

Paper N1

Church Life Review update

February 2023. Theos have also expressed interest and requested sight of the responses to the Jubilee questions which have been circulated (see point 4 below). A related issue of what additional data it may be possible to obtain through the church annual return is being explored.

2. Forensic accounting with MKS

Most of the financial material has now been received from Synods. Melanie Campbell is continuing to work with Synods where there are gaps in information to try to address any outstanding issues. There will be a meeting with MKS in mid October to review progress and it is hoped that a clearer timetable for completion of this work will be available following this.

3. Theology of money

Initial conversations have taken place concerning resources which will enable reflection on a theology of money, and how we are called to use money within the denomination. We are seeking to invite a number of people to contribute to this resource from biblical, financial, and justice perspectives. The aim is that this work shall be available for General Assembly 2023 and provide a theological grounding for a number of pieces of work currently being undertaken as part of the Church Life Review, including the forensic accounting and some of the governance questions.

4. Tending the Vineyard Service for Reformation Sunday, 30 October 2022

The material for this service was made available through Worship Notes, the Daily Devotions Sunday service, and publicised on social media, in Reform and through the Tending the Vineyard postcards. Responses are requested by 28 November and will be collated as soon as practical thereafter.

5. Minimum requirements for being a congregation

A redraft of this work is underway.

Future work

6. Consultation with the Synod Moderators

The Church Life Review Group will be holding a 48 hour consultation with the Synod Moderators from 5 to 7 December. This will be facilitated by the Moderator of General Assembly, the Revd Fiona Bennett. Fiona has spent time with both the CLRG and Moderators, reflecting on aims of the consultation and has designed a process for the consultation accordingly.

7. Communication strategy

Following discussion with Andy Jackson, it is intended to use Facebook as a way of sharing the work of the Church Life Review Group more widely. In addition to posting information, the Facebook Live function would also allow for real-time interaction and events with those who would like to engage further with the Review. Andy has offered support from the Communications Team, wherever possible.

8. Detailed planning is still to take place for the consultation event with representatives of Synods, LPAG and others on governance and financial questions. The timing of this event is determined in part by when the results of the forensic accounting exercise are known.

Part two

Consultation process on Paper N2/Resolution 27 from General Assembly 2022 on General Assembly Structures

Introduction

This is an interim report which provides Assembly Executive with feedback from the consultation process on Paper N2/Resolution 27 passed at General Assembly, concerning the proposed committee structure for the denomination. It goes on to offer some initial reflections about the proposed structure in light of the feedback received. The Church Life Review Group (CLRG) next meets after the deadline for the production of reports for Assembly Executive and so will consider the responses from the consultation process fully at its next meeting. It is anticipated that a further document for consultation will come to Committees, Moderators, Clerks and others following the CLRG consultation with Synod Moderators in early December, before a final paper is prepared for General Assembly 2023.

Consultation on Resolution 27

Section one: Review of responses received

The Church Life Review Group (CLRG) is grateful to all committees, their Conveners and Secretaries for their willingness to discuss Paper N2 and offer their responses to it within a very tight timescale. The CLRG is aware of the deficiencies of the consultation process, apologises and seeks to learn from this experience as the work of the CLRG progresses. In particular, it acknowledges that asking committees to comment on a paper already passed at General Assembly may have given the impression that decisions had already been taken and seeks to assure Committees and Assembly Executive that this is not the case and that there will be opportunity for further consultation, as indicated above.

Some respondents felt that insufficient attention had been given to vision, aspiration and strategy of both the denomination as a whole, and individual committee work, and that strategy should shape structure. It was felt that to adopt a new structure without clarity of vision and strategy was a mistake and lost opportunity. Other respondents asked whether the proposed restructuring is largely about numbers of volunteers and cost and would like to know whether any work been done on the reduction in terms of people and cost on the new committees?

The proposal to create three main areas of work was welcomed by some and felt to be logical with Mission having an outwards focus, Church Life an inward focus and Administration and Resources supporting both to work well. However, there were many concerns raised about the size of the proposed committees, wider remits, the challenges of grappling with the level of detail required and the potential necessity of working with more sub-groups or reassurance that sub-groups would continue. Concerns were also expressed about staff capacity and workload and the range and depth of experience required of committee members. There was feeling expressed that in recent years there had been much more 'joined up' work between committees and staff and this was developing rather than diminishing within the denomination. A desire was expressed that the voices of children and young people in particular be clearly heard in any new structure.

Paper N2 proposes that a number of committees cease to exist and a number of respondents commented on these in particular. Comments concerning Faith and Order indicated a strong desire for a continuing and respected place for Faith and Order, given our commitment to ecumenism. Any new body should be able to bring matters to the

Paper N1

- To provide integrated decision making and delivery as much as is possible to avoid duplication or lack of coherence.
- To significantly reduce the number of people required to populate the committee structure to make it proportionate to the current size of the United Reformed Church.
- To ensure coherence

Mission Committee, 22 – 23 September 2022
Focolare Centre, Welwyn Garden City

Agenda

Remit of the Mission Committee:

The central task of the Mission Committee is to focus on mission, working with the whole of the Church to formulate and give expression to our mission and faith in ways which bring alive our vision of 'being Christ's people, transformed by the Gospel, making a

m)17(u)6(u)2(e)20(a)w]T5.84(0674(e ou22(o)he 3(ak)4(i)6.(ans)4 Td1)20(17(n)(e ex(i)26ta6(om)d-p3(ed og

6.30pm: **Dinner**

8.00pm: **Session 4 (Ecumenical and Interfaith)**

- Follow-up to GA Resolution 16 – Reinvigorating the URC's ecumenical vision
- Report from ecumenical officers' conference
- Interfaith update – new URC resource on Holy Land pilgrimage

9.00pm: **Evening prayers** – Aftab Mughal (N W Synod rep)

Friday 23 September 2022

7.45 – 8.45: **Breakfast**

9.00: **Session 5 (Evangelism and Mission)**

- Morning worship – Lindsey Brown (Eastern Synod rep)
- Evangelism and Mission Discussion (contributions from Stuart Nixon on behalf of Mersey Synod and Philip Brooks – Steve Summers and Sam Richards invited observers from the Discipleship Team)
- Mission Enabling Fund launch and awareness

10.30: **Coffee Break**

11.00: **Session 6 (general business)**

- Warm Hubs initiative – NW Synod, Aftab Mughal
- Church and Society/JPIT Report and Update
- Application from Elim Church to join Free Churches Group
- Mission Committee Convenor second term from 2024
- Commitment for Life Convenor second term
- Mission Committee representative to the Ecumenical Reference Group
- Minutes of last meeting and matters arising (MINUTES)
- Items from Synods
- Dates and venues for future meetings in 2023 – for notification
2/3 Feb (online), 8/9 June (online), 28/29 September (Luther King House)

12.45: **Closing prayers** – Sarah Lane Cawte

1.00pm: **Lunch and departures**