in 1914* (2014)
- Margaret MacMillan, *The War that Ended Peace* (2013)
- Gary Sheffield, *The First World War in 100 Objects* (2013)
- Norman Stone, *World War One: A Short History* (2008)
- Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (2003)
- H. P. Wilmott, *World War 1* (2009)

Though dated, A J P Taylor's *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918* (1954) is still considered a classic.

E Useful websites

- URC Peace Fellowship: www.urb.org.uk/mission/peace-fellowship.html
- Churches Together in England – a useful gateway to a range of resources and websites: http://cte.churchinsight.com/Articles/363711/Churches_Together_in/Resources/News/News/Information_re_marking.aspx
- HOPE 'Greater Love' page: www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/203992/HOPE/Mission_Moments/Remembrance/Remembrance.aspx#.Ut_fBbSznct
- Compton History – a list of websites giving information about Black and Asian combatants: www.comptonhistory.com/ww1webresources1.htm
- We Remember Too – resources relating to participation by people of non-Christian faith traditions: www.faithsforum4london.org/2013/11/we-remember-too
- Network for Peace: www.networkforpeace.org.uk
- Peace Pledge Union: www.ppu.org.uk
- A Quaker paper remembering WW1 and the pacifist tradition: http://cte.churchinsight.com/Articles/355647/Churches_Together_in/News_Events/News/Quaker_statements_re.aspx
- Veterans for Peace: <http://veteransforpeace.org.uk>
- Fellowship of Reconciliation: www.for.org.uk
- Government webpage resource: www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/first-world-war-centenary
- Government statement about plans to mark WW1: www.gov.uk/government/news/maria-miller-sets-out-how-government-will-mark-first-world-war-centenary-in-2014
- No Glory in War 1914-18: <http://noglory.org>
- Battlefield information and timeline: www.greatwar.co.uk/index.htm

Paper J

Nominations

Nominations Committee

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church 2014



Paper J

Nominations Committee: Nomination

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Carol Rogers, Secretary carannrog@aol.com
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	See end of paper
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Nominations

The following appointments were confirmed by the Assembly officers as requested by the November Mission Council meeting:

Revd David Skipp as a member of the Joint Property Strategy Group.

Revd Dr Michael Jagessar (convener); Dr Jim Merrilees and Revd Jack Dyce (Scotland); Revd Gethin Rhys and Revd Shelagh Pollard (Wales); Mr Simon Fairnington and Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte (England); and Revd Prof David Thompson and Dr Augur Pearce (Law and Polity Advisory Group) to serve as members of the National Synods Task Group.

Resolution

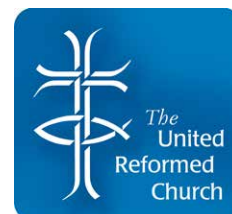
Mission Council appoints:

- a) **Revd Kate Gray and Revd Ashley Evans as members of the Communications and Editorial committee**
- b) **Revd James Mather as Secretary of the Listed Buildings Advisory Group**
- c) **Mr Stewart Cutler, Revd David Downing, Ms Sabrina Groeschel, Ms Victoria Paulding, Ms Emma Pugh and Revd Mike Walsh as members of the Task Group to give leadership on the issue of the integration of 20 to 40 year olds into the life of the United Reformed Church.**
- d) **Revd Sarah Moore, Revd Paul Whittle, and Revd Dr Stephen Orchard to serve as members of the Methodist/URC Strategic Oversight Group Faith and Order Conversations.**
- e) **Dr Jim Merrilees as secretary of the Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline Advisory Group.**
- f) **Mr Tony Bayley as a trustee of the Retired Ministers and Widows Fund.**
All of these appointments to take place with immediate effect.

Paper L

Church House Feasibility Study United Reformed Church Trust

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2014



Paper L

URC Trust: Church House Feasibility Study

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Sandi Hallam-Jones s.hallam-jones@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council agrees a feasibility study should be undertaken to explore options for the possible development of Church House.
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Feasibility study for the future use and configuration of Church House
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission Council has expressed concern about the infrastructural costs in the central budget • The URC Trust suggests a feasibility study for the options for possible development of Church House • Preliminary work on this idea is described • Cost of £15k-£20k can be found from existing budgets
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	Church House Management Group; officers of Finance Committee.

Summary of Impact

Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Feasibility Study: £15 - £20k; • If works proceed then, potentially, in a range between £4m - £9m depending on the option chosen and bearing in mind that some of those costs may be defrayed by sale or lease of parts of the premises to other parties as well as savings on future running costs.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Major work on Church House might enable a small partner Church or ecumenical body to share the existing premises.

United Reformed Church Trust: Church House Feasibility Study

1 Introduction

1.1 At previous Mission Council meetings in 2012 and 2013, concern has been expressed at the failure to achieve significant savings in the infrastructure parts of the central budget to match those agreed elsewhere. One element of these costs relates to operating the existing Church House at 86 Tavistock Place in London. The URC Trust has reported on unsuccessful efforts to consider sharing office premises, and therefore costs, with partner Churches and given a commitment to Mission Council to explore ways of using Church House more efficiently.

1.2 At its meeting on 19th February 2014, the Trust considered presentations from two architectural practices (Theis & Khan and Hutson Associates) on how they would propose to approach the carrying out of a Feasibility Study, if one were to be commissioned, on the possible refurbishment and use of Church House.

1.3 The brief was to provide the URC with information which would enable decisions to be made in respect of the following:

- a reduction in running costs;
- the ability to utilise the building more effectively by the use of more open plan office space;
- the potential for a reduction in staff numbers in the future;
- the potential for creating residential unit(s) which could be sold or leased to offset or cover the development costs;
- the potential for creating separate office accommodation which could be leased to offset or cover the development costs.

2 The recommendation of the United Reformed Church Trust

2.1 Having heard the presentations from both practices, which included: their approach to the project, an initial analysis of the issues, the potential costs and the potential benefits, as well as examples of their previous work, the Trust considers that Theis & Khan (the architects responsible for the award winning work on Lumen United Reformed Church, next door to Church House) should be appointed to carry out a feasibility study.

2.2 In considering the presentations and the issue of possible works to Church House, the Trust was mindful that the ultimate decision about significant alterations to Church House would rest with Mission Council, if not General Assembly, but it felt that the Trust had a responsibility to assist the Church by researching all the options.

2.3 The Trust also took the view that, pending policy decisions to be made elsewhere, data on the possibility of creating a more flexible building with income generating potential would be of use and that Theis & Khan appeared to be a good choice for carrying out a feasibility study of Church House.

2.4 The Trust agreed that the chairman, secretary and treasurer be authorised to draw up a brief report for Mission Council, explaining that the Trust, with the support of the church house management group (CHMG) and the finance committee, was minded to commission a feasibility study from Theis & Khan to explore practical options for reducing Church House overheads, for providing modern, energy efficient, flexible office accommodation to meet changing needs in the future, and for the possibility of funding such alterations through disposal or letting of some parts of an extended building.

2.5 They also agreed that that the status of the trusteeship of Church House should be checked.

3 The feasibility study

3.1 The formal brief for the study will need to set out what the United Reformed Church wants to get out of the exercise. This will include:

- whether the project is feasible – either technically or financially;
- can the need to achieve all or any of the objectives set out in 1.3 above be best met by:
 - a building project;
 - a refurbishment;
 - an extension;
 - or a new build?
- or by changing existing work patterns and doing nothing structural;
- will the budget cover the type of building we want?

3.2 The feasibility study should set out the project's scope and should test and refine the outline brief. It usually is made up of drawings, diagrams and text.

3.3 The study will need to define the areas of detailed work that are needed to take the project forward. It should also cover the following aspects:

- technical – relating to the building or site possibilities, constraints and likely permissions required e.g. is the site/building suitable for the proposed function;
- are there any specific site problems, such as poor ground conditions, inadequate utilities, flood problems in the basement, access issues or lack of expansion space;
- financial – including initial fundraising, realism of future revenue streams and long-term cost implications;
- organisational – the ability of the organisation to do the project and any extra skills needed, e.g. who will be on the Project Board and who will manage the project?;
- programme – the length of time needed, and any phasing issues, e.g. changing one floor at a time;
- relationship of scheme to planning authority's Local Plan, and current planning policies, so as to make planning permission more likely to be granted;
- what impact the project will have on the locality.

Some of the information above will come from within the United Reformed Church, i.e. the financial and organisational capability assessment and the technical elements from the architects/surveyors etc.

3.4 The feasibility study produced will then act as an advisory document in order for the Church to decide whether or not to proceed.

3.5 Theis & Khan have given an initial estimated cost for the feasibility study of between £7,500 to £21,000, depending on the level of information required, particularly with regards to the level of detail in which alternative schemes are worked out and costed. These sums can be found from within the existing budget of the church house management group. Once the details of the amplified brief have been settled, we would expect a more precise estimate of the fee level for the project.

3.6 They also recommend that a topographical survey of the existing building be carried out to provide accurate drawings to work from. Whether this survey is included in the early stage of the Feasibility Study will influence the scope and overall cost of the study.

4 The outline brief

4.1 Once the feasibility study is completed it will then be necessary to produce an outline brief for the project if it is decided to go ahead.

4.2 Securing buy-in to the outline brief will help maintain support throughout the project's progress. A good outline brief acts as a map to help the project delivery team reach its destination. It should set out what we want to achieve from the project and how we want to go about it. It is about setting out our needs for the project, rather than setting out specific built solutions.

4.3 The brief has a role to play at all stages of the project. It will help communication between all parties: sharing information about the goals of the project will help build the relationships essential for the success of any building project. It also forms the foundation for the design.

Resolution

Mission Council agrees a feasibility study should be undertaken to explore options for the possible development of Church House.



Paper M1

Assembly-appointed posts
General Secretary

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2014



Paper M1

General Secretary: Assembly-appointed posts

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Roberta Rominger roberta.rominger@urc.org.uk
Action required	Recommendation to General Assembly
Draft resolution(s)	See end of paper
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Clarification of the list of Assembly-appointed posts and the required affiliation of post-holders.
Main points	The list of Assembly-appointed posts is defined Affiliation requirements are identified under four groupings.
Previous relevant documents	Annex to the 1996 report of the Nominations Committee to General Assembly.
Consultation has taken place with...	Assembly officers, Nominations Committee, Human Resources Advisory Group, Mission Council.

Summary of Impact

Financial	None
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Clarifies which URC posts are open to applicants from partner churches.

Assembly-appointed Posts

1 Confirmation is needed as to the list of posts which must be Assembly appointments as opposed to the various support roles filled internally at Church House. Assembly-appointed posts are those which have been created by resolution of General Assembly (or Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly). This list was last updated formally in 1996 in an annex to the Nominations Committee Report to the Assembly, although some of the changes in this version derive from more recent understandings operating in that Committee. Clarity is also needed as to which posts require that the post holder be a member of the United Reformed Church or one of its partner churches. Mission Council is asked to approve the following resolutions for submission to General Assembly.

2 To avoid confusion, it may be helpful to note that people are appointed to Assembly-appointed posts in three ways. They may be appointed by Assembly itself. They may be appointed by Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly. In most cases they may be confirmed by appointing groups, as authorised in Resolution 16 of the 2010 Assembly:

“General Assembly agrees that the power to appoint Assembly staff members, other than officers of Assembly and Synod Moderators, shall be delegated to appointing groups duly appointed so long as appropriate processes and employment and related criteria have been met. All such appointments shall have effect from the date determined by the appointing group, and shall be reported to the next meeting of Mission Council or General Assembly.”

3 The Assembly also has a role in the appointment of members of the United Reformed Church Trust and the Board of Governors of Westminster College, but these are beyond the scope of this paper.

4 The Human Resources Advisory Group advises that there is no genuine occupational requirement for the Chief Finance Officer to be a Christian; it would be sufficient for the post holder to be willing to work within the Christian ethos of the Church. This post has therefore been removed from the list of Assembly appointments. Mission Council is asked to note and confirm this removal.

Resolution

Mission Council approves the following resolution for submission to the General Assembly.

1) General Assembly agrees that the Assembly-appointed posts are as follows:

General secretary

Deputy general secretary discipleship

Deputy general secretary mission

Deputy general secretary administration and resources

Head of children’s and youth work development

Secretary for church and society

Church related community worker development worker(s)

Director of communications

Secretary for ecumenical relations

Secretary for education and learning
Secretary for ministries
Secretary for mission
Secretary for racial justice and multicultural ministry
Editor, reform
National rural officer
Secretary for world church relations

Synod moderators

Westminster College

Principal
Director of Old Testament studies
Director of New Testament studies
Director of pastoral studies
Nivison chair of church history

Director of the Windermere Centre

2a) Assembly confirms that the following posts are restricted to ministers of the URC:

General secretary
Secretary for ministries
Synod moderators

2b) Assembly confirms that the following post is restricted to members of the URC:

Secretary for ecumenical relations

2c) Assembly confirms that the following posts are restricted to members of the URC and to members of those Churches which belong to one or more of the three world bodies: the World Communion of Reformed Churches, (WCRC), the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC) and the Council for World Mission (CWM).

Deputy general secretary discipleship
Deputy general secretary mission
Secretary for world church relations
Principal, Westminster College
Director, Windermere Centre

2d) Assembly confirms that all other Assembly appointments are open to members of the URC and to members of those Churches which belong to one or more of WCRC, DECC, CWM and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI).

Paper M2

Membership of the United
Reformed Church, The General
Assembly and Mission Council
Clerk

United Church 2014
Church 2014
Reformed Church 2014
Church 2014



Paper M2

Clerk: Membership of the United Reformed Church, The General Assembly and Mission Council

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Margaret Carrick Smith clerk@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision on recommendations to General Assembly and on a proposed change to the Rules of Procedure.
Draft resolution(s)	See text of paper
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Clarity and consistency concerning the membership of the United Reformed Church, the General Assembly and Mission Council.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	The officers of the Assembly, the officers of the Law and Polity Advisory Group and the officers of the Synod of Scotland (concerning paragraph 5).

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Membership of the United Reformed Church, The General Assembly and Mission Council

Membership Matters

1. During the meeting of Mission Council held in November 2013 an issue arose concerning whether those who were not members of the United Reformed Church (URC) could be members of the Assembly and Mission Council. The matter arose in connection with the three new Deputy General Secretary posts, but has wider relevance. Furthermore, there are some related issues and it now seems appropriate to gather them together for the sake of clarity and consistency.

The General Assembly

2. On the whole, the Structure is silent on the question of whether members of the Assembly must be members of the URC. When it was first drafted it may well have been assumed that those representing (then) District Councils would be members. As new categories of membership were added to the list, in some cases it was specified that they must be drawn from the URC membership, but nothing is laid down about the matter in general.

3. At General Assembly in 2006 a resolution was passed (number 51) which stated that, with a few exceptions, members of Assembly should be members of the URC. However, this decision was not enshrined in the Structure, and so is not widely known. I now propose that the Structure be amended to clarify this point.

4. At the same time as proposing this amendment I suggest that another change be considered. The Structure currently states that: “Where the moderator of synod is an officer of the Assembly, a committee convener or otherwise entitled to membership of the Assembly, the synod concerned shall appoint a substitute as its representative”. Whilst it is clearly appropriate that if the moderator of a synod is an officer of the Assembly an alternative synod representative should be appointed, the view has been expressed that since being a convener of a standing committee does not impede the synod moderator from representing the synod appointment of a substitute in that case is unnecessary. I therefore suggest that the Structure be amended to restrict this provision.

5. I am suggesting one other change which, if accepted, will result in the need for an amendment to the Structure. Currently the Synod of Scotland has six additional representatives to the Assembly, under category 2.(6)(h). At the time of union these additional places were put in place in lieu of all former chairmen of the Congregational Union of Scotland being entitled to membership as were all former chairmen, presidents and moderators of the other constituent parts of the URC. Since that time, of course, that provision has been altered so that now only 2 of the former leaders in England and Wales are members (see category 2.(6)(j)). It is therefore now proposed that the Synod

of Scotland should no longer be entitled to an additional six representatives. The officers of the Synod of Scotland have indicated that they would be willing to accept this change. The removal of these additional representatives does not itself require a change to the Structure, and I therefore propose the following resolution which, if passed by the Assembly, would take effect for the 2016 Assembly:

Resolution 1

Mission Council agrees to propose the following resolution to General Assembly:

General Assembly agrees that with effect from the General Assembly of 2016 there shall no longer be six additional representatives of the Synod of Scotland under category 2.(6)(h).

6. The resolution which follows contains, in addition to those outlined in paragraphs 3 and 4 above, a proposed amendment to the Structure to add the former chairmen of the Congregational Union of Scotland to the list in category 2.(6)(j). If Resolution 1 is not passed, that amendment will be removed from the resolution. I propose the following resolution:

Resolution 2

Mission Council agrees to present the following resolution to General Assembly:

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

Paragraph 2.(6)

Amend the first sentence to read: “The General Assembly which shall embody the unity of the United Reformed Church and act as the central organ of its life and the final authority, under the Word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, in all matters of doctrine and order and in all other concerns of its common life shall consist of members of the United Reformed Church (save for those in categories (g), (l), (m) and (n)) as follows:”

Amend category (d) by the deletion of the words: “, a committee convener or otherwise entitled to membership of the Assembly,” so that it reads: “Where the moderator of synod is an officer of the Assembly the synod concerned shall appoint a substitute as its representative”.

Amend category (f) by the deletion of the words: “being members of the United Reformed Church,” (twice).

Amend category (j) by the addition of the words: “former chairmen of the Congregational Union of Scotland,” before the words: “provided that” and delete the words “such former officers are members of the United Reformed Church and that”

Amend category (k) by the deletion of the words: “, being members of the United Reformed Church,”

{N.B. The current text of the categories of membership in the Structure is shown in Appendix 1.}

7. I propose that Mission Council should recommend to the Assembly that the three deputy general secretary post-holders should be members of the Assembly, and therefore propose the following resolution:

Resolution 3

Mission Council agrees to propose the following resolution to General Assembly:

General Assembly agrees to appoint the deputy general secretary administration and resources, the deputy general secretary discipleship and the deputy general secretary mission as members of Assembly under category 2.(6)(n).

8. Since it is the intention that normally the deputy treasurer will, in due course, be appointed as the treasurer, who as convener of the finance committee must be a member of the URC, I propose that it should be determined that the deputy treasurer should be a member, and also that Mission Council recommend to the Assembly that s/he be appointed as a member of Assembly. I therefore propose the following resolution:

Resolution 4

Mission Council agrees to propose the following resolution to General Assembly:

General Assembly agrees that the deputy treasurer shall be a member of the United Reformed Church, and further agrees that the deputy treasurer for the time being shall be appointed as a member of Assembly under category 2.(6)(h).

9. It is currently not explicitly stated that the clerk of the Assembly should be a member of the URC. I propose that Mission Council amend the Rules of Procedure to rectify this by means of the following resolution:

Resolution 5

Mission Council resolves to amend the Rules of Procedure of the United Reformed Church as follows:

Amend paragraph 5.1 so that it reads:

5.1 The General Assembly shall appoint a clerk of Assembly who shall be a member of the United Reformed Church. The Nominations committee shall submit a name to the General Assembly for appointment as clerk, for six years in the first instance, renewable for a maximum additional period of four years, but ensuring an overlap with a period of service of the general secretary.

MISSION COUNCIL

10. When the membership of Mission Council was determined in 1992 the legal adviser was included as a full member. S/he is not, however, a member of Assembly, but “in attendance”. The Law and Polity advisory group (LPAG) has considered this as part of its work following the report of the Resolution 38 Commission, and Mission Council has before it a paper from the LPAG which recommends that in future the legal adviser be in attendance at Mission Council rather than a member.

11. At its meeting in November 2013 Mission Council agreed to recommend to the Assembly that the convener of the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee should be a member of Mission Council. (13/42(5))

12. Also in November 2013 the officers proposed that the three deputy general secretaries should be members of Mission Council. This was deferred for further consideration. The officers now present the proposal again in the light of this clarification of the position of those who are not members of the URC.

13. Mission Council, contrary to the implication of its name, is not a council of the church. It does not have a separate section in the Structure. Originally, this body was the Executive Committee. Of course the nature and functions of Mission Council differ from those of the old Executive Committee, but for most of its work it functions as a Committee of the Assembly. At other times, however, it acts on behalf of the Assembly. The Structure makes it clear that members of standing committees must be members of the URC. Therefore in line with both the General Assembly and the standing committees it is proposed that it be stated explicitly that (with a few exceptions) members of Mission Council should be members of the URC.

14. Sometimes the officers receive requests from synods and other bodies for permission to send observer(s) to Mission Council. The resolution which follows seeks to bring clarity to this issue.

15. I propose the following resolution which deals with all the above issues:

Resolution 6

**Mission Council agrees to present the following resolution to General Assembly:
General Assembly agrees that the membership of Mission Council shall be:**

1. **Moderators of Assembly**
2. **Moderators-elect**
3. **Immediate past moderators**
4. **General secretary**
5. **Deputy general secretaries**
6. **Clerk**
7. **Treasurer**
8. **Deputy treasurer**
9. **Conveners of all Assembly standing committees**
10. **Synod moderators**
11. **Three further representatives of each synod**
12. **Three representatives of FURY (including the FURY Moderator)**
13. **Chair of the United Reformed Church Trust**

With the exception of those in category 5 (the deputy general secretaries) all the above shall be members of the United Reformed Church. The legal adviser and the convener of the Law and Polity advisory group shall be in attendance with the right to speak at all times, but not to use consensus cards or to vote.

Staff secretaries shall be in attendance with the right to speak (except during the decision stage of the consensus process) but not to use consensus cards or to vote.

Up to two ecumenical representatives may attend with the right to speak at all times, but not to use consensus cards or to vote.

Also present shall be the moderators' chaplains, the minute secretary, the consensus adviser (pending separate decision) and other staff members as agreed by committee conveners and the general secretary. These may participate in group sessions, and may speak during plenary sessions with the consent of the Moderator.

From time to time there may be visitors and/or observers present by prior arrangement with the general secretary. They shall not have the right to speak or participate in any way during plenary or group sessions, unless with the explicit consent of the Moderator.

APPENDIX 1

Extract from the Structure as at December 2013

2.(6) The General Assembly which shall embody the unity of the United Reformed Church and act as the central organ of its life and the final authority, under the Word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, in all matters of doctrine and order and in all other concerns of its common life shall consist of:

- (a) Such number of representatives of synods (ministerial and lay in equal numbers) as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine. These numbers shall be calculated proportionately to the total membership of each synod, as recorded in the year book of the United Reformed Church (at present this calculation shall be such as to produce a total of synod representatives not exceeding 250);
- (b) Among the representatives of synods shall be included at least two from each synod aged 26 or under, at the date of appointment. Should a synod prove unable to make such an appointment it may appoint from another synod but these persons must be 26 or under at the date of appointment;
- (c) The moderators of the General Assembly and of the synods, and such other officers of the General Assembly as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine (The Assembly has determined that the clerk of Assembly and the general secretary shall be members of Assembly);

- (d) Where the moderator of synod is an officer of the Assembly, a committee convener or otherwise entitled to membership of the Assembly, the synod concerned shall appoint a substitute as its representative;
- (e) The convener of each of the standing committees of the General Assembly;
- (f) A staff representative and a student representative being members of the United Reformed Church, from each of such theological colleges as the General Assembly has designated as resource centres for learning, and a staff representative and a student representative being members of the United Reformed Church, from such other colleges or centres as shall from time to time be designated by the education and learning committee as engaged in significant training for the United Reformed Church;
- (g) Such number of representatives from the partner churches of the United Reformed Church outside of Britain and Ireland as the Assembly shall from time to time determine (currently six);
- (h) Such other ministers, church related community workers and members of the United Reformed Church as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine (the Assembly has added to its membership one serving United Reformed Church chaplain to the forces, nominated each year by the organising secretary of the United Board, in consultation with the three principal chaplains, and six representatives of the Synod of Scotland);
- (i) The two most immediate past moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church;
- (j) Two in total from the following: former moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, past chairmen of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, past presidents of the Congregational Church in England and Wales, former moderators of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, former chairmen or presidents of the Annual Conference of the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, former presidents of the Annual Conference of the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, provided that such former officers are members of the United Reformed Church and that they shall have been elected by a college consisting of all such past and former moderators, presidents and chairmen as are members of the United Reformed Church;
- (k) Such number of representatives of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth, being members of the United Reformed Church, as the Assembly shall from time to time determine (at present three);
- (l) Representatives of other denominations in the United Kingdom as the General Assembly may from time to time determine (currently six);
- (m) A representative of the Council for World Mission;
- (n) Such number of Assembly-appointed staff as the General Assembly may from time to time determine;
- (o) The chair of the United Reformed Church Trust.

Paper M3

Consensus Decision Making
Mission Council Advisory Group

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2014



Paper M3

Mission Council Advisory Group: Consensus Decision Making

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Roberta Rominger roberta.rominger@urc.org.uk
Action required	Discussion and decision
Draft resolution(s)	None
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	The current consensus adviser's post finishes in 2014. Mission Council is asked to consider how the URC's ongoing development in consensus decision making can be ensured.
Main points	There is nothing in Assembly or Mission Council decisions that requires the appointment of a Consensus Adviser. Various options, formal and informal, are possible to take the work forward.
Previous relevant documents	May 2009 Mission Council paper
Consultation has taken place with...	Assembly officers and present and previous consensus advisers.

Summary of Impact

Financial	Formal reflection and training would incur costs; some money would be saved by not having a dedicated consensus adviser at Mission Council and Assembly.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Consensus Decision Making: the way forward

There was warm affirmation following the November 2013 Mission Council meeting for how well consensus decision-making had operated and what it had contributed to the spirit and outcomes of the meeting. As the current consensus adviser completes her term in July 2014, Mission Council is invited to consider how the United Reformed Church's development in consensus decision-making might best be taken forward.

One option is the appointment of a new consensus adviser. The clerk has researched the origins of the post. Here are her findings:

- Neither the documents in support of the adoption of Consensus Decision Making nor the Standing Orders which implemented it make any mention of a consensus adviser.
- In December 2008 Mission Council passed a resolution from MCAG which appointed Elizabeth Nash as consensus adviser "until General Assembly 2010 in the first instance".
- In May 2009 proposals were brought to Mission Council (see the first item of Session 2) which included at 1.10 "A consensus adviser be nominated by Nominations to both General Assembly and Mission Council, and four consensus facilitators be nominated by Nominations to General Assembly". The minutes record the decisions reached for many of these proposals, but do not record what was decided concerning this one. There is no reference to it in subsequent minutes. No resolution in these terms was presented to Assembly.
- In 2010 Assembly appointed Pauline Barnes as consensus Adviser until Assembly 2014.
- The Standing Orders include in the remit of the facilitation group "help and support the Moderator". (see SO 2c.(b))

The clerk concludes from this that Assembly, although it has appointed a consensus adviser, has not resolved that there should always be one. The previous clerk, James Breslin, treated the post as transitional in anticipation of the day when all procedural advice would once again lie with the clerk. If Mission Council decides that the appointment should not be filled from July onwards, there is no need for a resolution to rescind the post: it simply ends.

The Assembly officers have conferred about this and believe that it is no longer necessary to have a consensus adviser at the Moderator's elbow giving procedural advice, especially when there is a clerk at the other elbow speaking into the other ear. The clerk is confident that she can give appropriate procedural advice as required.

It is appropriate in consensus decision-making for an issue to be presented without any pre-determined recommendations as to the way forward. Mission Council is therefore asked to consider:

Should another consensus adviser be appointed? What would his/her remit be?

Alternatively, are there other mechanisms that could be put in place to enable the URC to continue to develop in its use of consensus? The best learning happens through reflection following each council meeting. Is it sufficient to leave it to the Assembly officers to ensure that this happens, encouraging them to include other people in their reflection sessions as appropriate to offer insight and challenge? Or should this responsibility be given explicitly to some group (e.g. Mission Council Advisory Group, Assembly Arrangements Committee)? Might we have designated process observers at each meeting?

If “reflection” is one crucial component in the ongoing development of consensus, “facilitation” is another. How might all Mission Council and Assembly members be encouraged to engage confidently in the decision making of the councils, putting energy, creativity and commitment into process as well as outcomes?

Paper M4

Mission Council Advisory
Group election
General Secretary

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2014



Paper M4

General Secretary: Mission Council Advisory Group election

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Roberta Rominger roberta.rominger@urc.org.uk
Action required	Nominations
Draft resolution(s)	None
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Two new members are needed for MCAG
Main points	Membership, terms of service, eligibility, nominations process.
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	Clerk to Assembly

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Mission Council Advisory Group election

The Mission Council Advisory Group is a body of twelve people, four of whom are appointed directly by Mission Council. The appointed members serve for four years, finishing sooner if they cease to be a member of Mission Council. There are two vacancies for appointment at this Mission Council, at least one to be filled by a committee convener.

The membership of MCAG is as follows:

- Two serving General Assembly Moderators
- Two immediate past moderators
- Two moderators-elect
- The general secretary
- The treasurer
- Four members of Mission Council, at least one of whom is a committee convener
[Mission Council has decided that the new deputy general secretaries should not be members]

The continuing members are Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor (to 2015) and Nicola Furley-Smith (to 2016). Mission Council will want to record its thanks to Elizabeth Nash who completes her service in July.

MCAG meets three times per year, normally on a weekday 1.00pm until 3.30pm at Church House. The purpose of the Group is to act as an executive to Mission Council, agreeing the agenda and dealing with practical, procedural and strategic matters as required. It also serves as a support group for the Assembly moderators, the treasurer and the general secretary.

Mission Council members are asked to make nominations for the two vacancies. Please obtain the consent of the person you wish to nominate before putting his/her name forward. The new members will serve with effect from July 2014 and therefore the people eligible to fill the convener's vacancy are these: Michael Hopkins, John Humphreys, Tracey Lewis, Sheila Maxey, Tim Meachin, Helen Mee, Gethin Rhys, John Smith, Elizabeth Welch and Irene Wren.

Nominations must be in the hands of the general secretary by the beginning of session 7, Tuesday 4.30pm. Please submit the name of the person you wish to nominate with two supporting signatures. If there is only a single nomination for each vacancy, Mission Council will be invited to appoint the new members by consensus. Where there is more than one name for either or both of the vacancies, a vote will be taken by ballot.

M4

United Reformed Church • Mission Council, March 2014

Paper O

Human Resources Advisory Group
(HRAG)

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2014



Paper O

Human Resources Advisory Group (HRAG)

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Keith G. Webster kwebsterwms@btinternet.com
Action required	For information
Draft resolution(s)	None
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Report providing an update on the recent work of HRAG.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Human Resources Advisory Group (HRAG)

There are three elements to the HRAG report:

1. Routine work
2. General Secretariat review: the three deputy general secretary job descriptions
3. HRAG: review of the role

Current membership of HRAG for information:

Keith Webster (convener), Alastair Forsyth, Mike Gould, Peter Pay, Revd Wendy White.

In attendance: the Revd Roberta Rominger (general secretary), Sandi Hallam-Jones (interim human resources manager).

These people bring a wide range of skills in diverse aspects of human resources (HR).

HRAG was established in October 2012 until July 2015 with a remit to provide a unified reference point on HR matters for Mission Council (General Assembly), the URC Trust and Church House personnel.

1. **Routine work report** – November 2013 to March 2014

1.1 The following job descriptions and/or posts have been considered:

Assembly Appointments

National rural officer – this is a joint post with the Methodist Church and was seen as an important part of the URC's outreach, in this case to the rural communities.

Staff posts

Retired Minister's Housing Society (RMHS) – further work on the organisation structure was carried out and there are now three jobs with a specific focus on the acquisition of properties and the development of maintenance programmes. These jobs are senior administrator, administrative assistant, and property adviser and deputy secretary to RMHS. Having been reviewed and approved by HRAG, these posts were submitted for evaluation to determine the appropriate salaries on the URC scale.

Administrator, Racial Justice and Intercultural Ministry – the range of the support work has broadened with a consequent impact on the nature of the job and hence the change to administrator.

1.2 **Policies Review**

Work has started on the review of the current set of HR policies which apply at Church House with a view to enhancing them as appropriate. To date the Employment Policy and Redundancy Policy have been reviewed.

It should be noted that the Employment Policy now states explicitly that at Church House we will pay the living wage at the prevailing London rate, rather than the minimum wage, in accordance with Resolution 33 of General Assembly in 2008.

2. General Secretariat Review

Following the Mission Council meeting in November 2013 and the submission of the revised Paper O2 (the amended job description for the DGS Administration and Resources), the job descriptions for both the DGS Discipleship and DGS Mission were similarly amended and were then to be made available on the URC website prior to the commencement of the recruitment and appointment processes.

3. Review of the role of HRAG

In November 2013 HRAG had been in existence for one year and hence it seemed appropriate for HRAG to step back and assess progress to date on the nature of the work that had been undertaken, interfaces with operational HR and line management, and the extent to which the 2013 remit to provide a unified reference point on HR matters had been met. This work is currently underway with the aim of ensuring that HRAG is able to give appropriate support to both HR and line management.

Paper P

Powers in pre-Union trusts

Law and Polity Advisory Group

Church 2014
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Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2014



Paper p

Law and Polity Advisory Group: Powers in pre-Union trusts

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Dr Augur Pearce augur@dunelm.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	See end of paper
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Powers in pre-Union Trusts (England, Wales and the Islands)
Main points	Trust deeds predating the 1972 and 1981 Unions forming the United Reformed Church gave powers to certain organs and officers of the predecessor Churches. Sections of the two Acts facilitating the Unions allowed the General Assembly to determine organs or officers of the United Reformed Church which were to “inherit” such powers, but this has never been done.
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	

Summary of Impact

Financial	None
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None

Powers in pre-Union trusts

1. Most property held for the United Reformed Church serves the church at the local level. Church buildings (here called chapels) and manses are the best-known examples. But from time to time land has been given or acquired to serve the denomination as a whole. This was true also of our predecessor denominations before the United Reformed Church came into being.
2. When the United Reformed Church Act 1972 varied the trusts of former Presbyterian and Congregational assets to make them available to serve the United Reformed Church, it dealt with such assets under five main categories. In the United Reformed Church Act 1981 a similar approach was taken to former local Churches of Christ assets.

Category	Type of asset	Act of 1972	Act of 1981
A	Chapels, church halls, mission halls and manses of local churches	ss.8(1) and (2), and Sch 2	ss.6(1) and (2), and Sch 2
B	Other local church land	ss.8(1) and (3)	ss.6(1) and (3)
C	Other local church assets	s.9	s.7
D	Denominational property – Presbyterian	s.11	
E	Denominational property – Congregational	s.12	
F	Denominational property – Churches of Christ		[applied by Scheme of the Charity Commissioners]

3. Section 8(2), applicable to property category A, replaced altogether the operative provisions of the trust deeds governing the property to which it applied. In their place, came the well-known provisions of the Acts' Second Schedules: Part II for manses, Part I for everything else. In relation to this category of property, there is no need to look beyond the provisions of the relevant Schedule, which distribute necessary decision-making between Trustees, Church Meeting and Synod.
4. However the other sections made very few changes to existing trusts, apart from substituting United Reformed Church purposes for those of the predecessor denomination. So it remains important to consider what the pre-Union trust instrument governing property in categories B-F (or, if there was no written instrument, the unwritten trusts implied by the circumstances of its acquisition) said.

5. The difficulty here is that, in some cases, pre-Union trusts conferred powers of direction, powers of nomination or appointment, and the right to give or withhold consent to a transaction, on organs of the predecessor denomination (for example on the Board of Managers of a Presbyterian congregation, a Presbytery, a special meeting of a Congregational church, or the Annual Conference of the Churches of Christ). Since such organs no longer exist, there is a question who can now exercise their powers.

6. No difficulty has been encountered in practice, and there has been a general assumption that “equivalent councils” under the Structure of the United Reformed Church can exercise the powers. But this is not strictly true. One reason is that the “equivalent councils” need to be expressly determined; otherwise it would be uncertain whether church meeting or elders’ meeting should replace earlier local organs. It would previously have been uncertain whether synod or district council should inherit the powers of a Presbytery. A deeper reason is that, although the Structure is part of our denominational constitution, setting out the terms on which members of the United Reformed Church past and present have agreed to order our common life, the agreement of church members is not enough to alter the terms on which the owners of assets gave them at an earlier date. That is why the United Reformed Church Acts were necessary; so that parliament could make changes which the authorities of the uniting churches themselves could not.

7. The authors of the Unions foresaw this difficulty and secured provisions in the United Reformed Church Acts to transfer trust deed powers in relation to property in categories B-E above. (In relation to category F any provision for succession to the predecessor denomination’s powers should have been made by the Charity Commission Scheme.)

8. s. 18(1) in the Act of 1972 and s.10(1) in the Act of 1981 were designed to resolve difficulties arising “Where immediately before the date of formation/unification any power with respect to any trust or any power of nomination is or is to be vested in any association dissolved by [the Act]”.

9. These sections did not say where such powers should go, but left that to the General Assembly to decide. “Any such power shall (in the case of a power previously vested ... in an association) vest in such person or body of persons as the General Assembly shall from time to time appoint”.

10. The General Assembly has, however, never exercised this right in general terms. The Acts permitted it to delegate the right, and it did delegate its right under the 1972 Act to its Executive Committee (now Mission Council); but the Committee never exercised the right either. The right under the 1981 Act was never delegated.

11. The resolution in this paper proposes that the right under both Acts should be exercised by Assembly itself, to prevent any question as to powers in pre-Union trusts arising in the future. It is suggested that decisions taken before the Union at the local level should pass to the church meeting, decisions at intermediate levels to the synod and decisions at the denominational level to Mission Council (unless it should happen that a need arises for an urgent decision when a meeting of Assembly is closer than a Mission Council meeting). The resolution is carefully worded to cover the possibility that a local church created by a Union may since have merged with others or ceased to exist, and to cover two different ways in which pre-Union Presbyterian deeds may have referred to a Presbytery.

12. The choice of the church meeting to make local decisions, rather than the elders' meeting, mirrors the choice made in the Second Schedules to the Acts regarding chapels, halls and manses. There too, the powers of direction, consent and appointment are bestowed on the church meeting, but church meetings are called upon to have regard to the recommendations of other councils including the elders' meeting. That exhortation is repeated in the resolution.

13. It is conceivable that a pre-Union trust deed may have conferred powers on some other pre-Union entity (such as a presbytery or denominational committee) not covered by the resolution, creating the necessity for a further exercise of the Assembly's right of appointment to lay uncertainty to rest. It is also conceivable that some amendment of the provisions now proposed may be needed in the light of experience. The resolution therefore also contains a delegation of Assembly's rights to Mission Council for the future.

14. The resolution will not cover property category A above since the Acts' Second Schedules have already made adequate provision for such property. This is stated for the avoidance of any doubt.

15. Section 18 of the 1972 Act extends to the Isle of Man by virtue of the United Reformed Church Act 1972 (Isle of Man) Order 1977, to Guernsey by virtue of the United Reformed Church Act 1972 (Guernsey) Order 1981 and to Jersey by virtue of the United Reformed Church Acts 1972 and 1981 (Jersey) Order 1998. The resolution therefore also covers powers in relation to any property in categories B-E above that may exist in the Islands.

16. Sections 12(1) and (2) of the United Reformed Church Act 2000 make comparable provision in respect of assets formerly held for the Congregational Union of Scotland and its churches, but in that case the power of appointment lies with the Synod of Scotland rather than the General Assembly. The resolution does not therefore refer to the 2000 Act; but if Mission Council agrees to propose the resolution to Assembly, the Law and Polity advisory group will send a copy to the National Synod of Scotland for information, in case it should wish to follow suit.

Resolution

Mission Council agrees to forward the following resolution to General Assembly:

(1) The General Assembly, in exercise of the powers conferred by s.18(1) of the United Reformed Church Act 1972 and s.10(1) of the United Reformed Church Act 1981, appoints until further notice the councils and other organs of the Church indicated in column 2 below to exercise any powers with respect to trusts and any powers of nomination vested prior to 5 October 1972 (or, as the case may be, prior to 26 September 1981) in the members, courts and other organs of dissolved associations indicated in column 1 below.

(2) In exercising any power vested in it by this resolution, a church meeting should act with due regard to any recommendations of the elders' meeting or of other councils of the United Reformed Church exercising oversight over the local church concerned.

(3) For the avoidance of doubt, this appointment does not affect trusts or powers in relation to property governed by s. 8(2) of and Schedule 2 to the Act of 1972, or by s. 6(2) of and Schedule 2 to the Act of 1981, or to property in Scotland.

(4) In exercise of the power conferred by s.18(2) of the Act of 1972 and s.10(2) of the Act of 1981, the Assembly delegates any further exercise that may be necessary of its powers under s.18(1) and s.10(1) respectively (including any amendment of the provision now made) to Mission Council. This is in substitution for the delegation made to the Executive Committee by the Uniting Assembly of 1972.

Power vested before the date of formation/unification in:	To vest in:
The Session, Diaconate, Deacons' Court or Board of Managers of a uniting congregation	The church meeting of the corresponding local church, or of any local church formed by its union with other local churches since the date of formation; or, if the local church has ceased to exist since the date of formation, the synod on which it was last represented
The members or deacons of a uniting church	
A presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of England, defined in the relevant trust instrument by jurisdiction over a particular uniting congregation	The synod on which the local church corresponding to that uniting congregation, or any local church formed by its union with other local churches since the date of formation, is for the time being represented; or, if the local church has ceased to exist since the date of formation, the synod on which it was last represented
A presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of England, defined in the relevant trust instrument only by geographical name	The synod of the current province or nation of the United Reformed Church within which the bounds of the former presbytery (or the greater part thereof) lay; to be determined in case of doubt by a ruling of a Moderator of the Assembly on the advice of the clerk, which shall be final
A county Congregational Union	The synod of the current province or nation of the United Reformed Church within which the area of the former Union (or the greater part thereof) lay; to be determined in case of doubt by a Moderator of the Assembly on the advice of the clerk, which shall be final
The General Assembly (or, prior to the adoption of that title, the Synod) of the Presbyterian Church of England	Mission Council (or the General Assembly if, whilst in session, it elects to exercise the power)
The Assembly of the Congregational Union or of the Congregational Church of England and Wales	
The Annual Conference of the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ	

Paper S1

Update

Medium Term Strategy Group

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church 2014



Paper S1

Medium Term Strategy Group: Update

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Roberta Rominger roberta.rominger@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council welcomes the update from the Medium Term Strategy Group and asks them to proceed with the work identified until the new general secretariat has put alternative medium term planning arrangements into place.
Alternative options to consider, if any	<p>1. If the life of the group is not extended beyond the 2014 Assembly, essentially it is discharged with effect from this Mission Council. This would leave various pieces of work incomplete, including some significant thinking about the future of the Assembly committees and the role of their conveners in light of the new Church House structures.</p> <p>2. There has been a comment that the group is too managerial in its approach. Mission Council might wish to consider asking the Nominations committee to identify an additional member to redress the balance.</p>

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To provide an update on the work commissioned in October 2012. To identify the next phase of medium planning work to be undertaken.
Main points	The Medium Term Strategy Group has drawn together work done by various reviews and working groups 2010-12 There is progress to report on synod issues, including structure, finance and the role of the synod moderator.
Previous relevant documents	Mission Council Paper B (October 2012), D and D1 (May 2013), and S (November 2013).
Consultation has taken place with...	Convener of the Faith and Order Committee.

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Medium Term Planning in the United Reformed Church

An update on the work arising from Paper B,
Mission Council October 2012

1 Introduction

This paper is offered to provide Mission Council with an overview of the work of medium term planning which has taken place since General Assembly 2012 and to propose next steps for Mission Council comment.

2 Background

2.1 In October 2012 Mission Council agreed to appoint a Medium Term Strategy Group to oversee a project of reflection and decision-making across the full range of issues which had emerged from various review groups and task groups which had presented their work since the previous Assembly.

2.2 This paper offers a general update on that project, noting that the specifics will be reported to General Assembly 2014 by the committees and groups responsible for them. Some urgent questions have now been addressed and decisions have been made. Other work remains outstanding. In some cases, exploration of a presenting issue has revealed deeper questions deserving the Church's attention in the next phase.

2.3 General Assembly 2012 finished with remaindered business. While a four-day Assembly could not resolve the host of questions it had received, it did set the scene for the many discussions that were to follow. The incoming moderator, the Revd Dr Michael Jagessar, challenged the Church to commit itself to "living conversations" on the issues of the day. He reminded us of God's generosity whenever we were in danger of succumbing to a narrative of decline and scarcity. The period 2012 to 2014 may well be remembered as the time when the United Reformed Church began to face its biggest questions with faith, courage and perseverance.

3 The questions we asked

3.1 The paper which the general secretary presented in October 2012 (Paper B) asked, what does a faithful, vibrant, sustainable United Reformed Church look like? It went on to propose specific questions under five major headings: the local church, the synods, General Assembly, Mission Council and Church House. These questions were allocated to various committees and groups for consideration. They are listed in the appendix.

3.2 It is beyond the scope of this paper to address each of the questions in full. The Book of Reports for General Assembly 2014 will give account of the thinking that has taken place and the conclusions reached. Seasoned members of Mission Council will recognise major themes from the 2013 meetings, including the future of the Church, the distinctiveness of the URC, the work of discernment in the councils of the Church, modes of decision-making, evangelism, the challenges facing the synods, and inter-synod resource sharing.

3.3 In some cases an issue has been transferred from one group's agenda to another's. In others, a conscious decision has been taken to defer an issue. Some of the work, such as consideration of the effectiveness of governance by committees, will need to be carried forward.

However, in the course of these many discussions and in the ongoing life of the Church some new questions have emerged. It has been helpful to have a group responsible for tracking progress on various pieces of work and endeavouring to co-ordinate the thinking of the Church across its many task groups and committees.

4 Progress to note

4.1 The Medium Term Strategy Group has kept a strong link with the Faith and Order committee (FAOC) throughout the 18 months of its life. FAOC has repeatedly challenged Mission Council's attention to distinguish between first and second order issues, each requiring a different kind of approach. Under their leadership, new clarity is emerging around the first order issues of the theological vision, values and ethos of the United Reformed Church, the distinctive contribution which the URC makes to Christian life and witness, and the work of the Holy Spirit through the councils of the Church. By their nature, these are questions which require continuous reflection. They will never have once-and-for-all answers.

4.2 It has been the Medium Term Strategy Group's role to address the second order issues in which we translate our understanding of the nature and purpose of the United Reformed Church into structural solutions to a host of pressing concerns. "Successful" solutions, MTSG said, would be sustainable (meeting foreseeable needs for the next five to ten years), scalable (capable of expansion or contraction as the Church's resources grow or diminish), and flexible (providing a common framework which can be adapted to suit the different needs and practices of each synod or local church).

4.3 General Assembly

Although Mission Council accepted the Medium Term Strategy Group's recommendation that a thorough review of the biennial General Assembly should be deferred until one more Assembly had taken place, various steps have been taken to improve the conduct of business at Assembly 2014. Principal among these is the new standing order dividing business into three categories: en bloc, majority voting, and consensus decision making. There will also be a session in which Assembly meets concurrently in five separate groups to consider the work completed by the committees since the last Assembly. This will allow for serious attention to be given to each committee report while allocating the majority of Assembly's time to current issues and proposals for the future.

4.4 Even Better Synods

4.4.1 In May 2013 the Medium Term Strategy Group led Mission Council in forward thinking concerning the synods. We noted the difference in size between the synods (both geographical and in the number of churches and people), as well as their different circumstances around staffing and financial resources. There is a variety of roles which synods can fulfil and the 13 synods of the URC each place the emphasis in a unique way:

Service – meeting the perceived needs of the churches

Instrumental – providing a vehicle for the churches to do things together which they could not do for themselves, e.g. regional ecumenical relationships

Co-operative – enabling churches to support one another through active networking

Governance – setting priorities, initiating programmes, managing resources

4.4.2 Through exploration of a series of scenarios, Mission Council established that there was no appetite for structural change, either to reduce the number of synods into larger regional bodies or to increase their number so that they would encompass fewer churches. Further thought was needed about their administrative functions, and this took place at the November 2013 Mission Council meeting, where the idea of a centrally funded manager for each synod was explored. It was decided that each synod should continue to address its administrative needs in its own way.

4.4.3 In November 2013 Mission Council affirmed the principle that each synod should have a guaranteed income sufficient to meet its basic needs, and the Resource Sharing Task Group was asked to draw Mission Council's recommendations into a coherent plan.

4.5 Role of the synod moderator

With various questions about the synods resolved, attention could turn to confirmation of a new role description for the synod moderators. This is the main item which the Medium Term Strategy Group brings to the March 2014 Mission Council meeting for decision.

4.6 Role of the synod clerk

There have been several requests for a review of the role of the synod clerk. The Medium Term Strategy Group believes that it would be more appropriate for this work to be undertaken at synod level. We are working on a tool to facilitate this process.

5 Significant issues for the next phase of exploration

5.1 "Right sizing" the central operations of the Church (N.B. the aim of this is to make things work better, not to save money, although the effective use of scarce resources would also be considered)

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing Assembly-level programme work
2. Scope of Church House provision, including use of premises, central staffing, based on research into the needs of the churches
3. Long term financial planning

5.2 Good governance

1. The effectiveness of governance by committees
2. The respective roles of committee conveners and Church House line managers in relation to the new general secretariat
3. Size and frequency of General Assembly
4. The relationship between the trust bodies and the councils of the Church
5. The possibility of appointing one group of trustees to serve the trust bodies of several synods

Resolution

Mission Council welcomes the update from the Medium Term Strategy Group and asks them to proceed with the work identified until the new general secretariat has put alternative medium term planning arrangements into place.

APPENDIX

From Paper B, “Medium Term Planning in the United Reformed Church”,
Mission Council October 2012

The Medium Term Strategy Group was appointed to oversee the process by which these questions, delegated to the appropriate committees, were considered.

Faith and Order Committee

- a. *Are we still persuaded that the ongoing life of the United Reformed Church as a separate denomination is within God’s purposes for the building of the Kingdom? What specifically would be lost if it ceased to exist?*
- b. *What is our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church?*
- c. *Our churches represent every stage of a life cycle from new inceptions through development, maturity and end of life. Work is needed on understanding this cycle. Can we enable churches to die with dignity, recognising that this is natural?*
- d. *There is significant concern about the health of church meeting.*

Human Resources Advisory Group

- a. *An effective denominational structure needs to deliver six functions: embodiment, development of strategy, governance, management, advice and implementation. Who within the structure should be responsible for each?*
- b. *Some people say that the concept of operation by committees is past its sell-by date. What other options exist? What is most appropriate for the United Reformed Church?*

Ministries Committee

The Ministries Committee has repeatedly challenged Assembly, synods and churches to be imaginative and flexible in meeting the leadership needs of the churches. However, the model of stipendiary ministry stretched ever more thinly persists. What can we do to encourage churches to explore and implement other possibilities?

Mission Committee

- a. *How do we re-evangelise the Church?*
- b. *How about church planting?*

Mission Council Advisory Group

- a. *Most of the Mission Council agenda arises out of committee work, with only occasional items from the synods. Is the balance right? How should the Mission Council agenda be generated?*
- b. *Given the ever increasing pressure on Mission Council agendas does modern technology offer other options for consultation? Decision making?*

Medium Term Strategy Group

- a. *What are synods for? (Service? Providing the vehicle for regional witness/action? Enabling churches to cooperate and support one another? Governance? Some/all of the above?)*
- b. *What is the long-term viability of inter-synod resource sharing? Is it what we want?*
- c. *Should the synod trusts be centrally coordinated?*
- d. *The level of service offered to churches varies synod by synod depending on wealth. Are we content with this reality?*
- e. *Do we agree the proposed role of the synod moderator?*

- f. Should service/administrative functions be moved from the synods to Church House? If so, how would this be funded?*
- g. Should synod moderators have a formal role in the ministerial disciplinary process?*
- h. How many synods should there be? Does each require a full-time synod moderator?*
- i. The Assembly is essential to the health and faithfulness of the United Reformed Church. Does the current pattern of biennial Assemblies deliver what we need?*
- j. Do we have the membership of Assembly right? Should it be larger? Smaller?*
- k. When is it appropriate to use consensus decision making? When should other modes of decision making be employed?*
- l. Where resources and support are needed for mission and programme work, how do we determine whether these should be provided by the synod or the Assembly (or both or neither)?*

Paper S2

Role of the synod moderator
Medium Term Strategy Group

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2014



Paper S2

Medium Term Strategy Group: Role of the synod moderator

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Roberta Rominger roberta.rominger@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	MC agrees that the job description set out in the appendix to Paper S should be recommended to Assembly as a model for future synod moderator appointment groups.
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To complete the work undertaken in the 2011-12 review of the role of the synod moderator.
Main points	Following wide consultation, the Medium Term Strategy Group offers a revised job description and person specification for Mission Council comment.
Previous relevant documents	“Review of the role of synod moderator” (Book of Reports, Assembly 2012, pp. 46-56).
Consultation has taken place with...	The convener of the 2012 review group, current synod moderators, three synod clerks, members of a recent synod moderator appointment group, convener of Human Resources Advisory Group.

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

The role of the synod moderator

Purpose

1. The Medium Term Strategy Group (MTSG) inherited as unfinished business the proposals of the task group to review the role of the synod moderator, chaired by Stephen Orchard, that were presented to the 2012 General Assembly. MTSG has moved forward some of the group's proposals. This paper offers a draft model job description for a synod moderator in the light of the Orchard Group's own work and developments since.

Building Blocks

2. The Orchard Group prepared a draft job description consistent with their other proposals. Much of what appears in this paper is based on that document.

3. MTSG also looked at the job description used by the most recent synod moderator appointment group, i.e. that for Mersey. MTSG took account of discussions at Mission Council since the Orchard Group reported, especially the discussions around the concept of a synod manager, and sought to put the job description in the format now preferred by the Human Resources Advisory Group (HRAG).

4. MTSG supports the Orchard Group's preference for a common core to the synod moderators' job descriptions but feels that individual synods need encouragement to reflect deliberately on what specific local demands need to be added. In some synods, for example, the moderator has a role with the synod trust. This constitutes a significant expectation which does not pertain in other synods. The draft job description therefore includes some prompts to encourage that reflection. MTSG suggest that the standard sections should not be altered by a synod appointment group without at least reference to the general secretary.

5. It is also recognised that new patterns are emerging, such as the Cumbria president post within the North Western Synod and the possibility of collaborative working between the five northern synods. This job description is not meant to discourage flexibility but to establish the benchmark against which different patterns can be agreed.

6. Some synods and their moderators have instituted a pattern of regular reviews to assess the needs of the synod and agree the areas where the moderator should focus his/her energies. This is an interesting parallel to the Local Mission and Ministry Review process in local church life where the role of the minister is regularly reviewed and renegotiated in light of the church's mission priorities and pastoral needs. At synod level, such reviews offer the moderators feedback on how their ministry is being received and where changes of emphasis might be appropriate, and they are a healthy response to a job which everyone acknowledges it is unrealistic to expect one individual to fulfil. Each moderator will bring particular strengths to the role. If the synod is aware of the full breadth of its needs, it can release its moderator to work to his/her strengths and support him/her in ongoing personal development, all the while ensuring that there is provision in place for the full scope of work required.

Resolution

Mission Council agrees that the job description set out in the appendix to Paper S should be recommended to Assembly as a model for future synod moderator appointment groups.

APPENDIX: Draft Proposed Model Job Description

JOB TITLE:	Moderator of XX Synod of the United Reformed Church
RESPONSIBLE TO:	General Assembly through the General Secretary
STIPEND:	Stipend authorised by the Plan for Partnership will apply
ROLE OVERVIEW:	<p>To provide spiritual and pastoral oversight, care and leadership within the synod, giving confidence for the Church's mission locally, regionally/nationally, and globally.</p> <p>To provide clear personal leadership to enable and encourage discernment of God's will within the councils of the Church.</p>

This post is for an initial seven year term with a possibility of renewal for a further five years. The main responsibilities will be subject to review during the term, and at the point of any renewal, as new insights are gained and circumstances evolve.

Responsibilities and Duties

Synod

1. To play a key role in developing and realising the synod's vision and strategy by offering theological insight, having a clear awareness of priorities, and facilitating open discussion within the synod to produce realistic and agreed objectives.
2. To encourage ecumenical commitment and endeavour across the synod.
3. To encourage the Church's engagement with public issues.
4. To nurture a sense of community and coherence across the synod by clear communication and leadership to ministers, churches, officers, committees, synod staff and the synod trust company.
5. To work collaboratively with synod officers/committees to facilitate clarity about priorities and to encourage creativity and new ideas about being church.
6. To chair synod meetings.
7. [Synod specific addition, if any]

Churches

8. To work collaboratively to encourage local churches and partnerships to engage in strategies leading to health, growth, learning and renewal.
9. To ensure the development and implementation of an appropriate strategy for the deployment of stipendiary ministers/CRCWs within the synod's agreed allocation.
10. To visit and provide strategic encouragement to pastorates in vacancy, to suggest names of ministers and CRCWs to vacant pastorates in conjunction with interim moderators of local churches and to preside (except where a deputy is appointed) at all ordinations/commissionings and/or inductions of ministers within the synod.
11. To work with others to ensure that individual gifts in the churches and committees will be recognised and fostered for the benefit of the whole synod.
12. To visit and lead worship at churches within the synod.
13. [Synod specific addition, if any]

People

14. To ensure active encouragement and support for the spiritual growth, renewal and Christian service of church members of all ages.
15. To meet with ministerial candidates and provide them with procedural guidance.
16. To provide supportive oversight and pastoral care to serving ministers, CRCWs and their families both personally and through the establishment of collegial teams.
17. To act as an adviser in the URC's provision of support services to ministers and CRCWs (e.g. long term sickness arrangements, welfare, retirement processes).
18. To encourage ministers and CRCWs in spiritual growth and development at all stages in their ministry, in partnership with those responsible for their self-appraisal and ongoing development.
19. To fulfil the responsibilities ascribed to the synod moderator under the Ministerial Disciplinary process and the Incapacity procedure.
20. [Synod specific addition, if any]

Wider Engagement

21. To participate as a member of Mission Council and the General Assembly.
22. To represent the synod to the wider church and the wider church to the synod.
23. To take a full part in the moderators' meeting.
24. To be proactive in encouraging fruitful ecumenical activities at a regional/national level, to ensure the United Reformed Church is represented in church leaders' meetings and, where relevant, represent the synod at ecumenical events.



Person Specification

JOB TITLE: Moderator of XX Synod

REQUIREMENTS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	MEASUREMENT
Education and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educated to at least diploma level or equivalent in theology Ordained minister of Word and Sacraments of the United Reformed Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of keeping abreast with current theological literature 	Applicant's details/ interview
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working as a minister in a local pastorate Experience of leadership and working in close collaboration with other colleagues Experience of working with church or voluntary organisations on strategic plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent experience of working as a minister in a local pastorate Experience of different church contexts Experience of working ecumenically Experience of change management at synod level 	Applicant's details/ interview
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep understanding of the role of the Church in its mission to the world Deep understanding of the distinctive traditions, ethos and witness of the United Reformed Church Awareness of the individuality of local churches and their needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of the ethos and polity of other denominations and major faith groups Applicant's details/ interview	Applicant's details/ interview
Skills and Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to exercise appropriate personal leadership within a conciliar ecclesiology Ability to exercise appropriate personal leadership within a conciliar ecclesiology Ability to discern and deliver the kind of approach which will best promote open and constructive relationships at all levels Delegation and team building skills Facilitation skills Conflict resolution skills Skills in project and change management. Skills in time management. Ability to assess priorities and plan workload accordingly IT skills in e-mail and document handling 		Applicant's details/ interview

Paper U

Mission Council Advisory Group

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church 2014

Paper U



Mission Council Advisory Group

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Roberta Rominger roberta.rominger@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	<p>1. Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, agrees to extend the appointment of the Revd Lis Mullen as interim synod moderator of the Northern Synod until 31st July 2015.</p> <p>2. Mission Council agrees the terms of reference for the Task Group on the Church's engagement with 20 to 40 year olds.</p>
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	General update with two items for decision.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Mission Council Advisory Group

1. Five northern synods conversations

Conversations between the five northern synods continue as to ways that they might share the resources of people, programmes and administrative functions across their borders. In May 2013 Mission Council noted that these discussions would take place. Mission Council gave its support and agreed that an interim synod moderator should be appointed to Northern Synod so that various future options could be explored. The Revd Lis Mullen was appointed to serve until July 2014. As these explorations are incomplete, it is recommended that this arrangement should continue for a further year. Lis Mullen is willing to serve.

Resolution 1

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, agrees to extend the appointment of the Revd Lis Mullen as interim synod moderator of the Northern Synod until 31st July 2015.

2. Officer action

Mission Council authorised its officers to confirm various appointments following the last meeting. These are listed in the Nominations Committee report, Paper J.

3. Review of decision making under the new standing order

In May 2013 Mission Council agreed a new standing order by which business would be divided into three categories: en bloc voting, majority voting and consensus decision making. MCAG undertook to review the new system after it had been tried in the November meeting. There had been many positive comments concerning en bloc voting. MCAG noted the two technical provisions which had been made, both with reference to the process for removing an item from en bloc. The first was the Moderators' ruling that three signatures would be sufficient to call for the removal of an item at Mission Council, rather than the six indicated for Assembly purposes in the standing order. The second was the creation of a single sign-up sheet to enable those wishing to see an item removed simply to add their names rather than having to find two colleagues to sign a special request form with them. Both of these changes had helped to make Mission Council's experience of en bloc satisfactory and MCAG has encouraged that they continue.

4. Observers at Mission Council

People may attend Mission Council as observers at the discretion of the general secretary. For the sake of clarity, Mission Council should understand that observers will not be assigned to discussion groups. They will not participate in decision making and may only speak with the permission of the moderator. Staff in attendance are entitled to speak but should not participate in decision making.

5. Role of committee conveners

One of the issues identified by the 2011-13 Investigation Group chaired by Val Morrison concerned committee conveners. Their role in relation to staff members was not clear, particularly as it operated alongside a system of line management. The Nominations committee took responsibility for issuing advice. They appointed a task group with Kirsty Thorpe, Malcolm Hanson and Frank Kantor as members. This group has produced a paper which was received by MCAG and forwarded to the Medium Term Strategy Group to be included in their consideration of the URC committee structure.

6. Task group on the Church's engagement with 20 to 40 year olds

Terms of reference were agreed by MCAG for Mission Council's consideration. They are appended to this paper.

Task Group for the Church's engagement with 20 to 40 year olds

Terms of reference

General Assembly 2012 expressed concern at the reducing number of young adults in the Church and asked that energy should be devoted to including and integrating them at every level of Church life. In November 2013 Mission Council agreed that a task group should be appointed to consider how the Assembly resolution should be implemented. The Mission Council Advisory Group offers the following terms of reference for the task group.

The Task Group for the Church's engagement with 20 to 40 year olds will:

1. speak with people in this age group to ascertain
 - a. their perception of their faith needs and how these are being met,
 - b. their current experience of the United Reformed Church at every level, identifying good news stories where these exist, and
 - c. their ideas about the sort of Church they would want to be part of;
2. survey the work of partner Churches concerning this age group, significantly the Methodist Church's "Missing Generation" report and its follow-up;
3. explore the Fresh Expressions movement, including participation in the Young Adults Round Table, with a view to identifying experience, insights and methodologies Fresh Expressions can offer for engagement with 20 to 40 year olds;
4. consult with Assembly committees and groups as appropriate, including the Mission, Ministries, Equalities, Education and Learning, Children's and Youth Work, Communications Committees, Racial Justice Advocates, Resource Centres for Learning, TLS Management Group, and the FURY Advisory Board;
5. report to Mission Council in 2015;
6. bring a final report to Assembly 2016, including fully costed proposals for the future.

Resolution 2

Mission Council agrees the terms of reference for the Task Group on the Church's engagement with 20 to 40 year olds.

Paper Y1

Frequency of General Assembly

Wessex Synod

United Church 2014
Church 2014
Reformed Church 2014
Church 2014



Paper Y1

Wessex Synod: Frequency of General Assembly

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Clare Downing moderator@urcwessex.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council agrees to explore ways by which the United Reformed Church can return to the pattern of General Assembly being held every year.
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To enable exploration of how the United Reformed Church can return to a pattern of annual General Assemblies.
Main points	The change from annual to biennial General Assembly, taken at the same time as the loss of District Councils, needs to be reviewed. Mission Council needs to be enabled to take an informed decision on whether a return to annual General Assemblies is the right way forward, and if so, what effects this would have for organisational and budgetary purposes.
Previous relevant documents	General Assembly 2005: resolution 43
Consultation has taken place with...	Wessex Synod (decision by agreement at November 2013 meeting). Synod Clerks have been made aware of this resolution.

Summary of Impact

Financial	Potentially significant and needs to be quantified as part of the exploration process.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Frequency of General Assembly

1. Whilst the resolutions passed at the 2005 General Assembly – to remove a decision making layer of the councils of the church and to reduce the frequency of General Assembly were taken with the best possible intentions – the result of the combination of these two decisions has had some adverse effects on the United Reformed Church and some consequences which were, perhaps, not foreseen.
2. Both decisions resulted in fewer church members being part of the decision making bodies of the United Reformed Church beyond the local congregation, both through the district committee structures and in taking part in Assembly-wide events. Whilst synods have addressed the sense of distance and isolation from the wider church in a variety of ways, the opportunity to hear about and take part in decisions about the life of the whole United Reformed Church cannot be dealt with at a synod level.
3. Biennial assemblies with a slightly reduced number of representatives mean that less than half of those who would previously have attended are now able to take part. It has also reduced a synod's ability to have some continuity in representation whilst also encouraging different people to attend.
4. In terms of the content of the Assembly, the work of committees and assembly staff is reduced to limited space in the book of reports and minimal time for presentations. We have lost one of the major opportunities for church members to understand and connect with the work done at the assembly level.
5. A further consequence is that the role of Mission Council has changed and an increasing amount of unfinished Assembly work is being remitted to it. More decisions are having to be taken by Mission Council between Assemblies to avoid unreasonable delays in business. Major change is also slowed where it must wait for Assembly approval. This has caused much discomfort especially as Mission Council is not constituted as a formal "council of the Church" and the boundaries have not been fully defined.
6. There is also an issue around the length of time the moderators of General Assembly have to commit to. Whilst the sharing of commitments through the two years between two moderators reduces their workload to some extent, this is more than outweighed by the need for both to attend such things as Mission Council.
7. In serving for a period of two years, the commitment is for six years in total. With the change in retirement age, this means that a minister coming up to retirement would be expected to serve until well beyond 70. For a younger minister it means being away from pastorate/post over the full period of service and it would be very difficult to consider a move within this time. Similar concerns apply to the lay moderator's post which might significantly reduce the pool of those who feel able to accept a nomination.
8. Finally, one unexpected consequence of the change to two moderators serving jointly for two years is the potential for roles and responsibilities to be confused. Whilst the simile of the assembly moderator being the equivalent of the constitutional monarch and the general

secretary being the prime minister is not altogether apt, there does seem to be a risk of the power base of two moderators for two years being quadrupled from one moderator for a year.

9. It is with these various matters in mind that Wessex Synod has asked Mission Council to explore a return to an annual General Assembly within a timescale such that, if the principle of an annual assembly were agreed, it would be possible to hold a General Assembly in 2017.

Resolution

Mission Council agrees to explore ways by which the United Reformed Church can return to the pattern of General Assembly being held every year.

Paper Y2

Children's Assembly
National Synod of Wales

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2014

Paper Y2



National Synod of Wales: Children's Assembly

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Shelagh Pollard synodclerk@urcwales.org.uk
Action required	Resolution
Draft resolution(s)	<p>a) Recognising that children and young people are equal partners in the life of the United Reformed Church, Mission Council deeply regrets that there will not be a Children's Assembly alongside General Assembly in Wales in 2014.</p> <p>b) While recognising the pressures of budgetary constraints Mission Council urges General Assembly to restore the invaluable Children's Assembly in future years as part of our common life.</p> <p>c) Mission Council requests the Assembly Arrangements Committee, in consultation with the Finance Committee, to present options as to whether the reinstatement of Children's Assembly should be achieved by increasing the overall budget for General Assembly or by cutting other aspects of General Assembly to keep within the agreed budget.</p>
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Reinstate Children's Assembly as an integral part of General Assembly.
Main points	Inconsistency of commitment to full participation by children in the life of the Church and excluding them from GA.
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	Children within the synod, Assembly Arrangements Committee, Finance Committee, Children's and Youth Work Committee.

Summary of Impact

Financial	Possible increase to budget for GA or cut to other areas of GA budget to keep within the agreed budget.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None

Children's Assembly

1 The United Reformed Church believes in the ministry of the whole people of God: women and men, young and old, ordained and lay, and has acknowledged this over many years in many documents including "Charter for Children" (General Assembly 1990) and "A vision for youth and children's work" (General Assembly 2008).

2 The United Reformed Church is committed to enabling children and young people to play a full and creative part in the denomination's life. This was fundamental to the children's and youth development officers programme.

3 Part of the remit of the children's and youth work committee is to facilitate the involvement of young people in all councils of the Church

4 The commitment of the United Reformed Church to the development of children and young people, to a clear recognition that they have a ministry to offer as well as to receive, and to their participation in the life and ministry of the whole Church is beyond doubt.

5 In a separate but parallel programme covering some of the issues being addressed in General Assembly, members of Children's Assembly have contributed to the discussion and debate of the General Assembly to the great benefit of all.

6 After budget cuts, including a substantial cut to the budget of the Assembly Arrangements Committee, were agreed by General Assembly in 2012, Mission Council agreed that the cost of a Children's Assembly could not be covered by the budget for General Assembly 2014, though for some this decision was taken with a heavy heart. Yet, to exclude children from participation in General Assembly by cutting Children's Assembly seems inconsistent with the Church's fundamental belief in the worth of children and the contribution they can make to the Church as a whole.

7 Both adults and children have benefited from the participation of children in Children's Assembly and in General Assembly as a whole. Children's Assembly is an important aspect of our life together and should be reinstated.

Resolution

a) Recognising that children and young people are equal partners in the life of the United Reformed Church, Mission Council deeply regrets that there will not be a Children's Assembly alongside General Assembly in Wales in 2014.

b) While recognising the pressures of budgetary constraints Mission Council urges General Assembly to restore the invaluable Children's Assembly in future years as part of our common life.

c) Mission Council requests the Assembly Arrangements Committee, in consultation with the Finance Committee, to present options as to whether the reinstatement of Children's Assembly should be achieved by increasing the overall budget for General Assembly or by cutting other aspects of General Assembly to keep within the agreed budget.

