

# News from Mission Council May 2013

## **New Moderator Inducted**

As agreed at the last General Assembly, Mr John Ellis was inducted as Moderator of the General Assembly, and will serve until the start of General Assembly 2016, when the normal pattern should resume. In a dignified and inspirational Communion service, we heard a magnificent sermon from the President of the Methodist Conference. John had even dug out the old Moderator's hat, forgotten for many a long year, not to wear, but to use to illustrate the Trinity.

## **Evangelism?**

Mission Committee are preparing a bid for the next round of funding available to us from CWM, and are exploring ways to encourage and resource evangelism in the URC. Watch out for more from them as they develop their idea.

## **Theological thinking to continue...**

The Faith & Order Committee brought a paper to stimulate our thinking upon the future of the URC. It did just that, and the committee will consider our inconclusive theological conversations from Mission Council as they ponder the next steps.

## **Three Deputy General Secretaries and an interim Assistant!**

We said good bye to Richard Mortimer, ending his service as Deputy General Secretary, and agreed that for up to a year from his retirement as South Western Synod Moderator, the Revd David Grosch-Miller will serve as Interim Assistant General Secretary half-time. It was further agreed that the management structures in Church House will focus more clearly on the three departments, as first set out in Catch the Vision (Ministries of the Church, Mission, and Administration & Resources). Each of these three departments will be led by a full-time Manager having the title "Deputy General Secretary - x", being the title of each department. The Ministries of the Church post will, in some respects, replace Richard Mortimer. The Mission post will be changed from an existing staff post. The Administration & Resources post will replace the HR Manager post, which is currently vacant.

## **And in other news...**

- The group bringing together various thinking and reviews, now known as the Medium Term Strategy Group, will develop their thinking on ways to improve Synods without radical structural change.
- Youth & Children's Work will now be known as Children's & Youth work, and technical matters relating to the employment of CYDOs were agreed.
- The funding of EM1 students will now be considered as part of the general review of all our training, which should conclude next year.
- In response to critical feedback of the timetabling at the last General Assembly, changes were agreed to Standing Orders to make more effective use of time at General Assembly 2014. GA2014 can then vote on whether to keep them for the future, if they work well, or revert to the former Standing order if they don't.
- The 2012 budget has not led to the level of deficit expected (yay!), but there is no reason to suppose that providence will continue in 2013, alas.
- Equal Opportunities brought to our attention some authoritative work done by the Synod of Scotland in response to the Equalities Act 2010, which will be circulated widely as soon as it is widened to include more English and Welsh information.
- Equal Opportunities also drew our attention to the imbalance in membership of the various Trust bodies, and it was agreed to try to remedy this urgently.
- Roberta Rominger's seven year term as General Secretary ends in 2015, and a review group was appointed.
- Mission Council received a report from the Resolution 38 Assembly Commission, who referred all relevant points to either the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee or the Law and Polity Advisory Group.

This is neither an exhaustive nor an official report, but some headlines. The minutes and approved papers will be posted on the URC website in due course, which will provide a more comprehensive record.

*Your Wessex Synod reps were Clare Downing, Peter Pay, Michael Hopkins, and Mary Thomas. Also attending from Wessex were Margaret Carrick-Smith (Assembly Clerk), Elizabeth Nash (Convenor of the Assembly's Equal Opportunities Committee), and Rob Weston (Convenor of the Assembly's Children's & Youth Work Committee).*