

Paper 13

Walking the Way Steering Group

Walking the Way – living the life of
Jesus today

Update

United Church 2017
Church 2017
Reformed Church 2017
Church 2017

Paper I3

Walking the Way steering group Update

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Richard Church: richard.church@urc.org.uk Francis Brienen: francis.brienen@urc.org.uk
Action required	Take note
Draft resolution(s)	None

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	This is an update on the progress of the development of <i>Walking the Way: living the life of Jesus today</i> with its emphasis on discipleship and mission.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	Mission Council 11/15 M1 and M2 Mission Council 3/16 Paper M1 General Assembly Reports 2016, p.11 Mission Council 10/16 Paper M1 Mission Council 5/17 Paper I8
Consultation has taken place with...	Steering Group, Mission Committee

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Walking the Way: living the life of Jesus today

This is an update on the progress of the development of *Walking the Way: living the life of Jesus today* with its emphasis on discipleship and mission.

The primary means through which the life of faith is nurtured and grows is that of the local church. The steering group has therefore worked to resource local churches with materials that can be useful in developing missional discipleship which touches on all aspects of our life.

Resourcing with missional discipleship materials

1. In September 2017, every church was sent copies of a leaflet which introduces *Walking the Way, living the life of Jesus today* to all those associated with URC churches. This mailing also included a prayer card intended to help all of us pray for this process of congregational renewal.
2. Autumn synod meetings included an item on Animating Discipleship consisting of a short-animated sequence and another clip of people explaining what they would expect to see in the life of someone trying to follow Jesus and what they think the Church is for. The intention behind these items is to explain Walking the Way and to stimulate conversation on the questions which were put to the public.
3. An Advent liturgy has been developed which involves members of local congregations in briefly explaining what living out the light of Christ involves them in, in their lives. The information for this is accessible through the Walking the Way pages of the website.
4. Occasionally, understanding contemporary culture is best done through watching films. A resource is being developed in 2018 which will spark discussion of some of the larger issues facing us today in the context of our call to live as disciples of Christ.
5. Holy Habits by Andrew Roberts charts ten habits of faithful behaviour in the early church. A URC/Methodist working party has developed resource material based on each of the habits which is available from the Bible Reading Fellowship. The publication date is 19 January and is available for pre-order through their website.
6. 'Stepwise' is the working title for the new discipleship course which replaces TLS. It is currently being developed for launch in the autumn of 2018 and further details appear in this book of reports under the Education & Learning Report, Paper D1.

Resourcing Spirituality and Prayer

7. A growing resource within the United Reformed Church are the Daily Devotions which deliver to around 1600 individual subscribers a daily Bible reading, together with a reflection and prayer. This material has been written by over a hundred people from across the United Reformed Church. This material is part of the Walking the Way emphasis and is stimulating small groups as well as individuals as they reflect on their spiritual journey daily.
8. As part of a season of prayer throughout the autumn of 2017 around the Walking the Way themes, synods have contributed prayers focused on the needs of our country, and specifically to recognise that the big social issues affect many of us in our working out of discipleship in daily life. These are being published on the website and can be used in weekly worship, Elders and Church meetings or simply individually.
9. Walking the Way is an intergenerational approach and to that end the steering group is developing ideas for Messy Church and Godly Play sessions which explore discipleship and mission across the generations.

Advocacy

10. In July, a meeting took place in Birmingham which brought together those in synods and Resource Centres for Learning to share initiatives, learning how an emphasis on *Walking the Way, living the life of Jesus today* is unfolding across the denomination, and sharing the steering group's work with them.
11. Members of the steering group have continued to respond to invitations from around the country to speak about Walking the Way and to listen to the needs of synods and local churches. However, with a small steering group, it is not always easy to meet every request.
12. Bookings are now being received for the gathering for Ministers and Church Related Community workers to be held in Staffordshire next year. This significant event in our denominational life will offer an opportunity for ministers to be stimulated in their thinking and share with colleagues the ideas and opportunities that this new emphasis may lead to in the life of the URC.

Communications & Advocacy

13. Articles will appear in future issues of Reform, including an interview with Andrew Roberts. The intention is to carry articles which address the implications of our Christian calling to inform and challenge readers.
14. The web pages related to Walking the Way are live and will be added to over the coming months thus encouraging people both to visit and to share news of developments in their context.

15. A series of films will be prepared around the ten habits of Holy Habits to profile places in which the habits are being practiced and are reshaping local congregations. It is hoped that these will become available by the middle of 2018.

Accompaniment

16. Churches from every synod will be identified which have strengths in discipleship development. The steering group will be thinking about how such congregations can be the source of inspiration for others in their immediate area.
17. The importance of accompaniment has been emphasised through many people engaged in mission and discipleship development. Accordingly, the steering group is exploring the role of mentoring and coaching with our partners at the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity.

Recruitment

18. It will be apparent from the report that the scope of the steering group's work as it liaises with many other groups within the Church is growing. To resource and coordinate these developments, an interim part time project manager has been appointed, the Revd Elizabeth Gray-King. Elizabeth's contribution has been valuable in ensuring that our timeline for the delivery of materials to synods, RCLs and local churches has been met.
19. Elizabeth's role will continue until the end of the year, from when a fulltime project manager has been appointed. Mr Simon Peters, who is currently the Children's and Youth Work Programme Officer will assume his new responsibilities at the beginning of 2018. Simon has a wide-ranging understanding of the United Reformed Church and is an enthusiastic advocate for *Walking the Way, living the life of Jesus today*.

