

Paper M6

Engagement with 20-40 year olds

General Secretary





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General Secretary: Engagement with 20-40 year olds

Basic Information

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| Contact name and email address | Roberta Rominger roberta.rominger@urc.org.uk |
| Action required | Decision |
| Draft resolution(s) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mission Council agrees to form a task group of six people with the insight and expertise to give leadership on the issue of the integration of 20 to 40 year olds into the life of the United Reformed Church. 2. Mission Council asks the Nominations Committee to identify the appropriate people to serve. 3. Mission Council asks the Mission Council Advisory Group to approve the terms of reference for this task group, including a date for completion of the work, and to report to the next meeting of Mission Council. |
| Alternative options to consider, if any | |

Summary of Content

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| Subject and aim(s) | To address Assembly Res 33 on the integration of 20 to 40 year olds into the life of the URC |
| Main points | A task group is required |
| Previous relevant documents | Assembly 2012 Reports pp. 224-6; Assembly 2012 Record p. 43 |
| Consultation has taken place with... | Church House staff |

Summary of Impact

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| Financial | Expenses for task group meetings and investigations |
| External (e.g. ecumenical) | Draws upon work by partner churches; collaboration likely |

The Church's engagement with 20 to 40 year olds

General Assembly 2012 agreed a resolution brought by the Youth Assembly as follows:

General Assembly celebrates the contributions of young adults in the life of the United Reformed Church and recognises:

- **the reducing number of adults aged 20-40 in the United Reformed Church and**
- **the concerns of the United Reformed Church Youth Assembly 2012 that many people on reaching the age of 26 and leaving FURY drift away from any engagement in the United Reformed Church.**

General Assembly asks Mission Council to address these issues and consider how to improve the integration of this age group at every level of the United Reformed Church.

This resolution reinforces the case for a Department of Discipleship at Church House which could have responded immediately to a challenge such as this. The Connective meeting of senior Church House staff discussed how the resolution should be implemented and they offer these observations and suggestions to Mission Council.

1. This concern is not unique to the URC – there is extensive research on the subject and good practice to be drawn upon. In particular, the Methodist “Missing Generation” report should be a primary source for statistical information and analysis.
2. The real issue is the transition a young adult makes from youth participation (often high energy and exciting) to adult belonging (dull by comparison). This can only be enabled in the local church. But churches would probably welcome guidance and suggestions.
3. The post-FURY age tends to be a period of transition, personally, socially and professionally. The experience of transition on multiple levels militates against participation in a single local congregation. Some people find Christian nurture through higher education (or further education) chaplaincies. Others find it through social media. The recent Faith & Order Committee discussion on the relevance of religious orders for the future of the United Reformed Church offered intriguing models for alternative forms of belonging and discipleship.
4. Fresh Expressions has a lot to contribute to the discussion, as does university chaplaincy. There is to be a round table group thinking about how Fresh Expressions can best serve young adults. Catherine Lewis-Smith (EM1 student at Westminster) is a member.
5. Vigilance was needed as to whether the URC's structures discouraged this age group from getting involved.
6. The best way to engage with these issues would be through a Mission Council task group of people with the relevant insight and expertise.

Resolutions

- 1. Mission Council agrees to form a task group of six people with the insight and expertise to give leadership on the issue of the integration of 20 to 40 year olds into the life of the United Reformed Church.**
- 2. Mission Council asks the Nominations Committee to identify the appropriate people to serve.**
- 3. Mission Council asks the Mission Council Advisory Group to approve the terms of reference for this task group, including a date for completion of the work, and to report to the next meeting of Mission Council.**