

The Movement of Ministers

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2 Introduction

This document is a revision of the first version of the Movement of Ministers following the introduction of new Synods. It replaces *Guidelines for Declaring and filling a vacancy* and *Interim Moderators in the United Reformed Church*. It includes an overview of the process from the time a minister receives a call to another post to the end of an induction period when a new minister has been called. This document does not deal with Church Related Community Workers, who are the subject of a parallel document 'The Movement of CRCWs'.

3 The Outline Process

Preparing to declare a post vacant

Minister receives a call and informs the pastorate and the Synod

Concurrence is given by the Synod, co-ordinated by the Synod Clerk

Appointment of Interim Moderator(s)

Visit by members of the Pastoral Committee (or equivalent) sometimes with the Synod Moderator

Identifying of the Pastorate Call Group

Preparation of Pastorate Profile and Summary Profile

Visit by Synod Moderator

Draft Terms of Settlement (including housing arrangements)

Declaration of a Vacant Post

Calling a Minister

The Role of Synod Moderators' meetings

The profiles

First visit by a candidate

Preaching with a View

Deciding on a call including concurrence

Induction Service and Induction period

4. Preparing to call a minister

The best current practice in the movement of ministers contains the following elements. The order and timing of events will vary according to circumstance. Practice varies between Synods.

(NB: 'Synod' here implies 'or the appropriately authorised committee or officers of Synod'. Synod procedures need to be clearly agreed and understood on such matters, including who can give concurrence to calls. Similarly 'Elders' stands for the equivalent group in an ecumenical or 'special category' ministry situation. A Pastorate can consist of one or several congregations arranged as a joint pastorate, group or cluster etc.)

a. The minister informs the Elders and Church meeting(s) of receipt of a call to another post, retirement or other reason for leaving; normally three months' notice of a move is given, though in Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) and in the case of retirement it will be known earlier. At the same time any call is referred to Synod, whose concurrence needs to be given. Care should be taken as to the timing of the announcement and the way it should be done, particularly in a group pastorate. A statement of the reasons for leaving a post is prepared by the minister for sharing with the pastorate or post to enable reflection by the pastorate and Synod.

b. Synod initiates discussion with the pastorate with a view to appointing an Interim Moderator (or sometimes more than one to churches in a joint pastorate). The role and duties of Interim Moderator(s) should be clearly defined. If more than one Interim Moderator is appointed, because there are several congregations in the pastorate, it is advisable to choose one of them to play a 'coordinating' role.

c. Ahead of the departure of the minister the Interim Moderator will chair any meetings about the future and will be the point of contact with Synod and the Synod Moderator.

d. Synod and the Synod Moderator arrange one or more meetings with the Elders, or other appropriate pastorate group, to explain the process of the movement of ministers and to discuss the mission needs and the scoping of the vacant pastorate.

e. After consultation with all involved the Synod decides on the shape of the pastorate and its scoping. "Scoping" is the term used for determining the ministry allocated to each pastorate. Thus a pastorate may be scoped for a full-time or part-time minister of Word and Sacrament or other form of ministry.

f. A 'pastorate call group' is identified by the pastorate to help them through the process. Often this group is composed only of Elders (some or all), however, others may be invited to take part since it is best practice to ensure that there are women and men present, and if possible a mix of ages. Representation of each of the congregations in a group

pastorate is important. The meeting will be less fruitful if more than, say, twelve are present (in addition to Interim Moderator(s) and candidate).

g. The pastorate prepares a Pastorate Profile and a summary profile (see Appendix 3). A draft role description should be prepared (see review and appraisal proposals for General Assembly 2006). Agreement should be reached on the procedures for decision-making in relation to a call. The decision is taken by those present in church meeting. The size of majority that will be required in the voting must be agreed in advance. In the case of a joint or group pastorate, there are various options to consider. It is recommended that there be a joint church meeting so that the whole pastorate shares in prayer and discussion. The vote may then be taken as a single vote of the pastorate, or separate ballot papers may be used for the different congregations. If separate church meetings are held, it is good for them to take place concurrently. The decision of each meeting should be held in confidence until all have met and made their decision. In addition to agreeing an overall majority required for the issuing of a call, it is possible to set a lower threshold for the vote of each individual congregation within the pastorate. (See footnote below.)

h. The pastorate prepares, and Synod agrees, draft 'Terms of Settlement', to be finally negotiated with a prospective minister. Synod needs to confirm the suitability of the manse. Changes to the manse (or housing allowance) to accommodate a particular minister should be made before the induction.

i. When a pastorate profile is completed, scoping agreed and terms of settlement approved in draft form, then Synod will declare the pastorate free to seek a minister and the Synod Moderator will seek a candidate through the Synod Moderators' meeting.

Footnote

The following procedure for voting as one joint church meeting in a group pastorate was agreed in General Assembly 2001 and ratified in General Assembly 2002

1(1) (b) Where two or more local churches together, and in consultation with the district council, decide that their mission will be more effective if they share resources and ordained ministry, they may, on the recommendation of the district council and the decision of the synod, form an association known as a group of churches with a structured relationship and a constitution governing the way in which they relate to one another as to the sharing of both resources and the ordained ministry. Each church within the group shall retain its own identity, and its church meeting and elders' meeting shall continue to exercise all their functions in relation to that church, save that, so long as the constitution shall so declare, decisions relating to the calling of a minister (see paragraph 2(1) (vii)) may be taken by a single group church meeting at which all the members of each of the constituent churches in the group shall be eligible to attend and vote.

1(1)(c) Where two or more local churches together, and in consultation with the district council, decide that their mission will be more effective if they share ordained ministry (but not other resources), they may, on the recommendation of the district council and the decision of synod, form an association known as a joint pastorate, with a structured relationship with respect to the provision of ordained ministry only and a statement of intent governing the way in which they relate to one another in relation to the sharing of ordained ministry. Each church within the joint pastorate shall retain its own identity, and its church meeting and elders' meeting shall continue to exercise all their functions in relation to that church, save that, so long as the statement of intent shall so declare, decisions relating to the calling of a minister (see paragraph 2(1)(vii)) may be taken by a single joint pastorate church meeting at which all the members of each of the constituent churches in the joint pastorate shall be eligible to attend and vote.

5. Seeking and issuing a call

The best current practice for the movement of ministers follows the process given here. The basic framework will be adapted for single church pastorates, group pastorates, team ministries, ecumenical or 'special' situations. The process should be regarded as confidential to those involved.

- a. The Synod Moderators meet monthly (except August) to consider the movement of ministers. When the vacant post has been declared and the Pastorate Profile and summary have been prepared, the Synod Moderator gives information about the vacant post to the Synod Moderators' meeting using the Summary Pastorate Profile. The vacant post is advertised through the monthly mailing to all ministers before any consideration of an introduction. Ministers can view all Summary Pastorate Profiles via the website www.urc-profiles.org.uk. If candidates can be identified, or if any ministers have asked for it, they are shown the full Pastorate Profile and asked about letting their name go forward. Ministers seeking a move may be shown more than one profile, from which they may choose one to pursue.
- b. If a minister agrees, his/her Personal Profile is given to the pastorate. If several wish to be introduced their Personal Profiles are given to the pastorate which has to choose one with whom to proceed. (See Appendix 10 for a description of the process as printed in Assembly Reports 2004 page 120.)
- c. An invitation may then be given to the minister to meet the Interim Moderator and Elders. These meetings/interviews should be confidential and carefully handled; some guidance is offered in Appendix 5. Members of any ministry team and ecumenical representatives may be met at this point and the manse may be seen.
- d. If the minister and pastorate call group both agree, the candidate should be invited for a weekend, to include meeting with appropriate groups, leading of services, social gatherings, etc. Consideration should be given as to whether joint services in a group pastorate might be more appropriate than leading worship several times in different locations.
- e. Elders' Meeting and Church Meeting(s) (normally with the Interim Moderator(s) chairing) will take place as soon after the weekend visit as possible; the Elders are free but not obliged to make a recommendation to the Church Meeting(s). In a group pastorate a decision can be taken to meet in one place for a shared discussion and decision. Otherwise results of decisions taken separately at different times should be kept in confidence by the Interim Moderator(s) until all congregations have met, then the result communicated to everyone. Pastorates should think through carefully the possibilities of different outcomes and make plans accordingly. Any decision is communicated to the candidate immediately after the meeting, or as soon as possible, by telephone and confirmed in writing; a report on the attendance and the voting figures should also be offered. If the candidate is willing to accept the call, the acceptance is provisional until Synod concurrence is given; a provisional acceptance should therefore be communicated to the Synod Clerk as soon as possible, with a request for concurrence.
- f. At this point the minister is required to seek a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure, the result of which will be made known to the Synod Moderator by the Ministries Committee.
- g. The Interim Moderator(s) works with the pastorate, Synod officers, newly called minister and Synod Moderator to co-ordinate the preparation of the (Ordination and)

Induction service, which is under the auspices of the Synod. The Interim Moderator may also work with the incoming minister on an induction process.

6 The Appointment, Responsibilities and Role of Interim Moderators

Introduction

The ministry of Interim Moderators has been recognised from the foundation of the United Reformed Church. Their purpose is to provide a continuing mutual link between the wider church and local pastorate during a time of ministerial transition. A function of a Synod is "to appoint, in consultation with the local church and the Moderator of the Synod, from among its members an Interim Moderator during a pastoral vacancy". Such person has in the past normally been a minister or retired minister, but sometimes an elder may be appointed. It is important that the Interim Moderator be able to act and to be seen as a neutral person - someone outside the local situation. The Interim Moderator needs to be objective and sensitive to the church's tradition, theological stance and ways of operating. The agreement of the local church in the appointment is essential. The Synod is responsible for the training and support of Interim Moderators. The Interim Moderator may be invited to the Pastoral Committee to report on the state of the pastorate during the time of ministerial transition.

Appointment

When a minister receives a call to another pastorate or post, or is within six months of retirement, or for any other reason is leaving the pastorate, then the Synod initiates discussion with the local church and the Synod Moderator and appoints an Interim Moderator [Manual 2 (3) iii]. In a pastorate involving more than one church each may have its own Interim Moderator, and if so a co-ordinating Interim Moderator may be appointed. The role and duties of the Interim Moderator should be agreed and clearly defined. Care should be taken in choosing a person with experience, knowledge of the district, insight into the needs and aspirations of the local church, time and a readiness to exercise the role.

Best practice is for clearly defined terms of service to be agreed by all parties at the beginning. An appointment for a year at a time is helpful. All will then understand the time available to be used, the cost of the operation (Interim Moderators' expenses are paid by the receiving local church) and the tasks which can be undertaken by the Interim Moderator. One of the first needs will then be to determine who will be responsible for what the Interim Moderator is unable to do. Note that the oversight by Elders and Church Meeting continues, intensifies and in many instances flourishes during the time of transition.

Responsibilities

The role of the Interim Moderator will have to be negotiated. Some will simply be responsible for the process of introducing a candidate, others may be willing to lead worship, chair all church meetings, make emergency pastoral visits, preside at the ordination and induction of elders and attend social functions. All of these depend on the availability of the Interim Moderator and will vary from person to person. In some areas a small number of specialist Interim Moderators are being trained to carry out this role. So, the responsibilities of Interim Moderators normally include:

- a. Chairing Elders' Meetings, Church Meetings or special groups where the calling of a minister is discussed
- b. Chairing all meetings with prospective ministers

- c. Providing a mutual link between the Synod and the local church
- d. Providing a mutual link between the Synod Moderator and the local church
- e. Providing a mutual link between the prospective minister and the local church
- f. Aiding the drafting and negotiating of Terms of Settlement, including housing provision
- g. Overseeing and co-ordinating the planning of the Induction Service in consultation with the Synod, Synod Moderator and future minister
- h. Advising on what is appropriate at each stage.

The Role

The question of how much leadership to give and of what nature is difficult to prescribe because it has to be assessed in the light of varied circumstances. In this period it can be helpful to reflect on such matters as the sense of 'bereavement' that the loss of a minister might bring, the anxiety about a time without a minister and any underlying conflicts that might have emerged during the previous period of ministry. This time can also be an opportunity for hidden gifts within the elders and members to be released in leadership, worship and pastoral care etc.

The transition time is not just a waiting time; the church can develop. The Interim Moderator can help the church grow in awareness and confidence in the process, and be prepared to address difficult issues. If this growth and development does not occur the church will be restricted in its vision for the future.

It follows that good relations with the Interim Moderator are not enough if they inhibit the kind of in-depth appraisal and discernment for ministry, which may be essential for the future. It is better to take time in order to reach a fruitful outcome.

The Interim Moderator also has a role in helping a candidate through the process and in reflecting on it, whether or not a call is issued.

7 Special cases: Ordinands, married couples, advertised posts, fixed term appointments, health issues.

Experience gained from a variety of special cases enables the Synod Moderators' meeting to offer guidance and support to ministers, pastorates and Interim Moderators. For further information beyond that given contact one of the Synod Moderators.

Ordinands - see Appendix 6 for guidelines for Interim Moderators in introducing an ordinand to a pastorate. Ordinands prepare their Personal Profiles in time for interviews with the Synod Moderators normally in September of their final year of training. The October Synod Moderators' meeting then seeks to offer each ordinand a suitable pastorate to consider. Most ordinands receive a call within their final year of training. Before proceeding to ordination and induction the Synod should be satisfied that training has been satisfactorily completed.

Married Couples - the settlement of couples is complicated and therefore requires sensitive and careful handling. Two call processes will be interlinked, and the Interim Moderators will need to liaise closely. Particular care will need to be taken over confidentiality, whilst issues such as housing, etc will be different from normal.

Advertising posts - The Synod Moderators' meeting produces each month a list of pastorates seeking a minister, which is circulated to all ministers through the payroll system. In addition the summary pastorate profile is placed on the website so that they are available to be viewed. This is the way that posts are 'advertised' within the church. When a pastorate first appears on the list normally no names are considered by the Synod Moderators, so that all ministers have the opportunity to express an interest. In the case of a post being advertised, e.g. through Reform, then usually that post is not considered by the Synod Moderators, unless the advertisement specifically directs enquirers to their Synod Moderator.

Fixed term appointments - most calls to ministers to serve pastorates are open ended. But some posts are for a fixed period, for example the special category ministry posts, which are five years in the first instance but can be extended after review. Ecumenical posts are also often fixed term and this will be clear from the job description.

Health and Disability issues - the pastorate should be made fully aware of all relevant matters in cases where there may be health and disability issues.

Appendix 1 Notes for a visit at a time of ministerial transition

Visits to a pastorate by the Synod Moderator and representatives of the pastoral committee enables everyone involved in the process of the movement of ministers to have a clearer understanding of what is involved. These visits can explain the process, clarify the role of the Synod, Interim Moderators and Synod Moderators, review the ministry needs of the pastorate, review the draft pastorate profile and prepare the way for the introduction of possible candidates. What follows are headings, which should be covered in one or more of these visits.

- a) Explanation of the Synod's responsibilities through Pastoral Committee for determining the pastorate and its scoping, drawing up terms of settlement and declaring a vacant post
- b) Appointment and Role of Interim Moderator(s)
- c) Synod Moderators' Role with Pastoral Committee and Synod
- d) Movement of Ministers
 - i. at each monthly meeting Synod Moderators give consideration to ministers seeking a call. NB Description of Process in Assembly Reports 2004 (See Appendix 10)
 - ii. ordinands are given priority - their profiles usually come to the October meeting
 - iii. the process deals with ministers seeking a call, occasionally it begins with pastorates. NB A summary Personal Profile for each minister and a Summary Pastorate Profile for each pastorate are circulated to each Synod Moderator.
 - iv. sometimes there are specific requests from ministers (they receive a list each month of vacant posts, and can view Summary Pastorate Profiles on the website)
 - v. sometimes specific requests for named ministers are received from a pastorate
 - vi. as appropriate, consideration is given to ministers from other churches with a certificate of eligibility
 - vii. occasionally, settled ministers are challenged to consider a call to a particular pastorate
 - viii. Decisions about introduction are the result of Synod Moderators' collective discussion
 - ix. A full Pastorate profile, or more than one, is offered to a minister. In some cases the same profile is offered to more than one minister, in this case a deadline is set by which ministers have to express their wish to proceed.
 - x. A minister's full personal Profile is send to the Interim Moderator for consideration by the Pastorate Call Group. NB More than one ministers profile may be offered, however, the pastorate can choose only one to pursue.
 - xi. The minister meets with pastorate call Group and the Interim Moderator
 - xii. The minister meets with congregation and preaches with a view
 - xiii. The Church meeting(s) decide on whether to offer a call. NB procedures for voting should be discussed and agreed in advance.
 - xiv. Concurrence is sought from Synods
 - xv. A Criminal Records Bureau disclosure has to be obtained by the minister
 - xvi. The Induction Service is planned, co-ordinated by the Interim Moderator
 - xvii. General
The timetable is unpredictable and may be lengthy.
In cases when the process is halted by either party, support and reflection are important.

The whole process is confidential.

Everything should be under-girded with prayer

- e) Review of ministry needs of pastorate, including -
 - i. State of congregation:- Mission opportunities; Special needs or features; Ecumenical context; Scoping comments; Openness to change
 - ii. Minister: - Equal opportunities Church; Age and gender; Length of future ministry; Appropriateness for Ordinand; Special skills, e.g. Pastoral, preaching, administration, youth and children, leadership, evangelism, social involvement, music, reconciliation, Theological range, Ecumenical commitment, Terms of settlement, Manse, 'Anything to Avoid'
 - iii. Positive aspects of vacancies
 - iv. Need to keep congregation informed of process and steps being taken

Appendix 2 Making good use of a time of transition

Reaction to change

The movement of a minister brings with it many different reactions and a wide range of emotions. Sometimes symptoms of bereavement will predominate, at other times perhaps the excitement of a possible new beginning. The Interim Moderator will need the gifts necessary to help a pastorate through a period of change.

Supporting

It is not easy in a transition period to support the life of the church. This is particularly true where the leadership expectations of the members have rested almost entirely on the minister. The elders and the entire congregation will need help from the Interim Moderator in encouraging their self-confidence and recognising their gifts. But the life of the church is their responsibility - its worship, pastoral care and outreach - and the Interim Moderator can help them to accept this responsibility, try to guide their thinking and encourage best practice. Positive thinking about the present, together with the constructive view of the past will provide the best foundations for a healthy future.

Reflecting

The transition period is not a time for simply maintaining what has been the case. For the health of the church (and in order to be more attractive to an incoming minister) it should be seen as a time of reflection on where the church is and where its future lies. There is time to re-assess resources and discover ones previously unrecognised. The Interim Moderator as an independent observer is well placed to serve as a catalyst to this process. Square pegs and round holes can sometimes be better seen from a distance and lateral solutions to problems suggested. Adequate reflection takes time but is an important prerequisite for the writing of a clear and visionary profile.

Planning

A well-used transition period can be used to plan for the future. The church's participation in God's mission continues and, while there are some things which are better developed with the new minister, it is a mistake to put aside all new ideas, especially those which are likely to raise the spirits of members. The Interim Moderator's experience and objectivity again will help the church to analyse when to do and when to defer. It seems safe to assume that a new minister will look more favourably at a church which is moving forward rather than one which is bogged down in struggles to stay where it is.

Appendix 3 PASTORATE PROFILE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PASTORATES SEEKING A MINISTER

A well-produced Pastorate Profile can help in the introduction of a minister. It is useful to those who are seeking to make an introduction and to any minister who is trying to understand the characteristics of the vacant pastorate. It should be written with care after Elders have discussed each section and have consulted other leaders and representatives of local churches concerned.

Before indicating their expectations for a new ministry, the Elders should examine the life, work and theological outlook of their church(es) and the leadership they need from a minister. This paper should be taken as a guide to the questions they should ask and to the content of the resulting Profile. It is not a form to be filled in, although specific statistics are asked for in certain places.

If the final Pastorate Profile is in type-script, one copy should be sent to the Synod Moderator in a form which can be photocopied. However, a few pictures and perhaps a map may help you to present your church and its setting. If you do include photographs, or produce the Profile in a bound form, provide **at least three** copies.

The name of the pastorate and, where appropriate, the names of the local churches concerned should be at the front of the Profile or at the head of the first page.

At the end of the Pastorate Profile indicate who were involved in its preparation and add the date.

Pastorate Profile

A Pastorate Profile is a multi-purpose tool for

- producing a pastorate profile when a minister moves,
- engaging in a pastoral consultation with the synod,
- undertaking a review of ministry, and
- seeking financial support from the Synod or other sources.

Whatever customised versions or alternatives Synods produce should cover the key elements included here. The component parts of the Pastorate Profile are:

- What are we here for?
- Where are we going?
- How will we get there?

These are unpacked into the following sections:

Where are we? Who are we? What do we do? What are we here for?

What are our resources? What are the opportunities? Where are we going?

How will we get there? What do we need?

(The numbers in brackets marked with an * refer to the notes provided at the end to give additional guidance for those who require it)

1. Where are we? Mission Context

- 1a. **Name** of the pastorate and the churches involved.
- 1b. **Describe the context** (e.g. rural, country town, suburban, inner city, urban priority area, city centre etc.) and adding other relevant detail (e.g. local employment, culture, deprivation)
- 1c. **Describe the population** of the communities being served:
 - (a) numerically - with other relevant detail (e.g. growing / static / declining)
 - (b) by social composition (e.g. age, ethnicity etc.)
- 1d. **Describe the ecumenical scene**
 - (a) What other churches are in the area?
 - (b) What are relationships like?
 - (c) Are there any local formal arrangements (e.g. local covenants)? (*1)

2. Who are we?

2a. **Give a brief pen portrait** of the pastorate, including key points in its history; what is distinctive about the pastorate, its theological outlook and worship style.

2b. **Number on roll- total**

- number up to 11.....
- 12-18
- 19-30
- 31-50
- 51-70
- 71+

Number of adherents (*2)

Average attendance at main act of worship on Sunday

Average attendance at worship over a week

2c. **Changes in the roll over the last five years-**

- (a) Additions:
 - on profession of faith
 - by transfer
- (b) Losses:
 - by death
 - by transfer
 - by removal from the roll

2d. **Number residing-**

- (a) within one mile of church building
- (b) over three miles from church building

- 2e. Number of serving Elders
Number of non-serving Elders

3. What do we do?

Pattern of worship (Sunday, midweek, styles, venues etc.) (*3)

Pattern of care and nurture (teaching the faith, discipling etc.)

Pattern of leadership & decision making (elders, church meetings, ministry team) (*4)

Pattern of work with different groups (children, young people, elderly, community etc.) (*5)

Pattern of partnership with others (ecumenical and secular) (*6)

Other activities

4. What are we here for?

What is your mission statement (value statement, vision statement etc)? (*7)

What is the biblical basis for your mission purpose?

5. What are our resources?

What skills, gifts, experiences are there in the personnel of the church?

What property resources are available? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

What financial resources are available? (include your latest set of accounts)

6. What are the opportunities?

What are the trends in the life of the church and in the community context?

What challenges does the church face locally?

7. Where are we going?

What are the priorities, the targets, goals, objectives for the next few years? (*8)

8. How will we get there?

What plans are there for making progress on the priorities agreed by the church?

9. What do we need?

Where help is required either of personnel, property or finance?

(include the role description for the minister(s))

Additional Notes:

The following are not intended to be proscriptive but are offered as a guide for those who are seeking further help when filling in the Pastorate Profile.

1. If the church is a united church or Local Ecumenical Partnership a more detailed description of the partnership can be given here.
2. If it helps to give a better understanding of the fellowship of the church the number of households represented by the combination of members and adherents can be given here.
3. The worship/devotional life of the church could be described in the following areas:
 - What services are held each Sunday?
 - What is the average attendance?
 - How often is Holy Communion celebrated?
 - What special services were held last year?
 - What lay involvement is there in the leading of worship?
 - What hymnbooks (or other sources of songs) are in regular use?
 - What mid-week services are there?
 - What bible study or study groups meet?
 - How many baptisms, believers and infant have there been in the last five years?
 - How many services of thanksgiving for the birth of a child have there been in the last five years?
 - Is there regular all-age worship?
4. If other ministers are involved give more details regarding the relationships, responsibilities, roles and planned system of review.
 - If other ministers are involved, give their names and indicate whether they are stipendiary or non-stipendiary.
 - What are the ministry team relationships?
 - What agreements cover leadership, meetings, pastoral responsibilities, specialist roles etc.?
 - Is there a suggested overall portion of ministry for each congregation and its community, or is this to be agreed with the new minister?
 - How is this expected to work out in regard to services, meetings, pastoral work and other responsibilities?
 - What system of review is proposed for these arrangements?
 - Outline how the pastorate sees the role of the prospective minister in this, and what particular skills and experience will be preferred in her or him.
5. If the church has a particularly strong ministry in the area of weddings or funerals, this could be described here, as well as any including the baptismal policy of the church.
 - How many weddings are conducted in the church each year?
 - What proportions of these are for neither church members nor adherents?

- How many funerals are conducted each year?
 - What proportions of these are for neither church members nor adherents?
 - What is the baptismal policy of the church?
6. Formal ecumenical relationships will have been described earlier but other ecumenical and secular partnerships should not be ignored and can be described here.
7. If the church has not engaged in another strategy for reflecting on its mission and purpose it would do well to bear in mind at this point the Five Marks of Mission.
- TELL Proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom.
 - TEACH Teaching, baptising and nurturing new believers.
 - TEND Responding to need by loving service
 - TRANSFORM Seeking to transform unjust structures of society
 - TREASURE Striving to safeguard the integrity of creation
8. What different opportunities are there in the various sections of the pastorate?

(February 2010)

Appendix 4 Aid to drafting Terms of Settlement

Draft Terms of Settlement should be considered by the Synod prior to declaring a vacant post, and then later discussed with any prospective minister. Agreed Terms of Settlement can also assist the process of monitoring during a ministry, and form the basis of any agreed changes. Terms of Settlement are a local expression of the Plan for Partnership, which is the basis on which ministers act as office holders within the Church. The latest edition of the Plan for Partnership for Ministerial Remuneration can be found on the URC website www.urc.org.uk. Go to 'Our work', then 'Ministries' and a link to it will be found in the Resources Section on the left.

Pastorate name:

Scoping

Is the post fully scoped (i.e. 100%) or part time? If part time, specify what proportion it is.

Stipend

The General Assembly of 1993 passed the following resolution:

Assembly believes that the payment of special stipend supplements by churches is no longer justified and calls upon ministers and churches to bring an end to this payment as soon as possible.

Is it proposed to pay any supplement to the basic stipend? £..... p.a.

(NB The pastorate is responsible for corresponding additional NI payments.)

Is any additional paid work agreed (by Synod and pastorate)? (see Plan for Partnership Section 8) £.....p.a.

Housing (see Plan for Partnership)

(NB In some areas responsibility for manses lies with District or Synod.)

Is a manse provided? If so indicate what sort of house it is.

What accommodation has it, e.g. number of rooms - downstairs /study / bedrooms / type of heating / garage, garden etc.? (see Plan for Partnership Appendix D National Manse Guidelines and Assembly Guidelines for Manses Assembly Record 2003).

What is its address?

Indicate how it is situated in relation to the church(es), shops, schools etc

What public transport is available?

Is the pastorate willing to consider changing the manse if asked?

If there is no manse at present, is the pastorate in a position to provide one?

Is the pastorate willing to consider payment of a housing allowance in lieu of provision of a manse?

If YES will the pastorate follow the full guideline given in the Plan for Partnership Appendix B?

Travelling (see Plan for Partnership)

Is the regular use of a car considered necessary? Where a minister does not provide a car but the regular use of a car is considered necessary, it is the responsibility of the local church to provide a suitable vehicle. The costs of private motoring shall be borne by the

minister under locally agreed arrangements (paragraph 6.3.4.3 Plan for Partnership). Will such a vehicle be provided?

If so, complete Section A.

If the minister wishes to provide his/her own vehicle, complete Section B.

A. If a vehicle is to be provided, state make & type of car, size and year

What annual figure is budgeted for: depreciation, maintenance and running costs?

What arrangement is proposed for private mileage by the minister?

Will there be any limitations on private mileage?

B. If the minister provides the vehicle; will the agreed national rate be paid?

Will these arrangements be reviewed annually? If NO, what basis of review is proposed?

Administration (see Plan for Partnership)

Office Expenses

Office expenses, including postage, telephone (including mobile phones and internet), computer equipment, stationery and any other expenses necessarily incurred on church business shall be reimbursed in full to the minister.

On what basis will these sundry expenses be met?

Is the minister is expected to pay for private telephone calls? (There is a Tax and National Insurance charge if this is not the case.) What will be the arrangements for doing this?

Education for Ministry

The pastorate must clearly understand that all URC Ministers of Word and Sacraments are expected to undertake annual study as part of their continuing education. In the first three years of ministry, it is compulsory for ministers to take part in Education for Ministry 2. (Report to General Assembly 1998 p.124) This comprises two residential weekends a year as part of a 14 day study leave programme and as well as time with a Pastoral adviser and a Synod programme of study for new ministers. During the rest of their ministry, Ministers are strongly urged to devote two weeks per year to Education for Ministry 3 (Page 126 General Assembly 1998). Ministers attending a weeklong course should not be expected to lead worship on the following Sunday (a study Sunday). For non-stipendiary ministers, a 'week' means two weekends each lasting from Friday evening until Sunday tea-time.) Every ten years, Ministers are encouraged to undertake up to three months sabbatical leave in negotiation with the Synod re timing and pastoral cover.

Is it proposed, or would the pastorate be willing, to offer the minister a book allowance in regard to education for ministry, say within the range of £150 - £250, and help towards the cost of ministers' summer schools etc.?

Other

The pastorate shall honour the holiday entitlement in the Plan for Partnership. 'Ministers are entitled to 5 weeks holiday in each calendar year and one further Sunday away from the pastorate. When a minister only serves for part of a year the holiday provision is pro rata. One week of holiday may be carried forward to the following year. Holiday entitlement is not affected by sick leave, in-service training courses or sabbatical leave. Such periods of leave/absence may result in more than 1 week's holiday being carried forward into the following year.' (paragraph 7.1 Plan for Partnership) The pastorate should state it will be responsible for its share of removal expenses as in the Plan for Partnership (Appendix C -

The receiving local church is responsible for paying the costs of removal. Where the removal is within the United Kingdom reimbursement of up to 50% of the cost incurred (subject to a maximum reimbursement of £1,000) is available from the Ministry and Mission Fund and application should be made via the MoM Office.)

General

The pastorate accepts the United Reformed Church policy to grant maternity pay and parental/adoption leave.

The pastorate accepts the declaration of Equal Opportunities contained in the URC Employment Practice report accepted by General Assembly 1990 and notes the provision for a grievance procedure (see Appendix 8).

The pastorate will review these terms every two years and is willing to renegotiate these terms during a particular ministry, providing the minister and the Synod agree to changes.

Agreed at the Elders' Meeting on.....

Signed
Church Secretary

Signed
Synod

Signed
Minister

Appendix 5 Sample Terms of Settlement

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

..... SYNOD

Settlement Agreement - [Stipendiary]

This Settlement Agreement is made between

----- (the Pastorate)

and the Revd _____ (the Minister)

1 Scope

The pastorate has been declared to be (full time/part-time) scope by the Synod. It is agreed that the basic pattern for the minister's time and conduct of worship will be:

.....

2 Stipend The minister will receive the stipend appropriate for a pastorate of this scope from the national Maintenance of the Ministry pay roll office.

3 Housing

The minister will live in the manse provided at

The pastorate will pay the Council Tax water rates and any other tax[es] on the manse in full; will insure the building and accepts responsibility for the maintenance and decoration of the manse.

[Or The minister will live in a house within the pastorate area towards which the pastorate will pay a housing allowance according to the Plan for Partnership.]

4 Travel

The pastorate will reimburse the minister for using his/her own car in accordance with the recommendations of the URC central committee, and for costs of public transport, upon submission of a written claim (*as agreed*), and subject to annual review in the light of recommendations from URC Synod and/or finance department. The pastorate will also pay a fixed car allowance of £1,200 per annum.

5 Administration, telephones and Computer

The pastorate will reimburse the minister for all administrative expenses, including stationery and postage, upon submission of a written claim. Telephone(s) will be provided by the pastorate. The minister will be expected to reimburse the pastorate for private telephone calls. A computer will also be provided with access via broadband to the internet. A specification for the computer and details of telephones and broadband will be negotiated and agreed prior to induction.

6 Education for Ministry

The pastorate will support the minister in undertaking Education for Ministry (EM), both EM2 (Report to General Assembly 1998 p.124) and EM3 (Page 126 General Assembly 1998). The Pastorate will encourage the minister to take Sabbatical leave as recommended in the Plan for Partnership and to attend one annual Synod School, for which the pastorate will pay. The pastorate will also support the ministers in the accompanied self-appraisal scheme. For any Sundays involved in these provisions the pastorate will be responsible for arranging and paying for pulpit supply.

The Pastorate will offer a book allowance of £..... (150-250) to be offset against the purchase of books, computer software etc.

7 Holidays and regular days off

The pastorate will honour recommendations for regular weekly days off, and will follow recommendations regarding holidays in the 'Plan for Partnership' (*note iii*)- viz. five full weeks holiday per year (including five Sundays) plus one additional holiday Sunday.

8 Removal costs

The pastorate will accept its share of removal expenses as recommended in the 'Plan for Partnership' (*note 3*).

9 General

The pastorate accepts the United Reformed Church policy to grant maternity pay and parental/adoption leave and will honour the declaration of Equal Opportunities contained in the URC Employment Practice report accepted by General Assembly 1990.

10 Re-negotiation and Review

The Pastorate and minister are willing to re-negotiate these terms of settlement during the course of a ministry at the request of the Synod. Any suggested changes from the pastorate or the ministers will be subject to the agreement of the Synod.

The terms of this agreement will be reviewed every two years and when changes are made to synod and General Assembly guidelines.

11 The wider United Reformed Church

The pastorate acknowledges that ministers are ministers of the whole United Reformed Church and have a responsibility to serve the wider church as well as their own local pastorate. Requests for specific pieces of wider service will be discussed between the Elders' Meetings and the minister.

12 Local Mission and Ministry Review

The minister and pastorate will participate in the Local Mission and Ministry Review agreed by Mission Council in December 2008, previously introduced at General Assembly 2006, when it is active in the *Synod / National Synod of*

13 Generally

Both minister and pastorate will seek to follow the Plan for Partnership and the provisions of the Basis for Union.

Signed _____ Minister
_____ [for the Pastorate]
_____[for the Synod]

Date _____

Appendix 6 Interim Moderator's Notes for introducing an Ordinand

These notes are to assist the Synod Moderator in ensuring that an Interim Moderator is aware of all the special factors that might obtain when an ordinand is being introduced to a vacant pastorate. **Most of the following would be expected in the normal pattern of introducing a minister to a pastorate.** Some elements are particularly sensitive where the introduction of an ordinand is concerned.

1 The Synod Moderators will take care to identify the pastorates that are genuinely suitable for a student according to agreed criteria:

- a reasonable role description
- a good Interim Moderator
- openness on the part of the pastorate to receiving a student and responding supportively to his/her ministry
- availability of a neighbouring minister with the gifts to offer meaningful support

When the Synod Moderator first proposes the name of a student, the Interim Moderator should check with the local church leadership through the church secretary/ies that the pastorate is willing to consider an ordinand. This will usually have been covered by the Synod Moderator during a visit according to the above criteria, but should be clarified before an introduction is effected.

2 A first consideration of the ordinand's personal profile and an invitation to an initial exploratory meeting with the pastorate call group should normally take place within 3 weeks of introduction. This will ensure that, if either or both parties conclude that there is no basis for proceeding further, the ordinand is available for introduction at the next Synod Moderators' meeting.

3 The Interim Moderator should try to be available in a supportive role for the ordinand and the pastorate through each stage of their exploration together. This is particularly important when there may be need for clarification of how the Church's settlement process operates. Specifically the Interim Moderator should make space for:

3.1 Briefing the ordinand about the context and any special factors in the pastorate, unpacking the pastorate profile as appropriate. This may involve responding to questions of:

- theology and worship style;
- pastoral practice, especially baptismal policy;
- relationships between the congregations in the pastorate; ecumenical relationships;
- the manse and terms of settlement.

3.2 Being present to ensure a creative and reflective engagement with meetings of the pastorate call committee, special interest groups, and informal gatherings of church members. These should include penetrating discussion about:

- priorities for mission and patterns of delivery;
- serious pastoral and local church life issues - including baptismal policy
- leadership patterns
- gender matters.

3.3 Making arrangements for a daylight visit to the community/ies served by the congregation/s in the pastorate. Where possible this might include an opportunity to meet with non-church community leaders and representatives of ecumenical partners.

3.4 Ensuring the suitability of overnight hospitality arrangements, especially if the ordinand is visiting alone, and that there is sufficient and appropriate relaxation and reflection time built in to the timetable.

3.5 Learning from the ordinand if there are any special dietary or disability needs to be borne in mind when arranging hospitality or the provision of meals; or any particular personal or family information needs that would facilitate reflection and decision about a possible invitation. This might include:

- local schools' choices
- retirement or sheltered housing provision
- availability of specific specialist medical services

4 Candidates should be given clear and precise travelling directions, especially if coming by road. These should include contact telephone numbers in the event of last minute hitches or getting lost. Travelling expenses should be identified and paid swiftly.

5 Candidates should be clearly informed of:

- the decision-making process including the timetable of response,
- the method of reflection and voting, especially if more than one congregation is involved
- the agreed majority required for a call to be sustained

6 The Interim Moderator should make clear arrangements with the ordinand how s/he will make known the outcome of an initial exploratory meeting or a church meeting. If this is agreed to be done by telephone it should always be confirmed by a letter. In the case of an offer of a call the ordinand should also reply in writing.

7 The Interim Moderator should ensure that, in the event of a decision not to proceed at any stage of the introduction, a detailed de-brief of the process, discussions and reactions should be sent to the receiving Synod Moderator within one week. This is designed to enable a supportive de-brief of the candidate and to assist the Synod Moderators in the next stage of exploring appropriate introductions.

8 After a call to the pastorate is given and accepted, the Interim Moderator is a key person in a number of practical matters:

- to arrange a date for the service of ordination and induction, which is suitable for the Synod Moderator, ordinand, pastorate and Synod.
- putting together the order of service in consultation with the ordinand and the local pastorate, and with the agreement of the Synod Moderator; all parties should agree the content and order before printing deadlines are identified.
- to ensure that the manse is in good order and ready for occupation, cleaned and with all systems checked to be working; this is especially important if the manse has been let to tenants after a minister has left or is subject to building works.
- There may be times when an Interim Moderator has a role in the handing over of records and contact lists relating to the pastorate; this is especially important in respect of confidential information regarding sensitive pastoral issues.

Appendix 7 A meeting of the Pastorate Call Group and the Minister

In the context of discovering God's will regarding the filling of a vacant pastorate, the care taken over a meeting of the pastorate call group and the minister is vital. When a candidate visits a pastorate, there should be more than one opportunity for informal contact with a wide range of members (including children and young people) and, if possible, adherents.

1. The preparation

Ensure that all relevant papers are available. This will comprise correspondence; minister's personal profile (not for general publication); pastorate profile; draft terms of settlement. The pastorate call group may comprise only Elders, or it may include others invited to take part, since it is desirable to ensure that there are women and men present, and if possible a mix of ages. The meeting will be less fruitful if more than, say, twelve are present (in addition to Interim Moderator and candidate). A comfortable venue, with freedom from distraction and a friendly atmosphere should be chosen. Well before the meeting the Interim Moderator(s) should consult with the pastorate call group and the minister to decide what form the meeting will take. It is important that this is not determined solely by the pastorate call group and that the minister has significant input into the arrangements for the meeting and is happy with them before the meeting takes place. Prior to the meeting the pastorate call group with the Interim Moderator(s) should agree topics they wish to cover in the meeting with the minister and the Interim Moderator(s) should consult the minister about topics s/he wishes to raise in the discussion. It might be helpful if the Interim Moderator arranged an exchange of this information prior to the meeting.

2. The meeting

An Interim Moderator should chair the meeting. Every interview, however formal or informal, has a recognisable sequence, which should be followed:

- a) Opening. It is important to set the scene, to spend time in prayer together, to confirm introductions. Make clear the agenda to be followed; agree on what notes will be taken, by whom and for whom.
- b) Exchange of information. The questions and discussion should cover all topics and at each stage the candidate should be able to ask as well as answer. Only by frank exchange of views can God's will for pastorate and minister be discovered.
- c) Closing. Even when the time is pre-arranged, the conclusion of such a meeting must be handled with care. No major matter should be overlooked.
- d) It is important to make clear what the next stages will be, and the probable timing.

3. The assessment

It is vital to stop, think and pray when the candidate has withdrawn, before any conversation, discussion or assessment is begun. Those present should gauge their impressions against the list of factors previously agreed, such as training, qualifications, experience, presentation, motivation etc. Additional factors will now be apparent following the meeting, and will probably affect the assessment. It may be useful to score a candidate under each heading as good, acceptable or problematic but not everyone will follow this method. A consensus should be sought in order that a clear recommendation can be made. The pastorate call group should have confidence in the candidate as a prospective minister before issuing an invitation to preach with a view.

Appendix 8 Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

The United Reformed Church believes that all people are created in God's image and are loved by God. In his ministry Jesus showed God's love by his openness to all people, including those who were marginalised in his day.

Statement of intent

The United Reformed Church affirms its commitment to show the same openness to all people in today's world. It intends in spirit and in deed to promote equality of opportunity and diversity in all spheres of its activity and is committed to behaving as an equal opportunity organisation. It acknowledges that people are called to be diverse and lively, inclusive and flexible through the sharing of the gospel.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy Statement

Exclusion and discrimination can occur on many grounds including those recognised in law, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status and disability. The United Reformed Church seeks to eradicate less favourable treatment in these areas by endeavouring to:

- Build inclusive communities where all will be treated with dignity and respect and have equality of opportunity to contribute their gifts to the common life;
- Identify and remove barriers to participation in employment, training, promotion, leadership and representation on church committees and in the attitudes and actions of every congregation;
- Take positive action to counter attitudes and practices contrary to this statement of intent ;
- Define within the law when being of a particular religion or belief is or is not a requirement for any post within the church.
- Develop detailed policies to give effect to these requirements; and Monitor and report on progress in fulfilling these requirements.

This policy is the overarching equality and diversity direction of the United Reformed Church and should be read in conjunction with The United Reformed Church's declaration that it is a multicultural church and its equality policies on employment, church activities, membership, committees and councils.

October 2006

Appendix 9 A grievance procedure

1. The purpose of a grievance procedure for ministers is to give a legitimate place of complaint and to solve the problems as quickly and as simply as possible. A timescale should be agreed in each case which should normally be dealt with inside three months.
2. It is important that grievances are treated seriously, because they are genuine to the person concerned.
3. It is important to discover whether the grievance is legitimate.
4. In the first instance the minister with the grievance should approach the Synod Moderator; however if the grievance involves the Synod Moderator, the minister should approach the Synod Clerk.
5. The Synod Moderator should approach both parties within one month of the request, respond to the grievance and where possible effect a reconciliation. If the Synod Moderator is a party to the grievance, the Synod Clerk or another mutually acceptable person should act.
6. Where immediate reconciliation is not possible, a small independent group should be established by the appropriate council of the church, consisting of lay people and ministers, men and women.
7. Either party should be able to challenge the composition of the group which should reflect the nature of the grievance (e.g. if it concerns equal opportunities, finance, etc. members of the group should be seen to have some knowledge of the issue).
8. The group should then meet with both parties who may be accompanied. The group should again attempt a reconciliation but, if this is not possible, should arbitrate between them.
(Revision of Employment Practice Report 4.7.2, Note D)

Appendix 10 Personal Profile for a Minister

NB This document is to be completed and controlled by the writer. It may be useful to a Synod Moderator and/or the Interim Moderator, Church Officers and Elders of a pastorate under consideration. It is **NOT** for general circulation.

Surname

Christian names

Address (please include postcode and telephone number)

Date of Birth

Date of Ordination

Spouse: Name

Occupation

Child(ren) Name(s) Date(s) of birth

Any other relevant family information.

Medical: If there are any medical factors that might affect your work, ensure that your present Synod Moderator knows.

Education: Please give dates and qualifications.

Secondary Education

General Higher Education (pre- or post- ordination)

Please list other training courses, other professional qualifications, language or similar skills etc.

Pre-ordination/commissioning Theological Training

Education for Ministry 3 (in-service training undertaken)

Please give details of your life and faith journey, in a chronological form, including ministries and other posts, (paid or unpaid) academic achievements, in-service experiences.

For each post give:

- its location
- details of the main duties, responsibilities etc.
- a description of the particular skills, techniques or experience relevant to this post.

Description of Ministry:

Please give a description of the following

- Your priorities in ministry
- Your view of community development
- Your preferred way of leading worship
- Your working style, including the approach you take to leadership
- Your theological approach
- Your views on baptism
- What areas of ministry do you most enjoy?
- How would you describe your strengths and weaknesses?

Expectations:

Please describe any experience or special skills not already mentioned which you feel may be relevant to your future ministry.

In which areas of ministerial work are you particularly interested and/or experienced (e.g. pastoral care, youth work, evangelism, community development, administration, leading worship, preaching, training, etc.) Please give your reasons for your choice.

Please outline your immediate objectives in ministry.

Please outline your vision for the church.

If you have an interest in a particular post please indicate the grounds of your interest in a covering letter.

If you are considering a move, please complete the following:

Do you presently own a car? yes/no

Do you prefer to run your own car? yes/no

Would you prefer a housing allowance to the provision of a manse? yes/no/no preference

When would you be free to leave your present post?

Are there any factors which would affect your ability to move or determine where you would consider going (e.g. Educational, family, occupation)?

Signed Date

Please complete the Personal Summary Profile (see attached pro-forma).

Appendix 11 Guidelines for the Introduction of Stipendiary Ministers

Report to General Assembly 2004

Appendix 1

Guidelines for the Introduction of Stipendiary Ministers to pastorates declared vacant by District/Area Councils

'Mission Council welcomes the following procedure and encourages the Synod Moderators to implement them and make them known to the wider church.'

1. A personal profile on one sheet of A4 to standard format shall be prepared by a minister seeking a move. This will be circulated in advance of the Synod Moderators' meeting. It shall include details of particular geographical or other constraints.
2. A synopsis of its profile on one sheet of A4 to a standard format shall be prepared by a vacant pastorate and tabled at the Synod Moderators' meeting.
3. If more than one minister has expressed an interest in a particular pastorate then the personal profiles of all those interested shall be made available to the pastorate, but they may then choose only one candidate with whom they wish to meet.
4. Pastorates may enquire via the Synod Moderators to see if a particular minister would be willing to meet with them.
5. Ministers seeking a move may be shown more than one profile.
6. On request, ministers may be shown the synopsis of any vacant pastorate not already the subject of a formal introduction.
7. The present system of notifying all ministers monthly of all vacancies shall continue.
8. The Synod Moderators' meeting shall be free to approach ministers to consider urgent needs in particular vacancies.

Appendix 13 Minister/CRCW Personal Profile Summary

Contact details:		
Full name:		Preferred name:
Date of birth:		Date of Ordination:
Present Pastorate:		Date of Induction:
Marital status:		No. of dependent relatives:
Housing requirements:		
Pastorate Preference (e.g. inner city/urban/suburban/market town/rural; team/LEP/specialist; theological emphasis, worship style, etc.)		
Priorities in Ministry:		
Geographical Constraints:		
Relevant or Recent CME:		
Skills and Experience Offered:		
Other Comments (e.g. Anything to Avoid?):		

sample

Appendix 14 Orientation for Incoming Ministers to Methodist and United Reformed LEPs

Introduction

LEPs can be among the most exciting churches in which to serve as a minister. At their best, they are growing and developing situations that enable congregations and community to see the church fulfilling Christ's prayer "that they might be one." However, each LEP has a different constitution that almost invariably takes precedence over "normal" denominational practice, and allows for creative development. It is therefore necessary for incoming ministers of either denomination to understand the practice of the specific LEP to which they have been called, or in which they have been stationed. This means that it is necessary to understand:

the differences between the LEP, and the Methodist and United Reformed Churches;
the expectations of the wider church structures on the LEP;
how and why the original Constitution and Sharing Agreement are implemented now.

The orientation process

This document provides an orientation process that should result in ministers gaining this understanding. The process involves the support of a colleague from the other denomination, a person appointed by the local congregation, and reading essential documents.

A colleague from the "other" denomination who has no ongoing or previous involvement in the LEP, will be identified by the District Chair or Synod Moderator. When a minister of the United Reformed Church is called, the Synod Moderator will initiate the process in consultation with the District Chair, and vice versa.

The colleague from the "other" denomination will be active in ministry, be in touch with developments in his /her denomination and understand the theology, tradition and practice of his/her own church. His / her role will be to help you:

- explore the areas of difference between the Methodist and United Reformed Churches;
- reflect on the way the theology, tradition and practice of both churches, have or have not, been incorporated into the LEP;
- and make decisions about your wider involvement in church structures.

His / her role is not to make value judgements about the LEP and it does not matter whether or not s/he has been in a similar LEP.

It would be helpful to meet regularly (perhaps quarterly) during the first year. It is hoped that the relationship might provide you with an ongoing sounding board, but in subsequent years, meetings could be less frequent.

Reading essential documents. The LEP's leadership should provide you with these before your arrival. They include:

The Constitution or Declaration of Intent.

The Sharing Agreement. (NB: Please be aware that Sharing Agreements are drafted according to the Sharing of Buildings Act 1969. They are legal documents and might not appear to reflect the dreams and hopes in local situations for equality and goodwill.)

Practice Documents. Where these exist they might include terms of reference for committees, processes for electing Elders / Stewards etc.

Annual Reports

Minutes of meetings with powers of governance such as Elders and Church Meeting, Church Council, and Joint Councils.

"How to Make it Work" is a pack of advice, produced by the Methodist / United Reformed Church Liaison Committee, for locally united Methodist and United Reformed Churches. This is available on the Methodist and United Reformed Church's Websites: www.urc.org.uk and www.methodist.org.uk

A person appointed by the congregation to help orientate you (e.g. the Church Secretary or Senior Steward). You may need to ask for someone to be appointed! S/he should help you to understand the LEP and how local practice has evolved. You should meet with him / her regularly in the first year, probably monthly initially, but reducing in frequency as seems appropriate.

Understanding the practice of the "other" denomination

If you are to move beyond stereotypes and learn to value the other tradition as much as your own, it is essential to have an understanding of the nature of the church that underlies the normal practice of the other denomination. This will enable you to establish the extent to which the local practice of the LEP has developed from the practice of its constituent denominations.

Identify the ecclesiology and practices of your own tradition that you particularly value, and with your colleague from the other denomination, seek to understand the practice of the other denomination. Ask for an explanation of how and why the church works as it does at all levels. The major areas of difference between the Methodist and United Reformed Churches are:

1. The different processes used for "calling" (United Reformed Church) and "stationing" (Methodist Church) ministers.
2. The different roles and understandings of leaders and ministers in the two churches at congregational, Circuit and District levels. This should include, ordination and authorisation in relation to the eldership and the role of the Church Secretary in the United Reformed Church, and Superintendents, Circuit Stewards, Local Preachers, Pastoral Visitors and Stewards in the Methodist Church. It is also important to understand the effect of the differences in the relationship between the minister and the local congregation.

3. The different understandings of local church governance and authority in relation to decision-making, pastoral care and worship.
4. Different accounting and church years have implications for local decision-making and the relationship of the local church to the Circuit and District. The United Reformed Church works on a calendar year (January to December), while the Methodist Church uses the "Connexional" Year (September to August)
5. Different rules, practices and laws concerning property.
6. Worship is where the life of the two churches looks most similar, but there are significant differences around communion practices (for example: how, and by whom, the elements are served to the people and lay presidency), baptism, and transfer of membership. It would be helpful to explore the use of "set forms of worship", the status of hymn and service books and the minister's role in leading worship.
7. The relationship between the local church and the wider structures and the different roles, status and authority of leaders. (Methodist Circuit, District and Connexion, Methodist Superintendent, Circuit Stewards and the District Chair; United Reformed Church Focus Groups / Clusters, Synod, Assembly, and Synod Moderators.)

You might also find it helpful to attend one of the local or national courses run for ministers new to LEPs. These are currently organised by the United Reformed Church and some County Ecumenical Officers.

Understanding the practice of the LEP

The following should be set out in the Constitution and Sharing Agreement.

Church Governance / Decision Making and the roles of church leaders and meetings

Ministry including calling or stationing

Worship

Finance

Property

The relationships between the LEP and its minister and the wider structures of the denominations

The relationship with Local Sponsoring Body

Churches with Constitutions may have negotiated them carefully and they therefore require sensitive and careful attention. Some follow more closely the pattern of either the Methodist or the United Reformed Church. But churches differ in the extent to which these are adhered to and it is likely that constitutions will have been adapted with time. For each of these areas you will need to understand:

1. What was originally agreed and why.

Read the documentation.

If it is possible, develop an understanding of the history of the LEP by talking with people who were members in the churches that came together to form the LEP.

2. Current practice.

Observe.

Read current documents.

Ask the person appointed by the church what they understand current practice to be.

3. How and why practice has developed from the original intention.

a) If possible, talk with those who have been involved in making the changes, especially local church leaders, past and present.

b) Ask what were the primary reasons for the change? Were they practical or ecclesiological?

c) Find out who / what were the most significant influences on these changes (e.g. previous ministers, previous or current members, changes in the theological emphasis of the church, positive or negative interactions with the Methodist Circuit, the local and regional structures of the United Reformed Church, or local "Churches Together" group)?

4. The distance of the LEP from its constituent denominations.

The intention of this exploration is not to re-establish the forms that originally existed, but to understand what was originally agreed and how far the LEP had developed from the ecclesiology and practices of the Methodist and United Reformed Churches with which you will normally be more familiar. This should enable you, at least in the early stages to understand what expectations the LEP has of you, and to adapt their own practices accordingly.

a) Reflect on your findings in the light of what you know about the Methodist and United Reformed Churches.

b) What are the advantages / disadvantages of the practice of this LEP.

c) Identify the issues raised by the different expectations for you as a minister in your own tradition.

The expectations of the wider church structures on the minister of the LEP

The expectations of the wider church are also varied and normally depend on factors such as the membership and original make up of the LEP, the extent of the minister's responsibilities (e.g. other churches, responsibilities, hours worked. etc), and the previous history of relationships with both denominations.

1. Ensure you have developed an understanding of the ecclesiology and practice of the "other" denomination so that you are aware of normal practice. The areas that frequently cause tension are:

Leading worship: the effect of the Circuit Plan on United Reformed ministers and the expectation that a minister in United Reformed single church pastorate would normally lead worship each week.

The number of meetings: getting a good balance that reflects the size of the job in relation to the "other" denomination and enables useful participation.

Attendance at meetings.

Administration requirements including the different accounting and church years and the differences in who is legally responsible for managing property.

2. Establish an understanding of the LEP's expectations of the minister's relationships with other church structures. The Constitution may have some information about how the relationship between minister and the wider church structures was envisaged. If this is the case, establish whether or not this is the current position, or seek to understand what the church's current thinking and expectations are.

3. Establish an understanding of the wider church's expectations of the minister's relationships with them.

a) During the calling / stationing process there should have been some conversation about the expectations of the incoming minister. These should normally have included the District Chair, Methodist Superintendent and the Chair of the United Reformed Church Pastoral Committee (or its equivalent) and / or the Synod Moderator, and sometimes representatives of the Sponsoring Body.

b) If these are not clear, or appear to be unreasonable, you may wish to discuss this with ministers in other Methodist / United Reformed Church LEPs, and if / when appropriate, with the leaders in the local congregation. If it is believed that changes are necessary, these will require further discussion with the Methodist Superintendent and Circuit Stewards / or Synod Moderator.

Methodist / United Reformed Church Liaison Committee
March 2007

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