

Paper F1

Update on the work of the Faith and Order Committee

Faith and Order Committee

Basic information

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Action required	For information.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Update on the work of the Faith and Order Committee.
Main points	This paper outlines the current areas of work for the Committee.
Previous relevant documents	None.
Consultation has taken place with...	URC Communications, URC Youth, Fresh Expressions Enabling Group, Walking the Way Steering Group, ecumenical partners and URC Ministries Committee.

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Ongoing discussions with ecumenical partners about the role of eldership in LEP's.

The Remit of the Faith and Order Committee:

- * To address issues of faith and order on behalf of the URC.
- * To participate in and respond to ecumenical and inter-faith discussions on faith and order issues.
- * To advise the assembly, its officers and committees on questions of faith and order.
- * To listen to concerns raised by Local Churches, synods and individuals and to advise as appropriate.
- * To publish and disseminate occasional materials relating to questions of faith and order.

The Faith and Order Committee will meet on 20 to 21 October (a date after the date to submit papers to Assembly Executive but prior to the meeting itself). The Committee has not met since General Assembly, but its work has continued and this paper gives an update about ongoing work.

- After wide consultation, a revised paper on the place of Elders in the United Reformed Church has been drafted. This includes an understanding of ordination (of Elders) and some biblical, historical and theological reflection on how and why we might have inherited this ministry and why we ordain elders. It is hoped that an agreed version of the paper might help clarify the United Reformed Church position in LEPs and in ecumenical discussion. The Committee will consider how best to take this matter forward.
- The sub-group delegated from Faith and Order to consider questions raised by the Fresh Expressions Enabling Group regarding what makes a group of people a *church* have now drafted a response for discussion. This document will be discussed at the meeting in October. It is hoped that our continued discussion will help the Fresh Expressions Enabling Group in terms of ecclesiology as it brings together a breadth of URC Committees with a view to an Assembly Executive consultation and ultimately a combined paper for the 50th Anniversary General Assembly in 2022.
- Faith and Order continues to engage with the IRAD report '*Koinonía: God's Gift and Calling: The Hiroshima Report of the International Reformed-Anglican Dialogue*' (2020) and the follow-up, on-line seminars which have been organized by the joint committee (there is a webinar to be held on 2 to 3 November, hosted by Churches Together in England, the United Reformed Church, the Church of England and IRAD representatives). Faith and Order has also suggested to the Worship Reference Group that it might use the report to commission worship material around *koinonia*. We continue to commend the Report to the Church and would ask that any worship material relevant to the subject of *koinonia* should be forwarded to the Worship Reference Group for wider dissemination in the denomination.

Alongside ongoing work, some new subjects will be included on our agenda in October.

- As the United Reformed Church prepares to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its inception, the opportunity has been taken to review its ecumenical policy. A paper will come to the October meeting discussing the 'place and potential' of LEPs, something that might well prove significant in a post-lockdown world.
- A report will be given to the October meeting about the Meissen Colloquium, 5-6 July 2021. The Colloquium discussed *episcopate* and this might be something the Committee takes up.
- A question has been submitted to the Committee regarding how best to articulate our understanding of creation, especially in light of the most recent scientific reporting about climate change. A further question has come to the Committee regarding the place of the imposition of hands in ordination and induction. The Committee will discuss and report back accordingly.

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Members of the Committee would be pleased to receive comments and feedback from members of Assembly Executive. We would be pleased also to receive questions of faith and order for deliberation during, or between, our meetings.