

Paper H1

Ministries committee

Non-stipendiary ministry of Word and
Sacraments

United Church 2017
Church 2017
Reformed Church 2017
Church 2017

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Non-stipendiary ministry of Word and Sacraments

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Paul Whittle moderator@urceastern.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mission Council instructs the Education and Learning Committee, in consultation with the Resource Centres for Learning and the Ministries Committee, to look again at training requirements for NSMs and at whether training for NSMs should have a) basic core components and b) follow specific training for Model I, II or III, or a possible Model IV. This may or may not include obtaining a university degree. 2. Mission Council instructs Ministries Committee to prepare a proposal for locally ordained ministers, taking account of how that fits with the other ministries of the church, including stipendiary ministry, non-stipendiary ministry as it currently is, local leadership (recognising that there is no denominational scheme as such) and the eldership, including the specific role of authorised elders. 3. Mission Council supports the idea of a formal appointment process for all NSMs as on-going support for their ministry and commends that to the Synods. 4. Mission Council supports the idea of a formal review process for all NSMs as on-going support for their ministry and commends that to the Synods. 5. Mission Council supports the idea of a formal retirement process for all NSMs as on-going support for their ministry and commends that to the Synods. 6. Mission Council instructs the Ministries Committee and Education and Learning Committee to look at the training needs of those transferring between one form of ministry and another with particular reference to the circumstances in which further preparation might be offered or required.

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Welcoming the contribution of non-stipendiary ministry since its introduction, the paper suggests extending this form of ministry and ensuring it is properly supported.
Main points	This paper recognizes the value of non-stipendiary ministry and its contribution to the current challenges of church leadership. It raises the possibility of a form of locally ordained non-stipendiary ministry.

	<p>Recognising that there is a mixed pattern of support for non-stipendiary ministry across the synods, it seeks to establish a more consistent approach.</p> <p>It raises the question of how appropriate support is offered when ministers of word and sacraments transfer from one form of ministry to another.</p>
Previous relevant documents	Numerous reports have concerned non-stipendiary ministry, notably reports to General Assembly 1982 and reflections on non-stipendiary ministry within the 1995 Patterns of Ministry Report.
Consultation has taken place with...	<p>All 13 Synods</p> <p>The Revd Fiona Thomas, Secretary for Education and Learning</p> <p>The Revd Dr Rosalind Selby, Principal Northern College</p> <p>The Revd Neil Thorogood, Principal, Westminster College</p> <p>Faith and Order Committee</p> <p>CRCW Programme Sub-Committee</p>

Summary of Impact

Financial	No immediate impact on the budget
External (e.g. ecumenical)	No direct immediate impact

Non-Stipendiary Ministry of Word and Sacraments

1. Like all ministries, Non-Stipendiary Ministry (NSM) is both a gift and a calling. Much valuable ministry has been undertaken within the URC by Non-Stipendiary Ministers (NSMs). In many cases this is ministry that could equally have been undertaken by Stipendiary Ministers. It is an important principle that there is an essential parity within the ordained Ministry of Word and Sacraments. It is also an important principle that we sometimes respond to God's call to new, emerging and pioneering ministries, as well as to ministry in particular sectors, often referred to as chaplaincy. NSM has often been an important component of such initiatives.
2. In February 2015 the Ministries Committee, with the endorsement of Mission Council in May 2015, decided to establish a new Working Group on Non-Stipendiary Ministry with the following terms of reference:
 - i. To canvas the synods in order to understand current practice with regard to the appointment and review of ministers in non-stipendiary service.
 - ii. To canvas the synods with regard to any retirement practice and planning that is currently in place, and to seek contributions from retired ministers who served in a non-stipendiary capacity indicating what was, or what might have been, helpful.
 - iii. To reflect on the established 3 models of non-stipendiary service and advise on their usefulness or otherwise, and to consider whether alternative models might better serve the church and the ministry.
 - iv. To identify Best Practice with regard to the appointment, review and retirement of ministers in non-stipendiary service, in order that the Ministries Committee can encourage the support and use of this ministry.
 - v. To consider whether there should be an age limit for candidating or ordination and if so what that age or ages should be.
 - vi. To consider any other matters that affect the support and utilization of ministers in non-stipendiary service and make recommendations to the Ministries Committee for any improvements.
3. The Working Group recognised that little, if any, of this was new, but equally recognised the significant value in re-visiting these questions at this point. The group consulted widely and produced a much longer report which can be made available to any members of Mission Council who may wish to see it.
4. The original vision for NSM within the URC was established by resolutions passed in 1979 and 1980 and was incorporated into Section K of the Manual as follows:

There are three models of non-stipendiary ministry:

Model I – service in a congregation as part of a team. The pattern is taken from the former eldership of the Churches of Christ and is limited in scope and local in nature.

Model II – pastoral charge of a small congregation, or service as part of a team of ministers caring for a group of churches.

Model III – ministers in secular employment. Service set apart to be a focus for mission in the place of work or leisure. It is related to a local church or District Council.
5. In practice the majority of NSMs now serve under Model II, arguably filling gaps in deployment. That is immensely valuable, but has inevitably diminished the possibilities of the more innovative usage of Model III. It is also significant that

changes in career patterns and reduced opportunities for early retirement, together with transfer to stipendiary ministry, have reduced the number of available NSMs and, in particular, affected the number of new entrants. However, the removal of the age limit on candidating may bring some reversal of this trend.

6. Given the increase in the number of local church leaders, or equivalent, across the denomination, the Working Group sees scope in a new model of ministry which would not require a candidate to be residential in one of the colleges but which would largely be done by training *in situ*, including study and reflection, being overseen by an experienced minister. This would be a local ordination, and, if a later transfer to another area of ministry was required, further training would almost certainly be needed. This would also require the commitment of local ministers to tutor such a course. There could be an annual gathering of NSMs trained in his way for mutual support and encouragement.
7. The Working Group further recognised that appointment as an NSM is necessarily different to that of a stipendiary ministry. While a stipendiary minister is expected to have no (or only reasonable) geographic limitations, an NSM will need to serve in the area in which they live and work. Thus, the process is one of appointment, and whilst a candidate's sense of calling will need to be taken into consideration, it does need to be balanced with the strategic overview of the particular Synod. In addition, it is perhaps more likely that a candidate for NSM may feel a calling to ministry other than in a congregational setting e.g. ministry in secular employment or chaplaincy.
8. The Working Group considered questions of candidating, training, appointment, review and retirement and considered how to achieve the appropriate mix of being relevant to the needs of the church and its context alongside the question of appropriate parity for all ministers. It came to the (obvious) conclusion that all ministry is important, but not all ministry is the same. It recognised that practice with respect to appointment, review and retirement of NSMs varies across the Synods and that it is important to have good processes in place across the denomination. Through the resolutions above Ministries Committee seeks to offer a range of appropriate and properly supported models of NSM which will complement the other ministries of the church, including stipendiary ministry of Word and Sacraments. The committee affirms the importance of retaining the possibility of equivalence of training between stipendiary and non-stipendiary, but suggests that we do not continue to make that applicable in all cases.
9. One particular question is that of transfer between non-stipendiary and stipendiary service. At the moment, this can involve the suggestion, offer, or even requirement of a further period of preparation. Clearly a period of preparation for a different role may be usefully offered. However, we suggest that further thought is given with respect to how such opportunities are offered and used. If, as we are suggesting a new model with a more local basis were offered, then it is clear that a fresh candidating process leading to an appropriate period of preparation would be required in order to transfer to either stipendiary or the current models of non-stipendiary service.

