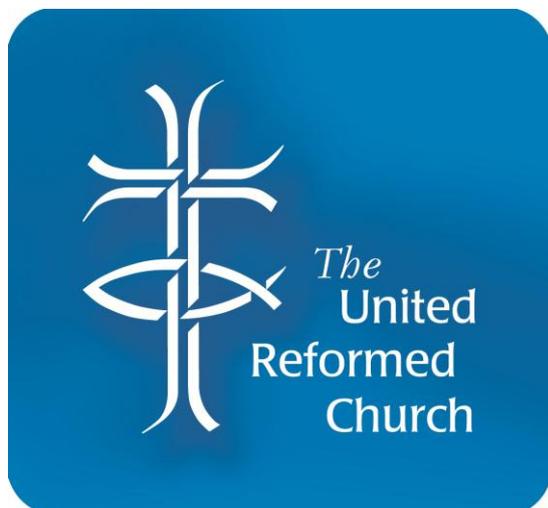


# ***The Role of the Interim Moderator***

## ***A Training Workbook***



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# Session 1 – Introduction

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We begin with a few comments on how to use this course.

## Who's the course for?

This course is intended to equip those who have been asked to be Interim Moderators for the first time, and to act as a refresher course for those who have already served the church in this capacity.

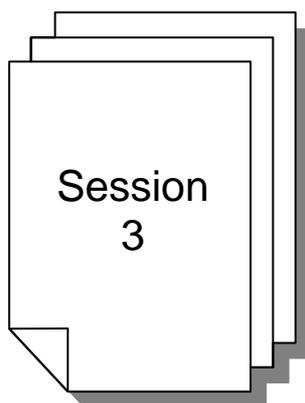
It is useful for people who have not served as Interim Moderators for a while, to explain new emphases in a changing church.

Some parts of the course, particularly that on the pastorate in transition, may also help to equip people asked to be Pastorate Partners in the new system of Local Ministry and Mission Review, though separate and more comprehensive training is available for this.

## References to Other Sessions

The course is in several sessions. You are free to look at the sessions however you wish, but it is recommended that you complete the sessions in order the first time you do the course.

References to sessions other than the one to which you are working on are indicated with this symbol. (This is a reference to session 3.)



You can do the course at your own pace by breaking off at any point and resuming at a later time. But, if you are doing the course as part of a group, you will obviously want to work together.

## Pause to Consider

At various points during the course you are invited to pause the presentation to consider a question or

## Session 1

### Introduction

#### Aim:

*We begin with a few comments on how to use this workbook.*

#### Outline:

- 1) Who's the course for?*
- 2) References to Other Sessions*
- 3) Pause to Consider*
- 4) Document – The Movement of Ministers*

#### Check:

*Have you got a copy of 'The Movement of Ministers'?*

*If not, it can be obtained from the URC website:  
[www.urc.org.uk/ministry/ministries/resource-documents.html](http://www.urc.org.uk/ministry/ministries/resource-documents.html)*

reflect upon something that has been said. This is indicated by the appearance of a 'pause' symbol like this.



## Pause to consider

The task you are asked to complete will appear in the box like this.

The course can be done alone, or in a small group. A pause can be a cue for group discussion. Simply continue with the presentation when you are ready.

Some sessions have accompanying handouts – printed in the body of the session.

### Document – *The Movement of Ministers*

As you undertake this course, you should have a copy of the document 'The Movement of Ministers' at your side. This is a definitive document, detailing the process of declaring a pastoral vacancy, preparing a Pastorate Profile and introducing a potential minister.

If you do not have a copy it can be inspected and downloaded from the URC web-site at this address:

[www.urch.org.uk/ministry/ministries/resource-documents.html](http://www.urch.org.uk/ministry/ministries/resource-documents.html)

Throughout the course, references to 'The Movement of Ministers' will appear on the screen like this: showing either the section number or the appendix number.

Check that you have a copy of this document.

***The  
Movement of  
Ministers***

**Appendix  
2**

# Session 2 – Process Overview

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## A familiar story

The Revd Mary Jones had been minister of Busytown and Greenfield United Reformed Churches for 9 years. One Sunday she called the Elders of Busytown together before the morning service and told them that she had some news which she wanted to share with them prior to telling the gathered congregation. She proceeded to say that she had received and accepted a call to be minister of the joint pastorate of Queens Norton and St John's Valetown United Reformed Churches and that she would be leaving Busytown and Greenfield in around 3 months time. She was to make the same announcement later today when she led worship in Greenfield.

The Elders were genuinely shocked to hear this news, although some thought that even 3 months was too long! But once the fact that they were to soon be without a minister sunk in they began to wonder what to do next.

It so happened that one of the Elders was himself a retired minister, Revd Fred Evans, who had, for many years been a member of the Synod Pastoral Committee. He assured the rest of the Elders that they needn't worry too much because help was at hand. The Synod would soon appoint someone called an Interim Moderator who would guide them through the process of declaring a vacancy and calling a new minister. This made some of the Elders feel better. One or two however wanted to know a bit more – in particular how much was expected of THEM during this time of uncertainty and transition.

So at the next Elders meeting Mary and Fred between then explained the process from beginning to end.

They told the Elders that Mary's call to her new charge would need the **concurrence** of the Synod, through its **Pastoral Committee** as well as the **concurrence** of the equivalent committee in the receiving Synod.

### *Aim:*

*This second session is designed to give you an understanding of the entire process of vacancies and the calling of ministers in the United Reformed Church.*

### *Outline:*

- 1) A Familiar Story*
- 2) Summary*

Assuming this was granted (as it almost always was) then Mary would be leaving.

The Synod would appoint an **Interim Moderator** for the church whose role it would be to guide the church through the process. The Interim Moderator would also be the point of contact between the church and the Synod / Synod Moderator and any prospective candidate. The church could expect a visit from members of the **Synod Pastoral Committee** and from the **Synod Moderator** but as she was a very busy woman this might not happen immediately and probably not until Mary had moved on.

It was explained that the Synod, in consultation with the church would decide how the pastorate would be **scoped** once Mary had left. Would the church still be in a joint pastorate with Greenfield or were there other possibilities for providing ministry in the area? This would all need to be looked at.

The church would need to appoint a **Calling Group** whose role it would be to work with the **Interim Moderator** in carrying out all the tasks that needed to be done in preparation for **Declaring a Vacancy**.

One of the main tasks for the **Calling Group** and **Interim Moderator** would be to prepare a **Pastorate Profile** including a draft **Role Description** and a **Summary Profile** which would be shown to any prospective minister who was interested in the pastorate. They would also need to work on drafting **Terms of Settlement** which would include provision for the housing of a new minister. Once these were in place the Synod could declare the vacancy and forward details of the vacancy to the **Moderators' Meeting** for consideration.

One of the Elders asked for clarity about what the **Moderators' meeting** did so it was explained that the 13 Synod Moderators meet together each month. Their main task is to consider the list of vacant churches alongside those ministers who had expressed a desire to move and to suggest suitable introductions based upon the needs of each pastorate and the gifts, skills and requirements of ministers. The pool of ministers may also include those leaving college as well as those who had applied to join the URC from overseas or other denominations.

The Moderators would then approach ministers in their own Synod with suggestions of Pastorates that they might like to pursue. These ministers would be sent copies of the **Pastorate Profile and Terms of Settlement** to help them to decide. If a minister wanted to proceed with an introduction then the **Minister's Profile** would be sent to the respective pastorate for consideration by the Call Group and/or Elders meeting. If more than one minister was interested in a particular pastorate then the pastorate may request sight of each minister's profile – however they may only choose to meet one candidate.

After the **Moderators' meeting**, assuming that a minister was interested in the pastorate and the pastorate wanted to meet with him or her then the **Interim Moderator** would act as the point of contact between pastorate and candidate. An initial meeting with the **Call Group** would then take place and the prospective minister might also be given an introduction to the area, the manse, church buildings etc. This would normally be a confidential meeting so discretion is important.

Should this initial meeting be positive then the **Call Group** might want to invite the candidate to **Preach with a View**. If this invitation is accepted then arrangements need to be made by the **Interim Moderator** in consultation with the candidate and pastorate for this to take place. This might also be a further opportunity for members of the church to meet the candidate informally, to ask questions and to further explore the possibilities for a new ministry.

It was explained that as soon as possible after a minister has **Preached with a View** there needs to be a special church meeting held, chaired by the **Interim Moderator** to consider the **Issuing of a Call**. This will be done in accordance with the pastorate's agreed method of deciding and voting. If a call is issued then the **Interim Moderator** would communicate this to the candidate with some indication of its strength. The **Interim Moderator** would usually confirm this in writing too.

If the candidate accepts the call then this is communicated by the **Interim Moderator** to the **Synod Moderator** and **Synod Pastoral Committee** as concurrence needs to take place. The Terms of Settlement and Role Description would need to be confirmed by the pastorate and minister elect and arrangements for a service of **Ordination and/or Induction** need to be made. This would normally be presided over by the **Synod Moderator** so finding a date when they are available is important.

The Elders of Busytown now felt much better knowing that there was a clear process to follow and thanked Mary and Fred for their clarity and patience in explaining it all to them. They wondered how long all this would take, but as Mary hadn't even left yet were reminded that there was still work to do – and that a period of vacancy and transition could be a positive experience for a church.

## Summary

In summary then, the process falls into two fairly distinct stages.

Firstly here are the steps that are needed to prepare a pastorate to be in a position to declare a vacancy. This would normally include all the items on these two slides.

These lists are in The Movement of Ministers, in section 3.

And secondly, once the vacancy is declared these are the steps that are needed to introduce a prospective minister and to see this process through to its natural conclusion – which may be a service of induction if an introduction proves successful.

The rest of this course looks in particular at the role the Interim Moderator plays in this process.



# Session 3 – The Role of the Interim Moderator:

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## Appointment

Interim Moderators are appointed by the Synod, though usually this is conducted by a Pastoral Committee acting on behalf of the Synod. They are normally serving or retired ministers, but sometimes an experienced elder may be asked.

A significant part of the role of an Interim Moderator involves liaising between churches and other people and acting as a critical friend. For these reasons it is important that they should be seen to be a neutral person and to act accordingly. So an Interim Moderator is someone from outside the local situation, who needs to be objective and sensitive to the church's tradition, theological stance and ways of operating.

Their appointment needs to be agreed by the church or pastorate.

If you are new to the role, you will, no doubt, have asked what is to be expected of you. This will vary with the pastorate involved; an Interim Moderator may be appointed to a single church, or to all the churches in a group pastorate, or to a co-ordinating role among a number of Interim Moderators in a large pastorate.

It will depend also on the time and skill you have to bring to the role. Some Interim Moderators may only have time to do the essentials while others may have both the time and the expertise to encourage the development of the life of the pastorate while the vacancy exists.

Some will simply be responsible for the process of introducing a candidate; others may be willing to lead worship, chair all church meetings, make emergency pastoral visits, preside at the ordination and induction of elders and attend social functions.

### **Aim:**

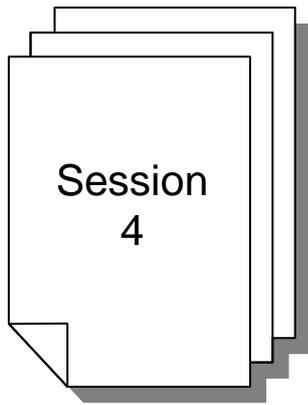
*In this session we look at the role of the Interim Moderator.*

### **Outline:**

*1) Appointment*

*2) The Usual Role of the Interim Moderator*

*3) Working with the Pastorate*



It is important to know what you are prepared to do, to be clear about this from the beginning, and to ensure that the church Elders understand.

We will return to this in session 4 – The Pastorate in a Time of Transition.

For now we will focus upon the usual role of an Interim Moderator.

## The Usual Role of an Interim Moderator

This involves:

- ❖ Chairing those meetings where the calling of a minister is discussed, such as Elders' Meetings, Church Meetings or special groups, and meetings with prospective ministers;
- ❖ Providing a 2-way link between the local church and the Synod, the Synod Moderator and the prospective minister.

The role of the Interim Moderator also normally involves:

- ❖ Aiding the drafting and negotiating of Terms of Settlement, including housing provision, and the Minister's Role Description; also co-ordinating the Pastorate Profile in a multi-church pastorate;
- ❖ Overseeing and co-ordinating the planning of the Induction Service in consultation with the Synod, the Synod Moderator and future minister;
- ❖ Advising on what is appropriate at each stage, given that the Interim Moderator may well have the clearest overall view of matters.

So, let's revisit the summary of the vacancy process introduced in the last session, and see where the Interim Moderator fits in.

A vacancy is rarely a tidy period in the life of a pastorate so, when Interim Moderators are appointed, it is useful for them to find out what has happened, and how much of the formal process, if anything, has been accomplished.

## Working with the Pastorate

There are several tasks for the pastorate to do before a vacancy can be declared.

- It is for the church or churches in a pastorate to decide who represents them in doing preparatory work, but the Interim Moderator may need to take the initiative to arrange for the formation of a Pastorate Call Group. Where a pastorate is served by more than one Interim Moderator, further liaison is necessary.

- Similarly with the preparation of the Pastorate Profile: it is for churches to write or update this, but it may require co-ordination by the Interim Moderator and advice on how information should be presented.
- When the Synod Moderator visits, it will be helpful for the Interim Moderator to be present, both in building working relationships and in order to be able to discuss or remind churches later of what was said then.
- As with the Pastorate Profile, the Interim Moderator has access to the sample Terms of Settlement showing what needs to be addressed in drafting the document.
- The declaration of a vacancy is a milestone marking the completion of formal preparatory work. But the formal process does not describe the pastoral and spiritual preparation that a pastorate may need to undergo to reach the point when it is fit to consider a prospective minister; this is addressed in session 4 – The Pastorate in a Time of Transition.
- When an introduction is made, the Interim Moderator needs to arrange for the prospective minister's profile to be circulated among the Pastorate Call Group and for the group to decide whether they wish to meet the candidate.
- The Interim Moderator arranges for the visit to take place and chairs the meeting with Call Group.
- If the pastorate invites the prospective minister to Preach with a View, the Interim Moderator will see that arrangements are made for this, and likewise for the necessary meeting(s) to decide on whether to issue a call. It should be the Interim Moderator who communicates the outcome of this to the candidate and liaises with both parties in the finalising of Terms of Settlement.
- When a call is accepted, the Interim Moderator liaises with the minister-elect, the Synod Moderator and the pastorate over the arrangements for the induction service. It is also helpful for the Interim Moderator at least to advise the pastorate on a suitable induction process for the new minister's first few weeks.
- It is for each Interim Moderator to decide how many of the tasks she or he has time and ability to fulfil. A handout – Role of the Interim Moderator – is supplied with this course to help consideration of this.
- However large a role an Interim Moderator has, it is useful to know a few essential facts: who is your contact on the Synod Pastoral Committee (or equivalent); and what is the best way to contact the Synod Moderator?

Finally, Interim Moderators are able to claim travel and other expenses relating to their role from the pastorate; the Synod will have a standard mileage rate for this.

# The Role of the Interim Moderator

## Core tasks in the process

- Advise the pastorate concerning the vacancy process
- Chair meetings which consider potential candidates
- Liaise with candidates
- Liaise with Synod Moderator and wider church
- Chair meetings between the pastorate and candidate
- Chair Elders and Church Meetings which discuss and vote on issuing a call
- Communicate result of voting to candidate
- Ensure induction arrangements are made

## Further tasks before an introduction is in sight

- Guide the pastorate in preparing their Pastorate Profile
- Ensure the Profile is the required standard
- Help the pastorate to come to terms with loss and uncertainty
- Enable the emergence of new gifts in elders and members
- Help spirituality and vision within the pastorate to develop in the transition period

## Further tasks during or after an introduction

- Oversee the programme for candidates when they visit
- Aid the drafting and negotiating of Terms of Settlement
- Guide the pastorate concerning the first few weeks of the new ministry

## Other things you might negotiate

- Chair other meetings during the period of ministerial transition
- Preside at Ordination and Induction of Elders
- Lead worship, especially Holy Communion (if you are ordained/authorised)
- Conduct weddings and funerals
- Offer pastoral care, especially at critical times
- Ensure appropriate ecumenical consultations take place

## Don't forget the candidate

- Guide the prospective minister through the process
- Enable the prospective minister to reflect on and learn from the process
- Offer feedback to a candidate when a call is not issue

# Session 4 – The Pastorate in Transition

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The process of preparing a Pastorate Profile, declaring a vacancy, and introducing a candidate can be specified clearly, even if does not always run smoothly.

However, there are many aspects of church life that are important during a time of transition that will vary greatly from one pastorate to the next and may be quite unpredictable. For example, churches react differently to the departure of a minister, and some cope far better during a vacancy than others; crucial to this is their ability to imagine a future under new circumstances.

## *The Movement of Ministers*

### Appendix 2

Our approach in this session will follow **Appendix 2** in **The Movement of Ministers**, “Making good use of a time of transition.” We will consider the ministry of the Interim Moderator under 4 headings: Reaction to change, Supporting the pastorate, Reflecting on church life, and Planning for the future.

You may find it helpful to look back at **section 6** of **The Movement of Ministers** on The Appointment, Responsibilities and Role of the Interim Moderator, particularly what is said about the role of the Interim Moderator on page 6. Pause now if you need to do this.

## *The Movement of Ministers*

### Section 6

## Reaction to change

When a minister moves on the pastorate enters a time of more obvious change and transition. People react to this in various ways and with a wide of emotions. Sometimes, when a minister leaves, symptoms of

### **Aim:**

*In this session we look at the life of a pastorate in the time of transition between the departure of a minister and the hoped-for arrival of its next minister.*

### **Outline:**

- 1) Reaction to Change*
- 2) Supporting the Pastorate*
- 3) Reflecting on Church Life*
- 4) Helping the Church to Reflect*
- 5) Planning for the Future*

bereavement will predominate, at other times perhaps the excitement of a new beginning.

Remember that, in a joint or group pastorate, the churches may react differently. Indeed, individuals within the same local church will respond in ways influenced by the particular nature of their relationship with the former minister.

Similarly, absence of a minister may induce a paralysing anxiety, or it may cause a church to rise to the challenge.

Whatever the reactions, the Interim Moderator will do the pastorate a service by giving people opportunities to express their emotions.

How people react is important, not simply because of our normal pastoral concern for them, but for two further, particular reasons.

Experience shows that, in some pastorates, the content of the Pastorate Profile and the choice of the next minister may be unduly influenced by the reaction to the last minister. While it is beneficial to learn from experience, it is unhelpful for the outlook of a congregation to be dominated by the past, especially at a time when it needs to look to the future.

The ways in which people react may also be indicative of underlying conflict. Church members may have strong and different views of the leadership of the outgoing minister; their desire to influence the choice of the next minister may cause tension. Perhaps there have been tensions among church members for some time but these were not addressed or have been suppressed, either because of politeness or strong leadership. With church life in flux, these may now become more explicit. If you come across conflicts you feel ill-equipped to deal with, you should consult your Synod Moderator.

It is not that we are looking for problems where they do not exist, rather we want to prepare a pastorate to listen clearly to the leading of the Holy Spirit as they make decisions about the future, and this is difficult when clouded by strong emotion.

Once again, opportunities to acknowledge differences and express emotions will assist in the process, and may be necessary before God can be heard.



## Pause to consider

Think of instances that you know when ministers have moved on.

How did people in the churches react? What did they feel?

In what ways did the Interim Moderator, or others, help the congregation to acknowledge the past and move on?

If you are a minister yourself, then you may have had few opportunities to see how people react when another minister leaves; so you may need to pay particular attention to this aspect of the pastoral work of the Interim Moderator.

## Supporting the pastorate.

A major cause of the anxiety that a congregation may be feeling is not knowing who will do what the minister did. This is particularly the case where a church has developed a substantial dependence upon the minister. In time, the Interim Moderator will do well to assist the church to adapt to a more healthy distribution of leadership tasks. But often, before that can happen, the church will need some assurance that they can simply cope.

It is important for you to decide how much you are prepared to do as an Interim Moderator beyond those tasks essential to your role. Look again at the document 'Role for Interim Moderator', particularly the section entitled, 'Other things you might negotiate.' You will need to consider how much time is available for you to help the pastorate in these ways.

This checklist also forms a useful basis for a discussion with the elders. By initiating this discussion you will offering support. Together you can consider: what tasks are likely to arise, which you will do, and who can be approached to help with the remainder.

A cornerstone of the United Reformed Church is the ministry of the whole people of God in the name of Jesus Christ and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. A healthy church is one in which the members gifts are offered in joyful service of the gospel. A vacancy can be a time for hidden gifts to emerge and for necessity to prove a decisive stimulus for people to step out in faith. There will be opportunities for people to exercise ministry in new or renewed ways: in leading worship and preaching, in the exercise of pastoral care, and in leadership.

Of course, it is also possible that church members will withdraw in fear of failure. But the role of leadership is to develop the gifts of others and to build up confidence. The Interim Moderator can do this through a ministry of encouragement, thereby assisting the church to see the vacancy as an opportunity rather than a crisis. Individual gifts for ministry can be developed through training, as can the team leadership of the Elders Meeting; contact your synod training or development officer for help with this.

Ultimately, responsibility for the life of the church - its worship, pastoral care and outreach - lies with the local church. The Interim Moderator will want to take every opportunity to move the church away from dependence on others, including its next minister. Pastorates that want to stand on their own feet are more attractive to potential ministers, who are then free to consider how their gifts could enhance what the churches are trying to do.

How ready you are to support a pastorate in the ways that have been suggested may depend on your style of ministry. You will need to decide which extra tasks you

**'The Role of  
the Interim  
Moderator'**

**Page 12  
above**

are prepared to do for the pastorate. But, if you have the time and experience there is the danger that a church may transfer its dependency onto you; so a pertinent question is: do you have a personal need to be helpful, to be needed? If so, you may not be inclined to encourage church members to develop their contributions to ministry. It is important to remember that your appointment as an Interim Moderator is a temporary one and your aim should be to leave the pastorate in a healthier state than when you start. So think how well equipped you are to develop gifts in others. How much experience do you have in doing this? If not much, do you know how to contact your synod training officer?



## Pause to consider

Your style of ministry

What tasks are you prepared to do?

Do you need to be helpful?

How will you develop gifts in others?

### Reflecting on church life.

A church in vacancy will be focussed upon the future. The congregation will have hopes and fears, often unspoken. They may think that the future is largely in the hands of people outside of the church. The Interim Moderator will want to help the church play its part in engaging with those beyond the congregation who will shape its future (and God is the most significant of these).

But, before a church can do this it may be useful, even necessary, to address the past: for the church to tell its story. Only then will the Interim Moderator discover where their true passions lie, what makes them tick. While the past remains untold, the hopes and fears for the future may be difficult to articulate. This is particularly important for an anxious or depressed church, as its view of the future will be very restricted. By encouraging them to give voice to what they have been through, the Interim Moderator may help the church to see new possibilities of God's work with them, and enable the church to give others a better idea of who they are and where they are going.

Although, for some churches, their priority may be simply to maintain life as it has been, the transition period must be more than that. Every viable local church has a God-given purpose which will depend on its location and the resources it can marshal; these will change with time. So, in looking to the future, churches should be encouraged to reflect upon their sense of purpose. It is likely that the churches in a joint or group pastorate will come to different conclusions. Nevertheless, one of the

primary roles of the next minister will be in developing these, so it is important that churches have some idea of where their future lies.

## Helping a Church to Reflect

So, how can an Interim Moderator help churches to reflect on this?

One way is simply to ask the right questions. What are the strengths of the congregation? What do they do well, perhaps even without considering this a strength? How do these strengths match the needs of people on the edge of the church or in its neighbourhood? What opportunities exist for outreach or mission?

An anxious church is likely to be more ready to speak about its weaknesses - increasing age, falling numbers, few children, for example. As an independent observer, the Interim Moderator is well-placed to point out the positive aspects of a church's life and to challenge unreasonable assumptions. One common assumption is that the church can continue as it has always been and that the next minister will bring people in.

The Interim Moderator may find it helpful to organise specific activities of a reflective nature, at a Church Meeting or another time, particularly if a congregation is lacking any sort of vision or seems to be stuck with an unfeasible model of church. Many synods make use of vision workshops or mission audits; some employ a mission enabler. It is worth finding out what resources are available in yours.



### Pause to consider

What is the church's God-given purpose? (The next minister will be guided by this).

*Ways to explore this:*

IM asks about strengths & opportunities

IM observes and comments

IM challenges unfounded assumptions

IM organises reflective activities

Enabling helpful reflection need not be a time-consuming task. It is more a matter of keeping in mind the characteristics of a healthy church and taking every opportunity to engage people on the subject. Let us look at some features of healthy church.

### *A healthy church*

*believes that every member participates in God's work*

*takes responsibility for its own life*

*does a few things and does them well*

*expects to adapt to changing times and circumstances*

*looks to God for inspiration & strength*

This is one that believes that all members, across the age range, have some contribution to make to the work of God in the world; such work may not happen in church premises or 'church time'. The opposite of this is the belief that only a few do God's work - just the minister and elders, perhaps - and most of the congregation are passive consumers.

As we have already noted, a healthy church takes responsibility for its own life, rather than being dependent on others.

A church which concentrates its energies on a small number of priorities, rather than trying to be all things to all people, is more likely to be sustainable. For example, it is counterproductive for a small church to try to replicate all the activities of a larger church. Often this means accepting that some things must stop.

A healthy church will change with the times, not to be trendy, but because all natural organisms adapt. This does not mean compromising on the core beliefs of the faith, but expressing them in ways appropriate to new circumstances.

Above all, a viable church will look to God for inspiration, guidance, and the strength to meet new challenges. The worship and prayer life of the church will be more than a habit: it will be a meaningful expression of its joys and sorrows, frustrations and questions, and those of its members.

Meaningful reflection takes time, and the understandable desire of a pastorate to get a new minister settled as soon as possible is often misguided; this is a time to wait on God.

Although the Interim Moderator will probably take the lead in enabling a church to reflect upon its life and future, the conclusions must be those at which the church arrives for itself; the Interim Moderator may offer opinions and guidance, but it must ultimately be for the church to decide on its future.

The purpose of a Pastorate Profile is to present to potential ministers a picture of where churches are in their ongoing journey of faith. This is almost impossible to do unless a church intentionally pauses to reflect on just this.

When it is able to describe this, then it is better able to see the areas of church life and mission where a minister can make a significant contribution. The pastorate then becomes a more attractive proposition to a candidate than the pastorate which thinks the role of the minister should be obvious.



## Pause to consider

What is your experience of a church in vacancy?

Did meaningful reflection take place? Did it lead to a good Pastorate Profile?

### Planning for the future.

We end this session by suggesting that not all change must wait for the day when a new minister is called. Prayerful reflection will enable a church to discover or refine its vision for the future. But the future begins today and need not wait for the next minister. God's mission in the world is not on hold. While there may be good reasons for waiting until the minister comes before developing some aspects of the church's ministry, it would be a mistake to think that this applies to them all.

The advantages of a church doing more than simply treading water, besides being faithful to God, are that it will improve confidence in its ability to cope and make the pastorate more attractive to potential ministers who will be able to see that not everything depends upon them.



## Pause to consider

A handout (Page 20) is provided to help you consider a range of possible initiatives that a church might decide upon in relation to its worship, pastoral care and outreach.

Which of these do you think require the consideration and leadership of the next minister. And which do not?

What factors do you think are important in deciding this?

What do you think the priorities should be for an Interim Moderator with limited time in helping a church to move on?

## Planning for the future exercise

Consider a range of possible initiatives that a church might decide upon in relation to its worship, pastoral care and outreach.

- Which of these do you think require the consideration and leadership of the next minister. And which do not?
- What factors do you think are important in deciding this?
- What do you think the priorities should be for an Interim Moderator with limited time in helping a church to move on in these cases?

<i>Possible initiative</i>	<i>Needs minister's leadership?</i>	<i>Relevant factors</i>	<i>Role of the Interim Moderator</i>
Move the time of the Sunday morning service to an hour earlier			
Start monthly united services with the local Methodist church			
Alter the pastoral care system so that some serving Elders and some non-Elders do the visiting			
Two Elders propose to organise and lead regular home communions for housebound Church Members			
Start a regular film club, which shows DVDs with theological discussions afterwards			
Respond to the approach of a local yoga teacher to provide 'active living' sessions to over-50s			

Are there other initiatives where you, as the Interim Moderator, would seek advice before encouraging the church to go ahead?

# Session 5 – Equal Opportunities

---

## Introduction

Offering people equal opportunities means making decisions about them based primarily on relevant criteria, not on incidental details.

In general, a person's ability to perform a task may have little to do with accidents of birth or whether they have a life-partner.

To hold irrelevant details against a person is to discriminate. In our society, increasingly, forms of discrimination are becoming unlawful. In the Church, they are unethical.

There are several reasons why this is important subject for us to consider.

It is clear that discrimination does take place generally, and statistics show that the church is unbalanced; for example, while only 30% of URC members are men, a significantly higher proportion of elders are male. Black and minority ethnic people are also under-represented in the church's leadership.

While statistics do not prove that discrimination is taking place, there is anecdotal evidence that a problem exists, and particularly with the choice of ministers.

In his ministry Jesus showed God's love by his openness to all people, including those who were marginalised in his day. In 2006 the United Reformed Church reaffirmed its commitment to show the same

***The  
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**Appendix  
8**

openness to all people in today's world; and that includes the call of ministers.

The policy is set out in Appendix 8 in The Movement of Ministers.

Though discrimination is difficult to eradicate, people can be helped to consider their

### **Aim:**

*In this session we look at equal opportunities.*

### **Outline:**

1) *Introduction*

2) *Facing Prejudice and Discrimination*

prejudices in the light of the gospel. As churches prepare to meet potential new ministers, Interim Moderators are well-placed to promote URC Equal Opportunities policy and have a responsibility to do so.

## Facing Prejudice and Discrimination

Before looking at how an Interim Moderator can promote Equal Opportunities, it is worth reflecting on your own attitude.



### Pause to consider

Think about people who are different from you in these particular ways, and ask yourself honestly what your attitude is towards them.

gender

disability

age

marital status

ethnic origins

sexual orientation

This may not be easy for you. Perhaps some people make you feel uncomfortable in their presence.

Nevertheless, try to consider

Are you ever prejudiced or patronising? Do you make excuses for your behaviour?

It is likely that God is calling you to transcend your weaknesses; as an Interim Moderator, the Church is asking you to do so.

In the Church, people are rarely blatant about their prejudices and often do not recognise when they discriminate.

So they may not acknowledge their prejudice as wrong and, if they do, may keep this attitude to themselves, wishing to avoid confrontation.

Although this does not excuse unjust behaviour, it is important to be sensitive in encouraging people to reflect upon their attitudes; otherwise their prejudices will be buried and continue to have unexamined influence upon their decision-making.

An Interim Moderator can exercise leadership by helping people to think about discrimination before actual cases arise, and by challenging people to recognise their own prejudices whenever these appear.

The first of these can be tackled by the Interim Moderator being proactive in discussing possible types of minister; the second requires that the Interim Moderator is attentive for the assumptions that people are making about their next minister.

We will look at each of these in turn.

#### a). Proactively

Discussions about the kind of minister that a church might seek in principle are best conducted at a Church Meeting so that as many people as possible are present and no-one is excluded.

It is natural for people to want the sort of minister who they could imagine fitting in well with their social groupings, but the Pastorate Profile should give indications of the type of leadership that is sought; the draft Minister's Role Description will do this in some detail. Focussing upon leadership gifts and tasks will promote objectivity and put into a proper context thoughts about the sort of person the church hopes for.

Similar objectivity can then be applied to a discussion of hypothetical candidates using sample cases. These help people to move away from loose generalities, to think positively about a variety of possible ministers, and therefore to be more open to the leading of the Spirit.

*Prejudices can be  
acknowledged or unacknowledged  
open or secret*

*An Interim Moderator can help people  
to think about discrimination  
to face their own prejudices*

*An Interim Moderator can do this by:  
being proactive – discuss hypothetical  
ministers  
being reactive – look out for assumptions*

**'Equal  
Opportunities  
Case Studies'**

**Page 25  
Below**

A set of example case studies is provided as a support document for this session. Let's look at two of these.

Case study 1: Angela is a bright, lively and energetic single woman, 28 years old.

Case study 2: Bryan is a black Caribbean man of 35 with one successful ministry behind him.



## Pause to consider

In each case:

Consider what the advantages and disadvantages would be of calling the prospective minister to the pastorate of which you are in the Interim Moderator, or pastorates that you know well.

A minister is an enabler of a church, but the church should also be an enabler of the minister. So what can the church do to enable each ministers' ministry? Be imaginative without presuming too much.

### b). Reactively

We began by looking at the case of Angela. But often people talk as if a minister is naturally male.

“When our next minister comes, he will be able to do this.” But so could she, could she not?

“What we need is a family man.” Would a family woman not serve just as well?

Perhaps it's the habit of decades, or a result of their local experience. Nevertheless, if it goes unchallenged, then the repetition is likely to reinforce the assumption, at least among some, that this must be the case; and this would be an example of discrimination.

When the Interim Moderator is aware of the possibility, then she or he is well-placed to challenge assumptions which may signify prejudice.



## Pause to consider

Conclude this session by thinking of examples of how other prejudices may be enshrined in the way language is used.

## **Equal Opportunities case studies**

### **Questions for discussion**

*For each case below consider:*

a) What are the advantages and disadvantages of calling each of these ministers?

b) What can the church do to enable their ministry?

### **Case studies**

1. A skilled, experienced and able white man of 35 with three small children and a wife who is committed and active in the church.
2. A bright, lively and energetic single white woman of 28.
3. A wise and caring white man of 61 who had a heart attack followed by a bypass operation four years ago.
4. A black Caribbean man of 35 with one successful ministry behind him; with a wife and two children aged 6 and 8.
5. A white woman with walking difficulties - cannot do stairs, needs accessible toilet facilities, but drives and is very able.
6. A white man with visual difficulties - cannot drive, needs large print to read. He has a warm and caring personality.
7. A married man of Indian origin aged 58, with nine years of good ministry behind him.
8. A lesbian woman who has been together with her partner for 20 years and is now in a civil partnership. Has been in ministry for 30 years and is much loved by her present congregation.
9. A gay man who has been together with his partner for 20 years and is now in a civil partnership. Has been in ministry for 30 years and is much loved by his present congregation.
10. A recently divorced man of 48 who has been out of ministry for the last two years and is looking to be in a different area of the country.



# Session 6 – All About Pastorate Profiles

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In this section we examine the Pastorate Profile, and the related Pastorate Profile Summary, and then go on to look at two related documents involved in the call of ministers, the Minister's Role Description and the Terms of Settlement.

The Pastorate Profile is the means by which the nature and characteristics of a pastorate are communicated to a potential minister during the initial stage of an introduction. Unless the pastorate is known from wider experience, this will be a primary factor in helping a potential minister to decide whether or not to pursue the introduction.

## ***The Movement of Ministers***

### **Appendix 3**

Guidelines for preparing a Pastorate Profile are given in Appendix 3 of the Movement of Ministers. These are essential reading, and we will only summarise their contents here. Make sure you have a copy of this at hand before continuing.

The Pastorate Profile comprises five types of information, to which is added the draft Minister's Role Description. We will begin by examining this content and then consider how it is prepared.

## **Preparing the Profile**

Two factors will influence the way that the Pastorate Profile is prepared.

First, how many churches comprise the pastorate? For most pastorates this is more than one, so the easiest way to proceed is for each church to prepare its own profile and for these to be bound together. However, there should be an overall introduction to the pastorate, perhaps giving a little historical background.

Furthermore, where churches within the pastorate have aspects in common, these can be included here. For example, Section A - the Mission Context includes details of the localities of the churches and of their

### ***Aim:***

*This session is all about Pastorate Profiles, Minister's Role Description and Terms of Settlement.*

### ***Outline:***

*1) Preparing the Profile*

*2) Contents of the Profile*

*3) The Interim Moderator's Role in Preparing the Profile*

*4) Minister's Role Description*

*5) Pastorate Profile Summary*

*6) Terms of Settlement*

ecumenical settings; where they have these in common they may be included in this general introduction. Other parts, such as Sections D and E – Local Church Life and Statistics - will necessitate separate contributions from each church.

The second consideration is the fact that some sections simply give factual information which should be beyond dispute, while Section B will result from a reflective or vision-seeking process, as will an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in section A. The factual material simply needs compiling by people who are able to do this; the strategic thinking will have been discussed at the Church Meeting in each church.

## Contents of the Profile

**In Section A, Mission Context**, a description is given of the setting of the pastorate, the environment in which the church ministers and the background to its work.

What is the setting of each of the churches – urban, suburban, or rural – and what characterises each community; for example, is there a significant employer, or is this a commuter dormitory town? How many people live there and how is this changing? What is their age profile and ethnic composition?

What about the ecumenical scene – what other churches are there and how are relationships with them? Are any of these relationships formalised?

Then what does each church bring to their community? What, briefly, is its history? What makes it distinctive? What is its theological outlook and worship style? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the congregation?

**Section B, Priorities for the Pastorate**, is where the pastorate sets out its strategic thinking: what is its God-given purpose that a minister will help them develop? Because it is visionary, rather than factual, this section is can be harder for a church to prepare; but its importance in finding a good match for a minister cannot be overstated. An Interim Moderator can assist with the preparatory work described in section 4 of this course, The pastorate in a time of transition.

**Section C, Ministry**, sets out the wider context of ordained ministry in the pastorate. The guidelines for this section ask questions about other ministers serving the pastorate, relationships within the team, and the expected pattern of the prospective minister's responsibilities. If there are definite expectations, it is important they are set out here.

**Section D, Local Church Life**, is intended to give as full a picture as possible of life in each church. Again, the guidelines ask several questions to help a pastorate to do this.

**Section E, Statistics**, simply asks for information about members, adherents, Elders, and other church officers.

## The Interim Moderator's Role in Preparing the Profile

The role of the Interim Moderator is not to write the Pastorate Profile – that is the responsibility of the Pastorate Call Group in collaboration with the full Elders Meetings. But the Interim Moderator should guide the Elders in the preparation of a useful document. Guidance may be needed in several ways.

As will be apparent by now, the Profile is likely to be a large document and, especially where more than one church is involved, complex in its structure. The Interim Moderator may need to oversee the preparation and integration of several parts. Remember that the guidelines for preparing a Pastorate Profile are just that; the Profile need not slavishly follow the structure in Appendix 3, but it should include the right information in an accessible format.

*“The role of the Interim Moderator is not to write the Pastorate Profile – that is the responsibility of the Pastorate Call Group in collaboration with the full Elders Meetings.”*

Because of its influence on potential ministers, churches can be tempted to treat the Pastorate Profile as shrewd advertising and to be economical with the truth. The Profile is more correctly seen as a tool for discernment; a church's weaknesses do not need to be hidden from a prospective minister who is honestly praying to be guided to the next challenge to which they are called by God.

Having said that, it is also possible for churches to undersell themselves, unaware of their strengths or, perhaps, assuming that the obvious does not need to be documented. It is advantageous for the truth to be presented in attractive ways; for example, photographs and maps are useful in describing the setting.

Clarity of language, structure and presentation are important, not just because the Pastorate Profile needs to be accessible, but also because it needs to be capable of easy revision when pastorate reviews take place in the years after the induction of the next minister.

Finally, if the Interim Moderator is a minister with experience in pastoral charge, she will be able to reflect upon how a Pastorate Profile is likely to be perceived by prospective ministers; for example, does it contain everything that is likely to be of interest?

## Minister's Role Description

The Minister's Role Description may be a new development since the pastorate last called a minister. It identifies the minister's primary responsibilities under the headings Priorities & Objectives, Worship Leading, Pastoral care, Decision making and Wider Church service; and also particular factors to be taken into account. The document will arise out of an agreement between the minister and the pastorate. But a draft version is provided as part of the Pastorate Profile to give the prospective minister an idea of what the pastorate has in mind. When compiling this, it is useful for the pastorate to indicate how flexible it is prepared to be about major items.

A number of pitfalls await the pastorate drafting a Minister's Role Description.

In a multi-church pastorate it may seem convenient to produce one document for each church. Indeed this is likely to be the way the Pastorate Profile is written. But the Role Description is different: it relates to an individual minister. The various perspectives of the local churches need to be brought together so that the result describes an overall role that is feasible. This requires at least liaison, and possibly negotiation, between the component churches: clearly something to be facilitated by the Interim Moderator.

It may be that the sum total of the various expectations of the minister is unrealistic. This may arise if every church in a joint pastorate wants its pound of flesh, or even for a single church pastorate that wants to be over-reliant on its minister. Patient intervention here will be a wise investment; it is important that the resulting document represents genuine understanding rather than masking problems. In the end, a pastorate with an unrealistic Minister's Role Description will not be declared vacant.

Finally, there may be a temptation to put too much detail in the Role Description. It is not for the pastorate to manage its minister, but to work in partnership. An overly prescriptive document gives the message that initiative and leadership are not valued.

## Pastorate Profile Summary

The pastorate is also required to submit a Pastorate Profile Summary. The outline for this can be found as Appendix 12 of the Movement of Ministers but an electronic version should be obtained from your Synod office or Moderator for completion. The sections in the Summary do not correspond to those in the full Pastorate Profile, so some further thought will be needed here.

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**Appendix  
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## Terms of Settlement

***The  
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**Appendix  
4**

Terms of Settlement are the local expression of the working terms and conditions for the minister laid out in the Plan for Partnership for Ministerial Remuneration. Terms of Settlement set out the necessary additions to and variations from the plan for Partnership. The Plan for Partnership is subject to regular updates, since it sets out the level of stipend, among other things; the latest edition can be found on the URC web-site. The link is given in Appendix 4 of the Movement of Ministers; or you can go to the URC site, click on the 'What we do' tab, then on the link to Finance; there you will find a link to the Plan for Partnership.

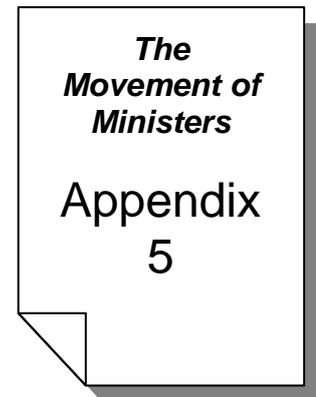
It is necessary to produce draft Terms of Settlement before a vacancy is declared, so that the pastorate demonstrates that it is prepared for a minister and there are ready answers to questions from prospective ministers.

Some Synods have model Terms of Settlement and expect these to be used with only simple amendments to specify the pastorate. Check with your synod office.

If your Synod does not supply model Terms of Settlement, then the Movement of Ministers offers valuable guidance in drawing these up.

Appendix 4 is an Aid to drafting Terms of Settlement but also offers a useful commentary on some elements.

Appendix 5, Sample Terms of Settlement, gives a good idea of what the final document should look like.





# Session 7 – Making Decisions

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## How Will the Church Decide on Making a Call?

As soon as you have completed the Church Profile and the scoping has been agreed and before you have a possible candidate in view, the pastorate needs to decide how the decision on whether or not to issue a call is to be made. It is really important that this happens before any one person in particular is in view.

This is a decision to be taken by the church meeting/s, but it is good if the vacancy group has a preliminary discussion and brings some suggestions to the church meeting.

**Where and when** will be the meeting to take the decision? If this is a group or joint pastorate, make sure that you have the discussion together even if you take the decision in separate local church groups. This is to ensure that all the churches are taking the decision on the same information and knowledge.

**Who will be there?** Members and adherents. How will children and young people be enabled to participate? Ensure that everyone can take part – but only members may vote.

**Timing** – Allow plenty of time for discussion and reflection. Some subjects are not easy to raise and people need to feel that they are not rushed.

**Hospitality** – don't take the decision on an empty stomach! If you want to decide on Sunday after church – feed everyone first! It is very hard to take good decisions on an empty stomach.

## Listening to Each Other

Organise the discussion into 3 'sessions'.

**Information** – have we all heard and understood all the information?

### *Aim:*

*In this session we look at making decisions.*

### *Outline:*

- 1) How Will the Church Decide on Making a Call?*
- 2) Listening to Each Other*
- 3) Using Indicator Cards*
- 4) Voting Methods*

**Discussion** – sharing with each other what we all think.

**Decision** – we are ready to decide

There are lots of useful methods for enabling us to listen to one another.

- Encourage everyone to participate, to share their concerns and their delights
- Ask them to listen very carefully to one another and not begin to rehearse their reply in their heads!!!!
- Have some pause time so that people have time to think and reflect.
- Summarise what has been said, clarifying concerns and delights and check if people are coming to a mind
- Check if people have more questions.
- Use buzz groups to help clarify thoughts, and to encourage those who find it difficult to speak in a large group, both to practice their ideas and to be encouraged by the group to speak out – or even find someone else to voice their concerns.
- Plan a break for tea in the middle of the meeting so that there is space for people to 'come to a mind'.
- Take time to pray.



## Pause to consider

Reflect on these techniques and write an agenda to include them.

## Using Indicator Cards

Indicator cards are very helpful, in finding out easily what people are thinking and how they are responding to the discussion.

Everyone has 2 cards each – an orange one and a blue one. They can be  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$  A4 size – enough for you to see them from the front. Each time that someone says something or raises an issue, or after buzz group discussion, you can ask everyone to show how they respond. And they hold up either the blue or the orange card.

Orange means 'I agree' or 'I feel warm to this idea.'

The blue card means 'I disagree' or 'it doesn't feel right to me' or 'I need more time to think about it'.

When you see how people respond you may like to ask if anyone holding a blue card would like to share their concerns, or would anyone holding an orange card like to share why they feel warm to what has been said.

## Voting Methods

What method will you use to decide?

Now that the URC is using consensus at Assembly and in many synods, local churches can choose to use:

**majority voting**

**consensus method**

**or something half way between** – which uses the skills of the consensus method – but decides by a simple majority

With majority voting the decision is the preference of most people.

Consensus means listening to and cherishing what everyone thinks, then working together to find a decision which is acceptable to everyone.

A church secretary from a church which called a minister by consensus decision said afterwards, 'we teased out a lot of concerns which we would not have found out if we had not used the consensus process. All the concerns were seen as things which the church could manage and we were all happy to issue a call with consensus.'

Majority voting is our traditional and familiar method. But you will still need some preparation.

It is probably best to have a secret ballot, so you will need to prepare papers beforehand.

What percentage do you need to issue a call? 100%? 75%? or something in between? 80% is probably the most common figure. Don't forget the candidate may not accept the call if they do not think the percentage is high enough.

People must be present to vote although they can give the Interim Moderator comments, thoughts and questions beforehand, but they need to hear the discussion before they decide so there cannot be proxy or postal votes.

Consensus decision making is a process of listening for God's word to us through everyone involved being heard and discovering an agreed outcome. It is important that everyone is free to offer their views. At the same time it seeks not to be confrontational, but rather, in love, to cherish all views and patiently to work towards a decision which is acceptable to everyone.

Consensus means:

Setting the discussion in the context of prayer, not a quick 2 mins, but serious reflective prayer

listening closely so that you really hear each other and also listen to God

speaking openly without being defensive, and saying what you think, or what issues concern you, so that you are really sharing.

(These three should apply as much to majority voting as to consensus)

### Taking the Consensus Decision

At decision time only members make the decision. The rest of the time everyone can, and is welcome to contribute.

Sum up the discussion, clarify the concerns and the delights, help the group to see where it is going.

Use the indicator cards – try to keep using them until the cards are either all orange or all blue.

Consensus includes people who say, 'this is not my first choice, but I am prepared to accept it.'

It is also possible to find agreement. This is where some people do not support the proposal, but agree that they have been heard and are willing to accept the decision.



## Pause to consider

Do you think consensus is a good method to use?

Is it something you feel that you can handle?

Do you need help?

Could you use some of the consensus techniques with a majority voting system?

Now that you are ready to take the decision -

All that you need is for someone to be interested!

## Session 8 – Special Cases

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There are some special cases which are best considered before a particular candidate is in view. They are ordinands, ministers coming into their first pastorate, married couples, both of whom are ministers or one is a CRCW, fixed term appointments, posts which have a fixed length of service most commonly 5 years, disability and health issues, and the question of whether the local church willing to consider a gay or lesbian minister. Finally does the pastorate wish to consider advertising the post?

### Ordinands

When the Synod Moderator visits the churches before the taking the pastorate to the Moderators he or she will ask if the local churches would like to consider an ordinand, someone who is just completing training for ministry. So it is worth while discussing this at a church meeting before the Moderator comes. This gives the church a chance to think through their views and feelings on this matter. Don't forget to remind them that ordinands are not necessarily 24 and 'wet behind the ears'! They may well be in their 40s with much experience of life and church.

Full guidance on introducing an ordinand is given in Appendix 6 in the Movement of Ministers, so we will consider just the main points here.

If the name of an ordinand is offered to a pastorate, the church needs to act quickly. Time is always urgent for an ordinand. They need to be settled in their pastorate in good time before they finish their training or else they will find themselves unemployed and dependent on the dole for income. An initial exploratory meeting needs to happen within three weeks, so that if both sides decide it is not right to go any further then the ordinand can be considered at the next Moderators meeting.

The Interim Moderator is asked to have a special care for the ordinand and to offer support to him or her as well as the local churches. Talk through the pastorate with the ordinand, help them to understand what the churches are like, their theology and worship style, baptismal policy, relationships between the churches

### *Aim:*

*In this session we consider some special cases:*

### *Outline:*

- 1) Ordinands*
- 2) Married Couples*
- 3) Fixed Term Appointments*
- 4) Disability and Health Issues*
- 5) Gay and Lesbian Ministers*
- 6) Advertising*

in the pastorate and ecumenical relations. Be especially helpful about the manse and terms of settlement.

Imagine yourself in the position of looking for a new job in a new role – what would be helpful and supportive to you?

All through the process make sure that you do double communication – phone and email. Don't forget that the ordinand will be nervous about the whole process so just a phone call needs to be reinforced.

If the decision is not to proceed, clarify with the church why not and help the ordinand to understand the decision. If practicable, go to see the ordinand and tell them face to face.

Keep the Synod Moderator informed and, especially if the decision is not to proceed, provide a detailed de-brief within a week so that the Moderators have more information to work on at their next meeting.

## **Married Ministers**

Two ministers looking for two pastorates and wanting to live in the same house is always complicated!

The call process for each of them will have to be quite independent. We will assume that each partner is being introduced to a different pastorate, with different other Interim Moderators. However much you try, the introductions will not dovetail exactly!

Timing is very sensitive so it will help if you keep in touch with the other Interim Moderator. The processes need to happen at the same time, but not be dependent on each other.

There will be issues of confidentiality which can be very sensitive. For example, feedback from a pastorate about one candidate should not be given to their partner. So try to be very careful.

Questions of housing will raise different issues, but there is always a solution! Make sure that you discuss this with both pastorates after you have clarified with the ministers what they would like. Pastorates will need to understand that one of the ministers will not be living in 'their' manse. The ministers might even like to live in their own home!

## **Fixed Term Appointments**

Most calls to ministers are open ended. But some are for fixed terms – most often for 5 years.

The posts which are likely to be fixed term are:

Special Category Ministry

## Some Ecumenical Posts

If the post for which you are responsible is one of these, first double check with the pastorate that they are clear about what possibilities exist for renewing the post and the review process. There may not be any possibilities of renewal.

Then make very sure that the prospective minister is clear about the nature of the post.

## Disability and Health Issues

The URC is committed to equal opportunities and that is very important for people with a disability or someone who has a particular health issue.

It is important to discuss this issue with local church meetings before you are considering a particular candidate. Pastorates should consider their responsibility. You will need to help them to think through their responsibility to equal opportunities. This is discussed in detail in Session 5. Also see Appendix 8 in the Movement of Ministers.

Explain to the pastorate that there are appropriate and inappropriate questions at interview.

The task of the local churches is to enable those with disabilities to do the job, whatever the disability is.

Consider as wide a range of disabilities as you can and then try to imagine how the local church can enable someone with those disabilities to do the job.

## Gay and Lesbian Ministers

When the Synod Moderator visits the churches before the taking the pastorate to the Moderators he or she will ask if the pastorate would like to consider a gay or lesbian minister. We have many gay and lesbian ministers, some of whom have partners and some who do not. They are the same mix of good, bad and indifferent as any other group of ministers!

It is important for the elders, or the call group, and the church meetings to consider the issue. It's not a good idea to wait for the Moderator – think about it beforehand.

As with other difficult decisions it is important to help church members to talk, and express a range of views, without damaging their relationships. Sometimes younger church members assume that it is only an equal opportunities issue. The issue can be about different theologies and it can be about prejudice.

Your task is to help them to discuss the subject and decide how they will respond to the Moderator.

Give yourself time to think how you will do it, how you will deal with the feelings it raises. What about your own feelings? If you decide you need help to do this ask your Synod Training Officer.

## Advertising

If you wish to advertise your pastorate vacancy in Reform or somewhere else you can do so – BUT...

Posts in the URC are normally advertised through the payroll system and on the URC Profile web site. Then they are considered each month by the Synod Moderators at their meeting.

If posts are advertised in Reform or anywhere else they will only be considered by the Moderators if the advert directs the enquirer to the Synod Moderator.

If you want to advertise the pastorate think carefully about where and how to do it. It is not easy to advertise and it can be very expensive.

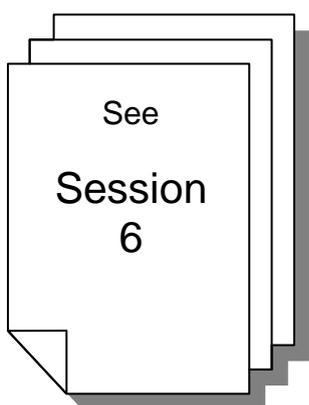
# Session 9 – Introducing a Prospective Minister

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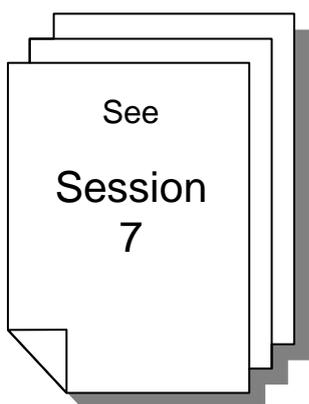
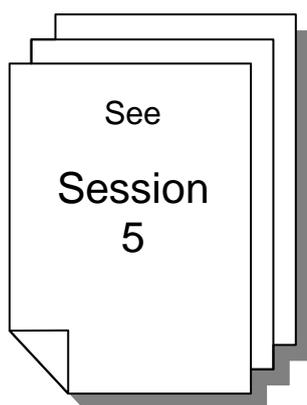
## Taking Stock

Let's begin with a check list to make sure that all is ready!

The draft terms of settlement should have been discussed and agreed. It is most important that churches are clear that they can afford a minister. It is not good if a minister is turned down by a pastorate because they cannot afford it rather than because it is not the right minister. If there has been a long gap since these were last looked at – check them again. Of course the final terms of settlement will depend on the particular minister. See Session 6 of this course.



Have you done an exercise with the Church Meetings on Equal Opportunities? so that every one has had time to think about how they will ensure that they treat people equally. This is in Session 5. Remember that Equal Opportunities is also a question of sexuality and you will have had a discussion with the Moderator about that.



Have the elders and church meeting or church meetings agreed how they will take the decision. See Session 7

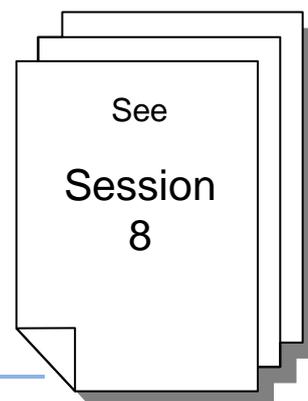
### **Aim:**

*In this session we look at the process of introducing a Prospective Minister.*

### **Outline:**

- 1) Taking Stock
- 2) Preparation
- 3) Meeting the Pastorate Call Group
- 4) 'Preaching With A View'

The Church Meeting should have discussed how they will treat ministers who are 'special cases', for example an ordinand. See Session 8



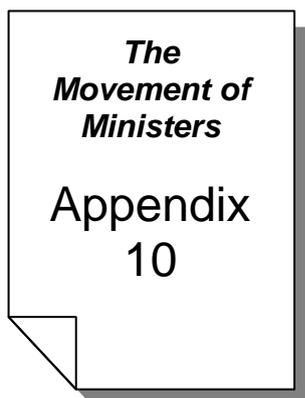
*Pause to check that this is all done, or that you are adequately prepared.*

Keep on keeping in touch with the other Interim Moderators in the Pastorate. We are assuming that there is just one Pastorate Call Group rather than one for each church in the group, but there may be other Interim Moderators.

When the Moderator calls the Interim Moderator to say that there is a prospective minister in view it is time to set up a meeting with the Pastorate Call Group.

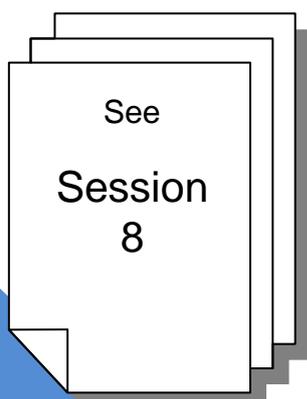
## Preparation

When you have finished rejoicing contact the Church Secretary or Secretaries to tell them to alert the Pastorate Call Group. Arrange a date for the Pastorate Call Group to look at the personal profile then wait for it to arrive. If more than one minister is interested, then you will have personal profiles of them all, but you will only be able to interview one minister at a time, so the Pastorate Call Group will have to decide which to interview.

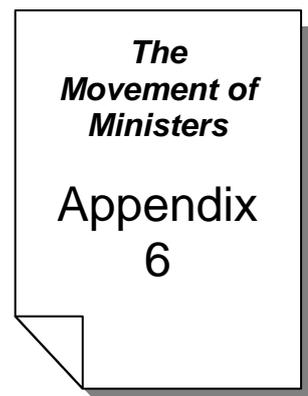


There is a blank draft of the personal profile in Appendix 10 of the Movement of Ministers.

Next make copies of the Personal Profile for all the Pastorate Call Group – it is wise to number them so that when you ask for them back you will know if any are missing! And hand out the copies – or arrange for the Church Secretary to hand them out. At this stage it is confidential to the Pastorate Call Group, and what ever happens all copies must be handed back to you for you to dispose of.

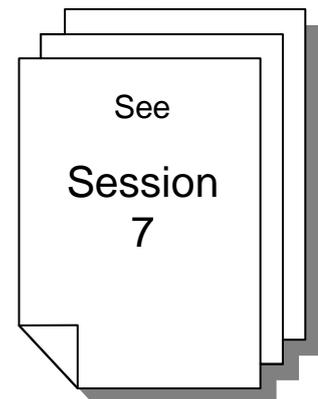


There is specific advice on introducing an ordinand in Appendix 6 of the Movement of Ministers, but this is worth reading regardless of the type of candidate. Remember we looked at ordinands and other types of Special Case in Session 8 of this course.



Now for the meeting of the Pastorate Call Group. Create an atmosphere of prayer, and don't rush the decision. It may be clear at this stage that this is the wrong minister, but think about that very carefully. If you feel that you need more information, then contact the Synod Moderator of the prospective minister.

If you have to choose between candidates, give yourselves plenty of time. It is better to have two meetings than make the wrong decision. It is important that all members of the Group have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. You might try buzz groups, or asking everyone to share the issues which concern them. If you are using consensus you will find the blue and orange cards help you to identify particular concerns or questions. See Session 7 on decision-making.

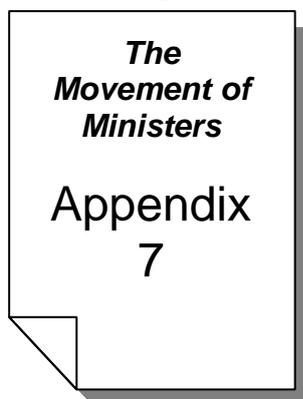


At the end of the meeting you will hope to have a decision whether or not and which to meet. You should then tell your Synod Moderator. The Moderator will then be in touch with the prospective candidates. The Moderator will put you in touch with the minister you are hoping to meet.

If there is a minister in the Group already, or ecumenical colleagues, tell them and arrange for them to meet the prospective minister before the interview with the Pastorate Call Group. Their comments can then be fed back to the Call Group before they meet the prospective minister. It's as well to know that they will be able to work together! But check with the Moderator what weight should be given to the views of colleagues.

If possible arrange for a brief view of the manse. A more thorough view can happen later.

## Meeting the Pastorate Call Group



Then you need to set up the arrangements for the prospective minister to meet the Pastorate Call Group. The meeting needs careful organisation and it is all detailed in Appendix 7 of the Movement of Ministers document. Try to make sure that there is proper time and that you are clear how the process is going to work. Think beforehand how you are going to take the decision. If you are using consensus you will be able to keep exploring concerns and issues until you reach a resolution. Remember this is not the final decision, this is just moving to the next stage.

Don't forget that you have a responsibility to the prospective minister as well as to the vacant churches. It would be helpful if you contacted the prospective minister to see if they have any questions or concerns that you can help to answer.

It is also worth consulting Appendix 6 of the Movement of Ministers. Although this is written for Ordinands, all ministers would benefit from the care and support suggested.

No matter how long the pastorate has been waiting, it is important to take time now, to reflect upon the meeting and to pray for God's guidance.

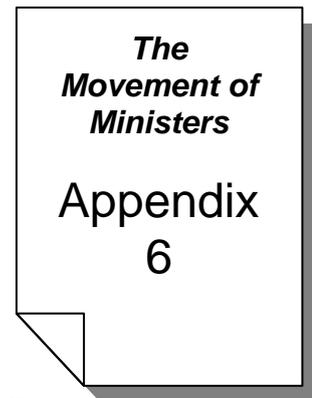
The Call Group must take their first decision –whether or not to invite the minister to preach with a view.

Under no circumstances communicate the answer by text, email or phone message. Talk to the minister directly.

If the decision is not to proceed, let the minister know as soon as possible and be ready to explain the issues which were raised. The idea is not to run down the minister's self esteem, but to help them to show themselves in a better light next time or perhaps to say why it was just not a good match. Try to help the minister, don't forget that some ministers have not moved for many years and may be out of practice at interviews!

If the decision is to proceed, let the minister know as soon as possible. It may also be appropriate to share if there were any concerns or issues raised. The minister may be able to answer some of these issues. But be careful because it may not be appropriate.

It is possible that, following the meeting with the Pastorate Call Group, the Prospective Minister decides not to proceed with this introduction.



## Pause to consider

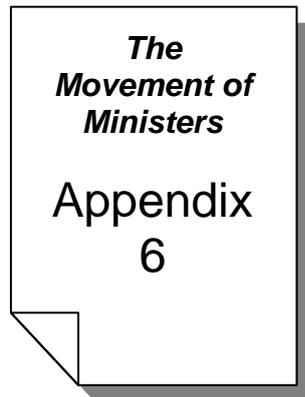
Pause now to consider what members of the Pastorate Call Group will be thinking and feeling under such circumstances.

On reflection you will understand that it is important for the Interim Moderator to allow time for a sharing of emotions, a discussion of what has been learned, and a consideration to the question of where God is in this.

### **'Preaching With A View'**

If both parties agree to proceed with the introduction, then the Interim Moderator needs to co-ordinate the arrangements for the Prospective Ministers to 'preach with

a view.’ Remember that such an invitation commits the pastorate to making a decision on whether to call the candidate soon afterwards. So the pastorate will need to be clear both about the date or dates upon which the candidate is invited to lead worship and about the dates of the decision-making church meetings.



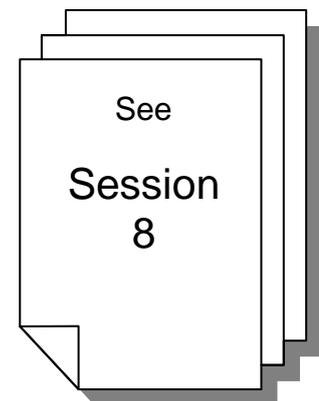
The Interim Moderator has the responsibility both of co-ordinating the invitation of the pastorate and of communicating with the candidate.

All this requires a lot of planning, so we will now look at some of the details.

Once again Appendix 6 of the Movement of Ministers offers guidance on dealing with all candidates.

Here is a check list:

- ✓ Confirm all the arrangements for the decision-making church meetings – see Session 8
- ✓ Let the prospective minister know how and when the decision will be made, including details of majority required and method of reflecting and voting
- ✓ Don't forget to confirm everything in writing
- ✓ The Interim Moderator should arrange to be at as much of the week-end as they can so that they are available both to the prospective minister and the church members



There are several matters to consider in preparing for the visit:

Arrange for someone to show the minister around the area and provide as much paper information as you can – maps, local schools, retirement or sheltered housing provision, hospitals, specialist medical services etc.

There may be different groups of people to meet, not just local church members.

Make sure there is an opportunity for children and young people to meet and contribute to the discussion and decision.

Check about preaching in all the churches in the group, or are the congregations going to be in one place?

Viewing the manse – hopefully they will have had a preliminary look on their first visit, and a longer look may be better at a later stage, but it may need to be included in the Preach with a View week-end

Try to make the week-end as comfortable as you can for the prospective minister.

Check:

- ✓ Are they coming on their own, or with their partner?

- ✓ Make sure they have travel directions and you both have contact information such as mobile phones in case of emergency
- ✓ What are the arrangements for hospitality?
- ✓ Where will they stay overnight? An hotel or with a church member?
- ✓ Food, when and where will they eat?
- ✓ Do they have any dietary requirements and anything to make things more comfortable for them, including disability needs

#### Afterwards

- ✓ Contact the minister as soon as possible, to let them know the result. Do not 'dump' by text!
- ✓ Make sure that you have the time to talk,
- ✓ You may need a second conversation, especially if the response is no and try to help them to understand the reasons why.

# Session 10 – What Happens After a Call

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Assuming that the Call by the Pastorate is accepted by the prospective Minister, the process then moves into a new phase.

## Concurrence

Before much else can be done, concurrence to the Call must be obtained from both the Synods of the calling pastorate and of the prospective Minister. So as Interim Moderator you need to inform the Synod Pastoral Committee Convenor (or other designated Synod Officer) of the Call and its acceptance. The prospective Minister should do the same in his or her Synod.

## Timetabling

While waiting for concurrence, preliminary decisions can be made for the Minister's settlement in the pastorate. Three dates are central to this: the date of moving in to the Manse, the date of the Induction, and the date of commencing ministry in the pastorate. Clearly all these dates need negotiating with a number of people and are contingent upon a number of factors.

### a). The date of moving in to the Manse

- If the Manse was let during the vacancy, when will it become available?
- What work and redecoration will be needed to prepare the Manse for the new Minister and family? (Don't forget to involve the Minister fully in deciding this – there may be particular requirements as well as colour schemes).
- How will this work be done and how long will it take?

### b). The date of the Induction

- When will the Minister be able to/wish to leave the present pastorate, and be Inducted to this one?
- When will the Minister be able to move in to the Manse?

### **Aim:**

*In this session we look at the process after a Call is given.*

### **Outline:**

- 1) Concurrence
- 2) Timetabling
- 3) Planning and Preparation
- 4) Finally

- When will the Moderator and any other Synod Officers to be involved in the Induction be available?
- Is the proposed date convenient to both the 'sending' and 'receiving' pastorates? (i.e. it doesn't clash with significant local events or occasions).

### **c). The date of commencing ministry in the pastorate**

This may or may not be the same as the date of the Induction. Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, particularly the availability of the Moderator, the Induction is delayed for a short time. In such circumstances it is not uncommon for the Minister to begin fulfilling ministerial duties earlier. However, this should not be a protracted period, and should not diminish the significance of the Induction, expressing as it does the mutual commitment of Minister and church.

## **Planning and Preparation**

Having agreed the timetable, the work of planning and preparing gets under way apace.

### **Preparing the Manse**

What is needed to prepare the Manse will clearly be very dependent upon the local situation.

### **The Induction Service**

This needs to be worked out in consultation with the Minister, the Moderator, and the local Pastorate. Obviously, there's a service in the Service Book, but the Moderator or the Minister may have particular variations to this. There's also a lot of practical issues to sort out. Here's a checklist, though it's probably not exhaustive.

- ✓ Time and venue agreed
- ✓ Catering decided and arranged
- ✓ List of invitations compiled and arrangements made for printing and distribution (among others who should be invited ecumenically, from the community etc.)
- ✓ Arrangements for printing the order of service agreed
- ✓ Hymns and Readings chosen and communicated to the organist and readers
- ✓ Who will take part in the service besides the Moderator and other Synod Officers (Preacher – usually the choice of the incoming Minister – readers, organist, Church Secretary, greetings from representatives of local churches and the community etc)?
- ✓ What stewarding is needed?
- ✓ Is there sufficient car parking?

### **Commencement of Ministry and Induction Process**

Whether the date the new Minister is to commence ministry in the pastorate precedes or coincides with the Induction date, thought needs to be given to an Induction Process (not to be confused with the Induction Service) – a kind of introduction to the pastorate and area.

Again, a checklist may be helpful as a prompt, but it is most certainly not exhaustive – it should be added to according to the local situation and any specific requests by the incoming Minister. A balance needs to be struck between imparting important information and bombarding the incoming Minister: it needs to be helpful, not overwhelming. Which of these it turns out to be will depend upon that Minister's needs and approach as well as on the completeness and flexibility of the process. The process should be negotiated and agreed with the incoming Minister so that important information is given and introductions made in the way that is most able to be assimilated.

Provide:

- Relevant local information (e.g. street map, local directory, information about local doctors, dentists, hospitals, shops, clubs, etc.).
- List of Officers, Members and Adherents in the pastorate (with contact details).
- List of activities in the church building, both by the church and other users.
- Synod directory.
- List of other local clergy (with contact details).

Arrange:

- Will there be a designated Elder for the Manse family? If so, who will this be, and how will they be introduced?
- A tour of the premises, with keys being handed over, and relevant safety issues being highlighted.
- A discussion with the Church Secretary and other Church Officers of significant current issues and forthcoming events.

Re-iterate:

- The pastorate has called a *new* Minister. He or she will not be a replica of the last, nor the complete opposite.
- The new Minister has been called by the pastorate for their particular qualities and vision. They should be encouraged to exercise that ministry in the pastorate.
- That means listening and being open. Minister and pastorate are *both* embarking upon a new phase in their faith journeys.

## Finally

After the new Minister has arrived and been Inducted, relax – job done, commend Minister and Pastorate to God's guidance and care.

Thank you.

