

# Paper 12

Mission committee

World Council of Churches  
applications

United Church 2016  
Church 2016  
Reformed Church 2016  
Church 2016

# Paper I2



## Mission committee

### World Council of Churches applications

#### Basic Information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	The Revd David Tatem <a href="mailto:david.tatem@urc.org.uk">david.tatem@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Endorsement of a resolution of the mission committee
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Mission Council endorses the support of the mission committee for the applications to join the World Council of Churches from the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod of Malawi and from Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, and instructs the mission committee to inform the World Council of Churches accordingly.</b>

#### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Concurrence with two applications for membership of the World Council of Churches. To raise awareness within the URC of our international relationships
<b>Main points</b>	Two applications have been made for membership of the World Council of churches. The central committee invites existing members to concur with the decision to admit them
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	None
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	The mission team and mission committee

#### Summary of Impact

<b>Financial</b>	None
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	Contributes to the work of the World Council of Churches.

# World Council of Churches applications

1. Membership of the World Council of Churches (WCC) involves certain responsibilities. One of these is to take note of and agree applications from new churches that apply for membership. This is not an automatic process and careful scrutiny of those applications is carried out by the officers of the Council. The churches join for a trial period between two meetings of the central committee and at the same time details of the applications are passed to the member churches for their support prior to final approval by the central committee. The next meeting of the central committee will be in June at which the Revd Sarah Moore will be present as a member on behalf of the URC.
2. Three applications have been passed to the churches for consideration as part of this process. In some cases the knowledge of and links with an applicant may be almost non-existent to the point that a member church feels that it is not reasonably able to endorse or resist an application and it is happy for other more competent members to offer an opinion. Such is the case for us with one of the current applications: the Council of the Baptist Church in North India about which we do not feel able to comment. There are, however, two churches making application with which we have historical and familial links and it is appropriate that the URC be made aware of their applications and asked to endorse them. They are the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod of Malawi and the re-admission of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.
3. The mission committee has already discussed, welcomed and agreed support for these two applications and invites the Mission Council as a wider council of the church to take note of and endorse that support in order that it may be a fuller expression of our belonging to one another.
4. The information provided by the WCC is given below:
  - a) **Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod in Malawi**, created by Scottish missionaries in 19th Century. It has 1,800,000 members, 800 local congregations, more than 200 clergy. Based mainly in Southern Malawi, this church will be the first from Malawi to be a WCC member church. The leadership of this church consider their application for membership in the WCC as a prophetic one, hoping that the interest of other Malawian churches in the WCC will grow.
  - b) **Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa** (re-admission) founded by Dutch settlers, beginning in the 17th Century. Having presently 1,074,700 members, this church was involved in the policy and system of apartheid and therefore excluded from WCC as well as from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. In the last decades, after repentance and official rejection of 'all forms of racism' the Dutch Reformed Church was re-admitted in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and became, for the first time in history, member of the All Africa Conference of Churches. The last step of the reintegration of this church in the global ecumenical family is re-admission in the WCC.

