

Paper C1

Communications and Editorial Committee

Towards a new logo for the
United Reformed Church

Church 2015
United
Church **Reformed**
Church 2015



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Communications & Editorial

Towards a new logo for the United Reformed Church

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	John Humphreys jhumphreys@urcscotland.org.uk
Action required	To appoint: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. A short term task group to devise and oversee a competition to produce a new logo for the United Reformed Church and; ii. A panel of six to judge the entries.
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mission Council agrees to establish a short term task group to create, advocate and run a competition to produce a new logo for the United Reformed Church over the winter of 2015/2016. 2. Mission Council appoints a panel of five people to judge entries, the result to be concluded before, and announced at, General Assembly 2016.

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To run a competition across the three nations with the expectation of producing a new logo for the United Reformed Church.
Main points	The present logo is dated and has technical limitations regarding its suitability/adaptability across a range of uses.
Previous relevant documents	None that the communications and editorial committee is aware of.
Consultation has taken place with...	With the communications and editorial committee and the relevant members of the communications staff team.

Summary of Impact

Financial	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Expenses connected to the running of the overseeing group and the panel of judges. ii. A prize for the designer of the winning entry (to be decided) iii. Cost of securing the Trademark of the new logo. iv. Cost of redesigning letterheads and comp slips for staff based at Church House, and in the synod offices (noting that the stationery redesign will be done by a staff member and most stationery is printed 'on demand' – so there will be no throwing away of reams of preprinted letterheads, nor investing in reprinting 1000s of same. <p>Please note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Existing publications showing the current logo would be replaced on a gradual basis. ii. It is likely that local churches would incur some costs, replacing notice boards etc; but this would be a gradual process, and not centrally funded.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Hopefully only positive; a new logo would give freshness and modernity to our visual presence.

Toward a new logo for the United Reformed Church

- 1.1 Why? Why bother about our denomination's logo? A good logo is memorable, appropriate, versatile, and simple in form, conveying a specific, intended, message in a timeless fashion. Effective logos clearly say something about an organisation's core values and ethos – its place in the world. The communications committee does not feel that our current logo does this. Our logo should communicate with the world around us, conveying something of the life and essence of the denomination. For some this might feel like fiddling with the deck chairs... others may see our logo as an important part of how the United Reformed Church sees itself, and, equally important, how others see it.
- 1.2 Why now? The present logo is outdated, even old fashioned, and, because there are at least two versions in everyday use (with and without the blue square background) it is impossible to create a consistent image based on a strong logo. There are situations where it has been found not to be suitable (e.g. on the cover of the denomination's Yearbook). At a time when the communications department is reviewing the published resources available to the denomination, with a view to updating many of them, it is timely (and cost-effective) to update the logo too.
- 1.3 Why a competition? The committee feels that a competition would engage the United Reformed Church in debate and tap into the creativity within the denomination, helping create ownership of a new logo. And, of course, holding a competition is cost-effective. Using in-house design staff would take them away from their agreed priorities, and the cost of hiring an external design agency would be prohibitively expensive.
- 2.1 There are technical issues – from a designer's point of view – with the current logo. It is often distorted in use and it is not possible to create a vector version of the current square blue logo because of the way it was originally created. (A vector version would allow resizing without losing quality, enabling the creation of high quality door etchings and door signs etc.)
- 3.1 Whilst there are technical issues in designing and producing a new logo, the role of the communication's department would be to advise – not to decide in isolation on the winning entry. It is important that the Mission Council takes ownership of the proposal and process, taking some responsibility for encouraging a wide range of people to think about a new logo/and participate in the competition. It must be noted that the graphics office will need to be involved in the choice of the shortlisted logos because they will need to ensure that the logo is fit for purpose, meets all technical requirements and will work across the vast range of designed and printed material the graphics office produces. The communications department, led by its graphic designers, will also create a comprehensive set of guidelines on how and when the new logo should be used.
- 3.2 The intention is that the conversations (and images!) generated by the logo competition will, in themselves, be good.
- 3.3 The competition is about more than focusing on a logo but focusing on a future. We expect that the younger people in the church will be particularly enthusiastic about creating a logo that represents the future, as well as the history, of the denomination.
- 3.4 There is a variety in the ways in which the logo is displayed: In print, on websites and on church notice boards etc. Whilst variety and diversity are part of the URC's character, having more than one logo in use, both of which are used inconsistently, does not serve us well.

- 4.1 The proposal is in two parts. The first resolution forms a group to set up and oversee the competition. This group should reflect the diversity of the denomination and we suggest a group of around six people, including representation from the communications department with regard to the technical requirement of logo. The task group would write the rules, promote the competition and respond to questions from would-be entrants and others.
- 4.2 The second resolution appoints a judging panel.
- 4.3 The Mission Council commits itself to the final decision of the judges.
- 4.4 The task group to devise and oversee the competition should be made of people from the three Assembly departments, with at least one member from communications, and one member to act as convener.
- 4.5 The six judges should be made up of one graphic designer from out with the URC, one person from communications, in addition to one judge from each of the three Assembly departments and the panel to be convened by a moderator-elect.
- 5.1 The department and committee recognise that, for some in the denomination, moving from the existing logo, which has been in place (in one form or another) since the denomination's inception, will be a sad loss; but it recommends that that this step forward is taken, and is convinced that the benefits of a fresh new denominational logo will outweigh the loss of the current one.