

Paper M5

Clerk

Resolution 19B(2) and 19E from
General Assembly 2014

United Church 2016
Church 2016
Reformed Church 2016
Church 2016



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Resolution 19B(2) and 19E from General Assembly 2014

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Michael Hopkins clerk@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	<p>1) (Resolution 19B(2) from Cardiff) Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, resolves to amend the Structure of the United Reformed Church by deleting the words ‘a committee convener or otherwise entitled to membership of the Assembly’ from Paragraph 2(6)(d). That sentence would now read: Where the moderator of synod is an officer of the Assembly the synod concerned shall appoint a substitute as its representative;</p> <p>2) (Resolution 19E from Cardiff) Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, resolves to amend paragraph 2(4)(a) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church by adding the words ‘former Moderators of General Assembly and Assembly appointed ministers who are members of a local church in that synod’ This sentence would now read: The synod being representative of the local churches in that province or nation united for the purpose of dealing with matters of wider concern shall consist of: (a) All ministers, registered pastors (in Scotland) and Church Related Community Workers engaged directly in the service of the United Reformed Church within that synod, former Moderators of General Assembly and Assembly appointed ministers who are members of a local church in that synod</p>

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Membership of synods and of General Assembly
Main points	Adding two new categories of people to the roll of synods Reducing the number of cases in which conflict of interest may allow a synod to appoint an extra member to Assembly
Previous relevant documents	Record of Assembly, 2014, pages 15-19 Paper M4, Mission Council, May 2015 Paper M3, Mission Council, November 2015
Consultation has taken place with...	All thirteen synods

Summary of Impact

Financial	Occasional slight reduction in Assembly costs; small increases in the synods' running costs
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

Resolution 19B(2) and 19E from General Assembly 2014

1. Resolution 19 at the 2014 General Assembly concerned the membership of Assembly and Mission Council. Some sections of the resolution were agreed at that Assembly and were able to be implemented. Various other sections proved more complicated than expected and cannot immediately be taken forward. Two further sections that were agreed at Cardiff would involve changes to the Structure of the United Reformed Church, and so require a more elaborate process, involving reference to the synods and further consideration at a central council of the Church. These two sections are the subject of this paper.
2. The proposed amendments to the Structure, approved in July 2014, were forwarded to synods in May 2015, and replies were sought by December 2015. The attached two-page letter from the General Secretary to the Synod Clerks sets out both the procedure and the substance of the amendments.
3. All thirteen synods have had opportunity to consider these two amendments. None has asked that they 'be not proceeded with'. The amendments therefore come to Mission Council, with a resolution that would effect their final approval and incorporation into the Structure of our Church. In this matter, Mission Council would act on behalf of General Assembly.



17th May 2015

To Synod Clerks

Dear Friends,

Report to Synods on matters referred to you for consideration

This letter comes on behalf of the Revd Michael Hopkins, Clerk to the General Assembly, as well as on my behalf. Any responses should be sent to me.

We write to let you know about three sets of matters that were discussed at the URC's Mission Council last weekend. These are now referred to Synods for consideration, because they would involve changes to the Structure of the Church. The procedure for doing this is set out in Section 3(1) of the Structure. You will see that such matters are considered at a central council of the Church, referred to Synods, and then considered again at a central council, where a formal and final decision may be taken. So this is now the middle stage of a three-stage process.

Unless your synod passes a resolution that an item "be not proceeded with", and you notify the General Secretary by the date specified, your synod will have been deemed to agree by default. That means that if you agree with a measure, you do not need to reply. If you disagree with it, it is important that you do reply.

For convenient consideration of these matters, they are set out below on separate pages.

Should you have any questions about the process and formalities of these matters, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With thanks for your help in guiding the life of our Church,
Yours sincerely,

John Proctor

1. Changes to membership of governance bodies

These items were both approved by General Assembly meeting in Cardiff in July 2014:

19B(2) General Assembly resolves to amend the Structure of the United Reformed Church by deleting the words “a Committee Convener or otherwise entitled to membership of the Assembly” from Paragraph 2(6)(d).

That sentence would now read:

Where the Moderator of Synod is an Officer of the Assembly the Synod concerned shall appoint a substitute as its representative;

In practical terms, this first resolution means that where a Synod Moderator is a member of General Assembly in more than one capacity, the Synod would now only appoint a substitute if that other capacity is as an Officer of Assembly. This was agreed because the Assembly judged that this was the only conflict of interest that was really sufficient to merit a substitute.

19E (re Paragraph 2(4)(a) of the Structure) General Assembly resolves to amend the Structure of the United Reformed Church by adding the words “former Moderators of the General Assembly, and Assembly appointed Ministers who are members of a Local Church in that Synod” to the end of the current sentence.

This sentence would now read:

The Synod being representative of the Local Churches in that Province or Nation united for the purpose of dealing with matters of wider concern shall consist of:

(a) All Ministers, Registered Pastors (in Scotland) and Church Related Community Workers engaged directly in the service of the United Reformed Church within that Synod, former Moderators of the General Assembly, and Assembly appointed Ministers who are members of a Local Church in that Synod.

This second resolution adds two categories of people to the membership roll of a provincial or national Synod.

*The date for responses to these is **31 December 2015**, which means that these matters must be dealt with at your forthcoming autumn Synod if you wish to consider them.*

*Michael Hopkins, Clerk to the General Assembly
John Proctor, General Secretary
May 2015*

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