

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A Fresh Start

The Churches Main Committee should be re-launched as the Churches' Legislation Advisory Service (CLAS). It should have a proper constitution, making explicit its remit and working arrangements.

The CLAS should be a Christian ecumenical body, providing a service to its member churches and other faith and secular groups, and should aim to increase its membership among Christian denominations currently unrepresented.

Its relationship with other Christian bodies and its operation generally should be reviewed again in five years' time.

Working Practices

Governance and Secretariat

Its secretariat will have day-to-day responsibility for the work of the CLAS. A small governing body should replace the current Executive Committee and be responsible for all governance matters, including staffing and finance. It should comprise six members, including one Anglican bishop as chair, one seat for the Roman Catholic Church and one for a representative of the free churches. Members should elect the other three governors.

Participation of Members

Much of the CLAS's policy work should be done through time-limited task groups. Its main means of communicating should be electronic and the secretariat should brief members on matters of interest by regular email bulletins, which should also be a means of gaining feedback from members.

The CLAS should ensure adequate representation of Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish interests. It should have good two-way links with groups concerned with churches' interests in the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.

Topical seminars should take place regularly for members and other interested parties.

Interaction with Government and other Authorities

The CLAS should ensure close links with those who prepare legislation within Government. The Cabinet Office should be invited to alert Government departments to the role of the CLAS.

It should forge closer links with the European Parliament and Commission, working with European church bodies, to monitor initiatives with implications for UK churches.

The CLAS should make greater effort to publicise its work.

Secretariat

The new governing body should review the allocation of costs between member churches and agree a policy on subscriptions for non-members.

The CLAS should consider whether its future secretariat should be employed by itself, by another church body (or shared between both), or outsourced.