



Annual Report of the Trustees for the year 2013

to be presented to the Annual General Meeting on

15th July 2014 at 2.15 pm at

High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts

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ABOUT MODERN CHURCH

Modern Church takes an open-minded and thoughtful approach to Christian faith.

We understand that

- genuine faith is committed to the search for truth, wherever it comes from
- it is possible to think and talk about God in ways that make sense in our time and culture
- we never have absolute certainty.

We encourage

- open discussion: freedom to explore ideas, ask questions and change our minds without fear of disapproval
- critical scholarship: keeping up to date with good research, examining the implications of new insights and discoveries
- willingness to change: so that what we believe now can be expressed in the things our churches do and say.

We expect our theology to be

- public: talking the language of ordinary people, not that of a religious club
- relevant: engaging with what is going on in society, informing our faith and how we live
- respectful: willing to learn from others, within and outside Christianity, since we accept that we don't have all the answers.

Public benefit

As a charitable organisation we consider that our aims and objects have the following public benefits:

- we have a duty within our present-day society to present Christianity in a way which can be understood by ordinary people
- we encourage all church people, both ordained and lay, to play a full part in the governance and activities of their churches and foster greater engagement with the mission of the churches to support the poor, sick and needy in society
- by engaging in research and study we can help our fellow Christians come to a deeper understanding of their faith and how it has developed
- our approach to theology will encourage people of all faiths to better understand one another thus promoting better relations between the faiths.

The Way Forward: thoughts from the General Secretary

There are tremendous possibilities for Modern Church at the present time. Some growth and a renewed commitment to mission (in the narrow sense of evangelism and in the broader sense of service and activity in the public realm) is being detected in the Church of England and in other denominations. The research shows this happens particularly in those places where there is clarity about the definition and purpose of the Church.

For those churches operating in the "traditional paradigm", especially for evangelicals, self-definition and clarity of purpose have been relatively simple to articulate and communicate, hence the success of Alpha and other initiatives. For liberals and for those operating within an "emerging paradigm", self-definition and clarity has never been simple or easy.

The great opportunity before Modern Church is to enable the liberal voice to be heard and to define itself with clarity and confidence. We "woolly liberals" have often run a mile from this challenge, fearing simplicity and self-confidence, because the gospel as we have understood it is infinitely subtle, nuanced, mysterious and open to reinterpretation. The opportunity of the hour, however, is that we are speaking to a public which, by and large, has lost faith in the traditional paradigm and which is wide open to the flexible response, sense of mystery, oneness to other faiths and embrace of scientific frontiers which liberalism, at its best, allows. A generation which we will find "speaks our language", if only we can learn to speak our language better in the public sphere.

Equipping liberal churches to engage spiritual seekers in exploring the adventure and mystery of the divine is something we have tried to do, through DVDs, courses and leaflets, in the past. We are making a renewed commitment to work carefully over the coming four years to offer to the Church new resources such as a course in basic Christianity from a liberal/emerging perspective and other educational and liturgical resources, delivered online and in print.

Besides this focus on equipping the liberal/emerging Church, we continue to help the Church to change from within. The fresh thinking which we do at conferences and through Modern Believing continues to be a significant resource for the Church as a whole. Those in the "traditional paradigm" have often found themselves defending traditional dogma and ecclesiology against the public consensus of the day (on the ordination of women, on the place of LGBTI Christians in the Church etc). Modern Church plays a vital role in the debate and in the campaigns for inclusion which have characterised the last 30 years and which will continue into the future as the wider Church comes to terms with a fast

changing society. As a campaigning ally and a source of creative theology we are particularly involved in the GS2015 campaign as it seeks to ensure a more representative General Synod in the Church of England, in the campaign for Women Bishops and in the campaign for LGBTI Christians to be fully represented in the life and leadership of the Church. Special editions of Modern Believing are also helping Modern Church to carry forward this vital work, within the Church.

Canon Guy Elsmore

Reviewing the past year: Chair of Council

At the AGM in July 2013 John Plant stood down as Chair after many years of service and we thank him for his commitment and support of Modern Church. As I moved into the Chair, we were on the brink of two significant changes.

Jonathan Clatworthy had decided that he must resign as General Secretary, the post he held for some 11 years. His resignation on health grounds was received with regret and we owe him a considerable debt of gratitude. Jonathan continues however to be fully involved in Modern Church.

Council voted unanimously to appoint Guy Elsmore as the new General Secretary, and we are already benefitting from his energy and vision.

The second change concerned the publication of our journal 'Modern Believing'. The journal is now published through Liverpool University Press, and has an attractive new look. The new arrangements for journal distribution and for subscription collection have caused some transitional difficulties which are being addressed.

Modern Church had a valuable presence at Greenbelt, once again sharing a G-Source stall with PCN Britain, Inclusive Church, and St Marks Centre for Radical Christianity. The 'birthday' theme of the stall attracted interest and a good number of new email contacts were collected.

Our annual conference 'The Earth is the Lord's' focussed on environmental responsibility. In addition, during this 50th anniversary year of 'Honest to God', various special events were run or supported by Modern Church. We joined with PCN Britain to run a residential conference at Swanwick in November 2013, and day conferences in Bristol and London were supported by Modern Church. We were encouraged by the success of these events and there has been some discussion about further regional conferences.

2013 saw the publication of two new books in the 'Making Sense' series, on Death and Immortality by Paul Badham and on Religious Pluralism by Alan Race.

My thanks go to Christine Alker for her support and efficiency as administrator, and to the officers, Trustees and members of Council for all their work through the year.

Rev Jan van der Lely

Report from the Editor of *Modern Believing*

The highlight of the year was the April issue, a collection of papers marking the 50th anniversary of the publication of John Robinson's *Honest to God*. We printed extra copies and sold them at the celebratory meetings and conferences held throughout the year. Adrian Thatcher is to be congratulated on producing this excellent collection.

Administratively it was a year of changes. It began with a Working Group examining the viability of two offers from publishers, SAGE and SCM, to administer the journal for us. In the end we opted for Liverpool University Press. The new arrangement, commencing with the January 2014 issue, includes LUP taking over a number of tasks from others: the copy editing from Anthony Freeman, the printing and distribution from Orphans Press and the subscription management from David Marshall.

By the time this had been agreed Adrian Thatcher had submitted his resignation. The July issue was his last. We therefore say goodbye, with thanks for their work, to Adrian Thatcher for his brief but eventful spell as Editor; to David Marshall for his accurate and reliable administration of the membership subscriptions since 2008; and to Orphans Press who have been printing *Modern Believing* for decades.

I have agreed with the Trustees to edit the journal until the end of 2015. Anthony Freeman has kindly agreed to work with me as Assistant Editor; with his long experience of editing he is a great asset to the team. In this year of changes we are grateful for points of continuity, and one is Michael Brierley's regular work as Reviews Editor. The reviews add significantly to the popularity of the journal. We thank him for his continuing work, always to a high standard.

The journal is widely read outside the membership. In addition to the extra sales, it is available online via the American Theological Libraries Association. The number of hits for 2012 was 19,000.

Rev Jonathan Clatworthy

Website Report

The website was administered by David Marshall from 2008 until August 2013. In this time it has grown from around 100 pages to just over 500. It is now a substantial site offering a wide range of resources. The number of page hits per day is averaging around 230, which indicates that it provides public benefit well beyond the membership.

Because of its size we need to change the system of administration. We agreed to move it to a new platform using Joomla software, under the supervision of Kieran Bohan with a view to completion by April 2014. This should enable us to provide a Content Management System allowing specific officers to look after their own pages easily. It should also be possible to incorporate the Modern Church blog, which is currently on a separate site.

In the meantime I am administering the site as inherited from David Marshall. I have made some changes, mainly to the Home Page, to provide more information about Modern Church, make it easier for viewers to appreciate the range of resources available on the whole site and break up the text with more graphics.

The blog has been active since March 2013. Most of the posts have been mine. It would be greatly improved by a range of different contributors, so offers would be welcome.

Rev Jonathan Clatworthy

Signs of the Times

Our popular newsletter continues to flourish – despite some hiccups in delivery. During 2013, it has inevitably focused on the internal affairs of Modern Church, where significant changes (reported elsewhere in these pages) have taken place. However it has also provided a place for members to debate such familiar issues as Incarnation and Eucharist, and such contemporary and controversial ones as women bishops and equal marriage. It is good that, increasingly often, the debate is genuine, in that a challenging article from one member will elicit a response from others. This really does help to fulfil Modern Church's objectives of bringing theology into the public square and helping all God's people to feel that they can be theologians.

An increasingly prominent feature of the newsletter has been reviews of books which might not be as academically rigorous as those reviewed in *Modern Believing* but which are thought to be of interest to the membership – and our Reviews Editor, Alan Wolfe, would welcome more reviewers to his panel. It would

also be good to have nominations of such books which members have found of interest.

Contributions on any issues of potential interest to the membership, of a less academic kind than would be appropriate for our learned journal, are always welcomed. The quality of the material depends on our members, and lively, concise and if possible illustrated contributions are particularly appreciated.

Anthony Woollard

Membership Report

The numbers of subscribers at the end of 2012 and 2013 were as follows:

Subscription type	2012	2013
Individual member	441	416 ¹
Joint member	48	33 ²
Life member	10	10
Honorary member	10	10
Total members	509	469³
Institution	87	85
Journal exchange	8	4

Notes

1. Of which 170 paid the concessionary rate (186 in 2012).
2. Of which 23 paid the concessionary rate (23 in 2012).
3. During 2013 40 new members joined (54 in 2012) including 20 gift subscriptions.

Christine Alker

2013 Conference Report

The Earth is the Lord's: Renewing the Covenant of Creation

Chair: Margaret Barker : Chaplain: Fr Dominic White : Speakers: Alex Evans, Helen Hutchison, Jeffrey Newman, Hylton Murray Phillips, David Shreeve, Tom Spencer

The conference set out to explore what the bible says about creation, based on the most fundamental idea of the eternal covenant which binds all creation and human society into one God-given system. Margaret's contribution was shaped by her approach to Temple Theology. There was considerable appreciation of the variety of speakers, content and presentation, though some wanted greater/deeper theological input. New attenders felt welcomed and included, something regulars must continue to work at since the annual conference is something of a 'reunion' for many of us!

Clare Nicholson

Treasurer's Report

During the course of 2013 Richard Hall retired as Treasurer and I was elected to take his place – a tough act to follow as he has been an experienced and faithful Treasurer who kept the accounts in good order. My thanks go to Richard for his help with the handover.

Richard was used to keeping accounts on a spreadsheet while I was experienced only in two, widely different, accounting packages. I have been using the system known as Money Manager for many years both for personal accounts and for my husband's business accounts and accordingly have adapted this system for use by Modern Church. This has involved a considerable adjustment in the way the information is presented. As a result, although I have combined a number of my codes to be equivalent to the headings used by Richard, there are a few places with figures for 2013 which are blank for 2012. By showing the totals as published at last year's AGM, and adding in the extra ones I have found necessary, you can see that the deficit on the current accounts has reduced slightly.

In order to clarify spending on projects, the annual conference and Modern Believing I have provided separate reports on those, in addition to the Funds balance sheet. The annual conference is recorded in the accounts on a straightforward annual accounting basis. However, each year there is income for the following year as well as spending in advance. This generally cancels itself out but for information I have done a breakdown to attempt to show the financial situation for each conference as a stand-alone.

You will see from my statement of accounts, that no Gift Aid was claimed for 2013. In fact we are now in a position to claim for 2011, 2012 and 2013. The system used by HMRC has changed during the course of 2013 with the result that it proved impractical to claim before the year end. However, this should provide a useful addition to our income for 2014.

Trustees have had an interesting time this year trying to find ways both to balance the books and to improve the academic standing of Modern Believing, our flagship journal. I will leave our General Secretary and Editor to explain these in more detail. However, there are implications from the accounts point of view.

With the move to publishing Modern Believing by Liverpool University Press, our membership administration is also moving to their subscriptions managers, Turpin Distribution. This has caused some hiccoughs, which unfortunately members will have experienced. We apologise for this, but hope that over the coming years it will provide a more cost-effective way of managing subscriptions. It appears that

there will certainly be considerable savings, both in administration costs and printing costs of Modern Believing. However, because 2014 is a crossover year, it is likely that our income for this year will be considerably reduced. This is because during this year only part of members' annual subscriptions will be collected in order for Turpin to collect them annually at the turn of the year. Part of the hidden costs of the changeover to LUP is the loss of our institutional subscribers. LUP will retain all the income for these, but the hoped-for benefit is that they will solicit new subscribers and therefore make a deeper impact on the world of academic theology.

For 2015 members will be able to renew their membership via the website and will need to click on the Gift Aid box if that is appropriate. Or they can pay by cheque etc on receipt of the renewal letter and invoice from Turpin. Unfortunately it was not possible to include the website option for 2014 renewals due to the complicated calculations required. We believe that the new arrangements will provide value for money in future.

As a result of the transfer of the membership administration to Turpin, Dave Marshall ceased to manage this and Christine Alker took this on in addition to her general administrative duties. We are most grateful for the professional way in which she has managed this. We continue to need a membership secretary who can provide welcome packs and personal introductions to new members and we are grateful to Clare Nicholson for taking this on. However, it is likely that Christine may well have to keep an eye on membership matters, certainly for the remainder of 2014 and this may result in some additional costs. It is hoped that by 2015 this work will be minimal.

We have also been concerned that we needed to increase our income from our regular membership. This is something we are always reluctant to do as we are aware that if we increase costs too much, we will lose valued members who contribute so much to what we are as a union. We are therefore proposing a radically different way of looking at membership fees for 2015 onwards. We propose a three-tier system – standard membership, donor membership and reduced membership. We expect that most people will opt for the standard membership which we suggest should be set at £45 for individuals and £60 for donors with a £30 fee reduced membership for those on a low income. These would all be self-selected, so that if you feel that your income is low, eg student or OAP on state pension, then you would opt for £30 p.a., but otherwise you would opt for £45 or even £60. For two members at the same address the rates would be £60 (standard), £75 (donor) and £45 (reduced).

Rosalind Lund

Treasurer's Report 2013 continued

	2013 Income	2013 Expenditure	2012 Income	2012 Expenditure
Paypal fees		£154		£173
Advertising		£1,021		£1,058
PCN Britain (inc £750 loan)		£1,465		
Trustee and Council meetings		£4,575		£5,052
Publishing		£176		£1,423
Greenbelt (inc other projects 2012)		£4,287		£2,475
High Leigh Conference Centre: annual conf.		£14,458		£15,479
Books purchased		£498		
Annual conference expenses		£271		£2,914
Miscellaneous		£141		£36
Refunds		£221		
Administrator		£6,178		£5,669
Office and membership expenses ¹		£4,910		£5,324
MB Orphans Press etc		£17,797		£18,599
Miscellaneous			£1,972	
Gift Aid tax repayments (none claimed in 2013)			£3,376	
Books and publications ²	£3,030		£3,479	
Annual conference income	£16,736		£17,476	
Donations (inc legacy)	£5,541		£15	
Interest	£141		£274	
CBF Income Fund	£7,707		£7,519	
Subscriptions ³	£14,690		£21,337	
Council residential	£586			
Honest to God conf ⁴	£866			
Restricted donations ⁵	£295		£5	
Greenbelt	£2,963			
Institutional subscriptions	£840			
Joint publications	£643			
	£54,037	£56,151	£55,453	£58,202
Surplus/Deficit	-£2,114		-£2,749	
Adjustment in reclaimable Gift Aid tax				-£1,000
Total Surplus/Deficit	-£2,114		-£3,749	

Notes to the Accounts

1. Including website
2. Inc £2082.96 from ATLA
3. Including institutional subs in 2012
4. Repayment of 2012 loan
5. For student places at High Leigh

Further note: I have combined some codings within the accounts so that as far as possible the headings follow on from those adopted in previous years in order to assist comparisons. The Conference Account is incorporated into the main accounts on this page. However, for clarity I have shown separate reports for the Annual Conference, Greenbelt and Joint publications. Payments to Dave Marshall - CDP Book Systems - ceased at end August 2013 - payments for this work are included in Office and membership expenses. From September 2013 the costs of Administrator include membership work and the additional work which has been required for the handover of the membership administration to Turpin on behalf of Liverpool University Press.

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2013

2012		2013
£206,731	Balance as at 1 January 2012	£218,880
-£3,749	Surplus (Deficit) for year	-£2,111
£15,898	Investment appreciation (depreciation)	£20,555
£218,880	Total Funds	£237,324

Represented by:

£16,144	Barclays Bank current account - cash	£8,385
£317	Paypal at 29-12-13	£911
£21,468	CCLA Deposit Account	£26,609
£5,000	Estimate of Gift Aid tax reclaimable	£5,000
£175,951	CBF Investment Fund - year end share value	£196,506
£218,880		£237,412

Notes:

1. CCLA - £5000 was transferred from the current account to the deposit account in March 2013
2. CBF Investment fund shows a revaluation of shares held up from previous year - the number of shares held remains the same
3. No Gift Aid was actually claimed in 2013

Budget for 2014

	2014	2013 (actual)
Expenses		
Administrator	£5,460.00	£5,437.00
Administration costs meetings etc	£6,500.00	£6,153.00
Advertising	£3,000.00	£1,000.00
Annual Conference costs	£17,000.00	£15,803.00
Greenbelt	£1,500.00	£4,286.00
Modern Believing and SOTT	£7,600.00	£17,796.00
Publishing (including Joint Publications)	£1,650.00	£1,650.00
Projects	£2,500.00	
Website	£3,000.00	
Membership costs	£1,500.00	£3,323.00
Other	£590.00	£680.00
Total	£50,300.00	£56,128.00
Income		
Membership	£7,000.00	£14,635.00
Annual Conference	£18,000.00	£16,735.00
Council	£600.00	£585.00
Greenbelt	£0.00	£2,962.00
Publishing	£1,000.00	£3,650.00
Gift Aid	£15,000.00	£0.00
CCLA	£7,700.00	£7,700.00
Donations	£1,000.00	£5,541.00
Other	£0.00	£2,209.00
Total	£50,300.00	£54,017.00

Notes to Budget

1. Membership income reduced for 2014 only, due to change from rolling annual renewals to December renewals
2. Publishing income for 2013 includes ATLA income not expected in 2014
3. Donations in 2013 included a legacy of £5000
4. Administrator expenses 2013 include some costs of membership administration since September
5. MB and SOTT costs for 2013 included £2000 to Assistant Editor

Conferences and Projects

Annual Conference 2013	Costs	Income
Advertising and expenses	£1,135.04	
Christian Conference Trust 2013	£12,597.95	
Receipts 2013		£14,535.84
Receipts from 2012		£1,670.00
Advertising paid in 2012	£283.00	
Deposit paid in 2012	£1,315.00	
Deposit paid in 2011	£200.00	
Totals	£15,530.99	£16,205.84
Net credit	£674.85	

Annual Conference 2014		
Receipts 2013 ¹		£2,225.00
Advertising 2013	£402.50	
Christian Conference Trust 2013	£1,660.50	
Christian Conference Trust 2011	£200.00	

Annual Conference 2015	
Deposit paid	£200.00

Greenbelt 2013		
Costs to MC	£4,286.97	
CRC St Marks		£763.41
Inclusive Church		£837.62
PCN		£1,361.48
	£4,286.97	£2,962.51
Total cost to MC	£1,324.46	

Joint publications		
Brought forward from 2012 ²		£107.06
Income 2013		£643.46
Paid to PCN ³	£714.67	
Totals	£714.67	£750.52
Balance due to PCN	£35.85	
Loan to PCN for 2013	£750.00	

Notes

1. Restricted donations towards the cost of student places are included in Receipts
2. Brought forward amount is not shown on 2013 accounts which are strictly related to 2013
3. PCN Britain holds fund for the Joint Publications in a ring-fenced account

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Modern Church

I report on the accounts of the Modern Church for the year ended 31 December 2013, which are set out on pages 1 to 2 and show a revenue deficit of £2,114, together with funds totalling £237,321.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Jonathan H. Rudge MA FCA
20 Blackthorne Close,
Solihull B91 1PF 25th April 2014

Modern Church Officers and Post-holders

Post	Elected at 2012 AGM	Elected at 2013 AGM
Chair of Council	Rev John Plant	Rev Jan van der Lely
Vice Chair of Council	Mrs Rosalind Lund	Rev Tim Stead
General Secretary	Rev Jonathan Clatworthy	Canon Guy Elsmore
Treasurer	Mr Richard Hall	Mrs Rosalind Lund

Council members who did not stand for re-election at the 2013 AGM:

Rev Dr Chris Halliday	Dr Susannah Cornwall
Mr Patrick Lewin	Mrs Mary Roe
Rev Jean Mayland	Mr David Storey

Council Members since the 2013 AGM

Elected members

Rev Dr Jeyan Ankatell*
Mrs Jean Barnett
Helen Burnett
Mrs Pat Boyd
Rev Dr Lorraine Cavanaugh
Rev Jonathan Clatworthy
Rev Canon David Driscoll
Rev Guy Elsmore*
Rev Ruth Fitter
Rev Anthony Freeman
Rev John Goldsmith
Mr Richard Hall
Rev David Howard
Rev David James
Rev Peter Law-Jones
Rev Tim Laundon
Rev Jan van der Lely*
Rev Franklin Lee
Mrs Suzanne Long
Mrs Rosalind Lund*
Mr David Marshall

Rev Clare Nicholson*
Rev Canon Trevor Pitt
Rev Canon Dr Alan Race*
Rev Tim Stead*
Prof Adrian Thatcher
Mr Anthony Woollard*

Vice-Presidents

Prof Paul Badham
Prof. Elaine Graham*
Rev Dr Nicholas Henderson
Rev Prof M McCord Adams
Dr Peter Mills
The Most Rev Barry Morgan
The Rt Rev Dr John Saxbee
The Rt Rev Brian Smith
The Rt Revd Tim Stevens
Rev Canon Richard Truss
The Rt Rev Martin Wharton

*Trustee

