

PRESS RELEASE

Re. INDUCTION OF NEW FREE CHURCHES MODERATOR

Tuesday 5th April 2011 - For immediate use

The Revd Michael Heaney, General Secretary of the Congregational Federation, is to be inducted as the new Moderator of the Free Churches in England and Wales at a service held at the Bunyan Meeting Free Church in Bedford on 13th April 2011 at 3pm.

Michael was elected by the members of the Free Churches Group to serve a period of four years, succeeding in this post Commissioner Elizabeth Matear of the Salvation Army who has served as Moderator since 2007.

The Free Churches Moderator represents the twenty-four denominations in membership with the Free Churches Group at significant national occasions and generally in the public arena. The Moderator also serves as a Patron to over forty Christian and charitable organisations.

The Moderator is ex-officio a President of Churches Together in England, alongside the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of Westminster and Bishop Jana Jeruma-Grinberga of the Lutheran Church.

The Service of Induction was held in the historic Bunyan Meeting Church, which is affiliated to both the Congregational Federation and the Baptist Union and, with its museum, is a focus for the life and writings of John Bunyan, author of Pilgrim's Progress.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Michael currently serves as the General Secretary of The Congregational Federation (a fellowship of some 300 independent congregationally ordered churches across England, Scotland & Wales). He is also a Director of the Free Church Federal Council (Incorporated); Governor of Northern College (United Reformed and Congregational); Director of Congregational & General Insurance Charitable Trust; Chair of Council and Trustee of Congregational Memorial Hall Trust; Member of the Partnership Forum of the Fresh Expressions Network.

Coming to faith as a teenager in a Baptist Church, Michael subsequently embarked on a career in banking. Following a move to Northampton, Michael encountered the Congregational Federation, joining a small village fellowship and being appointed Lay Pastor. Undertaking training and leaving behind a 13 year career in banking Michael then received a call to full time ministry at Witney Congregational Church in 1990. This involved 10 very happy and blessed years of pastoral ministry during which time the church experienced significant growth and successfully transformed its premises by way of a major rebuild. Following a brief period as Assistant to the General Secretary Michael became General Secretary of the Congregational Federation in 2000 based in Nottingham. (pto)

A passion for mission has been an ever present motivation in Michael's ministry and service within the church. He has served the world church through the Council for World Mission (CWM) family of 31 member denominations across 5 continents. This included 4 years in the office of Honorary Treasurer and steering through a major restructuring of this global mission partnership. Michael has also served on the World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission & Evangelism.

Moderator: Revd Michael Heaney

Convener: Mr Geoff Lomas

Secretary: Revd Mark Fisher

Assemblies of God - Baptist Union of Great Britain - Baptist Union of Wales - Christ Apostolic Church - Churches in Communities International - Church of God of Prophecy
Church of the Nazarene - Congregational Federation - Council of African & Caribbean Churches UK - Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion
Fellowship of Churches of Christ - Free Church of England - Free Methodist Church - Independent Methodist Churches - Methodist Church - Moravian Church
New Testament Assembly - New Testament Church of God - Old Baptist Union - Presbyterian Church of Wales - Salvation Army - Union of Welsh Independents
United Reformed Church - Wesleyan Reform Union



Serving the Free Churches in partnership with Churches Together in England

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Coming from a congregationally ordered body Michael believes it to be one of the gifts God has given to the world wide church. In this regard he believes that the collection of churches that is represented as the Free Churches Group has a significant contribution to make in the wider ecumenical scene, and more importantly within our communities which should be encouraged and celebrated.

Michael has been married to Rose for some 32 years. They have three children and one grandchild. Michael and Rose are both Beaver Scout Leaders, running a colony of 30 young boys in their local village. These relationships and local commitments together with a life long support as a 'season ticket' holder of Coventry City Football club keep Michael's feet very firmly rooted in the realities of life.

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