

CONTENTS

*Those parts of the Report on which decisions have to be taken are printed on **white** paper. Material provided for information is printed on **yellow** paper.*

Members of the Joint Committee	Page 2
Preface	4
Introduction to the Proposals (this explains the thinking behind the Committee's Proposals and indicates ways in which they might be implemented)	6
The Proposals for Unification (these define the procedures and conditions for unification)	17
Schedule of Amendments to the Basis of Union and The Structure of the United Reformed Church (these are the changes which would be made so that unification might take place)	21
The Basis of Union and The Structure of the United Reformed Church, as amended by the Scheduled Amendments (this shows what the complete Basis and Structure as amended would look like)	26
Proposed Parliamentary Bill (this contains the legal changes necessary for unification)	47
Appendices containing supporting information:	
1. How the United Reformed Church works	65
2. Financial Arrangements in the United Reformed Church	71
3. Financial and Administrative Implications of Unification for Churches of Christ	73

PREFACE

After fifteen lengthy meetings during a period of three and a half years the Joint Committee now presents to the United Reformed Church and Churches of Christ the result of its deliberations. Accompanying the process of committee discussion two substantial interim reports have been considered by the assemblies, and comments have been received from synods, district councils and meetings, and local congregations of the two Churches. Our final proposals have taken fully into account the views expressed and the questions raised within these many areas of discussion. While this has not made our task simpler it has certainly made it a richer and often a more exciting undertaking, and we express our indebtedness to all who have thus participated in this corporate endeavour to discover the way forward.

As we now present proposals which call for decisive action one way or the other, it is well to recall the kind of initiative which led to the search for union between our two Churches. It is now more than ten years since Churches of Christ accepted an invitation to send observers to the Joint Committee which had been entrusted with the task of formulating a basis of union between Congregationalists and Presbyterians. This observer relationship became a fruitful part of the process which led to the inauguration of the United Reformed Church. Shortly before this inauguration the Annual Conference of Churches of Christ authorised its Central Council "to approach the United Reformed Church with a view to initiating discussions which we hope may lead to our union with them in one Church". At its first Assembly in 1972 the URC warmly responded to this request and authorised the creation of this Joint Committee.

These events were part of an experience in which the call to Christian unity was felt to be imperative in its demands and exciting in its promises. The jubilation accompanying the achievement of union between Congregationalists and Presbyterians sprang from something more than a superficial emotion. Something had been 'given' beyond our contriving and this was also evident in the wealth of goodwill and generous hopefulness of other Churches as they reacted to the event. Not least important - and part of the confidence in which the union was launched - was the URC's recognition that it would fail in its own calling if its 'open-ended' character did not make possible further steps towards the fuller unity of Christ's people. Admittedly, the proposed union of the URC and Churches of Christ is in some respects only a small step in this direction. But in itself it is the outcome of a long process of growth in understanding and in our common apprehension of the fullness of the Gospel and the wholeness of the Church of Jesus Christ. Further, in the issues it has raised, especially those which have prolonged the negotiations for a year beyond our original hope, it has become clear that agreement between our two Churches on Baptism and Ministry may constitute a creative contribution to the world-wide quest for the right expression of that unity which is Christ's will for his Church.

In reaching the forthcoming moment of decision the URC and Churches of Christ will of necessity look searchingly at the details of our proposals. Nevertheless, especially in view of the many discussions which now lie behind

this Report, the Joint Committee earnestly hopes that the vision in which this endeavour was initiated and the high promise in which it began will be constantly renewed amongst us as we move towards actions which must have consequences far more than parochial - except in the sense that the world is our parish and the Church universal our home.

As members of the Joint Committee we express to both negotiating Churches our sense of the privilege entrusted to us in this three-year task. We give thanks for the further and most moving experience of our given unity in Christ which has accompanied our deliberations; and we pray that the outcome of our work may be to the glory and praise of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

NORMAN GOODALL
WILLIAM G. BAKER
T. C. CHEESBROUGH
MARTIN H. CRESSEY
J. E. FRANCIS
WILFRED GEORGESON
JAMES GRAY
DOROTHY HAVERGAL SHAW
JOHN HUXTABLE
ARTHUR MACARTHUR
PHILIP MORGAN
BRIAN PRATT
KENNETH SLACK
DAVID M. THOMPSON

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPOSALS

1. The main part of this Report consists of the Proposals for the Unification of Churches of Christ and the United Reformed Church, together with a Schedule of the Amendments to the Basis of Union and the Structure of the United Reformed Church which would be made so that the unification might take place. These Proposals together with the Scheduled Amendments will be voted on by the two Churches according to the procedures described in the Proposals. The sanction of Parliament, so far as that is necessary for the implementation of the unification, will be sought, and a draft of the proposed Parliamentary Bill is annexed to the Proposals. The details of this concerning trusts are basically the same as those in the United Reformed Church Act of 1972.

2. Some of the Scheduled Amendments remove purely historical references to Congregationalists and Presbyterians, rather than add new references to Churches of Christ. [See paragraphs 7(7), (8), (24) and (26).] In paragraph 7(18) reference has been added to a classic statement of the position held by Churches of Christ, and this involves a consequential amendment to Schedule D. The rest of this Introduction explains how and why the Joint Committee has revised its proposals on Baptism and Ministry in the light of the comments received on its Reports for 1974 and 1975. Finally, there are Appendices containing information on the financial, administrative and other effects of the union upon Churches of Christ.

Baptism

3. In 1975, even more than in 1974, the comments received by the Joint Committee concentrated on the subject of Baptism. Some even doubted whether agreement had been reached on the doctrine of Baptism at all, and so the Committee takes this opportunity of repeating what was said in its Report for 1974. The Committee's proposals are based upon three shared convictions about baptism:

a) Baptism is first and foremost a proclamation of God's gracious act of redemption in Christ. God's action is primary. The basis for baptism is thus the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism signifies dying to sin and being raised to new life; it marks a union with Christ in faith; and in it is promised the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. In each baptism God's continuing work of reconciliation is proclaimed.

b) Baptism also requires the response of faith in God's gracious action. It is administered by and within the Church, which is the community of faith. When a believer is baptized, he is required to make a personal confession of faith and repentance. When an infant is baptized, his parents are required to confess their faith and commitment to the vocation of Christian parenthood; and admission to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the Church depends upon a personal confession of faith at a later date. In both believer's baptism and infant baptism the Church declares its faith.

c) Baptism has to be understood in the context of the Church - the Body of Christ. It is always more than an individual act; it is an act of the Church. It is the sacrament of entry into the Church and its corporate

ministry, and as such it is a once-for-all event in the life of the Christian. Within the Church the baptized person is nurtured and equipped for the service of Christ: this is as true of the believer as it is of the infant, for the process continues throughout life. At each baptism the congregation renews their own commitment to Christ. (1974 Report, pp. 7-8.)

4. The major topic of comment, however, was the vexed question of "rebaptism". It has become clear from URC comments that any suggestion which may be interpreted as rebaptism is unacceptable to a significant proportion of that Church: it is also clear from Churches of Christ comments that much more needs to be said about the way in which a personal confession of faith in Christ can be an occasion of celebration in the Church. The Committee considers that the best approach to the matter is to set out the present position of the two Churches, and to indicate similarities and differences.

5. Both Churches administer believer's baptism on profession of faith to those who are converted to Christianity from a non-Christian background.

6. The first difference occurs in the treatment of those who come from a Christian background. In the URC, children of church members are baptized as infants (if their parents wish it), and their parents confess their faith and promise to bring up their children so that they may in due time make their own confession of faith in Christ. The ground for this is that baptism as a means of grace makes "explicit . . . what God has accomplished in Christ for the whole creation and for all mankind" and that this grace is at work in the life of a Christian from the beginning of a child's life. Such children truly enter the Church and the Church also accepts responsibility for their nurture in the faith. This membership is fulfilled when they make their own confession of faith and are admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership. Personal faith is thus complementary to baptism.

7. In Churches of Christ, children of church members are brought to a Service of Thanksgiving, when their parents confess their faith and promise to bring up their children so that they may in due time make their own confession of faith in Christ and be baptized. The Church accepts responsibility for their nurture in the faith. Baptism takes place when the person is ready to make a confession of faith. This one rite of initiation, including a personal confession of faith and baptism in water, admits to membership of the Church. The ground for this is that in the new covenant the spiritual relationship of faith in Christ is held to have replaced the hereditary relationship which made a Jewish child a member of the People of God. God waits for each person to accept his grace. Personal faith is thus a prerequisite of baptism.

8. Clearly in both Churches the process of spiritual growth in the Christian community is very similar: the difference lies in the point at which the act of baptism is thought to be appropriate. Moreover, both Churches believe that baptism speaks primarily of God's grace rather than man's faith. The URC believes that to practise infant baptism as well as believer's baptism speaks more clearly of this than to practise believer's baptism only, fearing an over-

emphasis on man's response. Churches of Christ believe that the practice of infant baptism is liable to the opposite peril, that of under-emphasising the significance of man's faith. Both Churches believe that admission to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership should take place after a process involving baptism and confession of faith.

9. The Committee feels that the differences of view between the two Churches derive from a different estimate of what is likely to have happened in the early Church in the period immediately after that of which the New Testament speaks - the period when second-generation Christians began to make up a significant proportion of the Christian community. They reflect different emphases within the range of meaning which is attached to baptism in the New Testament. The Committee believes that the division in the Church by which different emphases have been held in separation from others has been harmful to a full understanding of the New Testament doctrine of baptism: this is why it proposes a union in which different convictions will be held, but also shared. Christians are committed to a common pilgrimage, and this means helping each other along the way, rather than accusing each other of travelling in opposite directions.

10. The Committee has been helped in its latest consideration of these questions by the Second Report of the Churches' Unity Commission, *Visible Unity: Ten Propositions*. In the notes which follow Proposition 5 on Initiation, the following seems to be particularly relevant to the present negotiations:

"Those who focus the initiatory process in a total rite administered at one point in time and those who embody its significant elements by way of a temporal 'division of the total rite' would then be recognising that, in either case, the result was membership of the Church of God. Each tradition stresses the importance of instruction, whether before Believer's Baptism or in preparation for Confirmation, or its equivalent rite. On such understandings movement from one covenanting Church to another, though properly requiring appropriate admission to fresh rights and responsibilities, would not involve any supplementing of the 'initiation' already fully received."

Although in the context of the Commission's aims this is intended to make possible a closer relationship between covenanting Churches - a relationship short of organic union - the Committee believes it provides a theological framework within which the differences about baptism in these negotiations may be resolved.

11. Difficulties in the present discussions have arisen over those people who are neither new converts, nor children of church members. One group consists of those who wish to transfer their membership from other Churches. The URC has always admitted such persons by transfer. Churches of Christ used to require that anyone who had not been baptized as a believer should be so baptized before his membership could be transferred: but in recent years an increasing number of churches have adopted what is called 'ecumenical membership', whereby anyone in good standing with his own Church may be received by transfer, regardless of whether he has been baptized as a believer. The effect of the proposed union would be that all

uniting Churches of Christ would act in future in the way that those which have adopted ecumenical membership act now.

12. A second group consists of people who were baptized as infants but who have had no Christian upbringing, or alternatively have drifted away from the Church without ever being confirmed or admitted to membership. These people may become involved in a local church through its youth group or women's meeting, and decide that they wish to join. The URC, recognising their infant baptism, has admitted such people upon profession of faith. Churches of Christ, not recognising infant baptism, have baptized them upon profession of faith. The Committee's proposal here is that in future such people be received into membership upon profession of faith.

13. Yet a third group consists of those who change their conviction about the proper practice of baptism. A pastoral question arises when this change of conviction leads to a request for believer's baptism from someone who has received infant baptism. In the Churches which came together in the URC there were instances of such persons going to a Baptist church to be baptized, but continuing their membership in their old congregation. Churches of Christ have never hesitated to baptize such persons, but usually it has been insisted that they take up membership in the congregation where they were baptized. Churches of Christ ministers have generally been reluctant to conduct baptisms for those who do not wish to take up membership. It was this kind of case which paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Committee's Report for 1975 was designed to cover.

14. Hitherto, Churches of Christ practice has been entirely consistent: they believed that baptism was essential for membership; they did not believe that infant baptism was baptism in the New Testament sense; therefore believer's baptism was essential for membership. The question of 'rebaptism', according to the understanding of Churches of Christ, did not arise. But a new situation is created when a believer-baptist Church like Churches of Christ recognises infant baptism, as is envisaged in the present proposals. The old practice then takes on a new significance; and if previous Churches of Christ practice continues unchanged, it is bound to be seen to strike at the integrity of infant baptism, however charitably it is intended and however carefully it is put. Furthermore in many cases, whilst the rite might have the outward form of believer's baptism, it would not be the baptism of one who was expressing his belief in Christ for the first time. It would be more of an act of personal witness, and this is not the primary purpose of baptism, even the baptism of believers.

15. In the light of all these considerations the Committee proposes that any suggestion of a baptismal rite for those who have already received infant baptism be dropped. But it would not be sufficient simply to deny baptism in such cases. There would need to be some pastoral and public recognition of the need of such a person, which is primarily the assurance of the grace and forgiveness of God, but also the provision of an opportunity for him to express his own faith in and commitment to Christ. This is the context for the Committee's proposals in the next two paragraphs.

16. The Committee believes that the life and witness of the Church would

be enhanced if the importance of the service of Confirmation and Admission to the Full Privileges and Responsibilities of Church Membership was more fully recognised. This service should be significant both for the individual and the church in affording an opportunity for a public confession of faith. Its liturgical form should reflect its theological significance as the essential complement of infant baptism. It should therefore be part of the main Sunday worship and preferably set in the context of the Communion Service so that First Communion might follow.

17. The Committee also believes that opportunities should be made for church members to renew their baptismal vows on solemn occasions in the life of the Church. Easter has been a traditional time for this in the Church of England, whilst the Methodist Covenant Service at New Year has performed a similar function there. From time to time congregations have done this after special missions, or occasionally at the centenary of the original church covenant. It would be entirely appropriate at a baptismal service to invite the congregation to renew their own baptismal vows, though the occasions should not become so frequent as to reduce their significance, or to overlap with the different function performed by the Communion Service. But the Committee makes the suggestion because it believes that it would meet a real need in some places.

18. To sum up: the Committee sees baptism in the context of the process of Christian initiation. Both Churches have a similar process, but they practise baptism at different points in that process. The Committee proposes that both practices should continue in the united Church. Nothing should be done in conformity with one practice that casts doubt on the integrity of the other. In all cases baptism, and the process of initiation, are but the beginning of life on the Christian way. Along that way there is value in reminding ourselves of the commitment with which we began. It is the Committee's hope that in a united Church new understandings would become possible which are hindered by our present separation.

19. The foregoing consideration of Baptism has led the Committee to propose a revision of paragraph 7(14) of the present URC Basis of Union (see page 21). A few small verbal alterations have been made and the paragraphs have been slightly rearranged, but the main changes take the form of additions to the earlier text. Baptism has been set in the context of the total process of Christian initiation. Both patterns of Christian initiation - infant baptism followed by a later profession of faith, and believer's baptism upon profession of faith - are recognised by the Church, and both forms of baptism are to be made available in the life of every worshipping congregation. An explicit reference to the profession of faith by the parent(s) of an infant being baptized has been inserted as a reminder that baptism always takes place in the context of faith. A reference has been inserted to the significance of the profession of faith to be made prior to baptism by a believer or at an age of responsibility by one baptized in infancy. The substance of what was proposed as a footnote in the 1974 Report has now been brought into the main text in a revised form. It indicates that the Church includes within its membership persons with differing convictions about the form of baptism and provides for the pastoral reconciliation of any personal conflict of

conscience which may arise. It also provides that no one shall be required to administer a form or mode of baptism to which he has a conscientious objection, and that the form or mode of baptism to be used in any instance shall not be one to which conscientious objection is taken by the person seeking baptism or by the parent(s) requesting baptism for an infant. The footnote now refers to the whole of paragraph 9(1) so as to give some idea of what the privileges and responsibilities of membership are.

Ministry

20. The Joint Committee has also considered the comments made on its proposals for Ministry in the Reports of 1974 and 1975. It will be remembered that the Committee considered the place of the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the life of the Church with special reference to presidency at the Lord's Supper. It may be helpful to repeat the convictions which emerged in the Committee's thinking:

a) The Committee believes it to be essential that every local church should have the fullest opportunity to celebrate the Holy Communion. The fact that Churches of Christ have celebrated the sacrament every Sunday obviously makes a far higher demand for ministry at this point. It may further be expected that the witness borne within any united Church to the value of a weekly celebration by former Churches of Christ may lead to its extension.

b) It is highly desirable that the president at the communion should be chosen by the Church for that office and so set apart. Here the Church is understood in a more than local sense.

c) It is more important that the president at the communion should be pastorally related to the church than that a 'qualified' person should be constantly brought in from outside that fellowship. (The Committee does not, of course, mean by this that an 'outside' minister should never preside at the communion.) (1974 Report, pp. 12-13.)

These convictions led the Committee to propose a twofold form of the ministry of Word and Sacraments under the titles of 'general minister' and 'local presbyter'.

21. The original proposals led to some misunderstandings, and these may have been compounded by the titles proposed. The Committee repeats the assurance made in 1975 that its proposals would not require that any full-time minister be disturbed in his present ministry, nor be necessarily transferred to a ministry with a group of churches. The Committee also now proposes that the two forms of ministry should be known by the titles of 'minister' (as at present) and 'auxiliary minister'. The title of 'non-stipendiary minister' was seriously considered, but felt to be too cumbersome for ordinary usage.

22. Some scepticism has been expressed within the URC as to whether people with full-time jobs will come forward for the auxiliary ministry, and whether such people could ever be available for ministerial duties on more than an occasional basis. Congregational expectations and denominational tradition obviously affect this. But the experience of Churches of Christ has been that many people (and not only the self-employed and the retired) have

been ready to undertake such a ministry and to make themselves available. Another worry within the URC has been that the auxiliary ministry will become a kind of second-class ministry and it has been compared with the List B category in the former Congregational Union. But when the history of the List B ministers was explained to the Committee it became clear that these were originally unordained, full-time and in sole pastoral charge: by contrast the auxiliary ministers envisaged by the Committee will be ordained, part-time and normally without sole pastoral charge.

23. Concern was expressed within Churches of Christ about ensuring the provision of Presidents for the weekly celebration of Holy Communion while the auxiliary ministry was being developed. The Committee has therefore proposed a transitional arrangement by including a footnote to paragraph 7(25) of the Basis of Union, which permits those in Churches of Christ authorised to preside at baptismal and communion services at the date of unification to continue to do so for such period as shall be determined by the District Council.

24. In several places there was a request for more information about what would be expected of auxiliary ministers. The Committee feels that this can best be answered by referring first to the collegiate pattern of ministry as it has developed within Churches of Christ. Here it has been normal practice to have in each congregation several elders ordained to a ministry of Word and Sacraments, regardless of whether a minister was available to serve that congregation. Together the minister and elders provide preaching, presidency at the weekly communion service and pastoral care. The minister is likely to do most of the preaching, assisted from time to time by the elders; and the minister and elders share the presidency and pastoral care between them. When no minister is available, the group of elders provide the ministry required, no one person being expected to fulfil every aspect of the ministry, but the whole group acting as a college of ministers. A plurality of ministers has thus been a matter of principle in Churches of Christ and not merely an expedient to overcome a shortage of full-time ministers. This form of ministry has proved of great value in the history of Churches of Christ and is a contribution from their experience to be made to a united Church.

25. The ways in which auxiliary ministers would be used in the united Church would vary according to the situation. One pattern of ministry in which they could serve would be that traditionally practised by Churches of Christ. Other patterns could be developed: where a number of smaller churches were grouped together, there could be a team consisting of one or two full-time ministers and several auxiliary ministers, who between them would provide the necessary ministry for all the churches in the group. Again, where there was one strong congregation with a minister and several weaker ones without ministers in an area, auxiliary ministers based on the strong congregation could share its ministry with the minister, so that he could be free to give essential service to the weaker congregations. In such ways the auxiliary ministry can be used to fulfil the requirements of paragraph 7(25)(a) of the Basis of Union.

26. This diversity makes it impossible to specify a single pattern for the

duties of an auxiliary minister. A person's availability would determine what he or she could do: some might be available to officiate at weekday services, such as weddings and funerals; others would only be available for Sunday services. Some would be available every week; others regularly, but not so frequently. There would be a similar flexibility over training. The General Assembly would determine standards of training; the Ministerial Training Committee would apply these standards in the light of the experience and qualifications of each candidate. Courses of training would need to provide a basic equipment for the practical tasks of leading worship, preaching or pastoral care by building on the particular gifts already possessed by the candidate: whilst allowing full opportunity to the candidate to broaden his or her theological interests, they would need to avoid becoming too exclusively academic in emphasis. The value of a collegiate ministry will lie in the sharing of different kinds of experience.

27. Who would become auxiliary ministers? The ordained elders in Churches of Christ already exercise a ministry of Word and Sacraments, to which they have been ordained, and so the Committee proposes that they should be given the opportunity to choose to become auxiliary ministers at the time of union. They could then be inducted to their ministry as soon as possible after union. They would also be offered the opportunity of suitable further training. Those who did not choose to become auxiliary ministers would continue as elders in the URC sense.

28. Others from both traditions will be able to offer themselves for this ministry under rules to be laid down by the General Assembly. To avoid too long a delay between union and the ordination of new auxiliary ministers, the Committee has set up a working party to consider the implementation of the proposal in more detail. This working party, which will be in touch with those responsible for overseeing ministerial training in both Churches, will give special attention to the kind of training expected and related questions. In this way it is hoped that draft rules for auxiliary ministers might be available for consideration when union takes place.

29. Some lay preachers might also wish to offer themselves for the auxiliary ministry, but the Committee does not envisage that auxiliary ministers will replace lay preachers or make them redundant. Those lay preachers who wished to become auxiliary ministers would have to recognise that this ministry necessarily included pastoral responsibility in a local church. They would be ordained to this ministry, after any further preparation or training decided upon by the Synod in accordance with the general rules for the training of auxiliary ministers: in some cases the Synod might judge that no further preparation or training was needed.

30. The position of registered local pastors is more complex, because of the varied circumstances in which they work. Some give part-time, non-stipendiary service and thus exercise a ministry very much like that which the Committee envisages for the auxiliary minister: others give fuller service which is more like that of the full-time ministry. The Committee's working party is to consider the relationship of registered local pastors to the full-time ministry and to the auxiliary ministry. But the act of unification will not

adversely affect the existing rights of registered local pastors, nor will they be disturbed in their present ministry.

31. No congregation will be required to have auxiliary ministers and not every congregation will see the need for such. It is likely, however, that as congregations may increasingly be grouped together for ministry, auxiliary ministers will be needed. Where the Lord's Supper is frequently observed a similar need will be found. Experience of a collegiate approach to ministry may commend itself to wider acceptance with its possibilities of diversity and flexibility in pattern to suit a variety of situations. The Committee's proposals therefore are not an attempt to patch together two differing traditions of ministry, but rather to learn from both in such a way that the values of each may be retained, and a creative relationship to the life of the Church provided for those whose vocation to ministry does not separate them from 'secular' tasks.

32. To sum up: the Committee envisages a ministry of Word and Sacraments shared by *ministers*, who would be full-time and stipendiary like those in the two Churches at present, and *auxiliary ministers*, ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacraments while remaining employed in secular life. They would receive appropriate training and be fully recognised and clearly authorised by the Church. The use of the word 'auxiliary' indicates the necessary distinction between the two types of minister, whilst retaining the conviction that both share one ministry. The minister will be available to the Church full-time whilst the auxiliary minister will only be available as other commitments allow: the help (*auxilium*) given by the auxiliary minister is offered to the whole Church and not just as assistance to full-time ministers.

33. The Committee suggests that the procedures for the recruitment, appointment and service of auxiliary ministers might be as follows:

a) *Vocation*: vocation to the auxiliary ministry could be discerned either by a sense of inward call (as has been usual with the full-time ministry) or it could be recognised by other members of the local church who would encourage its growth and expression (as has been usual with the eldership). In either case the local church and the District Council would need to test this vocation: they would have to be satisfied that the candidate displayed qualities and potentialities of spiritual insight and leadership, and the capacity so to benefit from an appropriate course of training as to exercise an effective ministry.

b) *Training*: when such a call had received the confirmation of the District Council and Synod, candidates would be required to take a course of preparation and training appropriate to their needs. Various courses of training would be available. The precise nature and amount of such preparation and training would depend on the experience and qualifications each candidate already possessed and upon the nature of the work envisaged for auxiliary ministers. Standards of training would be determined by the General Assembly, and applied by the Ministerial Training Committee in the light of the experience and qualifications of each candidate.

c) *Ordination*: having satisfactorily completed this training, the

candidate would be ordained by the District Council within the local church which had called him or her to its service. The names of auxiliary ministers would be added to the Roll of Ministers as a new category.

d) *Availability*: auxiliary ministers, whilst appointed and inducted to serve in a particular local church or group of churches, would be free (if available) to give ministerial service elsewhere when their services were sought. When such auxiliary ministers moved to a new area, they would be available for appointment there.

e) *Representation*: auxiliary ministers would in all cases be members of and share in the responsibilities of the Elders' Meeting of the church in which they served, and would carry out their duties in consultation with that body. They would be eligible for membership of the District Council (and therefore of Synod), but it would be for each District Council to determine the total number of auxiliary ministers in its membership in consultation with the Synod. This is because variations in the use made of auxiliary ministers in different places might lead either to the disproportionate representation of particular congregations on the District Council or to a disproportionate number of ministers sitting on the Council, or both. Auxiliary ministers should be fully represented in the councils of the Church, but should not swamp them. The provisions for representation can be specified in more detail in the light of experience.

f) *Transfer to the full-time ministry*: should auxiliary ministers wish at some stage to transfer to the full-time ministry, they would be subject to the normal processes in District Council and Synod; and their assessment and further training would be under the care of the Ministerial Training Committee. On completion of such training and call to a full-time ministry, they would be inducted to it and not ordained, since their authority to minister would not be of a new character.

g) *Transfer from the full-time ministry*: full-time ministers whose place and form of service become dependent upon an agency not under the discipline of the General Assembly would be released from the responsibilities of the full-time ministry, except where the General Assembly agreed either for specific categories or individuals to their continued recognition as full-time ministers. They would retain their standing in the ministry as auxiliary ministers, and in that capacity would be available for such service as in their circumstances may be desirable.*

34. The *eldership* in the form now exercised in the URC (see paragraph 7(22) of the Basis of Union) as an office of counsel and pastoral care would remain. Elders in Churches of Christ who did not become auxiliary ministers would become elders in the URC sense. Since the functions of deacons in

*The position of any ministers ordained under the provisions made by the 1973 Assembly of the URC for the ordination of those who had completed the non-collegiate examinations but had not yet been called because of the then operative rule that only those who could render full-time service could be ordained, is not affected by the provisions for those who move from the full-time ministry into the auxiliary ministry.

Churches of Christ are similar to those exercised by elders in the URC, it is proposed that serving deacons in Churches of Christ should serve on the Elders' Meeting for such period as may be determined by the Church Meeting.

35. The Committee's proposals on Ministry have required an expansion of Paragraph 7(21) of the Basis of Union (see page 22). New paragraphs have been added defining the auxiliary ministry, indicating the general nature of the training required for the two forms of the one ministry, and also providing for movement between one form of the ministry and the other. A footnote provides for ordained elders of Churches of Christ to choose at the date of unification whether to become auxiliary ministers or to remain as elders in the URC sense. Provision has been made in the footnote to paragraph 7(22) for Churches of Christ elders who do not choose to serve as auxiliary ministers and Churches of Christ deacons to serve on the Elders' Meeting. A new footnote has been added to paragraph 7(25) to permit District Councils to continue the authorisation of those in Churches of Christ authorised to preside at baptismal and communion services at the date of unification. References to auxiliary ministers have also been inserted at various points in the Structure of the URC (paragraph 9), where it was felt particularly desirable to call attention to their inclusion. Generally, however, references to "ministers" and "ministry of the Word and Sacraments" should be taken to include reference to "auxiliary ministers" and "the auxiliary ministry" except where otherwise stated.

36. The Committee's proposals on ministry are thus intended to do justice to the insights about ministry in the two traditions to be united. But they are also intended to provide an element of flexibility which is surely necessary at a time when patterns of ministry are bound to change. The proposals for an auxiliary ministry are not essentially different from what has been considered and in some cases practised in England, Scotland, North India and New Zealand, and the Committee believes that other Communion within the United Kingdom might be interested to follow a similar pattern.

PROPOSALS FOR UNIFICATION

The Committee for Negotiations whose members were appointed by the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church and by the Annual Conference of Churches of Christ submits the following proposals for the unification of the United Reformed Church and Churches of Christ.

Definition

1. These Proposals
 - (a) define the procedures by means of which and the terms and conditions upon which the United Reformed Church (Congregational-Presbyterian) in England and Wales ("the U.R.C") and the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland ("the Association") would be unified and
 - (b) declare in the Schedule to these Proposals the amendments ("the scheduled amendments") which would be made to the existing Basis of Union ("the Basis") and the Structure of the U.R.C. ("the Structure") if such unification were to take place.

Procedures and Conditions for Unification

2. Provided that the procedures and conditions defined and declared in paragraph 3 of these Proposals are duly performed and observed the passing of the Unifying Declaration as therein defined shall operate on the date that such Unifying Declaration is passed ("the date of unification")

- (a) to bring into immediate effect the scheduled amendments

and

- (b) to effect the immediate dissolutions and other consequences defined and declared in paragraph 4 of these Proposals

all of which taking place on the date of unification are in these Proposals referred to as "the unification".

3. The unification shall take effect provided that

- (a) the General Assembly of the U.R.C. ("the General Assembly") at its meeting in 1977 following due reference to District Councils and Provincial Synods of the U.R.C. by resolution agrees and at its meeting in 1978 by resolution ratifies (in each case in accordance with the processes for amendment contained in the Scheme of Union ("the Scheme of Union") upon which the U.R.C. was formed on the 5th day of October 1972) the scheduled amendments as amendments to the Basis and the Structure to become effective on the date of unification,

and

- (b) these Proposals are accepted by resolutions for unification as hereinafter defined passed on or after the 1st day of January 1977 but before the 1st day of December 1977 by not less than two-thirds of the total number of the churches ("the churches of Christ") whose names at the latter date are on the list of churches compiled in accordance with rules 6 to 9 of the Rules and Regulations of the Annual Conference whose combined membership as shown in the last edition of the Year Book to be

published before that date by the Association ("the relevant Year Book") is not less than three-fourths of the total membership as shown in the same Year Book of all churches whose names are on such list.

For the purpose of these Proposals:

(i) a resolution for unification shall mean a resolution to approve these Proposals passed on or after the 1st day of January 1977 but before the 1st day of December 1977, by not less than three-fourths of the members present and voting at a meeting of any one of the churches of Christ of which due notice has been given to the members of that church provided that written notice of the passing of such resolution has been given by any person specified in the resolution addressed to the General Secretary of the Association by the 15th day of December 1977.

(ii) a uniting church of Christ shall mean a church of Christ which has passed a resolution for unification of which such written notice has been given and a non-uniting church of Christ shall mean one which has not.

and

(c) the Annual Conference at its meeting in 1978 by resolution passed by the votes of not less than three-fourths of the members of the Annual Conference present and voting approves the acceptance of these Proposals

and

(d) the General Assembly and the Annual Conference resolve to meet together on a date to be specified or provided for in each such resolution as a unifying assembly ("the unifying assembly").

and

(e) the unifying assembly being satisfied that all necessary action has been taken for the giving of legal effect to such parts of these Proposals as require legal sanction by resolution passed by the members of the General Assembly and of the Annual Conference first voting separately and then as one body declares that the U.R.C., the Association and the uniting churches of Christ are thereby unified in the one Church (hereafter to be known as The United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom) but continuing to be constituted upon the terms and provisions contained in the Scheme of Union with the Basis and the Structure amended in accordance with the scheduled amendments and with the amalgamation of membership and ministry provided for in these Proposals.

Effects upon the Churches of Christ of the Passing of the Unifying Declaration

4. The sanction of Parliament so far as that is necessary for the implementation of these consequences will be sought. A draft of the proposed Parliamentary Bill ("the draft Bill") is annexed hereto and is to be found on pages 47 to 64.

(a) The Unifying Declaration will effect the dissolution of the bodies listed in Section 5(2) of the draft Bill and the extinguishment of all offices held in connection with any of them.

(b) Every member of a uniting church of Christ shall on the date of unification become a member of the U.R.C. and the membership roll of

- a uniting church of Christ shall on that date be deemed to be the membership roll of a local church of the U.R.C. (each such local church being referred to in these Proposals as "the corresponding local church").
- (c) All property belonging to a uniting church of Christ will belong to the corresponding local church. Existing Trust Deeds of places of worship manses and other residences will take effect as if their operative provisions were replaced by provisions contained in the appropriate part of the Second Schedule of the draft Bill (which are identical to those contained in the Second Schedule of the United Reformed Church Act, 1972).
 - (d) Every church of Christ which does not pass a resolution for unification will continue in being and retain its property.
 - (e) All other property of the Association or held for its purposes or for purposes of churches of Christ will be held for purposes which include purposes of the U.R.C. Following the date of unification, all such property will be allocated by the Charity Commissioners between the U.R.C. and those churches of Christ which do not pass a resolution for unification.
 - (f) Trustee powers which prior to unification are vested in a body which is then dissolved will be exercised by such persons as the General Assembly appoint.
 - (g) Every full-time Minister of a uniting church of Christ shall from the date of unification continue as Minister of the corresponding local church his rights and obligations as such Minister being thenceforth governed by or under the provisions of the Scheme of Union. The name of every such full-time Minister shall on that same date be placed on the Roll of Ministers kept by the Clerk to the General Assembly.
 - h) There shall also be placed on such Roll of Ministers
 - (i) the name of every full-time Minister who immediately prior to the date of unification held office in the Association or approved by the Annual Conference and
 - (ii) the name of any person who immediately prior to the date of unification is serving as a full-time Minister of a non-uniting church of Christ and who within six months of the date of unification notifies the Clerk to the General Assembly of his desire to serve as Minister to a local church of the U.R.C. Every such Minister is hereinafter called a "notifying Minister".
 - (i) The U.R.C. shall be under no financial or other liability towards any Minister of a non-uniting church of Christ. The General Assembly shall, however, ensure that every notifying Minister who has resigned his pastorate (whether or not he shall have been required to do so) is given such support and for such period prior to his becoming Minister to a local church of the U.R.C. as the General Assembly in consultation with the Synod of the Province in which such Minister resides may deem appropriate.
 - (j) From the date of unification every retired full-time Minister whose name is on the Roll of Retired Full-time Ministers kept by the General Secretary of the Association shall be deemed to be a Minister Emeritus

of the U.R.C. unless he gives written notice to the General Secretary of the U.R.C. of a contrary wish.

- (k) (i) Every ordained and serving Elder of a uniting church of Christ who elects to serve as an auxiliary Minister and who (not less than two weeks prior to the date of unification) gives written notice to that effect to the General Secretary of the Association shall following the unification be inducted to that office.
- (ii) Every other serving Elder and every serving Deacon of a uniting church of Christ shall from the date of unification serve as an Elder of the corresponding local church for such period as the Church meeting of that local church shall determine.
- (l) Every person who immediately prior to the date of unification is serving as an officer (other than as a Church Secretary) of a uniting church of Christ shall from the date of unification and until the conclusion of the first Church Meeting of the corresponding local church act in relation to the corresponding local church in the like capacity. A Church Secretary shall likewise continue to act, but in that case until a Church Secretary shall have been appointed by the Church Meeting (as defined in the Scheme of Union) of the corresponding local church on the nomination of the Elders Meeting.
- (m) The first Church Meeting of each corresponding local church shall be appointed and summoned in accordance with the usual procedure followed by the uniting church of Christ to which such local church corresponds. The first Church Meeting shall elect or provide for the election of officers of the corresponding local church and of representatives to the wider Councils of the U.R.C.
- (n) The first Church Meeting of each corresponding local church shall also determine the periods of service of the first Elders of that local church and shall arrange for the holding of the first Elders Meeting. At the first Elders Meeting the Elders present shall determine the recommendation to be made to the Church Meeting concerning arrangements for the proper maintenance of buildings and for the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the corresponding local Church and shall also nominate from among their members a Church Secretary for election by the Church Meeting.

SCHEDULE

Schedule of Amendments to the "Basis of Union" and "The Structure of the United Reformed Church" contained in the "Scheme of Union", being the scheme of union approved by resolution of the Assembly of the Congregational Church in England and Wales on the 11th day of May, 1971, and by resolution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England on the same day and upon which the United Reformed Church was formed on the 5th day of October, 1972.

Para. 7(7) - lines 1 and 2 - "The Congregational Church in England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England humbly recognise" shall be amended to read **"The United Reformed Church humbly recognises"**.

Para. 7(8) - in place of the existing paragraph there shall be substituted **"The United Reformed Church has been formed in obedience to the call to repent of what has been amiss in the past and to be reconciled. It sees its formation and growth as a part of what God is doing to make his people one, and as a united Church will take, wherever possible and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people."**

Para. 7(14) - in place of the existing paragraph there shall be substituted **"The United Reformed Church observes the gospel sacrament of baptism into Christ as a gift of God to his Church, and as an appointed means of grace. Baptism is administered with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It is the sacrament of entry into the Church and is therefore administered once only to any person.**

When the Church observes this sacrament it makes explicit at a particular time and place and for a particular person what God has accomplished in Christ for the whole creation and for all mankind - the forgiveness of sins, the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit and newness of life in the family of God. In this sacrament the Church affirms its faith in the action of God in Jesus Christ; and takes corporate responsibility for those receiving baptism, promising to support and nourish them as it receives them into its fellowship. Baptism may be administered in infancy or at an age of responsibility. Both forms of baptism shall be made available in the life of every worshipping congregation. In either case the sacrament of baptism is a unique part of the total process of Christian initiation. When baptism is administered at an age of responsibility, upon profession of faith, the baptized person at once enters upon the full privileges and responsibilities of membership. When baptism is administered to an infant, upon profession of faith by his parent(s), he is placed under the nurture of the Church that he may be led by the Holy Spirit in due time to make his own profession of faith in Christ as his Saviour and Lord, and enter upon the full privileges and responsibilities of membership. These two patterns of Christian initiation are recognised by the United Reformed Church.

The profession of faith to be made prior to baptism by a believer or at an age of responsibility by one baptized in infancy is indicated in Schedule A.* This profession, and its acceptance by the Church which shares in it, is a necessary part of the process of initiation and whenever possible it should be

made at a celebration of the Lord's Supper.

The United Reformed Church includes within its membership both persons whose conviction it is that baptism can only be appropriately administered to a believer and those whose conviction it is that infant baptism also is in harmony with the mind of Christ. Both convictions are honoured by the Church and both forms of baptism are understood to be used by God in the upbuilding of faith. Should these differences of conviction within the one Church result in personal conflict of conscience it will require to be pastorally reconciled in mutual understanding and charity, and in accordance with the Basis of Union, in the first instance by the Elders' Meeting of the local congregation, and if necessary by the wider councils of the Church. No one shall be required to administer a form or mode of baptism to which he has a conscientious objection, nor shall the form or mode of baptism used in any instance be one to which conscientious objection is taken by the person seeking baptism or by the parent(s) requesting baptism for an infant.

*Admission to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the Church shall be in accordance with paragraphs 9(1) and (2)(vi) of the Structure and with Schedule A."

Para. 7(18) - in place of the last sentence and footnote there shall be substituted "It recognises as its own particular heritage the formulations and declarations of faith which have been valued by Congregationalists, Presbyterians and members of Churches of Christ as stating the gospel and seeking to make its implications clear."

*E.g. among Presbyterians: the Westminster Confession, 1647; A Statement of the Christian Faith, 1956; among Congregationalists: the Savoy Declaration, 1658; A Declaration of Faith, 1967; among Churches of Christ: Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address, 1809.

Para. 7(21) - in place of the existing paragraph there shall be substituted "Some are called to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. After approved preparation and training, on receiving a call they are ordained and inducted to their office. They are commissioned to conduct public worship, to preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, and to give leadership to the Church in its mission to the world.

Within this ministerial calling some offer themselves for ministry at such places and under such conditions of service as are decided under the oversight of the councils of the United Reformed Church; they may be called to be ministers of local churches, or missionaries overseas, or to some special and approved ministry.

Others serve as auxiliary ministers, under the same oversight but continuing in other occupations, earning their livelihood within them, and sharing in all the circumstances of a 'secular' calling.* Auxiliary ministers shall normally serve under the leadership of a full-time minister.

The preparation and training for the full-time ministry shall be of a more extended and developed nature than that for the auxiliary ministry. If auxiliary ministers offer themselves for the full-time ministry, and are recognised as candidates for it, they shall undertake such further preparation and training as is required under rules decided by the General Assembly.

Full-time ministers whose place and form of service become dependent upon an agency not under the discipline of the General Assembly become, for such time as this is the case, auxiliary ministers, except where the General Assembly agrees, either for specific categories or individuals, to their continued recognition as full-time ministers.

* **Ordained elders of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland at the date of unification with the United Reformed Church may choose either to be inducted as auxiliary ministers or to serve as elders as described in paragraph 7(22). Those choosing to serve as auxiliary ministers shall be offered opportunity of suitable further training as outlined above."**

Para. 7(22) - in place of the existing footnote there shall be substituted **"Elders elected for the first time after the formation of the United Reformed Church shall be ordained and inducted to that office. Serving deacons of the Congregational Church in England and Wales and serving elders of the Presbyterian Church of England shall continue to serve on the Elders' Meeting of the local church for such period as shall be determined by the Church Meeting. Serving elders of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland who choose to serve as elders at the date of unification with the United Reformed Church and serving deacons of Churches of Christ at the date of unification shall continue to serve on the Elders' Meeting of the local church for such period as shall be determined by the Church Meeting. Subsequently, all elders shall be eligible for re-election, and those elected shall enter on their office by induction. On re-election, those not previously ordained may, if they so desire, be ordained before induction.**

Elders of the United Reformed Church, or serving deacons of the Congregational Church in England and Wales at the time of union, or serving deacons of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland at the date of unification, on removing to another local church are eligible for election by that church to the Elders' Meeting, and if elected are then inducted.

The ordination and/or induction of elders shall be carried out in the course of public worship by the minister, or one of the ministers, of the local church (or during a pastoral vacancy, the interim moderator) acting with the serving elders (see Schedule B)."

Para. 7(24) - line 1 - the words "either of" shall be deleted.

Para. 7(25) - at the end of the paragraph an asterisk shall be inserted with the following footnote

"*Those in Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland authorised to preside at baptismal and communion services at the date of unification with the United Reformed Church may continue to do so for such period as shall be determined by the District Council. Subsequently, only ordained ministers (including auxiliary ministers) or those authorised under the provisions of this clause shall preside."

Para. 7(26) - in place of the existing paragraph there shall be substituted **"The ordination and induction of ministers (including auxiliary ministers) shall be in accord with Schedules C and D. Appropriate affirmations of faith shall also be made by those entering upon other ministries within the life of the Church. In the United Reformed Church all ministries shall be open to both men and women."**

Schedule A(c) - the words "either Church" shall be amended to read "the uniting Churches".

Schedule D - para. 4 - in place of the existing paragraph there shall be substituted "The United Reformed Church accepts with thanksgiving the witness borne to the Catholic faith by the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and recognises as its own particular heritage the formulations and declarations of faith which have been valued by Congregationalists, Presbyterians and members of Churches of Christ as stating the gospel and seeking to make its implications clear."

Para. 9(1) - line 9 - after the word "minister" there shall be inserted the words "or one of the ministers".

Para. 9(1)(x) to (xiii) - sub-paragraphs (x) to (xiii) shall be renumbered (xi) to (xiv), and a new sub-paragraph (x) shall be inserted as follows
"to consider, always on advice from the Elders' Meeting, any application for recognition as a candidate for the ministry (including the auxiliary ministry) and to transmit it, if approved, to the District Council."

Para. 9(2) - lines 1 and 2 - the words "minister or ministers" shall be amended to read "minister(s) (including auxiliary ministers)".

Para. 9(2) - lines 6 to 8 - in place of the existing third sentence there shall be substituted "The minister, or one of the ministers, or during a pastoral vacancy the interim moderator appointed as hereinafter provided, shall normally preside over the Elders' Meeting."

Para. 9(2)(ix) to (xi) - sub-paragraphs (ix) to (xi) shall be renumbered (x) to (xii), and a new sub-paragraph (ix) shall be inserted as follows
"to consider the suitability of any applicant for recognition as a candidate for the ministry (including the auxiliary ministry) and to advise the Church Meeting about its recommendation to the District Council."

Para. 9(3)(a) - in place of the existing sentence there shall be substituted "All ministers (other than auxiliary ministers), deaconesses and registered local pastors engaged directly in the service of the United Reformed Church within that District."

Para. 9(3) (b) - line 1 - after the word "ministers" there shall be inserted the words "(including auxiliary ministers)".

Para. 9(3)(c) to (f) - sub-paragraphs (c) to (f) shall be relettered (d) to (g), and a new sub-paragraph (c) shall be inserted as follows
"Such auxiliary ministers in the service of the United Reformed Church within that District as the District Council in consultation with the Provincial Synod shall from time to time determine, always with regard to a proper balance between ministerial and lay representation."

Para. 9(3) (iii) - in place of the existing sentence there shall be substituted "to appoint, in consultation with the local church and the Moderator of Synod, from among its members an interim moderator during a pastoral vacancy, such interim moderator normally being a minister or Minister Emeritus, though an auxiliary minister or in exceptional circumstances an elder may be appointed."

Para. 9(3)(v) - in place of the existing sentence there shall be substituted "to consider on the recommendation of local churches applications for recognition as candidates for the ministry (including the auxiliary ministry) and to transmit them, if approved, to the Synod for decision."

Para. 9(4)(a) - in place of the existing sentence there shall be substituted "All ministers (including auxiliary ministers), deaconesses and registered local pastors who shall for the time being be members of District Councils within the Province".

Para. 9(4)(v) - for the word "students" there shall be substituted the word "candidates".

Para. 9(4)(vi) - in place of the existing sentence there shall be substituted "to give oversight to candidates for the ministry (including the auxiliary ministry) and to candidates for any form of full-time service in the Church at home and abroad, and, in the case of candidates for the ministry, determine their eligibility for a call".

Para. 9(4)(xiv) - after the word "ministers" there shall be inserted the words "(including auxiliary ministers)".

Para. 9(5)(g) - in place of the existing sentence there shall be substituted "All former Moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church and all past Chairmen of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, all past Presidents of the Congregational Church, all former Moderators of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and all former Chairmen and Presidents of the Annual Conference of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, provided that such former officers are members of the United Reformed Church."

**THE BASIS OF UNION
AND THE STRUCTURE OF
THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
(as amended by the Scheduled Amendments)**

BASIS OF UNION

7. This clause sets out the Basis of Union.

THE CHURCH AND THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

(1.) There is but one Church of the one God. He called Israel to be his people, and in fulfilment of the purpose then begun he called the Church into being through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(2.) The one Church of the one God is holy, because he has redeemed and consecrated it through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and because there Christ dwells with his people.

(3.) The Church is catholic or universal because Christ calls into it all peoples and because it proclaims the fullness of Christ's gospel to all men.

(4.) The Church is apostolic because Christ continues to entrust it with the gospel and the commission first given to the apostles to proclaim that gospel to all peoples.

(5.) The unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of the Church have been obscured by the failure and weakness which mar the life of the Church.

(6.) Christ's mercy in continuing his call to the Church in all its failure and weakness has taught the Church that its life must ever be renewed and reformed according to the Scriptures, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

(7.) The United Reformed Church humbly recognises that the failure and weakness of the Church have in particular been manifested in division which has made it impossible for Christians fully to know, experience and communicate the life of the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church.

(8.) The United Reformed Church has been formed in obedience to the call to repent of what has been amiss in the past and to be reconciled. It sees its formation and growth as a part of what God is doing to make his people one, and as a united Church will take, wherever possible and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people.

(9.) The United Reformed Church testifies to its faith, and orders its life, according to this Basis of Union, believing it to embody the essential notes of the Church Catholic and Reformed. The United Reformed Church nevertheless reserves its right and declares its readiness at any time to alter, add to, modify or supersede this Basis so that its life may accord more nearly with the mind of Christ.

(10.) The United Reformed Church, believing that it is through the freedom of the Spirit that Jesus Christ holds his people in the fellowship of the One Body, shall uphold the rights of personal conviction. It shall be for

the Church, in safeguarding the substance of the faith and maintaining the unity of the fellowship, to determine when these rights are asserted to the injury of its unity and peace.

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH AND THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

(11.) Within the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church the United Reformed Church acknowledges its responsibility under God:

- to make its life a continual offering of itself and the world to God in adoration and worship through Jesus Christ;
- to receive and express the renewing life of the Holy Spirit in each place and in its total fellowship, and there to declare the reconciling and saving power of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ;
- to live out, in joyful and sacrificial service to all men in all the variety of their physical and spiritual needs, that ministry of caring, forgiving and healing love which Jesus Christ brought to all whom he met;
- to bear witness to the lordship of Christ over the nations in all the variety of their organised life.

THE FAITH OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

(12.) The United Reformed Church confesses the faith of the Church Catholic in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It acknowledges that the life of faith to which it is called is a gift of the Holy Spirit continually received in Word and Sacrament and in the common life of God's people. It acknowledges the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people.

(13.) The United Reformed Church believes that, in the ministry of the Word, through preaching and the study of the Scriptures, God makes known in each age his saving love, his will for his people and his purpose for the world.

(14.) The United Reformed Church observes the gospel sacrament of baptism into Christ as a gift of God to his Church, and as an appointed means of grace. Baptism is administered with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It is the sacrament of entry into the Church and is therefore administered once only to any person.

When the Church observes this sacrament it makes explicit at a particular time and place and for a particular person what God has accomplished in Christ for the whole creation and for all mankind - the forgiveness of sins, the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit and newness of life in the family of God. In this sacrament the Church affirms its faith in the action of God in Jesus Christ; and takes corporate responsibility for those receiving baptism, promising to support and nourish them as it receives them into its fellowship. Baptism may be administered in infancy or at an age of responsibility. Both forms of baptism shall be made available in the life of every worshipping congregation. In either case the sacrament of baptism is a unique part of the total process of Christian initiation. When baptism is administered at an age

of responsibility, upon profession of faith, the baptized person at once enters upon the full privileges and responsibilities of membership. When baptism is administered to an infant, upon profession of faith by his parent(s), he is placed under the nurture of the Church that he may be led by the Holy Spirit in due time to make his own profession of faith in Christ as his Saviour and Lord, and enter upon the full privileges and responsibilities of membership. These two patterns of Christian initiation are recognised by the United Reformed Church.

The profession of faith to be made prior to baptism by a believer or at an age of responsibility by one baptized in infancy is indicated in Schedule A.* This profession, and its acceptance by the Church which shares in it, is a necessary part of the process of initiation and whenever possible it should be made at a celebration of the Lord's Supper.

The United Reformed Church includes within its membership both persons whose conviction it is that baptism can only be appropriately administered to a believer and those whose conviction it is that infant baptism also is in harmony with the mind of Christ. Both convictions are honoured by the Church and both forms of baptism are understood to be used by God in the upbuilding of faith. Should these differences of conviction within the one Church result in personal conflict of conscience it will require to be pastorally reconciled in mutual understanding and charity, and in accordance with the Basis of Union, in the first instance by the Elders' Meeting of the local congregation, and if necessary by the wider councils of the Church. No one shall be required to administer a form or mode of baptism to which he has a conscientious objection, nor shall the form or mode of baptism used in any instance be one to which conscientious objection is taken by the person seeking baptism or by the parent(s) requesting baptism for an infant.

(15.) The United Reformed Church celebrates the gospel sacrament of the Lord's Supper. When in obedience to the Lord's command his people show forth his sacrifice on the cross by the bread broken and the wine outpoured for them to eat and drink, he himself, risen and ascended, is present and gives himself to them for their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. United with him and with the whole Church on earth and in heaven, his people gathered at his table present their sacrifice of thanksgiving and renew the offering of themselves, and rejoice in the promise of his coming in glory.

(16.) The United Reformed Church gives thanks for the common life of the Church, wherein the people of God, being made members one of another, are called to love and serve one another and all men and to grow together in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Participating in the common life of the Church within the local church, they enter into the life of the Church throughout the world. With that whole Church they also share in the life of the Church in all ages and in the Communion of Saints have fellowship with the Church Triumphant.

* Admission to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the Church shall be in accordance with paragraphs 9(1) and (2)(vi) of the Structure and with Schedule A.

(17.) The United Reformed Church at the date of formation confesses its faith, in the words of this statement:—

We believe in the one living and true God, creator, preserver and ruler of all things in heaven and earth, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Him alone we worship and in him we put our trust.

We believe that God, in his infinite love for men, gave his eternal Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who became man, lived on earth in perfect love and obedience, died upon the cross for our sins, rose again from the dead and lives for evermore, saviour, judge and king.

We believe that, by the Holy Spirit, this glorious gospel is made effective so that through faith we receive the forgiveness of sins, newness of life as children of God and strength in this present world to do his will.

We believe in the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church, in heaven and on earth, wherein by the same Spirit, the whole company of believers is made one Body of Christ, to worship God and serve him and all men in his kingdom of righteousness and love.

We rejoice in the gift of eternal life, and believe that, in the fullness of time, God will renew and gather in one all things in Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

(18.) The United Reformed Church, under the authority of Holy Scripture and in corporate responsibility to Jesus Christ its everliving head, acknowledges its duty to be open at all times to the leading of the Holy Spirit and therefore affirms its right to make such new declarations of its faith and for such purposes as may from time to time be required by obedience to the same Spirit.

At the same time the United Reformed Church accepts with thanksgiving the witness borne to the Catholic faith by the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. It recognises as its own particular heritage the formulations and declarations of faith which have been valued by Congregationalists, Presbyterians and members of Churches of Christ as stating the gospel and seeking to make its implications clear.**

MINISTRY IN THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

(19.) The Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry in and through the Church, the whole people of God called and committed to his service and equipped by him for it. This service is given by worship, prayer, proclamation of the gospel and Christian witness; by mutual and outgoing care and responsibility; and by obedient discipleship in the whole of daily life, according to the gifts and opportunities given to each one. The preparation and strengthening of its members for such ministry and discipleship shall always be a major concern of the United Reformed Church.

** E.g. among Presbyterians: the Westminster Confession, 1647; A Statement of the Christian Faith, 1956; among Congregationalists: the Savoy Declaration, 1658; A Declaration of Faith, 1967; among Churches of Christ: Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address, 1809.

(20.) For the equipment of his people for this total ministry the Lord Jesus Christ gives particular gifts for particular ministries and calls some of his servants to exercise them in offices duly recognised within his Church. The United Reformed Church recognises that Christ gives himself to his Church through Word and Sacrament and through the total caring oversight by which his people grow in faith and love, the exercise of which oversight is the special concern of elders and ministers. Those who enter on such ministries commit themselves to them for so long as God wills: the United Reformed Church having solemnly acknowledged their vocation and accepted their commitment shall appoint them to their particular ministry and give them authority to exercise it within the Church, setting them apart with prayer that they shall be given all needful gifts and graces for its fulfilment, which solemn setting apart shall in the case of ministers and elders be termed ordination.

(21.) Some are called to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. After approved preparation and training, on receiving a call they are ordained and inducted to their office. They are commissioned to conduct public worship, to preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, and to give leadership to the Church in its mission to the world.

Within this ministerial calling some offer themselves for ministry at such places and under such conditions of service as are decided under the oversight of the councils of the United Reformed Church; they may be called to be ministers of local churches, or missionaries overseas, or to some special and approved ministry.

Others serve as auxiliary ministers, under the same oversight but continuing in other occupations, earning their livelihood within them, and sharing in all the circumstances of a 'secular' calling.* Auxiliary ministers shall normally serve under the leadership of a full-time minister.

The preparation and training for the full-time ministry shall be of a more extended and developed nature than that for the auxiliary ministry. If auxiliary ministers offer themselves for the full-time ministry, and are recognised as candidates for it, they shall undertake such further preparation and training as is required under rules decided by the General Assembly.

Full-time ministers whose place and form of service become dependent upon an agency not under the discipline of the General Assembly become, for such time as this is the case, auxiliary ministers, except where the General Assembly agrees, either for specific categories or individuals, to their continued recognition as full-time ministers.

(22.) Some are called to be elders. They share with ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the local

* Ordained elders of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland at the date of unification with the United Reformed Church may choose either to be inducted as auxiliary ministers or to serve as elders as described in paragraph 7(22). Those choosing to serve as auxiliary ministers shall be offered opportunity of suitable further training as outlined above.

churches, taking counsel together in the Elders' Meeting for the whole Church and having each a group of members particularly entrusted to his pastoral care. They shall be associated with ministers in all the Councils of the Church. Elders elected by the Church Meeting, are ordained to their office and are inducted to serve for such limited period as the Church which elects them shall determine.†

(23.) In the Presbyterian Church of England some have been ordained to the office of deaconess and appointed to a local church to give instruction in the Christian faith, to exercise pastoral oversight together with the minister and elders, and when invited to do so to conduct public worship and to preach the Word. The United Reformed Church shall receive and recognise both their ministry and the candidature of those in training for the office of deaconess at the time of union.

(24.) Other full and part-time ministries recognised by the uniting Churches at the time of union shall continue to be exercised in the United Reformed Church without further commissioning, subject always to the decisions of the General Assembly. The United Reformed Church shall determine from time to time what other ministries may be required and which of them should be recognised as ministries in the whole Church. It shall decide how those who are to exercise them shall be set apart.

(25.) The worship of the local church is an expression of the worship of the whole people of God. In order that this may be clearly seen, the United Reformed Church shall (a) take steps to ensure that so far as possible ordained ministers of the Word and Sacraments are readily available to every local church; (b) provide for the training of suitable men and women, members of the United Reformed Church, to be accredited by District Councils as lay preachers; (c) make provision through District Councils, in full consultation with the local churches concerned, for the recognition of certain members of the United Reformed Church, normally deaconesses, elders or accredited lay preachers, who may be invited by local churches to preside at baptismal and communion services where pastoral necessity so requires. The pastoral needs of each situation shall be reviewed periodically

† Elders elected for the first time after the formation of the United Reformed Church shall be ordained and inducted to that office. Serving deacons of the Congregational Church in England and Wales and serving elders of the Presbyterian Church of England shall continue to serve on the Elders' Meeting of the local church for such period as shall be determined by the Church Meeting. Serving elders of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland who choose to serve as elders at the date of unification with the United Reformed Church and serving deacons of Churches of Christ at the date of unification shall continue to serve on the Elders' Meeting of the local church for such period as shall be determined by the Church Meeting. Subsequently, all elders shall be eligible for re-election, and those elected shall enter on their office by induction. On re-election, those not previously ordained may, if they so desire, be ordained before induction.

Elders of the United Reformed Church, or serving deacons of the Congregational Church in England and Wales at the time of union, or serving deacons of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland at the date of unification, on removing to another local church are eligible for election by that church to the Elders' Meeting, and if elected are then inducted.

The ordination and/or induction of elders shall be carried out in the course of public worship by the minister, or one of the ministers, of the local church (or during a pastoral vacancy, the interim moderator) acting with the serving elders (see Schedule B).

by the District Council in consultation with the local church. Apart from ordained ministers of the United Reformed Church and of other Churches, only such recognised persons may be invited.**

(26.) The ordination and induction of ministers (including auxiliary ministers) shall be in accord with Schedules C and D. Appropriate affirmations of faith shall also be made by those entering upon other ministries within the life of the Church. In the United Reformed Church all ministries shall be open to both men and women.

** Those in Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland authorised to preside at baptismal and communion services at the date of unification with the United Reformed Church may continue to do so for such period as shall be determined by the District Council. Subsequently, only ordained ministers (including auxiliary ministers) or those authorised under the provisions of this clause shall preside.

SCHEDULE A (See paragraph 7(14) in the Basis of Union)

Affirmation of Faith to be made at admission to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the Church.

It is the responsibility of the minister and Elders' Meeting, before bringing the names of candidates to the Church Meeting, to be assured of the sincerity of their intention. After adequate preparation, and acceptance by the Church Meeting, candidates shall be publicly admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the Church of Jesus Christ and in particular to the membership of the local church.

This act may include the laying on of hands as a sign of the commissioning of those called by God to the service of Jesus Christ. Acceptance of the candidates, as also their acceptance of their commission, shall be signified by the giving and receiving of the right hand of fellowship.

Thereafter they shall be commended to the love and care of their fellow-members.

During the act of admission public profession of faith and of commitment to the Church shall be made—

Either: (a) By question and answer thus:—

Q. Do you confess your faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, taking the Father to be your Father, the Son to be your saviour and Lord, the Spirit to be your helper and guide?

A. I do.

Q. Do you promise, in dependence on God's grace, to be faithful in private and public worship; to live in the fellowship of the Church and to share in its work; and to give and serve, as God enables you, for the advancement of his kingdom throughout the world?

A. I do.

Q. Do you promise, by that same grace, to follow Christ and to seek to do and to bear his will all the days of your life?

A. I do.

Q. And do you trust in his mercy alone to bring you into the fullness of the life of the world to come?

A. I do.

Or: (b) in the form of a declaration such as the following:

I confess my faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, taking the Father to be my Father, the Son to be my saviour and Lord, the Spirit to be my helper and guide.

I promise, in dependence on God's grace, to be faithful in private and public worship; to live in the fellowship of the Church and to share in its work; and to give and serve, as God enables me, for the advancement of his kingdom throughout the world.

I promise, by that same grace, to follow Christ and to seek to do and to bear his will all the days of my life; and

I trust in his mercy alone to bring me into the fullness of the life of the world to come.

Or: (c) in the forms customarily used in the uniting Churches before union.

SCHEDULE B

Affirmations to be made by Elders at Ordination and Induction.

NOTE

The service, which takes place at public worship, shall include a statement regarding the functions of the elders taken from Schedule D and from paragraphs 7(19), (20) and (22) in the Basis of Union.

Afterwards the presiding minister shall say to the elders elect:

In the light of this statement of the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church and concerning the functions of the eldership, the elders-elect are now asked to answer the following questions:

1. Do you confess again your faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
I do.
2. In dependence on God's grace do you reaffirm your trust in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord and your promise to follow him and to seek to do as to bear his will all the days of your life?
I do.
3. Do you believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people?
I do.
4. Do you accept the office of elder of the United Reformed Church in this congregation and do you promise to perform its duties faithfully?
I do.

SCHEDULE C (See paragraph 7(26) in the Basis of Union)

Affirmations to be made by Ministers at Ordination and Induction.

NOTE

The service will also include the reading of the Statement contained in Schedule D, and provision will be made for a statement to be made concerning the circumstances of the call. The minister may also make a personal statement of his own call to that office.

The presiding minister shall say immediately after the reading of the Statement:

A.B., do you undertake to exercise your ministry in conformity with this statement?

I do.

He shall then ask:

1. Do you confess anew your faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
I do.

2. Do you believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people?
I do.
3. Do you believe that Jesus Christ, born into this world, living as a man among men, dying upon the cross, raised from the dead and reigning for evermore, is God's gift of himself to the world whereby his love and mercy are revealed, offering to all men forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life? And will you faithfully proclaim this gospel?
This I believe and this I will proclaim.
4. Do you believe that the Church is God's people, gathered by his love to serve him in reconciling the world to himself?
I do.
5. Are zeal for the glory of God, love for the Lord Jesus Christ and a desire for the salvation of men, so far as you know your own heart, the chief motives which lead you to enter this ministry?
(At induction to a new charge, the question shall end "to enter on the duties of the ministry in this place".)
They are.
6. Do you promise to fulfil the duties of your charge with all fidelity, to lead your people in worship, to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, and to give leadership to the Church in its mission to the world?
I do.
7. Do you promise to live a holy life and always to maintain the truth of the gospel, whatever trouble or persecution may arise?
I do.
8. Do you promise as a minister of this Church to seek its purity, peace and true prosperity, to cherish brotherly love towards all other Churches and to endeavour always to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?
I do.
9. And all these things do you profess and promise as the Lord Jesus Christ shall give you grace and strength to fulfil the same?
I do.

SCHEDULE D

A statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church.

(To be read aloud at Ordination and Induction Services).

1. The United Reformed Church confesses the faith of the Church Catholic in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. The United Reformed Church acknowledges that the life of faith to which it is called is a gift of the Holy Spirit continually received in Word and Sacrament and in the common life of God's people.

3. The United Reformed Church acknowledges the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people.
4. The United Reformed Church accepts with thanksgiving the witness borne to the Catholic faith by the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and recognises as its own particular heritage the formulations and declarations of faith which have been valued by Congregationalists, Presbyterians and members of Churches of Christ as stating the gospel and seeking to make its implications clear.
5. The United Reformed Church testifies to its faith, and orders its life, according to the Basis of Union, believing it to embody the essential notes of the Church Catholic and Reformed. The United Reformed Church nevertheless reserves its right and declares its readiness at any time to alter, add to, modify or supersede this Basis so that its life may accord more nearly with the mind of Christ.
6. The United Reformed Church, under the authority of Holy Scripture and in corporate responsibility to Jesus Christ its everliving head, acknowledges its duty to be open at all times to the leading of the Holy Spirit and therefore affirms its right to make such new declarations of its faith and for such purposes as may from time to time be required by obedience to the same Spirit.
7. The United Reformed Church, believing that it is through the freedom of the Spirit that Jesus Christ holds his people in the fellowship of the One Body, upholds the rights of personal conviction. It shall be for the Church, in safeguarding the substance of the faith and maintaining the unity of the fellowship, to determine when these rights are asserted to the injury of its unity and peace.
8. The United Reformed Church declares that the Lord Jesus Christ, the only king and head of the Church, has therein appointed a government distinct from civil government and in things spiritual not subordinate thereto, and that civil authorities, being always subject to the rule of God, ought to respect the rights of conscience and of religious belief and to serve God's will of justice and peace for all men.
9. The United Reformed Church declares its intention, in fellowship with all the Churches, to pray and work for such visible unity of the whole Church as Christ wills and in the way he wills, in order that men and nations may be led more and more to glorify the Father in heaven.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

8.(1) Members of the United Reformed Church associated in a locality for worship, witness and service shall together comprise a local church. Since the proper functioning of the local church is so fundamental to the life of the United Reformed Church, where there is a number of small congregations in proximity to one another unable separately to provide leadership and resources for the work of the Church, such congregations shall consult with the District Council to formulate an acceptable scheme for joining together with a single membership, a common Church Meeting and Elders' Meeting, representative of all the constituent congregations, and a shared ministry.

(2) The United Reformed Church shall be divided into Provinces and Provinces into Districts, each such division comprising the geographical area from time to time assigned to it by the General Assembly.

(3) The oversight of the United Reformed Church shall be the concern both of the local church and wider representative Councils. The Councils of the United Reformed Church shall be:—

- (a) The Church Meeting and the Elders' Meeting of each local church.
- (b) The Council of each District to be known as a District Council.
- (c) The Synod of each Province to be known as a Provincial Synod.
- (d) The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church.

These four parts of the Structure of the United Reformed Church shall have such consultative, legislative and executive functions as are hereinafter respectively assigned to each of them and each shall be recognised by members of the United Reformed Church as possessing such authority, under the Word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, as shall enable it to exercise its functions and thereby to minister in that sphere of the life of the United Reformed Church with which it is concerned.

The Composition and Functions of the Councils of the United Reformed Church

9.(1) The Church Meeting of the local Church shall consist of those persons who have been admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the United Reformed Church and whose names are included on the membership roll of such local church. The Church Meeting may invite other persons who regularly worship with the local church but whose names are not on the membership roll to attend and speak at its meetings on particular occasions but no such person shall have the right to vote. In the Church Meeting which shall meet at least once a quarter and at which the minister, or one of the ministers, shall normally preside, the members have opportunity through discussion, responsible decision and care for one another, to strengthen each other's faith and to foster the life, work and mission of the Church.

Functions:

Concerning the outgoing of the Church:

- (i) to further the Church's mission in the locality;
- (ii) to develop local ecumenical relationships;
- (iii) to further the Church's compassionate ministry in the locality and

throughout the world;

- (iv) to consider and support the wider work of the Church at home and abroad;
- (v) to consider public questions in relation to the Christian faith;
- (vi) to bring concerns for consideration by the Elders' Meeting and wider Councils of the Church;

Concerning the nurture of the fellowship:

- (vii) to call a minister with the concurrence of the District Council(s) concerned (see paragraph 9(3)(ii));
- (viii) to elect elders and officers, determining their number and period of service, and representatives to wider Councils;
- (ix) to admit and transfer members, to maintain standards of membership, and to suspend or remove names from the membership roll, always on advice from the Elders' Meeting;
- (x) to consider, always on advice from the Elders' Meeting, any application for recognition as a candidate for the ministry (including the auxiliary ministry) and to transmit it, if approved, to the District Council;
- (xi) to adopt financial reports;
- (xii) to receive reports and proposals from the Elders' Meeting, District Council, Synod and General Assembly and to authorise appropriate action;
- (xiii) on the recommendation of the Elders' Meeting to make or provide for the making of arrangements for the proper maintenance of buildings and the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the local church;

And generally:

- (xiv) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Church.

(2) The Elders' Meeting of the local church shall consist of the minister(s) (including auxiliary ministers) and the elders elected by the Church Meeting of such local church and shall exercise oversight of the spiritual life of the local church. The Elders' Meeting shall serve the local church and by its relation to the wider Councils of the United Reformed Church represent the whole Church to the local church. The minister, or one of the ministers, or during a pastoral vacancy the interim moderator appointed as hereinafter provided, shall normally preside over the Elders' Meeting.

Functions:

- (i) to foster in the congregation concern for witness and service to the community, evangelism at home and abroad, Christian education, ecumenical action, local inter-church relations and the wider responsibilities of the whole Church;
- (ii) to see that public worship is regularly offered and the sacraments are duly administered, and generally to promote the welfare of the congregation;
- (iii) to ensure pastoral care of the congregation, in which the minister is joined by elders having particular responsibility for groups of members;
- (iv) to nominate from among its members a Church Secretary (or Secretaries), to be elected by the Church Meeting, to serve both the Church

Meeting and the Elders' Meeting;

- (v) to arrange for pulpit supply in a vacancy;
- (vi) to keep the roll of members (see paragraph 9(1)) and (as an aid to the discharge of the congregation's pastoral and evangelistic responsibility) lists of names of adherents and children attached to the congregation, and in consultation with the Church Meeting to maintain standards of membership and to advise on the admission of members on profession of faith and by transfer, on the suspension of members, and on the removal of names from the roll;
- (vii) to be responsible for the institution and oversight of work among children and young people and all organisations within the congregation;
- (viii) to call for the election of elders and advise on the number required;
- (ix) to consider the suitability of any applicant for recognition as a candidate for the ministry (including the auxiliary ministry) and to advise the Church Meeting about its recommendation to the District Council;
- (x) to recommend to the Church Meeting arrangements for the proper maintenance of buildings and the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the local church;
- (xi) to act on behalf of the Church Meeting and bring concerns to the wider Councils of the United Reformed Church;
- (xii) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Church.

(3) The District Council of each District being representative of the local churches in that District grouped together for the purpose of fellowship, support, intimate mutual oversight and united action shall consist of:—

- (a) All ministers (other than auxiliary ministers), deaconesses and registered local pastors engaged directly in the service of the United Reformed Church within that District.
- (b) Such other ministers (including auxiliary ministers), deaconesses and such local pastors as shall from time to time be appointed by the Provincial Synod as hereinafter provided.
- (c) Such auxiliary ministers in the service of the United Reformed Church within that District as the District Council in consultation with the Provincial Synod shall from time to time determine, always with regard to a proper balance between ministerial and representation.
- (d) Representatives of local churches within the District who shall normally be members of the Elders' Meeting of a local church and who shall be appointed by the Church Meeting of such local church, the number of such representatives to be one for each local church having a membership of less than two hundred and two for each other local church.
- (e) The Moderator of the Provincial Synod for the time being.
- (f) Such members of local churches, normally elders, not exceeding eight (or such other number as the General Assembly may from time to time determine) as may be co-opted by the District Council.
- (g) All Ministers Emeriti residing in the District who shall be associate

members of the Council having the right to speak but not to vote at meetings of the Council.

The District Council shall elect from among its members a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and such other officers as the Council shall from time to time think desirable and shall determine their periods of service. It may also appoint such committees and for such purposes as it from time to time may think desirable and may appoint to any such committee any member of the United Reformed Church notwithstanding that he is not a member of the Council.

Functions:

- (i) to exercise oversight of the ministry;
- (ii) to give (or, where deep pastoral concern for the Church requires it, withhold) concurrence in calls to ministers and, with the Moderator of Synod or his deputy presiding, to conduct, in fellowship with the local church, any ordinations and/or inductions of ministers within the district;
- (iii) to appoint, in consultation with the local church and the Moderator of Synod, from among its members an interim moderator during a pastoral vacancy, such interim moderator normally being a minister or Minister Emeritus, though an auxiliary minister or in exceptional circumstances an elder may be appointed;
- (iv) to care for all the churches of the District Council, and to visit them by deputies at regular intervals for consultation concerning their life and work;
- (v) to consider on the recommendation of local churches applications for recognition as candidates for the ministry (including the auxiliary ministry) and to transmit them, if approved, to the Synod for decision;
- (vi) to accredit lay preachers and, in consultation with the local churches concerned and the Moderator of the Synod, to give authority for appropriate lay persons to preside at the Sacraments;
- (vii) to consider resignations of ministers, and, in consultation with the Moderator of Synod to decide upon appropriate action (See also paragraphs 9(4)(viii) and (5)(xviii));
- (viii) to make recommendations to the Synod concerning the granting of the status of Minister Emeritus;
- (ix) to appoint from time to time such number of representatives to the General Assembly (ministerial and lay in equal numbers) as the General Assembly shall determine. The District Council shall so far as possible make such appointments in rotation from local churches within its District;
- (x) to engage in study concerning the Church's mission in the region and to encourage in the local churches concern for youth work and social service and a sense of responsibility for the wider work of the Church at home and abroad;
- (xi) to promote church extension within the area and to submit proposals to the Synod for the establishing of new causes;

- (xii) to make recommendations to the Synod in consultation with the churches concerned and to act on behalf of the Synod in consultation with the Moderator on all matters regarding the grouping, amalgamation or dissolution of local churches;
- (xiii) to make recommendations to the Synod in consultation with the churches concerned and to act on behalf of the Synod on all matters regarding erection, major reconstruction or disposal of buildings;
- (xiv) to provide a forum for concerns brought forward by local churches and to advise thereon;
- (xv) to hear and make decisions upon appeals brought forward by local churches and church members;
- (xvi) to take appropriate action on matters referred to the Council by the Synod or General Assembly, and to initiate or transmit proposals for consideration by those bodies;
- (xvii) to maintain contact with ecumenical and missionary work in the area;
- (xviii) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Church.

(4) The Provincial Synod of each Province being representative of the local churches and District Councils in that Province united for the purpose of dealing with matters of wider concern shall consist of:—

- (a) All ministers (including auxiliary ministers), deaconesses and registered local pastors who shall for the time being be members of District Councils within the Province.
- (b) All missionaries of the United Reformed Church for the time being on furlough and for the time being resident within the Province.
- (c) Representatives of local churches within the Province who shall normally be members of the Elders' Meeting of a local church and who shall be appointed by the Church Meeting of such local church, the number of such representatives to be one for each local church having a membership of less than two hundred and two for each other local church.
- (d) The Secretary for the time being of each District Council within the Province.
- (e) Such members of local churches, normally elders, not exceeding eight (or such other number as the General Assembly may from time to time determine) as may be co-opted by the Synod.
- (f) Such members as shall from time to time be appointed by the General Assembly.
- (g) All Ministers Emeriti residing within the province who shall be associate members of the Synod having the right to speak but not to vote at meetings of the Synod.

The Provincial Synod shall elect from among its members a Clerk, a Treasurer and such other officers as the Synod shall from time to time think desirable and shall determine their periods of service. It may also appoint such committees and for such purposes as it from time to time may think desirable and may appoint to any such committee any member of the United Reformed Church notwithstanding that he is not

a member of the Synod.

Moderators of Synods. There shall be a Moderator for each Provincial Synod being a minister appointed from time to time by the General Assembly to which he shall be responsible. The Moderator shall be appointed for such term not exceeding seven years as the General Assembly shall in each case think fit with power for the General Assembly to determine any such appointment during its term or to renew any such appointment for successive terms of not more than five years each provided that no such Moderator shall be eligible to hold office after the end of the calendar year in which he shall attain the age of sixty-seven. The Moderator shall be separated from any local pastoral charge; he shall stimulate and encourage the work of the United Reformed Church within the Province; he shall preside over the meetings of the Synod and exercise a pastoral office towards the ministers and Churches within the Province; in consultation with interim moderators of local churches he shall suggest names of ministers to vacant pastorates; he, or his deputy, shall preside at all ordinations and/or inductions of ministers within the Province; he, being a member of each District Council in the Province, shall participate with each such Council in the discharge of its responsibilities and in particular in the oversight of local churches and ministers.

The Moderators of the Provincial Synods shall meet together at regular intervals for the better discharge of their duties.

Functions of Synod:

- (i) to take such action as it deems conducive to the propagation of the gospel at home and abroad, the welfare of the United Reformed Church, the interests of the Church of Christ as a whole, and the well-being of the community in which the Church is placed;
- (ii) to have oversight of the District Councils;
- (iii) to promote church extension within the Province, and decide upon proposals submitted by District Councils for the establishment of new causes;
- (iv) to receive and decide upon recommendations from the District Councils on all matters regarding the grouping, amalgamation or dissolution of local churches and the erection, major reconstruction or disposal of buildings;
- (v) to receive and decide upon applications as candidates for the ministry, which have been previously considered and transmitted by District Councils;
- (vi) to give oversight to candidates for the ministry (including the auxiliary ministry) and to candidates for any form of full-time service in the Church at home and abroad, and, in the case of candidates for the ministry, determine their eligibility for a call;
- (vii) to receive and forward with a recommendation through the Moderator of the Synod to the General Assembly applications for admission into the United Reformed Church from ministers, probationers or congregations;
- (viii) to consider questions regarding inclusion on the Roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church and make recommendations thereon

- to the General Assembly;
- (ix) to deal with reports of committees of the General Assembly;
- (x) to examine matters sent to it from District Councils or the General Assembly;
- (xi) to make proposals to and raise concerns for consideration by the General Assembly;
- (xii) to foster ecumenical relationships and action;
- (xiii) to receive and decide upon references and appeals duly submitted;
- (xiv) to appoint at its discretion ministers (including auxiliary ministers), deaconesses and local pastors, not already members of a District Council, to serve on District Councils;
- (xv) to decide upon recommendations forwarded by District Councils concerning granting of the status of Minister Emeritus to retired ministers, such status conferring associate membership of the District Council and Synod within whose area the minister resides;
- (xvi) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Church.

(5) The General Assembly which shall embody the unity of the United Reformed Church and act as the central organ of its life and the final authority, under the Word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, in all matters of doctrine and order and in all other concerns of its common life shall consist of:—

- (a) Such number of representatives of District Councils (ministerial and lay in equal numbers) as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine.
- (b) The Moderators of the General Assembly and of the Provincial Synods and such other officers of the General Assembly and of the Provincial Synods as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine.
- (c) The Convener of each of the departments and standing committees of the General Assembly.
- (d) A representative from each of such Theological Colleges as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine.
- (e) Such missionaries of the United Reformed Church on furlough as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine.
- (f) Such other ministers and elders of the United Reformed Church as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine.
- (g) All former Moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church and all past Chairmen of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, all past Presidents of the Congregational Church, all former Moderators of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and all former Chairmen and Presidents of the Annual Conference of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, provided that such former officers are members of the United Reformed Church.
- (h) Such number of corresponding members from such other Churches as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine.
In making its determination from time to time as to the number of

members to be comprised in each of the categories (a) to (f) above the General Assembly shall ensure that

- (i) the total number of members to be drawn from all these categories shall not exceed seven hundred and fifty and
- (ii) the number of those in Categories (b) to (f) shall not in total exceed one-half of those in Category (a).

The General Assembly shall elect a Moderator and such other officers as it shall from time to time think desirable. It shall also appoint an Executive Committee with power to act in its name in matters of urgency between meetings of the General Assembly and to discharge such other functions as the General Assembly may from time to time direct. The General Assembly shall also set up Departments and appoint Standing Committees which subject to the General Assembly shall have charge of the continuing interests of the Church. It may also appoint Special Committees which subject to the General Assembly shall have charge of such matters as the General Assembly may assign to them from time to time. The General Assembly may appoint to any such Department or Committee members of the United Reformed Church who are not members of the General Assembly.

Functions:

- (i) to oversee the total work of the Church;
- (ii) to make decisions on reports and recommendations from its own Departments and Committees, issue such directions and take such actions as it deems conducive to the propagation of the gospel, the welfare of the United Reformed Church, the interests of the Church of Christ as a whole and the well-being of the community in which the Church is placed;
- (iii) to conduct and foster the ecumenical relationships of the United Reformed Church;
- (iv) to support and share in the missionary work of the Church at home and abroad;
- (v) to determine the standards and scope of an adequate ministerial education and training;
- (vi) to make regulations respecting Theological Colleges belonging to the United Reformed Church, to appoint the Principal, Professors and other members of the teaching staff, Boards of Studies, and Bursars, and to superintend their work;
- (vii) to recognise Theological Colleges previously recognised by the Congregational Church in England and Wales and such other Colleges in such manner and for such purposes as the General Assembly may determine;
- (viii) to appoint Moderators of Synods;
- (ix) to remit questions concerning the witness and judgement of the Church for general discussion in Church Meetings, Elders' Meetings, District Councils and Synods, and to call for reports from these Councils;
- (x) to interpret all forms and expressions of the polity practice and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church including the Basis and the Structure and to determine when rights of

personal conviction are asserted to the injury of the unity and peace of the United Reformed Church;

- (xi) to alter, add to, modify or supersede the Basis, the Structure and any other form or expression of the polity and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church provided that no such alteration, addition, modification or superseding shall have effect unless it be agreed by resolution of the General Assembly passed by the votes of two-thirds of the members thereof present and voting after the proposal has been referred to District Councils and Provincial Synods (and when considered appropriate by the General Assembly to Church Meetings and Elders' Meetings) and such resolution of the General Assembly has been ratified by a further resolution of the General Assembly passed at its meeting in the next succeeding year;
- (xii) to make, alter or rescind rules for the conduct of its own proceedings and of those of other Councils of the United Reformed Church and such other rules, bye-laws and standing orders as the General Assembly may from time to time think desirable for the performance of its functions and the carrying into effect of any of the provisions contained in the Basis and the Structure and for the conduct of the business and affairs of the General Assembly and of the other Councils of the United Reformed Church;
- (xiii) to appoint at its discretion additional members to serve on Synods;
- (xiv) to make such alterations in the boundaries and groupings of Districts and Provinces and to establish such new Districts and Provinces as the General Assembly may from time to time think desirable;
- (xv) to consider and decide upon references and appeals duly submitted;
- (xvi) to make, alter or rescind rules of procedure for the submission and conduct of references and appeals to and by the Councils of the United Reformed Church;
- (xvii) to receive and decide upon applications for admission into the United Reformed Church from ministers, probationers and congregations, transmitted by Synods through their Moderators;
- (xviii) to decide upon questions regarding inclusion on the Roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church which have been previously considered and transmitted with recommendations by Provincial Synods;
- (xix) to provide for the raising of funds for the work of the United Reformed Church and to determine arrangements for payment of stipends and expenses to ministers and officers of the United Reformed Church and for such other financial matters as the General Assembly may from time to time think desirable;
- (xx) to consider and decide upon issues and representations duly transmitted by other Councils of the United Reformed Church;
- (xxi) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Church.

Consultation

10. Decisions on the part of any Council shall be reached only after the fullest attempt has been made to discover the mind of the other Councils or of local churches likely to be affected by the decision.

Appeals

11. A local church or any member thereof or Elders' Meeting may appeal to the District Council upon which the local church is entitled to be represented for the resolution of any dispute or difference and may appeal from any decision of such District Council to the Provincial Synod on which it is entitled to be represented and from any decision of such Provincial Synod to the General Assembly.

A District Council may refer any dispute or difference, whether or not the same shall have come before it on appeal, to the Provincial Synod on which it is entitled to be represented and may appeal from any decision of the Provincial Synod by which it is affected, whether or not made on such a reference, to the General Assembly.

A Provincial Synod may refer any dispute or difference, whether or not the same shall have come before it on a reference or appeal, to the General Assembly.

The decision of the General Assembly on any matter which has come before it on reference or appeal shall be final and binding.

PROPOSED PARLIAMENTARY BILL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Arrangement of Sections

SECTION

1. Short title
2. Interpretation
3. Validity and evidence of Unifying Declaration
4. Validity and evidence of certain resolutions
5. Dissolution of unincorporated bodies
6. Lands held in trust for uniting churches
7. Other property held in trust for uniting churches
8. Property held in trust for Churches of Christ
9. Schemes as to property to which section 8 applies
10. Gifts which are to take effect as gifts to the United Reformed Church
11. Power to make grants etc. to the United Reformed Church
12. Powers vested in dissolved associations
13. Preservation of existing trusteeships
14. Covenants restricting use of land
15. Pension scheme
16. Application of Places of Worship Registration Act 1855 and Marriage Act 1949
17. Sharing of Church buildings
18. Pending representative actions, etc.
19. Indemnities
20. Admission of non-uniting churches
21. Arbitration
22. Saving for charges, etc.
23. Saving of powers in regard to charities
24. Costs of Act

SCHEDULES

Schedule 1—District and Divisional Associations of Churches of Christ

Schedule 2—Adaptation of Trusts

Part I Trusts for places used for Religious Worship

Part II Trusts for Ministers' Residences and other Church Workers' Residences

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

A Bill to make provision as to property held on behalf of the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland and its member churches and for other purposes incidental to or consequential upon the unification of the Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland with the United Reformed Church in England and Wales.

Whereas

- (1) The United Reformed Church in England and Wales (hereinafter called "the United Reformed Church") was formed by a Uniting Declaration passed on the 5th October 1972 in pursuance of the Scheme of Union approved by the Assembly of the then Congregational Church in England and Wales on the 11th May 1971 and by the General Assembly of the then Presbyterian Church of England on the same day:
- (2) The Association of Churches of Christ (hereinafter called "the Association") consists of local autonomous member churches who share the general convictions and aims of the Association:
- (3) Shortly before the formation of the United Reformed Church the Annual Conference of the Association authorised its Central Council to approach the United Reformed Church with a view to a unification of the Churches of Christ with the United Reformed Church:
- (4) The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church at its first Assembly on the 5th October 1972, authorised the holding of discussions which have culminated in the Proposals for unification (hereinafter called "the Proposals") which were approved by the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church on _____ and by the Annual Conference of the Association on _____ :
- (5) The Proposals provide for the unification of the Churches of Christ with the United Reformed Church:
- (6) Such unification must involve the variation of trusts of property held for or for the purposes of (amongst other bodies) the Association, local member Churches of Christ and associations of such churches:
- (7) It is expedient that the variation of trusts for which provision is made in this Act should be made if such unification takes place:
- (8) It is further expedient that the other provisions of this Act (being provisions incidental to and consequential upon such unification) should be enacted:
- (9) The purposes of this Act cannot be effected without the authority of Parliament:

May it therefore please Your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted, by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the United Reformed Church Act 1979.

Interpretation

- 2.(1) In this Act, unless the subject or context otherwise requires -
 - “Churches of Christ” means the member churches of the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland whose names appear as such churches on the list of member churches as it stands on the 1st day of December 1977;
 - “clerk” means the clerk of the General Assembly;
 - “commissioners” means the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales;
 - “date of unification” means the date on which is passed the Unifying Declaration;
 - “dissolved association” means an association dissolved by section 5 (Dissolution of Unincorporated Bodies) of this Act;
 - “enactment” means an enactment in this Act or in any general or local Act or in any order, rule or regulation made under any Act;
 - “General Assembly” means the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church;
 - “land” includes any estate, interest or right, in, over or under land and heritable property;
 - “local church” means a local church of the United Reformed Church;
 - “Moderator” means the Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church;
 - “non-uniting church” means any one of the Churches of Christ other than a uniting church;
 - “property” means property of every description wheresoever situate and includes property held on trust and securities, rights and powers of every description;
 - “Proposals for Unification” means the Proposals for Unification approved by resolution of the General Assembly and by resolution of not less than two-thirds of the total number of Churches of Christ;
 - “Unifying Assembly” means the General Assembly and the Annual Conference of the Association of the Churches of Christ meeting together in accordance with the Proposals for Unification;
 - “Unifying Declaration” means the declaration which under the Proposals for Unification effects the unification of the Churches of Christ with the United Reformed Church thenceforth to be known as the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom;
 - “United Reformed Church” means the church or denomination as defined in section 2 (Interpretation) of the United Reformed Church Act 1972;
 - “uniting church” means any one of the Churches of Christ which shall have passed a resolution for Unification under and in accordance with the Proposals for Unification;
- (2) Any reference in this Act to any enactment shall be construed as a reference to that enactment as applied, extended or amended by or by virtue of any subsequent enactment including any enactment in this Act.

Validity and evidence of Unifying Declaration

3.(1) The declaration by the president of the Unifying Assembly at that Assembly that the Unifying Declaration has been passed in accordance with the Proposals for Unification shall be final and conclusive as to that fact and as to the satisfaction of all preliminary procedures and conditions defined and declared in the Proposals, and the date, validity and effectiveness of the Unifying Declaration shall not thereafter be questioned on any ground in any court or proceeding whatsoever.

(2)(a) The president of the Unifying Assembly forthwith after the passage of the Unifying Declaration shall certify his declaration of that event and the date thereof, and shall send the certificate together with a copy of the Proposals for Unification to the commissioners for safe keeping under section 25(2) of the Charities Act 1960.

(b) A copy of the certificate referred to in the preceding paragraph or of the Proposals for Unification authenticated either by the Moderator or by the clerk shall be admissible in all courts and proceedings as evidence respectively of the matters certified and of the contents of the Proposals for Unification; and a document purporting to be such a copy shall be received without proof of the position or handwriting of the person authenticating it.

Validity and evidence of certain resolutions

4.(1) The declaration by the person presiding at the appropriate meeting that a resolution for unification has been passed shall be final and conclusive as to that fact and as to the satisfaction of all preliminary procedures and conditions, and the date, validity and effectiveness of such a resolution shall not thereafter be questioned on any ground in any court or proceeding whatsoever.

(2) Subsection (2) of section 3 (Validity and evidence of Unifying Declaration) of this Act shall apply in regard to resolutions for unification and for the purpose of such application -

(a) paragraph (a) of the said subsection shall have effect as if -

(i) for the reference to the president of the Unifying Assembly there were substituted a reference to the person presiding over the meeting at which the resolution for unification is passed or (in the event of his death or inability or unwillingness to act) to a person present at the meeting;

(ii) for the words "passage of the Unifying Declaration" there were substituted the words "passing of this Act";

(iii) for the expression "of that event" there were substituted the words "the passing of the resolution";

(iv) the reference to the Proposals for Unification were omitted;

(b) paragraph (b) of the said subsection shall have effect as if the reference to the Proposals for Unification were omitted

(3) The person who sends to the commissioners a certificate of the passage of a resolution for unification or (in the event of his death or inability or unwillingness to act) another person present at the meeting in question, shall forthwith send to the clerk a copy of the certificate sent to the commissioners.

(4) In this section a "resolution for unification" means a resolution which is referred to in the definition of "uniting church" in section 2 (Interpretation) of this Act.

Dissolution of unincorporated associations

5.(1) On the date of unification and subject to the provisions of this section every association to which this section applies shall be dissolved and all offices held in or in connexion with each such association shall be extinguished.

(2) This section applies to:—

- (a) The Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland;
- (b) The Annual Conference of the Association of the Churches of Christ;
- (c) each uniting church;
- (d) each district and divisional association named in Schedule 1 to this Act a majority of whose member Churches pass resolutions for unification; and
- (e) every committee, council, or other unincorporated association of or exclusively subsidiary or ancillary to any of the associations previously listed.

Lands held in trust for uniting churches

6.(1) All land which immediately before the date of unification is held in trust for or for the purposes of or in connexion with a uniting church shall on and from that date, and in accordance with the following provisions of this section, be held in trust for or (as the case may be) for equivalent purposes of or in connexion with the local church corresponding to the uniting church in question.

- (2) (a) The trust deed of any land to which subsection (1) of this section applies being either land held in trust for use as a church, chapel, church hall, mission hall, preaching station, Sunday school or other place of religious worship or land held in trust for use as a manse or place of residence of a minister, lay worker or caretaker shall on and from the date of unification have effect as if the provisions contained either in Part I or (as the case may be) in Part II of Schedule 2 to this Act were substituted for the operative provisions previously contained in that deed and the references in either part of the said Schedule to "the trustees" and "the premises" shall be construed (notwithstanding any definition in the deed) as references to the trustee or trustees for the time being of the deed and to the land and, where appropriate, the buildings, to which the deed relates, and references to "the local church" shall be construed as references to the local church corresponding to the uniting church to which the deed relates.

(b) In any case where the property subject to any trust referred to in paragraph (a) of this subsection comprises, in addition to land, any capital money, investments or other property, paragraph (a) of this subsection shall apply to all the property so comprised.

(3) The trust deed of any land to which subsection (1) of this section applies not being a trust deed to which the last foregoing subsection applies shall on and from the date of unification have effect as if words referring to a local church were substituted for any words therein referring to or describing a church of the Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland.

(4) The foregoing provisions of this section shall operate in relation to any scheme legally established and affecting land to which subsection (1) of this section applies as if the scheme were a trust deed and as if paragraph 8 in both parts of the said Schedule were omitted.

(5) The commissioners shall have power to modify or supersede the trusts imported by the last preceding subsection into any such scheme as is therein mentioned including any modified or new trusts since incorporated, whether the scheme was established by the commissioners or by the High Court.

Other property held in trust for uniting churches

7. All property (other than property to which the preceding section of this Act applies) which immediately before the date of unification is held in trust for or for the purposes of or in connexion with -

(a) a uniting church

(b) the minister or ministers of a uniting church,

or

(c) the members of or any class of members of a uniting church

shall on and from that date be held in trust for or (as the case may be) for equivalent purposes of or in connexion with the local church, minister of a local church or members or class of members of the local church corresponding to the uniting church for which or for the purposes of which the property was previously held but otherwise, so far as circumstances will permit, upon the same trusts and with and subject to the same powers and provisions as those upon which the property was held before the date of unification.

Property held in trust for Churches of Christ

8.(1) On and from the date of unification and until the coming into force of a scheme in relation thereto made under section 9 (Schemes as to property to which section 8 applies) of this Act, all property to which this section applies shall be held so far as circumstances will permit upon the same trusts and with and subject to the same powers and provisions as those upon which the property was held before the date of unification but the purposes of such trusts and powers and provisions thereof shall be hereby varied or extended so as to include purposes of the United Reformed Church corresponding to any purpose of the trust which was extant before the date of unification.

(2) If immediately before the date of unification any property to which this section applies was (in whomsoever vested) subject to the management of any dissolved association then, until the coming into force of a scheme in relation thereto made under the said section 9, the management of that property shall be exercised -

- (a) where the management was previously exercised by a uniting church, by the local church corresponding to that uniting church;
 - (b) in any other case, by such persons as the General Assembly shall appoint but the General Assembly may delegate the exercise of its powers under this paragraph to any person or body of persons.
- (3) Subject to the provisions of the next following subsection this section applies to all property which immediately before the date of unification is held in trust for or for the purposes of or in connexion with -
- (a) the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland;
 - (b) any Association named in Schedule 1 to this Act;
 - (c) any other Council or Association whether incorporated or unincorporated of Churches of Christ.
- (4) This section does not apply to -
- (a) the Pension Fund (1965)
 - (b) property to which section 6 (Lands held in trust for uniting churches), section 7 (Other property held in trust for uniting churches), of this Act applies;
- and
- (c) property which immediately before the date of unification is held for or for the purposes of or in connexion with or is used by -
 - (i) a non-uniting church;
 - (ii) the minister or ministers of a non-uniting church; or
 - (iii) the members or any class of members of a non-uniting church.

Schemes as to property to which section 8 applies

9.(1) So soon as may be after the date of unification the trustees of any property to which section 8 (Property held in trust for Churches of Christ) of this Act applies, shall apply to the commissioners for an exercise of the commissioners' powers under the following provisions of this section.

(2) The commissioners shall under and by virtue of this section and after consultation with the applicants have power by order in regard to property to which the said section 8 applies -

- (a) to allocate or make provision for the allocation of property between the United Reformed Church and the non-uniting churches in such proportions as appear to the commissioners to be fair and equitable and if they think fit to make provision for the sale of such property or any part thereof and for such allocation to be made wholly or partly out of the net proceeds of sale thereof;
- (b) to establish schemes for the administration of property so allocated and specifying the purposes for which it is to be held; and
- (c) to vest property so allocated in trustees appointed under or in accordance with such schemes.

(3) Section 18 (except subsections (1) to (7) inclusive, (9), (11) and (13)), section 21 (except subsections (2), (3), (5) and (8)) and section 40 (except subsection (5)) of the Charities Act 1960 shall apply in regard to orders made under subsection (2) of this section as they apply to orders of the commissioners made under that Act.

(4) Subject to the application of the provisions of section 18(10) of the Charities Act 1960 an allocation of property made by the commissioners

under subsection (2) of this section shall not be questioned on any ground in any court or proceeding whatsoever.

(5) The transfer of an interest in land by virtue of an order made under subsection (2) of this section shall not -

(a) constitute a purchase or creation of that interest for the purposes of section 30(2) of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 (which restricts a landlord's right to oppose an application for a new tenancy of business premises in certain cases); or

(b) constitute an assignment, transfer, devolution, parting with possession or other disposition of that interest for the purposes of any provision relating to assignment, transfer, devolution, parting with possession or other disposition contained in any instrument concerning that interest.

(6) If within nine months after the date of unification an application has not been made to the commissioners in regard to any property to which section 8 (Property held in trust for Churches of Christ) of this Act applies, then the commissioners may at any time thereafter exercise their powers under subsection (2) of this section in regard to that property notwithstanding that there has been no application in regard thereto and the said subsection shall apply as if for the reference to consultation with the applicants there were substituted a reference to consultation with such persons (if any) as the commissioners think fit.

Gifts which are to take effect as gifts to the United Reformed Church

10.(1) Any provision contained in any settlement, trust deed, deed of covenant, will or codicil coming into operation on or after the date of unification and being a provision in favour of or directed to be administered by any dissolved association shall have effect as a provision in favour of or to be administered by the corresponding association of the United Reformed Church by, upon, with and subject to such trusts, powers and provisions as are by such settlement, will or codicil expressed concerning the same:

Provided that if in any such case a person or class of persons or a society, institution, charity or fund standing in any relation to any dissolved association is an object named in the provision, the object of such provision shall be a person or a class of persons or a society, institution, charity or fund standing in a similar relation to the United Reformed Church generally.

(2) In any case to which the preceding subsection applies the receipt for a gift or bequest of a treasurer appointed by the General Assembly, of the clerk or of the treasurer or secretary of the corresponding association referred to in that subsection shall be an effectual discharge to the trustees or personal representatives concerned and shall exonerate them from being concerned to see to the destination or application of the gift or bequest and from being answerable for the misapplication or non-application thereof.

(3) In any case where a provision which is referred to in subsection (1) of this section is a provision wholly or partly for the benefit or use of a non-uniting church, or any members or class of members thereof, the said subsection shall have effect so that on and after the date of unification the provision shall be to the same extent as before a provision for the benefit or use of the same non-uniting church, or members or class of members thereof, and the property affected by that provision shall be dealt with accordingly under the preceding provisions of this Act.

Power to make grants etc to the United Reformed Church

11. The power of any person under any enactment or document to make grants to or to lend property to or to provide benefits for any dissolved association or to or for any minister, officer, members or class of members of such an association or to or for any child, widow or other dependant of such a minister, officer or member shall on and from the date of unification be exercisable in favour of (as the case may be) an association, minister, officer, members or class of members of the United Reformed Church or the children, widows or other dependants of such a minister, officer or member.

Powers vested in dissolved associations

12.(1) Where immediately before the date of unification any power with respect to any trust or any power of nomination is or is to be vested in any dissolved association or in any minister or officer of the Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland in the capacity of such minister or officer, then on and from that date any such power shall (in the case of a power previously vested or to be vested in an association) vest in such person or body of persons as the General Assembly shall from time to time appoint and (in the case of a power previously vested or to be vested in a minister or officer) in the holder of the corresponding ministry or office of the United Reformed Church:

Provided that this section shall not apply where the minister or officer concerned is a minister or officer of a non-uniting church or non-uniting congregation or of an unincorporated association to which section 5 of this Act does not apply or where the trust relates exclusively to a non-uniting church, or the members or any class of members of such a church.

(2) The General Assembly may delegate the exercise of its powers under the foregoing subsection to any person or body of persons.

Preservation of existing trusteeships

13.(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, nothing in this Act shall operate to divest any trustee (including any custodian trustee) of any property vested in him immediately before the date of unification.

(2) Where in any document it is provided that the trustees of any trust shall be members of a dissolved association such document shall on and after the date of unification be read and have effect as if the reference to membership of that association included a reference to membership of the United Reformed Church.

(3) Where any property is property which is referred to in subsection (4)(c) of section 8 (Property held in trust for Churches of Christ) of this Act, then for the purposes of section 35 of the Charities Act 1960, the trusts on which the property is held shall be deemed to be the trusts of a charity whereunder trustees of property held for the purposes of the charity may be appointed or discharged by resolution of a meeting of the members of the charity and the members of the charity shall be deemed as the case may require to be the members of the non-uniting church in question.

Covenants restricting use of land

14. On and from the date of unification any words referring to or describing whether expressly or by implication the Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland or any member church of Christ being words which immediately before that day were contained in any restriction as to the user of land or the building thereon, shall be read, construed and have effect as including a reference to or description of the United Reformed Church.

Pension Schemes

15.(1) In this section -

“existing pension scheme” means the Pension Fund (1965)

“authorised scheme” means any pension scheme or any provident fund established by the United Reformed Church or any existing pension scheme.

(2) The existing pension scheme may as from the date of unification be amalgamated either wholly or in part with any authorised scheme or partly with one authorised scheme and partly with another such scheme in such manner and upon such terms as may be approved by the trustees of the schemes involved in the amalgamation by -

(a) the admission to participation in an authorised scheme of such of the members or pensioners or of other persons to or in respect of whom benefits or allowances are on the date of unification payable from the existing pension scheme who consent to such admission;

(b) the transfer to the trustees of such authorised scheme of such part or parts of the assets of the existing pension scheme as are certified by a practising actuary to be appropriate; and

(c) the assumption by the authorised scheme of liability for the benefits and allowances payable or prospectively payable out of the funds of the existing pension scheme in respect of which members, pensioners and other persons are admitted to participate in the authorised scheme or for substituted benefits and allowances certified by a practising actuary to be no less advantageous than those payable or prospectively payable as aforesaid.

(3) The trustees of an existing pension scheme may make such arrangements, execute such deeds and documents and do all such things as may be requisite or desirable for the purpose of giving effect to any such amalgamation as aforesaid, but so that no amendment of any instrument affecting such scheme shall be made except in accordance with the provisions of that instrument.

(4) For the purpose of any provision contained in any instrument affecting the existing pension scheme which has the effect of prohibiting or invalidating amendments of such instrument which would vary or conflict with the main objects or purposes of the scheme, any such admission, transfer of assets or assumption of liability as is referred to in subsection (2) of this section, whether effected in pursuance of the powers conferred by this section or otherwise, shall be deemed to be one of the main objects or purposes of the existing pension scheme.

(5) The rule of law relating to perpetuities shall not apply to the trusts of any authorised scheme.

(6) A consent given on behalf of an infant by his parent or guardian to any such admission as is referred to in subsection (2)(a) of this section or to any amendment of any instrument affecting the existing pension scheme shall be deemed to be an effective consent by that infant.

Application of Places of Worship Registration Act 1855 and Marriage Act 1949

16.(1) Every building which under the Places of Worship Registration Act

1855c.81

1855 or any Act repealed by that Act has been certified and recorded as a

place of meeting for religious worship on behalf of a uniting church and of which the record of certification has not before the date of unification been cancelled shall on and from that date be deemed to be certified and recorded as a place of religious worship on behalf of a congregation or assembly of persons of the United Reformed Church.

1949c.76 (2) Every building to which the preceding subsection applies which has been registered for the solemnisation of marriage therein under Part III of the Marriage Act 1949 and of which the registration has not before the date of unification been cancelled shall on and from that date be deemed for the purposes of the said Act to have been registered on behalf of a congregation of the United Reformed Church for the solemnisation of marriages therein.

(3) Nothing in this Act shall operate to disqualify any person who in relation to a building to which the preceding subsection applies is immediately before the date of unification an authorised person within the meaning of section 43(2) of the Marriage Act 1949.

(4) The clerk shall as soon as may be after the date of unification transmit to the Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England and Wales a list of all the buildings to which subsection (1) of this section applies and shall indicate on that list which of those buildings are buildings to which subsection (2) of this section applies.

Sharing of church buildings

1969c.38 17.(1) On and from the date of unification the Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969 shall have effect as if the United Reformed Church were named in the first column of Schedule 2 to that Act in substitution for any congregation of the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland and as if the appropriate authority named in the second column of the said Schedule in relation to any church or church buildings belonging to any such congregation were the Synod of the province of the United Reformed Church in which the church building or buildings is or are or will be situated.

(2) Nothing in this Act shall affect the validity of anything done before the date of unification under or in pursuance of the said Act but anything done thereunder by or for a uniting church shall as from that date have effect as if done by the United Reformed Church and as if the appropriate authority were a Provincial Synod of the United Reformed Church.

Pending representative actions, etc.

18.(1) Any action, arbitration or proceeding which shall on the date of unification be pending by or against representatives of any dissolved association shall not abate or be discontinued or be in any way prejudicially affected by reason of the provisions of this Act or of anything empowered to be done thereunder, but the same may be prosecuted and continued as if this Act has not been passed.

(2) Any cause of action, arbitration or proceeding which shall on the date of unification be existing against or in favour of persons representative of any dissolved association shall not be prejudicially affected by reason of the provisions of this Act or if anything empowered to be done thereunder, but the same may be enforced against or by such representative persons as shall be nominated for the purpose by the Moderator as and when it might have been enforced if this Act had not been passed.

Indemnities

19. Nothing in this Act and nothing empowered to be done thereunder shall deprive any person of any right of indemnity to which he was entitled immediately before the date of unification whether as party to any action, arbitration or proceeding, as trustee or in any other capacity whatsoever.

Admission of non-uniting churches

20.(1) A non-uniting church may if so authorised by not less than three-fourths of those present and voting at a meeting of the members thereof specially convened for the purpose apply to be unified with the United Reformed Church and shall be admitted thereto if the General Assembly so resolves by not less than three-fourths of the members thereof present and voting.

(2) Any admission under the preceding subsection shall occur on such day as the Moderator shall appoint.

(3) On and from the day of admission appointed under the preceding subsection the provisions of this Act shall apply as if the day of admission was the date of unification and as if the church were a uniting church.

(4) After the admission of a non-uniting church under subsection (1) of this section the Moderator may if he thinks fit apply to the commissioners for a consequential alteration of any allocation scheme or order made under subsection (2) of section 9 (Schemes as to property to which section 8 applies) of this Act and the commissioners shall in regard to such application have the like powers as those conferred by that section and subsections (2) to (5) inclusive thereof shall apply accordingly.

Arbitration

21. Any question arising under this Act as to what corresponds to any association, charity, class of members, committee, court, institution, members, minister, ministry, office, officer, purpose, society or uniting church shall be determined by a single arbitrator appointed by the President of The Law Society and the award of such an arbitrator shall be final and conclusive for all purposes:

Provided that neither the President nor The Law Society shall be under any liability with regard to the payment of the arbitrator's fee and the costs of the arbitration.

Saving for charges, etc.

22. Nothing in this Act and nothing done in the exercise of powers thereby conferred shall relieve any property or any person from any liability or responsibility to which they would otherwise be subject in respect of any mortgage, charge, incumbrance, lien, bond or obligation.

Saving of powers in regard to charities

23. Nothing in this Act shall affect any power of Her Majesty, the court, the commissioners or any other person to alter the trusts of any charity.

Costs of Act

24. All the costs, charges and expenses preliminary to and of and incidental to the preparing, applying for, obtaining and passing of this Act or otherwise in relation thereto shall be paid as to half by the United Reformed Church and as to half by the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland.

SCHEDULES

Section 5

SCHEDULE 1

DISTRICT AND DIVISIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Birmingham District of Churches of Christ
Chester and North Wales District of Churches of Christ
Churches of Christ Fife and Dundee District
Glasgow Churches of Christ District
Leicester District Association of Churches of Christ
London Association of Churches of Christ
Association of Churches of Christ Merseyside District
Churches of Christ North East District
Churches of Christ North East Scotland District
Churches of Christ North Staffordshire District
Churches of Christ North West District
Nottingham District Association of Churches of Christ
Churches of Christ South Wales District
South West District of Churches of Christ
Wigan and District Association of Churches of Christ
Churches of Christ Yorkshire District
Scottish Division of Churches of Christ.

ADAPTATION OF TRUSTS**Part 1****Trusts for Places used for Religious Worship**

These premises shall be held upon the following trusts:—

1. The trustees shall permit the premises to be used for all or any of the following purposes and all proper ancillary purposes namely:—

(a) The public worship of God according to the principles and usages for the time being of the United Reformed Church;

(b) The instruction of children or adults; or

(c) The promotion of other charitable purposes not inconsistent with the principles and usages aforesaid; such use to be primarily by the members of the local church or any other church which may supersede it as a result of amalgamation or regrouping and to be directed by the Church Meeting acting with due regard for the recommendations of the Elders' Meeting and those other Councils of the United Reformed Church which exercise oversight of the local church.

2. The trustees may, if in their discretion they think fit, but not without the authority of a resolution of the Church Meeting and (except as to work on or in a building which does not substantially alter its character appearance or value) not without the approval of the Provincial Synod (which approval shall be sufficiently evidenced by a document signed by the Chairman for the time being of the District Council and stating that such approval has been given) and subject to any statutory restrictions, do any of the following things from time to time:—

(a) Permit the buildings on the premises to be altered, enlarged, improved, rebuilt, supplemented or demolished;

(b) Raise money required for any of the last-mentioned purposes by mortgage or charge of the whole or by sale of part of the premises;

(c) Sell or mortgage the whole or part of the premises and apply the money so obtained (as the Church Meeting shall direct) in or towards the acquisition of other freehold or leasehold land (subject or not to incumbrances) and the erection thereon of buildings such land to be held upon the like trusts or for any other charitable purposes of the United Reformed Church within the area of the Provincial Synod;

(d) Dispose of the premises or any part thereof for development under a building lease or other arrangement including or not including provisions for the acquisition of a freehold or leasehold interest (to be held so far as may be on the trusts set forth in paragraph 1 hereof) of new church premises to be built as part of the development and apply all money arising from any such disposal and not required for new premises for such charitable purposes connected with the work of the United Reformed Church within the province as the Provincial Synod acting with due regard for the needs of such work within the district of the

District Council shall by resolution appoint (or if so directed by the Provincial Synod shall pay them to the Treasurer of the District Council to be dealt with as part of the general funds of that council);

(e) Let any part (not the whole) of the premises for any period not exceeding twenty-eight years and pay the income arising from such letting to the local church as an addition to its general funds.

3. The trustees may if in their discretion they think fit with the authority of a resolution of the Church Meeting but without any approval of the Provincial Synod and without creating any lease or tenancy authorise or permit any other person or persons, organisation or other body to use temporarily or occasionally or intermittently for any reputable purpose (but only when use under paragraph 1 hereof is not expected to be required) the whole or any part of the premises:

Provided that any such authority or permission may be granted without consideration or for such consideration as the trustees think fit and that any proceeds or income arising from such authority or permission shall be paid to the local church as an addition to its general funds.

4. The trustees shall not, except to the extent of funds supplied to them for that purpose, be responsible for the repair and upkeep of the premises.

5. If the Provincial Synod on the recommendation of the District Council made to it after consultation between representatives of that council and the Church Meeting resolves that the use of the premises as aforesaid is or if continued would be no longer useful and that the premises ought to be disposed of the trustees shall sell or let the premises under the direction of the Provincial Synod and shall apply the net proceeds of sale or letting in the manner prescribed by paragraph 2(d) hereof.

6. Any person acquiring from the trustees in good faith and for value an interest in or charge on the premises or part thereof may accept without further inquiry a statement in the document transferring creating or evidencing such interest or charge to the effect that the trustees are acting in exercise of the powers conferred on them by this deed and the interest or charge to which such document relates shall not be capable of being impugned on the ground that it was transferred or created without authority.

7.(1) The statutory power of appointing new trustees shall be vested in the Church Meeting and shall be exercised by a resolution of the majority of those present and voting at a meeting convened by notice stating the purpose of the meeting given at each service held on the two Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The chairman shall have for this purpose if necessary a casting vote.

(2) No individual person shall be eligible for appointment who is not on the membership roll of some local church (which need not be within the district of the same District Council as the local church).

(3) Any trustee who ceases to have the qualification last mentioned shall be deemed to be unfit to act in the trust.

(4) Any trustee who wishes to be discharged from the trust may be discharged therefrom, without any appointment of a new trustee, by such a resolution as is mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph.

(5) The number of trustees shall so far as practicable be kept up to four.

8. If in the opinion of the Church Meeting evidenced by a resolution passed by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the persons present and (being entitled to vote) voting at a meeting specially convened for the purpose of considering such resolution, any amendment of any of the foregoing provisions with or without any amendment previously made shall be desirable and such resolution (in which the foregoing provisions with any amendment previously made may be referred to as "the statutory scheduled provisions") shall be sanctioned by the Provincial Synod and the General Assembly and a memorandum thereof and of its sanction signed by the Moderator of the General Assembly and dated shall be endorsed on or annexed to the trust deed then as from the date of the said memorandum the foregoing provisions with any previous amendment shall be read as if the amendment or amendments specified in the resolution were embodied therein:

Provided that no amendment shall be made to that part of paragraph 1 hereof which ends with the words "principles and usages aforesaid" nor shall any amendment deprive the trustees of the discretion conferred on them by paragraph 2 hereof in relation to any matter therein mentioned.

Part II

Trusts for Ministers' Residences and other Church Workers' Residences

The premises shall be held upon the following trusts:—

1. The trustees shall permit the premises to be used for such charitable purposes in connexion with the United Reformed Church (including their use as a residence for the minister or any caretaker or other church worker or employee of the local church and also including their use for any religious or other charitable purposes not inconsistent with the principles and usages of that church) as the Church Meeting acting with due regard for the recommendations of the Elders' Meeting and those other Councils of the United Reformed Church which exercise oversight of the local church shall from time to time direct.

2. The trustees may, if in their discretion they think fit, but not without the authority of a resolution of the Church Meeting and (except as to work on or in a building which does not substantially alter its character, appearance or value) not without the approval of the Provincial Synod (which approval shall be sufficiently evidenced by a document signed by the Chairman for the time being of the District Council and stating that such approval has been given), and subject to any statutory restrictions, do any of the following things from time to time:—

- (a) Permit the buildings on the premises to be altered, enlarged, improved, rebuilt, supplemented or demolished;
- (b) Raise money required for any of the last-mentioned purposes by mortgage or charge of the whole or by sale of part of the premises;
- (c) Sell or mortgage the whole or part of the premises and apply the

money so obtained (as the Church Meeting shall direct) in or towards the acquisition of other freehold or leasehold land (subject or not to incumbrances) and the erection thereon of buildings such land to be held upon the like trusts or for any other charitable purposes of the United Reformed Church within the area of the Provincial Synod;

(d) Dispose of the premises or any part thereof for development under a building lease or other arrangement including or not including provisions for the acquisition of a freehold or leasehold interest (to be held so far as may be on the trusts set forth in paragraph 1 hereof) of new premises to be built as part of the development and apply all money arising from any such disposal and not required for new premises for such charitable purposes connected with the work of the United Reformed Church within the province as the Provincial Synod acting with due regard for the needs of such work within the district of the District Council shall by resolution appoint (or if so directed by the Provincial Synod shall pay them to the Treasurer of the District Council to be dealt with as part of the general funds of that council);

(e) Let the premises or any part thereof for any period not exceeding twenty-eight years and pay the income arising from such letting to the local church as an addition to its general funds.

3. The trustees may, if in their discretion they think fit, with the authority of a resolution of the Church Meeting but without any approval of the Provincial Synod and without creating any lease or tenancy authorise or permit any other person or persons, organisation or other body to use temporarily or occasionally or intermittently for any reputable purpose (but only when use under paragraph 1 hereof is not expected to be required) the whole or any part of the premises:

Provided that any such authority or permission may be granted without consideration or for such consideration as the trustees think fit and that any proceeds or income arising from such authority or permission shall be paid to the local church as an addition to its general funds.

4. The trustees shall not, except to the extent of funds supplied to them for that purpose, be responsible for the repair and upkeep of the premises.

5. If the Provincial Synod on the recommendation of the District Council made to it after consultation between representatives of that council and the Church Meeting resolves that the use of the premises as aforesaid is or if continued would be no longer useful and that the premises ought to be disposed of the trustees shall sell or let the premises under the direction of the Provincial Synod and shall apply the net proceeds of sale or letting in the manner prescribed by paragraph 2(d) hereof.

6. Any person acquiring from the trustees in good faith and for value an interest in or charge on the premises or part thereof may accept without further inquiry a statement in the document transferring creating or evidencing such interest or charge to the effect that the trustees are acting in exercise of the powers conferred on them by this deed and the interest or charge to which such document relates shall not be capable of being impugned on the ground that it was transferred or created without authority.

7.(1) The statutory power of appointing new trustees shall be vested in the Church Meeting and shall be exercised by a resolution of the majority of those present and voting at a meeting convened by notice stating the purpose of the meeting given at each service held on the two Sundays preceding the meeting. The chairman shall have for this purpose if necessary a casting vote.

(2) No individual person shall be eligible for appointment who is not on the membership roll of some local church (which need not be within the district of the same District Council as the local church).

(3) Any trustee who ceases to have the qualification last mentioned shall be deemed to be unfit to act in the trust.

(4) Any trustee who wishes to be discharged from the trust may be discharged therefrom, without any appointment of a new trustee, by such a resolution as is mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph.

(5) The number of trustees hereof shall so far as practicable be kept up to four.

8. If in the opinion of the Church Meeting evidenced by a resolution passed by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the persons present and (being entitled to vote) voting at a meeting specially convened for the purpose of considering such resolution, any amendment of any of the foregoing provisions with or without amendment previously made shall be desirable and such resolution (in which the foregoing provisions with any amendment previously made may be referred to as "the statutory scheduled provisions") shall be sanctioned by the Provincial Synod and the General Assembly and a memorandum thereof and of its sanction signed by the Moderator of the General Assembly and dated shall be endorsed on or annexed to the trust deed then as from the date of the said memorandum the foregoing provisions with any previous amendment shall be read as if the amendment or amendments specified in the resolution were embodied therein:

Provided that no amendment shall authorise the use of the premises for any purpose not being charitable and connected with the United Reformed Church nor shall any amendment deprive the trustees of the discretion conferred on them by paragraph 2 hereof in relation to any matter therein mentioned.

APPENDICES
containing supporting information

APPENDIX 1:

HOW THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH WORKS

The United Reformed Church is made up of local churches corresponding to those which formerly belonged either to the Congregational Church in England and Wales or the Presbyterian Church of England. It was formed in 1972 by a Scheme of Union which is set out in full in *The Manual of the United Reformed Church*.

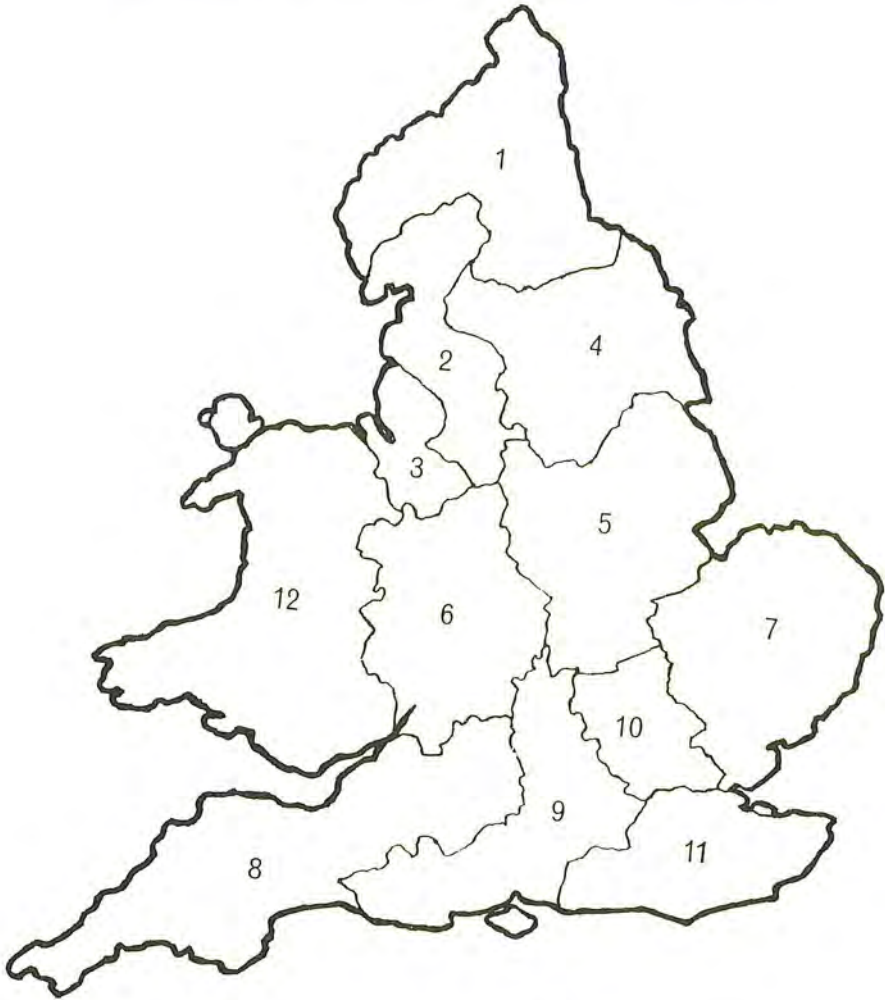
The structure is simple. Each local church is a member of a District Council, on which it is represented by the minister and one or more elders, according to the size of the local church. The District Council acts for its member churches, and cares for them. It visits each church at regular intervals, about once every five years, and reviews the total life of the church, including its buildings and its finances. It must approve (or withhold approval of) the movement of ministers in and out of churches, and it seeks to give help through its committees with all aspects of the life of member churches.

The Districts are grouped in twelve Provinces. Each Province has its own Moderator, who ministers to the whole Province, to every church and every minister. The Province has representatives from each church at the meetings of its Synod and it seeks to co-ordinate the work of the Districts, to stimulate interest in mission at home and abroad, and to handle the finances both in the gathering in of contributions and the allocating of grants and loans to churches. The Provinces have a series of committees to carry out the various duties.

The General Assembly, which acts for the whole Church, is made up of representatives from each of the District Councils (ministerial and lay in equal numbers). The Synods are represented by the Moderators and Synod Clerks and Treasurers. The Theological Colleges are also represented. The General Assembly meets once a year, usually in the month of May. It appoints its own Moderator who presides over the Assembly and serves as its chief representative for one year. The General Assembly appoints an Executive Committee to act on its behalf between Assemblies. This meets usually three times a year.

The Assembly also appoints committees, which are arranged in four Departments. Each Department has staff members who are appointed by the Assembly. The Departments exist to advise the Assembly and to serve the local churches. They report each year to the Assembly.

THE PROVINCES OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



Province

- 1 Northern
- 2 North Western
- 3 Mersey
- 4 Yorkshire and Humberside
- 5 East Midlands
- 6 West Midlands

Province

- 7 Eastern
- 8 South Western
- 9 Wessex
- 10 Thames North
- 11 Southern
- 12 Wales

THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

with some indication of what a local church may expect from each Department.

WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT

This department deals with the URC's relations with other Churches in Britain and abroad, and its membership of international bodies such as the Conference of European Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches. It is the means whereby the URC participates in the Council for World Mission. It has the following committees which seek to work through the Provincial and District committees, and also directly with each local church.

The Committee on Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home

... relates to the British Council of Churches, the Free Church Federal Council and the Churches' Unity Commission. It advises on local unions, missionary outreach and evangelism, sharing of buildings with other churches, ecumenical experiment and local Councils of Churches.

The Committee on Missionary and Ecumenical Work Abroad

... is responsible for contacts with overseas Churches. The greater part of its work concerns the Council for World Mission, of which the URC is a constituent member (see below). It supports the work of the Ghanaian and Chinese chaplaincies in London, and awards scholarships to overseas Church workers for study at St Andrew's College, Selly Oak, Birmingham, or elsewhere.

The Committee on Mission and Other Faiths

... is concerned to help the churches make contact with, understand and help those of other faiths, and help them to understand the Christian Faith. Religious education in multi-faith schools is also on its agenda.

The Department circulates material on all these subjects to every church, and the Departmental Secretary is available to correspond with or visit member churches.

THE COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

The Council was formed in 1966 by the coming together of the London Missionary Society and the Commonwealth Missionary Society, and at that time the Congregational Churches of the British Isles, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. It was then called the Congregational Council for World Mission. These national Church bodies took responsibility for maintaining the interest in the overseas mission among their own churches, finding people to go and the money needed. In 1972, following the formation of the URC, the overseas work of the former Presbyterian Church of England was added to the Council and the augmented body became the Council for World Mission (Congregational and Reformed). During 1976 all the Churches associated with CWM have been voting on a new structure, which will make it a partnership of Churches in every continent for mission throughout the world.

The same ideals, which have been honoured by famous achievements in the past, remain:

"To spread the knowledge of Christ throughout the world, to proclaim

the glorious Gospel of the blessed God and to share resources of people, money, faith and understanding in this work and witness."

The Council, through the World Church and Mission Department, issues regular information and leaflets, provides visual aids, an Annual Report and a Prayer Fellowship Handbook. The URC supports the work of CWM through the Unified Appeal and thus provides at present about two thirds of the total of CWM's contributions income.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY DEPARTMENT

This department is concerned with all the issues relating to the Churches' involvement in society. Its work includes social responsibility, international affairs, world development, industrial affairs, broadcasting and public education. Unlike other Departments it does not have standing committees on particular aspects of its work, but through its Central Committee it works with the Divisions of Community Affairs, International Affairs and Christian Aid at the British Council of Churches, and with a wide range of other bodies such as the National Council of Social Service, the Temperance Council, the Churches' Council on Gambling, the Consortium on Industrial Mission, the World Development Movement, Christian Concern for Southern Africa, the Brussels Ecumenical Centre, and the World Council of Churches.

From time to time the Department appoints working parties to focus thinking on particular issues, and some of these working parties meet in Provinces and Districts to ensure a wide range of local expertise and opinion. The reports of working parties are communicated to the churches through publications, the Information Service, *Reform*, and the Annual Report to General Assembly.

The Department tries to stimulate in the churches action in local communities, and involvement in the changes taking place in society locally, nationally and internationally. The Department, often in cooperation with other denominations, makes representations to the Government about national policies and legislation, and also represents the URC in its approaches to other nations and international bodies about contemporary trends and events.

The Department is at the service of the churches, and through correspondence and visits is ready to help churches and individual Christians to work out how to live the Christian faith in the world today.

CHURCH LIFE DEPARTMENT

The main responsibilities of this department are discharged through the following committees.

The Ministerial Training Committee

... covers the work of the recognised Theological Colleges, the selection and training of candidates for the ministry, post-ordination training and refresher courses for ministers.

The Supplementary Ministries Committee

... has responsibility for lay preachers, deaconesses and local pastors and their training (including the Lay Preachers' Certificate Course).

The Doctrine and Worship Committee

... deals with all questions relating to what the Church believes, and its forms of worship. *New Church Praise* (the supplement to the hymn books) and various printed Orders of Service are recent productions.

The Christian Education Committee

... covers the whole range of education in the local church, including study guides for adults, young people and children. Training courses for Elders and Family Church teachers are also available.

The Children's Work Committee

... works closely with the Christian Education Committee, and is concerned with all aspects of the Church's ministry to children.

The Youth Work Committee

... organises a wide programme of activities for young people, including Summer Camps, Easter cruises on the Norfolk Broads, and continental exchange groups. Help for all youth work and youth clubs is provided through the Youth Leadership Training Officers. The young people of the URC meet in an Annual Assembly in February. Their title is Fellowship of United Reformed Youth (FURY) and their badge is the old Christian symbol of the Fish. The URC Youth Policy calls for each District to organise one or more Youth Forums for older teenagers and young adults.

The Department also encourages Consultations and Retreats in all parts of the country. Each August, at The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire, there is an all-age holiday conference. CWM also arranges a similar conference in the same place at the beginning of August. Both conferences provide for fellowship with many church members from all over the country, and details of them are circulated to each church in January.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

The Committees of this department are responsible for:

- ... the Maintenance of the Ministry Scheme, including Pensions.
- ... the Unified Appeal. An explanatory leaflet is issued from time to time showing how the monies gathered by this appeal are allocated.
- ... the Central Accounts, including investments.
- ... certain Legal Trust matters, relating to the Presbyterian Church of England Trust and the Congregational Union of England and Wales Inc.
- ... limited assistance by way of loan and grant for urgent repairs to church buildings, or for alterations and extensions. Application has to be made through the Province, which will also advise on all property matters. The disposal and renting of Church property is the concern of the District and Province, to whom all initial inquiries about financial matters are addressed.

PUBLICATIONS AND PUBLICITY UNIT

Departments are served by this Unit in the production of printed material, ranging from single-page leaflets to the Year Book. The Year Book, published annually, contains details of every church and every minister belonging to the United Reformed Church.

The TAVISTOCK BOOKSHOP, situated in 86, Tavistock Place, London, W.C.1, belongs to the Church. It is a general bookshop, specialising in religious and church publications, and it carries a full range of URC publications and church supplies. Much of its work is done by mail order.

REFORM is the monthly magazine of the United Reformed Church. It carries the news and views of the URC, reviews of books, articles on all manner of subjects, and a lively correspondence from church members.

INFORMATION SERVICE - three times a year every church is sent a comprehensive package of letters, leaflets, reports etc. from Church House, 86, Tavistock Place, London.

CHURCH HOUSE STAFF

The Executive Staff are appointed by the General Assembly, and consist of:

- 1 General Secretary
- 4 Departmental Secretaries
- 1 Chief Accountant
- 1 Editor
- 1 Administrative Secretary
- 5 Assistant Secretaries.

These are supported by a clerical staff, both full-time and part-time. The total number of full-time staff (including all executive staff) is about 30, with about 20 part-time staff.

APPENDIX 2:
FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS IN
THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

1. Maintenance of the Ministry

The URC will have in existence from 1st January, 1977 a Unified Scheme of Ministerial Remuneration. There is a basic stipend for ministers varying with years of service, which is paid from the Central Office. As from 1st July, 1976, this is £1,900 per annum in the first 10 years of service, £1,950 in the second 10 years and £2,000 thereafter. In addition either a manse is provided and maintained in a reasonable state of decoration, or a housing allowance is paid. Each local church (or group of churches) will reimburse the minister in respect of expenses: it will either provide a car or pay an adequate car allowance. It will also be responsible for the payment for heating and lighting of the manse. In addition URC ministers in ecumenical situations, certain chaplaincies etc., approved by the URC will be included in the Scheme as well as Provincial Moderators and ministers on the staff at Church House. In addition certain smaller churches rank as 'oversight' pastorates and are served by ministers who have retired: the rate of remuneration is determined through the Province.

The fund from which these stipends are paid will be maintained by assessments on the local churches. These will be based on membership and what might be termed 'financial capacity'. The latter is measured by 'net assessable income' which really means the income necessary to support the ongoing work of that local church. From the total income, therefore, it is permissible to deduct the amount given to other causes - work overseas, Christian Aid, etc. In addition the cost of essential repairs and maintenance of church, church hall and manse may be deducted, and also an amount in respect of car provision.

A local church having met its assessment may decide to pay a supplement, over and above the basic stipend; the amount of this is actually added to the assessment, and then the basic stipend and the supplement are paid in one sum from the Central Office.

Children's Allowances

There was a difference in practice between the two parts of the URC and so far the URC has merely continued the existing practices. Broadly speaking as regards the future a minister on the basic stipend is eligible to receive children's allowances.

2. Pensions

The existing pension funds are being merged and the benefits brought into line. For all new entrants, a pension will be provided in return for contributions from the minister. The local church's share is included in the assessment.

A pension at the rate of 1/80th of the appropriate basic stipend per year of contributory service will be provided: the pension will be linked with the basic stipend. A 'death in service benefit' equal to a year's basic stipend will be paid. A widow's pension (at the rate of one half) will also be secured. The

minister will contribute annually 5% of the appropriate basic stipend; this is collected by monthly deductions from stipend. The total contribution rate is 12½%.

3. Unified Appeal

The work of the Church, apart from the maintenance of the ministry, is financed through the Unified Appeal. Of this work a large portion is, of course, work overseas and includes the URC's contribution to CWM. But in addition money is needed for ministerial training, supplementary ministries, youth work, ecumenical work and the costs of the General Assembly and administration generally.

Budgets are prepared and the total target allocated between the Provinces, who further split them between districts and the local churches.

APPENDIX 3:
FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS
OF UNIFICATION FOR CHURCHES OF CHRIST

1. National Structure

In the event of unification with the URC those Churches of Christ congregations which vote for unification will become as local churches part of the appropriate District of the URC. A list of these was given in Part III of the Joint Committee's Report for 1974. The churches in Scotland will form a new and separate District. The privileges and responsibilities of local churches as outlined in paragraphs 8 to 11 of the URC Scheme of Union (see pages 37-46) will apply.

The work of Churches of Christ Districts and National Committees will be merged with that of the URC Districts, Provinces and Departments. Special provision will need to be made for the inter-church commitments of the churches in Scotland. A transition period will be planned to ensure that no aspect of work at present undertaken by either Church is neglected.

Both Churches of Christ and the United Reformed Church are members of the British Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, so there would be no change here. The URC is a member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational), which has 127 member churches in 75 different countries with a membership of some 55 million people. The General Secretariat of the Alliance is based in Geneva and has two special departments—for Theological Studies and for Cooperation and Witness. The URC will seek to continue the existing relationships between Churches of Christ and other Disciple bodies throughout the world, such as the Disciples' Ecumenical Consultative Council and the quinquennial gatherings of the World Convention of Churches of Christ (Disciples).

2. Maintenance of the Ministry

Churches of Christ already operate a unified scheme of ministerial remuneration, providing from 1 September 1976 a stipend scale of £1818 p.a. in the first seven years of service, £1908 p.a. in years 8-14, £1968 p.a. in years 15-19 and £2028 p.a. from year 20 onwards. In addition a manse is provided and each local church reimburses the minister for agreed expenses. No minister of Churches of Christ who wishes to become a minister in the united Church will be disturbed in his present pastorate as a result of unification, provided that the congregation(s) he serves vote(s) in favour of the Proposals for Unification. In no circumstances will a minister who enters the united Church receive a lower stipend than at present. Consideration will need to be given to the harmonising of stipend scales and other provisions for the support of the full-time ministry.

3. Pensions

Churches of Christ have their own pension scheme. The benefits due to all ministers currently on the list of ministers will be protected, whether or not all enter the URC. Equalisation of pension payments and benefits will need to be considered in the light of existing provisions and proposed government legislation.

4. Unified Appeal

The nearest parallel to the Unified Appeal of the URC in Churches of Christ is Unified Finance, a voluntary scheme supported by rather more than half the churches and contributing rather less than half the funds required for national work, apart from payments for ministerial service. The URC system of financial support both for general work and for the maintenance of the ministry constitutes a major change for Churches of Christ, but it is a natural consequence of the change involved in unification whereby each congregation becomes part of a Church rather than a member of a voluntary association of churches. The application of this financial system to each uniting congregation will be worked out in detail by local consultation.

5. Those engaged in general service

In Churches of Christ the following have been seconded or appointed to general work in a full-time capacity:

1 General Secretary

1 Warden of Overdale College (who also serves as Secretary/Treasurer of the Publications Department, and Stewardship Secretary)

1 Education Officer (who is currently serving the URC for one-third of his time).

Part-time service is given by:

1 Administrative Assistant to the General Secretary

1 Secretary/Organiser for the Christian Women's Fellowship

1 Social Questions Organiser (who also has responsibility for the Churches of Christ Housing Association and the Christian Fellowship Association).

1 Financial Secretary.

Discussions will be held with the appropriate persons in both the URC and Churches of Christ concerning the safeguarding of the future of those engaged in general service.

6. Church Property

The changes relating to church property as a result of unification will be similar to those which took place in former Congregational churches which became part of the URC. Existing trustees will continue to hold their property, but their duties will now be governed by new or extended trusts.

All property belonging to a uniting Church of Christ will belong to the corresponding local church. Existing Trust Deeds of places of worship, manses and other residences will take effect as if the operative provisions were replaced by those contained in the URC Trusts for places of worship or manses and other residences (see pages 60-64). Every Church of Christ which does not pass a resolution for unification will continue in being and retain its property.

All other property of the Association, or held for its purposes or for purposes of Churches of Christ will have its purposes extended to include purposes of the URC. Following the date of unification all such property will be allocated by the Charity Commissioners between the URC and those Churches of Christ which do not pass a resolution for unification.

Gifts taking effect after the date of unification in favour of Churches of Christ national committees or any body connected with Churches of Christ which has ceased to exist, will go to the corresponding body in the URC. This would apply in particular to a bequest made before the date of unification by someone who died after it.

