



A

Campaign of Radical Welcome

Update from the Steering Group

There is much progress and activity to report since the last meeting of Mission Council.

1. It's a green light!

The Review Group appointed by Mission Council completed its work and authorised the campaign to proceed. Complaints and concerns across a range of issues were heard and addressed (see paragraph 12 below).

2. The training plan is now clearly in place

There is a three stage process for churches.

- a) The first stage is exploration. What is the state of the welcome we offer? Whom do we exclude? How can we raise our game? This is commended to every church.
- b) The second stage is to opt in. Each opt-in church is assigned a companion to help them explore radical welcome at a more searching level. A contract sets out the expectations which companions and churches will bring to the partnership. The training is tailor-made for each congregation, recognising that they start in very different places. A core of trained companions is helping to roll out training across each synod so that there are enough companions to meet the need. This too is offered to every church.
- c) The third stage is covenant. When a church decides that it wishes to affiliate with the campaign and reckons itself to be ready, and its companion agrees, the church meeting takes a formal decision to join the campaign. This is marked in an act of worship. Covenanted churches will be listed on the campaign website and this is how enquirers will find the church nearest to them.

3. Internal Launch +1

After the controversy and confusion earlier in the year, the Review Group recommended that the campaign be presented to the churches afresh. This will happen in various ways, significantly through synod visits, some of which have already taken place. These give the opportunity for people to hear about the campaign in depth and ask their questions. The Communications office is also fully involved with regular updates offered through QU and Reform.

4. Youth and children

The staff at Church House are creating some materials on radical welcome suitable for young people and children.

5. Ecumenical preparations are proceeding

In autumn 2012 the campaign will become available as an evangelism tool for the wider Christian family in Britain. There is thinking to be done about how to turn a single denomination project into a movement that is fully owned by a range of partners, and discussions have begun. However, the urgent task is to alert our partners to what is about to happen so that no one is taken by surprise on launch day. Roberta Rominger has made visits to evangelism officers, ecumenical officers and/or communications directors in the

Methodist Church, Anglican Church, Roman Catholic Church, Baptist Union, Salvation Army and Society of Friends. Response has been overwhelmingly positive. She will be travelling to Scotland in November to meet with the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Society of Friends and the Salvation Army, with hopes of adding Methodists, Baptists and the United Free Church to the itinerary as well. Peter Noble is taking the lead in speaking to Welsh colleagues, although CWM partners (the Union of Welsh Independents, the Presbyterian Church of Wales and the Congregational Federation) are already on board. In addition to the denominations, there has been huge encouragement from Christian Aid and the Student Christian Movement.

Discussions are also taking place with the organisers of Greenbelt with a view to the adoption of radical welcome as a key theme of the festival in 2012. The URC has been asked to lead Bible studies and workshops throughout the programme.

6. **A ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ page has been posted on the URC website**
http://www.urb.org.uk/what_we_do/campaign_of_radical_welcome/campaign_of_radical_welcome.
7. **New body copy**
 The Steering Group heard concerns that the body copy (the smaller print on each ad) as initially presented was (a) illegible (b) a bit arrogant and (c) potentially offensive ecumenically. This has been remedied and new wordings have been agreed. These are available with the FAQs.
8. **New launch date**
 At the request of churches and synod training and development officers, the launch date has been put back until May 2012. This is to give as many churches as possible the time they need to prepare for affiliation with the campaign.
9. **A draft project plan is now in place**
 Much work remains to be done to make a May 2012 launch viable. This has now been captured onto a comprehensive diagram with individual steering group members being assigned responsibility for taking each area forward. This diagram doubles as the foundation for a risk assessment document. There are various key deadlines and deliverables which must be met if the campaign is to launch successfully. The work of risk mitigation follows as the steering group considers how to undergird the more vulnerable points of the programme.
10. **Additional Steering Group members**
 The Mission Committee gave approval to the enlargement of the steering group to include one of the synod contact people and a FURY member in addition to Simon Peters who is spending a year at CWM Mission House in Amsterdam. It has also been noted that ecumenical roll-out of the campaign will require legal, structural and fundraising skills not represented in the current steering group.
11. **Fundraising**
 This is now an urgent matter. The CWM grant will allow for modest media coverage but further funding is required for the ecumenical roll-out, development of further advertising materials and fuller media coverage. Options have been identified and specialist help has been sought.
12. **Addressing the requirements of the Review Group**
 The Review Group report outlines ten areas of required work which form the conditions upon which they gave the campaign their go-ahead.

- a) **Communicate radical welcome as a journey commended to every church.**
This will be an ongoing task, but existing documents have already been revised to take into account this change of emphasis.
- b) **Fix new reporting structure with Mission Committee**
This has two parts. The first is to agree the form and frequency of reports offered to Mission Committee meetings. The second, recognising that Mission Committee does not have time to give the campaign the detailed scrutiny which is required, is the appointment of a Liaison Group to keep on top of developments and monitor the work of the Steering Group. The Liaison Group must have a representative from the Communications & Editorial Committee as well. Names are being confirmed and will be reported to Mission Council.
- c) **Communications strategy** This is in process.
- d) **Internal Launch “+1”** See paragraph 3 above
- e) **Financial information for local churches** In process, to be added to FAQs
- f) **Relationship with Faith & Order Reference Group** In hand
- g) **Consultation with other groups**
The Faith & Order Reference Group and the Human Sexuality Task Group are specified. The Steering Group is in active contact with both. There is also a request that the Liaison Group and Steering Group consider whether there are other groups that should be on this list.
- h) **Risk assessment document**
The project plan mentioned in paragraph 9 is the first stage in naming and addressing the risks ahead. Further work will follow.
- i) **Minimum number of churches** See numbers in Review Group report. At the time of writing the number of exploring churches stands at 389.
- j) **Revised body copy** Completed and agreed.

13. CWM review

In May the Mission Committee considered terms of reference for a CWM mid-term review. The latest news is that this is not required and that the normal annual reporting to the European Region Round Table is all that is expected.

Roberta Rominger

20 October 2011