

**THE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
1976**

3rd — 6th MAY

THE CITY TEMPLE

Holborn Viaduct, London EC1A 2DE

**REPORTS
TO ASSEMBLY**

The United Reformed Church in England & Wales
86 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RT

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The United Reformed Church

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES and other papers submitted to the GENERAL ASSEMBLY London, 3rd – 6th May, 1976

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. In accordance with the undertaking given to last Assembly the Executive Committee has met on three occasions only and reports in this briefer form. It has set the first Thursdays of November, February and July as fixed dates for its meetings.

2. **Office Structure** At two meetings the Committee considered aspects of the report on the work of the office prepared by Miss Una Brown and Dr Everard. A number of their proposals were put into effect immediately since they involved decisions internal to the office. At the meeting in November three resolutions were passed, namely:

The Executive Committee

- (a) invited the Central Committees of the four Departments to review the roles of Chairmen, Secretaries and members of Committees to ensure that the work load is evenly shared and the value of the team approach is readily achieved.
- (b) welcomed the proposal to appoint the Revd R. O. Latham as Deputy General Secretary on the lines set out in the report and asked him to undertake these additional duties immediately. The Chairman expressed the good wishes of the Executive to Mr. Latham.
- (c) agreed that the work carried out by the Publications and Publicity Committee shall no longer be the concern of the F & A Department, but shall be directly related to the Central Secretariat, and asked the Chairman and Secretary of that Committee to consult with those responsible for the Bookshop and for *Reform* as to the best way in which to keep all the publicising activities of the Church in relationship and to report.

3. The Assembly Moderator's Advisory Committee was asked to keep the larger reorganisation of the Departments under review and to bring proposals to the Executive or the Assembly whenever it is in a position to do so. The meeting in January was informed of proposals prepared by the Publications and Publicity Unit, but these were not submitted for consideration as no opportunity had been found for examination of their effect on other parts of the office.

4. A proposal to appoint an 'outside' Chairman to serve with the Provincial Moderators at their meetings was not approved, but a Provincial Moderator was added to the membership of the Assembly Moderator's Advisory Committee.

5. **Synod Matters** Directors were appointed to County Union Trust bodies in Wiltshire and East Somerset, Lancashire, Berkshire, London, Gloucester and Dorset. Note was taken of the renaming of District 58 as Leicestershire instead of Leicester and Rutland, and of the Blackburn District as North East Lancashire District.

ASSEMBLY MATTERS

6. **Synods and Districts** To implement the instruction that the working of Synods and Districts should be reviewed the Executive appointed ten people, under the Revd Ronald Bocking as Chairman and with the Revd Malcolm Hanson as Secretary, instructing them to consult as widely as necessary and to report with recommendations to the Executive and to the Assembly. The group has begun its work, but it is not yet ready to report.

7. **Filling of Vacant Pastorates** Another group with Principal A. G. Macleod as Chairman and the Revd David Hannen as Secretary was appointed to report on the processes to be followed in the filling of vacancies. The group reported to the February Executive which approved their report in general, and instructed the Assembly Moderator's Committee to do some redrafting and then to submit it for acceptance by the Assembly as a guide to action. It will be presented as a separate paper.

8. **Ministers emeriti** On the proposal that ministers emeriti should have full voting rights in Synods and District Councils, the Executive resolved to take no action believing that the power to add names to the full membership of the Councils gave adequate means to deal with this concern. This decision was communicated to the Mersey Synod which raised it at the Assembly and their further comment invited.

9. **Deployment Committee** The Committee appointed a Deployment Committee in accordance with the proposals received at last Assembly and this is now at work under the Chairmanship of the Revd P. McCall and with the Revd N. Beard as Secretary.

10. **The John Huxtable Prize** Since Dr Huxtable had given back part of the gift made to him at the Assembly to provide a prize for essays on a theological subject, arrangements were made to put this in train and the first prize will be awarded in 1976. Dr Huxtable was reluctant to allow his name to be attached to the prize, but after much persuasion agreed.

11. **Accounts** The Accounts for 1974 were finally completed and adopted at the November meeting. Copies were made available to those interested, but they were not otherwise published.

12. **Wessex Provincial Moderator** At its June meeting the Executive received and agreed to accept the resignation of the Revd Douglas Smith as Moderator of the Wessex Province as from 22nd September, 1976. A Committee was appointed in accordance with the rules of procedure which after two meetings held within the Province was able to report its recommendation to the next meeting that the Revd Peter S. Cheney be appointed as from September 1st, 1976. A resolution is submitted on this matter.

13. **Nominations Committee** The Nominations Committee has reported at each meeting and sundry vacancies on Committee were filled and other urgent appointments made. These will appear in the report of the Nominations Committee to the Assembly. A group representative of various interests was set up to further the concern for Christian Stewardship and this group will report to the Assembly.

14. **Election of Assembly Moderator** Consideration was given to the rules governing the election of the Moderator of the General Assembly, and on recommendation of a group under Sir Harold Banwell, a paper setting out some alternative methods was sent to Synods and Districts. In the light of their comments a resolution will be submitted to enable Assembly to make a decision as to the methods to be followed in future years.

15. **Thames North Provincial Moderator** The appointment of the Revd R. J. Hall as Moderator of the Thames North Province being due for review, a Committee was appointed which unanimously recommends that his appointment be extended for a further two years from September 1976.

16. **Southern Provincial Moderator** The Executive was deeply concerned about a period of sustained illness which made it impossible for the Revd V. N. J. Lewis to fulfil all his duties. It was able to arrange for the Revd Cyril Franks to serve in an interim capacity and expressed its thanks to his church at Purley for making this possible.

17. **Housing in Retirement** The provision for housing in retirement being made at present in a variety of ways, the Executive welcomed the initiative being taken by the Retired Presbyterian Ministers Housing Society to extend its operation and passed the following resolution:

The Executive resolves that the Retired Presbyterian Ministers Housing Society be authorised to take such legal advice and such action as may be necessary to enable the Society fully to represent the requirements of housing for retired ministers of the United Reformed Church and their widows. Such action to include a change of name and the enlarging of the objects of the Society.

A report of progress made will be submitted by the Society.

18. **Consortium on Industrial Mission** At the instance of the Church and Society Department the Executive welcomed the establishment of the Churches Consortium on Industrial Mission and approved the proposals for its membership, terms of reference and servicing. Further report on its activities will be the concern of the Department.

19. **Assembly '76 - '79** On proposals from the Business Committee the Executive made adjustments to the times of meeting of the Assembly in 1976 and agreed to submit proposals for meetings in 1977, 78 and 79, and these are set out in resolutions.

20. **Doctrine and Worship Committee** The Executive authorised the Doctrine and Worship Committee to send comments on behalf of the URC on the WCC paper on 'One Baptism, One Eucharist and a Mutually Recognised Ministry'.

21. **Churches' Unity Commission** General approval was given to a method of procedure in preparing a reply to the second report of the Unity Commission and this will be reported through the World Church and Mission Department.

22. **Christian Education Secretary** On the recommendation of the Church Life Department it was agreed that the post of Teacher Training Officer be not refilled when the present appointment is completed in August 1977, but that steps be taken to appoint a Christian Education Secretary to commence if possible in January 1976. A special Committee was authorised to make the appointment and the Revd Keith Forecast took up this work as from April 1st, 1976, his appointment being until August 31st, 1981.

23. **Budget** At its February meeting the Committee authorised a group consisting of the Departmental Officers, together with representatives of the Provincial Moderators and appropriate Committees within the F & A Department, to prepare the Budget for 1977 for submission to the Assembly.

24. **Length of Service of Secretaries** Consideration was given at two meetings to the length of any extension to the periods of service of Secretaries within Assembly Departments. It was finally agreed that the Nominations Committee be authorised to propose the extension of the chairman or secretary of a committee, at that Committee's explicit request, and for a period shorter than the original appointment.

The Minute Book of the Executive Committee will be available at the Assembly.

A. L. Macarthur, *Clerk*

RESOLUTIONS:

1. The Assembly receives the paper on procedures for the filling of vacant pastorates and commends it to Synods and Districts for their guidance.
2. The Assembly appoints the Revd Peter Sutherland Chesney as Moderator of the Wessex Province from 1st September, 1976 for a period of seven years.
3. The Assembly re-appoints the Revd R. J. Hall as Moderator of Thames North Province for a further period of two years from September 1976.
4. The Assembly resolves that the rules of procedure for the election of the Moderator of the General Assembly be revised as follows - the revision to take effect as from the close of this Assembly.
 - Part III (3) After 'a Synod' add the words 'the consent of the nominee not being required'.
 - (7) Delete 'but no other information' and 'at least 14 clear days'.
add at end of paragraph, 'Brief indication of reasons for the nomination as supplied by the Synod concerned may be circulated with the ballot paper.'
 - (8) Shall now read: 'Voting papers shall be placed in a ballot box in the meeting place of the Assembly up to the close of business on the second day of meeting. The unopened box shall then be delivered to the Tellers by whom alone it shall be opened. They shall report the result of the ballot to the Assembly at its final session.'
 - (9) Delete the first sentence.

5. The Assembly confirms the acceptance of the invitation of the West Midlands Synod to meet in Birmingham in 1977 and resolves to meet at 3 p.m. on Monday, May 2nd, 1977 in that city, or at such other time and place as may be duly appointed.
6. The Assembly accepts the invitation of the Mersey Synod to meet in Southport in 1978 and resolves to meet there at 3 pm on Monday, May 1st, 1978 or at such other time and place as may be duly appointed.
7. The Assembly accepts the invitation of the Yorkshire Synod to meet within its bounds in 1979 and requests that Synod to arrange that in that year
 - (a) the Assembly be held residentially.
 - (b) it take place at the end of June.
 - (c) it be held over the last week-end of that month commencing on the Friday afternoon and concluding its business by Monday afternoon.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: APPENDIX 1

Deployment Committee

1. The committee has begun its work and sees its task as:—
 - (i) To arrive at an accurate assessment of our present Ministerial strength and its distribution throughout the Church.
 - (ii) To make a statistical computation of the likely Ministerial resources in the foreseeable future and to assess the needs of the Church in terms of total membership figures and viable pastorates in the various provinces.
2. Having regard to the differing situations throughout the Provinces and District Councils, and also to the special factors which might obtain in certain areas, the committee feels that the right way to proceed is not to work out a hard and fast scheme and promote it from the top, but rather work in close consultation with the Provinces.
3. Towards this end the committee is seeking to elicit as soon as possible from Provinces their provisional views on deployment within their respective Districts, and the committee hopes to be able to meet representatives of the Provinces at a Conference in September to work out together with them a realistic policy of deployment.

Peter McCall, *Chairman*
J. Norman Beard, *Secretary*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: APPENDIX 2

Housing for Retired Ministers

1. Since Assembly last met a considerable amount of thought has been given to this matter by the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, the Trustees of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and the Retired Presbyterian Ministers Housing Society. As a result of this it is encouraging to report that a good deal of agreement in principle has been reached, and some progress made which is summarised in paras. 2 - 5.
2. The Retired Presbyterian Ministers Housing Society Ltd, has agreed to:
 - (a) enlarge its Committee of Management from 7 to 15 members, the additional members being nominated by the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee. (This has now been done and is in operation.)
 - (b) seek the approval of the Registrar of Friendly Societies to amend the Rules of the Society, firstly to change its name to that of the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society, and also, if possible, to extend the scope of the Rules to permit the Society to undertake a wider range of help to retired Ministers than is possible at present.

3. The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee has expressed its agreement with, and encouragement for the concept of one Society operating for the whole denomination in the field of housing for retired Ministers.

4. The Trustees of the Congregational Union of England and Wales have confirmed their position as that of custodian Trustees and have indicated their willingness to delegate the management and disposals of properties owned by that Trust to the new Society.

5. It is hoped that Incorporated County Unions and individual Churches who already own properties, or acquire properties to be, occupied by retired Ministers will also co-operate with the new Society in allocating and dealing with such properties.

6. Subject, therefore, to the approval of the Registrar of Friendly Societies, as referred to above, it is hoped that the URC may shortly have one operational body solely responsible for the raising of funds for the Appeal for Housing for Retired Ministers and for the allocation of properties and funds to retired Ministers in the future.

H. E. GREENING

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly notes with pleasure the progress so far made in dealing with housing for retired Ministers, and approves the action taken, and to be undertaken, in fulfilment of the objectives set out in the Report.
2. The Assembly agrees that the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society shall be responsible to, and report through the Central Committee of the Finance and Administration Department.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: APPENDIX 3

Christian Stewardship

Chairman: Mr. Ronald S. Martin

Secretary: The Revd Charles K. Meachin

1. At the Assembly in May 1975, the Christian Stewardship Group published a report entitled 'Christian Stewardship — WHY and HOW? This report was issued to all those present at the Assembly and subsequently it has been widely distributed in our churches. The report reminds us that the Church's faith is the measure of its resources. Christian commitment is not vague but intensely practical and all embracing; it involves every detail of our life. If Jesus is indeed the Saviour of the World, then to be a Christian cannot mean less than a total commitment to Him in obedience and service and the placing of every department of life under His Sovereignty and control. Stewardship is a Christian duty and privilege embracing the whole of our existence. It is an inescapable responsibility which affects the use we make of all of our time, our abilities and our money.

2. The report is being well received and used in Elders' and Church Meetings to discuss the aim and purpose of the Church and ask, "What do we need in terms of People, Programme, Plant and Pounds to exercise our mission as we witness to all men the love of God and neighbour?".

3. The Group is grateful to the churches who have responded to the Resolution on Christian Stewardship adopted at the Assembly in 1975. However, the majority of churches have not in fact replied to the resolution. This, of course, does not mean that active consideration of the report is not taking place, but the Group is disturbed to learn that, although a copy of the report was issued free to all churches, in some cases it has not even been read. It is very important to emphasise that **Christian Stewardship** involves **renewal** and **evangelism** and so endeavour to persuade our churches to take very seriously this call to a reappraisal of all our resources. The replies received suggest that many churches are seriously undertaking the need to examine and implement Christian Stewardship as a means towards renewal and evangelism.

4. The Group arranged a consultation for Provincial representatives to provide inspiration and information to help local churches implement this call to Christian Stewardship. The consultation proved to be an outstanding success with those attending re-emphasising the fact that the Church as a whole must take up urgently the meaning of **membership of the Church** — IT MUST COME TO MEAN MORE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH — the commitment which is implied needs to be spelled out more firmly and will mean that members know that they have a responsibility for Mission. The consultation hopes that Provinces and Districts will promote and sponsor consultations and training programmes to help and encourage local churches respond to the call to Christian Stewardship and renewal.

5. The Group commends to local Churches the vast amount of material available to help them respond to the call to Christian Stewardship viz. 'Belonging to the Church', 'Christian Stewardship — WHY and HOW?', 'Study Kit for Elders', material from the Churches of Christ and the Church of Scotland.

6. The Group shares fully in the British Council of Churches Standing Conference on Christian Stewardship and is encouraging the BCC to produce a 'Stewardship Kit'.

RESOLUTION

The Assembly calls upon Synods and District Councils to promote and sponsor training programmes to help encourage local churches respond to the call to Christian Stewardship, renewal and evangelism.

APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd Harold M. Springbett

Secretary: The Revd Arthur L. Macarthur

The Committee has met twice during the year and reports the following:

1. Admissions:

By Ordination: The Revds Bryan Michael Alderson, James Graeme Davidson Allan, David Atkinson, Edward Norman Barrow, Ronald Blick, Stuart James Brock, Martin Frederick Camroux, Graham Carling, Barry Edward Carter, Ian Sutherland Duncan, John Farmer, Barry F. Jones, Moira Helen Kerr, Ian McLeod, David Miller, John Reginald William Paull, David Raymond Peel, Bryan Reginald Shirley, David Edmund Robertson Sparks, John Edward Reid Stevenson, Kenneth John Summers, Kenneth James Tracey.

By transfer from other Churches or CWM: The Revds H. M. Abba, B. Bailey, H. E. Berry, N. Clarke, J. Hutchison, F. Larkworthy, J. M. Lloyd, R. D. Robinson, R. L. Whittle.

By replacement on the Roll: The Revd Dr R. Abba, The Revd Cynthia Livingstone.

2. Deletions:

By transfer to other Churches: The Revds F. O. Brown, J. G. Davey, Paul M. Davies, G. Mitchell.

By resignation from the Ministry: The Revd D. Ackling.

3. Certificates of Eligibility In accordance with the rules regarding applications passed by the first Assembly, the Committee has issued certificates of eligibility for a call in the following cases: The Revds P. Brewer, Louise Drake, J. B. Kidd, Gareth Thomas, D. Wall.

4. Local Pastors The following additions to the Register of Local Pastors were reported to have been made by the Supplementary Ministries Committee: J. W. Candler, Kenneth Cox, G. S. Knott, Nigel Lemon, Andrew Lorimer, W. E. Royle, F. W. Webb, Miss W. P. Wenyon, Stanley Whitfield.

5. Methods of Procedure The Committee continues to review its methods of procedure in the light of the Scheme of Union and the rules laid down for its work, and a memorandum was circulated to the Provincial Moderators which they gladly received as guidance for the immediate future. If need arises the matter will be further considered. In particular further thought will be given to the processes by which ordinands are received.

6. Ministerial Membership of Local Churches The Committee noted that in both the uniting traditions ministers were expected to have their names on the roll of a local church and submits a proposal for the approval of the Assembly.

7. Ministerial Accountability Questions about ministerial accountability in the URC have been raised with the Committee and a paper has been circulated to the Committee and to the Provincial Moderators. This is now being re-drafted and will be sent to Synods and Districts for comment.

8. Mutual Eligibility The Assembly of the Church of Scotland at its meeting in 1975 approved the proposals regarding Mutual Eligibility and sent them to Presbyteries. A final decision will be made at the Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1976.

RESOLUTION

1. The Assembly agrees that it shall be normal for ministers in charges to have their names placed on the roll of the church they serve and that ministers of the United Reformed Church who are retired, or serving otherwise than as ministers of local churches, shall normally be members of a local church of the United Reformed Church or, because of residence or for other good reason, of some other recognised Christian fellowship.

2. The Assembly receives Belgrave Union Church, Loughborough Road, Leicester as a local church of the United Reformed Church.

PUBLICATIONS AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd R. T. Brooks

Secretary: Percy W. Bush

1. The Executive Committee has withdrawn this committee from the oversight of Finance and Administration Department. It is now related to the General Secretary. The chairman and the three senior staff (Percy Bush, John Gregory and Edmund Major) submitted a report at the request of the Executive Committee on the best way to combine all the publicising activities of the URC.

Tavistock Bookshop Sub-Committee

2. Under the Revd D. W. Ager's chairmanship the committee is meeting the needs of a changing situation. Counter sales are mainly to the visitors to 86 Tavistock Place and greater emphasis is being placed upon mail orders and bookstalls for conferences and local churches despite the difficulties through rising postage costs and stock deterioration if books are retained for long periods.

3. Orders for over 30,000 copies of New Church Praise were dealt with in seven months and gross receipts in 1975 rose to £100,870 (£60,500 in 1974). After allowing for New Church Praise receipts were approximately 25% up on the previous year and £4,000 from accumulated profits was transferred to the URC.

4. Mr. Edmund Major became manager in August and Mr. A. E. Hockley willingly reverted to his original appointment as accountant. The committee is grateful for the successful work done by Mr. Hockley in a role which no one foresaw when he was originally appointed. Continued support by members and churches enables the Bookshop to provide a better service and to contribute to the URC's resources.

Reform (Management and Promotion) Sub-Committee

5. The chairman, the Revd Dr. Robert Duce, has led the Committee in coping with unprecedented increases in postal costs; (£360 **per issue** in 1973/4; £780 in 1975/6). This amounts to over £8500 per year. Printing and paper costs increased by nearly 50% to about £1500 per issue. Advertising revenue was above expectations.

6. Churches are responding to the Promotion Campaign but subscriptions for 1976 were 24,200 at the end of February, 1600 fewer than at the same period in 1975. Increased circulation is essential if Reform is to remain financially viable. One Reform to every **four members** of the URC would increase subscriptions by nearly 20,000 copies per issue. 'Refer to Reform' is being retained as a slogan commending its content and promoting its readership and sale. We congratulate the Editor and his panel on an attractive and professional publication.

General Publications and Services Sub-Committee

7. The Revd T. A. Chadwick continues as chairman of this committee. Publications usually represent the thinking of the URC's committees and departments and enable the Church to benefit from their work. During 1975 they included the Year Book, Diary and 30 other items plus three re-prints. Publications to the value of £9500 (wholesale) were supplied to the bookshop.

8. Printing costs are still rising. New processes and sources of supply are explored regularly to contain costs. Our own off-set and duplicating machines cope with over 400,000 print runs every quarter.

9. The first full music edition of New Church Praise sold out four months after publication. Total sales to retailers at 1st January 1976 amounted to over 36,500 copies.

Publicity Group

10. Using selective approaches this has won attention from the media. The group has concentrated on feeding the local media with information about visits by the Moderator of the General Assembly and on reports about newsworthy events at national level.

11. The chairman, the Revd Edmund Banyard, urges Provinces and Districts to set up effective procedures for bringing their work to the attention of their local press and radio.

RESOLUTION

The Assembly notes the work of the Publications and Publicity Committee during a difficult period and congratulates it on the increase in business through Tavistock Bookshop and the continuance of Reform and other essential services to the Church.

JOINT COMMITTEE FOR NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN CHURCHES OF CHRIST AND THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Report for 1976

1. When the Committee met in January to consider comments on the Interim Report for 1975, replies had been received from 13 out of 19 Churches of Christ Districts, 6 out of 12 URC Provinces, and 17 out of 65 URC Districts. A few replies came in later, including one from another URC District, but they did not alter the previous pattern significantly. The Churches of Christ response was encouraging, and in particular indicated a majority willingness to make both forms of baptism available from the point of union. The Committee had difficulty in interpreting the disappointing URC response: it was aware that some Districts which had discussed the Report had made no comment, and also that some Districts had not discussed the Report at all. It seemed fairly safe to assume that wherever there was strong opposition to the Committee's proposals, this had been made known. But even where there was criticism, there was also encouragement to carry on.

2. The comments as a whole revealed that there was still some disquiet about the Committee's proposals on baptism and ministry. In particular there was a significant minority in the URC which was unhappy about the possibility of a second baptismal rite for someone who had grave doubts about the validity of his baptism as an infant; and there was a request from Churches of Christ for further clarification on presidency at communion. The Committee has therefore given further consideration to these matters, and is hopeful that a way forward might be found which will be widely supported in both Churches; for the Committee is particularly anxious that its proposals should not lead to the alienation of any group within the two Churches. The time required for the careful drafting of a full report on these issues means that a final report is unlikely to be ready before the early summer. The Committee therefore proposes the following procedures, which will not be the same for each Church because the processes and timetable involved are different. The URC Assembly will be asked to authorise the Executive Committee to receive the Joint Committee's final report and, if it thinks fit, to send the report to Synods, District Councils and local churches in preparation for the first determinative vote at the Assembly of 1977. The Churches of Christ Conference will be asked to authorise the final report to be sent to the churches, together with the necessary legal material when that is ready.

3. Two particular points raised in several replies, however, do seem worthy of immediate comment by the Committee. One concerns the size of Churches of Christ. It has been suggested, directly or indirectly, that the Churches of Christ are too small for the URC to bother with. The Committee believes that this suggestion should be answered frankly. The URC is already the result of a union of Churches of unequal size, and incorporates the principle that the Holy Spirit may speak through few as well as through many. In this case the ecumenical importance of the conversations is not in the numbers involved in the possible outcome. If union takes place, other Churches will be widely interested in the creative new ideas on ministry and in a bridging of the division between infant-baptism and believer-baptists for the first time in Western Europe or North America. It would be a valuable model for the ecumenical movement, regardless of the size of Churches of Christ. On the matter of size, however, there has been concern in, for example, the Free Church Federal Council, about whether small Churches can take a meaningful part in the movement towards union among much larger ones; and the Committee has always held that this union could show that union is possible without the larger Church simply swallowing the smaller one. Finally, it should be remembered that Churches of Christ responded to the invitation of the Congregational-Presbyterian Joint Committee by sending observers, and then subsequently invited the URC to open negotiations. The URC accepted that invitation in pursuance of its stated aim that its union should be open-ended.

4. The other point concerns the relationship between these negotiations and wider union. There still seems to be some concern that this union will in some way make wider union more difficult.

The Committee, nearly half of whose members are also members of the Churches' Unity Commission, does not share this view. The Churches' Unity Commission has never suggested that bilateral union negotiations should be held up until the multilateral discussion is complete, but has on the contrary recognised that some member Churches of the Commission may proceed more rapidly along the road of union than others. The Commission has also encouraged the Joint Committee in its work. Final answers to the Commission's 'Ten Propositions', published earlier this year, are not expected before the middle of 1977: only then will the Commission be able to see what further progress is possible and at what speed. The Committee therefore sees no reason to delay its own proposals. It feels that the overlap in membership between itself and the Commission is an adequate guarantee that it will constantly be aware of the thinking in the Commission. Furthermore, it is convinced that the Commission would be encouraged by a successful union between the two Churches.

Norman Goodall, *Chairman*
David M. Thompson, *Secretary*

RESOLUTIONS:

1. The Assembly receives the Report.
2. The Assembly authorises the Executive Committee to receive the Joint Committee's final report and, if it thinks fit, to send the report to Synods, District Councils and local churches in preparation for the first determinative vote at the Assembly of 1977.

THE MODERATORS' REPORT

Pastorates and Ministers

1. From time to time the Moderators have reported on the number of vacant churches seeking ministers and the number of ministers seeking a move. The situation at present is that there are 94 full-time, and 17 oversight pastorates seeking ministers. There are 80 ministers, known to the Moderators, as seeking a move. On the face of it the problem is fairly straightforward, except for the 14 full-time and 17 part-time churches for which we cannot at present suggest the name of a minister they might consider. However it must be pointed out that 11 of the ministers are over 60 and a further 16 are between 55 and 60 years of age. In our experience churches are somewhat reluctant to consider ministers who have reached this age group. We think that on the evidence here given, churches will either have to think again about the age of a prospective minister or face a prolonged period of vacancy.
2. It could be argued that in these circumstances the settlement of ministers should be easy but there are circumstances over which neither Moderators nor anyone else have much control. A church has the right to make up its own mind about the minister it will call and a minister has the equal right to turn down an invitation if he is not led to accept it. If we worked under another system whereby ministers were "placed" in churches the settlement of ministers might be more easily accomplished, but as it is Moderators and everybody else have to accept the limitations the system imposes on us.
3. It may be noticed that the number of churches seeking settlement is considerably less than it used to be. This is due to more churches linking to form groups (which it might be argued is a good thing) but more sinister is the fact that more churches have become so weak that they cannot possibly support a ministry; sometimes geography makes it difficult to form groups into which these may be fitted and, of course, the reluctance on the part of some to admit they ought to share a ministry with others.
4. We find that an increasing amount of our time is now taken up with discussions and schemes for ecumenical co-operation. There is a growing number of pastorates formed by linking or merging churches of our own with those of some other denomination. We warmly welcome this and foresee an increase in this pattern which reaches across denominational frontiers. We also find ourselves being more and more involved in ecumenical discussions about Church Unity and Covenanting. All of this is of great importance. Although it adds to the work that we have to do we feel that it merits our full support.

The State of our Churches

5. We are becoming very concerned about the state of some of our churches. While a few are gaining strength and a large number managing to maintain positions without making any measurable progress, far more are in a state of decline. Many factors can be blamed for this, but we are sure that one reason is that the members have lost their sense of purpose, they are no longer sure why they are a church or what a church really is. Having lost the reason for their existence they must inevitably decline. Strong and living fellowships cannot be built up on a programme of purely social activities even if some of them are designed for the good of the general public, because if there is a lack of the motivating dynamic of lives fully committed to the Gospel, then these schemes, however worthy, must peter out. We are often told by churches seeking a minister that what they need is a bright young man "who will attract the young people". It must be said that no matter how young or bright, a minister is not likely to attract either young or old to a fellowship that has lost the reason for its being which is a deep rooted faith in the living Lord. It sometimes appears that the motive for "attracting young people" to a church is more for the sake of keeping up their numbers than a desire that men shall know their Lord and confess and serve Him gladly. We are not arguing for a retrenchment of social outreach but for a renewal of the living faith that gives it powers and direction.

Synods and District Meetings

6. There seems to be a growing fashionable exercise of gazing contemplatively at conciliar and synodical navels. To judge from correspondence in *Reform* there seems to be two or more distinct schools of thought on these matters. One is that Synods and District Meetings ought to be judged on their entertainment value and nothing dreary or dull should be included on any Agenda.

7. We, who have to suffer more of this than the average, would gladly concede that business should be presented in as interesting a way as possible but unfortunately so much of what has to be done for the good ordering of the Church has little entertainment value but it must be dealt with. Another idea is that all the dull and dreary work ought to be done by committees (has no one any feeling for committee members?). If this were so then there would be an immediate outcry of a Synod being a rubber stamp while all the real work was done in secret by a cabal of the chosen few. No one is better aware than a Moderator how dull and dreary so much of the work can be, for the greater part of his working week is taken up with matters of fact routine, this is enlivened occasionally by some "purple passage" which usually causes more trouble and heart ache than what is judged to be ordinary and routine.

8. It must be said that the work of the Church, whatever it be, is our duty and those who belong to the Church must carry their share of the burden with as much cheerfulness as they can muster. So much depends on one's attitude of mind and the acceptance of duties as part of our commitment puts them in their proper perspective.

Aid to ministers and churches on settlement

9. Moderators have the task of requesting from Trust Funds aid to some churches for the payment of the cost of removal expenses for a new minister. There are rules that apply but we seek to interpret them as generously as possible and those managing the Trusts are most helpful. A church that has called a new minister is faced with the costs of redecoration of the manse as well as a heavy bill for the removal of his goods and chattels to that manse. This is one side of the coin but there is another which faces the minister viz. that very rarely do the carpets and curtains fit the new manse and often any gift of money he may receive from the church he leaves is eaten up by the costs he faces in settling into the new home. In the secular world an employee who is moved from one part of the country to another by his firm is often given a "disturbance allowance". Even in these days of financial stringency we feel that this is a matter which ought to be looked at by some appropriate committee of the Church to see if there is any way of easing the burden that must fall on ministerial budgets.

10. During the year we said our farewells to our colleague Norman Beard on his retirement and we welcomed his successor, Alasdair Walker, who has settled happily and usefully among us. We shall bid goodbye to another well-known colleague, Douglas Smith, who is retiring this year. We shall miss his warm and genial friendship and wise counsel but we wish him a long and happy retirement. We shared the concern of many at the illness of Vernon Lewis during this year, and look forward to his complete recovery.

11. We offer to R. J. Hall our good wishes for his year as Moderator of the General Assembly of the URC and assure him of our prayers and loyal support for his term of office.

CHURCH LIFE DEPARTMENT

Chairman: The Revd. Dr. Kenneth Slack

Secretary: The Revd. Robert O. Latham

The fourth report of the Church Life Department to the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church

INTRODUCTION

1. In a letter to The Times in February of this year on the subject of Christian doubt the following quotation appeared from the Basque Catholic writer Unamuno:

“Those who believe they believe in God, but without passion in their heart, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt and even despair, believe only in the idea of God, not in God himself.”

Any believer, who is true to himself will recognize the truth of Unamuno’s assertion. The Church is a fellowship of sinners and doubters who are seeking faith, and we know, at the same time, that we have received that faith and forgiveness by which we live.

2. Our function as the Church Life department is to try to minister to the needs of the churches as they are made known, or as they are experienced. The chairmen and committees of the department are ministers and members of our churches from all parts of the country. Each brings his own experience, and his own doubts. Together, with the staff members, we seek to serve the Lord of the Church by serving His people.

3. Those who would not easily express their doubts in the words of the Basque theologian could do so more easily if he had been writing about the Church, and not about God. “Those who believe they believe in the Church, but without passion in their heart, without anguish of mind . . . believe only in the idea of the Church”. And there are many among us who have been expressing such doubts about the Church. Is it that we are believing only in the idea of the Church, and the reality of the eternal fellowship of the Church has not been experienced?

4. It is with this dimension that we have been confronted during this year. The questions have been raised about the nature of Church membership and the reluctance of some people to become members; about the decline in the number of children associated with our churches. The ministry has been much discussed following the report of the Commission on the Ministry; the nature and forms of ministry, the deployment of ministers, and the recruitment of ministers. The young people in their Manifesto passionately challenge all of us to be the Church, and we need to hear what they are saying.

5. There has been a minimum of staff changes during the year. The Revd John Sutcliffe served us well as Christian Education consultant, and we are grateful to him. We appointed his successor the Revd Keith Forecast who took up his office in April. Mr. Forecast is no newcomer to the Department. He was chairman of the Pilot Panel, a member of the Youth Committee and of the Central Committee. He is now welcomed as a full time member of the staff.

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd J. Ieuan Evans

Secretary: The Revd Robert O. Latham

6. **Chairmanship.** The Revd Ieuan Evans intimated his intention of resigning from the chairmanship as from the General Assembly about which time he enters partial retirement. The Committee is grateful for the faithful service rendered by Mr. Evans since its inauguration, for his sympathetic leadership which has given the committee unity and confidence.

The Assembly records:

its thanks to the Revd Ieuan Evans for the service he has rendered to the Church as chairman of the Ministerial Training Committee.

COMMISSION ON THE MINISTRY

7. The follow-up is forming, and will form, a great part of the committee's work. Arrangements are being made with the Provinces for Lay Training and Ministerial In-Service Training. The Revd. Dr. Stephen Mayor of Westminster/Cheshunt College has been assigned to co-ordinate this work by the College. He will work with the Church Life Department, Manchester College, and the Provincial representatives. The pattern of work undertaken may vary from one Province to another.

8. **Central Training Fund** Investigations are proceeding into the possibility of creating a Central Training Fund for both Lay and Ministerial Training.

9. **Course 3** — the College based non-residential course. The committee has considered the arrangements for Course 3 (to replace the Roll of Ministers course) and Course 4 (to replace the course for candidates over 55). It proposes the following:

The Assembly agrees:

1. that Course 3 should not be restricted to non-graduates as the description in the Commission on the Ministry report implies, but should be open to candidates whose age is not less than thirty, whose personal circumstances make a three year residential course in a college impracticable, and who have educational qualifications which may range from not less than **five** GCE 'O' levels to a university degree, or who can provide evidence of ability to cope with sustained study well beyond 'O' level standard.
 2. that the Colleges should devise, for each candidate they accept for training, a course suited to his needs and capabilities, bearing in mind that the normal length of Course 3 is four years, including a period of residence in college, normally one academic year, and that an adequate course should include the elements listed in the Commission on Ministry report (para. 38). The Colleges would be responsible for supervising and examining the courses.
 3. that the Colleges should be encouraged to use university and other courses open to those studying at home, and the non-residential ordination courses of other denominations, as part of Course 3, wherever appropriate; to arrange for the practical training of candidates to include pastoral experience and projects related to, e.g. social and welfare services, local authority youth work, in their home area; and to seek opportunities for candidates to take part in the lay training activities of the Church.
 4. that the Colleges should, in consultation with the appropriate Provincial Moderators, appoint local tutors who would be expected to give candidates regular oversight. Each candidate should be visited by a member of College staff about three times a year, and occasional weekend seminars in College should be arranged for Course 3 candidates, in which candidates on other courses and ordinands from other denominations might also take part.
 5. that candidates who do not intend to enter the ministry immediately should be permitted to postpone the year's residence in College to the year before they actually begin their ministry. The College would be expected to keep in touch with them during the intervening period.
 6. that Course 4 Candidates should be required to take either a one year residential course or a two year non-residential course.
 7. that the costs of administration and travel for Courses 3 and 4 should be borne by the Church.
10. **The John Huxtable Prize** The subject for the essay for 1976 has been set by the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Right Reverend Dr. George Caird. It is 'The Nature of Authority in the Church'. The essay competition is open to all students for the ministry of the URC and all ministers ordained in the three preceding years, who are eligible in July of each year. The prize for the 1976 essay will be £75. An examiner has been chosen and all essays must be sent to the Secretary of the Church Life Department not later than December 1st 1976 which is the closing date.

11. **College Reports** The College reports are appended (appendix 1). This year they carry the names of all ordinands in training and their year of study.

12. **Roll of Ministers Examination 1975:** the following passed their examinations:

Part I: Mr. Brian Coward (Wessex)
Mrs. R. Humphrey (South Western)
Mrs. M. Mumford (South Western)
Mr. David Morgan (Southern)

Part II(i) Mrs. Evelyn Anwyl (Eastern)
Mr. Gordon Palmer (Southern)

Part II(ii) Mr. David Wilkinson (West Midland)

Mr. David Wilkinson completed the course.

13. COLLEGE STATISTICS

College	Total No. in training for URC Ministry Oct. 1975	New Candidates for URC Ministry Oct. 1975	Estimated No. to enter Ministry of URC '76 '77 '78			Actual No. entered URC in '75	Total No. of Theological Students (incl. Post Grads.)	Total No. of places available for Theol. Students
Westminster/ Cheshunt	11	6	1	5	5	6	30	38
New	5	—	5	—	—	5	15	78
Manchester	29	11	7	7	6	5	31	78
Mansfield	3	—	2	—	1	2	16	35
Swansea	2	—	—	2	—	—	35	40
Bala Bangor	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Roll of Ministers	14*	6	2	4	8	1	—	—
Totals	64	23	17	18	20	19	127	269

*includes 5 'Over 55'

SUPPLEMENTARY MINISTERIES COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd John Williamson

Secretary: The Revd Roger Tomes

14. **Deaconesses.** Last Assembly the Commission on the Ministry took up our concern about recruitment, and recommended that "the ministry of the Diaconate" be revived, being capable of becoming "an important element in the future pattern of ministry" and "ought not, in our judgment, to be confined to women".

15. The word 'Deacon' however is used in so many varied ways in different parts of the world wide Church, that the Assembly decided it would be confusing at this stage to accept the recommendation, and referred it back to our committee "for further consideration in the light of other proposals before the Church".

16. Other churches are reconsidering whether there is a distinctive office of 'deacon', and until the churches generally have come to a more common mind on this subject we feel that we shall have to confine ourselves to maintaining the present arrangements, adding any new deaconesses who may apply and be accepted, but not engaging on an active recruitment policy.

17. We have been glad to accept as deaconess in the URC Miss Mollie Fletcher, who returned from missionary work in India in 1971, having been "a member of the Women's Order of the Church of South India" — i.e. a deaconess — from 1947. She has been appointed to take charge of a group of churches near her home — Sherwood, Arnold and Burton Joyce.

18. Miss Madge Saunders has returned to Jamaica after nine years in Sheffield, and is now in charge of a church there; and Miss Aileen Mortimer of Salford has, for family reasons, left our service and taken up deaconess work in the Church of Scotland.

The number of deaconesses at present in service is five.

19. **Local Pastors.** At last year's Assembly the Committee's decision to interview all candidates for admission to the Register of Local Pastors was criticised on the grounds that it made for delay and that it usurped the functions of District Councils and Provincial Synods. The Committee has revised its procedure and hopes that it will be able to gather the information it needs without normally interviewing candidates, but it is not possible to maintain a national Register of Local Pastors without the final decision being made by the Assembly through the Committee.

20. **Lay Preachers** In October 1975 the new joint Methodist, Baptist and United Reformed Church lay preachers' course *Exploring the Faith* was launched, and there has been an encouraging number of enrolments. The Committee hopes that District Councils will adopt this course as one of the basic requirements for the future accreditation of lay preachers.

21. It is, however, not the only requirement, and completion of the course is no guarantee of accreditation by a District Council. District Councils still have to satisfy themselves that the lay preacher has a sense of call himself, that this seems to be justified by his conduct of worship and the support of his local church, and that he is in sympathy with the basis of the URC and willing to serve in the churches of the District.

22. In 1975 the Shergold Fund was used to provide prizes for an expository sermon competition. This produced quite a large response, and the Committee hopes that entrants found the comments on their sermons helpful. The prize-winners were:

- 1st Miss Kathleen Nichol (East Finchley URC)
- 2nd Mr. R. C. Carter (Harting Congregational Church)
- 3rd Miss Joy Sadler (Vine URC, Ilford)

A further competition is being held in 1976.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd J. E. Mather

Secretary: The Revd Michael J. Davies

23. **Youth Leadership Training** Substantial progress had been made during the past year in the establishment of a Training Team. Two full-time Regional Youth Leadership Training Officers (Mr. Brian Harris since January 1, 1975 and Mr. Bernard Grimsey since September, 1975) and one part-time Officer (Rev. John Oldershaw of the Churches of Christ since July 1, 1975) have been serving the Northern and Yorkshire Provinces, the North West and Mersey Provinces and the West Midlands Province respectively. Efforts are being made to obtain additional funds from Local Education Authorities and other outside sources in order to enable further appointments to be made as soon as possible. The Introductory Training Course is now available for use and it is hoped that this can be used wherever there is a demand, even if there is as yet no Training Officer working in the Region.

The Assembly urges:

1. all local Churches to encourage more men and women to offer themselves for service as youth workers in church, statutory and voluntary youth organisations.
2. local Churches and District Councils to encourage youth workers to take part in the URC Introductory Training Course or some other training programme relevant to their work within the Church in order to improve the quality of the Church's work amongst young people.

24. Ecumenical Co-operation There has been an increase in co-operation with the Churches of Christ, including a joint meeting of the Youth Committees. National conferences and activities of the two Churches are advertised jointly and the interchange of leaders and participants is growing. Special pieces of work, like the production of the Nairobi Youth Project and the Leaflet and Resource Kits (available on loan from Provincial Offices) on 'Activities with 8-13 year olds' are undertaken by joint working parties. Our two Churches also share the 'Time for God' scheme with the Baptist Union and the Baptist Missionary Society, and this has developed well during the year. Although at any given time there are unlikely to be more than about 15 volunteers serving, there is a steady flow of applications from both prospective participants and possible placements. We are still looking for more situations in which to place volunteers and, although the pocket money has been raised to £4 per week, a small fund is being built up out of which to subsidise payments to volunteers when the total cost cannot be raised locally. Old links on the Presbyterian side with sister Churches in Scotland, Ireland and Wales have been revived and a joint conference for young adults has been arranged in September in Lancashire. There has also been significant development in wider co-operation between the National Youth Secretaries of the English Churches, implementing the 1970 'Statement of Intent' to work together wherever possible. Regular staff meetings are taking place and new areas of joint work are being explored, e.g. in the fields of Leadership Training, Voluntary Service schemes, Youth unemployment, etc.

The Assembly notes with pleasure:

the increased co-operation between Churches in serving young people and encourages the Youth Committee to develop joint Conferences and activities, the 'Time of God' scheme and the sharing of concerns and projects in general.

25. International Developments The Youth Committee has been encouraging young people to be concerned internationally. The new Anglo-German Exchange programme has very successfully completed its second year of operation and 40 British and German young people met in England last Summer for a fortnight of work projects, conference and social activity on the theme 'Hope and Fear'. This year the theme will be 'Freedom' and the venue the Rhineland. A new venture this Summer is to be a South India Journey, led by the Revd Charles Meachin where 15-20 of our young people will meet young Indians and visit the Diocese of Coimbatore. The URC was well represented at the European Christian Youth Conference at Driebergen in Holland at Easter 1975 organised by the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe. The Youth Secretary, the Revd Michael Davies, is now one of the two Western European members of the Council's Executive Committee.

26. The Local Church and the District The primary concern of the Youth Committee is to help local Churches and District Councils to serve young people in their own situations. This it is seeking to do by providing training opportunities for youth workers and for young people, by advising and encouraging Districts to provide Youth Forum (particular important for young people in isolated situations), by publishing leaflets, resource materials, study kits, etc. and by undertaking special research and development projects (e.g. for work with young adults).

27. Fury Assembly The Assembly of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth met at Swanwick January 23-25 1976. It was attended by 129 people and the Committee was encouraged to note that 49 of the Church's 65 Districts were represented. The Assembly expressed its concern about a number of issues in the life of the Church and asked that more positive steps be taken to encourage men and women to consider the challenge of the Ministry (i.e. through enquirers conferences, literature, advertising, etc.) The main concern of the Assembly on this occasion was to produce a 'Manifesto for our Future'. The Manifesto is contained in Appendix 2.

The Assembly welcomes:

the concern shown by the FURY Assembly and expressed in its 'Manifesto for our Future' and urges all Councils and Committees of the Church carefully to consider its emphases and proposals in the planning of their future work and policy.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd C. Cyril Franks

CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd Donald H. Hilton

Secretary to both committees: The Revd John Sutcliffe

28. **Decline in the number of children** During the debate of the Committees' report at the 1975 General Assembly, the Revd. R. J. Hall drew attention to the reduction in the number of children in our churches. This became the subject of a special consultation on children in the church and in society.

29. It is true the number of children associated with the churches has declined. In the majority of churches most of the children are from church connected families. Even these do not attend regularly. In many churches the work of Christian education for all age groups, including children, is not a high priority.

30. The Committee acknowledges that it needs the help and has asked the Department to set up a working party of sociologists, heads of schools and social workers to assist in understanding more of the complex sociological situation in which the churches exercise their ministry. There are further questions to be faced such as, what does it mean to be a minority group? and, if there has been a decline in the teaching of Christian faith in day-schools, what are the implications of this for the churches?

31. The Committees also ask the co-operation of District Council and Provincial Synods in raising as a matter of urgency questions about the churches' ministry to children with local churches. A discussion paper has been prepared in which a number of suggestions for action and experiment are made. The attention of the Assembly is drawn to four emphases.

- (a) We would like to see more of the resources of local churches devoted to helping parents to take more seriously their part in the Christian education of their children and to develop a greater sense of priority about the place of Christian nurture within family life.
- (b) It is generally agreed that leaders of children's groups have to be much more thoroughly prepared to work with an informal approach than is the case with a formal approach. More emphasis therefore should be given to education for leadership of children's groups and to techniques of adult education,
- (c) Fundamental to the churches' work with children and adults is the recovery of confidence in its faith, and the consequent sense of freedom to explore the riches of a greater diversity of church life. Churches should be encouraged to explore the use of various forms of music, drama, movement, colour and congregational participation in worship and in this respect to learn from the methods used with children. Because of irregular attendance patterns, much of the cumulative value of the integrated Partners in Learning courses is lost. But all is not lost, and extra care must be taken to make every Sunday session a significant event in and for itself.
- (d) The quality of the Church's life and the commitment to regular teaching and attendance by both children and parents should be one of the concerns of the District visitation of the churches.

32. The Committee recognise that ministry to children is part of larger questions about the mission of the church, the use of Sunday, the church's use of weekdays and holidays. It could be that if the decline in numbers, and the ministry to children today were to engage the mind of the church, convictions would emerge that none of us suspect at this moment; bold experiments may follow.

The Assembly draws

the attention of District Councils to the availability of the discussion paper entitled 'Ministry to Children', and recommends that they hold a consultation with church leaders and workers among children on the issues raised by the paper.

33. **Children and Holy Communion** About a thousand copies of the discussion paper on Children and Holy Communion have been distributed on request to the churches. Reports from the churches suggest there is a growing diversity of practice and that it is not yet possible to formulate commonly agreed pastoral norms.

34. **Material for House Groups**

1. A discussion paper on the planning and use of Church Meetings . . . available on request.
2. *Looking afresh at the Bible*, published by the British Council of Churches. It is an exploration into the use of the Bible with adults and children. This is warmly recommended. Available from The Tavistock Bookshop, price 30p.
3. How to cope with the mass of material which issues from Church offices, Partners in Learning, Assemblies, Ecumenical agencies, etc. . . . a discussion paper for elders and ministers. Available on request.

35. **Co-operation with the Methodist Church** Representatives of the Church Life department and of the Division of Education and Youth of the Methodist Church have been exploring ways to co-operate in work among children. There is evident good will and a desire for the closest collaboration consistent with the present separated Church structures.

The Assembly welcomes

the possibility of the Church Life Department through the Children's Committee being involved in new ways of working with the Division of Education and Youth of the Methodist Church.

DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd Dr. John Huxtable

Secretary: The Revd Donald McIlhagga

36. **Ordination** The General Assembly in May 1973 remitted to the Doctrine and Worship Committee a consideration of the nature of ordination. The committee has given careful consideration to this question and has prepared a Statement which the Department considers needs full discussion in the Synods.

The Assembly requests

The Provincial Synods to study the statement on Ordination prepared by the Doctrine and Worship Committee and to report back to that committee by December 1976.

37. **World Council of Churches Report: One Baptism, One Eucharist, and a Mutually Recognized Ministry.** The committee was asked to comment on this document on behalf of the United Reformed Church. It has prepared a detailed comment, and has consulted with representatives of the World Church and Mission Department, and sent the agreed comment to the World Council of Churches.

38. **Comment on the report of the Joint Committee on negotiations between the URC and the Churches of Christ.** The comment requested by the General Assembly 1975 has been made.

39. **Orders of Worship** The Doctrine and Worship Committee has during the year completed the following orders of worship and offers them for the use of the Church:

Baptism of Infants

Confirmation of those already Baptised

Baptism of Believers and Confirmation

Funeral Service

The Induction of a Provincial Moderator

Commissioning of an Accredited Lay Preacher

(with the Supplementary Ministries Committee)

The following are in preparation:

- Ordination and Induction of Ministers
- Marriage
- Funeral of a child
- Service for Healing (with the Healing Group)
- Thanksgiving after Childbirth/Dedication of Parents

40. **Service Books** The Committee is proposing to publish three Service Books as follows:

1. Book of Services, for leaders of worship (by Assembly 1977) to contain
 - (a) The Lord's Supper
 - (b) Baptism and Confirmation
 - (c) Thanksgiving after Childbirth, and Dedication of Parents
 - (d) Marriage
 - (e) Funerals
 - (f) Ordination and Induction of Elders
 - (g) Service for Healing
 - (h) Dedication of Property
 - (i) Prayers for the Seasons, etc.
 - (j) Lectionary

Concurrently with the above, or as soon thereafter as possible a book to be put into the hands of people in congregations possibly in loose-leaf form, containing material for corporate use, both prayers and bible-passages.

3. An Ordinal to be published, as soon thereafter as possible, containing
 - (a) Ordination and Induction of Ministers
 - (b) Ordination and Induction of a Deaconess
 - (c) Commissioning of an Accredited Lay Preacher
 - (d) Commissioning of an Accredited Local Pastor
 - (e) Induction of a Provincial Moderator
 - (f) Service for the grouping of Churches

It is the intention of the Committee to publish all Services in a temporary form as soon as they are ready, with the exception of the Induction of a Provincial Moderator, which is in the hands of the Clerk to The General Assembly.

The Assembly notes

that certain orders of worship and three service books are being prepared by the Doctrine and Worship committee, and that all services will be published in a temporary form for use in the churches; and asks churches to send their commitments on these services to the committee. In the light of the comments received the Committee will proceed to revise and publish the Services and Books for the help and guidance of the churches.

41. **'Towards Easter '76'** Once again the committee has published a leaflet for the use in the weeks leading up to Easter. It is grateful to the Revd Alan Gaunt for writing it.

42. **New Church Praise** The sales of *New Church Praise* have been very good. The full music edition has been reprinted, and the melody edition is selling well. Members of the New Church Praise committee have conducted numerous 'Sing-ins', and Keele University Choir has issued a recording of some of the hymns. The staff of Saint Andrew Press, who published the hymnbook for the United Reformed Church have served us well.

The Assembly records

its thanks for the excellence of the service of the members of Saint Andrew Press in the publishing of *New Church Praise*, and also to the members of the New Church Praise Committee, for not only producing, but also so effectively promoting, this stimulating contemporary supplement to our hymnbooks.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALING GROUP

Chairman: The Revd Alan Whillis

Secretary: The Revd Charles Meachin

43. The major activity of the Group has been the preparation of an Order of Service for Healing. Considerable benefit has been gained from a scrutiny of the draft service by the Doctrine and Worship Committee. It is hoped that the service will be available later this year.

44. Many requests for such a service have been received. It is recommended that until such time as the new booklet is approved and printed 'An Order for a Service of Healing' prepared by Presbyterian Church of England and available at the Tavistock Bookshop be used.

45. For its next project the Group proposed to assemble a Study Kit on Health and Healing, the intention being to provide material that will stimulate discussion upon this topic in Church Meetings and study groups.

46. The Revd A. Whillis has intimated his intention of resigning from the Chairmanship of the Group as from the General Assembly 1976. The Revd David Dale has agreed to become chairman. The committee is very grateful for the service given by Mr. Whillis.

CHAPLAINS AND STUDENTS WORKING PARTY

Chairman: The Revd R. O. Latham

Secretary: The Revd M. J. Davies

47. There are three concerns the working party wishes to place before the General Assembly, and so before every Council of the Church:

47.1 Overseas Students It was noted with concern that the level of student tuition fees announced for 1976/77 perpetuates and increases the discrimination against overseas students which has been evident for some years. Fees for overseas students are to go up by £96, from £320 to £416 per annum, while those for home students are to be increased from £140 to £182. Students from developing countries, many of whom are privately sponsored, will face great hardship. Hostel fees charged to overseas students at Polytechnics are also more than double those paid by home students with the result that few students from overseas enjoy the benefits of the residential facilities provided by the Polytechnics.

47.2 Student Groups and Societies During recent years the policy of the Student Christian Movement has changed considerably and there are now very few SCM branches. This has been a matter of some concern to the Working Party which is giving serious thought to ways of encouraging the development of broadly based student societies in higher education which would, like the SCMs of former years, be centres of Christian learning and service. The inadequacy of Christian adult education in so many Churches and Colleges not only encourages ignorance of the Bible, the Gospel and Christian doctrine but thereby prevents the working out of proper Christian attitudes on personal and national morality.

47.3 A general crisis in Education We remind the churches of the plight of those of their members whose careers in Further Education and Higher Education are vulnerable; of student teachers who may not be able to find employment in teaching; and of those potential F.E. students in the age-group 16-19 whose courses are under scrutiny at the present time. We record our anxiety that there are utilitarian ways and means of planning higher education (e.g. by the cutting out of courses, the increasing of charges to overseas students, the postponement of plans for student hostel accommodation and the tendency to promote courses and research which bring a fairly quick advantage for the British economy). These not only adversely affect individuals, but also ultimately impoverish the life of the nation, by restricting students' choice of subject, obliterating the less obviously "useful" subject departments, and curtailing those academic freedoms without which no advanced society is in full health.

48. **Chaplains** According to the URC register there are only 76 URC Chaplains who have been appointed to establishments of higher education. The latest statistics published by the Depart-

ment of Education and Science show a total enrolment of 3,517,698 students. A more positive policy is called for in the appointment of Chaplains because of the value of a Free Church contribution to Chaplaincy service.

The Assembly urges

Provincial Synods, when appointing Chaplains to Establishments of Higher Education, to ensure that those appointed have sufficient time and funds available to do justice to the task. Consideration should also be given to the appointment of suitable lay people to assist in this work.

49. Student Link up scheme This scheme is an attempt to link up students commencing on courses of higher education with appropriate chaplains. 436 notified in 1975 compared with 358 in 1974. There must be many more young people from our churches who could benefit from this pastoral link up scheme.

The Assembly commends

the Link up scheme and urges Ministers and church secretaries to forward to the Church Life Department the name and college addresses (or, if not known, details of the college, course and home address) of students, nurses, etc., commencing studies at any Higher Education Establishment by September 15th each year.

END PIECE

50. The Departmental committee has been responsible for three publications in seeking to respond to needs expressed by the churches. The first is a leaflet about Church Membership to put in the hands of the intelligent person who has started asking questions. The draft was prepared by a group of ministers and is being submitted to a variety of young people before publication.

51. The second is related to the leaflet. It is a brief popular historical sketch of the United Reformed Church. This was written by the Revd John Taylor of Beckenham, to supplement the church membership leaflet. It is hoped that both of these will be available by the General Assembly.

52. The third is a Handbook for smaller churches. The term 'smaller churches' is not defined. Many church secretaries, treasurers, and elders are asking for help and guidance in running their own churches. Others are still bewildered by the organization of the United Reformed Church. This 'handbook' is written for such. It is hoped that it will be available by Assembly or soon afterwards.

53.1 Finally the Department was asked to give advice and the criteria for the revision of, and removal of, names from the roll of members. This takes us back to the opening paragraph of this report. The dilemma of maintaining standards when the very nature of membership of the church today is in question remains. The question which gave rise to the inquiry concerned the returning of accurate statistics and the issues which lie behind the nature of the roll of members on which capitation is based. The root question is what constitutes membership of the United Reformed Church? Are there any standards of membership which can be maintained?

53.2 The following guide lines are offered for consideration:

1. Those members, who while residing in the district, break fellowship with the church through deliberate non-attendance. They should be visited by the minister and an elder and be gently but firmly told that by absenting themselves from the life and worship of the church they were removing themselves from the fellowship. If they continued so to do then the church would acknowledge their action by removing their names from the roll.
2. Those members who leave the district, but who do not associate with another church, and leave their name on the roll. Some may continue to make a regular financial contribution. The pastoral question in these cases is why they do not wish to associate with another church, and the responsibility lies with the church from which they went, to help them to transfer their membership to a church near enough for them to be able to attend. The 'transfer' of membership should be encouraged as the normal pattern in this mobile society. After a reasonable length of time those who fail to transfer their membership should also be removed from the church roll.

3. Those members who have lost their faith, or have serious problems about faith, or whose behaviour and conduct is unbecoming a church member. These members are in need of special pastoral care, and only in extreme cases of, for example, unrepentant and repeated, misconduct, should their names be removed from the roll.

53.3 The removal of names from the roll is a decision of Church Meeting on the advice of the elders meeting. The problem raised by 'adherents' could in many cases be resolved if the URC adopted a more positive policy relating to the transfer of members.

The Assembly agrees that:
this report be received.

CHURCH LIFE DEPARTMENT : APPENDIX 1

COLLEGE REPORTS

WESTMINSTER AND CHESHUNT COLLEGES, CAMBRIDGE

1. For the Session 1975-76, the regular course is being taken by eleven students for the URC ministry and by one student from the Congregational Federation. Other theological students in residence come from Ireland and the United States, and they with one of the URC students are doing degree courses in the University. Six students completed the URC course in 1975 and have been ordained and inducted to pastoral charges. One student completed the course but has proceeded to London University for a further course prior to ordination. One other student completed the course and will return to Greece to become a minister in the Greek Evangelical Church. Among our research students, one from the Church of Scotland has successfully completed his Ph.D. studies in Church History and another from New Zealand has been awarded the M.Litt degree for O.T. research. Visiting scholars from Australia, Canada, U.S.A., and Korea have shared in College life.
2. A candidate for the Roll of Ministers' Examination and nine ministers on sabbatical leave have spent a term in College. This is made possible by the action of the Cheshunt Foundation, and ministers are encouraged to spend a term in College and thus to have fresh contact with College and University studies.
3. There is continuing co-operation with the other theological Colleges in Cambridge, and, by considerable sharing in worship, teaching and social activity, the College is attempting to fulfil the General Assembly's recommendation to work for a clear co-ordination of the work of ministerial training in Cambridge. Our staff has lectured in the University in the New Testament, Church History and Islamic Studies. The College, particularly through Dr. S. H. Mayor, is involved in In-service and Lay-training projects. Professor Cressey organised the 1975 Ministers' Refresher Course and is planning the 1976 course. He also attended the WCC Assembly in Nairobi.
4. A number of Conferences, including the Summer Schools of the Eastern and Thames North Provinces have been held in the College.
5. The Grants Committee have made awards to students for 1975-76 amounting to £6,800, towards which the Governors of Cheshunt contributed £1,750.
6. The buildings have been satisfactorily maintained in spite of increasing costs, and the running of the College has owed much to the work of Mrs. P. Thwaite, the housekeeper-caterer, and of Mrs. R. Richardson, the College Secretary.
7. The names of the URC students for 1975/6 are as follows:

Second Year: Breslin, J. A., BA.
Graver, J. M. W.
Lawrence, D.
McCallum, Jean
Stec, D. M.

First Year: Freeman, E.
Lowes, R.
Phillips, J. T., BA.
Sowerbutts, Janet
Titlow, J.
Williams, D.

THE CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGE, MANCHESTER

8. **Students** Again the College Roll lists 88 names. This includes nine married and living out of College. The total number of theological students is 31, the highest for many years; 29 of these are URC, one Moravian and one Churches of Christ; and three of them women. Eleven students begin theology this year.

9. **Staff** The full time staff have been the Principal (Revd Dr. Edgar Jones) and the Senior Lecturer (The Revd. J. H. E. Hull) who is also part-time lecturer in the University of Manchester in New Testament. Four part-time lecturers have completed our teaching staff — the Revd. A. G. Burnham and Revd. David Jenkins, (who are the leaders of the South West Manchester Group of Churches and greatly re-inforce the practical training of the students) the Revd John D. Salisbury, and Mr. David Goodbourn who serves both us and the Northern Baptist College, lecturing in Church and Community Studies, and Adult Education.

10. **Settlements**

B. F. Jones	Loughborough
D. Miller, B.A.	Fagley, Bradford
B. M. Alderson	Erewham Group
J. Paull	Sutton in Ashfield
D. R. Peel, BSc.BD.STM.	Toller Kettering

11. **Open Courses** provided (especially for lay people) by the Manchester Theological Colleges, continue. The Principal and the Revd J. H. E. Hull undertake Bible Studies on I Corinthians and Philemon and on the Book of Daniel. The Revd A. G. Burnham has begun a course on 'Tomorrow's Church', in which lay people and first-year theological students share ideas and experience. Week-end courses are being held at the Baptist College — on 'The Holy Spirit' and 'Group Work'. Ecumenical work also continues in the final-year theological course, in theological tuition of second-year students at the Baptist College, and Old Testament and New Testament at our own College.

12. **College Visit to Derby** On the last week-end in October two members of staff and eight students went for the Saturday and Sunday to churches in Derby and district. Some 19 churches were visited and an afternoon conference held, attended by approximately 40 people.

13. **Overdale College** The College has been glad to accede to a request from Overdale College that future students for the ministry of the Churches of Christ should be trained at Manchester in association with our own students. Unless and until a possible union of the Churches of Christ takes place with URC, this would be on similar terms to our training of students for the Moravian Church, which has continued happily over a number of years.

14. Students of the College

<i>Final Year</i>	1971	T. J. Harwood, BA.	Bradford
	1971	G. Spicer, BA.	Leamington
	1972	P. W. Pells	Swindon
	1972	P. Roche	Darwen
	1972	P. Floe	Barry
	1972	S. Swailes	Purley
	1972	A. F. Finch	Gosport
<i>Third Year</i>	1974	J. D. Farquhar	Altrincham
	1973	P. Frampton	Hove
	1973	N. George	Irthlingborough
	1973	A. M. Gudgeon	Dunfermline
	1973	P. Brooks	Bristol
	1973	V. Openshaw	S. Africa
	1973	P. Quilter	Bristol
<i>Second Year</i>	1974	C. F. Warner	Aylesbury
	1974	D. Spence	Blackpool
	1974	B. W. Acty	Southport
	1974	J. L. Humphreys, BA.	Cobham
	1974	D. J. Jones, BA.	Swansea
		John Paull (ROM) in residence for Spring Term 1975.	

<i>First Year</i>	1975	R. E. Wright	Kettering
	1975	Thelma Robinson	Morecambe
	1975	Robert Pagan, BA	Great Malvern
	1975	Philip Baker	Harrow
	1975	Christine Flashman, BA.	Harrogate
	1975	Stephen Fisher, BA.	Lindfield, Sussex.
	1975	G. McGowan	Rochdale
	1975	Harry Bates	Ryde, I.O.W.
	1975	Rowena Gates (Churches of Christ)	Leicester
	1975	John Abakumov (Moravian)	Bradford
	1975	Stuart Roberts	Eastham, Wirral
	1976	Hazel Catton, MA.	Middlesbrough

MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

15. We have ninety-four students in residence, of whom sixteen are reading Theology, Eleven are ordinands, three for the URC ministry. Two students completed their training in June and were ordained at Southampton and Ilford. Two of our D.Phil. candidates, though leaving with their thesis incomplete, have gone to academic posts, one to be Director of Theological Training and Ministry for the Diocese of Antigua, and one to become a Lecturer in Union Theological College, Kingston, Jamaica. This year we have eleven visiting scholars on sabbatical leave, one from Poland, one from Austria, two from Canada, and seven from the USA.

16. The names of the URC ordination candidates at Mansfield are:

John Peter Crocker, Bsc.,	third year
Gillian Avril Jones, B.A.,	first year
Thomas Graeme Longmuir, B.Ed., B.A.	third year

17. The staff have been establishing themselves more strongly than ever in the faculties to which they belong, examining for the University in Geography, History, Law, and Theology. Dr. A. Lemon has become Secretary of the Sub-faculty of Geography. J. W. Creaser has completed his edition of Ben Jonson's *Volpone* for the London and Mediaeval Renaissance Series. A. I. Ogus has been Consultative Expert to the Committee on the Protection of the Environment in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, and U.K. Delegate to the Ninth Congress of the International Academy of Comparative Law in Teheran.

18. This year there have been two changes in staff. A. I. Ogus has left to take up a Senior Research Fellowship at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, and has been replaced by Dr. R. A. Buckley. The Revd. Dr. Paul Wee, has left to take up an influential post as General Secretary of the U.S. National Committee of the Lutheran Church.

19. In Hilary Term we had a most encouraging and well attended series of services on Wednesday evenings, with an outstanding roster of preachers from the well-known leaders of all denominations. In Trinity Term Alan Paton delivered the second Frank Foster lecture on 'The Future of the Republic of South Africa' to an audience of over three hundred. For the rest the year has been remarkable chiefly for the frequent absence of the Principal on other duties.

NEW COLLEGE, LONDON

20. **Students** In June 1975 five students completed their course of training, four of whom had previously obtained the B.D. degree. Our three remaining full-time ministerial students gained the degree at the same time, together with one non-Foundation student.

21. Of the fifteen students on the roll, four are doing post-graduate work, three will complete the four year ministerial course, two will finish studies which will enable them to go forward for ordination, while the remaining six are studying for the B.D. for other purposes than the ministry.

22. We have five URC students in training for the ministry, 3 of whom were accepted by our Governors for the four year course:

Stuart A. Bidmead	4th Year
Brian O'Neill	4th Year
Adrienne Savage, BD	4th Year

The other two are students who have come to us for one year only:

Sheila Massey who completed her course at Westminster College in 1975 but is taking the Final B.D. examination of London University in June, and Mrs. Christine Stuart who is here at the request of the Church.

23. **Staff** Dr. W. G. Morrice, who served as Lecturer in New Testament from 1972 to 1975 left at the end of September to become tutor and lecturer at St. John's College, Durham. We have been fortunate to secure in his place Dr. H. K. Moulton, formerly Professor of New Testament at the United Theological College, Bangalore.

24. **The Future** The College buildings are to be leased for a period of fifty years to the Open University. Plans are being developed for a New College London Foundation which will support both initial and in-service theological training. It is envisaged that the Foundation will operate from October 1977.

MEMORIAL COLLEGE, SWANSEA.

25. **Students** In the 1975-76 session we have 35 students taking the University of Wales B.D. or Diploma in Theology courses, in addition to four who are pursuing research under our supervision for the M.Th. degree. The 35 consist of 22 ministerial students, six students studying with a view to educational or social work and seven men already ordained (three Anglican clergymen, one URC minister, one Baptist, one Presbyterian and one Unitarian). The ministerial students include two of the URC, three of the Congregational Federation, one Free Evangelical, one Baptist, three Unitarian and twelve Welsh Independents.

26. In 1975 one student completed the B.D. degree and one the Diploma. One researcher was awarded the M.Th. for a dissertation on early Independence in Anglesey.

27. **Staff** The Award of a Bursary to the Principal the Revd. Dr. Pennar Davies, by the Welsh Arts Council to enable him to be relieved of much of his administrative and lecturing work for one year so that he may give time to literary work has led to the appointment of the Revd. D. L. Trefor Evans as Principal for the session and to the engagement of the services of the Revd. Dr. E. Lewis Evans as lecturer in Church History. The Revd Maurice Loader resigned his post in New Testament and Greek in June 1975 to take up a pastoral charge in Llanelli, and the College has with the approval of the University appointed in his stead the Revd. D. Elwyn Davies who has just been awarded the degree of Ph.D. (Wales). In addition the Revd Dewi Eirug Davies continues to serve in the department of Christian Doctrine.

28. We sorrowfully record the death in January 1976 of a former greatly esteemed colleague, Emeritus Professor D. J. Davies.

29. **Lay Training** A Saturday class for preachers, Sunday School teachers and other Christian workers is faithfully attended and is conducted by the staff and visiting speakers. It is inter denominational and reaches out to a wider audience through local radio.

30. **Chairman** Mrs. J. T. Morgan has been succeeded by the Revd. Emrys Jones, Carmarthen, as Chairman of the College.

31. Students in training for the Ministry
Elwyn James JOHN Both in their second
Stephen James WOODS Year at College

CHURCH LIFE DEPARTMENT: APPENDIX 2

"MANIFESTO FOR OUR FUTURE"

1. The following Manifesto was agreed by the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth Assembly, held at Swanwick, Derbyshire, January 23-25. 1976.

- 1.1 Church Unity** That the URC
- A. considers whether the Spirit of Christ has been allowed to act without hinderance since union and takes action to ensure that He is seen in everything we do.
 - B. co-operates with and supports other denominations at all levels, keeping in close communication and sharing resources.
 - C. encourages the establishment of ecumenical youth groups for young people in isolation as a special concern.
- 1.2 Community** That the URC
- A. (i) encourages all local churches to undertake open youth work wherever possible — and, when this is not possible, to endeavour to ensure that adequate facilities are provided (e.g. by Local Authorities or by other Churches working together).
(ii) urges Church Youth workers to participate in its Youth Leadership Training scheme.
 - B. recognises that the local church is an integral part of the community and should be encouraged to be involved in all matters of community concern and care.
 - C. urges local churches to consider from both social and economic stand points, the use of their buildings by the wider community.
 - D. encourages local churches to take an active interest in international, social and political problems and to be critically involved in the international and caring agencies.
- 1.3 Evangelism** That the URC
- A. recognises the varied forms which evangelism must take in a complex society and commits itself to prayerful consideration of this concern.
- 1.4 Worship** That the URC
- A. accepting the need for corporate worship on a Sunday, believes worship is necessary for a full Christian life and that all churches should be available for worship seven days a week.
 - B. whilst recognising the value of conventional forms of worship, urges that there should be more congregational participation and a greater flexibility in services so that individual talents may be used more fully to the glory of God.
 - C. believes that fulfilling worship can best be experienced as a response to the sense of community which develops when worshippers spend more than one hour a week together.
- 1.5 The Local Church** That the URC
- A. develops the use of small house groups as a major source of Christian renewal and as a valuable means of being involved in spiritual, social and community concerns.
 - B. encourages all church members and prospective church members to realise their responsibilities and duties.
 - C. recognises faith, not age, as the sole criterion for membership,
 - D. urges all members and adherents to consider the wise stewardship of their financial resources, skills and talents.
- 1.6 Personal Relationships** That the URC
- A. encourages local churches to establish relations with local Samaritan groups, Councils of Social Service and similar bodies and to endeavour to create caring agencies where they do not exist.
 - B. encourages local churches to establish encounter groups where members and non-members can honestly share doubts and problems and agrees that ministers be trained to conduct such groups.
 - C. responds to the need for ministers to be trained to understand people's psychological needs and recognises the value of both ministers and lay members being trained in the skill of counselling.

- D. urges local churches to offer a counselling service to the community.
- E. encourages ministers and lay members to respond to the needs of all men for social and spiritual support and to be willing to offer their support wherever people in need of it may be found (e.g. in the home, the pub, the club, etc.)
- F. encourages reciprocal visits by ministers and lay members with third world countries.
- G. encourages local churches to create an atmosphere where members and strangers feel that they are at home and have a role to play — that people matter.
- H. aims to create, with other denominations, more purpose-built ecumenical centres where the needs of the community can be catered for.

1.7 Church Structure That the URC

- A. is concerned that young people should be used to their fullest potential in all levels of church life — especially in the Eldership, District Councils and Provincial Synods.
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CHURCH AND SOCIETY DEPARTMENT

Chairman: The Revd John Johansen-Berg, M.A., B.D.

Secretary: The Revd John P. Reardon, B.A.

1. **Introduction** Compassion is part of Christian discipleship. Response to needs — physical disability, denial of rights, depression or loneliness - was part of Jesus' ministry and of the ministry he gave to his followers. Compassion is the basis for much of the work of our Department; sometimes it involves careful assessment of proposed legislation; it may mean raising the level of awareness in our membership on some social issue; in other cases it involves provision of training for action. Major crises, such as earthquakes, dramatically highlight the need for compassionate action, but the same basic needs are being met in the ongoing detail of providing overseas aid or finding the right political response to the situation of one parent families.

2. This Report attempts to mirror our year's work. It is incomplete because we cannot cover the wide range of involvement in Provinces, Districts and local churches which are the proper places for much of our work to be done. Our task is to stimulate activity there and reflect on it so that we can express the Church's viewpoint in ecumenical conversations.

3. **Enabling Social Action** Because we regard the local level as so important in the expression of social concern, we have considered how we can provide some basic training to make people more effective agents of social change. Many Christians are willing to engage in social action but feel helpless in the face of the complexity of needs and political and other barriers to action. The Department has organised one training session and been represented at another ecumenical training conference in this field. It is one of the priorities listed by the British Council of Churches in a two year Programme of Study and Action, 'Britain Today and Tomorrow', and is a current concern in the World Council of Churches. This is the area in which we can make our most helpful contribution to that programme, so we are exploring ways of setting up such a training programme.

4. **Province Reports** The paper on 'The Nature of Christian Marriage' prepared in the North Western Province was studied by the Department and some Province Committees. It raises important questions about the relationship between religious and civil marriage ceremonies and changes in attitudes towards marriage, as well as the Church's attitude towards divorce and the remarriage of divorced people. Although the paper cannot be said to represent the Department's mind, it is a useful basis for discussion and was commended in the Information Service.

5. Current interest in finding appropriate styles of life for Christians, given new impetus by the publication of John Taylor's 'Enough is Enough', has been considered by South West and West Midland Committees.

6. In the Eastern Province religious and ethical problems raised by transplant surgery were considered at a conference addressed by Professor Roy Calne of Cambridge. Homosexuality is also being studied by this Province and a paper is being prepared for discussion in the churches.

7. **Age Action Year 1976** In the Information Service we circulated leaflets about Age Action Year. Many organisations support the Year which focusses attention on the health, happiness and wellbeing of older people with a view to improving their living conditions and opportunities in the community. Although the programme includes money-raising for local and national projects, the major thrust is educational. The facts about ageing are not widely appreciated although nearly one in four adults in the UK is over retirement age. We believe that the churches are well equipped to take up this issue in cooperation with other agencies, and we welcome initiatives taken in several Provinces encouraging the churches in this respect. In November and December 'Reform' drew attention to some important questions raised by Age Action Year.

8. **Marriage Guidance** In 1975 the Home Office appointed a Working Party to review the practice of marriage guidance with a view to producing a consultative document. The Department submitted evidence, after seeking opinions through the Information Service and 'Reform'.

9. We drew attention to the lack of resources for training in marriage guidance counselling within voluntary agencies like the churches, and urged the Working Party to encourage more effective liaison between all local agencies engaged in preparation for parenthood and family life. Sex education in schools too often emphasises the purely biological aspects of human reproduction. We would welcome widespread provision of human relationships courses in schools and further education colleges.

10. We commented on availability of counselling facilities and lack of publicity about services offered by statutory and voluntary agencies. More recruitment and training of counsellors would help to make counselling more immediately available.

11. When the Home Office publishes its consultative document we will invite churches and individuals to comment so that a further contribution may be submitted.

12. **Sexual Ethics** The Department has appointed a working party on sexual ethics to study ways in which the churches can offer help to both the young and the middle-aged in their understanding of human relationships and sexual ethics.

13. **Abortion** Widespread debate about legalised abortion followed the 1967 Abortion Act. A Government Committee of Enquiry published its Report in 1974. A Private Member's Bill in 1975 attempted unsuccessfully to amend the Act. In February Parliament decided to re-establish the Select Committee to consider the Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

14. An Anglican/Methodist working party was set up in 1974 to consider the basic principles involved in legalised abortion, but its unanimous report was not acceptable to the Anglican Board for Social Responsibility and was not published. The Methodist Division of Social Responsibility issued a consultative document 'Abortion: The Issues Involved' in the autumn of 1975 outlining some of the arguments for and against abortion and considering the question about when life begins.

15. Among its provisional conclusions were:

- (a) that abortion should not be permitted on a possibly viable foetus except where the mother's life is clearly at risk;
- (b) that it is proper to consider the social context into which a child would be born when deciding whether or not to abort;
- (c) that prenatal diagnosis or high statistical risk of a pregnancy leading to the birth of a severely handicapped child should remain a ground for abortion;
- (d) that abortion on demand should be rejected and that no abortion should be carried out without adequate counselling;
- (e) that the basic stance of the 1967 Act is acceptable;
- (f) that no member of the medical or nursing profession should be required to take part in abortion against their conscience, nor should their career suffer because of their abstention. Equally a woman must have the right to have her application for abortion considered by a medical practitioner not fundamentally opposed to it in principle;
- (g) that the 1967 Act has significantly reduced irresponsible and wretched back-street abortions.

16. Abortion arouses strong feelings and public discussion is often heated. It is important that Christians should contribute to discussion with deep concern for all who are faced with the dilemmas and decisions surrounding abortion. We are grateful for the Methodist document and work done in the Southern Province on this issue, and continue study in the hope that help may be offered to churches to enable them to participate in discussions in an informed and sympathetic way.

17. **Religious Education** Although early legislation to amend the religious clauses in the 1944 Education Act is not expected, the Free Church Federal Council set up a working group to prepare a statement as a contribution to the widespread concern about this matter. The Department discussed the draft document of the FCFC and after correspondence with some educationalists has made some criticism of and suggestions for amendment of the draft. When the revised statement is issued it is hoped that churches will use it for discussion and action.

18. **Education** We have begun to identify educational issues for Christian comment and action. The BCC is studying the relationship between education and society. It is looking at the nature of institutions and how they shape our educational system, and considering some less institutionalised forms of education and ways in which options in education can be increased. The Christian Education Movement and the Thames North and Southern Provinces have been studying some of the tensions in education. These Provinces have published a report, 'Teaching Under Stress', available from their offices at 15p.

19. Some issues emerging from correspondence with educationalists are: the relationship of parents to the schools and public participation in education; problems of schools in multi-racial areas; and allocation of resources for education when all public expenditure is under scrutiny. We will seek to engage groups, preferably in different parts of the country, in a study of these and other educational issues, and would be glad to hear from educationalists prepared either to serve in such groups or to comment on educational matters.

20. **Community Work** The BCC's Working Party on the Church's involvement in Community Work held consultations in different parts of the country. It examined the potential of churches in community work and scope for deeper involvement. A report will soon be available for discussion.

21. The BCC has appointed a full-time officer for Community Work and we take pleasure in the fact that he is one of the Provincial representatives in our Department, the Revd Tony Addy. We wish him well as he undertakes this vital work on behalf of the churches.

22. **Race Relations** Through notices in 'Reform' and the Information Service we have compiled a list of URC members involved in community and race relations. Copies of the Newsletter of the BCC's Community and Race Relations Unit are being sent to them, and we hope to use their experience and insight to encourage wider church involvement in this field.

23. **Human Rights** Taiwanese and South Korean Christians were denied permission to attend the WCC Assembly in Nairobi. The General Secretary wrote to the South Korean Embassy and the Foreign Secretary to register dismay at this infringement of religious liberty. We tried unsuccessfully to raise the Taiwanese case with the press and radio.

24. The Chilean Government ordered the closure of the Chile Committee for Peace which had offered help to prisoners, refugees and their families. Unsuccessful attempts were made by church leaders to visit the Chilean Embassy and a letter in 'The Times' drew attention to the closure. An ecumenical group visited the British Ambassador to Chile to discuss the situation.

25. These events highlight the need for church involvement in concern for human rights, and while denominations discuss cooperation on these issues we commend to the churches the important work done by Amnesty International. Some churches already support that work, but we hope to send further information to encourage wider support.

26. **South Africa** An official visit to the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa was made recently and a Report is being published. The concerns expressed in this visit find a vital place in our work. We stress the need for greater links with the South African situation and the helpfulness of first-hand information.

27. The Report includes the issue of the Homeland areas. We criticise the weaknesses of the system, particularly the lack of economic viability in the amount of land and resources given and the failure to deal adequately with the many problems of migrant labour. However, the existence of the Homeland areas and the coming independence of the Transkei force us to assess the new situation. We recognise the dilemma facing Homeland Governments who struggle to raise the standards of living of their people. Under-development in these areas and the absence of most of the working force in the cities cause basic poverty and hunger and resulting debilitating disease. There is therefore a vital need for the development being carried out by the Bantu Investment Corporations. While we continue to strive for the ideal that South Africa should become a multi-racial state with universal political rights, investment in Homeland Development is a way of improving the lot of the poorest section of the black population. This raises questions about church investment policies. We could contribute to the current debate on the ethics of investment by exploring the possibility of investing church money in the Homeland areas. It would not have the high return of investments elsewhere, but it would have the highly desirable social and Christian element of giving help where it was most needed.

28. **C.C.S.A. and E.L.T.S.A.** We continue to support Christian Concern for Southern Africa and are impressed by their careful research into investments and conditions of work in firms in South Africa. Their Report on Consolidated Goldfields shows the detail and accuracy of their assessment. With our Finance and Administration Department we follow up reports of this kind and through the work of C.C.S.A. our investments in firms like Consolidated Goldfields can be monitored.

29. We noted the pressure by End Loans to South Africa to persuade the Midland Bank to cease its large loans to the South African Government, since they can be seen as active support for apartheid. After consultation with the Finance Department the URC supported the Resolution to the Bank's AGM calling for an end to all further loans to the South African Government.

30. **Ireland** We share with others an increasing sense of alarm at the continuing high level of violence in Northern Ireland. The situation changes so rapidly that anything written now will soon be out of date. We express our appreciation of the efforts of those political and church leaders who search for peaceful solutions in an increasingly difficult and bitter conflict. We hope that churches will continue to pray for those who suffer because of violence and to offer whatever practical help and encouragement is possible. The Department wants to develop links with people in the situation and explore ways in which we can help to ease the tension. We must continue to support those who urge moderation.

31. **European Questions** Now that the Referendum has convincingly demonstrated the desire of the British people to remain in the European Community, Christians should play their part in shaping that Community. The Brussels Ecumenical Centre, with meagre resources and little financial help from British Churches, attempts to study European policies and to engage in dialogue with officials in the European Commission. Its Bulletin is a useful resource for churches and individuals.

32. The Department Secretary is a member of the Task Force on Development, established by the Centre and OCIPE, its Roman Catholic counterpart. Its first task has been a study of the Lomé Convention which governs the relationship between the European Community and forty six developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Recommendations to the European Commission and the governments of the Member States will form the basis of discussion and action by the Advisory Group on Development in the BCC.

33. Richard Taylor is one of two British members of the European Contact Group on Urban Industrial Mission. This Group includes representatives from Eastern and Western Europe and provides a useful forum on urban industrial mission. Current work includes study of multinational companies and debate about the place of work in society. The latter debate has provided opportunity for appreciating different approaches to problems of working life in Eastern and Western Europe.

34. **Industrial Mission** The Department welcomes the establishment of the Churches' Consortium on Industrial Mission, and the Executive Committee's endorsement of its terms of reference and approval of URC membership. The Consortium, replacing the BCC's Church and Industry Advisory Group, will advise churches on the priorities of industrial mission, including questions about appointment, evaluation, deployment and training. It hopes to improve ecumenical cooperation in industrial mission and to act as an appeal body in cases of uncertainty and dispute.

35. A consultation of URC industrial chaplains was arranged in February to enable them to share experiences and to discuss our Church's participation in industrial mission.

36. **Ecology** Some Department members attended a conference in August 1975 on the theme 'Limits to Growth', for members of the URC, the Church of the Palatinate, Germany and the Reformed Church of France. At that conference Professor Geoffrey Dimbleby of London University warned that knowledge of the ecosystems of the world is very incomplete in spite of studies in recent decades. He showed how man in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages had destroyed the forest areas of upland Britain for agriculture but had ultimately created infertile moorland wastes. He cited parallel examples of the impact of man on his environment. He drew attention to the massive use of fertilizers and pesticides in modern agriculture without regard for the effects of their residue on marine ecosystems, to the possible damage to the ozone layer caused by widespread use of aerosols, and to global pollution of the seas.

37. Professor Dimbleby's paper was discussed with him at a Department meeting, and a small group has been appointed to consider ways of helping churches to understand ecological questions and to cooperate with organisations like Friends of the Earth in concern for the environment. A group in Mersey Province is working on similar issues.

38. **World Development Programme** The Department is grateful to the many churches who discussed the booklet 'Justice Requires Sharing' and sent in their comments about the World Development Programme. Those comments revealed widespread appreciation of the complex problem of world poverty and the inequalities between the rich and the poor. The need was recognised for greater justice both between nations and within nations, and the great majority supported continuing Christian action to influence political parties and to help people in need.

39. Many churches have tried to exert political pressure but more information is required about government policies and methods of political lobbying. We will give attention to this aspect of the Programme because of the reluctance of many churches to take political action. Many churches have worked with local World Development Action Groups, and this link has helped them to sustain political lobbying. The Churches Sign-In in 1969, the Europe '73 Programme and the Foodshare Campaign helped identify political issues on which churches could take action. We work closely with the World Development Movement through the WDM Churches Group.

40. Although some churches questioned whether letters to M.P.s and other forms of political lobbying make any impression, our contact with M.P.s convinces us that they do. M.P.s have assured us that they take notice of such letters and Ministers are influenced by the volume of letters and by the evidence they give of public opinion. Many M.P.s have become interested in development because of the informed lobbying of their constituents, and some argue that levels of overseas aid have been maintained because of steady pressure.

41. There was general agreement that a financial appeal should form a part of a world development programme, but apart from the 10% contribution to the World Development Movement for political lobbying and education, there was little enthusiasm for the use of funds for projects in this country to assist the poor. The Department therefore intends to use 90% of the money for financing overseas development projects through Christian Aid.

42. A frequent request was for direct links between churches and overseas projects. The administrative costs and the many other problems that surround such links persuade us that we should not encourage them. Aid charities and missionary societies have for many years discouraged direct links between donors and recipients and we do not have the resources to provide detailed information that churches would require to make them effective. We hope to provide more information about the projects we have funded as a stimulus to further giving.

43. The churches requested information about what other denominations are doing about world development. Methodists and Anglicans have similar appeals to our own including contributions to the World Development Movement and Christian Aid. The Department was consulted when the Church of England planned its first appeal last year. In some areas there is ecumenical cooperation on development issues and there is close liaison at national level. Different denominational structures and other problems make it impractical to present one identical World Development Programme and financial appeal in all denominations, but there is sufficient similarity of approach to facilitate local cooperation.

44. The number of organisations concerned with world development perplexes many churches. In our appeal we work closely with Christian Aid and the World Development Movement, and CWM assists in the choice of overseas projects. However, the Department uses the help of many other agencies in its educational and political work. Through the publication 'New Internationalist', through contacts with Oxfam and War on Want, through membership of the Second Development Decade Standing Conference and through the work of specialist bodies like the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex, we try to identify current problems and opportunities in the world development field to help churches to understand them better.

45. **Conclusion** These are some of our wide-ranging concerns. We limit our main areas of work to matters on which we can make a positive contribution. We share in other work through ecumenical cooperation. Reports from Nairobi raise new subjects and fresh emphases which concern our Department. We reiterate that the main impact in the Church and Society field will be

made by action at local level. While continuing to express the Church's concern in national and international matters, we try to earth that concern in compassionate action in local settings where people meet people.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly commends Age Action Year 1976 to the attention of the churches and expresses the hope that churches will help to emphasise the educational aspects of the campaign.
 2. The Assembly encourages the Church and Society Department to discuss with the Finance and Administration Department questions raised by the possibility of investing in the Homelands in South Africa and to explore ways in which our own investment policies might reflect a concern for the development of such areas.
 3. The Assembly **welcomes** the continuance of a world development programme based on political action, education and a financial appeal; **encourages** the Church and Society Department to cooperate with Christian Aid and the World Development Movement in the production of literature to promote such a programme; and **urges** churches to play a full part in helping their members to respond to the programme through study, action and financial commitment.
 4. The Assembly approves the allocation to Christian Aid of 90% of all monies raised for the world development appeal for overseas projects and programmes, with the remaining 10% being allocated to the World Development Movement for its development education and political action.
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WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

1. Three developments of particular importance have taken place in the ecumenical and missionary spheres during the past year.
2. First: in England. The initiative concerning Church Unity in England taken by our Church at the Assembly of 1973, and leading in the following year to the establishment of the Churches' Unity Commission, has now resulted in a clear challenge to the Churches, from the Commission, on the next steps to be taken if any real advance towards unity is to be made. The Ten Propositions contained in the Commission's second report call for serious discussion by our Church at all levels of its life. The Central Committee has given preliminary consideration to the ways in which such discussion can be facilitated. Cyclostyled copies of the Report and Propositions have already been sent to every church and printed copies are included with the Assembly papers. This matter is a special responsibility of the At Home Committee and Resolutions initiated by it are presented to Assembly.
3. Second: Council for World Mission. At the 1975 Assembly the desire of CWM to restructure itself so that the Associated Churches might share fully in all the responsibilities of the Council, was reported. After careful consideration Assembly cordially agreed to the principles on which it was proposed the restructuring be based. This decision provided important backing for CWM as it proceeded to produce the final plan of the changes required in order to implement the principles. This plan, *Sharing in One World Mission*, with required resolutions, is now submitted for the approval of Assembly. If sufficiently wide approval is given the new structure should begin to operate in the summer of 1977. The consequences of the restructuring will be far-reaching for all the Churches concerned. The examination of the consequences for URC, is receiving careful consideration in the Abroad Committee which has initiated proposals for submission to Assembly.
4. Third: Nairobi. The Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Nairobi, towards the end of 1975, was an event full of the widest implications. Reports of what was said and done there have been available through Reform and the Press generally. A kit, with papers, tapes and film, has been produced by the British Council of Churches. URC representatives at the Assembly have been accepting numerous speaking engagements at all levels of our Church's life. For further study of the issues there is the account of the Assembly written by Dr. K. Slack, and the full report edited by Canon D. Paton.
5. The Department has a special concern with the manner in which issues presented by the WCC to its member Churches can be taken up by URC. This, in particular, applies to the Recommendations arising from the six sections of the 5th Assembly's main theme. The Department will ensure that, if the Section Reports and Recommendations are not otherwise available, duplicated copies will be produced in quantity at Tavistock Place. We hope that local churches, Districts and Provinces will give careful study to the admittedly numerous recommendations to discover which are applicable to their local situations and the manner in which they may best be implemented there. The Department will seek fullest considerations also at national level through the Departments and Committees of the Church. The Department will also study ways in which the ongoing work of the WCC can be more vitally linked to the life of our whole Church so that there may be the most creative exchange of ideas and experience between our Church and other Churches of all confessions throughout the world.
6. Details of other concerns of the Department can be found in the appended Reports. One in particular deserves special note. In response to the request for a closer relationship with our Church which had come from the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and was warmly welcomed by Assembly last year, the Secretary visited the 1975 Synod of that Church. We can report that the visit was deeply appreciated coming as it did at a critical time in the life of the Korean Church.
7. The Department has recommended to the Finance and Administration Department that the sum contributed to CWM work in 1976 be increased for 1977 by the same percentage as that generally applicable to the Unified Appeal.

Brian M. Pratt, *Chairman*

Boris Anderson, *Secretary*

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK AT HOME COMMITTEE

8. **Ten Propositions — and Forty-four Guidelines.** The Committee presents to the Assembly with accompanying proposed resolutions two major ecumenical reports, separately printed.

9. The second report of the Churches' Unity Commission speaks, tersely and urgently, for itself. The responses to the report's ten propositions will largely determine the relations between the Churches in England for the next decade and more.

10. The detailed 'Guidelines for Local Ecumenical Projects' have, after careful scrutiny, been adopted by the MEW at Home Committee as its own working policy. They are now submitted to the Assembly for general approval, as what they claim to be — guidelines, not a legal code. The following notes indicate some of the ways in which the report can be applied within the structures of the URC. Numbers in the notes refer to the forty-four numbered paragraphs of the 'Guidelines' document.

URC notes to the 'Guidelines'

A. *Recognition*

11. A local ecumenical project (LEP) will usually fall within the area of one particular District Council; hence, initial study of the scheme — its aims, the nature of denominational commitment expected (in manpower or finance, whether capital or annual grant), provisional local agreement on membership, ministry and worship — should take place in the District Council, where local knowledge is available.

12. Where a Sponsoring Body (paras. 15-20) already exists, it might next ascertain whether any major amendments to the scheme are likely to be proposed by any participating denomination.

13. Thereafter, approval of the scheme should be sought at Synod level, preferably following detailed examination by the appropriate Synod committees. Where ministerial manpower is involved, it will be necessary to consider Maintenance of the Ministry and Deployment issues and to seek Moderatorial advice on the likelihood of a suitable minister becoming available. Where central finance is required, the appropriate consent must be obtained at this stage.

14. All of the foregoing will be necessary before any local commitment is undertaken; if this and other advice seems to promise long-drawn processes, it should be recognised that this factor is one of those which stimulate URC efforts for national church union.

B. *Sponsoring Bodies (paras. 15-20)*

15. There is a wide variety in forms of Sponsoring Bodies, their geographical area and their membership. Where they correspond to an Anglican Diocese (e.g. Bristol) they may cover more than one Province of the URC as well as several District Councils, and may be responsible for several LEPs. In some cases, however, there is a separate Sponsoring Body for each LEP. In the former case the Moderator may be the obvious choice as representative of the URC; in other cases (especially where there are several Sponsoring Bodies in a Province), an Ecumenical Officer or Ecumenical Committee Chairman or Secretary of the Synod and/or District Council would be appropriate. All representatives should be appointed by Synod and/or by District Council after mutual consultation. Representatives should have ready access to appropriate Synod committees.

C. *Corporate Responsibility*

16. The method of appointment of representatives and definitions of the degree of responsibility delegated to them and to Sponsoring Bodies are particularly important in the light of the URC conciliar structure. Individual members of Sponsoring Bodies need to know to what extent they can speak for the URC, and when to insist on reference to District Council or Synod.

17. Methods of decision-making are an important part of Reformed Church life, but considerable modifications may need to be accepted both in whatever for the local constitution is the equivalent of the Church Meeting and in the function or existence of Elders. Synods should ensure that the constitution of the LEP involves as a minimum elected lay participation in local decision-making. Where worship is normally to be united, any continuous pattern emerging in a LEP should include a Reformed contribution, such as the maintaining of a clear link between preaching and sacrament.

18. In combined *Service of Initiation* (Baptism/Confirmation), where Anglicans will naturally expect a Bishop to participate in the laying on of hands in confirmation, it is important that the Reformed practice be maintained of using the local minister as the URC representative participant.

D. *Ministry*

19. Synods should ensure that URC ministers have equal standing with others within a team, and that leadership in the team is decided on the basis of suitability for the task. There should be clear agreement as to what recognition of each other's orders is conferred in the area of the LEP, and on arrangements for the conduct of public worship, including presidency at Holy Communion. Application of the principles agreed will be one of the responsibilities of the Sponsoring Body.

20. Appointments to teams working in LEPs require some modification of normal procedures by all participating denominations (para. 13). In the case of the URC, where a vacancy occurs, the Provincial Moderator should be asked to share (a) in consultation at the earliest possible stage as to the job-specification for the minister required; (b) in arranging for candidates to meet with members of the local team and Sponsoring Body at an early enough stage for questions to be raised and, if necessary or desirable, alternative nominations to be considered. It is at this point that second appointments to teams have often run into difficulties. The relation of ministerial appointments to the new deployed procedures should be taken into account (see under 'Recognition' above). Concurrence by District Council should be a stage following the steps outlined here.

E: *Finance* (paras. 25-28) (see also under 'Recognition' above).

21. Where the LEP involves the grouping of existing local churches into an ecumenical parish, in which the local churches retain their identity, assessment for Maintenance of the Ministry and targets for Unified Appeal will need little, if any, variation from the normal URC pattern, though District Councils should take into account the effects of additional combined expenditure.

22. Where a single united local church results from the project, it may be best to arrange for a contribution proportional either to initial membership or to denominational financial commitment to the LEP to be made to each parent denomination. In the case of the URC this will require agreement by District Council and negotiation with the national Finance and Administration Department through Synod. In such cases it should be agreed that the arrangement will be reviewed at stated intervals (e.g. three years).

F. *Liaison with other churches nationally*

23. The main channel for national-level liaison on matters affecting LEPs is CCLEPE itself. In view of the large number of LEPs in which URC and Methodist interests are involved, the MEV at Home Committee also maintains a small liaison group with the appropriate committees of the Methodist Church; this group is reviewing the letter of advice sent out last year concerning Methodist/URC cooperation and is arranging appropriate consultations between those regionally responsible.

24. **Follow-up on Evangelism.** The Committee has been working this year on a set of papers on varied aspects of evangelism, relating that central task, so strongly reemphasised by the WCC Nairobi Assembly, to all parts of the URC's life. The Committee is very much aware that these papers are only 'starters' but asks the Assembly to invite local churches, District Councils and Synods to take up one or other of them and work at its implications for the benefit of the whole church.

25. **Sister Reformed Churches in the British Isles.** The Committee has been glad to note the continuing cordial discussions, within the wider Welsh covenant for union, between the URC Province of Wales and the Presbyterian Church of Wales, and has followed with interest the changing fortunes of ecumenical efforts in Scotland.

26. The resolution submitted concerning the British Churches Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches is self-explanatory.

Martin H. Cressey, *Chairman*
Arthur L. Macarthur, *Secretary*

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK ABROAD COMMITTEE

27. **Sharing in one World Mission** The 1975 Assembly gave support to the five principles agreed by the Board of the Council for World Mission as a basis for future developments, and expressed the hope that firm proposals would be ready by the end of 1975 for discussion by the constituent bodies. This hope was realised — proposals were drafted for consideration by the Board in September and then submitted to the constituent bodies for comment and modification. In their final form they were adopted by the December Board, together with a draft Scheme to be put to the Charity Commissioners: this Scheme will then be the controlling legal document of the Council so long as it remains a Charity registered in the United Kingdom. The proposals form a carefully worked out scheme by which it should be possible to give shape to the concept of mutual co-operation in mission on the basis of participation by all the Churches connected with CWM, and remove the difference between 'sending' and 'receiving' Churches.

28. If the proposals are accepted and the necessary resolutions passed by the constituent bodies, the new Council will hold its inaugural meeting in mid 1977.

29. **Changes implied for URC** There will be considerable alterations as a result in the functions and responsibilities of all the participating bodies. For the URC, the main changes are seen as being in the following areas: —

- (i) more direct church-to-church relationships, both within and outside the United Kingdom.
- (ii) greater responsibility for the choice, training, commissioning, financial support and pastoral care of missionaries going from this country, both during and after service.
- (iii) arrangements for the placing and well-being of missionaries coming from overseas churches to work in this country.
- (iv) the assumption of certain financial responsibilities for missionaries hitherto borne by CWM.
- (v) responsibility for the production and promotion of a wider range of educational and advocacy material than hitherto.

30. These new responsibilities will demand a considerable expansion of the work undertaken by the WCM Department and some addition to that undertaken by Finance and Administration. New staff and office space will be required. A preliminary assessment of the expected needs has already been made and a working party has been set up by the WCM Central Committee to explore further and, if Assembly approves, to implement the practical working out of a suitable plan. The MEW Abroad Committee is very conscious that close co-operation will be needed not only between the departmental committees of WCM but also between WCM and other departments of URC.

31. As will be seen from the Proposals, the financial responsibilities assumed by URC will be offset by an appropriate adjustment in contributions to the work of CWM in its new form.

32. Certain questions call for further study, including that of the participation of URC and other UK member bodies of CWM in ecumenical missionary organisations in this country (e.g. in the Conference of British Missionary Societies and in Selly Oak) and the modification of URC provincial and local structure to help churches to be increasingly conscious of their mission both at home and abroad.

33. A group was set up early in the year to study suggestions for **educational material**: these are being pursued in conjunction with other Departments of URC. The Committee is convinced that the first few years of the new arrangement will be crucial in so far as helping to understand the new position and keeping them informed are concerned.

34. It will no doubt take time to grow accustomed to thinking in new terms, but the Committee feel that the proposals made will help bring about what the missionary societies set out to achieve — the planting of the Gospel and the friendly and fruitful co-operation of churches in the common task.

35. **Chaplains to overseas students** The venture is not, after all, entirely new. In the Revd Chong Kah Geh, and the Revd Ben Tettey, chaplains respectively to the Chinese and Ghanaian students in the first place, but also actively engaged in the work of the URC in their areas, we have with us two men who in their persons represent something of the new concept of mission,

and in their work are themselves seeing and enabling others to grasp the type of relationship desired, and how to achieve it. The Committee noted with interest the successful course, arranged by the Revd Ben Tettey, on 'Understanding and appreciating the cultural background of African students' for student welfare officers and chaplains of universities, colleges and polytechnics in the London area. About 100 people attended.

36. It had also been hoped that a member of the Church of North India would come to work in Manchester. Arrangements for housing and finance were made, but there is as yet no suitable candidate.

37. **Money and advocacy.** The Unified Appeal target for CWM of £284,000 was met in full. In addition a grant of £4,250 for non-recurring grants was made from legacy reserves and £589-11p. received from covenanters in non-uniting churches was forwarded to CWM. The number of CWM annual reports sold and distributed to local churches in 1975 (13,800) was a record: this was particularly encouraging in view of the fact that the report contained the substance of the discussions at the Singapore Consultation, including the proposals for the transformation of the Council itself. 26 free places at the CWM's Swanwick Conference were offered to Provincial representatives who were able and willing to discuss advocacy on their return. This was felt to have been a useful experiment.

38. **Visits overseas.** The future of CWM and its consequences have inevitably dominated the year's work, but many other items have been dealt with. Through the Committee, and as a result of lengthy correspondence and exchange of views which preceded it, it was possible for the Moderator of Assembly and the Revd J. Johansen-Berg to have a rare opportunity of discussing a wide range of topics with members of the Dutch Reformed Church in a visit to South Africa in the autumn.

39. The Secretary of the Committee was able to visit Taiwan and Korea in September and October in order to renew and strengthen relationships with the churches in those two countries. In particular, he was able to meet members of the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea, with whom the URC has special relationships. He was also present at the WCC Assembly in Nairobi.

40. In Europe, besides a number of visits paid by individual members to church gatherings, the URC was represented at meetings of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Council of European Churches and the continuing Leuenberg conversations, aimed at bringing about a closer understanding between the major European churches.

41. **Ministerial exchanges.** A programme and procedure for exchanges between ministers in this country and others has been drafted with the object of enabling those taking part to obtain a clear understanding of the issues in other countries and in the UK. Short term visits of between two and four months to Europe, America and the developing countries are envisaged on a limited scale.

42. **American Church contacts.** During the year, a gift of 10,000 US Dollars has been received by the URC, and offered to the World Church and Mission Department for use in furthering contacts between the URC and American Churches. The General Secretary will accordingly visit the Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA and consult them and other sister churches concerning ways of encouraging closer contacts and exchanges so as to use the gift to the best advantage.

43. **St. Andrew's College, Birmingham.** The Secretary of the Department was elected Chairman on St. Andrew's Hall Council during the year. Programmes in the College have been rearranged to meet the needs of students having limited time available. The URC and the College were disappointed that certain students nominated by URC for courses were unable to take their places due to their inability to obtain exit visas from their respective countries.

44. **Spring Conference.** WCM Provincial Officers met for the annual conference at Selly Oak in April 1976.

J. E. M. Gilbey, *Chairman*

Boris Anderson, *Secretary*

MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS COMMITTEE

45. Most people in Britain are aware today that the immigration policy of the last 25 years has radically changed British society, bringing into the country a considerable number of people of faiths other than Christian. But it has taken a long time for the implications of that change for those concerned about Christian witness and about religious education in schools to be fully appreciated. Reports reaching the committee on conferences at various levels on the Christian attitude to those of other faiths, on legal experiments in setting up inter-faith councils, and the proliferation of courses in the comparative study of religion suggest that there is now a growing concern across the Churches to achieve a right Christian attitude to the multi-religious nature of present day Britain. The committee's manual 'The local church's approach to those of other faiths' has gone into its third edition, having apparently done something to stimulate discussion of the Christian attitude in inter-faith dialogue in our churches.

46. The committee had before it an important recent publication entitled 'A New Threshold', by the Bishop of Guildford (BCC 50p). The sub-title of the booklet suggests that it may provide guidelines for the Churches in their relations with the Muslim communities. It can do considerably more than that, for it includes a sympathetic account of the beliefs and practices of Islam and a useful discussion of the theological issues involved in the relationship between Christianity and other world faiths. It advocates a positive attitude to all that is good and true in Islam together with a recognition that Christians have a continuing responsibility to share with all men the light and truth that have come to them through Jesus Christ. With due allowance for the Islamic context in which they are found, the guidelines provided in the booklet will prove helpful in the Christian's approach to any of the non-Christian faiths represented in Britain today. The committee commends 'A new threshold' for study in our churches.

47. The main committee activity of the year was a short residential study conference in Birmingham aimed at increasing the committee members' appreciation of what Judaism, Sikhism and Islam mean to those who profess these faiths. A Jewish-Christian, once minister of a Jewish synagogue, helped the group to understand Judaism 'from within' by a sympathetic description of Jewish religious practice and spirituality. Visits to a Sikh temple and a Muslim mosque, where the group met and conversed with representatives of both faiths, provided opportunity for learning something of the beliefs, worship and daily life of the two communities, and of the problems they face as immigrants in an English industrial society. In both temple and mosque we were received with the greatest courtesy and our interest in the concerns of the communities visited was obviously appreciated. Opportunities for such visits exist in many centres in Britain today. The committee records its own benefit from the experience and would encourage church groups wherever possible to deepen their understanding and appreciation of other faiths in similar fashion, as part of their Christian responsibility.

48. During the year representatives of the committee have met with members of the Church Life Department to discuss religious education in multi-faith schools. More information is needed about changes being introduced into syllabuses of religious instruction in such schools, and the implication of these changes for Christian education for children and young people in our churches has to be studied. Liaison with other Church bodies at work in the same field is essential, to avoid over-lapping. The inter-departmental group is continuing its work and will report later.

49. Four URC ministers attended the 1975 Summer Conference of the Council of Christians and Jews, a conference providing opportunity for developing Jewish-Christian dialogue and understanding the problems of the Jew in the modern world. The committee would remind the Church that the Revd R. Lewis, Consultant on Jewish affairs, is available to advise on Jewish-Christian relationships.

50. The World Festival of Islam is to be held in London and the provinces from April-June, 1976. A programme of lectures and exhibitions has been arranged on Islamic arts and crafts, literature, architecture, science and technology. 28 leading Islamic scholars will be attending the Festival, which is to be welcomed as providing the people of Britain with the opportunity to learn something of the cultural achievement of Islam.

Alan G. MacLeod, *Chairman*

Boris Anderson, *Secretary*

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly commends to local churches, Districts and Synods the reports of the WCC. Fifth Assembly and in particular asks them to study during coming years the Recommendations to the Churches arising from the six Sectional Reports, and to consider how these may apply in their own situations.
2. The Assembly receives the second report of the Churches' Unity Commission and remits it for general discussion in Church Meetings, Elders' Meetings, District Councils and Synods, comments to be submitted by 31st January, 1977, to the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee through the General Secretary with a view to a definite response to the ten propositions of the report by the Assembly of 1977.
3. The Assembly authorises the World Church and Mission Department, after consideration of the second report of the Churches' Unity Commission, to submit to the autumn meeting of the Assembly Executive Committee proposals for an interim response to the ten propositions for transmission, if then approved, to the Churches' Unity Commission as guidance in its work.
4. The Assembly, noting the publication by the Consultative Committee on Local Ecumenical Projects in England of 'Guidelines for Local Ecumenical Projects' and its detailed consideration by the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee, recommends its use, together with the URC notes thereon presented in the Assembly reports for the guidance of Synods, District Councils and local churches.
5. The Assembly authorises the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee to send the papers for 'Follow-up on Evangelism' to Synods, District Councils and local churches for selective use and for report back to the Committee on any matters of general interest and concern.
6. The Assembly accepts the recommendations of the British Churches' Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches:—
 - (i) that in the light of the need to encourage awareness of and participation in the wider European area of the Alliance and in the work of the Alliance as a whole, coupled with the limitations on current budgets for travel and committee work, the British Churches' Committee of the Alliance be dissolved;
 - (ii) that the World Church and Mission Department include in its concerns effective liaison between the member Churches of the Alliance in the British Isles and the direct maintaining of financial support of the Alliance and the dissemination of knowledge of its programmes.
 - (iii) that in particular the World Church and Mission Department seek support for and interest in the Centenary Consultation of the Alliance in St. Andrew's, Scotland, in 1977.
 - (iv) that thanks be expressed to the past and present officers of the British Churches' Committee and in particular to the Revd Dr. Stuart Loudon, the Revd Principal A. G. MacLeod and Mrs. Christiane Coe, its Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer in the immediately past years.
7. The Assembly agrees that the CWM should apply to the Charity Commissioners for a revised scheme in accordance with Section 4 of the document 'Sharing in One World Mission'.
8. The Assembly resolves that the URC will become a participating body of the Council for World Mission in its new form as outlined in the document 'Sharing in One World Mission'.
9. The Assembly authorises the WCM Department to plan for the assumption of those responsibilities which will fall to the URC if the proposals for the restructuring of the Council for World Mission are approved by the Constituent Bodies, and put into effect.
10. The Assembly instructs the WCM Department to submit proposals for the implementation of these plans to the Executive Committee of Assembly, which shall authorise any action it judges to be needed before the 1977 Assembly.
11. The Assembly authorises the Nominations Committee, in the light of recommendations to be made by the WCM Department, to appoint four members to represent URC at the proposed inaugural meeting of the new CWM Council in 1977.
12. The Assembly commends to its churches the study of Bishop David Brown's booklet 'A New Threshold' as a guide to issues involved in the Church's approach to Muslim and other religious communities.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

Chairman: Mr. L. R. Palmer

Secretary: The Revd. E. W. Todd

1. The financial viability of the local church, as well as the denomination as a whole, continues to be of paramount importance to the Central Committee of the Finance and Administration Department. It has initiated a study into the impact of the current economic crisis on the finances of the Church. At the time of writing the final report of the study group is not to hand but enough has already emerged to say that the U.R.C. as a whole, will in 1976 be spending about £5.9M. Of this sum about £3M will be spent on ministers' stipends, pension, housing and travelling costs. About £2M will be spent on church buildings — heating, lighting, cleaning, maintenance and repairs. Miscellaneous local expenditure accounts for about £0.25M, central, provincial and district activities for £0.35M and overseas mission for £0.3M. These figures are all approximations and further research is being made.

2. We are very grateful to church members everywhere for their response so that 97% of the revised and increased target for the Unified Appeal for 1975 was achieved. But it is not surprising that, faced with the heavy costs of maintaining the ministry and church buildings, local churches are running into difficulty in meeting other commitments such as the Unified Appeal. We must continue to look for economies in activities financed from the Unified Appeal, and fortunately there is evidence that local churches, districts and provinces are looking critically at the way we use our ministers and our buildings. Perhaps the figure of 1000 full time ministers postulated last year by the Commission on the Ministry needs to be re-examined for there must now be some doubt whether the URC can afford this number.

3. As well as a check on expenditure, we must also examine our sources of income. Briefly, there are two main considerations. Local churches are now realising that, with inflation, it is important to ask members to review their financial commitment every year, in the light of changes in their income. Less well understood is the amount of money the churches are failing to bring in by the way of tax rebates on covenanted giving. About one third of our churches do not use the covenant system at all and most of the rest seriously under-use it. It would be perfectly practicable to increase our income by at least £½M a year by covering a greater proportion of committed giving with covenants.

4. Here is a simple test. Look at your church's accounts and see how much has been contributed by members committed giving — mostly this will be by way of an envelope system. Then compare this figure with income from tax refunds. In theory the second figure could be as high as 50% of the former. If you find the percentage lower than 25% your church can do quite a bit better. Provincial Treasurers have agreed to do what they can to ensure that more use is made of this source of income. Districts, too, can give help. Often it is sensible for a church to appoint a covenant secretary to help the treasurer in operating a covenant scheme. Pamphlets, guidance notes and covenant forms are available from Finance and Administration Department.

5. Staffing has continued to be a problem — the resignation of the Chief Accountant in June, the retirement of Mrs. Vera Hooper in the autumn (who had given valuable service especially in Maintenance of the Ministry concerns) and the sudden death, in harness, of Mr. Charles Manning in November. We are relying to an increasing extent on voluntary and part-time help and we are grateful to those who help in this way. But it does involve the full-time staff in additional work. To Mr. Clement Frank, our new Chief Accountant, we extend a warm welcome and he has lost no time in getting to grips with the problems.

Reports from Departmental Committees are set out below.

MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd John White

Secretary: The Revd E. W. Todd

6. Throughout the year the Committee has been concerned to see that the appropriate basic stipend and expenses have been paid to all ministers in pastoral charge in the United Reformed Church, together with Children's Allowances, in accordance with the varying systems at present in force.

7. The two pension funds have been maintained, and consideration given to the improvement, and ultimate unification, of the existing arrangements. Further in the exercise of care for retired ministers, their wives or widows, the Committee has given thought to the administration of Fen Place and the provision and maintenance of houses and flats for retired ministers. In addition to these continuing responsibilities the Committee has given much time to the preparation of the details of the Unified Scheme of Ministerial Remuneration

8. **Basic Stipend 1976/7.** In the light of the needs of ministers and their families and the resources of the Church, the Committee is unanimous in recommending the maximum increase possible in the basic stipend for the year 1976/7. As it is hoped to introduce the Unified Scheme of Ministerial Remuneration in January 1977 under which the payment of the cost of heating and lighting the manse is the responsibility of the local church, the Committee has recommended that these heating and lighting costs should be paid by the local church from July 1st 1976. This means that the present cash basic stipend will be increased by £150 per annum and the local church will be responsible for the payment of heat and light up to £150 per annum. In those pastorates where the heat and light is already paid by the local church consideration should be given to the payment of a supplement of £150. It is proposed to maintain the present differentials so that the basic stipend from the 1st July 1976 should be £1900 for those in the first ten years of their ministry; £1950 from 10-20 years' ministry and £2000 over 20 years' ministry.

9. **The Unified Scheme** The Assembly in 1975 approved the Scheme of Ministerial Remuneration and authorised its introduction as soon as possible. To this end all churches have been asked to complete forms and to submit their accounts for 1974. Over 1600 accounts of ex Congregational Churches have been analysed (and the results tabulated) by the Committee's Secretary, and as a result the Committee is able to bring recommendations concerning the basis of assessment of the local church for its contribution to ministerial stipends, and concerning the rate of assessment for the year 1977. In the light of all this and the information already in hand from the ex Presbyterian churches, the Committee recommends that the assessment shall be at the rate of £5 per member and 48p in the £ of net assessable income.

10. "Net assessable income" will be calculated as laid down in the Scheme (Assembly Report 1975 12 (b) page 102) but a further concession is proposed to help those churches whose assessment would be much in excess of the basic stipend. In calculating net assessable income in any year the excess of the assessment over the highest basic stipend in that year will not be treated as ordinary income and will be deductible.

11. In addition to reduce fluctuations and to make it easier for the local church to compile its budgets, it is further proposed to take the average of both membership and "net assessable income" over 3 years (with interim arrangements in the early years). In the case of grouped churches or joint pastorates, where the assessment can be collected in one operation, a reduction of 5% will be allowed. For small churches of less than 50 members where the assessment would be less than £300, it is not proposed to levy an assessment but their contribution will be on a voluntary basis.

12. The change to central payment of stipends has been made in over half the cases; the rest will follow and other adjustments made so that we shall be in a position to move into the new scheme in January 1977.

13. **Other matters relating to Stipends.** Once again we are not proposing any alteration in existing practice with regard to children's allowances. It should be noted that in the presentation of the Unified Scheme of Remuneration emphasis is laid upon the need for the pastorate to provide the car where that is judged necessary for the minister's work. It is hoped that steps will be taken to relieve ministers of what, to many, has become a burden of grave anxiety. Where it is possible, at the present time, for the pastorate to provide a car, then full and adequate expense allowance should be provided for the car's provision and maintenance.

14. **Pension arrangements.** The Committee has been very much aware of the inadequacies in pension arrangements and the need to bring the two existing funds together.

15. Actuarial reports on both have recently been received; a summary of them will be available at the Assembly but the Committee's intention is to bring the two funds together with a common retiring age of 65 for men and 60 for women, and a future service pension based on one eightieth of basic stipend for each year of service (in the case of existing members of the

Congregational Ministers' Pension Fund back-dated to 1971). While it will not be possible under the latter fund to increase the past service pension rate, the Pastors' Superannuation Fund can be used to supplement the pension.

16. An increased contribution rate of 12½% will be demanded and it is proposed that the minister's share should be 5%.

17. **Housing in Retirement.** The Fund to provide for housing for retired ministers and widows which was launched a year ago seems to have made a slow start but is now gaining impetus. Slightly different methods have been followed in the different Provinces, but it is hoped to have sufficient resources to be able to provide for the needs of ministers and their wives or widows.

18. Representatives of the Committee and of the Retired Presbyterian Ministers Housing Society Ltd., have been in discussion concerning the future fulfilment of this part of the Committee's responsibilities. It has been agreed that the United Reformed Church should achieve those by bringing all the assets held nationally for this purpose into one organisation and that the present structure of the Housing Society should be adapted to ensure this. The name of the Society will need to be changed and to the existing Committee of Management consisting of seven persons and a chairman, seven people shall be added nominated by the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee. As at present, the Provincial Moderators will bring forward the name of those in need of accommodation.

19. The combined assets of the Society and of those held in the name of the Congregational Union of England and Wales Incorporated seem to provide considerable resources to meet our immediate needs in this field and one of the first tasks to be undertaken is to obtain information showing the likely needs for such properties in the next ten to twenty years.

TREASURERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mr. J. E. Hooper

Secretary: Mr. C. M. Frank

20. 1975 was a year in which accounting problems continued to cause unacceptable delays in the completion of the annual accounts and to prevent our providing the standard of service which we consider to be desirable. The sudden death of Mr. Charles Manning removed one of the last valuable memories of information on the accounting practices of the former Presbyterian Church, and added to our difficulties.

21. However, with the appointment of our new Chief Accountant, whose work is now having the desired results, we expect that the 1975 accounts will be completed for presentation to the General Assembly and we find that our standard of service has already begun to improve.

22. The recent appointment of a Trust Officer will help in bringing up to date the affairs of the many trusts involved and will enable the Committee to examine these trusts with a view to amalgamation where possible.

23. The form of accounts has been revised in order to make them more easily understandable and it is hoped that more changes will be made next year when the position of the ex Presbyterian funds has been examined.

24. The arrangements made with Christian Concern for Southern Africa authorised by the General Assembly last year commenced to operate towards the end of the year. Several meetings have taken place and a separate report has been provided on one Company in which we have an investment. Further reports are expected shortly and liaison is maintained with C.C.S.A. regarding action to be taken where necessary.

25. Since the Treasurership Committee felt it not possible to recommend the terms on which an amalgamation of the URC Insurance Co. Ltd., with the Congregational & General Insurance Co. Ltd., would be acceptable to the latter Company, conversations have ceased for the time being. Both Companies continue to serve the churches.

THE UNIFIED APPEAL COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mr. G. Vaughan Davies

Secretary: Mr. J. W. Paterson

26. The original target for the Unified Appeal in 1975 was £474,000, the same target as that for 1974. Unfortunately in spite of substantial savings in administrative expenses the falling value of the pound meant that in real terms this target was quite inadequate in the face of continuing commitments. At the 1975 Assembly an appeal was made to the churches to increase their giving over and above this target — and the guideline of 10% was suggested. In addition, contributions for the Congregational Maintenance of the Ministry scheme amounting to £77,125 had been asked for from ex-Congregational Churches. This meant that the amount to be raised was as follows:

Unified Appeal	£474,000
Increase of 10%	47,400
Maintenance of Ministry	77,125
	<hr/>
	£598,525

There was a good response to this appeal and approximately 97% of the total asked for, was received from Provinces, as set out below:

<i>Province</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Amount</i>
1	Northern	£36,600.50
2	North West	46,595.21
3	Mersey	34,871.47
4	Yorkshire	38,358.78
5	East Midland	35,733.03
6	West Midland	45,694.94
7	Eastern	50,670.63
8	South West	35,501.68
9	Wessex	51,222.05
10	Thames North	84,045.13
11	Southern	104,203.73
12	Wales	16,974.16
		<hr/>
		£580,471.31

(In addition, a sum of £5969.33 from non Provincial sources was credited to the Unified Appeal, giving a total of £586,440.64).

27. For the year 1976, the Assembly agreed a target based on an increase of 20% on the 1974 target, but it was recognised and it needs to be stressed that although this is an increase in the "number of pounds" it is, in view of continuing inflation, a reduction in real terms.

28. At the time of compiling this report, the 1977 budget is not complete but there will be a change in what is covered by the Unified Appeal, as the responsibility for the basic stipends of Provincial Moderators, and ordained ministers on the staff, will be transferred to the Maintenance of the Ministry fund, along with certain pension commitments, and will be raised by the assessment. This will mean that the commitments financed by the Unified Appeal will be less, but continuing inflation will demand in all probability a 10% increase and so once again the actual "number of pounds" asked for may be about the same.

29. The Committee felt also that for 1977 a new method of allocating the total Unified Appeal target between the Provinces should be explored. It suggests that consideration should be given to making the proportion of the total target asked from each Province the same as their proportion of the total Maintenance of the Ministry assessment for the Church as a whole.

30. Publicity in 1975 was again by way of leaflet, 24,000 of which were taken by the churches.

31. The 1976 publicity leaflet gives some basic information about the nature of the Unified Appeal and the way the money is spent. This material can deal with the mission of the church at home and overseas only in the broadest outline. It is an aid to advocacy, not a substitute for it. For this reason the committee have made available a kit for a "do-it-yourself" poster giving aids and suggestions for the preparation at local level of posters which have an accurate up-to-the-minute relevance for the Church Meeting, the District or the Province.

32. Last June Mrs. Speedyman tendered her resignation, which was accepted with regret.

33. The Committee are grateful to the staff at Church House for their help during three very difficult years, and to all Provincial, District and Church Treasurers for their support and forbearance. There is every indication that our major administrative difficulties are now behind us.

DEVELOPMENT IN NEW AREAS AND CARE OF EXISTING CHURCH BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. R. G. Walker

Secretary: The Revd. E. W. Todd

34. The Committee has, during the year, considered 24 applications from local churches, as a result of which grants £6,226 and loans of £29,500 have been made.

35. The funds available to the Committee are limited and it must be emphasised again that applications can be considered only if they have the support of the appropriate District Council and Synod. Local and Provincial sources of finance must already have been called upon as far as possible.

36. **Community Land Act.** Through our Property Consultant, who is a member of the Churches Main Committee, we made strong representations on certain aspects of this legislation. The outcome of the discussions is now well known and means that churches have a breathing space of ten years (of which nine remain), to work out schemes of development which they contemplate.

37. It is, therefore, important for our church, at all levels, to give early thought to any such schemes, and to have expert guidance where development is contemplated. We have sought to make the provisions of the Act as widely known as possible, but must warn that this is an area in which oversimplification can be misleading

38. **Listed Buildings.** We have noted the setting aside of government funds of one million pounds per annum at 1973 prices for the repair of buildings which have been listed as being of historical or architectural interest. We are seeking to discover what buildings of this description the URC possesses, and are concerned at the burden placed upon local churches by such listing. We recognise that this fund could be a source of help in some instances.

39. **Consumer Credit Act 1974.** This legislation, designed to protect those who borrow money, may have some application to the activities of the Committee and steps may be necessary under the Act. Legal advice is being sought.

WELFARE AND EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. D. A. Smith

Secretary: The Revd. A. L. Macarthur

40. This small Committee suffered two very serious losses during the year through the death of Mr. Gordon Taylor and the illness and subsequent retirement of the Chairman Mr. R. J. S. Green, both of whom brought to its work long experience and deep concern. It sends its good wishes to Mr. & Mrs. Green. Its new Chairman has taken over only since the last meeting but the Committee looks forward to his leadership in this work of service.

41. Careful work is being done by the staff of the Finance Department to reach a more detailed understanding of the resources available in the invested funds of the united churches and of

means by which they can be more effectively used. Most of them apply to ministers and their families and wherever cases of hardship are brought to the notice of the Committee, the funds are deployed as widely as possible to help to meet the needs

42. The Committee acknowledges with gratitude the generous support of the Church through the Unified Appeal. This enables it to make gifts over a wide area. Acknowledgments received make clear the importance of continuing this work both in meeting real need and in expressing the care of the Church for its servants.

RESOLUTIONS

Maintenance of the Ministry

1. *The Assembly resolves:*

- a) that with effect from 1st July 1976 the minimum rate of stipend payable to a minister in full charge shall be:
 - £1,900 per annum for the first ten years of service;
 - £1,950 per annum for the next ten years;
 - £2,000 per annum after twenty years.
- b) and that in addition with effect from 1st July 1976 the local church shall be responsible for the payment of heating and lighting of the manse up to £150 per annum.

2. *The Assembly resolves:*

- i) that Rule 2 (1) of the Presbyterian Maintenance of the Ministry Fund be amended accordingly.

3. *The Assembly resolves:*

that with effect from 1st July 1976 the minimum rate of stipend payable to a minister in a Scope (W) pastorate shall be:

- £1,800 per annum during the first ten years of ministerial service;
- £1,850 per annum during the next ten years of ministerial service;
- £1,900 per annum after twenty years of ministerial service;

and the Scope OV maximum shall be £1,350 per annum from 1st July 1976.

4. The Assembly resolves that with effect from 1st July 1976 the salary scale for deaconesses shall be:

- £1,650 during the first 10 years of service;
- £1,700 during the second 10 years
- £1,850 after 20 years.

5. The Assembly resolves that grants from the fund of the former Congregational Church to retired list B Evangelists shall be paid at the same rates which apply to grants from the Pastors' Superannuation Fund, and gifts from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund of the former Congregational Church to widows of list B Evangelists shall be paid at the rates which apply to grants from the Pastors' Widows' Fund.

6. The Assembly resolves that for the period from 1st July 1976 until the inauguration of the Unified Scheme the scale of Children's Allowances and the regulations of the Congregational Maintenance Scheme as regards 'Other Earnings Deductible' definitions of 'scope' and 'pastoral expenses' and 'car Schemes in Group Pastorates' shall remain as for the year 1st July 1974 — 30th June 1975.

7. The Assembly resolves that in the period from 1st July 1976 until the inauguration of the Unified Scheme the allocation from the Congregational Maintenance of the Ministry Fund to the support of the ministry in Other Situations be at the rate of £8,000 per annum.

8. The Assembly resolves that in each specialised ministry assisted by the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund of the former Congregational Church, the maximum initial charge on the Fund shall not normally exceed one half of the basic minimum stipend for up to ten years of service.

9. The Assembly confirms the action of the Committee in regard to the Congregational Pastors' Widows' Fund in increasing the income limit from 1st July 1975 to £950.
10. a) The Assembly welcomes the concern of the Committee in regard to the pension provision for retired ministers and minister's widows, and encourages the Committee to go ahead with plans to bring together into one Fund the Presbyterian Ministers and Widows and Orphans Pension Fund and the Congregational Ministers' Pension Fund.
- b) *The Assembly resolves that;*
- i) the pension age under the Presbyterian Ministers and Widows and Orphans Pension Fund should be 65 (for male ministers) and 60 (for female ministers).
 - ii) the future service pension under the Congregational Ministers' Pension Fund for all service after June 1971 be at the rate of 1/80th of the appropriate basic stipend at retirement for each year of such service, and that the resulting pension be calculated by reference to the basic stipend fixed from time to time.
 - iii) the total annual rate of contribution under the two funds be 12½% of the appropriate basic stipend, the minister to pay 5% and the balance to be raised by Church.
- and instructs the Committee to take such necessary steps and to alter the rules of either, or both, Funds as may be required.
11. The Assembly resolves that in regard to the Unified Scheme of Ministerial Remuneration;
- i) The basis of assessment shall be as set out in Appendix 1 of the Department's Report to the 1975 Assembly with the following modifications:
 - a) for a small church with fewer than 50 members, and where the assessment would be less than £300, any contributions to the fund should be on a voluntary basis.
 - b) where two or more churches are grouped under one (or more) ministers and the assessment can be collected in one sum, a reduction of 5% be allowed.
 - c) the membership and net assessable income on which the assessment is based will be the average over 3 years (the penultimate year and the two preceding years) with interim arrangements in the early years of the Scheme.
 - d) for churches where the assessment is in excess of the highest basic stipend, the amount of the excess shall be regarded as deductible in arriving at the net assessable income.
 - ii) for the calendar year 1977, the rate of assessment shall be £5 per member and 48p per pound of net assessable income.

Treasurership

12. The Assembly resolves that the accounts for the year ended 31st December 1975 be received and adopted.

Unified Appeal

13. The Assembly records its appreciation to all those who helped to produce a not unsatisfactory result to the Unified Appeal in 1975 and asks the Committee to consider the method used in allocating the 1977 target to the Provinces and to make any changes it deems desirable.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION: APPENDIX 1

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT: 1975

1. The Society has completed another useful year. There has been the usual steady flow of enquiries, either by visit or letter, and this year there was a visit by about 100 Americans taking part in a Presbyterian Heritage Tour. All of the above activities are reflected in our donation income.

2. Two issues of the Journal have been made, the second containing the Annual Lecture on "Our Architectural Heritage" delivered on May 5th by Mr. Christopher Stell, F.S.A., of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments.
 3. As a result of a request from Council, and with the help of some of its members, the URC Publications Committee are about to publish a brief history of the URC and its predecessors. The Society will hold a week end summer school in September 1976.
 4. further progress has been made with the sorting of papers held in the archives. **Fasti** sheets, arranged in periods dating from the 16th century, dealing very largely with Presbyterian ministers, but including some Independents and Unitarians (and a few laymen and women), together with separate bibliographical sheets, have been arranged throughout in alphabetical order and will make a useful addition to the existing Presbyterian **fasti**.
 5. During 1975 new members totalled 37 and we lost 6 by death, 12 by resignation and 10 by removal from the roll because of non-payment of subscriptions. At the end of 1975 membership stood at 585, which figure includes 34 members libraries. In addition there are 55 libraries which receive or purchase copies of our Journal.
 6. The 1975 AGM received with regret the retirement of Mrs. J. E. Carr as Treasurer and welcomed Mr. J. H. Anderson as her successor. The Council wish to express sincere thanks to all who have helped in any aspect of the Society's work during the Year.
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STANDING ORDERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Questions

1. (i) A member may:
 - (a) if two clear days' notice in writing has been given to the General Secretary ask the Moderator or the Chairman of any Committee any question on any matter relating to the business of the Assembly to which no reference is made in any report before the Assembly; and
 - (b) with the permission of the Moderator put to him or to the Chairman of any Committee any questions relating to urgent business of which such notice has not been given, but a copy of any such question shall, if possible, be handed to the General Secretary at the beginning of the morning session of the Assembly at which the question is to be asked.
- (ii) Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

Notices of Motion

2A. By Provincial Synods:

- (i) A Provincial Synod may deliver to the General Secretary not less than six weeks before the commencement of the annual meeting of the Assembly notice in writing of a motion for consideration at the Assembly.
- (ii) Any accepted notice shall first be considered by the appropriate Committee which shall report to the Assembly thereon. The report of the Committee shall appear on the Agenda of the Assembly with the notice of motion.
- (iii) If the report of a Committee cannot be brought before the Assembly immediately following the receipt of the notice, then the notice and report shall be placed on the agenda for the next following Assembly unless the subject matter is otherwise to be considered by the Assembly but if the Provincial Synod giving the notice considers that the notice raises a question which merits urgent consideration then the notice shall stand referred to the Business Committee.
- (iv) If a church or a District Council wishes to put forward a motion for consideration by the General Assembly then they shall submit the motion to the Provincial Synod for consideration, and if thought fit for transmission to the General Assembly at such time as will enable the Synod to comply with paragraph 2A (i) above. In the case of a church the motion must be submitted through the District Council.

2B. By Members of Assembly.

- (i) A member of the Assembly may deliver to the General Secretary not less than 21 days before the date of the meeting of the Assembly notice in writing of a motion to appear on the statement of the business to be transacted by the Assembly in concordance with Rule of Procedure 2.1.
- (ii) If the subject matter of the notice of motion appears to the General Secretary to be an infringement of the rights of a Synod or District Council through which the matter could properly have been raised, the General Secretary shall inform the member accordingly and bring the matter before the Business Committee who shall be required to advise the Assembly as to the procedure to be followed.

2C. General

- (i) No such notice as is referred to in paragraph A (i) and B (i) above shall be accepted if the question raised is the subject of any report to the same Assembly, or is capable of being raised as an amendment to any report before the Assembly, or has been the subject of any decision given to the Assembly within the preceding two years.

Reports

3. (i) Every Report shall be delivered to the General Secretary in time for inclusion in the statement of the business to be transacted to be sent to members of the Assembly under Rule of Procedure 2.1.
- (ii) If a report is for information only and makes no proposal for action, the motion on the report shall be "That the Assembly takes note of this Report".

- (iii) If a report makes any proposal for action by the Assembly then the motion on the report shall first be "That this Report be Received", and immediately thereafter such recommendations as shall be necessary to express the action proposed to be taken.
- (iv) It shall not be in order to move an amendment or a reference back motion to either of the motions set out in paragraph (ii) and (iii) above.
- (v) If either of the motions included in paragraphs (ii) and (iii) above is carried, it shall not be deemed to commit the Assembly to the acceptance of any matter contained in the report.
- (vi) If the motion "That the Assembly takes note of the Report" be carried, any member may move a further motion for expressing views on the whole or any part of the report or otherwise within the scope of the subject matter of the report.
- (vii) If the motion "That this Report be received" is carried, the recommendations to implement the report shall then be moved in turn. When those recommendations have been disposed of, any member may move a further motion for expressing views on the whole or any part of the report or otherwise within the scope of the subject matter of the report.
- (viii) Any motion (or amendment) moved under the provisions of this Standing Order shall be submitted in writing to the General Secretary in sufficient time for circulation to all members of the Assembly before debate.
- (ix) This Standing Order shall not apply to the Executive, Business, Applications, or Nominations Committees, or to any other Committee in respect of which the Assembly so decide.

Speeches

- 4. Speeches made in presentation of the report and motions of any Department and its committees shall not in aggregate exceed 30 minutes, save by the prior agreement of the Assembly on the recommendation of the Business Committee. The proposers of any other motion shall be allotted 10 minutes or such longer period as may be recommended by the Business Committee or determined by the Moderator. Each subsequent speaker shall be allowed five minutes unless the Moderator shall otherwise determine.
- 5. When a speech is made on behalf of a committee, it shall be so stated. Otherwise a speaker shall begin by stating his name and his accreditation to the Assembly.
- 6. Secretaries of Standing Committees and full-time officers of Departments who are not members of Assembly may speak on the report of the Department when requested by the Chairman concerned. They may speak on other reports with the consent of the Moderator.
- 7. In each debate, whether on a motion or on an amendment, no one shall address the Assembly more than once, except that at the close of each debate the proposer of the motion shall have the right of reply, but must strictly confine himself to answering previous speakers and not introduce new matter. Such reply shall close the debate on the motion or that amendment as the case may be.
- 8. The foregoing Standing Order shall not prevent the asking or answering of a question which directly arises from the matter before the Assembly or from a speech made in the debate upon it.

Seconding

- 9. No motion or amendment shall be debated or put to the Assembly unless it has been seconded. The seconder may, if he then declares his intention of doing so, reserve his speech until a later period in the debate.

Amendments

- 10. An amendment shall be either to omit words or to insert words or to do both, but no amendment shall be in order which has the effect of introducing an irrelevant proposal or of negating the motion.
- 11. No amendment shall be moved unless a written notice of its terms has been (a) submitted to the General Secretary before the Assembly opens, or (b) handed to the General Secretary during the Assembly, unless the Moderator otherwise decides.

12. If the Moderator considers that an amendment is of such a character that it cannot adequately be debated without previous distribution of copies, he may so decide and discussion of the amendment shall be adjourned until copies are available.
13. No motion or amendment which necessitates expenditure additional to that which has been provided for in the estimates for the current or ensuing year shall be put to the meeting unless and until the cost involved and the possibility of providing the additional amount has been considered by the Central Committee of the Finance Department, or in case of emergency by the Assembly Business Committee.
14. If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved. If an amendment is rejected a further amendment not to the like effect may be moved.
15. An amendment which has been moved and seconded shall be disposed of before any further amendment may be moved. Notice may be given of intention to move a further amendment should the one before the Assembly be rejected.

Alterations of motion or amendment

16. A member may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly, alter a motion or amendment he has proposed.

Withdrawal of motion or amendment

17. A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly. Any such consent shall be signified without discussion. It shall not be competent for any member to speak upon it after the proposer has asked permission for its withdrawal unless such permission shall have been refused.

Closure of debate

18. In the course of the business any member may move that the question under consideration be not put. This resolution takes precedence of every motion before the Assembly, and as soon as the member has explained his reasons for proposing it, and it has been seconded, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that such motion is an unfair use of the rules of the Assembly. Should the motion be carried the business shall immediately end.
19. In the course of any discussion, it is competent for any member to move that the question be now put. Unless it appears to the Moderator that this motion is an abuse of the rules of the Assembly, the vote shall be taken upon it immediately. When an amendment is under discussion, the motion shall apply only to that amendment. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. The mover of the original motion retains his right of reply before the question is put.

Voting

20. Every question shall be determined by a majority of the votes of members present and voting as indicated by a show of hands unless the Assembly rules that there shall be a ballot.
- (ii) To provide for voting under this Standing Order Tellers for each Assembly shall be appointed by the Nominations Committee.

Dissent

21. The right to record in the Minutes a dissent from any decision of the Assembly shall only be granted by the Moderator if the reason stated, either verbally or later in writing, appears to him to fall within the provisions of paragraph 7 (10) of the Basis of Union. The decision of the Moderator shall not be open to discussion.

Points of Order

22. A member may rise to a point of order or in personal explanation, but a personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of a former speech by him at the same meeting which may have been misunderstood. A member so rising shall be entitled to be heard forthwith.

23. The ruling of the Moderator on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be open to discussion.
24. A member may raise a point of order, offer a personal explanation or ask a question by standing in his place, in which event his words shall be repeated from the platform. Otherwise, no one shall address the Assembly except from a place indicated by the Moderator.

Suspension of Standing Orders

25. Any one or more of the Standing Orders, in any case of urgency or upon motion made on a notice duly given, may be suspended at any meeting so far as regards any business at such a meeting, provided that three-fourths of the members of the Assembly present and voting shall so decide.

Admission of public and press

26. Members of the public and representatives of the press shall be admitted to the Assembly unless the Assembly otherwise decides and they shall occupy such places as are assigned to them.

Minutes

27. The minutes of each day's proceedings shall be circulated on the following morning and, after any necessary correction, sustained at the opening of the afternoon session. The minutes of the closing day of the Assembly shall be submitted at the close of the business and, after any necessary correction, sustained.

The substance of the minutes shall thereafter be published, at the expense of the Church, in the first available issue of the official magazine and a copy of the minutes shall be sent to each Synod, District Council and local church.

Record of attendance

28. A record of attendance at the meetings of the Assembly shall be kept in such manner as the Executive Committee may determine.
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