

Faith Workers



NEWSLETTER • Autumn 2010

COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW

After much anticipation the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) has now taken place. The early predictions, ahead of the detail, is that this will have a huge derammental impact on those working for Not for Profit Organisations, including the faith sector.

The settlement to local authorities will reduce their budgets by 7.1% each year for the next 4 years, which will have serious implications on those organisations who hold contracts with their local councils. Other government departments have also been told to make massive cuts which are predicted to cost nearly 500,000 public sector jobs, with more to be expected in the private and not for profit sectors.

We are really encouraging our members to campaign against these cuts. There is an alternative economic strategy. History has shown that at times of an economic downturn that governments should invest, grow their economies, put people back in to work and therefore reduce the number of people who depend on benefit. We need only look at how the creation of the Welfare State, post the second world war, where our deficit was three times what it is today, to understand how this can bring recovery.

Cuts put people out of work and force countries into long term recessions. This was true of Britain in the 1930s and is true of Ireland today, where the government has made major cuts and has forced Ireland back into a very serious recession.

There are so many things that our members can do at this time for the sake of their organisations and that of others.

1. Across the country anti-cuts committees and campaigns are being started, so why not get involved in this locally.
2. Go and lobby your MP and Councillors about not making the cuts. This is especially important if your MP is Conservative or Liberal Democrat. These people have political choices to make and if they do not hear from you, they may make the wrong choice. Most MPs and Councillors have surgeries every week.
3. Encourage other people to join Unite. Not only does Unite defend members jobs, but trade unions are the only real voice against the cuts. We will campaign on behalf of all, and the stronger our membership, the stronger we will be at fighting these cuts.

Rachael Maskel (Unite National Officer)

Have you ever thought how you can help?

The Faith Workers Branch took 240 calls from member in the last year, and this is growing year on year as the Branch is getting bigger and stronger. We therefore need to ask more of our members to step up to become Unite Representatives. To help you decide if this is for you, we are holding a number of "taster day" training sessions, tutored by Andrew Murray, Unite Regional Officer for the Faith Workers Branch.

These days are designed for you to learn about the role of the rep, and then to have a go through role play!! You will also learn more about the workings of the Branch and meet other members.

As one representative said, "Being a representative is so

rewarding. To be able to help someone in their time of need, you realise how important the union is."

Members have really valued these days in the past, and many have gone on to become Unite representatives. Please can you let Maureen German know if you can attend one of the training days on Maureen.German@unitetheunion.org or call **020 7420 8978**.

22 November 2010 - Oxford
29 November 2010 - Newcastle
10 January - London, Covent Garden

Details of the venues and times will then be sent to you. We really hope that you will be able to attend.

Faith Workers Help Line 0845 108 2575 or faithworkers@unitetheunion.org

Join Unite the Union online at www.unitetheunion.org

Letter from the Chair

This is both a happy and sad letter. Happy that our branch has changed beyond recognition from where we were some four years ago and have now arrived at. But it is also a little sad as I am going to stand down as your chair of our Branch at the next Conference. Leavings are never easy.

When I first became chair we had an Exec. that was not really engaged proactively. Rather, we turned up to meetings, worked through agendas and then travelled off home. Often the struggles to get to grips with the issues and legal relationships that existed for the large majority of ministers was so daunting, it was a relief to travel off home. Thus we tended to forget most of our hopes as we all merged back into the relentless business of church life. Over these last years we reshaped the executive twice and have steadily changed as an executive and as people as well. This means we are indeed a changed branch.

We now have the largest executive we have ever had – so designed that each portfolio of activity has two involved, so the essence of teams are now built in. This we trust will create a far wider involvement of members in the activities of the Branch. In the past we elected then allocated tasks – now we have the described tasks and elect to those individually. This has focused our endeavours considerably.

Secondly, we have instituted better delivery of service and care of our members in difficulties. We have increased our AR [Accredited Representative] numbers by a combination of taster days and training that we now require all reps to undergo every two years. Maybe we are not quite there yet but we are steadily moving along those lines.

Unquestionably we have developed ARs who are very able and capable in dealing with the vast array of issues that we are presented with, and I am confident our service to our members has become far more professional and efficient. The help line is well managed with back up, and we are dealing with an ever increasing number of cases – currently up to about twenty a month.

Thirdly, the individual Denominational ideas needed to be represented and we had started that under the previous National Officer, with the Anglicans. This was on a see how things go basis, but now this has been progressed so that there is representation there ongoing and also with the Methodists, Congregationalists and Baptists. We have tried to set up the same sorts of relationships with the United Synagogues and also the Imams and some smaller groups as well, but these have so far not born much fruit apart from some open and better relationships. Though we realise there is much to be done, these groups have opened up doorways that are at least part way open for helpful representation for our various members and their issues. Additionally we are able to interact as things are devised, thus have a bit of a hand in shaping some policies.

Fourthly, we have run a number of campaigns that have reached some of the very neglected parts. The most significant would be the issues surrounding Health and Safety, the complex problems of Ministerial Housing and the now very worrying issues of pensions and care of ministers and spouses in retirement. The latter is a national issue thus all schemes everywhere are having to be looked at. In the case of Ministers of Religion, some live in tied housing all their lives, thus retirement presents particular challenges in this area.

I am really pleased to be able look back on these developments with huge thanks to the various Executives who have served with me and our National Officer, Rachael Maskell, without whom none of these things would have happened.

There are some regrets however and the main one has to be that despite the longest term of a Labour Government we failed to make the hoped for headway in the whole area of the relationship of Ministers of Religion and employment protection. The Church of England tends to set the agenda for all despite the fact they do not speak for all Ministers. They have instituted a complex framework under the fruits of the McClean proposals that effectively stifled any political will that flowered early in the term to ensure Ministers of Religion were treated fairly. The presence of Bishops in the House of Lords by right leaves everyone else at a great disadvantage and their official line is able to be represented in the most favourable of lights – despite the various cases we have represented that say otherwise. My lasting memory of all of this was after putting our case to the minister personally at the DTI [as was] he apparently listened carefully, and then pulled out a pre-prepared paper stating they wanted to stay with the voluntary code anyway. It would not have mattered had we pitched for the moon, the decision had been taken elsewhere already. Now under this Government our hopes are certainly reduced but time will tell and our endeavours remain undiminished.

All organisations need new initiative and drive so I am happy to stand down at our next conference in the firm belief that our Branch will make ever greater headway as I am sure you will all see and experience.

On a personal note, I sense we tend to spend our time in the union serving a large body of members in a very essential and vital area. On the face of things this is the politics of man in the main as we deal with the political realities that we have to interact with. I trust we will both continue in that vein as we must, but also increasingly serve the Politics of God as well. Something I have tried to do as have we all, but we want to do all the more, since nearly all the current understandings of human dignity and most of the rights we fight for, are ultimately to be found in God.

Hence I want to state my immense gratitude to all I have served alongside to all members I have served for, and thus pass the baton on with great confidence.

Gerry Barlow

Methodists live longer than the average Brit

In June this year Stanley Lucas of Cornwall died aged 110 (born on 15 January, 1900). Stanley was thought to be not only the oldest male member of the British Methodist Church, but one of the oldest men in the world.

Is this sort of longevity characteristic of Methodists? Seemingly, yes. An analysis of family announcements printed in the Methodist Recorder carried out by British Religion in Numbers, hosted by Manchester University, shows that in 1973 the mean age of death for Methodist laity was 77.9 years for men and 83 for women. By 2008 these figures had risen to 83.9 and 91.1 respectively – well above the life expectancy for the UK population as a whole (77 for men and 82 for women).

Dr Richard Vautrey, GP and Vice President of the Methodist Conference, said, “I’m sure there are many different factors at work for Methodists to attain these numbers. But I would guess that our emphasis on caring for our spiritual as well as physical health, avoiding excess, engaging with people in our communities and being good neighbours all help.”

The position for male Methodist ministers is similar, with a mean age of death of 83.4 years for those whose obituaries appeared in the 2009 edition of the Minutes of the Annual Conference and Directory of the Methodist Church. Since the Methodist Church began ordaining

women in 1973, too few Methodist women ministers die each year to draw any meaningful conclusions.

And this is not a new pattern. Clive Field’s unpublished Oxford DPhil thesis of 1974 revealed that, until the beginning of the twentieth century, the death rate per 1,000 among lay members of the various Methodist denominations in Britain was appreciably below the national level, especially in Wesleyan Methodism. Published studies by Kenneth Brown (‘A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales, 1800-1930’) and Tim Allison (‘An Historical Cohort Study of Methodist Ministers Examining Lifespan and Socioeconomic Status’ – University of Manchester MSc thesis, 1995) demonstrate similar trends.

Methodist commentators, both in the Victorian era and since, were quick to point out that the longevity of Methodists was not accidental. They posited a clear link between a religious, ‘clean’ and virtuous life on the one hand and a long one on the other. The avoidance of physical and moral excess was especially advocated.

The Church’s annual governing body, the Methodist Conference, begins every year with singing “And are we yet alive?”, a hymn by Charles Wesley.

Based on a Press Release from Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR (25 June 2010)

Role Descriptions

Church of England clergy face some significant changes in the coming years. After countless hours of work and reams of paper the Clergy Terms of Service package is due to be implemented early next year. It is the Church’s response to the government’s requirement that there be greater clarity on what might be broadly termed clergy Terms and Conditions. All of the relevant documentation has been gathered together at www.common tenure.org, and there is a lot of it.

Common Tenure will apply to all new appointments after the implementation date. Clergy who do not have freehold appointments will also come under its terms immediately. Those who do have freehold can choose whether or not to change from freehold to common tenure. Bishops should not imply that incumbents have to change and Unite’s advice is not to give up the freehold.

For those who do not have the choice there is one crucial new document introduced by the package. This is the role description. It sets out the purpose of the post and will be used in appointments, ministerial development reviews and capability procedures. The official guidance for writing role descriptions is off-putting at 34 pages long, including some templates that would probably need extensive editing to be relevant to a particular role. Despite the instruction that the role description should not have the same information in different sections that is what the guidance seems to do.

It is probable that current post-holders will be expected to produce a first draft of their role description. In drawing this

up it is important to seek clarity with simplicity. Likewise it should not be too specific in what it expects of the post-holder or impose an unreasonable work-load. There needs to be enough flexibility to adapt to changing situations and pastoral emergencies as well as allowing a proper life-work balance. An exhausted priest is not generally an effective one.

The Working Time Regulations have set the maximum hours at 48 hours per week as this has been identified as the maximum limit for workers to work safely.

The final version of the role description has to be agreed between the bishop (or his representative) and the PCC as well as the post-holder. What is not clear is what happens if the three parties cannot agree – how will this be resolved? The templates indicate that they will be signed off by the Archdeacon. However Unite would take the view that dignity at work does not allow imposition of an unreasonable expectation of the post-holder.

Another area of concern is that the guidance focuses entirely on expectations of the post-holder. These can include collaboration with others and the exercise of leadership. Nothing is said about the willingness of others to enable this to happen. At the very least when the PCC agrees the role description this should be recorded as indicating their acceptance of their responsibility to, in the words of the Measure setting up Parochial Church Councils, co-operate with the parish priest. Without that co-operation the expectations will be impossible to meet. **Roger Stokes**

Progress on Recruitment

I am pleased to report that we are making some steady progress on recruitment in the two small denominations with which I am associated; namely General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (which comprised 173 churches with 134 ministers), and the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland (33 churches and 20 ministers).

We now have ten members between the two; with an active Unite Rep., the Rev. Bob Pounder in England, and myself here in Northern Ireland. Bob is doing great work for us in England, and I know the word is getting out!

Of course, we still have a long way to go having only secured around 10/180 so far (some ministers sit on both rolls), but when you take out those who are returned, the figures is around 10/60; encouraging as all of our members are younger and more active ministers.

I write this as encouragement to those who may sometime find recruitment hard work. Keep going! You will make progress, after all, this time last year, we only had around four!

All of this may seem small fry compared to the thousands in the big battalions such as the Church of England, but remember every member matters, and every one who joins, strengthens the voice of all of us!

Let's keep positive and let's build the union, as a professional voice for all faith workers.

Rev Chris Wilson *Unite Faith Workers Executive & NS Presbyterian Minister*

Number of complaints against clergy goes down, and suspensions halve

Fifty-nine complaints were made against Church of England clergy under the Clergy Discipline Measure in 2009, according to the annual report of the Clergy Discipline Committee, which has been published and distributed to bishops and to members of General Synod (GS Misc 957). This is a decline compared with the previous year, in which 63 complaints were made.

Of the complaints made in 2009, 16 were dismissed by the bishop, five were referred for formal investigation, and to were referred to the bishop's disciplinary tribunal for determination. The number of suspensions of clergy was nearly half the previous year, down from 15 to 8. Out of the Church of England's 44 dioceses, 17 registered no complaints against clergy under the measure.

The Commission believes that the measure continues to 'bed down'. It would continue to devote attention, as requested by respondents in a consultation exercise, to the question of keeping distinct the pastoral and disciplinary roles of the bishop. The Code of Practice is being revised by the Commission to give clearer guidance about keeping the two functions distinct.

Colin Lunt *Publicity Officer*

UNITE FAITH WORKERS CONFERENCE AND AGM 8/9 FEBRUARY 2010

The next Faith Workers' Branch Conference and AGM will take place at the Northern College, Wentworth Castle, near Barnsley in South Yorkshire. This year the focus of the conference will be "Faith in the Union". We anticipate the attendance of a top union officer giving the opportunity for a very positive exploration of the role faith group workers can play within the wider union context.

Once again we ask for the widest attendance to help and guide the branch executive as it works to promote and defend the interests of all, lay and ordained, who work for faith organisations of all religions in the U.K. In the tough times ahead no sector will be free from the pressure government funding cuts bring in their wake. The conference is your opportunity to guide the branch in the best way forward in meeting these unprecedented challenges.

Don't delay – February will be here all too soon – book your place now by contacting

Peter Bellenes,
Unite Conference & AGM
Little Grove, Harrowbarrow, Callington
Cornwall PL17 8JN
e-mail: Parishbooks@aol.co

GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTIONS 2010

The Unite Faith Workers Executive want to encourage all its members to take part in the General Secretary Election. This is your opportunity to choose the leader of your union.

There are 4 candidates:

Gail Cartmail

Jerry Hicks

Len McCluskey

Les Bayliss

If you have not received a ballot paper, contact your Regional Office as your details may be incorrect.

METHODISTS NEWS

Letters of Understanding are now an integral part of the stationing system for Methodist ministers and deacons. It is therefore important that both engage in conversation with circuits regarding their stated areas of responsibility, period of invitation and matters relating to the provision of housing.

For the sake of clarity we would suggest that the letter include the following

Areas of Responsibility: These might be summarised 'in accordance with Circuit Policy and the requirements of the Constitution, Discipline and Practice of the Methodist Church'.

Supporting each other: 'Rest time and holidays as outlined in Conference Guidelines i.e. 35 days holiday per annum including 5 free Sundays plus the equivalent of public statutory holidays.' (There is also provision for three consecutive break days per quarter and at least one District now makes allowance for additional free Sundays. Ministers may also wish to discuss the working hours that

they consider will provide for a healthy life balance.)

Period of invitation: 'The invitation is for years from 1st September 20....'

Provision of housing: Confirm any work and changes that have been agreed and the timetable for implementing them.

Resources to be provided: Confirm that 'the stipend will be in accordance with that agreed by Conference' and any discretionary local allowances that might be provided. The letter should also note that 'other terms and conditions pertaining to the appointment are as detailed in Part 8 of the Constitution, Discipline and Practice of the Methodist Church'. (These include provision of Retirement Benefits and Maternity/ Paternity/Parental Leave)

The inclusion of such details will promote fuller mutual understanding of matters and responsibilities that otherwise might be missed.

Alan Barker Unite Representative, Methodists

Appointments

Over two years ago Unite raised concerns with the Church of England Division of Ministry about the appointments process. We were pleased to hear recently that the House of Bishops has, with the advent of common tenure, recognised the need to do something about the issue. We are now revising the paper we submitted so that it reflects the current and impending situation. As the Church of England faces up to a reducing number of stipendiary clergy it becomes ever more important that best practice is followed to improve the chances of making the best possible appointment to each parish.

There are two key principles involved in this. First is the need to maximise the pool of candidates to be considered through bringing the vacancy to the attention of as many people as possible. Advertising as widely as possible is a part of that, including bringing the vacancy to the attention of those who might not otherwise apply. This should not be done in a way that might suggest that there will be any preference shown in the selection process itself, a process that should be open and transparent.

The second principle is that unlawful discrimination must be avoided. Those involved at any stage, including drawing up the parish profile, should receive appropriate equality and diversity training. Under the Equality Act any discrimination has to be clearly due to a genuine occupational qualification. There are no grounds on which there can be lawful discrimination on the basis of gender, marital status, ethnicity, age, disability or sexuality, unless covered by this genuine occupational qualification.

An employer is required to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled employee. This responsibility is also relevant

in the selection process. The challenges the Church faces means using the skills and potential of all clergy. If it seems that an applicant may not be able to function in the same way as the previous post-holder then there has to be an open and honest consideration of what has to be done. Unnecessary assumptions are to be avoided at every stage of the appointment process, from the stage of drawing up the parish profile and role description onwards. A new approach can actually bring advantages and new opportunities.

The position with regard to discrimination on the grounds of gender are even clearer. No discrimination is allowed unless the PCC has passed either or both the resolutions specified in the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure. Any such resolution can only be passed if the PCC has been given 28 days notice of the intention to consider it and has to be before the parish profile is agreed.

Somebody has to take responsibility for the outcome of the appointments process, and the legislation places this in the hands of the patron unless the right of patronage has been suspended. In that case it rests with the diocesan bishop, who also has direct patronage responsibility for many parishes or may be asked by the actual patron to carry out the selection process. The bishop is the chief pastor of the diocese, and the person who institutes or licences the new parish priest to a cure which is shared with the bishop.

Unite believes it is important that bishops and their senior staff accept and exercise this responsibility as an essential part of the oversight and leadership of their respective dioceses. We believe that unless this happens the Church's overall ministry and spiritual leadership will not be as effective as it can and should be.

Roger Stokes

Stipends and Pensions

At a recent diocesan synod I was very concerned to hear that before the latest changes to the Church of England clergy pension scheme come into effect there are plans for further changes to the scheme. Dioceses have concerns which, using the term in the legal sense, are reasonable in that they are concerned that they cannot afford to maintain the present scheme. This could get very technical and make eyes glaze over so I will keep it simple.

There are basically two types of occupational pension scheme – defined benefit and defined contribution. Clergy pension schemes, for whichever denomination, tend to be defined benefit whereby the member (you) know that for x years' service you will get a pension of a certain level, usually defined with regard to stipend level. The employer (the Church) guarantees this benefit and any risk for underperforming investments lies with them. In a defined contribution scheme a certain amount is paid in each year but what this means in terms of pension is not known until shortly before retirement.

Changes in government regulations and the performance of the Stock Market in the past few years means that defined benefit schemes have run into trouble and many have been closed, either to future employees or even in terms of future service of current employees. There are worrying signs that Churches may wish to move away from the pure benefit contribution scheme towards a hybrid scheme with at least a proportion of defined

contribution.

Many of those in church congregations are in defined contribution schemes but there is an essential difference between them and the position of those who are ordained – housing. Those who are ordained frequently have housing provided as part of the compensation package. This makes it harder to move towards home ownership during one's ministry. When a minister retires their housing goes and they need to make alternative arrangements, for which they are ill-prepared in many cases. In the years approaching retirement uncertainty over the level of pension and lump sum they will receive means making these arrangements in reasonable time may be impossible.

In the last consultation a third of dioceses volunteered the view that there should be a thorough review of the compensation package. Clearly Unite should contribute to any such consultation, in whichever denomination it should occur. Should there be some means of an ordained minister building up equity (actual ownership of property) during their ministry so that they have more assurance when it comes to finding housing when they retire?

Please send your views to me

Roger Stokes
R.S.Stokes.65@cantab.net

Representation

At its recent residential meeting the Executive was (rightly) challenged about how representative it is of the actual and potential membership of Faith Workers. It was a gathering of white Christian men, most of whom are ordained and apparently able-bodied. There are a lot of lay people working for faith organizations, and the conditions of their employment may well be below what is commercially acceptable.

Equally there are a lot of women and those of other faiths who should be represented in the decision-making bodies of our Branch.

Come to the Annual Conference in February and make your voice heard. Help us to broaden representation on the Executive.

E-mails

Much of the Unite communications are now electronic, and you could be missing out if we do not have an up to date e-mail on the membership system for you.

If you do not receive anything via e-mail from Unite contact
Maureen.German@unitetheunion.org
and let her have your e-mail address

Branch Consultation

Over the last few years Unite Faith Workers have made a number of changes to the way that we operate. These have been as a result of you raising issues with us. We trust that these changes have been of benefit to you.

We are now wanting to hear from you again to know if there are better services that we could be providing, areas of work that we could be campaigning on, or other issues that you would like us to address.

Finally we will soon be running some taster days for those that are interested in becoming a representative for the Faith Workers Branch. These enable our members to see if this is something that they want to do, as well as give you some hands on experience through role play! If you are interested in becoming a representative in the future, then please complete this section of the survey. Please return all responses by 3 December 2010. For members who are on e-mail, we will also send the survey out electronically.

The Branch have agreed to give away 5 copies of the DVD 'Rev' for 5 members who complete the survey.

INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATION

Have you used the Faith Workers Helpline?

Yes No

If yes, how did you rate the service?

1 (very good) 5(poor) 1 2 3 4 5

What improvements could be made to this service?

Comment:

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Whether or not you have personally used the Faith Workers Helpline, have you any general comments about the support of individuals in Unite?

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DENOMINATIONAL/ FAITH REPRESENTATION

Which denomination/faith are you?

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Are there any issues that you believe Unite should be raising with your denomination?

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Have you any comments on the representation you received from Unite?

Yes No

Comment

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How would you want to be involved in the work that Unite does within your denomination? Please tick.

- 1. I would want to be a representative who works on denominational issues
- 2. I would want to be part of an e-mail group that discusses the issues that impact on the members
- 3. I would be interested in being part of a group which works with the dioceses locally (Church of England only)
- 4. I would like the newsletter to give a full report at what happens in each meeting

Is the ecumenical nature of the Unite Faith Workers Branch important to you?

Comment:

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Any other comments about our work with denominations/faiths?

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CAMPAIGNING

I want Unite to continue to campaign for employment rights?

I want Unite to campaign for health and safety rights?

I want Unite to campaign for improved well-being for clergy, including addressing

- bullying at work
- long working hours
- stress at work

I would like Unite to campaign for

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INVOLVEMENT

(please tick)

I would be interested in writing for the Unite Faith Workers newsletter

I would be interested in meeting with Unite Faith Workers members in my region

I would be interested in becoming a Unite representative

I will ask some colleagues to join Unite, please could you send me some application packs

In 2011 the Unite Faith Workers Conference will be held near Bradford. I would be interested in attending the conference on 8 and 9 February 2011.

Your Name.....

Your Denomination.....

Your E-mail.....

(Your responses will be treated confidentially.)

*Thank you for your time completing this survey. Faith Workers Executive.
Please return to Maureen German at Unite the union, 35 King Street, London WC2E 8JG*

For more information contact Unite:

Faith Workers Helpline **0845 108 2575**
or e-mail: **faithworkers@unitetheunion.org**

**Faith Workers Branch, Unite the Union,
35 King Street, London WC2E 8JG**

www.unitetheunion.org

