



## URC Ad Campaign

### 1. Progress at the advertising agency, ‘This is Real Art’

TiRA has now produced the artwork for six ads based on headlines approved by the steering group. Five of the ads are directed at the primary target group of people who need to be convinced that the church’s welcome includes them. One has been developed to address a secondary target audience: those who do not themselves feel excluded but would be attracted to a church that proclaimed and embodied the message of radical welcome. These poster-type ads will be adaptable for a variety of media, including merchandise, and in addition, TiRA will produce a film suitable for the internet. In rural areas where print or poster coverage proves problematic, local radio may be considered.

### 2. The brand

Over the months various people had said that to give high profile to the campaign as an exclusively URC project would be anti-ecumenical. It is not the URC that should be advertised, but the existence of churches which offer the welcome of God in Christ. The steering group considered this and felt that the ecumenical challenge would best be met by giving the initiative its own name and integrity, thus enabling wider ownership. This means that the URC logo does not appear on the ads. Instead there is a credit line reading, “An initiative by the United Reformed Church”. A discrete logo, look and name have been developed and these will appear on the ads. This leaves the door open to churches of other denominations who wish to join the campaign. It has meant that some LEPs have already felt confident to sign up.

### 3. Strategic Consultant

The Rev. Lucy Berry is a member of the steering group, the Communications & Editorial Committee and the Reform Editorial Board. She has a professional background in advertising and broadcasting and her expertise has been invaluable in developing the steering group’s brief for the campaign and liaising with TiRA. Over the months this involvement was taking up more and more of Lucy’s time. The steering group is grateful to the URC Finance Committee who authorised a grant from URC Legacy Fund to enable payment of a consultancy fee to Lucy. She is now putting substantial time into the campaign both as Strategic Consultant and Campaign Advocate. One of her priorities has been collaboration with the Communications Department to help with the designing and producing of materials and the integration of the campaign with the wider communications strategy of the church.

### 4. Internal launch

All of the synods allocated time at their March Synod meetings so that the campaign could be presented. This included unveiling of the brand and showing of the six ads. The Communications Department produced a PowerPoint presentation and an introductory DVD which have since been made available for church meetings. Copies of an introductory booklet for church members including pictures of the six ads and explanation of the rationale behind the campaign were posted to churches and synod offices.

## 5. Training materials

A group drawn from the Synod Training and Development Officers, Mission Enablers and CYDOs worked through the autumn under the leadership of the Rev. Fiona Thomas, Secretary for Education & Learning, to produce material for local churches as they prepare to offer the welcome promised by the campaign. Helpful, existing, preliminary resources have been identified which churches can begin to explore immediately. However, highly specific original material needed for profound conversations on the nature and extent of radical welcome (and the messages contained in the campaign) continues in development. Subjects such as “Remembering exclusion”, “Dealing with boundaries”, “What is inappropriate behaviour”, “Children’s radical welcome “and “Radical Jesus” are either finished or in development. Training materials echo the challenging themes of the ads to help deepen the understanding of local churches about the internal changes which may be required for them to live up to the gospel they proclaim.

## 6. Local church opt-in

The process of affiliation will look like this.

- a) Local churches need to understand and embrace the core values of the campaign. An introductory pack has been created including a range of resources to enable church meeting discussions.
- b) They also need a Companion, an ‘outside’ person whose role is to walk with the congregation and help them grasp clearly and prayerfully the challenges of being affiliated with the campaign.
- c) Participating churches need their own website (assistance will be given where necessary).
- d) Each church needs to engage with some core tools for development:
  - i. A discussion to identify what we value about belonging to *this* church.
  - ii. Discussions engaging with questions about ‘*Radical Welcome*’
  - iii. A facilitated workshop tackling the question of Boundaries
  - iv. Working through either ‘*Creating a Culture of Welcome*’ or ‘*Everybody Welcome*’
  - v. Receiving and engaging with feedback from a Mystery Worshipper
- e) The church needs to covenant to:
  - i. Continue practicing the values of radical welcome
  - ii. Continue to grow in the welcome they offer, asking “what can we look at next in order to continue developing?” This may involve such outcomes as working towards the “Child Friendly Church Award” or undertaking improvements to disability access.

Churches and their Companions will set their own routines and will travel at their own pace, pausing, if needed, to address the issues which exercise them most.

## 7. Take-up

As of this writing, 81 churches have requested introductory packs, either for discussions at their elders and church meetings. A few churches have already voted to become campaign churches and are beginning their preparations.

## 8. Companions and synod advocates

Each synod is asked to appoint one person to be the point of contact with the campaign. It will be through consultation with these contact people plus Training Officers, Mission Enablers, CYDOs and synod officers that potential Companions will be identified. Five sessions have provisionally been booked at Windermere for training of the first Companions.

## 9. Confidentiality

Thirty six ‘research & development’ churches participated in development of the campaign – thanks to each of them! On 28 November to 2 December 2010 two conferences took place at the Windermere Centre for presentation of the ads and opportunities to engage with training and worship materials. Alongside representatives of the R&D churches there were Training and Development Officers, Mission Enablers, CYDOs, and synod moderators and clerks.

The ads were shown to several other groups as well: a creative group involved in producing art and worship materials to enhance the campaign, the Communications and Editorial Committee, the Moderators Meeting, the Education & Learning Conference (December), and the staff at Church House. FURY Assembly was given a presentation on 29<sup>th</sup> January after they had passed a resolution affirming the objects of the campaign. The Youth & Children’s Work Committee was also brought into the circle of confidentiality in order that they could give support through the period of internal launch.

Throughout the internal launch it has been emphasized that the brand and the content of the ads must be held in confidence. A media leak prior to launch could significantly weaken the impact of the campaign. Gill Nichol, URC Media Officer, has given invaluable advice on this and other public relations issues. Media training will be given to those individuals designated by steering group to speak officially about the campaign.

## 10. External launch

The date for the external launch will be 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Although the steering group had preparations in hand for the September launch promised at General Assembly, there was a strong plea from the Training and Development Officers that local churches should be given more time to prepare. Gill Nichol also pointed out the public relations wisdom of a clear, uncomplicated New Year launch, rather than the split focus of a launch at Advent. This new timing allows for the completion of the three-year Vision4Life cycle before the campaign goes live.