

Local Mission and Ministry Review

Appendix 1 Theological background

The United Reformed Church understands itself to be part of the one universal church called to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all people (Paragraph 7.1 of the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church.) This task is fulfilled through the ministry and mission of the church, which is the responsibility of the whole church. There is one ministry “through which God makes known in each age his saving love, his will for his people and his purpose for the world,” (Paragraph 7.13.)

These statements recognise that while the people of God are called, commissioned and empowered by Christ through the Holy Spirit, they are still frail human beings.

“Lord, Our Sovereign, how glorious is your name throughout the world!... When I look up at the heavens the work of your fingers.... what are frail mortals, that you should be mindful of them, human beings that you should take notice of them? Yet you have made them little less than a God ...” (Psalm 8)

Because we are human, however much we try to determine God’s will for us, the Church and the world, we can make mistakes. Determining God’s will and recognising mistakes is not just an individual task, but a communal activity (Matthew 18: 15 - 20.) Therefore we recognise that we all have a responsibility to and for each other and that we are interconnected through our humanity, faith and ministry.

“All mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated.. As therefore the bell that rings to a sermon, calls not upon the preacher only, but upon the congregation to come: so this bell calls us all: but how much more me, who am brought so near the door by this sickness...No man is an island, entire of itself...any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.” (John Donne: *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, Meditation XVII)

The church is accountable to God and each other for the mission and ministry with which it is charged. The United Reformed Church recognises that oversight is given through the councils of the church including the church meeting, the elders’ meeting, Synod and Assembly

The church also acknowledges and celebrates that the people of God share in this ministry in different ways. The church understands that some people are called and equipped for different tasks, including ministry of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers and Eldership. Part of this ministry is to exercise oversight of the people of God and the mission and ministry that they undertake (Basis of Union paragraphs 7.20 and 7.22.) Paul reminded the Church in Corinth that while there are many different gifts and ministries given to the church, they are for the building up of the whole church and for the whole

ministry and mission of the church (1 Corinthians 12 and also see Ephesians 4: 7 - 16.)

While there is an element in our Reformed tradition that is suspicious of the concept of oversight because it has often been linked with a specific understanding of episcopacy, the core elements are those of mutual support, encouragement and unity (Ephesians 4: 1 - 4; Philippians 2: 1 - 4.) The United Reformed Church therefore understands that oversight is about recognising that:

- we are not alone (the over means there is an interconnectedness recognised)
- no one person can be all things nor are they responsible only to themselves.
- all in ministry are accountable to God for the discharge of that
- ministry.
- there is need for a certain watchful care, guardianship, encouragement and support which acknowledges the value of the individual or the congregation and seeks to reinforce their value.

Therefore as part of its concern for the continuing ministry and mission of the church the General Assembly agreed in 2006 to the setting up of the Local Mission and Ministry Review to enable and encourage all pastorates and ministers in the task of developing appropriate ministry and mission for the 21st century.

Appendix 2 History and purpose

In 2006 General Assembly passed the following resolution: General Assembly agrees in principle to replace the existing scheme for Ministerial Accompanied Self-Appraisal with a more comprehensive review scheme which would:

- i. eventually include all Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers;
- ii. operate biennially;
- iii. be based around an agreed role description for the Minister;
- iv. retain the confidential accompanied self-appraisal discussion for the Minister;
- v. include open discussions involving both the Minister and the pastorate or post;
- vi. would become, from a date to be agreed, a standard part of the Terms of Settlement when a Minister starts in a new pastorate or post.

By late 2008 further progress had been made on the details of this scheme though Synods had been left to develop it in their own way.

The West Midlands Synod recognises that there is a wide variety of types of pastorates, Team ministries and Church-in-Community projects (for Church Related Community Workers); the system will need appropriate adaption for each context. In an ideal world all churches and ministers in a pastorate will proceed through the scheme at the same time.

The Synod's scheme, reliant on the guidance documentation (referred to at Mission Council in December 2008) will have as its purpose: 'to explore a *Minister's sense of vocation, the pastorates' understanding(s) of mission in context, and the relationship between the two'

(*minister is an inclusive term for Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers)

Have as its intended outcomes;

'that the minister's professional development will benefit, the pastorate's understanding of mission in context be enhanced and there will be a development of the cooperative working between minister and pastorate.'

that the synod helps churches better identify and access appropriate resources and support from the synod and wider church

Use the following outline process:

church and ministers jointly reviewing their mission,
the minister then reflecting on their role in that context and finally
agreement on the way forward and an endorsement of the minister's role within
the framework of the church's plan for mission.

Include these key elements:

include the ministries of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Work
a major review every four years and a follow up conversation after two years
be based around an agreed role description for the minister and
the pastorate profile which becomes a living document which is thus periodically
reviewed in this process

include a confidential Ministerial Accompanied Self Appraisal (MASA) - with
ministers supported by an appraisal partner

Churches' Accompanied Self Appraisal (CASA) will be supported by Pastorate

Partners and where a Church-in Community project is involved, a partner experienced in community development
Be a standard part of the terms of settlement (as agreed by Mission Council)

Appendix 3 Administrative matters

In a group of churches, joint pastorate or team ministry, the LMMR will take place for all the churches involved simultaneously as far as possible, depending on the availability of Pastorate Partners. Different Partners might work with different churches. Similarly in a team of ministers the appraisal process will take place at the same time but with different Appraisal Partners if required. In each case the review and appraisal will consider both the individual church and/or the minister and the team and/or pastorate as a whole.

Ethos

- a. The model of 'accompanied self appraisal' will be applied to both the minister AND pastorate elements of the process.
- b. The review process is to be established as a continual building experience where one review builds on the previous one

Partners

- a. Potential partners attend training by invitation to explore their willingness and aptitude to undertake the role. Having completed training satisfactorily, they are invited to choose whether or not to become active partners in the scheme
- b. Generic training for Appraisal Partners and Pastorate Partners will be complemented by elements only for the Appraisal or Pastorate Partners
- c. Local Ministry and Mission Review (LMMR) and the Ministers Accompanied Self-appraisal (MASA) will be administered by one person to ensure coordination
- d. There will normally be two Pastorate Partners and it is suggested that this is good practice to resource the process. It provides for mutual observation/ reflection that might be helpful and otherwise it might become a burden for one person responsible for all aspects. It is however possible to undertake the LMMR process with the minister and one partner, with a single partner or without a partner. In such cases the Synod might offer a "consultant" to be available through the process.
- e. The minister's Appraisal Partner might attend the initial reflection of the minister and church to get a "feel" of the context in which the minister serves.
- f. The Administrator will send a list of Appraisal Partners and the minister will be given the opportunity to mark any that they would prefer not to work with. Such preferences will be taken into account in the selection of a partner.
- g. The Synod Administrator will keep a list of Synod appointed and trained Pastorate Partners. This should include Church-related Community Work ministers and/or others with community development experience.
- h. The Pastorate Partner can refer to the Area Minister, the Pastoral Committee or the Synod Moderator for advice.
- i. The role of the minister in the production of the pastorate profile is a matter of discretion when it is known that the minister is shortly to be leaving the pastorate, and should be considered in the light of the responsibilities of the Interim Moderator.
- j. For Church-in-Community Projects the Local Committee should also be involved in the process For reviews of Church-in-Community Projects see the documents on this link: http://www.urch.org.uk/images/Ministries/Community%20Work/CRCW%20documents/4_year_review.pdf

Frequency

- a. There will be a review (minister and pastorate) every four years with a follow up conversation in the intervening second year with the Area Minister (or Pastorate Partner if the Area Minister is the minister of the Pastorate being reviewed.)
- b. For pastorates where there has been an induction or commissioning there will normally be a review two years afterwards.
- c. The pattern and timing of reviews will be negotiated between the Administrator and the Area Ministers.
- d. When a pastorate becomes vacant it may be necessary to revise the pastorate profile and the Minister's role description using the LMMR process, with particular attention to its mission pledges.
- e. Review of Churches with a Church-in-Community Project will be undertaken in coordination with the CRCW minister's term of accreditation
- f. For Ministers serving in other roles such as Area Ministers and Chaplains the processes and timing of appraisal and review will be adapted in the light of such responsibilities.