



Te'ea ed e be a member of **General Assembly**

Introduction

This booklet has been written for those who've been asked if they

Who attends General Assembly?

The Assembly has several categories of members – each Synod has 16 representatives (this is the category of membership to which this booklet refers) and, in addition, the convenors of the Assembly committees attend as do a staff and student representative from each of the Resource Centres for Learning; some ecumenical representatives and one serving United Reformed Church military chaplain.

More information on the membership of the Assembly can be found on page 12 of section B of *The Manual* available on the URC website here: www.bit.ly/URCmanual-B

How are the Synod representatives chosen?

In most Synods people are invited to nominate potential members – with the hope and intention that the synod Assembly reps will be fully representative of the synod which they represent, in terms of race, gender and age etc. One third of Synod reps are to be ministers of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Workers, one third are to be lay members (many are elders, but this is not a requirement) and the remainder made up of individuals from either category.

In some cases, a person may be nominated because they have expertise in an area that will be the subject of major debate/ decision at General Assembly and such nominations are encouraged.

Membership is for a single Assembly so it's a one-year appointment, although the same person can go to consecutive Assemblies.



What makes an effective member?

Effective Assembly members love God and seek to serve the Church. They also:

- understand the realities of local church life and the challenges they are facing; most of the decisions Assembly takes will affect local United Reformed churches; members who grasp the demands and pressures of modern church life will be in a position to make informed decisions
- are confident enough to speak publicly when they have something relevant to say ... but not so consumed with their own ego that they feel that they need to contribute to every debate! If you have something to say, have the courage to say it. Don't be frightened – you didn't sign up just to be a listener. Don't hide away at the back, sit forward, be engaged – you've been invited to attend in the hope you'll be active; so be prepared to participate
- take their role seriously – have read the *Book of Reformation Documents* and familiarised themselves with the issues to be debated at General Assembly. Being a member of Assembly is like, briefly, being a member of Parliament. Assembly, like Parliament, makes important decisions – the contribution you make, and the vote to have, is significant. If you are new to it, it's bound to be intimidating; there are formal procedures/points of order to understand, but there are people to help you and excellent information available.



and your experiences of the United Reformed Church – it's great to realise you are part of something bigger than your local church and synod.

After General Assembly

Members of the Assembly are expected to report back to their Synods and local churches with news from the Assembly. To help members report back quickly and accurately, the outcomes of many, if not all, of the debates, will be on the URC website www.urch.org.uk/assembly, and in addition to the online coverage the communications team produce a printed round-up which is available to all, as are the daily minutes.

The final word

Being a member of General Assembly is a privilege – you'll be at the very heart of the denomination's decision making.

Enjoy it. Participate with confidence and passion. You are there for a reason so make a difference.



This is one in a series of booklets designed to give information to those who have been asked to consider taking on a role in the United Reformed Church.

The booklets can be read and downloaded at www.urc.org.uk/ask

