

WESSEX SYNOD STRATEGY 2005

PURPOSE

'The purpose of God according to Holy Scripture is to gather the whole of creation under the Lordship of Christ Jesus in whom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, all are brought into communion with God.'

(World Council of Churches, Canberra 1991 and based on Ephesians 1)

'Within the one Holy, Catholic, apostolic Church, the United Reformed Church acknowledges its responsibility under God:

- to make its life a continual offering of itself and the world to God in adoration and worship through Jesus Christ;
- to receive and express the renewing life of the Holy Spirit in each place and in its total fellowship, and there to declare the reconciling and saving power of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ;
- to live out, in joyful and sacrificial service to all in their various physical and spiritual needs, that ministry of caring, forgiving and healing love which Jesus Christ brought to all whom he met;
- and to bear witness to Christ's rule over the nations in all the variety of their organised life.'

(The Basis of Union, paragraph 11)

MISSION

The prime purpose of the Wessex Synod is to assist the local church in its response to God's call to mission, as expressed in the Five Marks of Mission¹

- to proclaim the good news of the kingdom (Tell)
- to teach, baptize and nurture new believers (Teach)
- to respond to human need by loving service (Tend)
- to seek to transform unjust structures of society (Transform)
- to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and renew the life of the earth (Treasure)

A VISION OF THE CALLING OF EACH LOCAL CHURCH

The calling of the local church is to fulfil God's purpose in its own situation.

The local churches should be communities where:

- Worship leads people to an encounter with the living God
- All five marks of mission are central to the church's ministry.
- Members have a clear understanding of the church's calling and regularly evaluate their life and witness.
- Vibrant and effective denominational and ecumenical relations are being sought

¹ adopted by General Assembly in 1999 as part of the 'Growing Up' report

STRATEGY

To stimulate, support and encourage the development of local mission by effective stewardship of the material and human resources available and by building and maintaining effective structures, processes and communication at all levels.

KEY AREAS

Ministries and Training

- Challenging people to recognise and respond to God's call
- Developing a culture of deepening discipleship through life-long learning for all people and support for all those actively engaged in the ministries of the church
- Wherever possible, developing and extending relationships with our ecumenical partners in the region to enable the more efficient and effective use of resources

Mission and Outreach

- Supporting mission and outreach to all sections of the community
- Sharing in commitment with ecumenical partners (at appropriate levels) in stimulating and supporting the planting of new churches and creating new ways of being church
- Encouraging local churches to be builders of hopeful, caring, loving, multi-cultural and inclusive communities centred in Christ and the worship of God
- Inspiring and enabling local churches to work for a world in which people live in freedom from poverty, exclusion and exploitation and challenging them to be good stewards of the environment

Resources and Communication

- After rigorous evaluation, using resources within the Synod in a focussed way to enable effective mission
- Promoting good stewardship of human, financial and material resources
- Establishing and maintaining effective internal and external communication channels and processes
- Responding to any changes in structures arising from General Assembly resolutions