

To: Members of Mission Council,
staff in attendance and observers

September 2016

Dear colleague,

**Mission Council
Wednesday to Friday 19 – 21 October 2016
High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire**

I look forward warmly to seeing you at Mission Council, and write now to mention several practical matters as we prepare for the meeting.

1. There will be an introduction session at 12 noon on the first day for new Mission Council members, to outline processes and procedures, introduce the Assembly officers, and explain some items of business. Old timers who would like to attend are welcome too. A full version of our rules for procedure is in the 'Standing Orders' (which are also used at General Assembly), and these can be found on the URC website at: http://www.urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Assembly2016/assembly_reports_16.pdf, from page 247 onwards.

2. In recent Mission Council meetings we have taken certain business *En Bloc*. Feedback has been very positive. The fact that an item is listed as *En Bloc* does not mean it is less important than timetabled items. Rather, the *En Bloc* list contains those items where the Moderators think that decisions might be reached responsibly without further discussion. You will see that the agenda includes a slot when these items will be voted on.

I suggest you read the *En Bloc* papers first. This will give you time to contact the author of a paper if you have questions. Authors' names and email addresses are noted on the cover sheets. If you think any of these papers need discussion at Mission Council, particularly if you disagree with a proposed course of action, you may ask that a piece of business be removed from *En Bloc*. A sign-up sheet will be available at the meeting, where you can list the paper you wish to be withdrawn. If an item gets three signatures by close of business on the first day, it will be withdrawn from *En Bloc* and added to our agenda, with time allotted for discussion.

I need to remind you too that we really rely on every Mission Council member to read the papers and take note of information to relay back to their synods. In using the *En Bloc* method of decision-making there is no wish to bury information or to avoid discussions which Mission Council ought to have. We must all ensure the appropriate flow of information from Mission Council to the synods.

3. You should already have a number of papers from the first mailing: a cover letter, an expenses form, directions to High Leigh, a list of members, and (for new members) 'What we are about in Mission Council.' If you are missing any of these, please contact Reception at Church House, 020 7916 2020, reception@urc.org.uk

4. Observers and URC staff who are not members of Mission Council should not participate in decision-making. Staff members are welcome to speak but, like observers, they should not use orange and blue cards.

5. I remind you that we are not expected to post on social media sites during business sessions. This restriction only applies when Council is in session; members may join in online debates during breaks and at the close of business. As ever, everything shared on these sites is the responsibility of the author and subject to the same defamation laws as any other written communication.
6. All bedrooms are en-suite. To comply with the venue's health and safety regulations, please do not bring food from outside into the Centre, nor take food from the dining room to your room.
7. Below are the papers enclosed in this mailing listed according to the ways we mean to address them:

Category A: En Bloc

- A1 Assembly Arrangements
C1 Communications: publications policy
I1 Mission: the URC's Jewish fund
J1 Nominations: trust and pension nominations
M1 Mission and Discipleship: *Walking the Way*
M3 Clerk: the future of General Assembly
M4 General Secretary: same-sex marriage in the Isle of Man
M5 Clerk: commissions for hearing Appeals
O1 Human Resources Advisory Group: report on work
O2 Human Resources Advisory Group: line management of the General Secretary
U1 Mission Council Advisory Group: discharging the Human Sexuality Task Group
X1 Northerly Synods: report on progress and learning

Category B: Majority Voting

- F1 Faith and Order: Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification
G1 Finance: budget for 2017
J2 Nominations: (late paper; to be tabled at High Leigh)
L1 URC Trust: redevelopment of Church House

Category C: Consensus decision making

- H1 and H2 Ministries: deployment and call
I2 Mission: new frameworks for local ecumenism in England

For information or advice rather than immediate decision

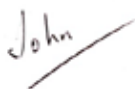
- M2 Clerk: consultation on Standing Orders

8. It is possible that two papers, which have to be prepared late, will only be available at High Leigh:
D1 From Education and Learning, for information and consultation only
J2 Nominations (supplement), as noted above

As always, please come to share, listen, reflect and discern together, and to support each other in fellowship outside the formal timetable. Let us treat one another with grace as together we seek the guidance of God.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



The Revd John Proctor
General Secretary

Mission Council

High Leigh Conference Centre
19 to 21 October 2016



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