

Paper I1

Mission committee

Partnership Re-Commitment
[The UK congregations of
the Evangelical Presbyterian Church,
Ghana, and the United Reformed
Church]

United Church 2017
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church

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Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Bernie Collins and Michael Jagessar michael.jagessar@urc.org.uk
Action required	Mission Council to affirm the Partnership Re-commitment, and endorse the following resolution (similar to that agreed in 2017 re the PCG) as a matter of good order and practice.
Draft resolution(s)	<p>a) Mission Council welcomes and affirms the Partnership Re-commitment between the UK congregations of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, and the United Reformed Church.</p> <p>b) Mission Council recommends as good practice, and requests Church Meetings to consider seriously, the principle that an individual should not serve as an elder in both of these churches simultaneously. This would not prevent an individual serving as an elder in one denomination, and at a later time serving as an elder in the other.</p>

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	As resolution
Main points	Re-affirmation of the URC's partnership with the growing UK Congregations of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana.
Previous relevant documents	2011 Memo. of Understanding between the EPCG and the URC. Mission Council Paper I2 of May 2017, re the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.
Consultation has taken place with...	Mission committee Dialogue Group (URC and EPCG).

Summary of Impact

Financial	None
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Refreshing a long-standing relationship; helping to pave the way for EPCG to apply to join Churches Together in England.

Partnership Re-Commitment

[UK congregations of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana,
and the United Reformed Church]

1. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (EPCG) and the United Reformed Church (URC) have had a long relationship as partner Churches. On 15 May 2011 the EPCG and URC affirmed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) their vision of sharing a common commitment to mission in the UK through partnership, and their desire to nurture Reformed Churches for immigrants from Ghana which will be in formal relationship with the both the URC and the EPCG.
2. Since then the EPCG has established congregations in England and Germany, and their mission and ministry continue to grow. In local contexts, especially in London, some EPCG communities share the worship space of URC Churches, URC ministers work collaboratively with EPCG colleagues, EPCG ministerial colleagues share in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic ministers' (BAME) gatherings, and there are ongoing conversations around ways that the EPCG (UK) and the URC can support each other's ministry.
3. Believing that we are guided by the Holy Spirit into a continuing relationship of mutual friendship and partnership in the work of the Gospel, we sense that the time is right for the URC and the EPCG (UK) to re-affirm:
 - our common faith in the living and true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 - our common heritage as Reformed Churches within the Reformed family of Churches
 - our sharing in, as partners, a common missional calling, a commitment to growing the Church and deepening Christian discipleship, and a desire to enable each other's mission and ministry, as God's Spirit will lead us
 - our commitment to give and receive from each other, learn from one another, to pray for one another, and to consider practical ways of sharing resources where possible, as we seek to serve and walk the way of abundant life of God in Christ.
4. This renewal of our commitment, as set out in the first resolution above, would re-affirm our long and strong partnership links and our desire to grow and deepen our relationship in new and mutually enriching ways
5. Over the last year there has been a series of meetings between members of the mission committee and senior leaders in the EPCG, and these conversations continue. One of the practical issues discussed was that of overlapping eldership which we felt would merit attention and guidance from the respective Councils of both churches. To this end, we bring before Mission Council the second resolution above.
6. The resolution would not require an elder presently serving with both churches to resign immediately from one or the other. But it would mean that as soon as this overlapping service could reasonably be ended (for example on the completion of a stated term in one of the churches), the elder should take the opportunity to stand down. After this they would only serve in one denomination at any one time.