

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS REFERRED TO SYNODS (to be voted upon)

Two matters discussed by the URC's General Assembly at the meeting in Southport in July have been referred to Synods for consideration because they would involve changes to the Structure of the Church. These are Resolutions 3 and 42.

In relation to each of the two pieces of business, unless our Synod passes a resolution that the matter **"be not proceeded with"**, and I notify the General Secretary by 31st March 2017, our Synod will be deemed to accept the Assembly resolution by default.

Resolution 3: Appeal, Reference and Constitutional Review

General Assembly, meeting in Southport in July 2016, resolved to adopt the following amendments to the Structure of the URC:

Current version of Section 5:

Appeals

5. The procedure for dealing with references and appeals falling outside Paragraph 6 (Incapacity Procedure) and Paragraph 7 (Disciplinary Process) is as follows:

A Local Church or any member thereof or Elders' Meeting may appeal to the Synod upon which the Local Church is entitled to be represented for the resolution of any dispute or difference and may appeal from any decision of such Synod to the General Assembly.

A Synod may refer any dispute or difference, whether or not the same shall have come before it on a reference or appeal, to the General Assembly.

The decision of the General Assembly on any matter which has come before it on reference or appeal shall be final and binding.

Proposed new version of Section 5:

5. Appeal, Reference and Constitutional Review

5.1. Any decision of a Church Meeting within an area of ecumenical experiment may be taken by way of appeal to the area meeting. A decision of any other Church Meeting may be taken by way of appeal to the synod on which the local church concerned is represented. Any decision of an ecumenical area meeting having implications for the United Reformed Church or any part thereof may be taken by way of appeal to the synod on which local churches in the area are represented. Any decision of a synod may be taken by way of appeal to the General Assembly.

5.2. A Church Meeting may itself refer any dispute or difference arising within the local church for resolution by the synod. An ecumenical area meeting may refer any dispute or difference arising within the area for resolution by the synod. A synod may refer any dispute or difference arising within the province or nation under its oversight for resolution by the General Assembly.

5.3. The synod may declare any decision of a Church Meeting within the province or nation under its oversight, or any decision of an ecumenical area meeting within that province or nation having implications for the United Reformed Church or any part thereof, which is (or has been reached by a procedure) incompatible with the Basis of Union, the Structure of the URC, the constitution of the ecumenical area (where applicable) or any rule or resolution of Assembly binding on the local church or

the ecumenical area to be a nullity. The General Assembly may declare any decision of a Synod to be a nullity on analogous grounds. The review of any decision with a view to declaring it a nullity shall be known as constitutional review.

5.4. Appeals, references and constitutional review under this paragraph shall be subject to conditions and processes laid down by the Assembly in Rules of Procedure. A wider council determining an appeal or reference may either substitute its own decision for that of the more local council, or remit the issue to the more local council for reconsideration. No procedure governed by this paragraph shall be used to review decisions reached under the ministerial disciplinary process or the incapacity procedure.

5.5. The decision of the General Assembly on any matter which has come before it on appeal, reference or constitutional review shall be final and binding.

Synod Resolution 4

Assembly Resolution 3

**The Southern Synod meeting in plenary session on the 8th day of October 2016, resolved that:
The Proposed new version of Section 5: 5. Appeal, Reference and Constitutional Review,
Be proceeded with.**

Resolution 42: URC Youth representation on Synods and General Assembly

General Assembly, meeting in Southport in July 2016, resolved to adopt the following amendments to the Structure of the URC:

a) Membership of Synods:

Current wording:

2(4)(i) Two young people, being members of the United Reformed Church, nominated by the Synod's youth forum, committee or equivalent;

Proposed new wording:

2(4)(i) Two young people, *actively involved and engaged with the United Reformed Church at local, synod or assembly level, who have the confidence of their local church or the confidence of the Synod's youth forum, committee or equivalent;*

b) Membership of General Assembly

Current wording:

2(6)(b) Among the representatives of Synods shall be included at least two from each Synod aged 26 or under, at the date of appointment. Should a Synod prove unable to make such an appointment it may appoint from another Synod but these persons must be 26 or under at the date of appointment;

2(6)(k) Such number of representatives of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth, being members of the United Reformed Church, as the Assembly shall from time to time determine (at present three);

Proposed new wording:

2(6)(b) Among the representatives of Synods shall be included at least two from each Synod aged 25 or under, at the date of appointment. *These representatives need not be members of the United Reformed Church, but must be actively involved and engaged with the United Reformed Church at local, synod or assembly level, and have the confidence of their local church or the confidence of the Synod's youth forum, committee or equivalent;* should a Synod prove unable to make such an appointment it may appoint from another Synod but these persons must be 25 or under at the date of appointment;

2(6)(k) Such number of representatives of *United Reformed Church Youth, associated with a young people's group in a local church or United Reformed Youth groups at Synod or Assembly level, who have the confidence of their local church or the confidence of URC Youth*, as the Assembly shall from time to time determine (at present three);

Synod Resolution 5

Assembly Resolution 42

The Southern Synod meeting in plenary session on the 8th day of October 2016, resolved that:

The Proposed new wordings in sections:

a) **Membership of Synods 2(4) (i)**

b) **Membership of General Assembly 2(6) (b) and 2(6) (k)**

Be proceeded with.