



**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**13 - 15 MAY 2013**

# 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?*

<b>MONDAY 13 MAY 2013</b>		
		<b>PAPER/S</b>
11.00 – 12.00	Conveners meet	
12.00 – 12.45pm	Registration	
<i>1.00 – 2.00pm</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	
<i>2.00pm</i>	<i>Room keys available</i>	
<b>2.00 – 4.00pm</b>	<b>SESSION 1</b>  <i>Worship</i> Welcomes Communications Protocol Minutes Matters Arising  General Secretary Review Group - membership	
(no later than) 3.00pm	Faith & Order Committee	<b>A – A1</b>
<i>4.00 – 4.30pm</i>	<i>Tea</i>	
<b>4.30 – 6.30pm</b>	<b>SESSION 2</b>  Faith & Order Committee	
(no later than) 5.30pm	Human Resources Advisory Group	<b>B – B1</b>
<i>6.30 – 7.30 pm</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	
<b>7.30 -</b>	<b>SESSION 3</b>  GA Resolution 38 Commission	
<i>9.00pm</i>	<i>Prayers</i>	<b>C</b>

**TUESDAY 14 MAY 2013**

		<b>PAPER/S</b>
8.15 – 9.15am	<i>Breakfast</i>	
9.15 – 11.00am	<b>SESSION 4</b> <i>Prayers</i> Medium Term Strategy Group	<b>D – D1</b>
11.00 – 11.30am	<i>Coffee</i>	
11.30 – 1.00pm	<b>SESSION 5</b> HRAG Listed Buildings Advisory Group	<b>P</b>
(no later than) 12.30pm	Mission Committee	<b>F</b>
1.00 – 2.00pm	<i>Lunch</i>	
2.00 – 4.00pm	<b>SESSION 6</b> Youth & Children’s Work Committee	<b>G – G1</b>
(no later than) 3.00pm	Education & Learning Committee	<b>H – H3</b>
4.00 – 4.30pm	<i>Tea</i>	
4.30 – 6.30pm	<b>SESSION 7</b>	
4.30 – 5.30pm	Items from the Clerk	<b>J – J5</b>
5.30 – 6.30pm	Items from the Treasurer	<b>K – K4</b>
6.30 – 7.30pm	<i>Dinner</i>	
7.30pm -	<b>SESSION 8</b> Nominations Committee	<b>L – L1</b>
	Equal Opportunities Committee	<b>E – E1</b>
	Safeguarding	<b>Verbal</b>
	Sexual Ethics Advisory Group	<b>N</b>
9.00pm	<i>Prayers</i>	

**WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 2013**

		<b>PAPER/S</b>
<i>8.15 – 9.15am</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	
<i>9.15 – 11.00am</i>	<b>SESSION 9</b> <i>Prayers</i> General Secretary Review Group Mission Council Advisory Group Remaindered Business Medium Term Strategy Group Faith & Order Committee HRAG Farewells	<b>R</b>
<i>11.00 – 11.30am</i>	<i>Coffee</i>	
<i>11.30 – 12.45pm</i>	<b>SESSION 10</b> Communion Induction of Mr John Ellis as GA Moderator 2013 – 2016	
<i>1.00 – 2.00pm</i>	<i>Lunch</i> Departures	

## GROUP G

\* Who are we?

Identity?

- tension: local v. tri-national v. international
- do we have one?
- do we need a brand? One brand does not fit all
- do 'punters' care? (about URC as denomination or just local community)
- celebrate differences/diversity

Our history/variety frustrates us/prevents finding 'the one way'

\* Where are we at with ecumenism?

- can't plant new church unless it is ecumenical – time for review?

\* We allow freedom in worship decision making

\* Can we not re-plant rather than plant new? (i.e. plant within existing congregations)

\* Let old idea/structure continue alongside new idea/structure

\* We may be small, but we can be part of BIG!

## GROUP G

- Are we not journeying already?
- How do others see us/our brand? (accept they are varied, don't represent the whole of the church)
- What do we value? What do others (outside the church) value about us? How do we perceive ourselves – challenge us to view ourselves differently
- Keep surprising people that the negative perceptions the outside world has of us should actually be positive.
- Keep the URC blue
- We want local churches to be out in their community more – developing relationships, meeting them, challenging perceptions
- What are we about – increasing numbers? Spreading the word?
- We need to use the skills of our people better (focus on what we are good at rather than what we are not good at)
- Recognise 'we' (local, synod, tri-national) should do a few things well, rather than do lots of things badly
- Recognise people retiring later/working longer hours/maximise after church time
- Recognise the way we work, committees work, we do church, does not tie in with the real world/changing make-up of congregations
- Make all feel at home in the decision making (local, committees, denominational) and change how we do it (use job share, team/task group)
- Empower/enfranchise people, rather than using gimmicks to hook people
- Greater use of technology – cyber church? skype? services online, intimations on web

- Keep personal meetings/relationship through inter-person contact/keep the church human whilst utilising/maximising technology
- Podcast the sermon, come together to discuss it (don't assume all have access to the internet or church building)
- Keep the buildings/space and utilise/maximise them more
- don't just see/view 'hall users', 'car park users' as £
- Learn from mistakes of others (keeping living with differences e.g. same sex issues and Church of Scotland)
- How far do we do with 'tent ministry'?

## 1

No one size fits all is refreshing as we are so diverse. Must allow for Spirit to work in different ways.

### Flexibility

Must touch and excite local church

What if our buildings are assets not burdens!

Doors should be open and welcoming

Lets stretch the boundaries of whom we welcome!

What is the theology behind our buildings?

## 2

About relationship building

We need to redefine what church is

What is our unique selling point?

Need to redefine 'membership'

In our DNA to restructure but too much time and energy spent on this

Where has the Spirit gone?

We need to identify what is missing in our church

We need to regain sense of who we are, why we are here, and then find out our priorities

Why are the scenarios about structure? Disappointing!

## 3

Scenarios

1. Feels like restructuring to cope

2. No energy for organic union, but raises some important questions. Are local people really interested in what is happening?

3. Too consumerist!!! Local unions already happening although sometimes feels like a tack over bid!  
Other churches are more CONFIDENT!

## 4

We have lost confidence in expressing our faith

We have lost confidence in the importance of Church Meeting

We need to assert spiritual leadership, importance of

4. Strength in relationship, pooling of resources, high quality strength that this is a sending model!!

But missing bits about serving local community

5. Very narrow scenario. Might work in some places but not across URC

### Holy Spirit

Discernment:

- \* when we come together – listening to one another – prayer – moving into grace
- \* at peace with oneself
- \* retrospective reading of Holy Spirit
- \* awareness of learning and growth
- \* in times when inspired and excitement
- \* there at the edges of your experience
- \* when we are ready to be courageous
- \* linking intuition to movement of Spirit
- \* individual and collective
- \* in disturbing
- \* excitement and caution – openness

### Scenarios

1. ... a salutary warning! Decline rather than choice

2 and 3. Seem unrealistic at the moment – unity not uniformity

4. An 'order' within the Church Catholic

Not in any scenario – Kingdom of God

Too much about church

Where is the dance of God going now?

Ecumenism beyond our comfort zone – congregation/new churches

Partnership with RC Church (1 billion!)

### **GROUP F**

Our passions:

Synergy, realism, energised vision, use professionalism, cooking, church buildings used well, youth work, singing, Christ should be enjoyed, organic unity, Liverpool (FC & team work)

What do we think of the Holy Spirit? Moments of revelation

Hungary – Being ecumenical in worship in 1989: An act of holy passion

Mission Council – October 2002, the Church Life Survey and Finance - so dire that something had to be done – Catch the Vision

Churches gel and build vision – responding to community needs

Church Secretary – neighbour coming to church

Church meeting – shut the building and become the worshipping heart of the village

Church re-ordering – happened by fire: new appreciation of true essentials

Elder from Sierra Leone – true stories of faith ignited action spontaneously

Bible – stories connect with real life

1996 – deep debates on contentious issue dividing the church: transformation through real life stories

### Scenarios are not options but prompts

What do we learn about God from this?

‘Steady as she goes’: does it mean being inevitably stuck in a rut?

- avoiding change actually chooses the change of victimhood

- lacks a powerful vision: change happens reactively

- as with other scenarios it assumes that the UK population will stay as it is; that we will get through economic stresses; and ignore that non-established churches depend on population density

Church of England: if every member makes a new member every year – it will be 2038 before numbers increase. Rate of decline is that high.

How do we define church size? What about measuring the church’s impact?

The church is a place where people seeking stability gather – so they are unlikely to change?

The Universal Church is more than the URC. When will the funds run out?

‘All Congregationalists’ – conciliar nature a very thin version of what it is now.

Where is the Spirit in this? Why are we afraid of dying?

What do we have to keep alive for, other than spread the gospel message of Jesus

The hospice movement speaks of a good death – scenario 1 is a picture of a bad death. Keeping the life support system going

Stewardship – what are positive and or threadbare models of this? Using resources more creatively.

The parable of the Talent: burying the little we have as opposed to the ‘Widow’s curse’ of Elijah

BUT: what are the other churches doing throughout the week. The scenario doesn’t say.

4 Synod Moderators and 3 Church House Staff – Old Guard while the church is getting on with it.

Scenario 2: where is the Spirit in this?

2023 – rather slow progress?

- lack of warmth for organic unity currently, but the Cumbria model (and in Cambridge in embryo) may offer an alternative

Ordination – a symbol of something else

Denominational theologies would have to be merged

Would we all become Anglicans (Church of England)? How many CofE would opt-out due to women clergy?

This seems all about styles of worship

What is stopping us doing this now? Agreeing financial years and boundaries would be a huge step forward. E.g. following the Cumbria model = attitudes of Bishops/Moderators/District Chairs.

Couldn’t General Assembly encourage this?

Somewhere between scenarios 2 and 3

Doing it on a medium scale could be very time-consuming. How do structures cope?

Advantage of a Uniting Church is to streamline and reduce meetings

The systems exist but the attitudes are what is effective – start from the bottom up

The idea behind it hints of what Jesus would have wanted

Working together would help with numbers enough to address local big issues

### Scenario 3

Positives – allow local flexibility and avoids splits: ‘This is the church in this place’

- strength from the grassroots: needs an enabling atmosphere to enable this. URC/CofE have more in common as congregations than URC/Methodist

New housing estates – lack of ecumenical church planting compared to the past

Cumbria – storms and floods created togetherness

RC will be the dominant church in 2033 – different demography: they have more children and hold onto them better. And migration. So – include the RCs in scenarios.

Authorisation for Lay Presidency becomes an issue in base communities

### Scenario 4

A bit like the old Methodist ‘class’ system

Lacks ecumenical aspect

Not sympathetic to old and very young?

Congregational nature holds building in high regard

Not having a building can be positive or negative

What about the community facilities in the buildings that were sold? And what about existing LEPs?

World church – ministers are used to operating in very big areas

This scenario is OK for people who are already committed to church. What about nominal churchgoers who rely on the building? But buildings also give out the wrong messages too sometimes

### Scenario 5

Where’s the core? Where are the resources? [1-5: ‘normally’ has to be strong enough to support new difference. Our current ‘normally’ isn’t necessarily right with the Spirit]

Where’s the wider church? How do local incarnations take part in wider discussions and express membership?

How do people influence decisions? Local works, but how does it relate beyond itself? How do they belong to a wider family? It may have to rebuild new covenant relationships.

We’re already used (in some cases) to more than one congregation within a church. ‘Messy Church’ in half-term holidays – how to build a sense of commitment? (one example). How big is the small core group and how sustainable is it? Any re-imagined church runs the risk of becoming an institution. Routinisation tends to lead to new steps in ecumenism.

More imaginative about how we resource – don’t want to lose the URC (even in ecumenism, Fresh Expressions, etc)

We like the URC happy to share, but want to retain ecumenism – don’t want the URC to die (whatever was thought in 1972)

OK to have URC identity

Re-imagine the role of ministers of Word and Sacrament – multiple church pastorates not sustainable

Vision 4 Life and decline may force us to do what we know we need to do (lay/ordained teams, etc) – Holy Spirit seems not to work through programmes or restructuring – not enough ministers in too many meetings and in too many buildings

The Society of Friends is much smaller and has identity and structure



Have confidence in who you are as a local church  
Inclusivity of URC freedom, tolerance  
Lively, imaginative local churches  
We struggle to match our structures to those of other denominations (top-down)  
Allowing individuals to express faith commitment (bottom-up)  
Local church decides who members are  
Children and young people equal partners

Expressing faith in action and corporately as well as individually  
Ability to innovate  
Enable individuals to be responsible in local church  
Ministry of whole people of God – ontological views of ordination  
'Via media' – national and local  
Church of people and ordained/commissioned leadership  
Freedom of conscience and conciliar  
URC – what we value about our identity  
Holy Spirit is working through all/any  
Discernment re call of minister  
Decision making processes  
Concerns about obliteration of historically important traditions  
However, we may need to compromise

Need to go back to emphasis on discipleship  
Can we learn from Uniting Churches in other parts of the world?

#### 4. Features that attracted us

Release of people and buildings  
Intimacy of the small group  
Getting together to celebrate in a larger group  
Accountability to something larger than the pastorate

#### 2. attractive model

Could be combined with 4 in encouraging accountability  
(Cumbria as a working model)

### **GROUP A**

We discern the Holy Spirit in many and varied ways – seeing signs, possibilities of growth  
But we begin by seeking to discern together  
What are the healthy characteristics of the URC...

- \* a vision for governance based on Elders and Church Meeting – vocation
- \* flexibility – try it and see
- \* not just about what happens Sunday morning

\* liturgical flexibility too... [is there a fundamental/paradigm shift??- if so key question may be 'Where does authority lie?' Moving to charismatic figures having own experience of transcendence, but we test against authority of scripture and Church Meeting]

\* sharing of gifts a URC characteristic – M&M and resource sharing more than political! 'Coming together and hold together by goodwill

\* sovereignty of God (can we find our way of saying 'God gave me this word'?). Does our worship reflect the joy that should flow from that awareness? (Like all denominations, our congregations come from all traditions – but we don't then impose an identity!)

### Move to the scenarios

Commend the idea of a network or 'order' in a larger (?united or not) church

(Our ministry now seems to be a stumbling block – mutual recognition, different training, are issues...)

What is their place in local union scenario?

Maybe many would fall adrift

Pastorate churches exciting some

But concern for smaller cells: these are significant (danger! Letting our halls is not doing mission!)

Not a one size fits all!

If we like 5, this needs support mechanisms

Maybe sustainable as aspect of 4

Set up of messy church in supermarket!

Significance of today's society as networkers – not commitment

But are all these scenarios of a dying church?

Need for neighbourhood witness in deprived areas – which scenario supports gathering and support of people? Would 4 encourage formation of a cell there? And route in for Fresh Expressions to the wider church??

Work now to change mindset of those who relate differently (like the under 75s?!). (Sadly few of our young people operate in wider church area...)

(We are seeing strengths in 4 and 5

Can we make a case for 1 – but how to identify which?

Value in gradual downsizing

[We see the new as a mixed economy – need whatever equips people best to witness to Christ]

? each individual needs to experience the Christian life in different sized group

- and contagious enthusiasm may be found in the smallest churches

What about reducing stipendiary ministry? And train missionaries for reaching out, while presiding Elders do the word and sacrament stuff...

Never too late! – must revisit heavy dependence on stipendiary ministry (which goes against our core values)

And look to greater variety of ministries

'Whole people of God' presiding at communion – call for ordained local ministry?

## **GROUP B**

What do we value about the URC?

Freedom to decide

Enshrines meetings which are empowered to discern the working of the Holy Spirit, even against a majority view

Informality and lack of 'respect' (difference)

The way we related to the word of God in the Bible

Our commitment to social justice

Comment: 'I have not heard anything unique. Is it the combination that are unique?'

Our willingness to die as a denomination

Eldership

Comment: the church has not fully adapted to the faith that 1 minister 1 church is over

Is that because we have not fully adopted Provisionality?

Church leadership not having decision-making powers makes for interesting ecumenical meetings.

Senior officers' powers have reduced over the years (societal change?)

Equality needs a central focus to work

### Scenarios

Not enough clear sense of who we are to make this work

Maintaining existing model is not the way forward

Talking and building can lead to self-discovery

### Scenario 2

Discussion on Uniting Church in Wales

Buildings are a block to mission

'Eucharist' is polarising

### Scenario 3

Growing multi-cultural churches

LEPs are simply a way of holding back decline

Freedom from building worries can re-energise

The person in the pew does not mind

Institution offers a skeleton to define the body – so if this is inhibiting it needs to give wider boundaries (i.e. be less prescriptive)

Baptismal unity is the key

### Scenario 4

Cell groups

Networking (with reservations)

If no control ethos it is nothing

e-church only? – private and centre led (in practice)

confirmation on on-line community and real

### Points raised/made

- \* Migrant congregations (e.g. Korean community in SW): two ethnic groups challenge each other, possibility of a missional church
- \* Scenarios 2, 3, 4 and 5 have some positives and involve 'substantial letting goes'
- \* How do we stay as a family of the church with any of the scenarios?
- \* United (sic) Church of Australia: lessons to be learnt
- \* Scenario 1 is depressing!
- \* Denominational resentments less of an issue now
- \* We don't need to look for just one scenario to meet our hopes/desires/aspirations
- \* Allow people to be part of the URC without resentment (modern technology to be used?)
- \* Local closer relationships with Methodists
- \* The HUB principle/parent church for those facing a struggle
- \* 'De-branding' a process that can attract others who could be encouraged to engage, especially those currently outside the church
- \* A welcoming church means a home to be part of
- \* Don't have to have a building to be a church
- \* What do we want a URC identity for?
- \* Should there be a death scenario?
- \* Half of scenarios won't be possible without partners

What is the purpose of the Church?

Barriers:

- structure is under strain
- laity under pressure to play their part (lack of volunteers)
- laity complacency/competency

Distinctive characteristics

Church meeting (gathering at its best is something to cherish)

Some meetings 'play safe'

Aspire to make church meetings work

Good at working with a range of partners

Which aspects of characteristics/more work done on

'in partnership'

'gathering'

Exploring identity

'diversity partnership'!

Successful LEPs

Nobody prepared to press the unity button

How do we open this conversation up across the church?

V2020 has the structure to ensure this happens!

Quality of worship needs to be explored and improved

Inter-Assembly year used to promote 'creative' gathering to explore scenarios

Scenarios of Synods

B – best option, with variance!

Consider having fewer than 13 Synods!

## GROUP F

Medium Term Strategy Group 'Better Synods'

From the discussion on 'The Church' we bring over:

Synod is a support structure so responds to what churches are going, rather than having fixed guidelines

Refer to 1972 – 2 reasons for Synods:

a) Control of Congregational Moderators

b) Provide a unit of support larger and better equipped than Districts

Synods were more even in size (population)

The paper doesn't recognise why we are now uneven – Northern Economic and Industrial decline  
Stable – Wessex and Midlands; Decline – Southern and Thames North; why?

We should project into the future by taking past trends into account

Trust: could we go back to the Presbyterian system of Trust-body

'The power of the Synods' was a strong factor in the desire of Congregationalists to stay out

The Paper

- Finances uneven and resources stretched

- variations and we are all up against it

- businesses that survive in good times tend to fail in testing times

- tension builds when resources are limited

- 'it's not fair' – community conflict and competition

Our perceptions of each other are important

What is our theology of resourcing – 'my/our money' as shutters go down

Accidental inheritance of resources – how do we act with grace?

How do we put resources into where the calling is? Are we limited by the law about what we do with resources?

Don't fudge it any longer

How do we balance grace and hope with pragmatism and realism?

Free market economy and sense of scarcity will influence our thinking – but can theology counteract that?

Good stewardship of resources – are we too hung up on our comfort cushion in times of scarcity?

'Redundant buildings' – the use is tied

Can we not sell or use our buildings while we are still alive? Act while we are in a position to act. Use what is still alive instead of waiting until we are dead.

Re-invest in our property portfolio, but be astute about whether the church there is alive or dead on its feet.

Question: worship – waiting: should we be attentive to the Spirit, rather than restructuring (takes time and energy) immediately. E.g. Northern Synods talking to each other realistically. Contained

vulnerability. Pragmatic and realistic: understand what is happening and hallow the 'interim' and underpin insecurity.

## **GROUP F**

Two tasks – not necessarily overlapping

What is the purpose of the Church?

See the Basis of Union, paragraph 11 – it doesn't narrow down the shape or activity of the Church (others have cited the need to build up the confidence in the faith in the flip charts)

What are the URC's distinctive characteristics?

Paragraphs 12ff

[Are we losing our institutional memory?]

We tend to operate in spirals and circles of action and memory – and we are doing re-envisioning constantly

We tend to think of our worst examples and run ourselves down

We are self-critical and apologising for ourselves – we do not remember that we have been enriched by God (cf Jim's worship today)

Rowan Williams appreciates us more than we do ourselves – all are equal and given permission to act 'pregnant with possibilities'

What should we work on?

Look at existing Reformed resources over the last 50 years – we keep recycling and repeating ourselves

Do less – live out what has been agreed already

e.g. 1995 patterns of ministry, Equipping the Saints

celebrate what we've done

we think like younger siblings – always in the shadow of older ones

look into the detail of what other people are saying about us

Positive stories – a URC minister got Bolton started as a Fairtrade town

Use Appreciative Inquiry processes

Choose one thing and do it well – works in small congregations

How do we open up the question?

LMMR – if done properly it asks these questions

These questions would be good for Area Meetings (or equivalent)

If we were a business we would be snapping up ideas all the time from others – is fear and mistrust stopping us flowing with the Spirit?

We recognise the foolishness of doing things apart, easier than how to do things together – LEPs and Churches Together vary greatly in effectiveness often due to contingent factors

Grassroots needs to be strong but also an enabling bigger organisation

Ecumenical cooperation – be patient and persistent. And use the shared buildings creatively – apt liturgy and community service

Can we bring 'Church Meeting' more to the focus or has its centrality gone? Do people realise that it is fundamental?

'Occupy' – passionate people who knew their subject had daily 'church' meeting

Get people to talk about their faith – testimony

Purpose of the Church

- to participate in reign/kingdom of God
- we need to find where it is and then celebrate in it

Characteristics

- all in Basis of Union! But how many of us have read it!!!
- Church meeting
- Eldership
- call of all in church to ministry
- need to unpack it in ways which light people up!!
- need to stop beating ourselves up
- all of this is stunting our confidence and passion in the Gospel
- we need to reclaim the importance of Church Meeting and find our place in it.
- fed up with guilt trip on Larger Synods!!

Do the scenarios really address the real issue of lack of people and financial resources?

What is unique is the combination of many elements common to many denominations, but found uniquely in URC?



## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013



# Faith and Order Committee

## The Future of the Church

### Introduction

The Faith and Order committee started a conversation about the Future of the Church in the autumn of 2011. Around 30 papers were received, in response to an open request for reflections. The FAOC has spent four of its meetings focussing on this discussion.<sup>1</sup> (Be warned – this is not a quick fix discussion!) the discussion is now coming to Mission Council in order to take the next steps forward.

### Issues

The ‘future of the church’ is a discussion to be held not only by the URC, but by churches across Western Europe. It is in particular an issue where congregations are ageing and declining, but not so much a focus for discussion where congregations are flourishing and growing. We want to look at the way in which the URC is still held in God’s embrace and the distinctive way in which we are entrusted with re-telling the Jesus story.

Some of the points highlighted in the discussion are as follows:

- There is a genuine desire to discern God’s purposes together for the whole church, so that different voices are heard and taken into account.
- We want to be passionate – not just about ourselves, but about God and God’s purpose for the church, which means placing ourselves into God’s hands at each step along the way, seeing the church not just as a human institution which needs to be well organised, but as the Spirit-filled body of Christ in each place. We want to recognise the places where people are energised and fired up, as being places where the Holy Spirit is present.
- We need to be attentive to the particular nature of the Reformed tradition with regard to conciliarity and the authority of scripture.
- There is a concern that in some places the rightful Reformed emphasis on conciliarity has been interpreted as a need to be primarily concerned about structures rather than the spiritual life of the whole people of God in relationship to God, to one another and to the world. One contribution helpfully quoted “Rowan Williams wants to remind us that there is something deeply deceiving, though seductive, about thinking of the church as a human association. We want to organise it and run it better, so that it will succeed.” Instead we need to place our trust in the generous God who holds us in life.
- There is a desire to wrestle together from differing theological standpoints with regard to the authority and interpretation of scripture.
- There is a need to look again at our understanding of who God is, within a Trinitarian framework, in a way which can inspire people, give people confidence in their faith and the language with which to talk about the gospel to friends and neighbours.

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<sup>1</sup> Copies of the compilation of the papers, a summary of the papers, and a summary of the FAOC discussions are each available from Helen Garton at Tavistock Place. [helen.garton@urc.org.uk](mailto:helen.garton@urc.org.uk)



- We want to celebrate the gifts given to the United Reformed Church, emerging over several centuries, such as the participation of the whole people of God in decision-making, the possibility of each person's discernment of the Holy Spirit to be recognised, and an ability to be counter-cultural.

## **Process at Mission Council**

We are offering five scenarios for discussion, not as options to choose one or the other, but to help us think about what the URC would miss if it wasn't there, and how we discern the particular calling of the URC in these changing times. This is a discussion more about vision and ethos than organisation and structure. There will be group discussion and feedback, which will then be looked at again by the FAOC in order to discern the next steps forward.

Revd Elizabeth Welch  
Convener, Faith and Order Committee



## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

# A1

## Scenarios

It is Easter Sunday, 2033. As you get into your solar-powered electric car to join your fellow Christians for morning worship – grateful for the medical advances that have given you and your contemporaries an average life expectancy of 103, and the anti-Alzheimer’s drugs and other medications which promise that those extra years will be healthy and active ones – the first item on the BBC morning news is about the latest five-yearly survey of religion in Britain conducted by Dawkins College, Oxford.

The survey shows that religious affiliation in Britain has fallen to an all-time low, though the number of those self-identifying as Christians has risen since the last Dawkins College survey in 2028. At 21%, Christianity has regained its place as the biggest single religious group, a little ahead of Islam at 16%. However, those claiming ‘No religion’ number 52%, and that total includes 19% who self-identify as atheist, humanist or secularist.

In the light of these figures, the Secular Celebrant of Dawkins College gives an interview calling for some of the Faith Seats in the Westminster Senate to be reserved for the British Humanist Fellowship, and the Minister of State for Minority Cultures describes Government initiatives to preserve important parts of Christian cultural heritage.

After the news report, the presenter reminds listeners that the new Archbishop of Canterbury will discuss the survey in her first Easter sermon, to be broadcast live later that morning.

You think back twenty years, to the meeting when Mission Council first started discussing the future of the United Reformed Church. You recall the further discussions, the sometimes heated and painful arguments, the decisions, actions and hard work in the years that followed. Your memories lead you through one of the following five stories...

### 1. Steady as she goes

After that Mission Council meeting in May 2013, you very quickly sensed a change of mood in the URC. Nobody doubted the advice from the denominational leadership and external consultants that the church lacked the resources to maintain its present structures and activities. But an increasing number of voices at all levels argued that the URC’s present structures reflected core convictions about the identity and ethos of a Reformed Nonconformist church with a strong ecumenical commitment. Sweeping changes to structures or patterns of ministry would mean abandoning our distinctive calling as a church and losing some of the distinctive gifts we gave to ecumenical partners and society. By the 2018 General Assembly that mood was overwhelming, and proposals for the radical restructuring of Synods were decisively rejected.

Over the coming years, the URC avoided drastic changes to its structures or patterns of life, making only the adjustments needed to cope with declining numbers and resources. By 2030 the membership of the URC had fallen to 23,000 from its 2013 total of 68,000. As numbers and income fell, the church stood by its commitment to support local congregations as much as possible. Your church is now a lively Christian community with a membership of 62, making it the largest of the 370 congregations in the Synod of the Midlands and Northern England.

Since Easter is a busy time for the forty or so stipendiary ministers in the Synod, your own minister will be leading worship in four of her other churches today, and you are looking forward to a rare visit from the half-time Synod Moderator. Though most stipendiary ministers serve eight or ten churches, an agreement with the Congregational Federation for joint accreditation of ministers has eased the pressure somewhat.

However, although relations between the URC and the Federation are now quite friendly, the most recent conversations about union ended inconclusively. You remember the report of these conversations at the last quinquennial General Assembly in 2031: there was some uneasy laughter when a speaker from the floor quipped, 'Well, what does it matter? We're all Congregationalists now, anyway!' As you recall, none of the four Synod Moderators, nor the three full-time Church House staff, looked particularly amused.

## **2. The Uniting Churches of/in Great Britain**

You wonder what this morning's Easter Eucharist will be like. It is only seven years since the historic services held simultaneously in Westminster Abbey, Llandaff Cathedral and Iona Abbey to mark the URC's union with the Methodist Church and the Anglican Churches in the three nations to form the Uniting Church of England, the Uniting Church in Wales and the Scottish Uniting Church.

Many congregations are still coming to terms with the merger of all remaining URC and Methodist congregations with the Anglican churches in their parishes. However, the sale of so many redundant church buildings (most, though not all, URC and Methodist) has boosted the Uniting Churches' resources tremendously. As a result, the shortage of ordained ministry that had grown acute in all three churches by the late 2010s has largely disappeared.

Your own former URC minister resigned and transferred to the Congregational Federation once it became clear that Methodist and URC ministers would have to be episcopally ordained to serve as presbyters in the Uniting Churches. Your parish has a presbyter from a Methodist background and a newly ordained curate from a high-church Anglican tradition. The curate admits she still finds it awkward handing out the bread and the trays of communion glasses to the elders for the distribution of the elements, while some of the elders are distinctly unhappy about the Reserved Sacrament. However, there is plenty of goodwill and everyone is trying their best to make these new patterns of church life and worship work well.

## **3. Local unions**

As you park near Broad Street Church (Baptist/Moravian/URC) and enter through the automatic glass doors, you ponder just how diverse the experience of being a URC member can be these days. The church's policy of encouraging congregations to unite with the most appropriate local partners has been in force for fifteen years, and there are now just a handful of URC-only congregations left.

Before you moved to your present town three years ago, you were a member of a Methodist/URC congregation in your village. After the old Methodist chapel developed structural problems that the membership of twenty couldn't possibly afford to repair, the congregation entered into a sharing agreement to worship in the parish church. The proceeds from the sale of the chapel paid for the repairs to the parish church roof, and relations between Anglican and 'Chapel' congregations were warm from the outset – though joint worship was limited to a few special services a year.

Broad Street is very different: a growing multi-cultural congregation where white faces are in the minority, and the worship band and choir lead you in styles of worship you never knew existed. You find yourself wondering, not for the first time, just what the distinctive URC contribution to such varied churches is. In your experience, it is mostly reflected in the different kinds of arguments you find yourself having: in your village church it often meant reminding the Church Council that some

decisions had to be taken by Church Meeting, not merely reported there; at Broad Street the battles seem to be about persuading people that infant baptism really is baptism, or getting them to take an interest in the reports you bring back from Synod and General Assembly.

You've lost count of the number of times people have turned to you in Church Meetings and asked, 'What's the URC position on this?' – and you have to admit that often you don't know. You find yourself wondering where in the URC's structures you could go to find out, and how much it really matters anyway.

## **4. Pastorate Churches**

Your journey this morning is longer than usual: being Easter Day, today is the monthly Celebration Service at the central church of your URC pastorate. By the mid-2010s it had become hard to deny that the URC could no longer sustain its hundreds of small churches: ordained ministers were spread ever more thinly, congregations of ten or twenty lacked the people and money to keep their buildings usable, and the demands of legal compliance became impossible to meet.

After long discussion, a controversial proposal was agreed by the 2018 General Assembly: the thirteen Synods would be merged into five, and locally the church would be re-organised into pastorates of about 10-15 congregations. Each pastorate would have one central church building, able to accommodate all the congregations and the pastorate's church and community activities. The sale of the other church buildings would finance the re-ordering needed, or the purchase or construction of a new building.

A typical pattern of church life developed fairly quickly following this decision. In most pastorates a celebration service was held around once a month in the central 'Pastorate Church'. Often these monthly celebrations came to be combined with pastorate lunches, socials, meetings and other events. For the rest of the month the congregations of the pastorate functioned as 'cell groups'. Some cell groups met in members' homes for prayer, worship and Bible study, either on Sundays or during the week. Others joined nearby churches for Sunday worship, and this arrangement was often recognised by local ecumenical agreements.

You remember all too well the sacrifice and heartache that the changes meant to many, as congregations left church buildings that had been central to their faith stories for generations, and surrendered something of their own identity to become part of a new Christian community. You have had many conversations with friends who described it as a kind of bereavement. Yet the majority faced these changes courageously, and many discovered surprising new possibilities. The sale of buildings released funds to turn Pastorate Churches into high-quality resources for pastorates and their wider communities.

People as well as buildings were released for creative ministry and mission. Your pastorate has two full-time stipendiary ministers, a half-time youth worker and a half-time salaried Executive Officer who handles most of the administration, finance and compliance work. The building is a hive of activity all week, with lunch clubs, job-seekers' advice centres, toddler groups, daily worship, café church, evangelistic youth work and much more besides. With only one central service a month, the ministers are able to spend time with the cell groups on other Sundays. And released from the burden of church administration and building maintenance, the cell groups themselves have discovered unsuspected gifts of pastoral and spiritual leadership among their members, sometimes becoming places of extraordinary Christian nurture and spiritual growth.

Another Assembly resolution back in 2018 made it possible for those out of reach of a local URC congregation to belong to the URC without being members of a local URC congregation. With the continuing growth of social networking since the 2010s, a vibrant network has grown up of URC members who worship most of the time in local churches of other denominations, but remain virtually

– and strongly – connected to the URC online. Some have begun to call this network ‘a Reformed order within the wider church’, as members bring the particular gifts and insights of the URC’s tradition to their local Christian communities. In some places, Pastorate Churches and their leadership teams have become hubs of support for this ‘order’.

## 5. Local incarnations

That Mission Council meeting back in 2013 was when you first heard someone remark that the churches which were flourishing in the URC were the innovative local expressions of church rather than the ‘normal’ URCs. Some were established URC congregations that had ‘de-branded’ themselves in order to develop new ways of being church in their contexts, calling themselves names like ‘River Church’ or ‘The Meeting’. Others were congregations that had developed among migrant or international communities and then chosen to join the URC. Still others were innovative experiments in Christian community beyond the walls of the church building (‘fresh expressions’, they used to be called – you never liked that name).

You had no idea back then how true that remark would prove. Now, twenty years on, there are only a few dozen of what you still think of as ‘typical URCs’ left, and many of them are struggling with small congregations, lack of resources and buildings in disrepair. The ‘fresh expressions’ and the ‘de-branded’ and re-branded churches, on the other hand, have multiplied – which is why you are not on the way to a church building, but to the swimming pool at the local secondary school, which your group has hired for the morning. Normally you would meet in a private room in the pub in the next village. Apart from the small core group of you brought together by your minister to establish this new community, many of its twenty or so regulars are new to Christianity. Others severed their links with various churches long ago, having been hurt or alienated in various ways by their fellow Christians; but a renewed spiritual hunger has made them seek faith and worship again, and they find your community a safe place to explore Christian commitment once more.

At the beginning of this year, a young couple who have been part of your community for two years or so asked to be baptized. So you have used your meetings during Lent to explore the meaning of baptism and devise a baptismal liturgy together, and today your two catechumens will be baptized by immersion in the swimming pool, while you and some others will renew your baptismal vows and the whole group will promise to support the newly baptized couple in the next stages of their journey of faith.

## And so, back in 2033...

As you think back over the past twenty years, you find yourself asking:

- Did we discern rightly what God was calling us to be and to do as a church?
- How faithful did we manage to be to our particular tradition: out of the things that were really important about the United Reformed Church, what did we keep and what did we lose?
- What gifts have we continued to offer our ecumenical partners and the wider society?
- What has proved exciting, invigorating and life-giving about the path we chose? What proved discouraging and life-draining?
- In our church now, what is still recognisable of the United Reformed Church as it was in 2013, or in 1972?

*What answers would you give if each of (1) – (5) were the story you recalled of the twenty years since 2013?*



**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**13 – 15 MAY 2013**

B

# Human Resources Advisory Group (HRAG) General Report

*There are four elements to the HRAG report:-*

- 1) Routine work
- 2) Interim HR arrangements
- 3) Staffing Issue
- 4) Recommendations arising from Mission Council resolution agreed in October 2012 in relation to paper E, reporting on the review of the General Secretariat. (separate paper)

*Current membership of HRAG for information:*

Revd Rowena Francis (convener until May 2013),

Alastair Forsyth;

Mike Gould,

Peter Pay,

Keith Webster (convener from May 2013),

Revd Wendy White.

In attendance Revd Roberta Rominger General Secretary, Ruth Lovelace Human Resources Officer.

These people bring a wide range of skills in diverse aspects of Human Resources (HR).

## **1 Routine work report**

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) / Trust and Church House personnel.

Since then HRAG has:-

- 1.1 Overseen the Youth and Children's Work Committee restructuring of the staff posts as agreed by Mission Council in October 2012. This has led to the appointment of Karen Morrison as Head of Youth and Children's Work Development using professional advice and following laid down redundancy procedures. The second senior staff post of Youth and Children's Work Programme Officer is being recruited. YCW work is supported by two Personal Assistant posts.
- 1.2 With Managers and budget holders agreed recruitment in line with the policy that, given the budgetary constraints, only essential posts can be filled.
- 1.3 During the General Secretariat review and in undertaking this HR advisory work HRAG has identified anomalies in central URC employment practices and appointments that will require further exploration and discussion.

The following job description and / or posts have been considered:

*General Assembly posts:-*

Secretary for Ministries – subject to resolution.

Secretary for World Church Relations - subject to resolution.

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations – subject to resolution.

Secretary for Church and Society who is a member of Joint Public Issues Team. This is a new appointment following the departure of Frank Kantor. An interim secondment was put in place to cover this post while recruitment took place.

Honorary Treasurer (renewal of John Ellis 10/12) and Deputy Honorary Treasurer (currently being sought). HRAG has offered advice on the job descriptions for these honorary roles although nomination and appointment lies with others.

*Staff posts.*

Safeguarding Officer – a joint post shared with the Baptist Union. No appointment was made on the first round of recruitment when this was advertised as a Baptist post. As a consequence the decision was made that the post would be re-advertised with the URC as the employer.

Services will be provided to the Baptists via a Service Level Agreement.

Editor of Reform – recruited.

Principal of Westminster College – recruitment in progress.

Records Manager (maternity leave cover) – a temporary appointment has been made.

## **2 Interim Human Resources – general**

HRAG expresses its gratitude to Ruth Lovelace and Helen Bird for their hard work in sustaining the HR office in the absence of a senior member of staff.

Carmila Legarda - Director of Development & Personnel for the Methodist Connection and Sandi Hallam-Jones URC Trust Secretary have been providing high level advice.

Unfortunately no appointment of an HR Manager was made on the first round of recruitment in February 2013 following Mission Council agreement to this post. HRAG is pursuing interim options in regard to this.

## **3 Interim Staffing Issue**

In January HRAG's attention was drawn to the fact that as Revd Richard Mortimer had tendered his resignation as Deputy General Secretary with effect from May that there would be a capacity issue while recruitment and / or any changes agreed arising from the review of the General Secretariat are implemented.

HRAG completed a review of the current work undertaken by the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary and are recommending the appointment of a short term Interim Assistant General Secretary (IAGS) to cover some of the work, mainly line management responsibilities, and have arranged interim cover for other aspects of the work of the DGS. This will be on terms of settlement that are the equivalent of a 50% stipendiary minister. This is subject to resolution.

## **4 Recommendations arising from MC resolution agreed in October 2012 in relation to paper E, reporting on the review of the General Secretariat (see separate paper)**

## Resolutions

- 1) Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, extends the appointment of the Revd Craig Bowman as Secretary for Ministries until August 31<sup>st</sup> 2015.
- 2) Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, extends the appointment of the Revd Jane Rowell as Secretary for World Church Relations until August 31st 2015.
- 3) Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, extends the appointment of the Revd David Tatem as Secretary for Ecumenical Relations until August 31st 2015.
- 4) Mission Council agrees to the appointment of the Revd David Grosch-Miller as Interim Assistant General Secretary for a short term period to end at the latest by the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014.
- 5) Resolutions arising from the Mission Council October 2012 resolution as per the HRAG paper on the review of the General Secretariat.

Rowena Francis  
Convener HRAG

April 2013





MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

B1

## Human Resources Advisory Group (HRAG) Review of General Secretariat

HRAG replaced the Staffing Advisory Group with an agreed remit that brought together most staffing matters under this one group to give consistency and a unified approach. This group also carries as a separate remit the review of the General Secretariat agreed by Mission Council in November 2011.

This paper details work done in regard to the resolution of Mission Council agreed in October 2012 and should be read in conjunction with Paper E of that meeting. It is advised that members of Mission Council have read paper E recently. (<http://www.urc.org.uk/resources/mission-council1/papers/october-2012.html> or available from the General Secretary's office by request.)

*Mission Council (October 2012), recognising the need to clarify and simplify the lines of accountability and management in Church House, resolves to explore further:*

- 1) *the three roles of Church House as outlined in Paper E;*
- 2) *three teams in Church House of Ministries, Mission, and Administration and Resources;*
- 3) *the strategy proposals in the paper and the formation of a General Secretariat of the General Secretary and the three Departmental Staff Secretaries.*

*Mission Council asks the Staffing Advisory Group in consultation with committees, staff and other appropriate groups to explore further the areas identified above.*

The aim of this review is limited to making more effective and flexible the management of Church House. It is not about managing the Church nor its undergirding theology. As the medium term strategy group engages the councils of the Church more fully in those debates it is anticipated that nothing in this review will be a block or hindrance to it.

### 1. Process of exploration

HRAG has met with Conveners and Staff Secretaries of Church House, the Connective (senior staff meeting) and invited responses from committees, staff and others in response to the above. Three days of consultation were held in January 2013 when the senior staff and conveners of the committees were invited to explore what each of the suggested three departments might look like. One day gathered those involved in administration and resources, another in ministries and another in mission.

HRAG is also responsible for interim human resource provision. One important aspect of the review is to ascertain what the central URC HR requirements are. Following a Synod Moderators and Clerks meeting in late 2012 each synod has been consulted about this from a synod perspective.

Conversations with the Methodist Church, the Baptist Union and agencies about shared provision have been held but as yet have not yielded a significant way forward apart from mutual support and sharing of expertise.

## **2. Issues arising from the review of the General Secretariat and Church House management processes.**

The review and terms of reference were agreed by Mission Council (25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> November 2011) and an interim report was given in March 2012 (paper Q) before the October 2012 paper E that gave rise to the resolution above.

None of these issues cited is a reflection on current post-holders but of a genuine desire to improve the functioning of Church House. The items are not in any order of significance.

These issues are:-

- 1) The unrealistic management responsibilities laid upon the General Secretariat, which is comprised of the posts of General Secretary (GS), Deputy General Secretary (DGS) and Head of HR. This was exacerbated by the resignation of the Head of HR in 2011 leading to questions as to the most effective staffing required.
- 2) The need to review the responsibilities of the General Secretariat in response to changes in Assembly to bi-annual and the subsequent work of Mission Council.
- 3) A perception that the General Secretariat is too involved in the day-to-day running of the URC and thereby unable to provide the longer term 'denominational leadership' that is required.
- 4) Recognition that the URC is a very flat organisation that leads to the GS and DGS having more staff reporting directly to them than can be effectively managed.
- 5) The vulnerability of the General Secretariat posts to events and subsequent reputation management requirements and the lack of support structures including management training and development.
- 6) The risk of any legal challenge 'nominating' the General Secretariat with the resulting legal costs, time and energy expended and damage to people.
- 7) While the current structure may be very good in developing semi-autonomous professional creative ministries it does not deal as effectively as it might with individual personal and performance difficulties (duty of care). Therefore the structure needs reviewing to enable the Church to cover both aspects with greater excellence.
- 8) There is increasing employment legislation and development of good practice. The URC must be fit for purpose to deal with these requirements.
- 9) The challenge of line management in organisational terms is to:
  - a) release the energy that comes from competent, motivated specialists
  - b) coordinate the work of a group of individual 'specialists' who see themselves as 'leaders'
  - c) deal with performance difficulties satisfactorilyThere appears to be a lack of clarity about line management responsibilities and there is some confusion between roles of committee conveners and staff line managers in the URC.  
Church House currently relies on (a) heavily, is weaker at (b) the co-ordination of the creative specialists, and struggles to handle (c).

### **3. The October 2012 resolution to explore further the three roles of Church House as outlined in Paper E**

Section 1 of Paper E on the structure of the URC has been in the background and broadly informs the exploration. However it is recognised that there is no consensus on this. This structure may become clearer through the wider debate being enabled by the Faith and Order Committee on the nature of the Church. The arrow figure attached as an appendix illustrates broadly the relationship of the different parts of the structure of the URC.

Section 2 of Paper E in October 2012 gained broad agreement for the three roles of Church House as 1) providing a secretariat for General Assembly and Mission Council and those who need representatively to ‘embody’ the Church; 2) providing such service functions as local churches and synods seek, and 3) maintaining communication networks.

There is an on-going debate as to where programmes are initiated, and whether that is by staff, councils of the Church or through an external factor such as legislation. As there is a feeling in recent years of ‘initiative overload’ in the URC it is vital that there is joined up thinking and an overview approach to prevent this continuing. Therefore it is important to re-iterate that there has to be a demonstrable demand or specific requirement for a programme to be initiated.

### **4. The October 2012 resolution to explore further three departments in Church House of Ministries, Mission, and Administration and Resources**

The January consultations suggested that these three departments/ teams did not need to be the same in structure or ways of operation. They felt that the groupings were appropriate with some tweaking, especially in relation to Communications.

HRAG has taken this on board and is therefore bringing recommendations for minimal changes which will achieve the objectives of ensuring that:

- a. no one manager has more than 4-6 staff members reporting directly to them  
and
- b. lines of accountability are clear ensuring effective line management that develops staff, co-ordinates the work and provides effective performance management.

#### ***4.1 Ministries of the Church Department***

The current areas of committee work will initially remain the same. There would be a new Head of Ministries (in effect a replacement for parts of the role of Deputy General Secretary) who will manage the senior staff member in each area and will draw the work of the department together. The Head of Ministries would be line managed by the General Secretary.

This department would consist of the work currently covered by:

- Ministries
- Education and Learning
- Youth and Children’s Work
- Safeguarding

The job description for the Head of Ministries post would include:-

- 1) Developing and coordinating the work of the department.
- 2) Managing the senior staff members – Secretary for Ministries, Secretary for Education and Learning, Head of Youth and Children’s Work Development and Safeguarding Officer.
- 3) Supporting the General Secretary in developing the General Secretariat team to manage and lead Church House to fulfil its roles effectively as identified previously.
- 4) Acting as the staff support for the Ministerial Incapacity and Disciplinary processes (MIND) and for the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee and related reputation management in conjunction with Communications.
- 5) Normally and as appropriate deputising for the General Secretary.

#### ***4.2 Mission Team***

The Mission Team was created some years ago and it is anticipated will continue to develop along the current lines as discussed and agreed by the team and committee. It is important to acknowledge the progress in team and collaborative working in the Mission Team as it has developed since its inception and the impact that it is now having for good not only in those particular areas of work but more broadly too.

The team covers the work of the following areas:-

- Church and Society
- Commitment for Life
- Ecumenical
- Interfaith
- Mission
- World Church
- Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry
- Rural

It is proposed that one of the current staff secretaries should become the Head of Mission and be line managed by the General Secretary. This title is provisional and for further discussion. The revised job description would include:

- 1) Developing and coordinating the work of the department.
- 2) Ensuring line management and duty of care, and the development of staff within the team.
- 3) Supporting the General Secretary in developing the General Secretariat team to manage and lead Church House to fulfil its roles effectively as identified previously.

HRAG recognises that there is a need for further exploration with the Mission Team as to how management is organised within the team and within the current staffing levels and recommends this as a further piece of work before the November 2013 meeting of Mission Council.

#### ***4.3 Resources Department***

There would be a new Head of Resources who will also be responsible for the HR function (in effect a replacement for the previous Head of HR). This person would have both management and HR qualifications, skills and experience and would be line managed by the General Secretary.

This department would cover the areas of:

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Communications
- IT
- Facilities and events management
- Records and archives.

The job description for the Head of Resources post would include:-

- 1) Developing and co-ordinating the work of the department.
- 2) Managing the senior staff members – Chief Finance Officer, Human Resources Officer (as the Head of Resources would also function as Head of HR), Director of Communications, IT Support Manager, Facilities Manager, Archivist/Records Manager
- 3) Ensuring the provision of a comprehensive HR service to central staff and as agreed to the wider URC and to handle related reputation management in conjunction with communications.
- 4) Supporting the General Secretary in developing the General Secretariat team to manage and lead Church House to fulfil its roles effectively as identified previously.

Further work needs to be done on the internal structure of this department at all levels to ensure appropriate spans of management.

#### ***4.4 Other committees without staff secretaries***

Equal Opportunities and Faith and Order Committees will remain as now as a resource to inform the life and the whole Church and will continue to report directly to Mission Council / General Assembly.

#### ***4.5 Staff who relate to other bodies***

The Company Secretary of the Trust (who is also secretary to the Pension Board and the Investment Committee) would be managed by the Chair of the Trust.

### **5. The October 2012 resolution concerning the strategy proposals in paper E and the formation of a General Secretariat of the General Secretary and the three Departmental Staff Secretaries.**

#### ***5.1 General Secretariat Team***

This will be convened by the General Secretary and will consist of the Head of Ministries, the Head of Mission and the Head of Resources.

The role of the General Secretary will include:

- theological and pastoral leadership for the denomination
- operational oversight and leadership to the URC
- ensuring the implementation of the decisions and policies agreed by General Assembly and by Mission Council acting on Assembly's behalf
- overseeing the coordination of the work of Church House
- managing the 3 department heads and providing pastoral oversight to the Synod Moderators
- servicing both General Assembly and Mission Council.

In this proposal the General Secretary would be responsible for servicing the agenda-setting body for both Mission Council and General Assembly. HRAG would see a positive way forward in MCAG becoming the agenda-setting body for both General Assembly and Mission Council and for the Assembly Arrangements Committee becoming responsible for the practical 'events' management side of the meetings of councils. HRAG therefore suggests that this be considered elsewhere in the Church.

The General Secretariat team will meet regularly in order to:-

- 1) Develop, maintain and evaluate good management of Church House,
- 2) Ensure the effective accomplishment of the three Church House roles of
  - a. providing a secretariat for the General Assembly and Mission Council and those who need representatively to embody the Church,
  - b. providing service functions where a demonstrable demand or specific requirement is discerned, and
  - c. maintaining good communication networks within the Church and between the Church and wider societyin conjunction with the Connective meeting of senior staff.
- 3) Ensure the implementation of decisions of General Assembly and Mission Council.

### ***5.2 Strategy Development Group***

In the discussion at Mission Council in October 2012 it was the strategy section of paper E that led to the most discussion. It was clear that the proposal of a strategy development group did not find favour because it was seen as a potential executive body that could disempower the decision making councils of the Church. Therefore it is not part of this proposal.

It is clear that there are broader issues around vision and direction setting in the URC and the effective working of the councils that are beyond the scope of this review and will hopefully be picked up in the medium term strategy group process.

## **6. Financial Implications**

The review of the General Secretariat was set up in 2011 before the financial budgetary restrictions of 2013 were being debated. It is not financially driven. Rather its purpose is to identify the optimum structure to enable Church House to fulfil its roles effectively. However, financial costs are a factor. The proposals contained in this paper do not save money but neither should they significantly increase it from current levels.

The Head of Ministries will be the equivalent of the current Deputy General Secretary post. The Head of Resources post combines both the management of that department and provision of an HR service alongside the current HR staff. Therefore this will be the equivalent of the previous Head of HR post. Therefore there is no increase in head count. Training costs are already contained in the budget.

While it would have been good for this reorganisation to incorporate cost cuttings, that was not its objective and the proposal brought involves these identified costs.

## 7. Resolution

The purpose of the following resolution is to support the ministerial and spiritual leadership of the URC by efficient and effective Church House management activities with the associated operational and organisational leadership of the various departments (Terms of Reference of Review of Church House management processes Mission Council 25-27<sup>th</sup> November 2011)

Mission Council resolves to:-

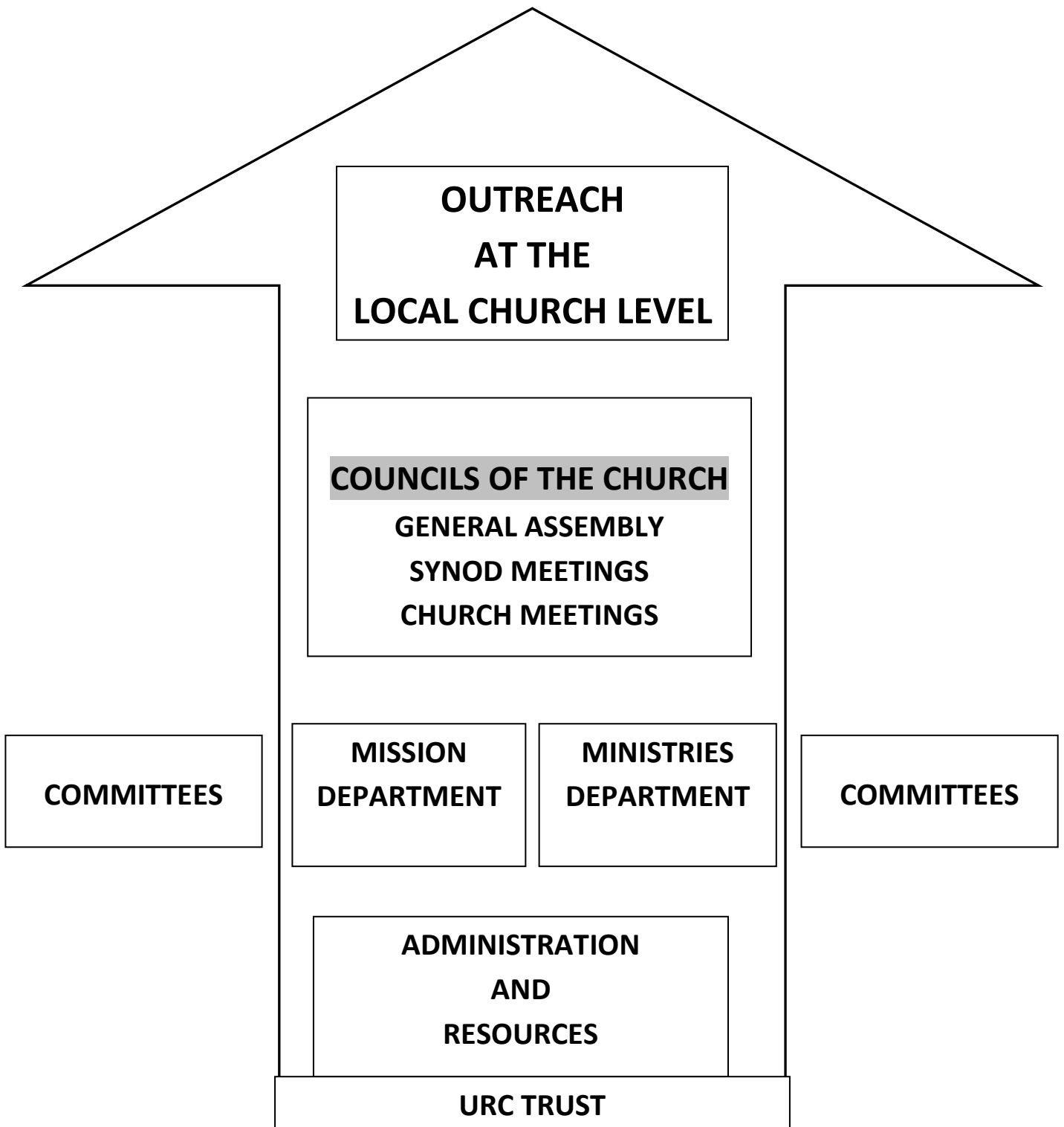
- 1) Establish a General Secretariat Team, convened by the General Secretary, consisting of the General Secretary, Head of Ministries, Head of Mission and Head of Resources with responsibility to:
  - a. Develop, maintain and evaluate good management of Church House,
  - b. Ensure the effective accomplishment of the three Church House roles of
    - i. providing a secretariat for the General Assembly and Mission Council and those who need representatively to 'embody' the Church,
    - ii. the provision of service functions where a demonstrable demand or specific requirement is discerned, and
    - iii. maintaining good communication networks within the Church and between the Church and wider society.
  - c. Ensure the implementation of decisions of General Assembly and Mission Council.
- 2) Establish three strands of work - Ministries, Mission and Resources - that are managed internally and consist of:
  - a. a Ministries of the Church strand with a staff post of Head of Ministries,
  - b. a Mission strand with a staff post of Head of Mission,
  - c. a Resources strand with a staff post of Head of Resources who will also be responsible for the provision of the Human Resource service in Church House and for the Church.
- 3) Instruct HRAG
  - a. to enable and facilitate the implementation of parts 1 and 2.
  - b. to include a revision of the job description of the General Secretary and the development of job descriptions and person specifications for the three 'Head of...' posts.
  - c. to work with the Mission Team to identify the way forward in the further development of the Mission Team with a leader and appropriate internal management processes. This to be within current Mission Team staffing levels and for report at the November 2013 meeting of Mission Council.
- 4) Rescind its resolution of October 2012 agreeing the appointment of a Human Resources Manager.

Rowena Francis  
Human Resources Advisory Group

April 2013

# Appendix 1

## THE NATURE OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE URC





## Assembly Commission (Resolution 38)

### Report to Mission Council

1. At the outset we think it worthwhile to remind everyone of the remit given to us by the General Assembly in 2012. Resolution 38 runs as follows:

In view of a variety of general issues which have been brought to a head by the resignation of the Moderator Elect, Assembly appoints an independent commission (the prospective members being the Revd Dr David Peel, the Revd Dr David Dadswell (sic)<sup>1</sup> and a female member) to consult with those involved to identify issues that arise from this unhappy experience.

Assembly requests:

- a) They liaise with the Pastoral Reference Committee [sic]<sup>2</sup> to initiate a process of reconciliation, both personal and collective, and
- b) They refer to the Law and Polity Advisory Group any procedural issues that emerge pertaining to the relationship between the Officers of Assembly, Mission Council/General Assembly and the law.

Assembly requests that the commission make a progress report to the October 2012 Mission Council.

Subsequent to the Assembly Mrs Claudette Binns was appointed as the third member of The Commission.

2. Following our "Progress Report" to the October 2012 meeting of Mission Council we have conducted the six interviews that had been planned. We were also grateful to receive submissions from members of Mission Council containing personal impressions of the closed session of the March 2012 meeting of Mission Council.<sup>3</sup> The Commission is thankful for the amount of time many people have taken to help us in our work. It has generated a mountain of paper, but through it we have gleaned what we believe is a trustworthy narrative of the events which led up to the closed session of Mission Council in March 2012 and the closed session itself.
3. We wish to make two points that provide a backcloth to our submission:
  - a) We underscore the truth in the old legal maxim that "hard cases make bad law".

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<sup>1</sup> David Dadswell wishes it to be known that he is not in possession of a doctorate.

<sup>2</sup> The full title of the Committee is Pastoral Reference *and Welfare*.

<sup>3</sup> The Commission received nine submissions and one composite submission from twelve Mission Council members. There was a slight overlap of authorship between the former and the latter.

Ours is a culture in which everything is reviewed mercilessly and often before having had an operational life long enough to provide realistic assessment. It is easy therefore for organisations to be driven by knee-jerk reactions. Exceptional events – one of which was the closed session of Mission Council in March 2012 – are “exceptional”, precisely because they cannot be contained within normal procedures. A danger is that in trying to revise the “normal” in order to embrace the “exceptional” organisations end up with worse procedures than the original ones under revision.

- b) However perfect our procedures they will always be operated by fallible human beings. Their success depends on education (people being enabled to understand them with a view to operating them) and skill (people having the ability to operate them). Voluntary organisations have a tendency to attribute mistakes to failing procedures rather than fallible people. They find it all rather difficult, quite understandably, to deal with the inadequacies of their volunteers. Churches are similar. We say this because *some* of the issues we have identified “from this unhappy experience” (as Resolution 38 puts it) have little to do with procedures, but originate in the poor performance of individuals and groups of individuals.
4. a) At the second formal meeting of The Commission<sup>4</sup>, we started to identify several “procedural issues” which, once clarified, we concluded would need referring to the Law and Polity Advisory Group. We also were able to identify several broken relationships which had occurred directly as a result of the course of events leading up to and including the closed session of Mission Council of 2012. Shortly after our January meeting, therefore, we were able to liaise with the Revd Sheila Maxey, the Convener of the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee, and thereby move towards fulfilling part of our brief, viz “to initiate a process of reconciliation” for the individuals concerned. We have been heartened to hear of the progress which has been made in this area, but we also recognize the long-term nature of such work.
- b) It is likely that until a “common narrative” of events is constructed (i.e. a story-line agreed by all parties) what Resolution 38 describes as “collective” reconciliation will prove impossible. We note that what The Commission believes to be “a trustworthy narrative of the events” (see para 2 above) differs at key points from the narratives we have heard put forward by some of the individuals and groups we have interviewed. Hence, we suggest to Mission Council that the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee be invited to bring together the principal persons involved for the purpose of constructing a “common narrative”, with only the implications of events being added once a basic chronological order has been agreed. Once completed, it can be checked against what The Commission believes is a “trustworthy narrative”. Another way to describe such a process is

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<sup>4</sup> Held at the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham (11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> January 2013).

to talk in terms of an attempt at reconciling memories. The Commission is prepared to help the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee carry out this task.

5. At our second meeting, we saw a need to interview further individuals. Two separate conversations duly took place. They were reflected upon at a third meeting of The Commission.<sup>5</sup> Following that meeting we were able to supply the Revd Professor David Thompson (Convener of the Law and Polity Advisory Group) with a paper outlining “procedural issues” which we have invited the Group to address. They are located within the following areas:
  - i. Church management: the adequacy of the management structure at Church House; the support, development and appraisal of senior management at Church House; a code of conduct to guide working relationships between “employees” and “volunteers”.
  - ii. The ethics of “compromise agreements” and “out of court” settlements.
  - iii. The role of legal advice and the position of the legal advisor in the Church’s conciliar governance.
  - iv. Guidelines for the delegation of duties which normally belong to senior management.
  - v. Guideline procedures for internal disciplinary hearings.
  - vi. Procedural rules for the conduct of meetings of Mission Council.
  - vii. The job description of the Moderator of General Assembly.
  - viii. Procedures for “re-opening” decision-making processes when subsequent evidence provides grounds for thinking original decisions might be flawed.
  - ix. Procedures for rescinding calls issued by the General Assembly to individuals to serve as Moderator of General Assembly.

It is quite possible that some of the above issues (particularly those surrounding “Church Management”) have already been (or are in the process of being) addressed. We are aware of some of the excellent work already carried out by the Investigation Group in response to the events we were asked to review.<sup>6</sup> Management issues have repeatedly arisen in our deliberations and we hope that the Law and Polity Group will relay our concerns to those who have oversight of such matters.

6. Our difficulty in locating “management” issues within our remit has been part of a wider problem we have encountered. Assembly asked us to address issues arising out of

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<sup>5</sup> Held at the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham (22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2013). For the record, each of the eight formal interviews we held were recorded, sometimes to enable a third member of The Commission to hear what had been said, and also to provide a record of the important verbal evidence which we had to place alongside the written submissions in our deliberations.

<sup>6</sup> As reported by the Investigation Group to Mission Council, October 2012.

what it referred to as “this unhappy experience”, but, interpreted narrowly, its directive to The Commission might suggest that all the issues we would discover could be subsumed easily under the terms of reference of the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee and the Law and Polity Advisory Group. Following a meeting with the Conveners of the aforementioned Committee and Group, convened by the Clerk to General Assembly, The Commission is reporting on the assumption that the preamble to Resolution 38 was not intended to limit any issues raised by us to those specified in a) and b) of its next paragraph.<sup>7</sup> We therefore conclude our report with the following points:

- a) As the reader will have already become aware The Commission believes that management issues are central to the vexed matter we were asked to investigate. Members of Mission Council need to consider very carefully whether or not the forthcoming changes in Church House management will be adequate. In particular, the United Reformed Church would be wise to seek re-assurance from an independent consultant that the management issues raised in a paper submitted by the members of the Disciplinary Hearing chaired by the Rev’d Nick Adlam have been thoroughly addressed in the new structure.
- b) The management of the events we have investigated was complicated, confused and compromised in ways which exposed Moderators of General Assembly, rightly or wrongly, to the charge of lack of impartiality. While the danger in a small church of individuals wearing too many hats is extremely difficult to avoid, there are basic principles of good practice which must be followed. For example, those expected to “rule” by providing judgment in disputes and conflicts ought not be expected to take up or place themselves in, positions where they find themselves “prosecuting” or “defending” individuals caught up in such disputes and conflicts.

[We have attempted to address a) and b) in our submission to the Law and Polity Advisory Group through areas (i) and (vii).]

- c) It has been claimed that the risk to the peace and unity of the United Reformed Church was increased rather than decreased by the occasion and decision of the closed session of the March 2012 Meeting of Mission Council. There are no means of knowing whether or not that is true. But The Commission shares the view of many in the United Reformed Church that large groups are not the best means for handling matters like the one which came before the closed session.

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<sup>7</sup> The meeting took place at the Lumen Centre on the 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2013.

There are lessons to be learned from the way the United Reformed Church conducts its Section 0 procedures.

[We hope that the Law and Polity Advisory Group will be able to address this matter under v, vi and ix of the areas we have invited them to address.]

- d) Among the events we found ourselves investigating was a Disciplinary Hearing the outcome of which appears to have been at variance both with the tone of its findings and the verdict to which it came. The Disciplinary Hearing in question found an employee of the United Reformed Church not guilty of several accusations made against him. One accusation against the employee was found to be proven. But, long after the Disciplinary Hearing had been completed, certain accusations against the person disciplined were still being made by senior management when in fact that person had been found not guilty of those accusations. And, additionally, the person disciplined was neither enabled nor supported in ways which might have helped the person as well as the management come to terms with the actual decision of the Disciplinary Hearing. These are very serious matters which now lie at the heart of the difficulties the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee face in their efforts to facilitate reconciliation between the key individuals concerned.

[We hope that this matter can be addressed through the suggested strategy of working towards “a common narrative” (see 4b above), although there may be lessons to be learned that can be picked up by the Law and Polity Advisory Group under areas ii and v of our submission to them.]

- e) Issues surrounding confidentiality have arisen throughout our investigations. The matters under investigation which fell under the constraints of confidentiality are as follows:
- i) *Information concerning compromise agreements made between the United Reformed Church and two of its former employees.* The Commission made no attempt to gain any information in this area and we have no evidence to suggest that the parties to these agreements have broken the required confidentiality.

- ii) *Information concerning a Disciplinary Hearing held by the United Reformed Church in connection with the alleged misdemeanours of one of its employees.* As with the compromise agreements mentioned above, it is standard practice that the content and outcome of disciplinary hearings remain confidential. We are not sure whether or not declarations to enforce such confidentiality were signed by both parties. What we do know is that, in the Disciplinary Hearing referred to at several points in this report, confidentiality was broken by the person who had been disciplined on the grounds that full openness favoured that person in subsequent dealings with the United Reformed Church. It is through the disciplined person and not the United Reformed Church that The Commission was given access to all the papers concerning the Disciplinary Hearing in question. We note that there has been no attempt, as far as we are aware, by the United Reformed Church to discipline their employee for breaches of confidentiality.
- iii) *Information concerning the closed session of the March 2012 meeting of Mission Council beyond what is contained in the minutes of the meeting.* All the information about the meeting to which we have had access came to us from the invited confidential submissions sent to us and the interviews we have held. That said, March 2012's closed session may well go down in history as one of the most talked about meetings of Mission Council!

Certain points are clear to us: (a) In each of the above three areas an imposition of confidentiality was appropriate. (b) Regarding (ii) we note that, after the person disciplined broke confidentiality, the management's grounds for enforcing confidentiality changed: from first being in the interests of the disciplined individual to then seeking to reduce the possible risk of a charge of "constructive" dismissal being made by the employee. (c) In the extended family called "The United Reformed Church" no one should over-estimate the likelihood that any of its meetings can remain confidential. (d) The greater the imposition of confidentiality the more likely it is that conspiracy theories will be spun on the familiar grounds that "they" are maintaining "secrecy" to hide dubious activities. (e) Wisdom is needed to determine when an imposition of confidentiality may risk damaging the church more than would a strategy of complete openness. (f) Where confidentiality is required or expected all concerned should "sign up" to it, and thereafter it should be enforced and rigorously policed.

[The point and place of confidentiality in the life of the United Reformed Church might be taken up in items iii and v of our submission to the Law and Polity Advisory Group.]

- f) It has been claimed that pressure was brought to bear on at least one, and possibly more, individuals not to be witnesses at the afore-mentioned Disciplinary Hearing. Sensing that this matter went beyond our remit we have not fully investigated the matter, save to be certain that it is not an idle claim. We feel sure that Mission Council will want this matter investigated and, given that The Commission already has a large amount of information on the matter (most of which must remain confidential), it seems sensible for us to offer to take on this task.

[The Commission members discussed this matter with the Conveners of the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee and Law and Polity Advisory Group at our recent meeting with the Clerk of Assembly. It was strongly felt by the non-members of The Commission that the remit of the present Commission should be extended to cover the need to investigate the accusation in question. A resolution to that effect accompanies this report.]

7. Our task has not been easy and our work may not yet be completed, but in commending this report to Mission Council we hope that it can be used to put an end to a spiral of brokenness whose genesis and momentum has been very painful to review.

Claudette Binns

David Dadswell

David Peel

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013.

## RESOLUTION

Mission Council authorises the Commission appointed under Resolution 38 of General Assembly 2012 to investigate the truth of suggestions that pressure might have been brought to bear on persons not to be witnesses at the disciplinary hearing concerned; if it is then satisfied that there are grounds for such suggestions, to discuss them with the persons concerned, and the Chair of the Disciplinary Panel; to decide on any appropriate action; and to report the outcome to Mission Council.





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**13 – 15 MAY 2013**

**D**

## **Medium Term Strategy Group**

### **Initial Report - Our Scope**

1 At its October 2012 meeting Mission Council set up a Medium Term Strategy Group: see October's Paper B and Minute 12.32 (now in the Resources section of the URC website). This is its first report.

#### **Membership**

2 In accordance with the criteria and procedure agreed by Mission Council, the Revd Dr Romilly Micklem and Ms Linda Austin have joined the General Secretary and the Treasurer to form the core group. Instead of one wider reference group, the core group proposes to consult with the stakeholders on each separate issue under consideration.

#### **Comments Received**

3 The October invitation for additional comments from Mission Council members to be sent to the General Secretary elicited responses from three people. They highlighted the primacy of the local church in its obedience to the Holy Spirit; the need for appropriate, lean and effective wider structures; and the importance of sustainability in resource planning. Their comments have informed the Group's thinking.

#### **Exploring the Scope**

4 The Group has spent time reviewing the extensive work done in the various reviews which led to its creation, in accordance with the first of its Terms of Reference. A very wide variety of interesting topics are covered. Recalling the comment at the October Mission Council that some people were confused as to how this Group fitted with all the other groups, we attempt in this paper some clarification about its proposed areas of activity.

5 It is clearly the case that almost all business brought to Mission Council by a particular Committee or Group has some potential knock-on effect elsewhere in the Church's life; and most decisions contain some element of "strategy". A strategy group could therefore be involved in everything and anything. That is not our understanding of how we can be most useful to the Church's mission.

6 Looking at the live issues brought to the 2012 Assembly and the areas where fresh answers are being sought, there are many subjects that can continue to be addressed by existing Committees and other denominational bodies. The spiritual health of the Church is being addressed in various ways by several Assembly Committees. However there are some issues, particularly in relation to the apparatus and structures through which we seek to support the work of local churches, which do not fit easily into the brief of any single existing group. And in these areas some good questions are being raised which cannot sensibly be addressed until other, prior questions have been answered.

7 We therefore suggest the Group should take a specific interest in subjects which meet all the following tests:

- are important to the life of the United Reformed Church; and
- have wide implications for the way local churches and the Councils of the Church do their work; and
- have a significant impact on the use of financial or personnel resources over the next 5-10 years; and
- do not fall specifically within the brief of any existing Assembly Committee or Mission Council Task Group.

The manner in which the Group would be involved would vary. For example, sometimes it might be co-ordinating the timetables of other pieces of work; sometimes it might be initiating work itself.

8 Looking at the work we have reviewed, examples of subjects that seem to us to meet these tests and on which the Church is seeking fresh thinking include:

- the pattern of our 13 Synods – on which we bring another paper to Mission Council
- the pattern of our Assembly Committees – on which we believe some work should be done once the staffing proposals for Church House are agreed
- the pattern of General Assembly – where we welcome the thinking of the Assembly Arrangements Committee being brought to this meeting of Mission Council and suggest that these and other changes are trialled in 2014 before any more wholesale review of our short experience of biennial Assemblies is undertaken
- the relationship between the URC Trust on the one hand and the General Assembly and the Mission Council on the other – on which we are asking initially for the URC Trustees to articulate current understandings
- the setting of longer term budgets – on which we do not envisage doing significant work until after the 2014 budget has been set.

9 On subjects where the Group identifies there could be value in it becoming involved, we would always welcome ideas, prayer support and inspirations from anywhere in the life of the Church and certainly including local churches and Synods. In addition, we would, in line with our Terms of Reference, seek to:

- ensure Assembly Committees and Task Groups with an interest were aware of our thinking and that we were not duplicating contributions they are equipped to make;
- advise Assembly Committees and Task Groups of ways for co-ordinating their work and offering other comment;
- seek to stimulate ideas on creative future options;
- consult the internal stakeholders and beyond;
- co-ordinate material coming to Mission Council for discussion and/or decision, in conjunction with the Mission Council Advisory Group;
- reflect carefully and prayerfully on the outcomes of Mission Council discussions;
- draw together coherent proposals for consideration at General Assembly meetings.

10 There are several subjects arising out of the work we reviewed where we believe other bodies can make progress without being dependent on the outcomes of work sketched above. Therefore in the Appendix we provide a summary of that work and invite Mission Council to note what is planned.

## **Resolution**

**Mission Council welcomes the initial report of the Medium Term Strategy Group and notes the planned work shown in the Appendix.**

# Appendix

## Committee work arising from Paper B, Mission Council October 2012

The paper “Medium Term Planning in the United Reformed Church” which was presented to Mission Council by the general secretary in October 2012 proposed various pieces of work for the committees of the Church. Updates are given in italics at the end of each section.

### Faith & 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? [A discussion for FAOC to facilitate at Mission Council]
- b. What is our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church? [ditto]
- 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: in particular, can we enable churches to die with dignity, recognising that this is natural?
- d. There is significant concern about the health of church meeting. [A discussion to share with the Medium Term Strategy Group]

*Discussion (a) takes place at the May Mission Council. Discussion (b) is scheduled for November. Achieving good endings (c) will be in a report to the November Council from the Joint Property Strategy Group. FAOC wishes to consider church meetings within the context of an examination of vibrant conciliar life at all levels.*

### 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?

*The work on denominational structures is in hand. The Medium Term Strategy Group proposes that any work on the future of committees be deferred until after there is agreement on the pattern of central staff structures.*

### Ministries Committee

- a. 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?

*This question perpetually underlies the work of the Ministries Committee. They continue to address it from a variety of angles, including their current work on ordained local ministry. This is also very much the concern of the Education & Learning Committee. See E&L’s recent promotion of the TLS (Training for Learning and Serving) programme, the development of online learning, and the ongoing offerings of the four resource centres for learning.*

### Mission Committee

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

*The Mission Committee will be bringing proposals regarding evangelism to the November Mission Council meeting. They are addressing the issue of church planting principally through full participation in the Fresh Expressions initiative and ongoing support of migrant congregations.*

### 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?

*MCAG has had a first discussion on a process which integrates Mission Council planning with planning for the business of the Assembly over the full two year cycle. There is no enthusiasm for decision making other than in face-to-face meetings, but every possibility for consultation will be explored. Synods are encouraged to express their ideas and concerns in the form of papers for discussion at Mission Council. Synod issues are often channelled through the appropriate Assembly committees; this means that sometimes a synod initiative arrives at Mission Council appearing to have been introduced by a committee. Further thoughts would be welcome on the evolution of Mission Council into a body which truly provides a meeting place and discussion opportunity for concerns arising from the synods.*

### Medium Term Strategy Group – to enable decisions at Mission Council and General Assembly

- 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)?
- m. The relationship between the United Reformed Church and the URC Trust needs clarifying. What is the solution that will honour our core principles and conciliar convictions while reducing unnecessary duplication or governance overload?

*Questions concerning the synods (a, c, d, f, h, l) are reflected in MTSG work brought to the May Mission Council. The role of the synod moderator (e, g) is scheduled for November. The 2014 Assembly will reflect lessons learned in 2012 (k) and it is proposed to defer a more thorough review (i, j) until afterwards. The URC Trust has commissioned a paper on the relationship between the Church and its Trust (m). This leaves only (b) which cannot be addressed until more fundamental issues concerning the synods are resolved.*



**MISSION COUNCIL**

**13 – 15 MAY 2013**

**D1**

## **Medium Term Strategy Group**

### **Even Better Synods**

#### **Purpose**

1 This paper is designed to promote a creative discussion about the future purpose and shape of synods.

#### **Process**

2 There is the possibility of the May Mission Council engaging in two substantial pieces of forward thinking. One comes from the Faith and Order Committee, inviting thoughts on how the United Reformed Church might express itself in future at local level. The Medium Term Strategy Group has encouraged this discussion as it is a fundamental building block for the work it has been asked to do. The Group has also prepared this paper which invites parallel thinking about how the synod structures of the Church might best support all those local expressions. Members of Mission Council are asked to consider it as part of their prayerful preparation for the Council meeting. Whether there will be opportunity for a full discussion of this paper at this Mission Council meeting depends on the progress of other business, not least the response to the Faith and Order paper. If it seems more helpful, the paper will be brought back at a later date.

3 In considering this work on synods, the Medium Term Strategy Group will naturally wish to consult the existing synods. However the Group feels that Mission Council, where representatives from all the synods meet and pray together and can learn of their very different synod experiences, should first help shape proposals for the whole Church. Then they can be offered to individual synods for comment from their own perspectives.

#### **Background**

4 In fulfilling its remit to review the output of various recent review processes, the Medium Term Strategy Group was struck by how many of the issues linked in some way to the future work of the URC synods and therefore also to their purpose in the Church's fifth decade. The questions being raised were summarised in paragraph 3 of last October's Mission Council Paper B and amplified in the discussion on the paper at the Council. They are briefly rehearsed here:

- What role do the synods play in *episcopal* oversight?
- What is the right balance between the various tasks laid upon synods?
- Should the role of Moderator be limited to, or more focused around, pastoral work?
- Who should exercise disciplinary roles?

- Should technical support services be provided centrally rather than from synods?
- Should the Synod Trusts, dealing mainly with finance and property, be centralised?
- Who should pay for the running costs of a synod?

## **The Current Reality**

- 5 Some key aspects of where the synods find themselves today include the following:
- (i) They are very different sizes: the largest has over three times as many members as the smallest; the smaller synods have fewer members and stipendiary ministers than the larger districts had in the 1970s.
  - (ii) There are distinct issues in the two national Synods of Wales and Scotland.
  - (iii) Since the ending of districts, the synods have evolved very different patterns: in some synods there are structured groupings that have regular meetings, their own Pastoral Committees and deployment responsibilities; in other synods the work has mainly been centralised.
  - (iv) In most churches the Synod Moderator and other synod staff are respected and readily used, especially as an emergency service.
  - (v) Many of the most innovative ministry posts in the Church, not least church-related community workers and Special Category Ministries, are devised and supported by synods.
  - (vi) Financial resources are very uneven: almost all synods now need proceeds from selling redundant buildings to cover their running costs but selling a property in one part of the country can produce several times the sum that selling the same property would produce in another area. The Inter-Synod Resource Sharing scheme is very dependent on the giving of just two synods.
  - (vii) Personnel resources are stretched: finding volunteers for synod posts is hard.
  - (viii) Costs of running the network of 13 synods are significant at around £4m per annum. There is a small but growing number of paid staff posts shared between adjoining synods.

## **Vision for the Future**

6 The Medium Term Strategy Group suggests the United Reformed Church needs to consider what sort of synods God now requires of us in order to support most effectively the mission of the Church.

7 The formal responsibilities of synods are set out in the Manual and reproduced in Appendix 1. As a list of items which the local church seeks from the wider Church, we detect no clamour for this list to be rewritten. However there are questions about whether all these functions are best located at synod level, and some of the work we reviewed envisaged certain tasks being moved to Assembly level. Hence the parallel list of the current tasks of the General Assembly is also given in Appendix 1 for reference.

8 Nonetheless it is evident that different synods have developed their work in different ways. We found the classification created at the meetings of the five northern synods very helpful in setting out the dimensions which every synod now seeks to provide in one way or another:

- (i) Service – meeting the perceived needs of the churches;
- (ii) Instrumental – providing a vehicle for the churches to do things together which they could not do for themselves, eg regional ecumenical relationships;
- (iii) Co-operative – enabling the churches to support one another through active networking;
- (iv) Governance – setting priorities, initiating programmes and managing resources.

9 We see the challenge now as being to rethink synods so that all these four dimensions can flourish but with the flexibility to recognise and welcome the diversity of emphasis in different parts of the denomination. We also believe we need a framework for synods that can be sustainable in terms of personnel and finance over a decade or more. That implies that the chosen patterns need to be able to be useful instruments of God's purposes whether the United Reformed Church continues to decline in membership quite rapidly or starts to grow again.

10 We also believe that the synods have a role in challenging local churches in fulfilling their local calling. This means a synod and its structures must remain more than just a provider of services. The creative use of ministerial deployment and the imaginative use of Local Ministry and Mission Reviews (LMMR) are two of the ways in which this challenge can be expressed, in line with the urging of General Assembly.

11 No detailed work has been done on any new synod model but, drawing on the thinking of various previous groups, we offer sketches of four different scenarios to promote Mission Council discussion. None of these are proposals or recommendations and certainly none of them would be without their complications. However each of them seems to us to have a degree of coherence and it would be very helpful to have a feel for where Mission Council senses the future might lie. This could then shape further work by the Group or others.

12 The four scenarios are attached as Appendix 2.

## **Questions for Discussion**

Q1 Are there any major additions you would wish to make to the summary of the current reality in paragraph 5 above?

Q2 If you were forced to choose only one of the four scenarios as the basis for our future pattern, which one of the four would it be?

Q3 What are the three most important amendments you would want to make to the scenario you chose in Q2 to improve it?

John Ellis  
23 March 2013

## APPENDIX 1

### A summary of the functions of the Synod and the General Assembly

This summary is offered for quick reference only. Wherever further detail is required, please refer to the Structure of the United Reformed Church, [http://www.urc.org.uk/images/the\\_manual/B%20%20Structure.pdf](http://www.urc.org.uk/images/the_manual/B%20%20Structure.pdf). And please note (a) that “ministers” includes CRCWs and (b) that references to district councils are correct!

**The Synod** is responsible for exercising the following Functions

(i) to take action which supports

- \* the spreading of the Gospel at home and abroad,
- \* the life and witness of the United Reformed Church,
- \* the interests of the Church of Christ as a whole,
- \* the well-being of the community in which the Church is placed;

(ii) to encourage church extension, new causes, mission projects;

(iii) to decide upon all matters regarding the grouping/amalgamation/dissolution of local churches;

(iv) to take appropriate action on matters referred to it by the General Assembly;

(v) to provide a forum for concerns brought forward by local churches;

(vi) to raise issues for consideration by the General Assembly;

(vii) to give concurrence in calls to ministers and to conduct ordinations, commissionings, and inductions;

(viii) to appoint interim moderators;

(ix) to care for the churches of the synod and conduct consultation visits at regular intervals;

(x) to appoint representatives to General Assembly;

(xi) to appoint the officers and members of the district council(s) within its boundaries;

(xii) to appoint [various listed categories of people] to service on synod;

(xiv) to devise mission strategies and encourage local churches in mission at home and abroad;

(xv) to exercise oversight of ministers and church related community workers;

(xvi) to oversee candidates for [the full range of] ministries and determine their eligibility for a call;

(xvii) to implement the ministerial disciplinary process and incapacity procedure as appropriate;



- (xix) to appoint and review non-stipendiary ministers; to accredit, support and train lay preachers and worship leaders;
- (xx) to give authority for appropriate lay persons to preside at the sacraments;
- (xxi) to consider the resignation of ministers;
- (xxii) to foster ecumenical life and witness in each local community, and in Scotland and Wales to undertake responsibility for national ecumenical relationships, under the authority of Assembly;
- (xxiii) to decide upon all matters regarding erection/major reconstruction/disposal of buildings;
- (xxiv) to receive, hear and decide upon references and appeals;
- (xxv) to recommend ministry candidates;
- (xxvi) to do such other things as may be necessary...

**General Assembly** is responsible for exercising the following Functions:

- (i) to oversee the total work of the church;
- (ii) to make decisions on reports and recommendations from its own committees, issue directions and take actions for the propagation of the gospel, the welfare of the URC, the interests of the Church of Christ as a whole and the well-being of the community in which the Church is placed;
- (iii) to conduct and foster ecumenical relationships;
- (iv) to support missionary work at home and abroad;
- (v) to determine the standards and scope of training for ministers;
- (vi) to recognise/oversee theological colleges;
- (viii) to appoint moderators of synods;
- (ix) to remit questions to church meetings, elders' meetings, district councils and synods, and to call for reports from these councils;
- (x) to interpret the polity, practice and doctrine of the URC and determine when personal conviction is asserted to the injury of its unity and peace;
- (xi) to alter, add to, modify or supersede the Basis and Structure;
- (xii) to establish rules for its own proceedings and those of other councils/commissions;
- (xiii) to appoint additional members to serve on synods;
- (xiv) to make alterations to the boundaries of districts and synods;

- (xv) to consider and decide upon references and appeals;
- (xvi) to establish rules of procedure for referrals and appeals;
- (xvii) to admit ministers, probationers and congregations to the URC as recommended by synods;
- (xviii) to decide on applicants' inclusion on the Roll of Ministers and the Roll of CRCWs;
- (xix) to raise funds, pay stipends to ministers and attend to financial matters;
- (xx) to consider and decide upon issues transmitted by other councils of the URC;
- (xxi) to exercise specified functions within the ministerial disciplinary process and incapacity procedure;
- (xxvi) to do such other things as may be necessary...

## **APPENDIX 2: Alternative Scenarios**

### **Even Better Synods.....Scenario A: Small is Beautiful**

- Synod focus on pastoral care of churches
- Replace existing synods by 30 synods of around 50 churches each
- Each synod decides on deployment and pastoral issues in its area
- A half-time Synod Moderator exercising pastoral and managerial responsibilities
- Secretarial and admin support for the Moderator paid for by the synod churches
- Synod could employ other staff if churches choose to pay for them
- Technical support to churches (eg legal, Safeguarding) provided centrally and charged for to users
- Disciplinary roles centralised and charged to synods on basis of use
- Three regional trust bodies hold and administer investments and properties for about 10 synods each, with each synod represented on the trust body; grants given to synods for their work. Trust costs funded out of trust income.

### **Even Better Synods.....Scenario B: Fair Shares for All**

- Retain existing 13 synods, with synods continuing to provide pastoral support and services
- Full-time Moderator but with focus on pastoral work
- Full-time Manager with focus on synod staff, legal compliance and disciplinary processes in synod funded (as Moderators are now) from central M&M Fund
- Additional mission and technical staff in synod team at individual synod's discretion and paid for by synod
- Synod Trusts retain current responsibilities
- All synod investment income and 50% of all property sales income given to central Trust; 1/13<sup>th</sup> of the total proceeds from the 13 synods then handed back to each of them

### **Even Better Synods.....Scenario C: Streamlining the Infrastructure**

- Replace current synods by three Regions, perhaps Southern (old South Western, Wessex and Southern Synods; 19,000 members), Central (old Wales, West Midlands, East Midlands, Thames North and Eastern Synods; 22,000 members) and Northern (old Mersey, North Western, Yorkshire, Northern and Scotland Synods; 21,000 members)
- Each Region to have a full-time Moderator for inspirational spiritual leadership and strategic coherence, eg in leading URC engagement with the region
- Well-equipped regional offices (perhaps in Bristol, Birmingham and York) led by godly managers and with professional staff where local churches normally turn for support, with some core staff funded from M&M by reducing central staff in London
- Management and disciplinary issues dealt with by regional staff
- Within region regular pastoral matters handled by local groupings of around 10-20 churches with volunteer leadership
- Former Synod Trusts administered together in the region

### **Even Better Synods.....Scenario D: Minimising Disruption**

- Maintain the status quo where funds and personnel permit



MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

E1

# Synod of Scotland & URC Policy in relation to the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brings together a number of pieces of legislation relating to discrimination in respect of age, race, sexuality, gender, disability, etc. In respect of people with disability the Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in connection with employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services, or the management of premises.

Previous law on disability concentrated on employment issues rather than the broader issue of discrimination; by making discrimination unlawful, the Act aims at full inclusion of disabled people in society.

Previous legislation subsumed under the Act is primarily:

- the Equal Pay Act 1970
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- the Race Relations Act 1976
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- and 3 major statutory instruments protecting discrimination in employment on grounds of religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

The Act protects people who have protected characteristics. The relevant characteristics are:

- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy & Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Marriage & Civil Partnerships

## Service Providers

Duties under the Act are placed on 'service providers', the definition of which includes churches; it does not matter whether the service is provided free or not.

### A THE CHURCH'S DUTY IN RESPECT OF DISABLED PEOPLE

**This duty is covered in significant detail because of statutory implications.**

A church's primary purpose is for worship and in the eyes of the Act, this is regarded as a service which the church provides for all people. Additionally most churches also have wider activities, for example activities for groups (perhaps in a church hall), concerts, education, etc. All such are covered by the Act.

The Act covers many forms of disability such as hearing and visual impairment, reduced mobility, manual dexterity and learning disability. The Act is therefore about making activities accessible to everyone – a theme fully consonant with the Christian faith.

## Duties

**Provision in the Equality Act is built upon previous legislation in the Disability Discrimination Acts of 1995 and 2005.** Synod Guidelines in relation to Disability Discrimination, produced in response to these Acts, are included as an Appendix and should be read carefully and acted upon.

From October 2010 service providers have had to take reasonable steps to change a practice, policy, or procedure which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to make use of its services. For instance, if a person with impaired vision was unable to read a screen on which hymn words are projected at a church service, that is unlawful.

Service providers also have a duty:

- **to take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids where these would enable better use of a service by disabled people;**
  - Auxiliary aids are things like induction loops for hearing-aid users, handrails, or large print service sheets that enable people to take part in the service to the same degree as everyone else.
- **to have considered which physical features of a building inhibit use of services by disabled people and to take reasonable steps to remove the feature, alter it, provide a way of avoiding it, or provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service available;**
  - For churches this could include looking at access to the church and parts of the interior, use of WCs, noticeboards, churchyard, halls, etc.

The implications of these duties for churches have, understandably caused concern. However, only reasonable alterations are required, and it is quite lawful to make services available whilst avoiding physical features or providing a service in a different way. The important principle is that all people are included in the provision of the service.

**The Act does not remove the need for planning legislation and faculty process. A faculty for works will be required in the usual way. Likewise planning and building regulations approval will also be required where necessary.**

## Action Required

Initially an **Access Appraisal** of all premises should be undertaken. The appraisal requires an assessment of various factors, as follows:

- Service-provision: What services do we provide and how and where do we provide them?
- Accessibility: What are the barriers to people wishing to use our services?
- Significance: How is the church (along with its fittings and furnishings) significant?
- Experience: What do disabled people in your congregation or community feel would best respond to their needs?

These factors need to be balanced and a list of priorities for action drawn up; this becomes your **Access Plan**.

The Act also requires that you **anticipate** that disabled people will want to use your premises; you should not wait until a disabled person turns up and then make arrangements.

Similarly, the Act applies to **all church premises** – the church itself, the hall, and any other buildings that are used for church activities (including clergy housing if appropriate).

## Cost

The issue as to whether it is reasonable to undertake a particular scheme will be dependent on what can be afforded; this would need to be set against other priorities. **However, lack of funds is not an excuse not to think about what can be achieved and to investigate options.** It may be that, as a result of your **Access Plan**, it is agreed that various things can be phased in on a particular timescale relating to finances and other objectives. If this decision is made, however, it would need to set a realistic and justifiable timescale rather than putting things off indefinitely.

Many of the things that can be done will not necessarily be very expensive:

- providing large print copies of service sheets may make a big difference to a large number of people;
- reception of visitors at the door at a time of service may be very much part of plans for addressing the issues.

It is important to ensure that any access audit, whether professional or informal, includes consultation with existing disabled users of the church and any local disability groups.

## Who carries out access audits?

A building surveyor may be able to offer this service. However, there is no formal recognised qualification for an access auditor so you will need to make sure that the person you entrust with the audit has relevant and up-to-date knowledge of construction and is familiar with the appropriate building regulations as well as disability issues. You may choose to check their credentials by speaking to previous clients or seek advice from the Synod Office. The Centre for Accessible Environments and many of the major disability organisations offer training to access auditors and maintain a list of access auditors that they have approved.

Alternatively, “Widening the Eye of the Needle” (see below) provides guidance and a checklist of such an audit which could be used by suitably knowledgeable members of the congregation, perhaps with the advice of a relevant professional.

## What happens when we need to make physical changes to the church building?

The normal Synod procedures relating to building alterations still apply.

## What if the church is a listed building?

The Equality Act does not override other legislation. You will still have to comply with planning or Ecclesiastical Exemption procedure (Ø661) as well as United Reformed Church procedures.

## Access Appraisal

Access appraisal requires an audit process and the following may be consulted:

- *Widening the Eye of the Needle: Access to Church Buildings for People with Disabilities* John Penton: publication by the Church Buildings Council available from Church House Publishing, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ priced £16.99 (01603 785 923 for orders)
- Helpful documents and leaflets on approaches to considering access for disabled people and on audits and training from *Through the Roof* (PO Box 353, Epsom KT18 5WS Tel: 01372 749955) <http://www.throughtheroof.org>
- The Diocese of London has useful guidance and a model access audit form at [www.london.anglican.org/DACInDepthAdvice](http://www.london.anglican.org/DACInDepthAdvice)
- The Diocese of Chichester has a guidance document (*Getting to Grips with Disability*) and an Access Appraisal guide at [www.chichester.anglican.org/disability](http://www.chichester.anglican.org/disability)

More detailed advice on the audit process and a church's responsibilities under the Act is available in an advice note produced by the Church Buildings Council (formerly the CCC) and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England (CFCE): *Advisory Note 5 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995: Taking Account of its Implications for the Fabric of Churches and Cathedrals (2003)*

**General advice on disability issues** is available on the Government's information website Directgov at: <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/index.htm>.

Information on providing access to historic buildings is available from:

Historic Scotland  
Longmore House  
Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1SH

Telephone: 0131-668 8600

A booklet, "Easy Access to Historic Buildings" can be downloaded from: [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk) or [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk).

**General advice on the Equality Act 2010** is available on the website for the Government Equalities Office at: [www.equalities.gov.uk](http://www.equalities.gov.uk). The section on "Equalities Act 2010 – What do I need to know?" is a useful starting point but if in doubt further advice should be sought from your Synod Office or a solicitor.

#### **Other useful addresses and contacts:**

Centre for Accessible Environments  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Holyer House  
20-21 Red Lion Court  
London  
EC4A 3EB

Tel: 020 7822 8232

[www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk)

Construction Industry Research and Information Association  
Classic House  
174-180 Old Street  
London  
EC1V 9BP

Tel: 020 7549 3300

[www.ciria.org](http://www.ciria.org)

ENABLE Scotland  
2nd Floor  
146 Argyle Street  
Glasgow  
G2 8BL

Tel: 0141 226 4541

[www.enable.org.uk](http://www.enable.org.uk)

Mencap  
Mencap National Centre  
123 Golden Lane  
London  
EC1Y 0RT

Tel: 020 7454 0454

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

MIND  
15-19 Broadway  
London  
E15 4BQ

Tel: 020-8519 2122

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

RADAR – Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation  
12 City Forum  
250 City Road  
London  
EC1V 8AF

Tel: 020 7250 3222

[www.radar.org.uk](http://www.radar.org.uk)

RNIB Scotland – Royal National Institute of Blind People Scotland  
12-12 Hillside Crescent  
Edinburgh  
EH7 5EA

Tel: 0131 652 3140

[www.rnib.org.uk/scotland](http://www.rnib.org.uk/scotland)



RNID Scotland – Royal National Institute for Deaf People Scotland

## **Name changed 9 June 2011 to Action on Hearing Loss**

Tel: 0808 808 0123 (freephone)

Textphone: 0808 808 9000 (freephone)

[www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/community/in-your-area/scotland.aspx](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/community/in-your-area/scotland.aspx)

### **Making everyone welcome**

For many years it has been unacceptable in practice and in law for anyone to be deterred from entering our buildings and participating in church life as a result of a lack of adequate facilities where they could reasonably be provided. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 had implications for churches in terms of internal and external adaptation of buildings but also wider implications in rethinking the way we carry out our activities. These provisions have been extended in this new Act.

Disability is defined as “a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. The Act protects anyone who has or has had a disability, or who is associated with a disabled person, or who is mistakenly perceived as being disabled.

Think broadly, do not make assumptions, and consider those with less obvious disabilities. It is not just the obviously disabled such as the elderly, the ambulant disabled with their walking frame, or the wheelchair users but also those who have poor strength or dexterity; have learning difficulties; have impaired vision or impaired hearing or who have an illness which gives rise to a disability or is likely to do so; and people who have a temporary disability.

In addition to those directly and obviously included in the legislation, churches should be aware that a difficulty in accessing certain facilities or services may also be experienced by people such as heavily pregnant women; those particularly large or small in stature (including children); parents or others in charge of small children; or those emotionally distressed or unstable.

Churches should think in terms of the concept of risk as people interact with their environment. The challenge is to assess and respond to that risk so that we may meet, as fully as possible, the needs of people as they really are and not as they might wish to be or as we might wish them to be.

### **Why does it affect the church?**

In relation to people with disabilities the general principle is that individuals or service providers must not treat disabled people less favourably than they would treat other people, for a reason related to their disability, when offering or providing access to goods, facilities or services.

It makes no difference that the services provided by a church are free of charge; churches are service providers. We should recognise ourselves as such and make every effort to make our activities and buildings accessible to all.

### **What are our responsibilities?**

The new Equality Act sets out three core responsibilities or requirements in relation to those with disabilities:

The first requirement is that, where the way that things are done puts a person with disabilities at a substantial disadvantage to people who are not disabled, then reasonable steps should be taken to avoid the disadvantage. In other words, this is about how things are done or how information is supplied. This might include such things as large print hymn books and notice sheets, people available to help someone from a car or into or around a building, and so on.

The second requirement is that, where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to people who are not disabled, then reasonable steps must be taken to remove, alter or ensure users can avoid it. This might include such things as providing a ramp to allow wheelchair users to gain access to premises otherwise reached by steps, widening an entrance or providing a hand rail.

The third requirement applies specifically to employment and so applies only to churches where they employ someone, for example a caretaker, administrator or youth worker. This third requirement is that where a disabled person would be put at a substantial disadvantage compared to someone who is not disabled without the provision of an auxiliary aid, then reasonable steps must be taken to provide that aid. This might include special software to allow use of a computer by a visually impaired administrator.

### **What action should we take?**

If you have not already done so you must review the access and facilities your church provides for ALL its users but particularly those with disabilities. You need to consider both the inside and outside of the church building including approaches to and from the building, movement around the building and all of the services inside the building as well as exit routes and means of escape in case of an emergency.

Some measures are relatively simple to implement now and will give immediate benefit. For instance, providing (and maintaining) colour contrast to assist the visually impaired (e.g. highlighting changes in level and the nosings on steps, etc.), rearranging furniture such as desks or tables, making sure routes are well signed and clear of obstacles, providing handrails etc. Simple things like clear signs around your building, easy to use door handles, large print copies of your magazine and notice sheets can be implemented at little cost with some thought and modest effort.

Whenever you are planning and carrying out building or refurbishment works, such as extending premises or making structural alterations to an existing building, you should consider whether this is the opportunity to remove or alter any physical features which create difficulties for access or to provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature.

For some buildings this may seem to present a considerable challenge, especially if your building is of historic interest, but every church should have a prioritised, planned method of achieving the appropriate level of facilities in the longer term. This may be achieved by an access audit and through consultation with disabled users, the Local Authority's Access Officer or assistance from bodies or resources listed below.

It is important to think through what is provided for disabled visitors. Take a look at guidance under Welcoming Disabled Visitors

It is good practice to produce an Access Statement which gives information on the suitability of buildings for people with a wide range of disabilities. Such a statement can be published and displayed by the church and handed out with acknowledgements of church bookings or lets by outside organisations and wedding or baptism bookings, etc. so that people know what to expect when they arrive at church. In this way people know what the situation and provision is in advance and should not have unwelcome surprises.

### **Useful People and Places to Contact**

#### **ENABLE Scotland**

Leading the way in learning disability: Tel: 0300 0200 101; [www.enable.org.uk](http://www.enable.org.uk)

#### **Churches for All**

Telephone: 0118 9516971; [makeadifference@churchesforall.org.uk](mailto:makeadifference@churchesforall.org.uk)

## **The Baptist Union Initiative for People with Learning Difficulties (BUILD)**

David Buckingham, Secretary, 37, Sandon Avenue, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffs ST5 3QB

[buildtogether@northern.org.uk](mailto:buildtogether@northern.org.uk)

### **Disability Discrimination Information**

[www.directgov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/index.htm](http://www.directgov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/index.htm)

**The other Protected Characteristics deserve some mention here and are covered by the Equal Opportunities Policy of the United Reformed Church**

#### **B GENDER REASSIGNMENT**

where a person proposes, has started or has completed a process to change his or her sex

#### **C PREGNANCY & MATERNITY**

discrimination because of a woman's current or previous pregnancy

#### **D RACE**

- Race
- Colour
- Nationality
- Ethnic or National Origins

#### **E RELIGION or BELIEF**

- Religion means any religion
- Belief means any religious or philosophical belief
- A reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion, and
- A reference to belief includes a lack of belief

#### **F SEX**

Males and Females (Gender)

#### **G SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

- Persons of the same sex
- Persons of the opposite sex
- Persons of the same and of the opposite sex

#### **H AGE**

People belonging to a particular age group. Includes people of the same age and people of a particular range of ages

#### **I MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS**

- People who are married
- Civil Partnership
- People who are not married or civil partners

URC/ Synod Policy on Civil Partnerships should be consulted.

The Equality Act 2010 applies to all of the above and can be consulted at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

**The Equality Act 2010 is the law which bans unfair treatment and helps achieve equal opportunities in the workplace and in wider society.** It is therefore central to the Church's work and practice both in being an employer and in its concern for people and society.

As an employer the Church seeks to care for and protect its employees, volunteers and members who take on positions and responsibilities within the fellowship.

In terms of its employment responsibilities the Synod of Scotland provides protection for employees and others under the **Guidelines for responding to allegations of bullying or harassment** as agreed by General Assembly in 2012 and published in the Book of Reports, pages 187-912 and under the **Synod Grievance & Discipline Policy** currently being finalised by the former Synod Clerk, Synod Moderator and College Principal.

The following Appendix completes this paper:

#### Appendix A: **United Reformed Church Equal Opportunities Policy (updated May 2011)**

This Appendix outlines the Equal Opportunities Policy of the United Reformed Church as agreed by General Assembly in 2008 and updated in May 2011, together with guidance in recognising responsibility and applying the policy

**Jim Merrilees**

**17 October 2012**

Jim Merrilees provided detailed information in the list below, but this has not seemed necessary to provide in full for Mission Council. Some of the documents Mission Council will have had at an earlier stage. The full texts can be provided when the document is in use.

#### **APPENDIX A:**

**United Reformed Church Equal Opportunities Policy (updated May 2011)**

**United Reformed Church Equal Opportunities and Diversity Guidance**

**ANNEX A Examples of particular disabilities or impairments and issues for consideration**

**ANNEX B Access/General Audit Assessment**

**ANNEX C Detailed Legal Explanations**

**Sources of further information**



## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

# E2

# Issues from Equal Opportunities Committee Trustees, the Equality Act 2010

## Trustees

The Equal Opportunities committee tries to see how balanced are all our organisations. Are women and men, lay and ordained, black minority ethnic and all ages represented on our committees and in our life and work? We have not yet found a way to check on the presence of people with disabilities.

We know that Nominations takes seriously the need of balance on Assembly committees although we are aware that there are very few black minority ethnic committee members. But in other areas of our church life we are not managing so well. Below is the analysis of Trustee membership at Assembly and Synod level. You will see that it is overwhelmingly white and male. We have not been able to fill in all the columns and will welcome the assistance of Mission Council in filling in the gaps.

What can we do to improve the balance?

	Male	Lay	Ord	BME	Young	Female	Lay	Ord	BME	Young
Northern	10	9	1	0	0	3	1	2	0	0
North Western	8	3	5			1	1	0		
Mersey	6	5	1			1	1	0		
Trust Property Mersey	7	6	1			1	0	1		
Yorkshire	5	3	2			3	3	0		
East Midlands	10	9	1			2	2	0		
Dennis George Webb Trust – East Midlands	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Midlands	8	7	1			1	1	0		
Eastern	4	2	2	0	0	3	2	1	0	0
South Western	8	4	4	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
Wessex	9	6	3	0	0	3	1	2	0	0
Thames North	9	5	4	1		3	1	2		
Synod Charities Thames North	8	4	4	1		3	1	2	1	
Southern	11	6	5			4	0	4		
Synod of Wales	6	5	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Scotland	9	3	6	0	0	8	4	4	0	0

	Male	Lay	Ord	BME	Young	Female	Lay	Ord	BME	Young
URC Trust Includes Ex-Officio	15	9	6		1	6	5	1	1	
URC Pension Trust Includes ex-officio	6	1	5	0	0	5	2	3	0	0
URC History Society Rev Chris Damp (male?)	7	2	5	0	0	5	2	2	0	0
Total	149	91	58	2	1	56	31	24	2	0

There are also a large number of local church trusts which have not been included.

Synod of Wales and English Synods taken from Charity Commissioners website in February 2013  
URC Trust and Pension Trust taken from 2012 Book of Reports – Ex Officio at Assembly 2012,  
Secretary and Deputy Secretary included.

I'm not sure how we are describing 'young' but for the moment we are working on under 30.

## **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 is the law which bans unfair treatment and helps achieve equal opportunities in the workplace and in wider society. In respect of people with disabilities, the Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in connection with employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services, or the management of premises.

Jim Merrilees of the Synod of Scotland has prepared a policy document in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and people with disabilities. It is full, detailed and helpful. It is essential that all churches take the Equality Act 2010 seriously and this is a helpful document. The Equal Opportunities committee wishes to add to the document, in particular to include contacts in England and Wales. The document is attached (not including the appendices).

Have all parts of the United Reformed Church considered these issues seriously?

What can we do to ensure that we are all providing equality for people with disabilities?

Elizabeth Nash  
Convenor, Equal Opportunities Committee

28 March 2013



## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013



# CWM Mission Support Programme Phase 3 Proposal for Consultation

## Introduction

In 2001, the General Assembly affirmed the importance of evangelism for the church and its ministry at every level. It directed the Life and Witness Committee to initiate discussions with other committees, so that together they might recommend ways for people to exercise their ministry as evangelists, and suggest ways of supporting them in their ministry. Since then a number of things have happened in the area of evangelism: a TLS module on evangelism was developed, the Vision4Life process was started with a strong focus on evangelism in its third year, and Mission Council in 2009 agreed to use the Special Category Ministry scheme to enable Synods or a grouping of churches to pilot the use of Ministers of Word and Sacrament as evangelists, by dedicating three posts to this particular ministry. Furthermore, in 2010 General Assembly accepted vision2020, with evangelism and church growth as part of its key statements and in 2011 a significant evangelism conference was held. Feedback from Synods and local churches shows that churches engage in evangelism in a variety of ways, be it through activities they organise themselves or existing initiatives they join (e.g. Back to Church Sunday or HOPE). Many indicate that even when they do not engage actively with faith sharing activities, they feel that this should be a priority and something they could do more.

For the last few months the Mission Committee has been thinking about the focus for the next phase of CWM's Mission Support Programme funding. The fund was set up as a 'gift of grace' for CWM member churches with the specific purpose to enable them to develop their priorities/programmes for mission in a way that is appropriate for their context. The mission programme applied for should be that of the entire denomination and should fit with CWM's overall strategic focus for developing missional congregations. In the past MSP funding for the URC has supported the setting up of the Belonging to the World Church programme and the development of Radical Welcome/ZI. Now is the time to make an application for the next phase of the funding (MSP3), which runs from 2014 to 2017. The amount available to us is just under £144,000.

Encouraged by the Assembly decisions outlined above and in particular by the churches' response to Vision4Life, the Mission Committee thinks that MSP3 offers us an opportunity to engage more intentionally with evangelism focused on how to equip people for this task, within the broader context of discipleship. It is a fact that, despite past decisions and programmes, we struggle with evangelism. MSP3 would enable us to develop something that will help us engage with evangelism or faith sharing in a way that is appropriate for the URC and that will capture the imagination of people in our church. It would need to build on the enthusiasm engendered by Vision4Life and would fit within the vision2020 framework. It would be a way of saying that for a specific period of time we concentrate the extra resources that are given to us on a particular and essential part of vision2020.

A small group from the Mission Committee (comprising Louise Franklin, Janet Sutton Webb, Andrew Willett, Francis Brien, Michael Jagessar and Wayne Hawkins of CWM) has started work on a proposal and this has been discussed by the Mission Committee.

The next stage now is to discuss this with a number of other groups, committees and networks in the URC, so that when a final proposal is submitted to CWM, it comes with the broad support and ownership of the church. So here it is: a basic proposal, with some detail already added, but by no means finished. There is much more to be done. And for this, we need your views and your ideas.



## Consultation questions

Would you please take some time at your next meeting to look at the proposal (on pages 3 and 4 of this document) and to give us your views? We have three questions in particular:

1. Would you support the suggestion that evangelism (a vision2020 theme) should be a focus for the United Reformed Church in the coming years? Is there another theme which you prefer to be such a focus?
2. What excites you about this proposal? What would you wish to change or add to it?
3. In what ways and to what extent is the evangelism theme relevant to your work as a committee, group or Synod? And what from your point of view would need to be included in the proposal?

You may have other comments to make, of course, and these are most welcome too. What we hope you will do is give us feedback that will help us to develop this into something that will genuinely further the church's life and mission. ***Please let us have your feedback by 12 June 2013 at the latest.***

If you would like someone from the group that wrote the proposal to be present at the discussion in your group or committee, then please contact the Secretary for Mission on [francis.brienen@urc.org.uk](mailto:francis.brienen@urc.org.uk).

## Further information about the consultation process

### Part 1: 1 March – 12 June: consultation with key groups and committees.

These include:

1. Synod Moderators
2. Synod Clerks
3. Assembly Committees: Ministries, Education & Learning, Youth and Children's Work, CRCW management committee, Communications & Editorial, Faith and Order, Finance
4. Assembly staff
5. Resource Centres for Learning
6. The Networks of Mission Enablers, Training and Development Officers, Children and Youth Development Officers, Church Related Community Workers
7. Black and Minority Ethnic ministers and church related community workers
8. FURY
9. Group for Evangelism and Renewal and Free to Believe
10. Selected world church partners
11. Ecumenical Partners, especially the Churches Group for Evangelisation and Fresh Expressions
12. The meeting of Committee conveners prior to the May Mission Council
13. A conversation at the May Mission Council about evangelism.

### Part 2: A special day meeting on 13 June, at Lumen URC, London.

An opportunity to hear what has been said by the groups in the first part of the consultation and for those who missed out on the first stage altogether to give their views on the proposal.

### **Timetable for consultation and submission of the proposal to CWM**

1. March – June 2013: mission consultation process
2. July – September 2013: revise and finalise proposal
3. October 2013: consideration of final proposal by Mission Committee
4. November 2013: consideration of final proposal by Mission Council
5. By 16 December 2013: submission to CWM Europe Regional Secretary
6. February 2014: decision by CWM.



## The Proposal

<b><u>3-Stage Plan for an Evangelism Strategy for the United Reformed Church</u></b>	
<b>Overall Aim:</b>	To create and nurture a culture of evangelism in the United Reformed Church.
<b><u>Objectives:</u></b> <b>Stage 1:</b>	1. To develop a shared understanding of and vision for evangelism in the church leadership.
<b>Stage 2:</b>	2. Based on point 1, to build/nurture a vision for evangelism across the Synods and provide training for local congregations.
<b>Stage 3:</b>	3. To equip local churches for and support them in active engagement in evangelism.
Stage One:	<p>a. Initiate research which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mapping what local congregations are doing in terms of evangelism,</li> <li>• looking at the structures of the church and its training of those who are called to a ministry of evangelism and the space to release their potential,</li> <li>• exploring what is currently being offered on evangelism and mission through the resource centres for learning, with a view to developing this exploration further later on in the process.</li> </ul> <p>This research would also include looking at changing an organisation's culture and this would be incorporated into the later stages of the process. The research could be funded from the remainder of the MSP2 funds or a CWM scholarship and would inform stage 2 of the process. This would also enable us to harness the enthusiasm of those already involved.</p> <p>b. Consultation with senior leadership of the whole church, including the Trustees, General Secretary, Assembly staff, Mission Council Advisory Group, Synod Moderators, FURY leadership and other key people, with the aim of transformation for change. This could take the form of a consultation day (or more) or a longer process. The focus would be to create a culture of evangelism and it would include analysing the current mindset about evangelism and what it means to be 'successful' in evangelism. The day/consultation process would be for strategic development and prayer.</p> <p>The starting point would be that not everything in church can or should be about evangelism, but everything we do must have an evangelism and outward focus. Connect with existing work and especially vision2020. The key areas to be covered in the process might include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a shared understanding of evangelism, as distinct from mission.</li> <li>• Developing a sowing, reaping and keeping attitude to evangelism by understanding the processes by which people come to faith.</li> <li>• What is attractive and connecting.</li> <li>• Changing the culture of church.</li> <li>• How leadership matters.</li> </ul> <p>This process could be resourced/facilitated by people both from within and from outside the URC (with experience/'authority' in this field) who can help us reflect on who we are.</p> <p>This stage might also include conversations with Moderators (and Ministries and Education &amp; Learning) about evangelism as a vocation and the deployment of people with these gifts.</p>

	<p>c. Conversations with Synods focused on roadshows on evangelism in the Synods and the setting up of Synod evangelism funds. The conversations would need to involve Synod Mission/Evangelism Enablers and others.</p>
Stage Two:	<p>a. Replicate part b above at Synod level, involving Training and Development Officers, Mission/Evangelism Enablers, Synod Evangelists (where appointed), and interested people from across the Synods. The aim would be both vision building and planning training/identifying trainers. (In reality these groups would already be involved in stage 1.)</p> <p>b. Training the trainers in how to deliver evangelism 'courses' (or other form of training) (see below). Trainers could be identified from the mapping exercise in stage 1. (A and b happen at the same time/event.)</p> <p>c. Synod roadshows on evangelism focused on advocacy.</p> <p>d. Training of local churches for evangelism. This could build on the learning and use the materials of the Radical Welcome campaign.</p> <p>e. Establishing points of contact in each Synod (e.g. the Mission Enabler or A N Other) who are Evangelism encouragers – available at the end of the phone, text/email/Facebook to give ideas of resources, signposting on, etc.</p> <p>f. Development of materials for stage 3. These will be resources specifically by/for the URC.</p>
Stage Three:	<p>a. Every church (not just those who have been trained!) is provided with material that can be picked up and used. This could include, for example, a specially produced URC evangelism training kit that could be run in house in each local church (with an enabler and a DVD player). This could cover an introduction to evangelism, communication and the gospel, sharing your story, handling peoples objections, leading someone to faith, first steps and what to do next, discipleship etc. Other materials (especially written for the URC) would be leaflets to give away/posters, ideas on evangelism, a guide to other resources, a booklet to hand out to people explaining the key aspects of faith in accessible language.</p> <p>b. Then move on to a season of first base evangelism events, changing perceptions and making connections. People who are starting to say yes. Give people opportunity to run events, Alpha, Christianity Explored, Reason To Believe, Lyfe Series, the Journey... or something typically URC.</p> <p>c. Each church feeds back what they have done via the church returns at the end of the year or via the Synod Evangelism Enablers.</p> <p>Then churches do what works again.... or try something new and carry on! By 2016 every church has evangelism resources and training.</p>
Stage Four:	<p>a. Evaluation.</p> <p>b. Start of MSP4 on deepening discipleship, the development of which will run alongside stage 2 or 3 of MSP3.</p>

We are aware that there are a number of elements of the proposal that need further thinking through. These relate to deployment, communication, funding and others.

We envisage that these will be further developed as a result of the consultation process.



## MISSION COUNCIL

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# Youth and Children's Work Committee – renaming the committee

As part of the restructuring of our work amongst children and young people at General Assembly level, the Youth and Children's Work Committee wishes to be known as the Children and Youth Work Committee.

Whilst this may seem an insignificant change in the whole restructuring of our department and therefore need not occupy much time at Mission Council, we bring the matter before Mission Council as we have been informed that a change of this nature requires the agreement of General Assembly.

General Assembly in 2008 changed the name of 'Youth and Children's Work Training and Development Officers' to 'Children and Youth Development Officers'. On reflection, we should have requested that our committee be renamed at the same General Assembly.

This resolution will bring the term 'children and youth' into wider usage, we hope to emphasise the importance of young people from 0-25. Furthermore, we aim for a more integrated approach, the removal of the old post titles (which linked people to specific age groups or organisations) indicates our desire to create a more interdisciplinary approach to this valuable area of mission and ministry.

### **Resolution**

**Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, resolves that the Youth and Children's Work Committee shall be known as the Children and Youth Work Committee, with immediate effect.**

Robert Weston  
Convener, Youth and Children's Work Committee

11<sup>th</sup> February 2013



**MISSION COUNCIL**

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**G1**

## **Children & Youth Work Development Officers Employment status**

In order that Mission Council might be able to make a decision about the future employment status of the CYDO programme employees this paper has been prepared by the Youth and Children's Work Committee, in consultation with CYDO Managers, and the General Secretariat.

### **Introduction**

The United Reformed Church has developed an Assembly run programme of youth and children's development officers over the past forty years. This was introduced in the 1970's and was focussed initially on 'youth leadership training'. Over the years it was recognised that the programme needed to include children and to include a focus on development, not just training. Both ministry amongst children and ministry amongst young people have developed as specialist areas over the past thirty years. The current team of Children and Youth Development Officers (CYDOs) consists of people who have developed specialist knowledge to support local churches in the areas of youth and children's work, including youth and children's ministry.

The first General Assembly resolutions concerning Youth Leadership Training Officers (YLTO) can be found in the book of reports for 1974, 1979, 1982, 1987. It was first agreed that we would aim for one in each synod (Province in those days) in 1988. As the number of officers grew in the 1980's it was decided that the co-ordination of the team was too onerous a job for the National Youth Secretary. One of the YLTOs was appointed as a half time manager with the remainder of time working for a synod. On the retirement of this post-holder, a full time manager was appointed and this role continued until 1997.

The focus and terminology changed in 1990 and details of the Youth and Children's Work Trainers programme can be found in the book of reports for 1990, 1997, 2002.

### **The story so far**

In 2008 a major review of the Assembly YCWTD programme took place, this included a recommendation to change the post title to Children & Youth Development Officer (CYDO). The CYDO programme, as it is currently run, was adopted at General Assembly 2008 and a 51 page handbook for the programme was updated and distributed to the relevant people in each synod, including CYDOs and CYDO managers.

Currently, the Assembly Youth & Children's Work Committee (YCWC) has oversight of the CYDO programme, on behalf of General Assembly. It is involved in appointments of new CYDO staff and includes the work of the CYDO programme in its reports to General Assembly.

The YCWC is responsible for the delivery of Youth and Children's work, as directed by General Assembly, at local, synod and Assembly level. The CYDO team members operate at all of these levels delivering programmes, events, training and activities. Their employed time is split in two portions: 25% for Assembly agreed work and 75% Synod agreed work. Each CYDO is managed by a synod appointed manager. Work completed as part of the 25% is managed by the HYCWD in

conjunction with the synod manager. The process for utilising the 25% time of each CYDO has become more effective in the past year.

From January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, the HYCWD chairs the CYDO team meetings and with the CYDO team being represented by one of their number at the YCWC, together, they can ensure that policy decisions made at the YCWC are understood and can be acted upon in the spirit of their intention through the CYDO team to the local churches. The HYCWD attends the CYDO managers' meetings and works with the managers regularly. A new programme of induction and support for managers will be implemented in the near future.

The employment contracts and Terms and Conditions agreement of the CYDO team members have traditionally been issued and held by Church House. In 2010, on the advice of the then Head of Human Resources, all new CYDOs employed from that point were appointed on Synod contracts rather than Assembly contracts, which has led to confusion, and for some, feelings of inequality or abandonment.

### **Implications of the employment status:**

If the CYDOs are employed by the General Assembly,

- they are all employed under the same terms and conditions. Thus they all receive the same salary and benefits across their team but may find themselves on different scales than other staff in the synods
- the level of salary carries both an expectation of professional standards and the ability to appoint people with appropriate nationally recognised qualifications; with continued professional development, this ensures transition and opportunities for career progression
- they are all recruited on the basis of an agreed set of qualifications, skills and experience, with consistency across the appointment panels
- there is a national standard of delivery enhanced by team discussions and training
- they are supported by regular training, organized at Assembly level and benefit from peer learning at regular meetings
- the programme is clearly an Assembly programme operating across the denomination and includes the instigation of new initiatives from General Assembly or the Assembly YCWC. Different local priorities can be built into their individual job descriptions but the variety operates within agreed limits
- they work as part of an Assembly recognised programme within the URC which enables them to speak with equal weight, responsibility and consistency when working ecumenically and with statutory bodies
- children and young people are part of a bigger church community and encounter other young Christians as part of the opportunities on offer, CYDOs facilitate this opportunity
- they have local managers but are ultimately accountable to General Assembly
- there has been a high dependency on CYDOs in the area of safeguarding and not unreasonably so. Particularly because of their independence from any local church situation they have been able to give objective advice, deal with specific issues and support synods, local churches and individuals before, during and after cases often conducted in the heat of publicity. They have been able to do this work because we can be assured that their training as part of the whole CYDO Team has been thorough and kept up to date with rapidly changing legislation. When you need advice in this area you want it speedily and to be able to rely on it unquestionably.

If the CYDOs are employed by the synods,

- the coherence of the Assembly programme is difficult to sustain. The balance naturally shifts towards local vision, energy and commitment, with Assembly work increasingly dependent on the good will of the synods in choosing to work together
- it would be up to the synods to decide about the qualifications, skills and experience needed, which not only impacts on the viability of the Assembly programme but also exposes the

synod to increased synod expenditure to ensure recruitment practices are within current employment legislation

- the terms and conditions of employment could be very different in each of the thirteen synods
- the support given to synod line managers would be lost by the synod if the employees are not part of Assembly CYDO programme

In addition, we note that the CYDO programme currently offers:

- local church support; most CYDOs and local church employed youth workers are not members of the URC and need cultural attachment and induction which nationally is provided through having a CYDO team and locally by CYDOs who know what they found helpful. The CYDO team have produced 'Induction resources for workers in the URC', an example of how perceived needs can be addressed in a consistent way
- colleague support
- the ability to advise or caution local churches especially with regards safeguarding; when CYDOs operate in advisory or cautionary roles within a Synod they can do so with a degree of independent authority knowing they are part of an Assembly team which is directly linked to the YCWC. An independent synod appointment may not feel they have the necessary freedom to fully advise or caution. CYDOs have the ability to target Assembly policy across disparate areas within Synods with differing needs. (It is the Assembly policy implementation which is important here as many others could and should recognise the differing needs)
- the production of resources for local churches; CYDOs either self motivated as a group recognising needs or directed via YCWC have been responsible for developing and publishing many helpful advisory, theologically reflective booklets and resources which are valued by many local churches and synods. Some examples are:
  - Core Skills for children's work
  - Spirituality among Children
  - Following God DVD resource
  - Children and Communion
  - Children and Film

## **Where we would like to be:**

The Youth and Children's Work Committee is convinced that the programme would become much more difficult to sustain if there is no Assembly level agreement. In order to maintain a consistent approach, the use of the Assembly level Youth and Children's Work Officers and Assembly level Human Resources officer in the appointment process seems the most appropriate way forward. Additionally, for all contracts to be issued and held in the Assembly Human Resources office seems the most effective way forward.

However, we do believe that there is still scope for the CYDO programme to continue to develop, as it has over the past 40 years. One area that we have already identified for improvement is the training and induction process for Synod CYDO managers. These people freely volunteer their management skills and experience, we recognise the need to ensure that they are adequately resourced and supported.

## **Resolution:**

**Mission Council resolves that the employment status of Children and Youth Development Officers be situated at General Assembly level, and asks the Human Resources office to take advice and bring this into being.**

Robert Weston  
Convener Youth and Children's Work Committee  
11<sup>th</sup> February 2013

***Groups for circulation: YCWC/CYDO Managers/Synod Moderators/Synod Clerks (for forwarding to CYDO strategy group or similar)/Synod Treasurers/CYDOs***

## Appendix A

The Youth and Children's Work Committee would have preferred this matter not to be dominated by financial considerations – the remit of the paper was not to consider the future funding of the CYDO programme but to consider where contracts were held. However, it is clear from the feedback we have received that financial arrangements need to be considered.

In the General Assembly book of reports 2008 the Finance Committee brought Resolution 41 which is introduced with these words:

'It was noted that the current funding arrangements introduce an administrative complexity. It was felt sensible to phase out over the next three years the split funding arrangement for those synods which choose to have YCWTDOS... This change would mean the elimination of the relevant YCWTDOS cost line in the United Reformed Church's central budget so that the M&M request to synods with YCWTDOS would be proportionately lower than it would otherwise have been.'

It is now clear that this was not simply about administrative complexity – the shift transferred the costs from each Synod's M&M contribution and it now comes from each Synod's funds. We are aware of the wide variance in the way each Synod funds its operations and with the economic slump this has made the situation much worse for many (if not all) synods.

The Finance Committee feel that it would be sensible that if employment contracts are issued at General Assembly level, then the employees should be on the central payroll. This would imply that the funding would move back to M&M – but with the current M&M situation it would be difficult to provide every synod with a CYDO. A possible way forward might be to aim at fewer than 13 CYDOS and move the funding responsibility gradually over a period of years so the reductions in other areas of the central budget are also less abrupt. A more radical alternative would be to set up a designated CYDO Fund, invite Synods and churches to contribute to it, and employ whatever number of CYDOS the donations to the fund can support.

The Finance Committee feel that if employment contracts are issued at Synod level, then each CYDO would be on the synod payroll and funding would be direct from the Synod. Clearly this approach would not address the challenging financial situation that many synods find themselves facing.





## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013



# Proposals on Reshaping Student Finances

## Resolutions

### Mission Council:

1. commends the existing flexibility of Education for Ministry Phase 1 pathways offered through the Scottish College, Northern College, and Westminster College, and encourages the Education & Learning Committee and these three Colleges to continue to offer a range of full-time and part-time formational pathways for an overall cohort of 50 Education for Ministry Phase 1 students;
2. endorses the Education & Learning Committee's undertaking to continue to work on the proposals given in section F. 1-4 of this paper, recognising the implications for candidates, their sending churches, Synods, Resource Centres for Learning, and the United Reformed Church in adjusting the norms and expectations for EM1;
3. agrees the outline in section F.4 which proposes that the financial support for students in EM1 available through the Education & Learning Committee's budget from the academic year 2014/15 onwards will be subject to:
  - a. Graduated capping with the aim of reaching an inflation-adjusted ceiling of £425,000 in 2018/19;
  - b. Means testing of new students where a grant is requested, with means testing extended to the total household income of each student;
  - c. Limitation such that no student can automatically expect to be fully funded through the Education & Learning Committee if accepted on a grant-maintained basis;
  - d. The development of bursary funds, with further work to decide the best channel for such funds;
  - e. Home churches and sending Synods being requested to provide support to students in line with the means testing system implemented by the Education & Learning Committee, where the EM1 budget and recourse to bursary funds is insufficient.

### A. The reasons for these resolutions

1. The Education & Learning Committee is committed to staying within the budget allocated to it by General Assembly, whilst also maintaining the commitment to integrated whole church learning which was inherent to the 2006 Training Review. It is possible to do both, but not by continuing the current ways of supporting ministerial students. Knowing that this has implications for

enquirers and candidates who are in the process of applying for ministry, it is important to offer clarity at an early point. Changes agreed in principle by Mission Council will not be applied retrospectively to current students but will apply to students commencing their EM1 programme from September 2014. The years 2014 – 18 will therefore be a transition period in which the current scheme and proposed scheme will operate alongside one another. The academic year 2018/19 will be the first year when the whole student cohort is being supported using the new system.

2. There is concern in some quarters that these proposals represent educational policy being driven by short-term financial challenges, rather than by pursuing the goal of what is best for the United Reformed Church and individual students in the long term. The counter argument is that this proposal, whilst responding to a financial challenge, seeks to do so by extending the flexibility which already exists in rare cases and has been shown to work well, and to encourage this flexibility for more individuals. Mission Council is an appropriate Council of the Church where this issue can be debated, and a steer given to the Education & Learning Committee.

## **B. Financial background**

1. In accordance with General Assembly 2012's agreed reductions in the central budget of the United Reformed Church, the Education & Learning Committee reduced its budget for 2013 by £200,000 through:
  - a. Reducing the total grants to Resource Centres for Learning (RCLs) by £75,000 and asking the RCLs to draw on their reserves where possible as a temporary measure. The bulk of any grant from the Education & Learning Committee to the RCLs goes towards teaching staff and educational administration costs.
  - b. Reshaping the Education for Ministry Phase 2 programme so that there are fewer residential conferences within it over the normal 3 year period.
  - c. Reducing the number of TLS weekends in each course from 4 to 3 each year, and putting study materials for the majority of students online.
  - d. Reducing the Education for Ministry Phase 3 allowance from £700 to £350 each year, and absorbing the Ministers' Refresher Courses into the EM3 allowances.

The Education & Learning Committee's assessment when making these immediate savings was that there would be a need for long term adjustments in the Education for Ministry Phase 1 budget to restore some of the temporary reductions. Restoration of the RCL core funding is a priority because of the unsustainability of drawing on reserves, and not allowing for inflation in the grants given to the RCLs in subsequent years.

2. Student Maintenance is the largest single budget line in the Education & Learning Committee budget. (£500,000 or just under 32% of the Committee's budget for 2013). In 2011/12, which is the most recent academic year for which figures are complete, there were 50 students, of whom 35 were grant-maintained (full-time) and 15 were expenses-only (part-time) students. The annual intake of students had decreased in recent years, but started to rise again in 2010/11 and the 2013/14 intake is expected to exceed the number of students completing their EM1 programme.

This has financial implications because the expenditure on students can be susceptible to disproportionate increases if we have an intake including a number of students with families, as we have had in the last few years.

### **C. The wider context**

Restoring the funding levels to RCLs should be seen in the context of larger discussions which may lead to reshaping of the work overseen by the Education & Learning Committee:

- a. The Education & Learning Committee is in the process of preparing a progress report on the implementation of the 2006 Training Review, as *The Learning Church. The Next Chapter*. This is expected to result in recommendations on future policy being brought to the 2014 General Assembly.
- b. The Faith and Order Committee are encouraging discussion on the future of the United Reformed Church, which could have implications for the kinds of ministry that are called for in the coming years.
- c. There are ongoing discussions involving variously the Ministries Committee, the Synods, and Mission Council on the shape of local lay ministries, flexibility of deployment of Ministers of Word and Sacraments, and the possible need for new forms of ministry.

Therefore the proposals outlined here attempt to bring about changes which are not irrevocable, and which do not try to anticipate long term shifts in policy which might emerge as recommendations from larger processes.

### **D. The consequences of not changing**

It could be argued that the current expenditure on supporting students is temporarily high, and could be reduced sufficiently from current levels by restricting the number of grant-maintained students accepted for full-time training in each year. Furthermore, there is a chance that the number of candidates will start to fall again soon after a few years of rising, in which case the EM1 budget could start to fall.

Deferring entry of grant-maintained students through a quota system could even out the annual number of students. However, the number of students completing EM1 each year is lower than the number of Ministers retiring each year, whether in stipendiary or non-stipendiary service. Supply is not exceeding demand, and the majority of candidates who are accepted by the Assembly Assessment Conference are keen to start their EM1 as soon as possible. The number of people who reach Assembly Assessment Conferences in any year is unpredictable, with no clear reason why it is 8 one year and 16 the next.

The current expenditure on students has been kept low artificially since September 2011 by delinking the student grants from the level of the stipend and not letting the grants rise. This will put increasing pressure on individual students in the coming years and is neither a long term nor effective solution to staying within budgetary limits.

Overall, the effect of not making a change would mean that the URC is assuming that the number of candidates for ministry and therefore students engaged in EM1 will continue to fall in the coming years in line with trends of the last decades (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Numbers of students engaged in EM1 (1991-2012)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Students in EM1</b>
1991	183
1996	109
2001	123
2006	78
2011	46
2012	50

The proposals put forward in this paper are based on the alternative assumption that the number of ministerial vocations amongst suitable candidates has now stabilised, and that a cohort of 50 EM1 students is a reasonable and sustainable size, although the balance between grant-maintained and expenses-only students will need to change in the long term.

## **E. Current norms and expectations**

Northern College, the Scottish College, and Westminster College all cater for both full-time and part-time educational pathways. They are able to offer a variety of educational awards for individual students from Diploma/Foundation Degree to PhD. The different shapes taken by EM1 for individual students can be seen from the narratives attached to this paper (Appendix 1). Pathways are recommended on the basis of the following underlying norms:

### **1. Academic Endeavour: Potential stretched as far as possible in EM1**

The current assumption of the Education & Learning Board which meets with candidates at the Assembly Assessment Conference is that an individual's EM1 programme should be as long and as stretching as each student needs to fulfil their potential. The minimum level of academic achievement for satisfactory completion of EM1 is a Diploma or Foundation Degree, but most full-time students currently achieve a BA or MA during EM1. The usual duration of EM1 is four years, but an individual's EM1 programme could last from 2 to 7 years, depending on their previous level of theological education, their academic abilities, and the extent of their need for placement experience. Where a candidate seems to have the capability and desire to achieve a PhD, the Board may note this in their recommendation so that an initial two to four year EM1 programme can then be extended by three years to include the higher study, if agreed subsequently by the Education & Learning Board of Studies. The assumption has been that it is generally easier to extend EM1 than to expect individuals to take a PhD whilst engaged in ministry after ordination or commissioning. One purpose of encouraging appropriate PhD students in any phase of Education for Ministry is succession planning for the staffing of the RCLs and contributions elsewhere in the URC. There are many kinds of theological educators and doctorate-level scholarship has a place within the mix.

### **2. Study Patterns: EM1 mirrors ministerial service**

The current assumption is that the training pathway in EM1 will correspond to the pattern of ministry which the individual is likely to offer once they have been called to a pastorate (Ministry of Word and Sacraments) or a place of community work (CRCW):

- a. People who are progressing towards exercising ministry in non-stipendiary service normally undertake EM1 on a part-time, expenses-only basis.

*Rare exceptions:* Candidates who already have their own means of support without needing employment and who anticipate being able to offer considerable hours to ministry may be offered a full-time pathway on an expenses-only basis.

- b. People who are progressing towards exercising ministry in stipendiary service (including all current CRCW candidates) normally undertake EM1 on a full-time, grant-maintained basis.

*Rare exceptions:* Candidates who are unable to leave their employment due to family circumstances may be offered a part-time, expenses-only pathway for the first part of their EM1 programme. They are strongly encouraged to move to a full-time grant-maintained pathway for at least their final year of EM1 so as to experience the realities of being in stipendiary service.

### 3. Supervised placements as the focus for reflective practice

The EM1 programme of every student includes supervised placements of varying lengths and intensity, in which they practise the skills of ministry and are helped to reflect on their experiences. This is essential for growing into the roles that they will take on after ordination or commissioning.

### 4. Relatively generous levels of financial support

The United Reformed Church’s level of support to grant-maintained students is more generous than any of its ecumenical counterparts, as suggested by figures obtained in 2011. Whilst every student is asked if they could contribute to the cost of their training, it has not been the practice to insist on this.

Further information about the general patterns of support are given in Appendix 2, whilst Table 2 below shows examples of the current level of grants, allowances and expenses for particular students. The income of a spouse or partner has to be substantial before this affects whether or not a student is given a grant. Personal circumstances vary widely for students within a single RCL and at different RCLs, which explains why the figures in Table 2 do not show a predictable pattern. The cost of housing a student when on placement can vary widely, depending on whether it is close to their home base or not. Most placements are close to home, but sometimes the right placement requires a move. Some students have to maintain two homes, if their family remains behind for education and employment whilst the student commutes on a weekly basis to the RCL.

**Table 2: Examples of the support given for grant-maintained students, 2011/12**

Student	Grant	Housing	Travel/Expenses	Total
A. Single, no dependents	£ 7,750	inclusive	£ 2,380	£10,130
B. Spouse, no children	£11,036	£4,188	£2,080	£17,304
C. Spouse, 3 young children	£13,889	inclusive	£1,053	£14,942
D. Spouse, 2 young children	£14,886	£5,496	£1,835	£22,217

## **F. Proposed new norms and expectations**

### **1. Academic Endeavour: EM2 and EM3 to be taken into account**

Whilst EM1 is a period in which studies can be pursued most easily, it is possible for higher studies to be extended into EM2 and EM3. So, if an individual achieves the equivalent of a Diploma or Foundation Degree in EM1 it should be possible to continue their studies part-time in EM2 to achieve a BA. It is a stretching way of achieving academic credits, but can also provide the opportunity for theological reflection based on first-hand experience of ministry in full responsibility. Many people in ministry already take Masters courses alongside full-time ministry during EM3. The overall effect of this change is likely to be that the normal duration of full-time EM1 would come down from 4 years to 3 years, with the range still being 2 -7 years and the upper end being an exception. Where a student shows the necessary aptitude to be a PhD candidate it is likely that significant efforts would be needed to put the funding in place for their additional years of study, but that there would be occasions when this is still the best option for the individual and the URC.

### **2. Study Patterns: The latter part of EM1 mirrors ministerial service**

There will continue to be students for whom a full-time pathway throughout their EM1 period, and the achievement of a BA or BTh is the recommendation made by the Education & Learning Board at the Assembly Assessment Conference on the basis of educational and personal circumstances. It is also the case that the CRCW training pathway has to be full-time in order to cover all the requirements of the professional community work qualification. However, some of the candidates accepted to train for stipendiary service as Ministers of Word and Sacrament would be encouraged to pursue EM1 through a pathway that started out in expenses-only, part-time mode. It would be expected that at least their final year of EM1 would shift to a full-time pathway, particularly in order to ensure that their placements became full-time. The expectation would be that the pathway would shift to full-time mode earlier than this, if circumstances showed this to be necessary.

### **3. Supervised placements as the focus for reflective practice**

This expectation would remain. Experience shows that the strengths and weaknesses of individual candidates emerge during placements, and therefore this element of EM1 should be protected, albeit reduced proportionally by greater use of part-time EM1 as preparation for stipendiary service.

### **4. Diversified financial support**

The Education & Learning budget will continue to provide the academic fees for all students, which is a separate budget line to that of student maintenance. Beyond this the Committee's budget for supporting EM1 students would be capped each year in a graduated way, in order to reach a ceiling equivalent to £425,000 in 2018/19. Inflation would be taken into account. This budget would provide:

a. Reimbursement for expenses-only students, although the levels are likely to be reviewed and brought into line with ecumenical counterparts where relevant. The charges by RCLs will be calculated on actual costs, to avoid any hidden subsidies. This is particularly relevant for Westminster College where the full cost of students' occasional accommodation is not currently charged to the church, such that the College is subsidising the URC.

b. Core maintenance grants on a means-tested basis for students whilst in full-time mode. This would be for the students as individuals only and not take all their family requirements into account. A student with a high-earning partner would probably not be allocated a full grant, and the grant given to a low income household with many dependents might not cover all household needs.

Aspect (b) is a major shift, and would only become possible if students can apply for other funding to cover the rest of the cost of any period of EM1 in full-time mode. The likely sources of such funding are:

*i. Bursary Funds.* Discussion is ongoing as to whether these would best be set up by the Colleges or the United Reformed Church as a whole. They would need vigorous fundraising, and it may be that the Colleges are better placed than any URC-wide body to generate the kind of loyalty and focus from donors which would be needed. The income-generating capabilities of some of the Colleges could allow them to channel a proportion of future profits into student bursaries. At best, the bursary would cover the part of the board and lodging not covered by the core maintenance grant from the Education & Learning Committee.

*ii. Family support funds.* This is an untried area for the United Reformed Church but a routine form of funding for the students of other churches. Home churches and sending Synods would expect to support their students according to the needs identified during standard means testing by the United Reformed Church. There would need to be some careful resource sharing such that candidates with large families and low household incomes from less wealthy churches/Synods are not disadvantaged in comparison with similar students from more wealthy churches/Synods. Any balance remaining in the Education & Learning Committee's EM1 student support budget could be allocated to the Family Support funds.

## **G. Possible outcomes**

This paper has tried to provide Mission Council members with the background information they need in order to have an informed discussion of the proposals. It has been written from the deliberations of a small task group which included the Principals of the three Colleges, the finance staff from one College and Church House, and the Secretary for Education & Learning. What follows is an attempt to predict the educational and financial outcomes of implementing all the changes suggested in Section G above.

### **1. Educational Outcomes of Proposed Changes**

The outcomes, as far as they can be predicted, are summarised in Table 3. The basis for this is the shift from 35 grant-maintained students at any one time in a cohort of 50 students (2011/12) to 25 grant-maintained students in a cohort of 50 students (2018/19). It is difficult to predict the effects of the changes because the starting points of students vary greatly from year to year (as can be seen from the narratives in Appendix 1). Academic credits accumulated towards a Masters are likely to be transferred to be completed in EM2/3. What is clear is that there will be fewer people completing a BA during EM1 if more people start this award on a part-time study basis.

**Table 3: Predicted educational outcomes of EM1 with proposed changes – 50 students**

<b>Award pursued</b>	<b>FdA/Diploma</b>	<b>BA/BTh</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>MPhil/PhD</b>
<b>2011/12</b>	13	26	9	2
<b>2018/19</b>	25	20	4	1

## **2. Financial Outcomes of Proposed changes**

The Analysis of Student Expenses 2011-12 (Appendix 2) shows the following averages:

Re-imburement of expenses to an expenses-only student	£ 1, 869
Grant, allowances, expenses to a grant-maintained student	£ 13,750

The following comparison assumes a cohort of 50 students, uses the 2011/12 figures, and is based on the actual and anticipated numbers of grant-maintained (g-m) and expenses-only (e-o) students:

<b>Year</b>	<b>g-m</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>e-o</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
2011/12	35	£481,250	15	£ 28,035	£509,285
2018/19	25	£343,750	25	£ 46,725	£390,475

Using these figures as an example of possible outcomes based on changing only the educational variables suggests that in the academic year 2018/19 the EM1 student budget line could be reduced to £390,475. Compared with the budget figure of £500,000 assigned to EM1 students in 2011/12, this would allow £75,000 to be re-allocated to the core funding of the RCLs, and leave a balance of £34,525 to be put to the Family support fund.

## **3. Do we really need to implement this change?**

The figures suggest that it would be possible to reach a position of removing the £75,000 deficit to the RCLs over the next 4 years, without the need to have bursary funds and additional support from home churches and sending Synods. However, four years is a long time for the RCLs to be drawing on their reserves, and trying to make the shift without recourse to bursary funds and local contributions would only be possible by implementing all the proposed changes in norms and expectations rigorously, immediately and simultaneously. This would have significant effects on the educational outcomes from EM1, and also leaves little scope in the system for responding to an influx of suitable candidates with complex family circumstances.

A more fruitful way forward would be to implement “both/and”, by introducing the new norms and expectations relatively cautiously at the same time as working hard to establish the bursary funds and encouraging home churches and sending Synods to start contributing to the costs of the students who come through them.



Therefore the resolutions to Mission Council ask for endorsement of the direction that is being proposed, in the knowledge that there is significant work ahead on the detailed implementation of the proposals in this paper.

Revd Fiona Thomas; *on behalf of*  
Education & Learning Committee's Task Group on Reshaping EM1 Finances<sup>1</sup>

5 April 2013

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<sup>1</sup> Revd Drs Rosalind Selby, Susan Durber, Jack Dyce as College Principals; Christine Thornborough, Northern College Administrator; Revd John Smith, Convenor of Education & Learning Committee, Revd Fiona Thomas, Secretary for Education & Learning; Andrew Grimwade, Chief Finance Officer URC; Penny Hannon, E&L Administrator.



## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

# H1

# Reshaping Student Finances: Appendix 1

## Current Pathways and Patterns in Education for Ministry Phase 1

This is a narrative from the colleges about the lives of students on the various pathways and patterns of training currently offered by the different colleges – the accounts are all fictional but reflect the experience the colleges have had in all sorts of ways over many years. The hope is that the lives and experiences of the different ‘students’ will help to personalise the financial discussions and give an insight into the benefits and challenges of these individualised formational pathways.

### NORTHERN COLLEGE

Formation for ministry usually takes place in a pattern of study over four years, both full time and part time, in which reflection upon a wide variety of denominational and secular placements is an integral part of working towards a qualification in contextual theology with the University of Manchester. The pattern of placements varies between Ministry of Word and Sacrament (MWS) and Church Related Community Work (CRCW) students. Most full-time MWS students also undertake a summer pastorate and all have the opportunity of an overseas placement. This is in addition to the ‘College Time’ (as the name implies, this is the time with students and staff within NoCo rather than the cross-college academic teaching at Luther King House) which is the opportunity for more practical formation: URC-focussed ethos and practice is reflected within it. We have a number of students on pathways of less than four years, taking into account their prior experience and qualifications. At present we have students with us for 3½ years, 3 years, 2½ years, and 2 years but it is impossible to predict variations in patterns for the future because they are so personalised.

### MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENTS

#### Full time – Diploma (level 5)

- **Grant-maintained** – N1 trained over four years. She came to the college with limited academic background and difficult experiences in her earlier education. For a considerable time she struggled with this aspect of the training – both attaining a good level and in terms of her confidence. But she engaged with the variety of her placements and gained experience and confidence there from the start. She would certainly not have been ready for ministry without the four years full time. She truly grew in self-awareness and her gifting and passion only really showed itself during the final months.
- **Expenses-only** – We have never had a student who has been self-funding on the full-time BA or Diploma pathway. However, there are occasionally students who have never taken a government student loan before and applying for one assists the URC. Their pattern of study would be the same as other Diploma/BA students and the URC would only pay academic fees and expenses.

## Full Time – BA (level 6)

- **Grant-maintained** – N2 trained over four years. He had been successful in running his own company, has an insightful mind but hadn't written an essay since school days. He benefited enormously from the theological reflection upon his placements and engaged with them wholeheartedly – this was the single biggest factor in helping him to make the transition from a very different form of work into ministry. The full-time pattern to a BA has ensured the student was stretched intellectually to the right level for him. Given this student's work ethic when he began, had he not been challenged by the variety of placements he benefited from he could well have experienced burn out quite quickly in ministry.
- **Expenses-only** – See under Diploma level above.

## Full Time – MA

- **Grant-maintained** – It was clear that N3 was an able student. He came with a first degree in a humanities subject and began on the undergraduate programme. He reached diploma level which gave him the necessary theological and biblical grounding before he switched to the MA programme. The MA has clearly taken this student to a good level of achievement, but more than that, the four years have given him the space to apply his theological thinking, with an able mind, to his placement experiences. This student might well have been a candidate for undertaking MPhil or even doctoral research as a potential theologian/educator in the URC in the future and his example raises the question of where (EM2 or 3) such work might be done in the future, but also of how it might be funded.
- **Expenses-only** – N4 is training over three years. She has been means tested and does not qualify for a grant. She brought with her a first degree in fairly traditionally-taught theology and the MA was the obvious pathway for her. Being able to spread the MA over three years has allowed her to use her assignments to reflect on variety of placement types and to stretch her awareness of the breadth of the URC. Again, she is a possible candidate for further research in the future. The URC pays only for fees and expenses.

## Part Time – Diploma/Foundation Degree

- **Expenses only** – All weekend students are self-funding apart from fees and expenses and, at the moment, teaching is only available to take them to Diploma level. They all study for four years – which is necessary for several reasons: (a) the amount of teaching we can offer in one year means they can only complete the requisite number of modules in four years; (b) with fewer hours on placement, the four years and the variety is essential; (c) 'College Time' is already limited (in duration compared to the mid-week pattern) and we do not feel it is appropriate to reduce this further. Student N5 was not a local preacher before he began training and he needed the four years to develop his preaching as well as his knowledge and ability to reflect.

## Part Time – MA

- **Expenses only** - A few students come in only for MA teaching and tutorial time. They are self-funding apart from fees and expenses. This pattern is usually for those with an appropriate first degree but also considerable experience working in the URC – for example, a Minister in non-Stipendiary service transferring to ministry in Stipendiary service or a CRCW becoming a MWS in stipendiary service.

N6 is changing from NSM to SM and she is undertaking the MA as her place to reflect upon the new challenges. Because she was self-funding she needed to continue in her 'day job', and, taken together with NSM responsibilities and college work, it was a real challenge for her to complete

within two years. Even so, she struggled to complete her dissertation before her induction in her new post.

## **CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORK MINISTRY**

### **Full-time (grant-maintained) BA/Diploma students (who, in addition, receive English Standard Board for Community Development accreditation)**

The placement-hours requirement for CRCW students means it is not possible to fulfil all requirements as a part-time student for all, or any, of their years at the College. Therefore, all CRCW students train for four years full time and are grant-maintained. Although I can conceive of a CRCW student who, after means testing, would not receive a grant, in practical terms I think this is unlikely.

- N7 is dyslexic and so her writing did not fully reflect her ability. She experienced being freed from previous poor experiences of education by having this recognised and supported by the College. The community-work modules are all taught over extended weekends, but the student selected some mid-week modules to complete a BA. There are few CRCW students and this gave N7 the opportunity to be part of the mid-week community and she felt less isolated.

## **THE SCOTTISH COLLEGE**

There are a number of distinctive elements in the patterns of EM1 offered through the Scottish College:

- Almost all students pursue an academic award, through either an appropriate local University in the case of full-time, grant-maintained pathways or through a validated course at the Theological Institute of the Scottish Episcopal Church (TISEC) in the case of part-time, expenses-only pathways.
- All students undertake supervised placements close to their home base, which could be in any part of Scotland or the North of England.
- All students take part in a weekly day of formational studies which are offered by the Scottish College staff on an open basis. So EM1 students potentially learn alongside members, Elders, and Ministers of the United Reformed Church and ecumenical partners who are interested in the particular subjects being offered.
- The majority of students at the Scottish College in recent years have been graduates of humanities subjects or theology when candidating for ministry, and many of them have undertaken an intensive one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Theology offered by the University of Edinburgh before moving on to Masters subjects.
- The length of full-time EM1 programmes of the Scottish College tends to be two or two and a half years due to the previous educational attainment of the students.

## **WESTMINSTER COLLEGE**

Education for ministry at Westminster ‘normally’ takes four years, but there is a great deal of room for a variety of pathways, taking into account educational styles and needs, previous learning and experience, and personal or family circumstances. Students study within the context of the ecumenical Cambridge Theological Federation, but while some live here, some commute either weekly or occasionally. They engage in a variety of placements (church, social context and international),

alongside study, throughout their time in education for ministry, and all students have a sustained and intensive placement, usually at the end of their time with us, called the Living Ministry Placement. We believe that ‘all learning is formation’ and throughout all the varied parts of learning, in church and in the classroom, in social context and in the life of shared community here and at home, students are learning to reflect and to pray, to seek wisdom and acquire skills. There are some parts of what we do that are outside the ecumenical programmes of the Cambridge setting, but most preparation for URC ministry is done in the richness of a truly ecumenical space.

### **Full time – FdA/BA (Anglia Ruskin) ... in future years Diploma/BA (Durham) ... plus Living Ministry Placement**

#### **Grant-maintained**

- W1 is being prepared for ministry over 4 years. He is in his early 30s and has 2 children under 5 – his partner is their full-time carer, taking a career break from teaching. This student has little previous formal education. He is clearly bright, creative and enthusiastic about learning, but (in part because of dyslexia) learns best with face to face contact with tutors and in seminar groups. He will study either to Diploma or to BA level and will then do a one year placement in a pastorate (the Living Ministry Programme) being in college one day a week in term.

The whole family have moved to be near Westminster and are thoroughly immersed in the life of Cambridge, the ecumenical Cambridge Theological Federation, and a local URC very different from the one they came from.

The community life with its daily prayers and rich diet of opportunities suits W1 well and, though he was wary of moving life to Cambridge and giving up his job (and income), he is thriving on it and growing in ways he hadn't expected. He is discovering that he can achieve in some areas in ways he never thought possible, holding his own in an ecumenical classroom, getting some good grades for assessments, and excellent reports for his interpersonal and communication skills.

He receives the full grant, including an accommodation allowance so that the family can rent a small house near Cambridge, and child allowances. He has no significant savings, and in fact came with some small debt. Family help out a little, but they are not well off and so cannot do much. His local church do give him a few hundred pounds a year which helps towards books and his Synod have helped out with a grant towards travel to an international placement. A college fund, with the aim of helping students with young families, has also given a few hundreds of pounds support, when the student's car needed some urgent repairs. Student W1 was tempted to choose a cheaper way of training, but he was encouraged to believe that he and the family would just about be able to manage on the grant for four years and that it would be worth it to be able to train in this community setting. He certainly could not have done this on a lower level of grant and would not have risked getting heavily into debt that, on a stipend, he would not be able to repay.

### **Part-time FdA (Anglia Ruskin) ... in future years Diploma (Durham) – plus Living Ministry Placement**

#### **Expenses-only**

- W2 is being prepared for ministry over 4 years. She is in her late 40s and has teenage children. She is continuing to live at the family home 100 miles from Cambridge, but travels to Cambridge once a fortnight for several days each time. She has a good mix of local tutors and she has good experiences of intensive days at college when she attends classes and seminars, worship and prayer, as well as throwing herself into community life. She will have her Living Ministry placement close to her home in her final year and will continue to travel to college once a fortnight. W2 is very bright and thrives on the blend of distance learning and face to face teaching – with local tutors and with college staff. She will be able to get to Diploma level part-time over three years, but could clearly achieve a higher level than this and hopes to do that, if she can, in her

- first pastorate (while she recognises how hard and demanding that will be). She is doing this alongside a full time job, and with agreed time out for study, but is thinking of cutting down her
- work hours so that she has more time for the demands of placements, study and prayer. The URC pays all her fees and travel expenses, and her accommodation whilst in college, but otherwise she is self-funding.

### **Mix of part-time and full-time – MA in pastoral theology (Anglia Ruskin) plus Living Ministry Placement**

- W3 began life at the college by preparing part-time for Ministry of Word and Sacraments in non-Stipendiary service. He has a previous degree in Theology and has quite a lot of church experience as a lay preacher. He is doing the MA, designed for students with a high level of pastoral experience and some previous experience of theological study. He lives at home, about 50 miles away, and travels every week during term to college for MA classes. He has recently received a severance package from work which is why he has both time to undertake part-time study and the means to support himself for a short while at least. The URC pays his expenses, fees and travel. When, in the midst of this, he tests a call to stipendiary service, he completes the MA (after two years part time), but then proceeds to a full time pattern of training. One year is spent in a mix of learning opportunities and placements in both church and secular settings and in doing the college's Life and Service courses which are where he really begins to engage with what it means to minister in the URC. In the final year he undertakes a Living Ministry Placement, travelling to a placement 20 miles from his home and one day a week to college. For the two years part time he is paid expenses only, but as he moves into full time study he is paid a basic grant. In the first year of full time study he still has some resources from his severance package and so returns some of the grant, but in the second year he has need of it and is grateful for it.

### **Full-time BTh – University of Cambridge**

- W4 is married with three children. She is academically gifted and was delighted to be accepted for education for ministry and to study on the BTh degree. She can only do this by studying for at least three years full time and by being (for the first three of those at least) residential in Cambridge during term.

W4 and her husband (who is the prime carer for their children) have kept the family home, about 70 miles from Cambridge. The children remain in their schools and her husband cares for them there. W4 commutes weekly to Cambridge during term and has a college room Monday to Thursday, returning to the family home at weekends and engaging in a placement in a local church on Sundays. This arrangement means that she can study hard during the week and concentrate on family at the weekends, though of course life has to be flexible. Her husband has a small income from a part-time job. The grant from the URC means that they can keep the home (which they own and hope to rent out when they are called to a pastorate somewhere else in the country) and pay for a college room during term. The family are learning to economise (since W4 used to earn a good salary), but they know this is good preparation for life on a stipend.

### **Full time – Tripos (Cambridge) plus Living Ministry Placement – and PhD**

- W5 is a warm, rounded person with great interpersonal skills and innate wisdom. She is single. She is also academically a high-flyer. She is studying through Westminster but is also a member of a University of Cambridge College (necessary for matriculation). She has gained a bursary from her university college to cover part of the high level of fees for the Tripos degree. The URC pays the rest and gives her a basic grant, which she supplements through support from family and from working during the summer months, when placements permit. She is happy to live in a student room. During her Living Ministry Placement year she continues to live as cheaply as possible in a

- student room, and continues to do that as she begins the first year of a PhD. She is one of a small number of students doing a higher degree as part of EM1. She's a very determined person and will certainly finish the PhD, even if that means doing so while also serving a lively, and diverse, first pastorate. She keeps up study and research part-time and, after her second pastorate, is called to a teaching post in one of the URC's Resource Centres for Learning....

Prepared by the Principals of the three Colleges

5 April 2013



## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

# H3

# The Learning Church: The Next Chapter

This paper is brought to Mission Council for information on a piece of work which has been commissioned by the Education & Learning Committee.

## Purpose of the work

To bring resolutions for shaping future whole church learning to the General Assembly of 2014. These will be put forward from an assessment of the progress made towards realising the aspirations of the United Reformed Church Training Review of 2006.

In commissioning this work the Education & Learning Committee recognises the major changes that there have been in the economic, ecumenical, and ecclesiological environment since 2006. The resolutions to Assembly 2014 will emerge from active conversations about the shape of the learning church, informed by the principles of appreciative inquiry.

## Shaping the conversation

A task group from outside the Education & Learning Committee has been appointed: Revd Terry Oakley, Revd Lindsey Sanderson, Revd Kumar Rajagopalan (London Baptist Association), with the Secretary for Education & Learning providing clerical support. The group will report regularly to the Committee and is developing a panel of readers who can comment on the products of their discussions from the breadth of perspectives found within the URC and from ecumenical partners. The task group has been supplied with extensive background documentation, given the freedom to ask pointed questions, and charged with the accountability that comes from being committed to the good health of the United Reformed Church.

The task group will be looking at all aspects of the learning church, and will be visiting the networks and sub-committees of the Education & Learning Committee, the Resource Centres for Learning, and other Assembly Committees and relevant networks. Such groups and committees are made up of people from local churches and Synods, but the task group will also seek appropriate ways of holding conversations directly with a small number of churches. The Quinquennial review of the Windermere Centre is due in 2013 and the task group will be augmented in order to incorporate this in to their schedule.

## The motivation for this task

The driving forces for this piece of work are:

- *Exploration* – affirming that which is good in the church's learning experiences, and using this more intentionally
- *Realism* - being honest about the strength of both the centralising tendencies and the vigour of independency and dissent which are features of the United Reformed Church



- *Vision* – using our size as the United Reformed Church (a large small organisation) to best advantage and preparing for new ways of being church
- *Suspicion* - when there's less money around, what will be cut?
- *Frustration* – what the URC wants to happen, in terms of collaboration in learning, has not yet happened to the extent to which the 2006 Training Review aspired, despite the best intentions of all concerned.

## Timetable

September 2012	Terms of reference agreed for the task group
January 2013	Members appointed and started work, with schedule of visits
June 2013	E&L Committee to receive report from the task group
September 2013	E&L Committee receive update from the task group
	The quinquennial Windermere Review
January 2014	E&L Committee receives final report from the task group and prepares report with resolutions for General Assembly
March 2014	Mission Council opportunity to comment on the report for Assembly
July 2014	General Assembly to debate the report and resolutions

A more detailed discussion of the aspects to be considered and the assumptions underlying this process is available from the Secretary for Education & Learning.

Revd Fiona Thomas  
Secretary for Education & Learning

5 April 2013



## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

# J

# Resolution 15 of General Assembly 2012

## Ratification

The Assembly in 2012 passed Resolution 15 with the two-thirds majority necessary for changes to the Structure. In accordance with paragraph 3(1) of the Structure, Mission Council is now invited to ratify the decision.

Margaret Carrick Smith

11th March 2013

### RESOLUTION

Mission Council resolves to ratify Resolution 15 of General Assembly 2012 thus making the following changes to the Structure of the United Reformed Church: (Where sections are replaced, changes from the existing are shown in red type.)

### Synod Functions

#### 2(4)(A)(xvii)

##### Amend to read as follows:

where the Synod, acting through its **Moderator (or his/her duly appointed deputy)** in accordance with either the **Disciplinary Process** contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church (where the issues relate to perceived disciplinary breach(es)) or the **Incapacity Procedure** contained in Section P of the Manual (where the issues relate to perceived incapacity as defined in the **Incapacity Procedure**), considers that a minister or Church Related Community Worker is **not** or may not be exercising his/her ministry in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Schedule E or Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II to the Basis of Union, as the case may be, to **take the appropriate one of the following courses namely (i) to refer the case of that minister or Church Related Community Worker into the Disciplinary Process in the manner prescribed by that Process and to act in accordance with the**

provisions thereof as regards the suspension of the minister or Church Related Community Worker concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Process (reference to be made to Paragraph 7.5 of the Structure to ascertain the point at which a Disciplinary case shall commence) or (ii) to follow the Consultation Procedure prescribed by the Incapacity Procedure which could in its turn lead to the case of the minister or Church Related Community Worker being referred into the Incapacity Procedure and to act in accordance with the provisions thereof as regards the suspension of the minister or Church Related Community Worker concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Procedure (reference to be made to Paragraph 6.5 of the Structure to ascertain the point at which a case shall commence within the Incapacity Procedure) (the transitional overlap which occurs when a case is referred back from the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure leading to the commencement of a case within the other of them shall be a permitted extension of the Function).

#### **2(4)(A)(xviii)**

##### **Amend to read as follows:**

to ensure that, where an Assembly Commission or an Appeals Commission following a Hearing under the **Disciplinary Process contained in** Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church or a Review Commission or an Appeals Review Commission following a Hearing under the **Incapacity Procedure** contained in Section P of the Manual *{words omitted}* appends guidance to its decision to delete the name of the minister or Church Related Community Worker from the respective Roll, any such *{words omitted}* guidance is brought fully to the attention of those responsible for exercising oversight of the minister or Church Related Community Worker and any others **who might in the future** be identified as being proper and appropriate persons to receive such information;

#### **2(4)(A)(xxi)**

##### **Amend to read as follows:**

to consider the resignation of ministers or Church Related Community Workers not currently the subject of any case within **the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O** and in consultation with the moderator of the Synod to decide upon appropriate action *{words omitted}*;

**2(4)(B) Remove this paragraph altogether.**

**2(4)(C) This paragraph now becomes 2(4)( B) and is amended to read as follows:**

**2(4)(B)** No appeal shall lie against the decision by a Synod to initiate the **Disciplinary Process contained in Section O or the Incapacity Procedure contained in Section P** in respect of any minister or Church Related Community Worker under Function (xvii).

### **Area Functions**

#### **2(5)(A)(viii)**

##### **Amend to read as follows:**

to consider the resignation of ministers or Church Related Community Workers not currently the subject of any case within the **Disciplinary Process** contained in Section O and in

consultation with the moderator of the Synod to decide upon appropriate action (see also Paragraphs 2(4)(A)(xxi) and 2(6)(A)(xviii));

#### **2(5)(A)(xviii)**

##### **Amend to read as follows:**

to ensure that, where an Assembly Commission or an Appeals Commission following a Hearing under the **Disciplinary Process** contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church or a Review Commission or an Appeals Review Commission following a Hearing under the Incapacity Procedure **contained in Section P of the Manual** appends *{words omitted}* guidance to its decision to delete the name of the minister or Church Related Community Worker from the respective Roll, any such *{words omitted}* guidance is brought fully to the attention of those responsible for exercising oversight of the minister or Church Related Community Worker and any others **who might in the future** be identified as being proper and appropriate persons to receive such information;

#### **2(5)(B) Remove this paragraph altogether.**

### **General Assembly Functions**

**2(6)(A)(xi)** *[Changes to this paragraph were approved under Resolution 9 of General Assembly 2010 and require ratification by General Assembly 2012.]*

#### **2(6)(A)(xviii)**

##### **Amend to read as follows:**

to decide upon questions regarding the inclusion on the Roll of Ministers and the Roll of Church Related Community Workers of the United Reformed Church which have been previously considered and transmitted with recommendations by synods (but excluding any matter which is dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Process referred to in **Paragraph 7 of the Structure**). *{words omitted}*

#### **2(6)(A)(xxiii)**

##### **Amend to read as follows:**

in the absence of any reference into **either the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church (where the issues relate to perceived disciplinary breach(es)) or the Incapacity Procedure contained in Section P of the Manual (where the issues relate to perceived incapacity as defined in the Incapacity Procedure)** by the appropriate Synod (the case of any minister who is the **General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary or a Moderator of Synod** being necessarily dealt with under this provision) and where the General Assembly (or Mission Council on its behalf) (acting through **the Deputy General Secretary or his/her duly appointed deputy**) considers that a minister or Church Related Community Worker is **not** or may not be exercising his/her ministry in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Schedule E or Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II to

the Basis of Union, as the case may be, to take the appropriate one of the following courses namely (i) to refer the case of that minister or Church Related Community Worker into the Disciplinary Process in the manner prescribed by that Process and to act in accordance with the provisions thereof as regards the suspension of the minister or Church Related Community Worker concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Process (reference to be made to Paragraph 7.5 of the Structure to ascertain the point at which a Disciplinary case shall commence) or (ii) to follow the Consultation Procedure prescribed by the Incapacity Procedure which could in its turn lead to the case of the minister or Church Related Community Worker being referred into the Incapacity Procedure and to act in accordance with the provisions thereof as regards the suspension of the minister or Church Related Community Worker concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Procedure (reference to be made to Paragraph 6.5 of the Structure to ascertain the point at which a case shall commence within the Incapacity Procedure) (the transitional overlap which occurs when a case is referred back from the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure leading to the commencement of a case within the other of them shall be a permitted extension of the Function);

## **2(6)(A)(xxvi)**

### **Amend to read as follows:**

without detracting from the general delegatory powers held by Mission Council, to give specific authority to Mission Council acting in the name of General Assembly to make with immediate effect such changes to any part of the Ministerial Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual or the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure contained in Section P as are recommended to Mission Council by the MIND Advisory Group (or such other Group or Committee as may in the future perform the functions of that Group), all such changes to be reported to the next meeting of the General Assembly.

## **2(6)(A)(xxvii) The existing Function (xxvi) becomes (xxvii)**

## **2(6)(B) Remove this paragraph.**

## **5. APPEALS**

### **5(1) Remove this Paragraph.**

### **5(2) This Paragraph to become Paragraph 5 and the opening words to read:**

5. “The procedure for dealing with references and appeals falling outside Paragraph 6 (Incapacity Procedure) and Paragraph 7 (Disciplinary Process) is as follows:-”

**The remaining 4 unnumbered paragraphs under the existing 5(2) are unchanged.**

## **6 INCAPACITY PROCEDURE**

6.1 After the words “...consider that s/he is...” insert the word “not” and after the words “(in the case of CRCWs” insert a closing bracket.

6.2 Add the following words at the end of this paragraph:

“..., and once so initiated that case shall be resolved in accordance with the Incapacity Procedure and not under Paragraph 5 above.”

**6.3, 6.4** These paragraphs are unchanged.

**6.5** Add a new paragraph 6.5 as follows:

**6.5** A case shall commence within the Incapacity Procedure when the Synod Moderator or the Deputy General Secretary shall send or deliver to the Secretary of the Review Commission\* a Certificate of Entry\* and a Commencement Notice\* (the expressions marked \* being defined in the Incapacity Procedure).

**7.** Insert new Section 7 as follows:

## **7. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS**

**7.1** The Provisions of this Paragraph 7 shall apply to cases proceeding under the Disciplinary Process (Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church) where the person responsible for initiating it in respect of a particular minister or Church Related Community Worker considers that s/he is not or may not be exercising the ministry of word and sacrament or the ministry of church related community work as the case may be in accordance (in the case of ministers) with Paragraph 2 of Schedule E of the Basis of Union and (in the case of CRCWs) with Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II thereto and perceives the issue as a disciplinary one not falling within Paragraph 6 above.

**7.2** No right of appeal shall lie against any decision taken in accordance with Paragraph 7.1 above to initiate the Disciplinary Process in respect of any minister or CRCW, and once so initiated that case shall be resolved in accordance with the Disciplinary Process and not under Paragraph 5 above.

**7.3** The decision reached in any particular case (whether or not on appeal) under the Disciplinary Process shall be made in the name of the General Assembly and shall be final and binding.

**7.4** As soon as any minister or CRCW becomes the subject of a case under the Disciplinary Process, none of the Councils of the Church shall exercise any of its functions in respect of that minister or CRCW in such a manner as to affect, compromise or interfere with the due process of that case provided that the provision of such pastoral care as shall be deemed appropriate shall not be regarded as a breach of this paragraph.

**7.5.1** In any case in which the Caution Stage (as defined in the Disciplinary Process) is invoked, that case shall begin with the calling in of the Synod Appointees as described in the Disciplinary Process.

**7.5.2** In any case in which the Caution Stage is not invoked, that case shall begin with the calling in of the Mandated Group as described in the Disciplinary Process.



## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

# J1

# GENERAL SECRETARY REVIEW

The Revd Roberta Rominger was appointed as General Secretary of the United Reformed Church in 2008 and her seven year term of service ends on 31st July 2015. This term is renewable. The relevant Rule of Procedure is as follows:

*4.1 The General Secretary, who shall be a minister of the United Reformed Church, shall be appointed for a period of seven years renewable for the same term or such shorter period as the Assembly may determine. The appointment shall be made according to the following procedure.*

*4.2 The group to appoint or review the General Secretary or Deputy General Secretary shall consist of the Moderators of the General Assembly (one of whom shall act as Convener), the Clerk of the General Assembly (who shall act as Secretary), three Conveners of the Assembly standing committees, and six members of the Appointment and Review Panel selected by the Nominations Committee. This group shall have the authority to make a nomination for the appointment or reappointment of a General Secretary or a Deputy General Secretary. That nomination shall be brought to the next General Assembly or Mission Council for agreement.*

With the agreement of Mrs Rominger the Moderators have decided that the review process should be completed before Assembly in 2014. The Nominations Committee has selected the necessary six members of the Appointment and Review Panel. They are:

Ms Karen Campbell  
Revd Derrick Sena Dzandu-Hedidor  
Revd Linda Elliott  
Mr Phil Knott  
Mr Chris Maple  
Revd Alison Termie

The Moderators have also decided that the three Conveners of Standing Committees should be elected by Mission Council. Because the work of the Review Group will be undertaken between July 2013 and July 2014 it is those conveners of standing committees who will be in post during that period who are eligible for election. Since John Ellis, Convener of the Finance Committee, will be a member of the review Group as Moderator of Assembly he does not appear in the list. At their request the names of the Revd Sheila Maxey, Convener of the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee, and the Revd Elizabeth Welch, Convener of the Faith and Order Committee, do not appear on the ballot paper.

The election will take place during the May 2013 meeting of Mission Council; only members of Mission Council will be able to vote.

Margaret Carrick Smith

11th March 2013

## **RESOLUTION**

**Mission Council appoints AA and BB to serve as tellers for the election of committee conveners to serve on the General Secretary Review Group.**

Proposed names will be supplied at Mission Council.





## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

# J2

# Ministerial Disciplinary Process

Mission Council, acting in the name of General Assembly and on the advice of the MIND Advisory Group, agrees to make the following changes to the Disciplinary Process:

**A.5** Add the following definitions at Paragraph A.5:

**“General Assembly Appointees” shall mean the persons appointed under Paragraph AA.2.1.2 to examine a disciplinary case within the Caution Stage and, if considered appropriate, to impose Cautions upon the minister.”**

**“General Assembly Representative” shall mean the person appointed (whether individually or as the holder of a particular office) to act in the name of General Assembly (or Mission Council on its behalf) in carrying out the responsibilities assigned to that person within this Disciplinary Process.”**

*In the event, for whatever reason, of there not being a Deputy General Secretary, then Mission Council will need to appoint someone to assume the DGS’s position within the Disciplinary Process. That person will be defined within the Process as “the General Assembly Representative” and will include the DGS while still in post. This paper makes the necessary changes to the paragraphs referring to the DGS.*

At the end of the definition of "Independent Safeguarding Authority" at Paragraph A.5, add the words "...and its intended successor body the **Disclosure and Barring Service or any other body which in the future may assume the functions of either of these bodies**".

*Section 87 of the Freedom of Information Act 2012 states that there is to be a body called the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Section 88 (1) states that the Secretary of State may by order transfer the functions of the ISA to the DBS and Section 88(4) states that he/she may by order provide for the dissolution of the ISA.*

In the definition of “Synod Appointees” at Paragraph A.5, after the words “persons appointed” insert the words “**under Paragraph AA.2.1.1**”.

**A.5<sup>^</sup>, A.8\*,  
AA.1.4,  
AA.2.1.2,  
AA.2.2,  
B.3.2\*, B.3.3,  
B.3.4, B.3.5,  
E.4.2, E.5.3,  
F.6.1, G.1.2.2,  
G.10.2**

In all of these paragraphs replace the words “Deputy General Secretary” with the words “**General Assembly Representative**”. <sup>^</sup>*In Paragraph A.5 the expression occurs in the definition of “Gross Misconduct.* \**In Paragraphs A.8 and B.3.2 the expression occurs twice. The DGS is also referred to in Paragraphs F.2.3, G.13.4 and G.14.5 – but see later as to those paragraphs.*

- AA.2.1.1, AA.2.1.2** Add the following words at the beginning of Paragraphs AA.2.1.1 and AA.2.1.2 of the Process to bring those paragraphs into line with B.3.1 and B.3.2:-
- AA.2.1.1** **"In disciplinary cases arising under Paragraph 2(4)(A)(xvii) of the Structure (Synods) in respect of any Minister in membership or under the authority of the Synod in question,...."**
- AA.2.1.2** **"In disciplinary cases arising under Paragraph 2(6)(A)(xxiii) of the Structure General Assembly (or Mission Council on its behalf)...."**
- Also at the end of Paragraph AA.2.1.2 replace the words **"Synod Appointees in that case"** with the words **"General Assembly Appointees in that case. As their functions will be the same as those of the Synod Appointees in a case arising under Paragraph AA.2.1.1, the expression "Synod Appointees" shall in a case arising under this Paragraph be taken to include General Assembly Appointees."**
- The persons appointed under this paragraph are not appointed by Synod but by General Assembly. Hence the need to change the wording as above.*
- AA.2.4** Replace the words **"both the Synod Appointees and the minister"** with the words **"the Synod Appointees"**.
- AA.2.6** Replace the words **"It should also be noted that..."** at the beginning of the second sentence with the word **"Also...."**.
- AA.9.3** Insert the word **"a"** before **"Mandated Group"**.
- AA.12** Insert the following additional paragraphs at the end of Section AA:-
- "AA.12.1** **Where the Synod Appointees become aware that (i) the minister is the subject of a criminal charge for an alleged offence falling into any of the categories set out in Paragraph E.7.2 or (ii) information has been laid before the Police which may result in a criminal charge being brought against him/her, in either such event the Synod Appointees shall adjourn their own enquiry and consult the Synod Moderator or other person who initiated the Caution Stage who may, on the basis of such information, conclude the Caution Stage in accordance with Paragraph AA.1.3 and call in a Mandated Group whereupon the case would be governed by the later Sections of this Process. In the event that the Caution Stage is not so concluded, the Synod Appointees' enquiry will remain adjourned pending the verdict of the criminal courts (whether or not on appeal) on the charges brought against the minister or the withdrawal of the charge (in relation to alternative (i) above) or the notification that no charge is to be brought (in relation to alternative (ii) above).**
- AA.12.2** **In cases where Paragraph AA.12.1 applies but where Paragraph AA.1.3 is not invoked, the Synod Appointees may themselves monitor the criminal proceedings, but shall otherwise for the period specified in Paragraph AA.12.1 suspend their own enquiry."**
- B.3.1, B.3.2** Insert the word **"disciplinary"** before **"cases"** at the beginning of these paragraphs.
- B.3.2** On the second line alter **"))"** to **")"**.
- B.7.1** Replace the existing paragraph in its entirety with the following:-

**"In every case involving an allegation of Gross Misconduct and in other cases where the Synod Moderator or the General Assembly Representative as the case may be considers that he/she has strong and urgent reasons for so doing, he/she shall suspend the minister with immediate effect either orally or in writing and shall forthwith call in the Mandated Group in accordance with Paragraph B.3.1 or Paragraph B.3.2, whichever applies. Suspension imposed orally shall be immediately confirmed in writing to the minister."**

**F.2.3** Remove the words **"the Deputy General Secretary,"**

*Should the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission decide to delete the name of a minister from the Roll, it may append guidance to that decision. Paragraphs F.2.3, G.13.4 and G.14.5 all deal with the passing on of that guidance to persons on a "need to know" basis. In the light of his/her wide-ranging responsibilities the DGS is currently included in the list of such persons. However the role of the "General Assembly Representative" will simply be to carry out the specific functions set out in the Process. Once the case in which s/he has been concerned is concluded, his/her involvement comes to an end and s/he will have no future monitoring responsibilities. Consequently s/he should not be included in the list of persons in these paragraphs.*

**F.6.1** Replace the reference in the text to **"Paragraph B.9.3"** with a reference to **"Paragraph B.3.2"**.

**G.13.4** Remove the words **"the Deputy General Secretary,"**

**G.14.5** After the words **"the Press Officer"** remove the comma and insert the word **"and"**. Also remove the words **"and the Deputy General Secretary"**.

In the following cases, the main paragraph numbers occupy a separate line: **A.4, A.6, A.7, B.1, B.2, B.5, B.6, B.9, C.2, C.3, C.4, C.5, C.7, D.2, E.1, E.2, E.3, E.5, E.6, E.7, E.9, E.10, E.12, E.13, E.14, E.16, F.1, F.5, F.6, F.7, G.1, G.3, G.4, G.5, G.7, G.10, G16 and H.2**. This uses up space unnecessarily. Those numbers can be removed so that the numbering of the relevant paragraph would begin with the first sub-number, e.g. A.4.1, A.6.1 etc.



## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

# J3

## **Improving our General Assembly: Proposal to amend the Standing Orders**

The Assembly Arrangements Committee has been considering ways to make the business of the Assembly more efficient and effective, given that the new agreed budget does not allow for any lengthening of the Assembly. I am most grateful for the help of members of the Committee in the preparation of this document.

In order to help achieve this objective the Committee proposes that all resolutions before the Assembly be put into one of three groups: A – resolutions which will be taken en bloc and decided by majority vote, B – resolutions which will be taken individually and decided by majority vote and C – resolutions which will be decided by the consensus process.

This approach attempts to respond creatively to the widespread view in feedback from the 2010 and 2012 Assemblies that while the consensus process had many advantages for some major pieces of business where the Assembly was able gradually to shape a key future policy, using the consensus process for some other business had not been the best use of time and had contributed to the amount of unfinished or rushed business. The use of en bloc business was trialled successfully at the 2007 Assembly. In Group A would be resolutions that are formally required at Assembly but are essentially for the record and all the work has been done elsewhere. Examples might include: the annual accounts, which have already been scrutinised in detail in the Finance Committee and received a professional auditor's certificate; or the appointment of a URC representative to an ecumenical body; or noting a report from an Assembly Committee simply reporting on its past work.

In Group B might be resolutions where Mission Council has already been used to test the mind of the Church in earlier discussions and no evidence has emerged that the final proposals being put to Assembly are widely controversial; or resolutions where the general principle has been agreed at a previous Assembly and is now being applied in a particular area.

The existence of Groups A and B should allow much more debating time for Group C resolutions, which would be the key areas for the Assembly to focus on in its work. These would include major and strategic questions where a high degree of ownership from Assembly members is critical and where difficult and perhaps potentially divisive issues need to be worked through under God without a sense of rush.

Those resolutions which the Assembly was content to address in Group A would be voted on without the opportunity for questions or debate. If this pattern were to be agreed, it would be the intention to include with the Book of Reports a note which would explain this and invite members of Assembly to raise with the originators of the resolution(s) before the start of the Assembly any questions they may have about one or more of the resolutions which have been placed in Group A. The note would also explain that if, after that, there are still concerns such that six members of the Assembly believe that one or more of the resolution(s) should be taken separately, then they would be removed from Group A.

It should be noted that, as is currently the case, any resolutions which would make a change to the Basis or Structure would be taken by majority vote and would therefore automatically be placed in Group B.

In order to save resources it is further proposed that the draft minutes of each day be no longer distributed to all members of Assembly, but instead that they be posted on a secure section of the Assembly web-site which would be available only to those present (because of the possibility that the first draft could subsequently be materially changed) and additionally that a small number of copies would be printed and made available within the Assembly hall. It is, of course, not the intention to inhibit those who wish to review the draft minutes from doing so, but experience suggests that few currently avail themselves of this opportunity, and that the number who do so does not justify the cost and considerable logistic difficulties involved in their printing. By far the majority of corrections/amendments received relate to errors in names and/or titles. If this change were to be agreed it is proposed that once the Roll of Assembly is complete (two weeks before the start of the Assembly), it would be sent by email to all members of Assembly. The covering message would invite members to give to the Clerk during the meeting of Assembly written notice of any errors. The email would also give the opportunity to remind members that once the Roll is complete there can be no substitutions, and that, even if a member is prevented from attending at the last moment, his/her name remains on the Roll, which is distinct from a record of attendance. Additionally, a few printed copies of the Roll would be available at the Assembly in case any did not receive it by email.

Mission Council is asked to consider approval of these two changes to the way the Assembly is conducted.

If Mission Council indicates approval then in order to effect the changes a change to Standing Orders will be required. Revisions to the Standing Orders are normally taken at the start of a meeting of the General Assembly, and they then take immediate effect. This timing would be too late in this case since both these changes would need action before the start of the Assembly. There is provision for Mission Council to agree changes to the Standing Orders "in case of urgency" (Standing Order 13b). I invite Mission Council to consider approving the following revised set of Standing Orders **FOR 2014 ONLY**. Then, at the end of the Assembly, I propose to invite members of Assembly, in the light of the experience of working in this way, to decide whether to adopt them for the future. If Mission Council agrees, the Moderators elect suggest that the practice of grouping resolutions into en bloc, majority voting and consensus is adopted for Mission Council business in the period leading up to the 2014 Assembly. A resolution to this effect will be presented to you if you agree the proposed changes.

In my view it would be in order for Mission Council to approve this revision of Standing Orders for 2014 because at the end of Assembly in 2012 decisions concerning the 2014 Assembly were remitted to Mission Council. There were two major concerns: many were concerned that the business was too rushed on the last day, and there was a need to significantly reduce the cost of the Assembly. The rearrangement of the way the business is conducted (red type changes) would address the first concern. The blue type changes would reduce costs. I commend these alterations to Mission Council.

There are three further alterations to the Standing Orders which I am now proposing. These could, unlike those described above, be taken to the Assembly at the start of business and take immediate effect. However, I suggest that to ask the Assembly to consider some changes to Standing Orders at the start and others at the end of business would be a cause of confusion, and so I am proposing that these changes are treated in the same way as the others. That is, Mission Council would approve them for 2014 and then the Assembly would be invited to adopt them at the end of the 2014 Assembly.

The first of these would require that the Moderator should make a statement at the start of a consensus process if s/he judges that the matter is urgent and must be resolved at the current meeting of the Assembly. This would replace the current provision which permits the Moderator to so declare if,

following the working through of the process, there is no agreement. This change appears in green type.

The other two would simply correct small errors. When the Assembly became biennial the necessary changes to the Standing Orders failed to remove the word "annually" from Standing Order 3a. I propose that this now be corrected. It is shown in turquoise type. Also in turquoise type is the removal of a reference to district councils in Standing Order 3d.

In order to come to a view on this matter you may need to review the current Standing Orders. They are to be found in the resources section of the General Assembly website. This is linked from the main URC website.

There follows a draft of the proposed Standing Orders for 2014.

Margaret Carrick Smith

11th March 2013

## **RESOLUTION 1**

**In order to assist the Assembly to conduct its business in an efficient and effective manner, Mission Council, in accordance with Standing Order 13b., resolves to amend the Standing Orders by accepting the changes in red, green, turquoise and blue type shown in the draft Standing Orders contained within Paper XX, thus creating the Standing Orders which shall be in force for the 2014 meeting of the General Assembly.**

## **RESOLUTION 2** (to be presented if Resolution 1 is passed)

**Mission Council agrees that the Standing Orders in use for the November 2013 and March 2014 meetings of Mission Council shall be those from the 2012 Assembly amended by the changes shown in red type in the draft contained within Paper XX.**

## Standing Orders of General Assembly 2014

### 1. The Agenda of the Assembly

1a. At its meetings the Assembly shall consider reports and draft motions prepared by its Committees which include the Mission Council or by synods, and motions and amendments of which due notice has been given submitted by individual members of the Assembly.

1b. For the good ordering of General Assembly's time, the Moderators for that Assembly, in consultation with the General Secretary and the Clerk, shall group the draft motions into three Groups which shall determine the manner in which the Assembly shall consider them: A – en bloc, B – majority voting and C – consensus. All matters covered by section 3(1) & (2) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church shall be placed in Group B. In the case of any other matter the Moderator may rule at any time that a motion be taken from Group B and placed in Group C.

1c. The motions in Group A shall be taken en bloc. Notice in writing to the effect that one or more of the motions included in Group A should be considered separately may be given to the General Secretary by the close of business on the first day of the meeting of the Assembly. If such notice, which must be signed by at least six members of the Assembly, is duly received, then the motion(s) in question shall be removed from Group A. It shall be for the Moderators, in consultation with the General Secretary and the Clerk, to determine in which of Groups B and C any such separated motions should be placed. When the single motion to approve Group A is before the Assembly, the vote shall be taken immediately, the motion being determined by a majority of the votes of members of the Assembly present and voting as indicated by a show of voting cards.

1d. The motions in Group B shall be determined by majority vote, and standing order 2 shall not apply.

1e. The motions in Group C shall be considered by means of the consensus decision making process set out in standing order 2.

1f. The Assembly Arrangements Committee shall prepare before each meeting of the Assembly a draft order of business, and submit it to the Assembly as early as convenient in the programme.

1g. Motions arising from a report which have been duly seconded and submitted by individual members of Assembly under rule 4b shall be taken at a point in the business determined by the Moderator on the advice of the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

1h. If notice has been given of two or more motions on the same subject, or two or more amendments to the same motion, these shall be taken in the order decided by the Moderator on the advice of the Clerk.

1i. The Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee may, during the meeting of the Assembly, propose that the order of business be changed.

### 2. Consensus decision making

2a. Those motions in Group C shall be determined by a process of decision making by consensus. For these purposes the following standing order 2 will apply and the standing orders 4, 5d, 5e, 5f, 6b, 6c, 6e will not apply.

## 2b. The process of consensus:

Consensus means a decision of the council reached unanimously, or where a small minority of members of the council is willing to accept a proposal that is not their first preference.

Agreement means a decision of the council where, after careful consideration of the options, a small number is unable to accept the majority opinion but agree to stand aside so that the matter may be resolved.

2b.(1) At each stage of the process the moderator will clarify the nature of the session, that is whether it is for information, discussion or decision making.

### 2b.(2) The Information Session:

This session aims to inform the Assembly on the issue to be considered. *At the start of this session, if s/he judges that the matter before the Assembly is urgent, requiring decision during the current meeting of the Assembly, the Moderator shall inform the Assembly that this is the case and advise that if following the Consensus procedures there is continuing disagreement it may be necessary to move to a majority decision under standing order 2b(9)vi.*

A range of options may be presented by different people who shall speak in favour of their option. Those presenting issues, reports or proposals may speak for no more than five minutes unless the Assembly agrees to an extension of time. members of Assembly are then free to ask questions on the issue or seek for clarification or further information.

### 2b.(3) The Discussion Session:

This is the opportunity for discussion of various viewpoints and vigorous debate on different opinions. Speakers may speak for no more than three minutes.

2b.(3a) All those present may contribute.

2b.(3b) The methods used may include prayer, buzz groups, group discussions, speeches to the whole council, time for thinking during a break etc. The Moderator may invite Assembly to indicate opinions by the use of coloured cards at this stage.

2b.(3c) The Moderator shall ensure that those who have different backgrounds or who disagree or who are unsure are given space to contribute to the debate, as well as those who are enthusiastic.

2b.(3d) The Assembly may meet around tables so that small group discussion can happen quickly and easily.

2b.(3e) As the discussion session proceeds possible ways forward for the Church are developed until a specific proposal is reached.

### 2b.(4) The decision session:

Only those Assembly members present may contribute to this session, they may speak for no more than three minutes.

2b.(4a) Discussion continues with speakers outlining the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal. At all times, speakers are encouraged to suggest a way forward for the Assembly, rather than merely speaking with passion for a pre-determined view.



2b.(4b) Minor changes of wording may be agreed as the discussion proceeds. It is important to hear from those indicating disquiet or disapproval as well as those who are enthusiastic.

2b.(4c) The proposal shall be displayed throughout the discussion in such a way that all can see the text and any progressively agreed changes to it.

2b.(4d) If there is a major new insight expressed, the Moderator may determine that it is appropriate to move back into a discussion session.

2b.(5a) After summing up where the Assembly seems to be heading, the Moderator checks whether the Assembly is nearing consensus using one or more questions such as the following:

i) What is your response to this proposal? (inviting a show of indicator cards)

ii) Do you believe we have consensus in support of this proposal?

iii) Do you believe we have consensus not to support this proposal?

2b.(5b) If there is strong but not unanimous support:

i) Who supports the proposal?

ii) Who does not support the proposal as your first option, but is prepared to accept it? Are you prepared to have the issue declared resolved by consensus?

iii) Who is not prepared to accept the proposal?

2b.(6) Where some members of Assembly indicate an unwillingness to accept a proposal there shall be further discussion and then the Moderator shall seek to ascertain that they accept that they have been heard and agree to live with the outcome.

2b.(7) The Moderator shall ask:

2b.(7a) are you prepared to have the issue declared resolved by agreement? If so they may choose to record their dissent.

2b.(8) Who is not prepared to accept the proposal?

2b.(9) Continuing disagreement

Assembly may, at the discretion of the Moderator, look for further possibilities including:

i) adjourning the discussion to another time or place perhaps with more work before reconsideration;

ii) asking the Moderator to continue to work on the issue with relevant people until the next Assembly;

iii) referring the issue to another council or group to deal with;

iv) deciding the issue is unnecessary/inappropriate to continue dealing with;

v) declaring that there are diverse views which Christians may hold with equal integrity;

vi) if the issue is urgent moving to majority decision, **but only if notice has been given under standing order 2b.(2).**

## 2c. The Moderator

2c.(a) The role of the Moderator is very important.

The Moderator:

- assists the Assembly to discern the will of God as far as possible
- is alert to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as members contribute
- pauses for prayer or buzz group reflection as appropriate
- encourages trust and integrity in contributions
- ensures care and support for those whose honesty or minority voice makes them vulnerable
- invites members to respond to speeches showing indicator cards, and reflects the mood of the meeting as it becomes apparent
- suggests or encourages creative modifications of a proposal, picking up insights expressed
- summarises discussion from time to time to assist in focusing the discussion.

2c.(b) The Assembly and Moderator may be assisted by a facilitation group. This will be appointed at the beginning of each Assembly by the Assembly. It will:

- enable group work, collate responses from groups and report back to the council
- help and support the Moderator
- be responsible for the display of the text under discussion.

## 2d. Coloured cards

2d.(1) Coloured cards are not essential in consensus decision making but they are helpful.

Each member receives two cards:

- i) Orange – held at the end of a speech, so that the Moderator can see, indicates warmth towards a point of view or approval of a proposal.
- ii) Blue – held at the end of a speech, so that the Moderator can see, indicates coolness about what has been heard or disapproval of a proposal.

2d.(2a) Cards held crossed indicate to the Moderator it's time to move on to the next subject.

2d.(2b) Cards should be shown only at the invitation of the Moderator and held so that the Moderator can see them. They indicate response to what has just been said. They help the Moderator to gauge the strength of feeling for various ideas, and to invite speeches from those who are unsure or cool towards the proposal.

## 2.e Changes of order

Changes of order may be raised by any member of Assembly at any time during the meeting and must refer to the proceedings of the council. The Moderator asks the member to state their change of order. The Moderator rules on it immediately, or asks for a decision by the Assembly via a simple majority vote.

Changes of order include:

2e.(1) Out of order – the speaker is digressing from the matter being discussed.

2e.(2) Closed session – that the matter in hand is sensitive and should be conducted in private. This is voted on immediately without discussion. It can be raised more than once during a discussion. If it is agreed, all those who are not members of the council must leave. Members must treat the subsequent discussion in the strictest confidence and must not divulge its content or process to non-members.

2e.(3) Adjournment of the discussion – this is voted on immediately without further discussion. It can be proposed more than once in a discussion. It cannot be brought by a person who has already spoken. When the discussion is resumed the person whose speech was interrupted has the right to speak first.

2e.(4) Personal explanation – a member feeling that some material part of their former speech has been misunderstood or is being grossly misinterpreted by a later speaker may ask to make a personal explanation.

2e.(5) Objection – a member may raise an objection if the remarks of a speaker are deemed offensive or derogatory. On such an objection being raised the Moderator shall immediately rule as to whether the remarks are offensive or derogatory and if the ruling is in favour of the objection may require the speaker to withdraw the remark. Should the speaker refuse to do so the Moderator may require the speaker immediately to terminate their speech.

### 3. Presentation of business

3a. All reports of Committees, together with the draft motions arising there from, shall be delivered to the General Secretary by a date to be *{the word “annually” omitted}* determined, so that they may be printed and circulated to members in time for consideration before the date of the Assembly meeting.

3b. A synod may deliver to the General Secretary not less than twelve weeks before the commencement of the meeting of the Assembly notice in writing of a motion for consideration at the Assembly. This notice shall include the names of those appointed to propose and second the motion at the Assembly.

3c. A local church wishing to put forward a motion for consideration by the General Assembly shall submit the motion to its synod for consideration and, if the synod so decides, transmission to the Assembly, at such time as will enable the synod to comply with Standing Order 3b above.

3d. A member of the Assembly may deliver to the General Secretary not less than 21 days before the date of the meeting of the Assembly a notice in writing of a motion (which notice must include the name of a seconder) to be included in the Assembly agenda. If the subject matter of such a notice of motion appears to the General Secretary

to be an infringement of the rights of a synod *{the words “or a district council” deleted}* through which the matter could properly have been raised, the General Secretary shall inform the member accordingly and bring the matter before the Assembly Arrangements Committee which shall advise the Assembly as to the procedure to be followed.

3e. Proposals for amendments to the Basis and Structure of the URC, which may be made by the Mission Council or a Committee of the General Assembly or a synod, shall be in the hands of the General Secretary not later than 12 weeks before the opening of the Assembly. The General Secretary, in addition to the normal advice to members of the Assembly, shall, as quickly as possible, inform all synod clerks of the proposed amendment.

#### 4. Motions and amendments

4a. A report presented to the Assembly by a Committee or synod, under rule 1, shall be received for debate, unless notice has been duly given under rule 3d of a motion to refer back to that Committee or synod the whole or part of the report and its attached motion(s). Such a motion for reference back shall be debated and voted upon before the relevant report is itself debated. To carry such a motion two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. When a report has been received for debate, and before any motions consequent upon it are proposed, any member may speak to a matter arising from the report which is not the subject of a motion.

4b. During the meeting of the Assembly and on the report of a Committee, notice (including the names of proposer and seconder) shall be given to the Clerk of any new motions which arise from the material of the report, and of any amendments which affect the substance of motions already presented. The Moderator shall decide whether such motion or amendment requires to be circulated in writing to members before it is discussed by the Assembly. During the course of the debate a new motion or amendment may be stated orally without supporting speech in order to ascertain whether a member is willing to second it.

4c. No motion or amendment shall be spoken to by its proposer, debated, or put to the Assembly unless it is known that there is a seconder, the exception to this being motions presented on behalf of a Committee, of which printed notice has been given.

4d. A seconder may second without speaking and, by declaring the intention of doing so, reserves the right of speaking until a later period in the debate.

4e. It shall not be in order to move a motion or amendment which:

i) contravenes any part of the Basis of Union, or

ii) involves the church in expenditure without prior consideration by the appropriate committee, or

iii) pre-empts discussion of a matter to be considered later in the agenda, or

iv) amends or reverses a decision reached by the Assembly at its preceding two meetings unless the Moderator, Clerk and General Secretary together decide that changed circumstances or new evidence justify earlier reconsideration of the matter, or

v) is not related to the report of a Committee and has not been the subject of 21 days' notice under 3d.

The decision of the Moderator (in the case of i, ii, iii, and v) and of the Moderator with the Clerk and the General Secretary (in the case of iv) on the application of this Standing Order shall be final.

4f. An amendment shall be either to omit words or to insert words or to do both, but no amendment shall be in order which has the effect of introducing an irrelevant proposal or of negating the motion. The Moderator may rule that a proposed amendment should be treated as an alternative motion under Standing Order 4k.

4g. If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved. If an amendment is rejected a further amendment with a different outcome may be moved.

4h. An amendment which has been moved and seconded shall be disposed of before any further amendment may be moved, but notice may be given of intention to move a further amendment should the one before the Assembly be rejected.

4i. The mover may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly, alter the motion or amendment proposed.

4j. A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly. Any such consent shall be signified without discussion. It shall not be in order for any member to speak upon it after the proposer has asked permission to withdraw unless such permission shall have been refused.

4k. Alternative (but not directly negative) motions may be moved and seconded in competition with a motion before the Assembly. After any amendments duly moved under Standing Orders 4f, 4g and 4h have been dealt with and debate on the alternative motions has ended, the movers shall reply to the debate in reverse order to that in which they spoke initially. The first vote shall be a vote in favour of each of the motions, put in the order in which they were proposed, the result not being announced for one until it is announced for all.

If any of them obtains a majority of those voting, it becomes the sole motion before the Assembly. If none of them does so, the motion having the fewest votes is discarded. Should the lowest two be equal, the Moderator gives a casting vote. The voting process is repeated until one motion achieves a majority of those voting. Once a sole motion remains, votes for and against that motion shall be taken in the normal way and in accordance with Standing Order 7.

## 5. Timing of speeches and of other business

5a. Save by prior agreement of the officers of the Assembly, speeches made in the presentation of reports concerning past work of Assembly Committees which are to be open to question, comment or discussion shall not exceed five minutes.

5b. Save by the prior agreement of the officers of the Assembly, speeches made in support of the motions from any Assembly Committee, including the Mission Council, or from any synod shall not in aggregate exceed 45 minutes, nor shall speeches in support of any particular Committee or synod motion exceed 12 minutes, (eg a Committee with three motions may not exceed 36 minutes). The proposers of any other motion of which due notice has been given shall be allowed an aggregate of 10 minutes, unless a longer period be recommended by the officers of the Assembly or determined by the Moderator. Each subsequent speaker in any debate shall be allowed five minutes unless the Moderator shall determine otherwise; it shall, in particular, be open to the Moderator to determine that all speeches in a debate or from a particular point in a debate shall be of not more than three minutes.

5c. When a speech is made on behalf of a Committee, it shall be so stated. Otherwise a speaker shall begin by giving name and accreditation to the Assembly.

5d. Secretaries of Committees and full-time Executive Secretaries who are not members of Assembly may speak on the report of a Committee for which they have responsibility at the request of the Convener concerned. They may speak on other reports with the consent of the Moderator.

5e. In each debate, whether on a motion or on an amendment, no one shall address the Assembly more than once, except that at the close of each debate the proposer of the motion or the amendment, as the case may be, shall have the right to reply, but must strictly confine the reply to answering previous speakers and must not introduce new matters. Such reply shall close the debate on the motion or the amendment.

5f. The foregoing Standing Order (5e) shall not prevent the asking or answering of a question which arises from the matter before the Assembly or from a speech made in the debate upon it.

## 6. Closure of debate

6a. A member of Assembly may deliver to the General Secretary not less than 21 days before the date of the meeting of the Assembly a notice in writing of a motion that the General Assembly, for the better consideration of a specified resolution and its related documents, goes into a committee of the whole Assembly. Provided that the Moderator, Clerk and General Secretary together decide that this rule may appropriately be applied in the case of the said resolution, the motion shall be presented immediately following the opening speeches in support of the primary motion. For such a motion to be carried, two thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. Committee procedure enables members to speak more than once and exploratory votes to be taken on particular points or suggested changes. The number and length of speeches shall be at the discretion of the Moderator. After discussion in committee and decision on any proposed changes the Clerk shall draw the attention of the Assembly to any changes to the original text which have been agreed.

The Moderator shall then declare the committee stage to be ended, and the Assembly shall proceed to hear a closing speech from the mover of the motion under discussion and proceed to a vote on the motion, subject to any further motion under Standing Order 6. The decision of the Moderator with the Clerk and the General Secretary on the application of this Standing Order shall be final.

6b. In the course of the business any member may move that the question under consideration be not put. This motion takes precedence over every motion before the Assembly. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded and the proposer of the motion or amendment under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule.

Should the motion be carried the business shall immediately end and the Assembly shall proceed to the next business.

6c. In the course of any discussion, any member may move that the question be now put. This is sometimes described as “the closure motion”. If the Moderator senses that there is a wish or need to close a debate, the Moderator may ask whether any member wishes so to move; the Moderator may not simply declare a debate closed. Provided that it appears to the Moderator that the motion is a fair use of this rule, the vote shall be taken upon it immediately it has been seconded. When an amendment is under discussion, this motion shall apply only to that amendment. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. The mover of the original motion or amendment, as the case may be, retains the right of reply before the vote is taken on the motion or amendment.

6d. During the course of a debate on a motion any member may move that decision on this motion be deferred to the next Assembly. This rule does not apply to debates on amendments since the Assembly needs to decide the final form of a motion before it can responsibly vote on deferral. The motion then takes precedence over other business. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded and the proposer of the motion under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule or that deferral would have the effect of annulling the motion. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. At the discretion of the Moderator, the General Secretary may be instructed by a further motion, duly seconded, to refer the matter for consideration by other councils and/or by one or more committees of the Assembly. The General Secretary shall provide for the deferred motion to be represented at the next Meeting of the General Assembly.

6e. The motions described in Standing Orders 6b, 6c and 6d above are exceptions to Standing Order 4c, in that they may be moved and spoken to without the proposer having first obtained and announced the consent of a seconder. They must, however, be seconded before being put to the vote.

Precedence as between motions under 6a, 6b,6c and 6d is determined by the fact that after one of them is before the Assembly no other motion can be moved until that one has been dealt with.

## 7. Voting

7a. Voting on any motion whose effect is to alter, add to, modify or supersede the Basis, the Structure and any other form or expression of the polity and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church, is governed by paragraph 3(1) and (2) of the Structure.

7b. Other motions before the Assembly shall be determined by a majority of the votes of members of the Assembly present and voting as indicated by a show of voting cards, except

i) if the Assembly decides before the vote that a paper ballot be the method of voting or

ii) if the show of cards indicates a very close vote, and the Moderator decides, or a member of Assembly proposes and the Assembly agrees, then a paper ballot shall be the method of voting.

7c. To provide for voting in the case of a paper ballot, and to assist in taking a count of votes when the Moderator decides this is necessary, the Nominations Committee shall appoint tellers for each Assembly.

## 8. Questions

8a. A member may, if two days' notice in writing has been given to the General Secretary, ask the Moderator or the Convener of any Committee any question on any matter relating to the business of the Assembly to which no reference is made in any report before the Assembly.

8b. A member may, when given opportunity by the Moderator, ask the presenter of any report before the Assembly a question seeking additional information or explanation relating to matters contained within the report.

8c. Questions asked under Standing Orders 8a and 8b shall be put and answered without discussion.

## 9. Points of order, personal explanations, dissent

9a. A member shall have the right to rise and call attention to a point of order, and immediately on this being done any other member addressing the Assembly shall cease speaking until the Moderator has determined the question of order. The decision on any point of order rests entirely with the Moderator. Any member calling to order unnecessarily is liable to censure of the Assembly.

9b. A member feeling that some material part of a former speech by such member at the same meeting has been misunderstood or is being grossly misinterpreted by a later speaker may rise and request the Moderator's permission to make a personal explanation. If the Moderator so permits, a member so rising shall be entitled to be heard forthwith.

9c. The right to record in the minutes a dissent from any decision of the Assembly shall only be granted to a member by the Moderator if the reason stated, either verbally at the time or later in writing, appears to the Moderator to fall within the provisions of paragraph 10 of the Basis of Union.

9d. The decision of the Moderator on a point of order, or on the admissibility of a personal explanation, or on the right to have a dissent recorded, shall not be open to discussion.

#### 10. Admission of public and press

Members of the public and representatives of the press shall be admitted to the Assembly unless the Assembly otherwise decides, and they shall occupy such places as are assigned to them.

#### 11. Circulation of documents

Only documents authorised by the General Secretary in consultation with the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee may be distributed within the building in which the Assembly is meeting.

#### 12. Record of the Assembly

12a. A record of attendance at the meetings of the Assembly shall be kept in such a manner as the Assembly Arrangements Committee may determine.

12b. The draft minutes of each day's proceedings shall be made available in an appropriate form normally on the following day. They shall, after any necessary correction, be approved at the opening of a subsequent session. Concerning the minutes of the closing day of the Assembly the Clerk shall submit a motion approving their insertion in the full minutes of the Assembly after review and any necessary correction by the officers of the Assembly. Before such a motion is voted upon, any member may ask to have read out the written minute on any particular item.

12c. A signed copy of the minutes shall be preserved in the custody of the General Secretary as the official record of the Assembly's proceedings.

12d. As soon as possible after the Assembly meeting ends, the substance of the minutes together with any other relevant papers shall be published as a "Record of Assembly" and a copy sent to every member of the Assembly, each synod and local church.

#### 13. Suspension and amendment of standing orders

13a. In any case of urgency or upon proposal of a motion of which due notice has been given, any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting, provided that three-fourths of the members of the Assembly present and voting shall so decide.

13b. Motions to amend the Standing Orders shall be referred to the Clerk of the Assembly for report before being voted on by the Assembly (or, in case of urgency, by the Mission Council). The Clerk of the Assembly may from time to time suggest amendments.





**MISSION COUNCIL**

**13 – 15 MAY 2013**

**J4**

## **Membership of General Assembly**

### **Resolutions consequent on decisions taken by Mission Council in October 2012**

At its meeting in October 2012, acting on the proposals of the Assembly Arrangements Committee, Mission Council decided that the number of representatives of partner churches overseas and of other denominations in the UK who are members of Assembly should each be reduced from twelve to six.

The relevant categories of membership in the Structure are 2(6)(g) and 2(6)(l):

*(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;*

*(l) Representatives of other denominations in the United Kingdom as the General Assembly may from time to time determine;*

It is now necessary formally to pass a resolution to this effect.

Margaret Carrick Smith

11th March 2013

#### **RESOLUTION**

**Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly, resolves that there shall be six members in each of the categories of membership of General Assembly 2(6)(g) and 2(6)(l).**



MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

J5

## THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AT WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

1. The composition of the Board of Governors of Westminster College derives from resolutions of the General Assembly. The Board was first constituted by a resolution of General Assembly in 1996, and this resolution was amended by a further resolution at General Assembly 2008. The relevant clauses are as follows:

*2.2.2.1 There shall be a Board of Governors for the College appointed by the General Assembly, consisting of fifteen members as follows:*

*(a) a Convener, chosen for that purpose;*

*(b) a clerk or secretary to the Board, chosen for the purpose;*

*(c) eight other persons, of whom at least two shall have expertise in management, finance and the administration of buildings, two shall have expertise in education, and two shall have ministerial experience;*

*(d) the Principal of the college ex officio;*

*(e) a member of the teaching staff of the College, chosen by them;*

*(f) a student member of the College, chosen by the students;*

*(g) the Chair of the Cheshunt Governors ex officio;*

*(h) an Honorary Treasurer.*

*2.2.2.2 Within the total membership there shall be a representative of the Cambridge Theological Federation, a representative of the University of Cambridge or the Faculty of Divinity of the University, a representative of Anglia Ruskin University and the Secretary for Education and Learning.*

*2.2.2.3 The nomination of Governors in classes (a), (b), (c) and (h) shall be made by the Nominations Committee of the General Assembly, and the period of service for such Governors shall be six years. At least nine Governors shall be members of the United Reformed Church. The Nominations Committee shall ensure a regular rotation of Governors.*

2. The Convener of the Board reports that, at present, the Board is operating with sixteen members, not fifteen. This is because there are nine members in category (c), as follows:

Persons with expertise in management, etc.:

- (a) Revd Nigel Appleton
- (b) Canon Brian Long.

Persons with expertise in education:

- (a) Professor Derrik Ferney (Anglia Ruskin University)
- (b) Revd Canon Andrew Norman (Cambridge Theological Federation)
- (c) Dr. Jean Stevenson
- (d) Revd Fiona Thomas (Secretary for Education and Learning)
- (e) Revd Professor David Thompson (University of Cambridge)

Persons with ministerial experience:

- (a) Revd Craig Muir
- (b) Revd Kristin Ofstad

3. The anomaly of the additional member arose in 2008, when a new Convener of Governors (Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms) was appointed, but the previous Convener (Revd Professor David Thompson) retained his role as a Governor, as the representative of the Divinity Faculty of the University of Cambridge.

4. This anomaly clearly needs to be rectified. However, the experience of the Board of Governors since 2008 has suggested that there is significant merit in having nine Governors in class (c). This is because it is certainly necessary to retain two members with managerial experience (in addition to the Treasurer), and it is also vital to retain two members with ministerial experience. Given that para. 2.2.2.2 requires the appointment of four representative Governors who almost by definition will have educational experience, there is a clear case for a Governor with educational expertise who is not a representative Governor.

5. The Governors therefore ask that paragraph 2.2.2.1 be amended so that in the preamble “fifteen” is replaced by “sixteen”, and in (c) “eight” is replaced by “nine”.

6. This change would require no action from the Nominations Committee at this stage, since the additional Governor is already in place.

Margaret Carrick Smith

6th March 2013

## **RESOLUTION**

**Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly, resolves to amend clause 2.2.2.1 of the provisions for the Governors of Westminster College to read:**

**2.2.2.1 There shall be a Board of Governors of the College appointed by the General Assembly, consisting of sixteen members as follows:**

- (a) a Convener, chosen for that purpose;**
- (b) a clerk or secretary to the Board, chosen for the purpose;**
- (c) nine other persons, of whom at least two shall have expertise in management, finance and the administration of buildings, two shall have expertise in education, and two shall have ministerial experience;**
- (d) the Principal of the college ex officio;**
- (e) a member of the teaching staff of the College, chosen by them;**
- (f) a student member of the College, chosen by the students;**
- (g) the Chair of the Cheshunt Governors ex officio;**
- (h) an Honorary Treasurer.**



## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

# K

## Finance Update

### Good News: 2012 Budget

1 Mission Council agreed a budget for 2012 with an anticipated deficit of £958k. This was a major factor in deciding that there needed to be savings in the 2013 budget. In fact the deficit in 2012 was a mere £7k, leaving our reserves virtually intact. The budget figures are shown in the attached table and summarised below.

£000s	2012 Budget	2012 Actual
<b>Income:</b>		
M&M Fund	19,885	20,230
Pensions Support	1,000	1,051
Other	980	988
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,865</b>	<b>22,269</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>		
Ministerial stipends, pensions, etc	17,317	17,082
Programmes & infrastructure	5,506	5,194
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,823</b>	<b>22,276</b>
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>7</b>

2 Unfortunately, an analysis of these figures indicate that the factors that removed the projected 2012 deficit were mainly one-off and so will not help with the 2013 position. Ministry and Mission Fund (M&M) income rose mainly because of transferring to income some accumulated balances previously held on behalf of Synods. Without this effect, the M&M income would have been close to budget and followed the pattern of recent years of a reduction on the previous year. Giving per member has risen again but been more than offset by the 3% fall in membership in 2012.

3 On the expenditure side, the average number of stipends paid was lower than forecast: this is always a difficult number to estimate in advance with precision. The reduction in programme costs largely reflects Assembly Committees reducing their costs down towards the agreed reductions in the budget for 2013.

## **More Good News: 2012 Accounts**

4 The formal consolidated accounts of the Church in the name of the United Reformed Church Trust are in preparation. It is hoped the audit process will be completed in time for these to be tabled at Mission Council.

5 Despite the small deficit described above, the formal accounts will show significant net incoming resources in 2012. This is because the Trust accounts include various elements outside the Assembly budget on which Mission Council normally focuses. The key one for understanding the 2012 accounts is the inclusion of the accounts of Westminster College. Over £2.5m had been banked by the end of December towards the Development Appeal, which temporarily inflates the Church's overall balance sheet. But the Appeal is enough of a success story to deserve its own paragraph.....

## **Even More Good News: Westminster Appeal**

6 The 2010 General Assembly authorised a £7m appeal for the redevelopment of Westminster College and committed £1m from the Church's central funds towards it. Since then money given and promised has risen to over £6.72m. Of this over £2.29m has come from Synods and over £0.50m from local churches and individuals. With this encouragement, it is likely that the contracts will be signed in time for work to begin this June. The target for completion of the work is Summer 2014. Mission Council might want to rejoice.

## **Resolutions**

**1 Mission Council notes the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2012.**

**2 Mission Council gives thanks to God for the progress of the Westminster College Development Appeal and congratulates all those within and beyond the College whose generosity and hard work have made this possible.**

John Ellis  
Treasurer

23 March 2013



## MISSION COUNCIL

13 – 15 MAY 2013

L

# Nominations Committee

## I. Introduction

The Nominations Committee continues to circulate details of vacancies as widely possible and full details of those to be filled at Assembly 2014 were circulated in April 2013. Suggestions of suitable nominees have been invited from synods, FURY, central staff and committees.

The replies received from those approached by the Committee have continued to be monitored, in total and broken down into the four categories – male ordained, female ordained, male lay and female lay. The higher number of invitations sent out 2011/2012 as compared with 2010/2011 reflected the difficulty in filling several specific vacancies as well as the overall percentage of invitations declined, particularly by women. However, although no detailed analysis has yet been made, replies received for 2012/2013 reflect a marked increase in the number of invitations accepted across all categories with a very small number of invitations declined. Appreciation should be expressed for the willingness of so many people to serve the church in this way. Unfortunately, there was still an imbalance in gender representation in some areas, although efforts continued to be made to address this. Because of the support of the Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry in supplying details of possible candidates, there was an encouraging increase in BME membership. However, recruiting younger members still presented a challenge. The figures for 2011/2012 formed part of a five-year analysis, setting out comparisons of committee membership for 2008-2012. Because of the very small numbers involved, it was not felt possible to identify any significant trends.

At the request of the Investigations Task Group a small group has been appointed to draw up new guidelines for committee conveners. The group, comprising Revd John Durell (Convener), Revd Malcolm Hanson, Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe and Mr Frank Kantor, hopes to present a report to MCAG in early September.

## II. Assembly Staff Appointments

### 1. REVIEW GROUPS

- 1.1 The Review Group, convened by Revd Terry Hinks, recommended the re-appointment of the **Revd Richard Church** to serve as **Moderator of the North Western Synod** to 31 August 2019.

# III. Assembly Committees and Other Appointments

Notes:

1. The moderators, the moderators elect, the immediate past moderators and the general secretary are members *ex officio* of every standing committee.
2. Symbols have been used as follows:
  - \*\* denotes those whom Mission Council is invited to appoint for the first time;
  - † denotes those who have been invited to extend their periods of service;
  - # denotes a convener elect who will become convener in 2014;
  - / the name after the slash is the alternate for the one before it.
3. The number in round brackets following the name indicates the member's synod:  
(1) Northern, (2) North Western, (3) Mersey, (4) Yorkshire, (5) East Midlands, (6) West Midlands, (7) Eastern, (8) South Western, (9) Wessex, (10) Thames North, (11) Southern, (12) Wales, (13) Scotland. This numbering is not shown where it is not relevant.
4. When a member of a committee is there as a representative of another body or a particular category this is indicated in round brackets following the name.
5. Committee membership is normally for a period of four years, though this may sometimes exceptionally be renewable. Committee conveners serve an additional preliminary year as convener elect. In sections 1–4 of the report, appointments with a different term are noted.
6. The date in square brackets following the name indicates the date of retirement, assuming a full term.
7. In accordance with the decision of General Assembly 2000 some nominations are made directly by the National Synods of Wales and Scotland.
8. In years when General Assembly meets, new committee members normally take up their roles at the conclusion of Assembly. In years when General Assembly does not meet, they normally begin on 1<sup>st</sup> July.

## 1 MISSION COUNCIL

Mission Council acts on behalf of General Assembly. It consists of the officers of Assembly, the synod moderators and three representatives from each synod together with the conveners of Assembly committees, the chair of the United Reformed Church Trust and three FURY members, including the FURY moderator.

*(Synods appoint and decide terms for their representatives)*

Northern Synod	Revd Ann Jackson, Mr Robert Jones, Mr Danny Pigeon
North Western Synod	Revd Geoffrey Clarke, Miss Judith Haughton, Revd Sarah Moore
Mersey Synod	Mrs Joan Colwell, Mrs Rita Griffiths, Revd Tim Meadows
Yorkshire Synod	Mr Chris Reed, Mrs Jenny Poulter, Revd Sue Macbeth
East Midlands Synod	Mr Duncan Smith, Revd Jenny Mills, Mrs Jill Turner





Training Coordinator: Mr Keith Webster      Coopted: Mr Hartley Oldham  
General Secretary      Clerk to Assembly      Secretary for Ministries      Legal Adviser

## **1.6 Resource Sharing Task Group**

Convener: Revd Paul Whittle\*\* [2017]  
Secretary: Mr John Rea  
Treasurer: Revd Dick Gray  
Miss Margaret Atkinson      Mr Mike Gould      Mrs Rachel Wakeman  
[*ex officio*: Honorary Treasurer]

## **1.7 Human Sexuality Task Group**

Convener: Revd Elizabeth Caswell  
Dr Jacob Addo\*\*      Ms Karen Campbell\*\*      Revd John Hardaker\*\*  
Mrs Val Morrison\*\*      Revd Neil Riches\*\*      Revd Justine Wyatt\*\*

## **1.8 Medium Term Planning Group**

General Secretary      Honorary Treasurer  
Ms Linda Austin\*\*      Revd Romilly Micklem\*\*

# **2 MISSION DEPARTMENT**

## **2.1 Mission Committee**

Convener: Revd Tracey Lewis [2016]  
Secretary: Secretary for Mission  
Mrs Pat Poinen (1) [2015]      Mr Andrew Mudharara\*\* (2) [2017]  
Revd Andrew Willett (3) [2014]      Mrs Tessa Henry-Robinson (4) [2015]  
Revd David Dean (5) [2015]      Revd Louise Franklin (6) [2014]  
Revd Sam White (7) [2015]      Revd Janet Sutton Webb (8) [2016]  
Revd Peter Hurter (9) [2014]      Revd John Macaulay (10) [2015]  
Mr Martin Hayward (11) [2015]      Revd Nick Stanyon (12) [2014]  
Revd Lindsey Sanderson (13) [2015]

### **2.1.1 International Exchange Reference Group**

Convener: Mr Chris Wright [2015]  
Secretary: Secretary for World Church Relations  
Members: Revd Dr Andrew Prasad (Synod Moderator) [2014]  
Mrs Judith North (5) [2016]

### **2.1.2 *Commitment for Life* Reference Group**

Convener: Mr John Griffith [2016]

### **2.1.3 Methodist/United Reformed Church Interfaith Reference Group**

*(Members normally serve for six years - in parallel with Methodist terms)*

Co-Convener: Revd Claire Downing [2019]  
Mr David Jonathan (10) [2014]      Revd Bill Burgess (3) [2015]  
Revd Tim Clarke (10) [2015]

### **2.1.4 Joint Public Issues Team Strategy and Policy Group**

Ms Marie Trubic (Spokesperson on Public Issues for the United Reformed Church)  
*(Other members appointed by the Methodist Church and the Baptist Union of Great Britain.)*

### **2.1.5 Rural Strategy Group (United Reformed Church/Methodist)**

Revd Roy Lowes                      Revd Louise Franklin                      Revd Peter Ball

## **3 MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH DEPARTMENT**

### **3.1 Ministries Committee**

Convener: Revd Ruth Whitehead [2014]

Convener elect: #Revd Gethin Rhys\*\* [2018]

Secretary: Secretary for Ministries

Revd John Cox (7) [2014]

Mr Andy Buxton (12) [2014]

Revd Heather Pencavel (8) [2015]

Revd Clive Sutcliffe (7) [2016]

Revd Dr James Coleman\*\* (4) [2017]

Mrs Jane Woods-Scawen\*\*(6) [2017]

Mrs Judith Johnson (Leadership in Worship Advocate) [2015]

Convener, Assessment Board

#### **3.1.1 Ministries - Accreditation Sub-committee**

Convener: Revd Fran Ruthven [2017]

Secretary: Secretary for Ministries

Revd Richard Church (Synod Moderator) [2015]

Mr Jim Murison (4) [2014]

Revd Helga Cornell (6) [2015]

Revd Bridget Banks\*\* (11) [2017]      Revd Naison Hove\*\* (10) [2017]

#### **3.1.2 Ministries - CRCW Programme Sub-committee**

Convener: Revd Jacky Embrey [2016]

Secretaries: CRCW Development Workers

Ms Marie Trubic (CRCW) [2014]

Revd Carolyn Smyth (13) [2016]

Revd Keith Morrison (5) [2016]

Revd Dr John Campbell (10) [2016]

Mr John Grundy\*\* (3) [2017]

Mr Graham Ghaleb (Coopted CRCW)

Revd Paul Whittle (CRCW Development Workers' Line Manager)

#### **3.1.3 Ministries - Maintenance of Ministry Sub-committee**

Convener: Revd Pamela Ward [2017]

Mr Andrew Martlew (3) [2014]

Revd Alison Hall (3) [2014]

Revd Richard Turnbull (5) [2015]

Mr Peter Rippon (5) [2016]

Mrs Eilidh Young (13) [2016]

[*ex officio*: Honorary Treasurer      Convener, Pensions Executive]

#### **3.1.4 Ministries - Retired Ministers' Housing Sub-committee**

*(Members will normally serve for four years but appointments may be extended for a further two years.)*

Convener: Revd David Bedford [2015]

Secretary: Secretary, Retired Ministers' Housing Society Ltd

Revd Anne Bedford (3) [2015]

Revd John Humphreys† (Synod Moderator) [2014]

Mr Peter West (7) [2015]

Mr Malcolm Lindo\*\* (10) [2016]

[*ex officio*: Honorary Treasurer]

*(Properties are managed by a Company viz: **Retired Ministers' Housing Society Ltd.** Details of the Members of the board etc may be obtained from the secretary, Mr Andy Bottomley, at Church House.)*

### **3.1.5 Assessment Board**

*(Members normally serve for five years as training is required.)*

Convener: Dr Graham Campling [2014]

Convener elect: # Dr Ewan Harley\*\* [2019]

Retiring 2014 Mr Mark Hayes (7), Mr Robin Pencavel (8), Revd Jamie Kissack (4),  
Revd Paul Floe (12)

Retiring 2015 Mrs Judith Garthwaite (4), Mr Rod Morrison (4), Ms Mercy Nimako (11),  
Mrs Maureen Campbell (10)

Retiring 2016 Mrs Adella Pritchard (6), Revd Franziska Herring (6), Revd Sue Kirkbride (13)

Retiring 2017 Ms Alex Bediako (10), Mr Bill Gould (3), Revd Peter Henderson (8),  
Revd Shahbaz Javed (10)

Retiring 2018: Revd Ruth Allen\*\* (5), Revd Kim Plumpton\*\* (11), Revd Mary Thomas\*\* (9)

### **3.2 Education and Learning Committee**

Convener: Revd John Smith [2015]

Secretary: Secretary for Education and Learning

Mr Celvon Binns (6) [2014] Mrs Lindsey Cole (5) [2014]

Ms Sue Matthews (6) [2014] Mrs Liz Bird (5) [2014]

Mr Mal Breeze (12) [2016] Mrs Julie Jeffries (6) [2016]

Revd Dr Irene John (13) [2016] Revd Dr Jack Dyce\*\* (Resource Centre) [2017]

Revd David Salisbury\*\* (Synod Development Officer) [2017]

#### **3.2.1 Windermere Management Committee**

Convener: Revd Howard Sharp [2014]

Convener elect: #Revd Mitchell Bunting\*\* [2018]

Minute Secretary: Mrs Jenny Poulter† (4) [2016]

Mr Graham Law (6) [2015] Dr Peter Clarke (1) [2015] Mr Peter Farrand (2) [2015]

Revd Jan Adamson\*\* (13) [2017]

Mrs Joan Stocker (representative of Carver Memorial United Reformed Church)† [2017]

Secretary for Education and Learning

#### **3.2.2 Education for Ministry Phase 2 and 3 (EM2/3) Sub-committee**

Convener: Revd Dr Robert Pope

Minute Secretary: Revd Elizabeth Gray-King (EM2/3 Officer)

Vacancy (EM3 minister) Revd Sue Fender (EM2 minister)

Ms Pat Oliver (CRCW) Revd Stephen Collinson (Training and Development Officer)

Vacancy (Training and Development Officer)

Vacancy (Resource Centre) Secretary for Education and Learning

[*ex officio*: Convener, Education and Learning Committee Secretary for Ministries]

#### **3.2.3 Education and Learning Finance Sub-committee**

Convener: Vacancy

Minute Secretary: Secretary for Education and Learning

Convener, Education and Learning Committee

Vacancy

[*ex officio*: Honorary Treasurer

*In attendance*: Chief Finance Officer]

### **3.3 Youth and Children's Work Committee**

Convener : Revd Tim Meachin [2017]

Secretary: Head of Youth and Children's Work

Miss Tamara Oates† (5) [2014]

Revd Shirley Knibbs† (4) [2014]

Revd Tim Lowe (6) [2015]

Revd Sue McKenzie (10) [2015]

Ms Alison Hadley (5) [2015]

Mr Mick Smerdon (13) [2016]

Ms Helen Wheelhouse (4) [2016]

Mrs Lorraine Downer-Mattis\*\* (10) [2017]

Ms Eleanor McIntyre\*\* (11) [2017]

Mr Philip Reeve\*\* (3) [2017]

Revd Richard Eastman\*\* (5) [2017]

Vacancy

FURY moderator

FURY moderator elect

#### **3.3.1 Pilots Management Sub-committee**

Convener: Mrs Soo Webster [2015]

Member: Mrs Tricia Legge [2014]

*(Other members of the Sub-committee are appointed by the Youth and Children's Work Committee. The Congregational Federation also has two representatives.)*

## **4 ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

### **4.1 Assembly Arrangements Committee**

Convener: Dr David Robinson [2014]

Convener elect: Revd Michael Hopkins [2020]

Secretary: Facilities Manager

Assembly Moderators Moderators elect General Secretary Clerk to General Assembly

Convener, Local Arrangements Committee

### **4.2 Communications and Editorial Committee**

Convener: Revd John Humphreys [2015]

Secretary: Director of Communications

Revd Heather Whyte (8) [2015]

Revd Ian Fosten (7) [2015]

Revd George Mwaura (7) [2016]

Mrs Andrea Varnavides (4) [2016]

Revd Peter Cooper\*\* (10) [2017]

Revd Dr Kevin Snyman\*\* (12) [2017]

Mr Peter Knowles\*\* (10) [2017]

Mr Andy Jeens\*\* (3) [2017]

Vacancy

### **4.3 Equal Opportunities Committee**

Convener: Revd Elizabeth Nash [2014]

Convener elect: #Revd Helen Mee\*\* [2018]

Secretary: Revd Adrian Bulley [2017]

Revd Tom Arthur (12) [2014]

Mr Tunde Biyi (7) [2014]

Mrs Adella Pritchard (6) [2016]

Mrs Margaret Telfer (9) [2016]

Revd Iain McDonald (8) [2016]

Revd Helen Mee (13) [2014]

Ms Maria Mills\*\* (8) [2017]

Revd Susan Flynn\*\* (3) [2017]

### **4.4 Faith and Order Committee**

*(Members normally serve for six years.)*

Convener: Revd Elizabeth Welch [2017]

Secretary: Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

Revd Dr Michael Jagessar [2014]      Revd Dr Sarah Hall (9) [2014]  
Revd Dr Neil Messer (9) [2014]      Revd Dr Malachie Muneyeza (6) [2018]  
Revd Tim Meadows (3) [2018]      Dr Augur Pearce (7) [2018]

#### 4.5 Finance Committee

Convener: Honorary Treasurer  
Chief Finance Officer

Revd Edward Sanniez (10) [2014]      Ms Mary Martin (6) [2015]  
Mr Andrew Mackenzie (7) [2015]      Mrs Elsie Gilliland (2) [2016]  
Mr Richard Pryor (7) [2016]      Revd Kate Gartside\*\* (3) [2017]  
Mr Ian Simpson\*\* (9) [2017]      Revd Richard Turnbull\*\* (5) [2017]  
Chair of the Trustees

##### 4.5.1 Stewardship Sub-committee

Convener: Mr Keith Berry [2017]  
Revd Leslie Morrison (13) [2014]      Mr Jim Crawford (3) (2016)  
Mrs Rosie Buxton (12) [2016]      Mr John Denison\*\* (11) [2017]

#### 4.6 Nominations Committee

*(Synods appoint and decide terms for their representative.)*

Convener: Revd John Durell [2014]  
Convener elect: #Mrs Irene Wren\*\* [2018]  
Secretary: Mrs Carol Rogers [2017]  
Synod Representatives:  
Revd Val Towler (1)      Revd Martin Smith (2)      Mrs Rita Griffiths (3)  
Mr Chris Reed (4)      Mr Duncan Smith (5)      Mrs Margaret Marshall (6)  
Revd Paul Whittle (7)      Mr George Faris (8)      Mr Peter Pay (9)  
Mr Simon Fairington (10)      Revd Derrick Sena Dzandu-Hedidor (11)  
Dr Jean Silvan-Evans (12)      Miss Myra Rose (13)  
Representative of the GA Moderators' Group      General Secretary

##### 4.6.1 Panel for General Assembly appointments

*(Members normally serve for five years as training is required.)*

Retiring 2015      Revd Terry Hinks (9), Mr Chris Maple (3), Mr Duncan Smith (5),  
                         Ms Helen Stenson (12)  
Retiring 2016      Mrs Joan Turner (7), Mr Peter Pay (9), Revd Pauline Barnes (5),  
                         Revd Alison Termie (4), Ms Angela Quinn (13), Mr Phil Knott (2)  
Retiring 2017      Revd Stuart Brock (1), Revd Dr Jim Coleman (4), Revd Linda Elliott (12),  
                         Revd Derrick Sena Dzandu-Hedidor (11), Dr Tony Jeans (6),  
                         Mrs Hilary Miles (11), Revd Peter Rand (1), Mr David Clarkson (12)  
Retiring 2018      Revd Jan Adamson\*\* (13), Revd Viv Randles\*\* (10), Mrs Helen Renner \*\* (3),  
                         Mrs Lesley Richmond\*\* (13), Mr Bill Robson\*\* (6), Revd Liz Shaw\*\* (10),  
                         Revd Mike Shrubsole\*\* (9), Revd Martin Smith\*\* (2), 4 vacancies

#### 4.7 Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee

Convener: Revd Sheila Maxey [2015]  
Secretary: Deputy General Secretary  
Mrs Irene Wren (5) [2015]      Revd Howard Sharp (Synod Moderator) [2015]  
Mrs Gabrielle Pagan (7) [2016]      Mr Douglas Hay\*\* (13) [2017]

#### **4.8      Disciplinary Process - Commission Panel**

*(Members serve for five years as regular training is required. They may be invited to continue serving beyond this as experience is especially valuable on this panel.)*

Convener: Miss Kathleen Cross [2014]

Convener elect: #Revd David Skitt\*\* [2019]

Deputy Convener: Dr Jim Merrilees [2014]

Secretary: Mrs Gwen Jennings [2017]

Members:

Retiring 2014    Revd Hazel Allen (8), Mr Mick Barnes (7), Revd James Brown (6),

Miss Kathleen Cross (2), Mrs Mary Cummings (6), Mr Peter Etwell (1),

Revd Christine Fowler (8), Mrs Barbara Groom (8), Mr Andrew Harvey (8),

Revd Naison Hove (10), Mr Peter Jolly (2), Mrs Barbara Lancaster (2),

Mrs Barbara Madge (8), Revd Nicholas Mark (5), Mrs Pat Poinen (1),

Revd Shelagh Pollard (12), Mrs Lynne Upsdell (13)

Ms Elizabeth Whitten (7)

Retiring 2015    Revd Meryl Court (10), Dr Fiona Liddell (12), Mr Colin Macbean (9),

Mrs Pamela Sharp (3), Mr Patrick Smyth (13)

Retiring 2016    Mr Geoffrey Milnes (5), Revd David Pattie (8), Mr Neil Robinson (4),

Revd Yvonne Stone (6), Revd Wendy White (2)

Retiring 2017    Revd Nick Adlem (8) Miss Judith Houghton (2), Revd Colin Offor (1),

Revd Carolyn Smyth (13), Mr Donald Swift (3), Mr Douglas Hay (13),

Revd Craig Muir (6), Mr Alistair Forsyth (4), Mr David Rice (13),

Revd John Bremner (13), Revd Jane Campbell (5), Mr Keith Webster (10),

Revd Ian Kirby (8)

Retiring 2018    Revd Pauline Calderwood† (4),    Revd Bill Bowman† (11), Dr Peter Campbell

Smith† (11), Mr Roger Tucker† (9), Mrs Wendy Dunnett\*\* (9), Revd Dr John M

Parry\*\* (10), Revd Alan McGougan\*\* (13)

#### **4.9      Standing Panel for the Incapacity Procedure**

*(This panel is normally convened by the member with legal experience.)*

Secretary:      Revd Ray Adams [2017]

Vacancy (Synod Moderator) [2018]

Revd John Marsh (Past Moderator of General Assembly) [2017]

Mr David Nash (Legal experience)\*\* [2018] Dr Ewen Harley (GP)\*\* [2018]

Commission Officer for the Incapacity Procedure: Dr David Westwood [2016]

#### **4.10      Criminal Records Bureau (Churches' Agency for Safeguarding) Advisory Group**

Revd Paul Whittle (Synod Moderator)

Ms Liz Crocker (Child Care Specialist)

Mrs Wilma Frew (Magistrate)

Youth Work Development Officer

Children's Work Development Officer

Deputy General Secretary

#### **4.11      United Reformed Church Trust**

*(Members normally serve for six years. The directors of the Trust appoint new directors from those appointed as members. The members of the Trust elect the chair from among their own number and appoint a secretary and deputy secretary.)*





Members: Mrs Liz Tadd (12) [2015]                      Revd Steven Manders (13) [2016]  
 [ex officio: Convener, Maintenance of Ministry Sub-Committee                      Honorary Treasurer]  
 (The Pensions Executive reports to the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pensions Trust Board, the  
 Maintenance of Ministry Sub-committee and to the Finance Committee.)

#### 4.14 Investment Committee

Convener: Mr Richard Nunn [2014]  
 Convener elect: #Mr David Martin\*\* [2018]  
 Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones  
 Members: Mr Brian Hosier [2015]                      Revd Dick Gray [2016]  
                     Revd Julian Macro [2016]                      Mr Andrew Perkins† [2017]  
 [ex officio: Honorary Treasurer                      Convener, Pensions Executive  
 Chair of United Reformed Church Trust or another Director  
 Chair of United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Trust or another Director  
 Treasurer, Westminster College  
 In attendance: Chief Finance Officer]

## 5 REPRESENTATIVES TO MEETINGS OF SISTER CHURCHES

- |      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| 5.1  | Presbyterian Church in Ireland<br>Revd Melanie Smith  | Revd Dr Michael Jagessar                                   |
| 5.2  | General Synod of Church of England  | Revd Graham Maskery† [2013]                                |
| 5.3  | Methodist Conference  | Secretary for Ecumenical Relations                         |
| 5.4  | Congregational Federation   | Secretary for Ecumenical Relations                         |
| 5.5  | General Assembly of Church of Scotland<br>[note 7]                      Revd Melanie Smith [2014] | Revd Dr Michael Jagessar [2014]<br>Revd Robin Hine         |
| 5.6  | United Free Church of Scotland [note 7]   | Revd John Humphreys  |
| 5.7  | Scottish Assembly of the Congregational<br>Federation [note 7]                                    | Awaiting invitation  |
| 5.8  | Scottish Episcopal Church [note 7]  | Revd Mitchell Bunting                                      |
| 5.9  | Methodist Church in Scotland [note 7]   | Revd Mitchell Bunting                                      |
| 5.10 | Baptist Union of Scotland [note 7]  | Revd John Humphreys  |
| 5.11 | Presbyterian Church of Wales [note 7]   | Assembly Moderator   |
| 5.12 | Union of Welsh Independents [note 7]  | Ecumenical Officer (appointed by URC<br>General Secretary) |
| 5.13 | Covenanted Baptists   | Ecumenical Officer   |
| 5.14 | Church in Wales Governing Board [note 7]  | Ecumenical Officer   |
| 5.15 | Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church   | To be decided  |

## 6 REPRESENTATIVES ON ECUMENICAL CHURCH BODIES

The following have been nominated as United Reformed Church representatives at the major gatherings of the Ecumenical Bodies listed.

### 6.1 Council for World Mission (CWM)

Revd David Coleman, Mrs Zadie Orr, Mr Philip Timson, Secretary for World Church Relations

#### 6.1.1 CWM European Region Meeting

Revd David Coleman, Mrs Zadie Orr, Mr Philip Timson, Secretary for World Church Relations,  
 Secretary for Mission

## **6.2 World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) General Council**

Revd Dr Sarah Hall, Ms Emma Pugh, Revd Dr David Pickering, Secretary for World Church Relations, General Secretary

## **6.3 World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee**

Represented indirectly

## **6.4 WCC Faith and Order Commission**

Represented indirectly

## **6.5 Conference of European Churches Assembly**

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

## **6.6 The Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council**

Revd Rowena Francis, Rev Professor David Thompson, Secretary for World Church Relations

## **6.7 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) Church Leaders' Meeting**

General Secretary

### **6.7.1 CTBI Senior Representatives' Forum**

General Secretary, Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

### **6.7.2 CTBI Environmental Issues Network**

Revd David Coaker, Revd Dr David Pickering

### **6.7.3 CTBI Church and Public Issues Network**

Ms Marie Trubic, Secretary for Church and Society

### **6.7.4 CTBI Churches' Criminal Justice Forum**

Mrs Wilma Frew

### **6.7.5 CTBI Stewardship Network**

Mrs Faith Paulding

### **6.7.6 CTBI Churches' International Students' Network**

Ms Eleri Evans [2014]

### **6.7.7 CTBI Consultative Group on Ministry amongst Children (CGMC)**

Mrs Karen Morrison, vacancy

### **6.7.8 CTBI Inter-Religious Network**

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

**6.7.9 CTBI Racial Justice Network**

Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry

**6.7.10 CTBI Churches' Network for Mission**

Secretary for Mission

**6.7.11 CTBI China Forum**

Revd Dr Walter Houston

**6.8 Churches Together in England (CTE)**

**6.8.1 CTE - Enabling Group**

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

**6.8.2 CTE - Coordinating Group for Local Unity**

Revd Kevin Watson, Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

**6.8.3 CTE - Churches Together for Healing**

Revd Deborah McVey, Revd Vivien Henderson [2014]

**6.8.4 CTE – Churches' Joint Education Policy Committee**

Mr Graham Handscomb

**6.8.5 CTE Churches' Theology and Unity Group**

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

**6.8.6 CTE – Group for Evangelisation**

Secretary for Mission

**6.8.7 CTE – Spirituality Coordinating Group**

Revd Sue Henderson

**6.8.8 CTE – Churches' Rural Group**

Revd David Herbert

**6.8.9 CTE – Minority Ethnic Affairs Group**

Revd John Danso, Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry

**6.8.10 CTE Youth Work Matters Group**

Secretary for Youth Work

**6.9 Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) Members' Meeting [see note 7]**

Revd John Humphreys, Revd Mitchell Bunting/Mrs Kathleen Ziffo

**6.10 National Sponsoring Body for Scotland** [see note 7]

Revd John Humphreys, Revd Mitchell Bunting

**6.11 Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN)** [see note 7]

Revd Gethin Rhys

**6.12 Commission of Covenanted Churches** [see note 7]

Synod Moderator, Ecumenical Officer, Mrs Ann Shillaker

**6.13 Joint Liturgical Group**

Revd Hugh Graham

**6.14 Free Church Education Committee**

Mr Graham Handscomb, Mrs Gillian Kingston

**6.15 European Churches' Environmental Network**

Revd David Coaker

**6.16 Churches' Refugee Network**

Mr Geoff Duncan, Revd Fleur Houston

**6.17 Churches' Committee on Funerals and Crematoria**

Revd Sally Thomas, Revd Kate Hackett [2014]

**6.18 Churches' Agency for Safeguarding**

Secretary for Youth Work

**6.19 Churches' Forum for Safeguarding**

Secretary for Youth Work

**6.20 Churches' Network for Non-Violence**

Secretary for Youth Work

**7 REPRESENTATIVES ON FORMAL BI-LATERAL AND MULTI-LATERAL COMMITTEES**

**7.1 United Reformed Church/Methodist Strategic Oversight Group**

General Secretary                      Deputy General Secretary                      Honorary Treasurer  
Member of Assembly Moderators' Group

**7.2 Methodist/United Reformed Church Liaison Committee**

Co-Convener: Revd Kevin Watson (Synod Moderator)

Miss Emma Pugh, 3 vacancies, Revd Peter Rand (co-opted)  
Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

### **7.3 Roman Catholic – United Reformed Church Bilateral Dialogue in England and Wales**

Revd Prof David Thompson, Revd Dr John Bradbury, Revd Dr Sarah Hall, Mrs Ann Shillaker, Mr Malcolm Townsend

Staff Secretary responsible to be decided.

### **7.4 United Reformed Church/Church of England Study Group**

Revd Nicola Furley-Smith (co-convener), Revd Tim Meadows, Revd Julian Templeton, Revd Elizabeth Welch,

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

### **7.5 EMU Partnership Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church in Scotland and the United Reformed Church Synod of Scotland)**

Revd John Humphreys, Mr John Collings, Revd Zam Walker, Revd Mitchell Bunting (ex officio)

## **8 UNITED REFORMED CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES ON GOVERNING BODIES OF THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES, ETC**

### **8.1 Northern College**

Miss Margaret Atkinson [2015]

Revd Dr Robert Pope [2015]

Revd David Jenkins †[2017]

Mr Steve Wood† [2017]

Vacancy

Secretary for Education and Learning

#### **8.1.1 Luther King House Educational Trust**

Secretary for Education and Learning

### **8.2 Westminster College: Board of Governors**

Convener: Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms [2014]

Convener elect: Vacancy

Clerk: Revd Cecil White [2016]

Honorary College Treasurer: Mr Anthony Williams [2016]

Members:

Revd Craig Muir [2015]

Revd Nigel Appleton [2015]

Mr Brian Long MBE [2016]

Revd Kristin Ofstad [2016] Dr Jean Stevenson † [2018]

Revd Canon Andrew Norman [2018] (Cambridge Theological Federation)

Secretary for Education and Learning

*(together with other Governors appointed by other bodies)*

#### **8.2.1 Cheshunt Foundation**

Revd Craig Muir [2014]

Mr Guy Morfett† [2016]

## **8.2.2 Cambridge Theological Federation**

Convener, Westminster College Governors

## **9 GOVERNORS OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS WITH WHICH THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH IS ASSOCIATED**

**9.1 Caterham School**                      Revd Nicola Furley-Smith [2015]

**9.2 Eltham College**                        Revd Terry Sparks [2015]

**9.3 Walthamstow Hall**                    Mrs Isabel Heald [2015]

**9.4 Milton Mount Foundation**    Revd Val Towler [2014]            Revd Derek Lindfield [2014] Revd Richard Wells [2014]

Mrs Hilary Miles† [2016]      Revd Kevin Swaine\*\* [2016]

### **9.5 Silcoates School**

Revd Steven Knapton [2014]    Mrs Sue Lee [2015]                      Mrs Tessa Henry-Robinson [2015]  
Dr Moira Gallagher† [2017]    Revd Dr Janet Lees† [2017]    Vacancy

### **9.6 Taunton School**

Revd David Grosch-Miller (Moderator, South Western Synod)

### **9.7 Bishops Stortford College**

Mr Anthony Trigg [2015]

## **10 MISCELLANEOUS**

The United Reformed Church is represented on a variety of other national organisations and committees as follows:

### **10.1 Arthur Rank Centre**

Revd Elizabeth Caswell [2014]

### **10.2 Churches Legislation Advisory Service**

Mrs Sheila Duncan/General Secretary/Deputy General Secretary

### **10.3 Congregational Fund Board**

Mr Anthony Bayley [2014]                      Revd Geoffrey Roper [2014]                      Revd Eric Allen [2015]

Revd Kate Hackett [2015]                      Mrs Jackie Haws† [2017]

### **10.4 Congregational Memorial Hall Trust**

Mrs Margaret Thompson [2014]                      Mr Hartley Oldham [2015]

Mr Graham Stacy [2015]

Dr John Thompson [2016]

Dr Brian Woodhall [2016]

Revd Derek Wales †[2017]

## **10.5 Discipleship and Witness Board of Trustees**

Mrs Patricia Hubbard [from before 1999]

### **10.5.1 Publications Development Group**

Vacancy

## **10.6 English Heritage's Places of Worship Forum**

Mr Peter West (Convener of the Listed Buildings Advisory Group)

## **10.7 Lord Wharton's Charity**

Revd Derek Lindfield\*\* [2017]

## **10.8 Methodist Faith and Order Committee**

Dr Augur Pearce\*\* [2017]

## **10.9 Retired Ministers' and Widows' Fund**

Mr Ken Meekison [from before 1999]      Mrs Jill Strong [from 1999]

Revd Julian Macro [from 2004]

## **10.10 Samuel Robinson's Charities**

Mr Tony Alderman [from 2004]

## **10.11 Scout Association – URC Faith Adviser**

Revd David Marshall-Jones

## **10.12 United Reformed Church History Society Council**

Revd Prof David Thompson [2014]      Revd Fleur Houston [2014]

Dr David Robinson [2015]      Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe† [2018]

## **10.13 United Reformed Church Guide and Scout Fellowship**

Revd David Marshall-Jones

## **10.14 Westhill Endowment Fund**

Mr Howard Bridge, Vacancy, Revd Elizabeth Welch (co-opted)

John Durell/Sarah Dodds

28 March 2013



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L1

## Nominations Committee

### Supplementary Report

#### 1 United Reformed Church Trust

Towards the end of 2012 a resignation from the United Reformed Trust was received from Mrs Rachel Wakeman, the West Midlands Synod Trust and Property Officer, who had been reappointed in 2010 to serve until 2014. Although normally appointments coincide with General Assembly years, the Chair to the Trust, Revd Professor David Thompson, asked that the vacancy be filled as soon as possible at Mission Council in May 2013 rather than delay the appointment until 2014. It was also requested that Mission Council be asked to make an appointment for one year until 2014 and that the new member be eligible for reappointment in 2014 for the normal four years.

As time was limited it was agreed that only Synods within Group 2 be consulted ie West Midlands, South Western, Wessex and Wales and that the search should concentrate on Mrs Wakeman's area of expertise of finance and property. In addition, following the considerable concern expressed at General Assembly 2012 by the Convener of Equal Opportunities Committee, Synods were asked to make strenuous efforts to address the current gender imbalance of the Trust membership.

Two nominations were received, both male. However, as both were considered to be excellent candidates, it was agreed that they be forwarded to the Trust to consider who would be the more appropriate to replace Mrs Wakeman.

A recommendation will be submitted verbally to Mission Council.

#### 2 Appointment of Deputy Treasurer

Following the decision to appoint a Deputy Treasurer, Nominations Committee was requested by the Human Resources Advisory Group to recruit a search committee to identify suitable candidates. This committee, made up of members with financial expertise and knowledge of relevant networks from which possible candidates might be drawn, is currently being recruited and Miss Margaret Atkinson has agreed to act as convener.

To avoid any delay in the appointment Mission Council is requested to give this search committee the right of appointment, similar to that given to a Review/Appointments Group. It is suggested that the new appointee be confirmed "subject to Mission Council approval" and could start work in anticipation of this being forthcoming at the November Mission Council.

#### ***Resolution:***

***Mission Council agrees to give the search committee for the post of Deputy Treasurer the right of appointment, subject to Mission Council approval in November.***



*{Note: the Clerk to the Assembly will wish to advise Mission Council concerning the admissibility of this resolution.}*

### **3 Amendments to main report**

#### **3.1 Ministries Committee**

Add: Revd Peter Meek\*\* (Synod Moderator) [2017]

#### **4.6.1 Panel for General Assembly Appointments**

Delete: 4 vacancies    Add: Revd Dr Irene John\*\* (13), Revd Michele Jarmany\*\* (2)

2 vacancies

#### **4.7 Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee**

Delete: Secretary: Deputy General Secretary    Add: Secretary: Revd Howard Sharp\*\*

Delete: Revd Howard Sharp (Synod Moderator)    Add: Revd Clare Downing\*\* (Synod Moderator)

(This is a temporary measure)

#### **4.8 Disciplinary Process Commission Panel**

Add: Mrs Mary Slater\*\*(11) [2018]

#### **4.9 Standing Panel for the Incapacity Procedure**

Delete: Vacancy.    Add: Revd Roy Lowes\*\* (Synod Moderator) [2018]

### **4 Change of Secretary**

At our March meeting warm thanks were expressed to our Secretary, Sarah Dodds, for her indefatigable work for us over the past four years. I myself am keenly aware of just how much information Sarah has had at her fingertips, and how efficiently and graciously she has carried out this demanding role. After June her email count should drop considerably, and deservedly so – but we shall then be welcoming in her place Carol Rogers, and we are confident that the committee's business will remain in good hands.

**John Durell**



## MISSION COUNCIL

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# N

# Sexual Ethics Advisory Group

## Issue 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 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.

This report details the activity since June 2008 and shows how the work is now incorporated into URC structures.

### **SEAG revised the remit:**

To ensure that all members and leaders in the URC are safe from abuse and harassment

To meet this remit, the Group agreed three groups of activities:

- Ensure awareness raising for prevention
- Ensure safe structures to handle events
- Ensure safe structures to handle effects of events

Each group of activity was broken down in detail:

### **1. Ensure awareness raising for prevention**

Specifically,

- a. Encourage information, understanding and guidance events
- b. Encourage training at locations where URC Church Leaders meet and identify and/or provide training materials
- c. Encourage training at locations where RC Church Members meet and identify and/or provide training materials
- d. Ensure that commitments are made in Codes of Conduct
- e. Ensure appropriate record keeping and record sharing

### **2. Ensure safe structures to handle events**

Specifically,

- a. Ensure that there are Pastoral Response Team resources for churches in cases of Clergy misconduct

- b. Ensure that there are Synod Advisors to handle information about lay misconduct
- c. Ensure that there are Synod Hearing Panels to adjudicate on cases of lay misconduct
- d. Ensure that that there is appropriate guidance and training for all those who operate the structures

**3. Ensure safe structures to handle effects of events**

Specifically,

- a. Ensure that there are Pastoral Response Team resources for churches in cases of Clergy misconduct

David A L Jenkins, Rowena Francis, Elizabeth Gray-King

Summer 2012

Following are three tables showing where this remit now fits within the URC structures.

Glossary:

APRT	Assembly Pastoral Reference Team
PRWC	Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee
E&L	Education and Learning (department) of the URC
SEAG	Sexual Ethics Advisory Group
SESG	Sexual Ethics Steering Group

## 1. Ensure awareness raising for prevention

Remit	SEAG Activity	Place in URC from 2012
a. Encourage information, understanding and guidance events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Boundaries/Sexual Ethics training delivered in 11 Synods</li> <li>▪ Local Resource packs made available in Synods</li> <li>▪ Mission Council approves “<i>URC Policy and Procedure in Response to Alleged Incidents of Sexual Harassment and Abuse</i>” [the Policy] &amp; agrees to review after three years.</li> <li>▪ 2008 Policy and Procedures, Flow Chart on Sexual Harassment placed on URC Website, January 2009</li> <li>▪ Presentation to Synod Moderators on SEAG work, December 2009</li> </ul>	PRWC and E&L
b. Encourage training at locations where URC Church Leaders meet and identify and/or provide training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Boundaries/Sexual Ethics training delivered to most ministers in 11 Synods</li> <li>▪ Sexual Ethics issues included in all EM2 residential weekends</li> <li>▪ E&amp;L Committee agrees to fund development of modular training with EM2 and EM3 material. Audit of available sources to complete by April 2012 and training material for delivery of modules by Autumn 2012.</li> </ul>	E&L in partnership with Synod Training and Development Officers
c. Encourage training at locations where RC Church Members meet and identify and/or provide training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local Resource packs made available to churches in Synods</li> <li>▪ E&amp;L Committee agrees to fund development of modular training material. Audit of available sources to complete by April 2012 and training material for delivery of modules by Autumn 2012.</li> </ul>	E&L in partnership with Synod Training and Development Officers
d. Ensure that commitments are made in Codes of Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ministerial Codes of Conduct were updated</li> <li>▪ EM2 2012 Guidelines specify EM2 Pastoral Adviser support to adhere to Codes of Conduct</li> </ul>	E&L in partnership with Resource Centres for Learning
e. Ensure appropriate record keeping and record sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Synod Training and Development Officers maintain records of Synod attendances at training events.</li> </ul>	E&L in partnership with Synod Training and Development Officers

## 2. Ensure safe structures to handle events

Remit	SEAG Activity	Place in URC from 2012
a. Ensure that there are Pastoral Response Team resources available for churches in cases of Clergy misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assembly Pastoral Reference Team (APRT) Coordinator appointed December 2008</li> </ul>	APRT now accountable to Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee (PRWC), September 2011
b. Ensure that there are Synod Advisors to hear and handle information about lay misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Residential Synod Adviser training events held, January &amp; February 2009 &amp; March 2010; Guidelines produced March 2009</li> <li>▪ APRT pool training completed, January 2010.</li> <li>▪ Detailed Adviser status in 12 Synods updated, February 2012</li> </ul>	PRWC agrees to ensure “that each Synod has a named advisor for its response to any allegation of sexual abuse”, February 2012
c. Ensure that there are Synod Hearing Panels to adjudicate on cases of lay misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Model guideline produced for hearing panels under Appendix D of Policy, January 2010</li> </ul>	PRWC
d. Ensure that there is appropriate guidance and training for all those who operate the structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ E&amp;L Committee agrees to fund development of modular training to embrace Synod Adviser, Spring 2012</li> </ul>	E&L and PRWC

## 3. Ensure safe structures to handle effects of events

Remit	SEAG Activity	Place in URC from 2012
a. Ensure that there are Pastoral Response Team resources available for churches in cases of Clergy misconduct	(as Activity at 2 a)	PRWC



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**P**

## **Listed Buildings Advisory Group**

### **Introduction**

The Listed Buildings Advisory Group, which normally meets twice a year, is accountable to Mission Council for co-ordinating a common approach to the application of Ecclesiastical Exemption across the Synods of the United Reformed Church other than Scotland. It is widely acknowledged that the facility to control our own listed buildings consent procedure, gained from the government by the churches some twenty years ago, is a valuable concession. For instance, each Synod, in coming to a decision on proposed alterations, must take account of the role of the building as a centre for worship and mission. This consideration, not required of local authorities, is an important benefit of the arrangement.

Additionally, but no less vitally, its officers and other members maintain the link between this Church and other organisations, in particular English Heritage where relationships are positive and cordial. They also maintain contact with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and relevant representatives of other churches. These relationships ensure the smooth flow of information both ways, to the benefit of all United Reformed Church congregations.

### **The year 2012**

A preoccupation of the early part of the year was the decision by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to impose VAT on alterations to listed churches. Alongside the other churches the United Reformed Church made representations, noting in particular the difficulties experienced by churches part way through a building project. Subsequently the Department of Culture Media and Sport extended the scope of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, and more funding was made available to it.

The United Reformed Church, through its Listed Buildings Advisory Group, has been commissioned to help English Heritage improve its advocacy for historic chapel and church buildings. English Heritage wishes to create an up-to-date database of the physical condition of and extent of criminal damage to all listed United Reformed Church church buildings in England, and the Group is grateful for the cooperation of Synod offices in the preparation of this material.

An announcement by English Heritage that they are changing their procedures for listing may reassure the officers of some churches. Noting that only 30 per cent of spot listing applications result in a listing, English Heritage are now much less likely to respond to a member of the public in pursuing a listing application, unless the building concerned is about to be demolished, is self-evidently of major significance, or is in a heritage priority area.

Heritage protection legislation is changing, and the Listed Buildings Advisory Group has been involved in the Government's consultation on the proposed changes. More will be reported as the Government's intentions become clear. The changes are part of the current Government's desire to see

regulation reduced and simplified. It is believed that the wider government initiative to simplify planning through a new National Planning Policy Framework will have few implications for the work of the Listed Buildings Advisory Committees.

In 2011, the Listed Buildings Advisory Group reported with regret the decision by the National Synod of Wales to withdraw from the Ecclesiastical Exemption arrangements. This is still pending. The latest information is that the new arrangement, by which listed buildings matters for United Reformed Church buildings in Wales will fall under the control of local planning authorities, is part of the development and implementation of a new Heritage Bill expected in 2014-15. Meanwhile, arrangements continue as before, and the Synod's officers are kept in touch with the activities of the Group.

## **General**

As indicated earlier in this report, the facility to control changes to our own listed buildings consent is a valuable concession. The Synods are very well served by the members of their Listed Buildings Advisory Committees, some of whom have been involved since the scheme's inception in 1994. Between them they provide the Synods with considerable relevant knowledge and expertise. They cannot go on for ever, however, and, although the system of synod-based committees is currently viable despite difficulties of recruitment, the time may well be coming when it is desirable to consider alternative arrangements. Meanwhile discussions are in hand to streamline the formal consultation required when new members are recruited.

Mission Council is invited to:

receive the annual report of the Listed Buildings Advisory Group

David Figures  
5 April 2013



## MISSION COUNCIL

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# Mission Council Advisory Group

## 1. Communications protocol

MCAG agreed the substance of a new communications protocol which will be in force with effect from the May Mission Council.

## 2. Update from the joint meeting of Mission Council and Methodist Council

Following the joint meeting with the Methodist Council in October 2012 a joint 24-hour meeting was held in January between the Methodist Connexional Leaders Forum and 26 leaders of the United Reformed Church, including the Assembly, Synod and FURY Moderators and senior staff. The combined forum reflected further on our ecumenical calling and suggested a number of specific ways in which the two denominations could work more closely together for the sake of the Kingdom. Subsequently the URC-Methodist Strategic Oversight Group met and considered the output of both meetings.

While many Methodists, especially those working in Local Ecumenical Projects (LEPs), are as keen as many in the United Reformed Church for blockages to be cleared and progress to be made in coming closer together, Mission Council needs to recognise that other Methodists more naturally look towards the Church of England from which Methodism sprang. In addition, between the time the joint meeting of the two Councils was agreed and the meeting actually taking place, the Methodist Conference agreed to a series of radical proposals under the Fruitful Field project on training. These will require a great deal of further work by Methodist leaders and staff to bring to effective fruition. This work itself could offer ecumenical opportunities and it is certainly very much in the interest of the United Reformed Church that this work is done thoroughly and creatively as vital ecumenical relationships in relation to both ministerial and lay training could be at stake.

Within this new context, the URC-Methodist Liaison Group has been commissioned to scope out what other work to bring the two Churches closer to each other might be attempted and they will report to the Strategic Oversight Group later in the year. They have copies of all the suggestions made.

In the context of other business coming to Mission Council, the implication of this update is that it is improbable that any major changes in structural or staff relations with our Methodist friends will happen quickly. Therefore Mission Council might be unwise to delay any necessary decisions, pending such possible, but unknown, changes.



### **3. Northern Synod**

The five northern synods (Scotland, Northern, North Western, Mersey and Yorkshire) held a meeting for officers and representatives in September 2011 to explore how they might work more closely together. Since that time there has been a modest sharing of staff and programme life between them. However, forthcoming searches for new synod moderators have brought this exploration back into focus. Howard Sharp is due to retire as moderator of the Mersey Synod in June 2014; Rowena Francis completes her term as moderator of the Northern Synod later this year.

When they heard about Rowena's imminent departure, the other four moderators urged the Assembly officers to delay the appointment of a new moderator for Northern Synod until new ways of working could be seriously considered. Northern Synod now has 3000 members; Mersey is slightly larger with 3800. However, the two combined are smaller than the Newcastle District was in the 1970's. Other synods will share Northern Synod's particular difficulty in finding people to do the jobs to fulfil the functions of a synod.

Val Morrison and Roberta Rominger reported to MCAG that they had met with the Mission Executive Committee of Northern Synod to discuss the possibility of appointing an interim minister to the post of synod moderator until July 2014. This person's task would be twofold: to give pastoral support to the officers, ministers and churches of the synod and to ensure that consultation with the other four synods takes place as a matter of urgency to identify the best way forward for the next chapter of their life in partnership. MCAG supported this action and recommended that Mission Council should be alerted to the situation.

A further visit was scheduled for early April and progress would be reported to Mission Council.

### **4. New format for Mission Council papers**

Those who were present at the October 2012 Mission Council meeting may have noticed that the papers prepared for our joint session with the Methodist Council were presented with headings which summarised the contents of the paper and gave other key information. Impressed by this, MCAG agreed that papers presented to Mission Council should in future contain such headings. A pro forma will be circulated in the autumn. The following information will be sought: contact name and details for the presenter; subject and aims of the paper; main points; background, context and relevant documents.

## APPENDIX 2

### Analysis of Student expenses financed by URC 2011-12

	by RCL			Average cost per student		
	Northern	Scottish	Westminster	e-o	g-m	
<b>Students:</b> 50 in total						
35 recipients of a grant	11	3	21			
15 part timers on expenses only	10	1	4			
	<u>21</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>25</u>			
<b>Expenses by category</b>						
<b>Travel Home to College</b>				<b>£29,034</b>	753	507
Claimed by 40 students						
Paid at 25p per mile or actual cost.						
Can be 3x per year or 2x per week						
<b>Travel on placement/internship</b>				<b>£30,008</b>	182	779
Claimed by 34 students						
Paid at 45p per mile or actual cost						
<b>Books and stationery</b>				<b>£1,967</b>	131	n/a
Claimed by 9 part time students						
<b>Computer grants</b>				<b>£3,837</b>	33	95
Claimed by 11 students, mostly first-years						
<b>Removal/resettlement grants/expenses</b>				<b>£5,790</b>	n/a	165
5 awarded grant at start of course - total £5142						
5 claimed smaller sums, e.g. van hire						
<b>Board and Lodging</b>				<b>£51,279</b>	770	1,135
This varies by RCL and type of course:						
- At Northern this represents charges by Luther King House for accommodation, meal coupons and soft drink machines.						
- At Scottish it depends on the home base of the student and the location of their studies.						
- At Westminster these are the subsidised charges made to students not in full time residence, and meal plans for those who are.						
<b>Flat/house rent (and Accommodation grants)</b>				<b>£81,149</b>	0	2,319
This varies by RCL and individual circumstances, and is part of existing means testing						
- At Northern and Scottish it was paid to 5 grant students to help with rent/mortgage costs.						
- At Westminster, 5 students received allowances towards own-home mortgage, local market rental or manse rental on internship.						
Also 8 students living in College flats and houses received allowances towards the rent charged by the College.						
<b>Total of identifiable costs</b>				<b>£203,064</b>		
The remainder of the total of approx. £509k for these students disbursed in respect of 2011-12 represents the basic grants and dependents' allowances paid to the 35 grant students, an average of £8,750 per student.						8,750
<b>Key:</b>				<b>Total</b>	<u>1,869</u>	<u>13,750</u>
e-o expenses only						
g-m grant-maintained						

Roberta Rominger presented papers D and D1 on behalf of the Medium Term Strategy Group set up by the previous Mission Council meeting. Paper D provided an overview of the scope of the group’s purpose and work and was received by Mission Council. Paper D1 – entitled “Even Better Synods” – aimed “to promote a creative discussion about the future shape and purpose of synods.” Mission Council discussed the ideas in the paper in small groups and in plenary, and, on the final day of the meeting, the Revd Dr Romilly Micklem presented feedback gathered from the group discussions, summarising the opinions gathered thus:

- There is no appetite for upheaval – evolutionary improvement rather than major restructuring
- Synods must be flexible and able to adapt to larger or smaller numbers of churches and it’s essential to sustain focus on local needs
- Resource sharing between Synods is widely supported – fair rather than equal allocation is desired and Church House functions could be included
- Separation of moderator roles (pastoral/managerial) broadly supported – but more detailed work and consultation required

The following resolution was passed: “Mission Council asks the Medium Term Strategy Group to continue its work on Synods, taking account of the points raised in the group discussions at the May 2013 Mission Council.”

The small group feedback reported via flip chart summaries and electronic submissions is reproduced in full below.

---

#### Scenario A

- Reinvention of district
- merging trusts is legally complex
- part-time moderators would be rooted in the local
- fragmentation -- more volunteers needed
- disturbs current balance between management and trustees / pastoral
  
- returning to districts, with authority (some worked, some didn’t)
  
- favoured scenario
- But we have already rejected is in “district” decision!
- How can moderator use other 50% of post?
- Can this be a way of managing current crisis and allowing growth?
- How do we address local church attitude: “it will see me out!” – Need whole church attitude. How do we engage this?
- Not addressing the default “Congregationalist” attitudes
- disappointed that we are still not tackling this
- how does this help us in ecumenism?
- Not sure churches would support financially – may not be able to do so

- Warm to Scenario A because of local focus
- Would desire enhanced communication between Synods
- Preferred scenario
- Would make most difference to local churches
- *possibly too bureaucratic – some like it but acknowledge that it's going to look as if we made a mistake in getting rid of districts*
- *We should be allowing synods to evolve as seems right to them –*
- *maybe centralise Trusts admin and ecclesiastical exemption etc – but some warn that that would introduce unacceptable advice burden*

## Scenario B

- Retains balance between management/trustees and pastoral
- retains current regional/national ecumenical engagement
- local churches aren't equal, so why should synods be?
- Best option with variance
- Fewer than 13 synods
- We like B
- Proportions need examining
- Not all 13 Synods will survive
- Need to unpack full-time manager role – how will this be funded?
- Share people / resources across Synods, e.g. training officers
- Include church house in resource sharing (“fourteenth synod”)
- work out common practice and convergence
- where does the oversight of ministry lie?
- Build in aim from A of working locally
- Ensure structure can cope with change (scaleability) / keep allowing for flexibility
- Allows for ‘round table’ resource-sharing
- Improve rather than restructure
- Needs tweaking
- Does it need F/T moderator \*and\* manager?
- Add in regional / national services, e.g. HR, legal
- Last bullet needs exploring (sharing needs tweaking)
- Include CH in resource sharing
- Can some Synods be merged?
- Challenge of synods investment income being shared. Trust issues between those who have shared and those who have received in the past
- despite this probably most do-able scenario
- would we need acts of parliament to do A or C?
- prefer B
- perhaps reduce 13 to fewer
- centralise some services

- geographic challenge – much greater without districts
- B needs role of Moderator and Manager clarified
- Financial burdens on Synods are uneven, as well as financial burdens – needs to be reflected in sharing
- B preferred but work it out better
- Should include aspects of A. so that e.g. oversight is clearer
- Fund CH as “14<sup>th</sup> Synod”
- Proportions need reviewing
- Question need for full-time managers
- *Is the relationship between Assembly and Synods correct?*
- *Release resources closer to where being used?*
- *Is the redistribution sustainable?*
- *is possibly not legally possible in all particulars, especially last bullet point – property sales*
- *reps of poorer synods speak of their embarrassment at the resource sharing table*

#### Scenario C

- Why have synods at all?
- No: synods already too remote
- may release resources, but it would be them and us on a much wider scale
- would lose national synods – don’t want this
- *(Wales and Scotland differences)*
- *3 English regions plus Wales plus Scotland ??*
- *Donor Synods / recipient Synods*
- *Churches struggle to understand what they get from M&M contributions*
- *liked by some, though need for pastoral support needs to be made more explicit*
- *surely this will need more than 1 f/t moderator?*
- *well equipped regional offices may be more expensive than we realise*
- *Where does Church House fit in this scenario (or indeed in any)? – do we regard it as one of the regional bases??*

#### Scenario D

- Should we change anatomy because of a few Synods?
- *Scenario D: discounted unanimously*

#### Scenario E

- If we wanted to support local Christians, how would we do it? (Rather than re-jigging existing synods, which tie up our ministers’ time)
- centralised expertise with local relationships and delivery

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

- examine what worked in districts and implement
- keep local gatherings
- do we need to restructure – identify what needs to be done by all in a uniform way
- identify which Synods can be left to get on with it for themselves creatively, and what works for them
- resource sharing seems like charity – can it be round-table?
- Allow for subsidiarity and flexibility to cope with changes
- could we go back to Presbyterianism of a single trust body?
- Good stewardship of resources: are we too hung up on our comfort cushion in times of scarcity?
- Attraction of centralising some but not all services
- Look at combining Synods which are vulnerable; revisit Synod boundaries
- Improve rather than full restructure
- NO RADICAL RESTRUCTURING
- Do the scenarios address the real issue of lack of people and financial resources?
- Should local churches be mutually inconvenienced?
- We should project into the future by taking past trends into account

*Q2 p3 of D1*

- *There are distinct issues for Wales and Scotland*
- *National identities are changing (re changing URC boundaries)*
- *Smaller synods enables flexibility around the reality of regional differences (but this scheme was dismissed at the time of removing District Councils as too expensive)*
- *Districts were not necessarily functioning very well but their size more manageable than Synod*
- *We note that A, B and C all seem to have different aims, prompting the question ‘What is this synod body for?’ And how do we respond to the local churches’ needs??*
- *We see strengths in A B and C – but are VERY WARY of any major restructuring plans.*
- *Should be asking, ‘What bits of any of these could we be working towards in our synods?’ – even if this leads to greater variety. (Northern 5 should be encouraged to explore great collaboration.)*
- *Ethos is more important than structure (though we understand that the two do interrelate).*

FROM THE “FUTURE OF THE CHURCH” DISCUSSION

- Synod is a support structure, so respond to what churches are doing, rather than having fixed guidelines