

**THE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
1977**

2nd – 5th MAY

THE CENTRAL HALL

Corporation Street, Birmingham

**REPORTS
TO ASSEMBLY**

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

Contents

						Page
1.	Executive Committee	...	...	...	...	3
	Appendix	1. Apportionment Group	...	...	...	6
		2. Deployment Committee and Addendum	...	...	...	6
	Christian Stewardship	...	...	...	...	9
	Applications Committee	...	...	...	...	11
	Publications and Publicity Committee	...	...	...	...	12
2.	Report of Working Party on Structures of the URC	...	...	...	...	14
	Appendix	Flexibility in District Councils and Synods	...	...	...	20
3.	Joint Committee for Negotiations with Churches of Christ					
		(Report for 1977)				23
4.	Report from the Provincial Moderators	...	...	...	...	24
5.	Church Life Department	...	...	...	...	26
	Appendix	College Reports	...	...	...	37
6.	Church and Society Department	...	...	...	...	43
7.	World Church and Mission Department	...	...	...	...	47
	Appendix	1. Report of comments received on 'Propositions of The Unity Commission'	...	...	...	51
		2. Draft of further response on behalf the URC to the Ten Propositions	...	...	...	53
8.	Finance and Administration Department	...	...	...	...	59
	Appendix	1. Retired Ministers' Housing Society Ltd.	...	...	...	65
		2. URC History Society	...	...	...	66
9.	Standing Orders	...	...	...	...	67

The United Reformed Church

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES and other papers submitted to the GENERAL ASSEMBLY BIRMINGHAM, May 2nd-5th, 1977

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Executive Committee has met on three occasions during the year and reports accordingly.

2. **Staffing Matters** Consideration continued to be given to the committee and office structure, especially in the light of the changes resulting from the new character of CWM. The Executive Committee, having earlier referred consideration of the general principles of the recent report on this matter to the Moderator's Advisory Group, has asked for a report on progress at its next meeting.

3. At the November meeting, on the initiative of the World Church and Mission Department and in accordance with the instructions of the Assembly in 1976, the Executive Committee received and adopted proposals for:

(a) The establishment of a Personnel Committee within the WCM and the appointment of a Personnel Secretary to act as its executive officer. It was later agreed that the Revd. Iwerth Thomas should be appointed as Personnel Secretary to serve from June 1st 1977 to August 31st 1982.

(b) The appointment of a Secretary for Communication within the Department.

These proposals were accepted on the assurance that since they were to discharge duties presently carried out by CWM, new expenditure would not be incurred. The consequent appointments were referred to the Nominations Committee.

4. At each of the meetings discussion took place concerning periods to be set for the re-appointment of full-time Secretaries in the Departments. Clarification was sought as to the legal validity of terminable appointments for those with Contracts of Employment. The matter was not concluded, but the General Secretary was asked to submit proposals either to the Assembly or a future meeting of the Executive.

5. **Orsett** The wish of the church at Orsett to withdraw from the URC was carefully considered, and after consultation over several months with all parties the Applications Committee brought a proposal to the February meeting that the church be allowed to secede with its property, and this was passed unanimously and the church removed from the URC roll.

6. **'Interim Moderator'** The use of the term 'Interim Moderator', remitted for consideration, was discussed and the Provincial Moderators were asked to consider it at their meeting. They suggested that a different term be used to describe those appointed to care for 'permanent vacancies' and it was agreed that this should be further considered by the Executive Committee.

7. **Churches of Christ** At its July meeting the Executive authorized the communication of available material concerning the negotiations with the Churches of Christ to their Annual Conference and had the full report, with the exception of the draft Bill, before it at its November meeting. The report was approved for circulation to District Councils and Synods with the draft Bill, with a view to 'the first determinative vote at the Assembly of 1977'.

8. **Provincial Moderators** Appointments in three Provinces falling to be reviewed, the appropriate groups were appointed to consider them and each will report to the Assembly. In the case of the South-West Province, the Revd. C. A. Haig had reached the age of retirement and the Revd. W. J. Samuel, Moderator of the Province of Wales, asked not to be re-appointed owing to ill-health.

9. **Business Committee** At the instance of the Business Committee the Committee agreed that:

- (a) the 1977 Assembly be held in Birmingham, commencing with a Communion Service at 3 p.m. on Monday, May 2nd, and ending at tea-time on Thursday, May 5th.
- (b) the 1978 Assembly meet in Southport commencing on May 8th.
- (c) the 1979 Assembly be in London and in the City Temple, unless a still more suitable place be found.
- (d) the 1980 Assembly be held in Yorkshire.

It was later agreed to amend Standing Orders and to apply the amendments in 1977. These will be printed with the Reports.

10. **Congregational Memorial Hall Trust** Attention was drawn to the terms proposed for the future operation of the Congregational Memorial Hall Trust and of the need for the United Reformed Church, which would be a beneficiary under the Trust, to nominate twelve members of the Trust, four of whom would serve on the Council. Those nominated who have agreed to serve are:

Mr. F. H. Brooman	Mr. L. R. Palmer
Mr. C. M. Frank	Mr. N. Pooler
Mr. J. E. Hooper	Mr. F. Riceman
Mr. M. Kirby	Mr. P. A. Simpson
Mr. F. Lodde	The Revd. E. W. Todd
The Revd. A. L. Macarthur	The Revd. J. White

11. **Pastorate of the Assembly Moderator** The Finance and Administration Department undertook, in accordance with the Assembly instruction, to make provision so that the expenses of a church whose minister is elected Moderator of Assembly are fully met.

12. **Deaconess's Stipends** At the instance of the Chairman of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee it was agreed that Deaconess's stipends be increased by £150 per annum and that local churches be asked to contribute a further £150 for heating and lighting.

13. **The Church in the Economic Crisis and its Budget** A group set up to consider the effect of the Economic Crisis on the Church has reported to the Executive and a Budget Committee formed consisting of representatives of the Spending Departments, the Provincial Moderators, the Treasurership and Unified Appeal Committees, together with three members to represent the general views of the Church. Messrs. H. F. Fisher, E. G. Hall and the Revd. J. Waller were later appointed as the three concerned. The Budget Committee is preparing a Budget for 1978 for submission to the Assembly through the F & A Department.

14. **Year Book** The Committee gave guidance to the Editor of the Year Book regarding the recording of degrees and decorations.

15. **Nairobi Follow-Up** In following up the reports received from the World Council of Churches Assembly and the request that member churches re-appraise their ecumenical commitments, each Department was asked to consider the relation of its work to the ecumenical bodies.

16. **Churches' Unity Commission** In fulfilment of the Assembly instruction the Executive Committee considered a draft of a first response to the Ten Propositions of the Unity Commission, approved its transmission to the Commission and its circulation to the Councils of the URC. It agreed to extend its financial provision for the work of the Commission for a further year to the end of 1978.

17. **Toronto Consultation of United Churches** The Executive also adopted a form of reply to a request from the Toronto Consultation of United Churches for clarification of the

relationship between United Churches in various parts of the world. The reply cited the position of this Church with regard to the admission of members and ministers from other Churches into the United Reformed Church.

18. **Synod Matters** In fulfilment of powers conferred by the URC Act, appointments of new directors were made to CUEW Inc. and to the Congregational Unions of Hampshire, Lincolnshire, Staffordshire, Essex, Durham and Northumberland and Dorset.

19. **Personnel** During the year the Executive Committee, on the initiative of the Nominations Committee, filled several vacancies on Committees, made appointments to the restructured Council for World Mission, appointed Mr. R. A. Heritage as Assistant Clerk in succession to the Revd. P. S. Chesney who was thanked for his service in that capacity, appointed review groups to meet with Provincial representatives to consider the Moderatorships of the Eastern, South Western and Welsh Provinces, appointed Corresponding Members to other Assemblies and representatives to attend the Centennial Conference of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to be held in St. Andrews from August 22nd to 29th 1977 and a representative to serve on the British Council of Churches in succession to the Revd. D. Geddes. The names of those so appointed will appear in the report of the Nominations Committee to the Assembly. It was also agreed that the Revd. Robert Latham, the Deputy General Secretary, should be a member of the Assembly.

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

A. L. Macarthur, *Clerk*

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly appoints the Revd. Michael Fortescue Hubbard as Moderator of the South-West Province for a period of seven years from September 1st 1977.
2. The Assembly re-appoints the Revd. Ronald Ernest Taylor as Moderator of the Eastern Province for a period of one year from September 1st 1977.
3. The Assembly appoints the Revd. John Ivor Morgans as Moderator of the Province of Wales for a period of seven years from September 1st 1977.
4. The Assembly thanks the Revd. W. J. Samuel and the Revd. C. A. Haig for their service to the Church as Moderators of the Welsh and South-West Provinces respectively.
5. The Assembly, noting that the following proposed revisions of the Basis of Union have been considered by Synods and Districts and approved by the Assembly of 1976, resolves that the Basis be now revised as follows:
 1. Add the following new paragraph to Functions of the District Councils at p. 24 of the Manual:

9(3) (xix) to make recommendations to the Synod for appointment to service on District Council of

 - (i) URC ministers/laymen serving as:
 - (a) Full-time Chaplains to Universities, Colleges, Hospitals, Factories, where their work is seen to be an extension of the ministry of the District concerned;
 - (b) Secretaries and other full-time officials of ecumenical bodies with which the URC is in relationship.
 - (ii) URC ministers giving significant oversight to local churches, under the general direction of the Council concerned.
 - (iii) Ministers of other Churches appointed to serve on behalf of the URC in charge of a UR Church or in an ecumenical group including URC interests.
 - (iv) Ministers not in pastoral charge who perform duties within the District in respect of which the Council has some direct responsibility.
 2. Add the following new paragraph to the Functions of Synods at the bottom of page 26 of the Manual:

9(4) (xvii) To appoint at its discretion additional members to serve on District Councils in accordance with recommendations made by such Councils under the provisions of paragraph 9(3) (xix) above.

6. The Assembly noting that proposals to increase the local church representation on Districts and Synod by changing paragraphs 9(3)c and 9(4)c in the Basis of Union to read as follows:

1–200 members	1 representative
201–400 members	2 representatives
401–600 members	3 representatives
601–800 members	4 representatives
over 800 members	5 representatives

have been discussed in Districts and Synods, resolves subject to confirmation by the Assembly of 1978 to amend the Basis of Union accordingly.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: APPENDIX 1

Apportionment Group

Chairman: The Revd. Dr. John Huxtable

Secretary: The Revd. Arthur L. Macarthur

1. The scheme of apportionment between the URC and the non-uniting churches was sealed on January 4th, 1977. Money due to the non-uniting churches has since been paid over and steps are being taken to bring the various URC funds set up by the Scheme into operation and into the control of the appropriate Committees. The group wishes to record its thanks to all who have helped to complete this part of the work, but especially to Mr. Donald Green who joined the group as an honorary consultant and carried through detailed examination of the funds and of the proposals with the care and skill the Church has long known to be characteristic of his service.

2. The group remains in being since it is responsible for applying for schemes on behalf of the County Unions. It is grateful for the progress made by some of the Unions in preparing their applications and hopes that others will be able to make the same progress at an early date.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: APPENDIX 2

Deployment Committee

Chairman: The Revd. Peter McCall

Secretary: The Revd. J. Norman Beard

Remit

1. The Deployment Committee was appointed by the Executive Committee at its meeting in November 1975 following the adoption by the Assembly of that year of the Report of the Finance and Administration Committee. That Report stated:

1.1 It is recognised that the deployment of Ministers to the best advantage of the Church demands careful consideration. In the future, the needs of new housing schemes and full-time chaplaincies must be increasingly considered as well as the needs of local churches and group pastorates. Having determined the percentage of the total active ministry which can and should be engaged in these special ministries, the needs of each Province will be assessed and a quota determined.

1.2 The determination of this quota will be the responsibility of a Deployment Committee appointed by and responsible to the General Assembly.

1.3 The Deployment Committee shall take into consideration any special features of the Province and/or of any particular District within it (e.g. rural areas), the total membership of the local churches, the population of the Province, and the number of churches of other denominations within the Province.

1.4 It will be the responsibility of the Province to determine those churches or group pastorates which constitute a viable whole-time pastorate, and thereafter the processes laid down in the Scheme of Union regarding the call of a Minister by a local church (paragraph 9(1) (vii) and the concurrence of the District Council (paragraphs 9(3) (i) and (ii) will be followed.

2. The Commission on the Ministry in its report to the same Assembly endorsed these recommendations of the Finance and Administration Committee.

Procedures

3.1 Ministerial Resources The first task the Committee set itself was to assess the number of full-time Ministers available to the Church now and in the foreseeable future. The expectation of the Commission on the Ministry that the URC would have 1,000 full-time Ministers by 1980 would appear to be over optimistic. Your Committee has computed the present availability of full-time ministers around the figure of 900. Furthermore, with a fairly high percentage of ministers reaching retirement age in the next few years and with the present rate of intake of students to our Theological Colleges this figure of 900 is bound to show some decrease in the years ahead.

3.2 Viable Pastorates In the URC there is a clear recognition that the services of ministers should be available to every local church. This does not mean, nor can it mean, one church – one minister. It can only be achieved by the widest possible use of Groups, Team Ministries, the service of retired and other part-time ministers in oversight charges and, very importantly, the sharing of ministers across denominational boundaries. It is no part of the Deployment Committee's task to arrange these. Such arrangements are the responsibility of District Councils and Provinces, and already much has been done in various areas in this direction. The chief concern of the Deployment Committee has been to assess the needs of differing Provinces and to agree with each Province a quota of viable pastorates to which ministers may be called. A full-time viable pastorate could be a single local church or one of the groupings referred to. It should be stated emphatically that the Deployment Committee has not had conferred upon it any powers to suggest the movement and appointment of ministers from one Province to another. Its procedure has been to ask each Province to define and name viable pastorates which could be described as full-time and in consultation with them all to seek to arrive at a formula which would provide an equitable allocation of such pastorates among the twelve Provinces. Each Province has been asked to name 'whole-scope' pastorates – those requiring the entire time of a fully-paid minister and which would preclude the minister from accepting any substantial secular employment.

3.3 Special Ministries In its remit the Deployment Committee was asked specifically to take into consideration the need for special ministries. These may be defined as:

Those ministries to which ministers are appointed by the District or the Synod, as distinct from those to which ministers are called by a local church. Such special ministries include Industrial and Educational Chaplaincies, Ministers to new housing schemes and special mission situations. Some special ministries may be 'half-scope', the other half being taken up by oversight of a small church, or by secular employment – arrangements to be the concern of the District or Synod.

It is reckoned that about 18 of such special ministries already operate throughout the Church. Five more have been recognised and are on the point of being put into operation. The on-going witness of the Church in a rapidly altering social situation will in all probability call for an extension of such special ministries. The Committee, therefore, estimates a possible 30 of these. It is the intention of the Committee to review all specials at regular intervals.

Findings

4. With the foregoing considerations in view, the Committee ultimately adopted a Deployment Formula consisting of the following factors:— Population Distribution: Members: Churches – in the ratio of 1:3:2. On this basis quotas of pastorates to which ministers

may be called were worked out for the twelve Provinces. This is shown fully in the Tables appearing in the addendum to this Report. The Committee has assessed a 10% vacancy factor to allow for movement. Some Provinces had independently worked out their own quotas and it was remarkable how most approximated to the figures arrived at by the Committee.

Timing

5. Since the factors involved in the Deployment Formula are never static, it is neither possible nor desirable to fix hard and fast quotas but it is felt that a start must be made somewhere. It is proposed that the quotas recommended by the Committee should be accepted by the General Assembly as targets to be aimed at during the next two years.

Submissions by Provinces

6. Any Province wishing to question the particular quota allocated to it will have the right to submit its case to the Deployment Committee. After submission of its case with full documentation the Moderator and representatives of the Province will be invited to meet with the Committee to discuss the proposed revision. After the implementation of the present quotas, any marked changes which may subsequently occur within the Provinces will be considered fully by the Committee; and, in consultation with them, suggest such re-assessment of pastorates as may meet the changed circumstances, and thus make possible the maintenance of an equitable distribution of ministers throughout the Church.

Fair Sharing

7. The Committee submits these proposals on Deployment to the General Assembly believing that they represent a first step towards a responsible stewardship of the Church's ministerial resources through a fairer sharing of the services of Ministers among its Provinces.

RESOLUTIONS

The Assembly receives the Report.

1. The Assembly accepts the quotas of full-time pastorates and Special Ministries allocated to each of the Provinces as set forth in the Table shewn in the Addendum and calls upon Provinces to work towards these target quotas during the next two years.
2. The Assembly charges the Committee to take cognisance of any alterations or developments within the life of each Province, and to adapt its quota system to such changes as they occur. It also directs that such revisions be made at all times in consultation with the Provinces concerned.

DEPLOYMENT COMMITTEE: ADDENDUM

The Formula

1. The deployment formula allocates pastorates to each province by taking the average of the province's share of six variables. These are the church membership totals for each of the last three years, the number of URC local churches, the number of URC places of worship and the total population. Certain adjustments to the resulting distribution of pastorates were made at a consultation attended by representatives of all provinces.

The Ecumenical Factor

2. The Committee makes allowances for the ministerial strength of other denominations, but since the Church of England is implementing a scheme of deployment (the Sheffield Report) along similar lines to our own, the Anglican clergy should be spread more evenly over England by 1980. Taking account of the distribution of Methodist and Baptist ministers, however, the Provincial Quotas include an addition for those areas where the URC has to provide a disproportionate amount of the Free Church coverage.

3. Allocation of full-time pastorates

Province	Ministers (September 1976)	Formula (for 1979)	Bonus for Free Church coverage	Adjust- ments	Provincial Quotas
Northern	72	75	2		77
North Western	88	85	2		87
Mersey	59	58	4		62
Yorkshire	70	72		+2	74
East Midlands	65	61			61
West Midlands	73	80			80
Eastern	65	66		-2	64
South West	54	64			64
Wessex	84	77			77
Thames North	103	91	2		93
Southern	124	109	2		111
Wales	40	62		-6	56
Totals	897	900	12	-6	906
	ministers	pastorates			pastorates

It is estimated that the net effect of all changes in the ministerial strength of the denomination between September 1976 and the end of 1979 will be a loss of 63 from the total of 897 serving in local churches. With an increase of 12 in the number serving in special ministries, there will remain only 822 to fill pastorates and another 10% of pastorates will be vacant pending settlement.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Chairman: Mr Ronald S. Martin

Secretary: Revd. Charles K. Meachin

1. In May 1976 the General Assembly called 'upon Synods and District Councils to promote and sponsor training programmes to help encourage churches respond to the call to Christian Stewardship, renewal and evangelism'. We are greatly encouraged by the response to this resolution in various parts of the country.

2. We are thankful for the definite signs of a new awakening to the wider vision of Christian Stewardship which the group is striving to convey and we believe that slowly but surely our churches are realizing that real Christian Stewardship results in **Membership Enrichment** as we study and act upon the **five** aspects of Church Membership:

- (i) The priority of regular **worship**, in company with other Christians.
- (ii) Deeper and more searching **prayer** for God's peace and justice for all men.
- (iii) **Involvement** in a local congregation as a sign of solidarity with the Church worldwide.
- (iv) **Giving** service and money, denying oneself in generous identification with human need.
- (v) **Learning** from the Bible and through dialogue with others, how to be a follower of Christ and a witness to him in a secular age.

We believe that in emphasizing these five aspects of Church Membership and by mounting **Membership Enrichment Programmes** in every local church it will be clearly shown that Christian Stewardship relates to the whole life of every Church Member. Any lesser emphasis is failing to understand the meaning of Christian Stewardship.

3. The Mersey and Yorkshire Provinces have planned a series of training conferences using material produced by themselves. Five other provinces are also holding training conferences. All these conferences have the express purpose of:

- (i) Enabling the representatives present to have the confidence to return to their churches and to initiate a Membership Enrichment Programme there.

- (ii) Emphasizing that local training of elders and members will result in both local and total mission – the purpose for which we exist.

Other training conferences for ministers and elders are taking place in various centres mostly serviced and staffed by members of the Christian Stewardship Group. At these we aim to do three things:

- (i) Introduce 'Membership Enrichment' with its five aspects: Worship, Prayer, Involvement, Giving and Learning.
- (ii) Introduce Christian Stewardship material available and deal with practical problems encountered when planning and carrying through a Christian Stewardship programme.
- (iii) Speak about techniques involved in such programmes – visiting, etc.

4. We are grateful for the continuing co-operation of the Church of Scotland Stewardship and Budget Committee especially for the way they have enabled teams of ministers and elders from our churches to take part in their training conferences at Crieff.

5. Close co-operation with the Churches of Christ Stewardship Committee means that the Churches of Christ share fully in our Membership Enrichment Programme.

6. We continue to share fully in the British Council of Churches Stewardship Committee and its three basic functions:

- (i) To share information.
- (ii) To inspire each other and to learn from one another.
- (iii) To encourage each other in understanding the purpose and significance of Stewardship for every aspect of membership in the Church.

7. Discussions are taking place with a view to involving Provincial Lay-Training Officers in the Membership Enrichment Programme.

The Holy Spirit
Gives us Confidence to Claim
The task ahead of us
is never so great as
the Power behind us!

RESOLUTION

The Assembly calls upon Synods and District Councils to promote and sponsor Membership Enrichment Training Programmes for ministers, elders and members.

APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. Harold Springbett

Secretary: The Revd. Arthur L. Macarthur

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

1. ADMISSIONS:

By Ordination: The Revds. Ian Alexander, Evelyn E. Anwyl, Stuart Andrew Bidmead, James Douglas Farquhar, Alan F. Finch, Paul Floe, Thomas Graeme Longmuir, Sheila Fletcher Massey, Brian O'Neile, Paul William Pells, John Trevor Phillips, Colin L. B. Plumb*, Peter Roche, Adrienne Savage, Eileen Dorothy Seymour, Graham John Spicer, Elizabeth Anne Welch, David John Wilkinson.

*Provisional.

By transfer from other Churches: The Revds. H. E. Berry, T. S. Colvin, Alun Lloyd-Griffiths.

By replacement on the Roll: The Revd. A. E. J. Swinford, The Revd. Gareth Thomas.

2. DELETIONS:

By transfer to other Churches: The Revds. A. C. Galbraith, J. Jewsbury, J. Keith Ramage, M. R. Stutter.

By resignation from the Ministry: The Revds. Martyn Carr, Costin L. Densham, David James, L. Laker, A. F. Scotford, Jeffrey F. Spratling.

3. LOCAL PASTORS The addition of Frank Aston to the Register of Local Pastors was reported to have been made by the Supplementary Ministries Committee.

4. CHURCHES Deletion – Orsett (cf Executive Committee Report).

5. METHODS OF PROCEDURE Following the memorandum circulated last year regarding the work of the Committee, a further paper has been prepared regarding the processes by which ordinands are received into the ministry. It is being circulated to the Colleges and to the Provincial Moderates for guidance.

6. MINISTERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY The paper concerning Ministerial Accountability, circulated to Synods and Districts for discussion, has received considerable criticism, not least for its title. The paper was originally prepared in answer to a Synod request for guidance which used that phrase. The Committee is giving the matter further consideration in the light of the comments received.

RESOLUTION

The Assembly receives the churches of Ebenezer Pontnewynydd; Keystone and Nolton Haven in Pembrokeshire and the Ecumenical Church of Woughton and Milton Keynes as local churches of the United Reformed Church.

PUBLICATIONS AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. R. T. Brooks

Secretary: Percy W. Bush

1. The Committee reports the following developments in the areas with which its four sub-groups are concerned.
2. The Publications and Publicity Committee has also explored ways to combine and integrate different aspects of the work it oversees, and future accounts will reflect some of these changes.
3. The Committee records its deep appreciation for the leadership of the Revd. R. T. Brooks upon the completion of his five year term as Chairman.

Publicity Group *Chairman:* The Revd. Edmund Banyard

4. Media coverage – much of it local and some of it national – has been obtained for visits by the Moderator, statements and reports on special issues, and selected aspects of URC life and witness. Specialists in local radio have generously supported the work of the group, all of whose members themselves accept voluntary reporting assignments.
5. The group gladly responded to the request to co-ordinate the display and publicity requirements for this Assembly. The 1976 meetings were featured in eight radio broadcasts.
6. In co-operation with a Province an experimental 'Communications Day' will take place in April (1977). The 'workshop' method is designed to develop more effective internal and external contacts, including local press and radio.

Tavistock Bookshop Sub-Committee *Chairman:* The Revd. D. W. Ager

7. Edmund Major resigned as Manager in October on joining the staff of Leicester Polytechnic. Colleagues generously undertook additional responsibilities in order to make this an opportunity to review the Bookshop's management and staff requirement in relation to the Publications and Publicity Section as a whole. Mark Rogers was appointed as acting manager for six months trial period from January 1st 1977.
8. The final accounts for 1975, which included the upsurge in sales from New Church Praise, enabled the Bookshop to transfer £7,000 to the URC. Trading in 1976 continued at a satisfactory level. Gross receipts were £81,500, £21,000 up on 1974. The need for adequate resources to meet the increased cost of stock make it unlikely that any transfer to the URC can take place this year, apart from the increased rental of £1,500. Trading at 1976's General Assembly amounted to £1,414.

Reform (Management and Promotion) Sub-Committee *Chairman:* The Revd. Dr. Robert Duce

9. Reform is one of the least expensive magazines for its size and content, and it is still financially self-supporting. The many readers' replies to the questionnaire will assist the editor and the Editorial Panel in formulating future plans.
10. The editor's appointment expires in September. In view of this a special working party reviewed all aspects of the publication and warmly recommended his reappointment. The working party's views on the magazine's financial policy are summarised in resolution 2 at the foot of this report. It also defined a policy for the magazine in the following terms:
'We believe we have now, and want to see continued, a magazine of independent stance, able to comment freely on all aspects of the Church's life, yet also committed to serve all sections of the URC constituency and to carry out for it what we see as a four-fold task – as an enlarger of horizons, a theological stimulant, a help in the work of local churches and a "house magazine" for the URC as an organization'.
11. Local churches, Districts and Provinces are invited to make free use of the display units now available from nine regional addresses. They feature Reform as background to your own material. Enquiries to your Synod office.

General Publications and Services Sub-Committee *Chairman:* The Revd. T. A. Chadwick

12. Work which previously went to outside printers is increasingly undertaken in the house. Additional staff resources and skills were called for but these will be off-set by reduced costs.

13. The Year Book and Diary were contained at 1975 prices. 27 other items for resale and 18 leaflets, etc., for free distribution were produced during 1976. A major up-dating of the Roll of Ministers in the Year Book and guidelines for new entries were completed during 1976.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report of the Publications and Publicity Committee.
 2. The Assembly endorses the following recommendations:
 - a. That if possible Reform should continue as a self-supporting magazine.
 - b. Should declining membership or circulation make this impossible, a subsidy from URC resources would be preferable to any of the following alternatives:
 - i. Changing the editorial policy from that which the Editor and Editorial Board believed best suited to the spiritual health of the Church;
 - ii. Reducing the size of the magazine;
 - iii. Taking its cover price above the equivalent of 15p at September 1976;
 - iv. Increasing the advertising ratio above the present level of one third of any edition and one quarter on average.
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REPORT OF WORKING PARTY ON STRUCTURES OF THE URC

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The General Assembly of 1975 approved the following resolution:
'In the light of great changes in the economic climate during the last two years, of the possible reduction in the number of ministers and of the considerable expenditure in time and money operating both Synods and District Councils, the General Assembly take steps to examine the present Scheme of Union in the light of experience with a view to promoting greater economy, efficiency and spiritual effectiveness.'
The Executive Committee subsequently appointed a group of ten to carry out this examination and to report to the Assembly.

INTRODUCTION

2. The concern which lay behind this resolution largely focussed on the relationship between Synods and District Councils. We have considered this area in detail, but have also sought to fulfil the wider terms of reference embodied in the resolution.

3. The resolution implies that a balance must be maintained between economy, efficiency and spiritual effectiveness. This we feel is significant because an apparent financial economy can lead to a decline in efficiency, and inefficiency results in a lack of care for people. Moreover, all three aspects interrelate in each facet of the life of the Church; for while the major expression of the spiritual effectiveness of the United Reformed Church is through the local church, consideration also has to be given to the spiritual effectiveness of the denomination as a whole, especially of the organs which express its corporate life. To encourage the spiritual effectiveness of the Church at all levels it is vital that there should be a healthy relationship and a steady flow of material and ideas between local and wider councils in such a way as to increase trust, consultation, care and an adventurous outlook. The question to be faced is how far the present structures help or hinder this development; how far they are as economical as is reasonable, and whether they function efficiently.

4. It may be that there is some unease within the Church because the union of our two previous traditions has not of itself produced a renewed Church. In many respects the Church is better equipped internally than it was, but we still look and hope for increased vitality and a more deeply enriched and outgoing community of God's people. Such things, however, do not come simply through the restructuring of the Church. It is worth quoting from the Introduction to the Scheme of Union (1970, page 3) which states: 'We would not wish to make unreal claims for our proposed union. It will not of itself make a breakthrough to effective mission.' The appointment of the Working Party arose partly from a sense of this deeper need. We therefore hope that the proposals relating to structure and administration will help forward the mission of the Church.

MATTERS FOR CONCERN

5. We have received a number of comments about difficulties which have been experienced over the four years of operating the Scheme of Union. Clearly these comments vary in significance, but we have considered them all and they have been the basis for our discussions. The main comments may be summarised as follows:

5.1 District Councils

- (a) Some District Councils which are large and strong are frustrated by the necessity to seek Synod's approval for action which they feel competent to take themselves.
- (b) Most Districts do not have funds at their disposal with which to provide help to local churches. They are dependent therefore on the agreement of those bodies which hold resources on their behalf, a process which can be time-consuming and frustrating.
- (c) Some smaller District Councils are hampered by a lack of personnel and cannot cope adequately with the responsibilities delegated to them.
- (d) Some of the general criticisms made below about Synods have also been applied to District Councils.

5.2 Synods There have been criticisms of Provincial Synods on the grounds not of size but of lack of interest and worthwhileness. Some particular comments arguing for the ineffectiveness of Synods are:

- (a) There is uncertainty about their role in the life of the Church.
- (b) They meet infrequently – generally only twice a year.
- (c) Their meetings are short and do not allow sufficient time for full debate.
- (d) They often seem to be duplicating work already done in Districts.
- (e) They are expensive.
- (f) There is confusion over responsibility for financial matters, particularly in relation to trust bodies.
- (g) There is not always a good blend of the business and inspirational elements, to the detriment of both.
- (h) They have little influence on the national policies of the Church.

5.3 General Assembly

- (a) It is too large to be an effective decision making body; it is difficult to influence or alter decisions from the floor of the Assembly.
- (b) It is too small to be a truly representative body able to give the Church a sense of national identity.
- (c) Representation from many District Councils changes every year; this results in a tendency for disproportionate influence to be exercised by the regular ex-officio members, a weakening of Synod and District Council participation and lack of continuity in debate and experience.
- (d) The Departments of Assembly have more say in the Assembly than the Synods.
- (e) The Assembly is trying to do too much too soon without adequate consultation at local level.

5.4 Other Concerns Other comments which have been expressed to us are:

- (a) Assembly Departments relate primarily to the General Assembly; the links between Departments and between Departments and other councils are not strong enough.
- (b) Local churches and church members find it difficult to relate to the Assembly, although they can relate to their District Councils and to the Synod. Assembly is distant and unknown; its decisions are not shared by many churches.
- (c) There is some confusion over areas of responsibility between the different councils.
- (d) There is fear that the new Church is expensive to run.
- (e) There is uncertainty as to who the real leaders of the Church are and where their voice is to be heard.
- (f) In all the effort to make the structures work we seem to have lost the original vision of a church renewed for mission.

COMMENTS AND PROPOSALS

6. From consideration of these concerns and from our own survey of the situation the Working Party makes the following comments and proposals.

7. Consultation The key to a good spirit and sound judgement within the Church is understanding. Every attempt must be made, therefore, to ensure that effective lines of communication exist within the life of the Church. The importance of consultation is expressed in paragraph 10 of the Scheme of Union:

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

We recommend that the attention of all Councils and Committees be drawn to the necessity of following this principle. We further recommend that, wherever possible, decisions should be taken by or with those most involved and as near to the point of action as possible. Responsibility for decision may lie with a particular council or committee which may

sometimes have to resolve conflicting viewpoints. All wisdom on the matter does not rest however with those who take the decision, and they are more likely to take a wise decision – and to have that decision accepted – if those who will be affected by it have had a clear opportunity to share in the discussion leading up to the decision.

8. Involvement Understanding and commitment often arise from involvement. There is advantage therefore in involving more people in councils and committees so as to draw more fully on the varied gifts of our members and to enable as many people as possible to understand at some depth the various aspects of Christian discipleship. This should also help to spread the work more evenly among those able to contribute. The Scheme of Union makes provision for this (see e.g. 9(3)(e) and the paragraph following 9(3)(f)) and we feel that more could usefully be done in this direction.

9. Flexibility The Scheme of Union lays down the composition and functions of the Councils of the United Reformed Church (paragraph 9). With the exception of the requirement of four Church Meetings a year, no stipulations are made as to how these Councils shall execute their functions. This deliberately allows for a very wide diversity of practice so that an appropriate response can be made to local needs, conditions and experience. Flexibility is built into the framework of the Church. We are convinced that many of the present frustrations arise from a failure to exercise the freedom inherent in the Scheme of Union. Too often the list of functions seems to have been read as if it were a constitution; which it is not.

10. It is the responsibility of Synods and District Councils to take account of local circumstances, to ensure that their functions are exercised appropriately, and to avoid unnecessary overlap and omission. In some circumstances Synods may wish to delegate particular matters to District Councils. In other situations District Councils may need to pass matters to the Synod for effective action. It is not always necessary to debate matters in full at every level. Synods and District Councils should decide where the main debate on certain issues is to take place. We are proposing some minor alterations to the Scheme of Union which should help to remove some duplication between Synods and District Councils. (Further comments on flexibility are made in the Appendix to this report.)

11. Wider Councils While it is desirable that decisions be taken as near as possible to the local Church, it is also necessary to have a forum large enough to discern local pressures and interests, but also able to know the situation intimately enough to make wise decisions. This is particularly important in relation to strategy, areas of new development and inter-church relations. Some matters concern the Church in a particular region and therefore must be considered by District Council or Synod; some concern the whole Church and rightly belong to the General Assembly.

12. In some areas District Councils or Synods resemble bodies which existed in one of the previous denominations and these areas may have had particular difficulty in coming to terms with the functions of the Councils of the United Reformed Church. Where this close resemblance exists there may still be need to ensure that full account is being taken of the changes which have taken place.

13. There is also some tension between the varied understandings of the purpose of the Councils of the Church. Does a Council exist primarily to make decisions and pass resolutions, or for what may be called 'inspirational' purposes? Clearly this distinction cannot be absolute. The Church's business covers all fields of its life. Some aspects are best dealt with in terms of clear decisions and precise resolutions; others require the stimulation of thought and vision, the revitalising of a sense of wonder and purpose; others achieve deepening of understanding by mental and moral challenge. It is not necessary, in other words, for every item of business to result in a resolution. Nor is the routine business of the Church to be regarded as unimportant or unspiritual. It should all have some relevance to the task of the Church. Thus we feel that some criticisms of District and Synod agendas are based on a false view of their purpose. An agenda is no indication of the possible value of a meeting. Only by active participation, and by being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, is it possible to assess the true value of a meeting.

14. Four-tier Structure We have considered very seriously the effect of abolishing either Synods or District Councils. While there have been strong pleas for a change, we believe that the four-tier structure (i.e. Local Church, District Council, Provincial Synod and General

Assembly) has merits and should be retained, though with different emphases. It is clear that District Councils need the wider fellowship of Synods, and some would not have the resources to take on the full range of Synods' responsibilities. Similarly it is clear that Synods cannot have the intimate local knowledge and understanding found in District Councils. If Synods were abolished District Councils would in almost all instances have to be much larger, with all the additional costs of travel and administration and further fragmentation of the wider fellowship of the Church. To have only one Council between the Assembly and the Local Church would increase the sense of remoteness and isolation. On the other hand we are of the opinion that some District Councils are probably too large. We therefore recommend that Synods should be able to adjust the boundaries of their Districts in consultation with the Districts and churches concerned, subsequently reporting such changes to the General Assembly.

15. Number of Provinces We have come to the conclusion that the present twelve provinces are well drawn and that no changes should be made. Alterations to these major boundaries would have complex and costly ramifications which would be of little benefit and produce little or no saving. A further consideration is that steps now being taken to simplify trust matters would be seriously disrupted.

16. General Assembly As we have looked at the role of Synods and District Councils within the Church, it has become clear that the role of the General Assembly should also be reviewed. The General Assembly is general in the sense that it acts for the whole Church, but *not* in the sense that every church is represented at its meetings. It follows that if matters are discussed only at the Assembly a large part of the Church is necessarily excluded from any share in the process of decision making, with the natural result that decisions then taken are sometimes felt to be imposed.

17. All churches, however, are directly represented at Synod. We strongly recommend, therefore, that the role of the Synods should be strengthened in relation to the General Assembly so that they can take a larger share in guiding the policies of the Church. We believe that the vital role of the General Assembly, viz., to 'embody the unity of the United Reformed Church and act as the central organ of its life . . .' (paragraph 9(5) of Scheme of Union) can be effectively maintained, and at less cost, if the following changes are implemented:

17.1 Representatives to the General Assembly should be appointed by Synods (not District Councils as at present), which in making appointments would hold in balance:

- (a) adequate representation of all District Councils;
- (b) continuity of representation;
- (c) knowledge of particular aspects of the life of the Church.

This would strengthen the link between the Synods and the General Assembly and should help towards meeting some of the criticisms which have been made of the Assembly.

17.2 All reports and major recommendations from Assembly Departments and Committees should be sent to Synods before going to the Assembly. This would allow Synods to debate and make representation on matters of concern, and would enable representatives to the Assembly to be informed about the issues to be decided. Assembly papers would need to be sent out in time for Synods to consider them at their Spring meetings. In this way Synods would become the place where, at a formative stage, all local churches could become involved in shaping the major policies of the Church. Provision would need to remain, of course, for urgent matters to be taken direct to the General Assembly, but the normal route for all business would be via the Synods. The precise dates of Synods and the Assembly can at this stage be left open to allow time for consideration of the practicalities of the proposed arrangements. (For a General Assembly in May, reports would need to be received at Church House by January 1st so that they could be sent to local churches and Synod representatives by early February for debate at March/April Synods. This timetable would run one month later throughout if the General Assembly were in June – which might, on other grounds, be the better time.)

17.3 We do not feel that a Church of our size can justify or afford an Assembly of 750 members. Such a large Assembly becomes unnecessary if matters of principle are also discussed in the Synods. We therefore recommend that the maximum size of the Assembly should be reduced by half to 375, of whom at least three quarters would be

representatives appointed by the Synods. The cost of travelling expenses to the Assembly would thus be halved – a saving of nearly £4,000 at 1976 prices. We propose in the appropriate resolution a formula for ensuring that representation from Synods (ministerial and lay in equal numbers) would be proportionate to the number of churches and the number of members in the Synod.

17.4 The remaining proportion would be made up of certain ex-officio members, although we envisage a considerable reduction in the number of such representatives as follows:

- (a) Category 5(b) (Scheme of Union, paragraph 9) to remain as at present determined by the General Assembly, i.e. Moderator, Moderator-elect, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Provincial Moderators, Clerks and Treasurers (total=40).
- (b) Category 5(c) to include the Chairmen of the four Departments, together with three representatives from each Department, and the Chairmen of Applications, Business and Nominations Committees (total=19 in place of present 25).
- (c) Theological Colleges (5(d)) should in future be represented through the Ministerial Training Committee of the Church Life Department.
- (d) Missionary representatives (5(e)) to be four in number and to be appointed by the World Church and Mission Department.
- (e) Category 5(f) – the power of co-option – to remain as now. (Included in this category at present are two youth representatives.)
- (f) Former Moderators and Presidents (category 5(g)) to continue for three years only after their year of office (a reduction from a possible 40 to 3).

This would produce an additional membership of about 68 (making a current minimum total membership of Assembly of about 350).

17.5 The question of corresponding members, and the possibility of inviting observers from the other major churches in England and Wales, should be given further consideration.

17.6 The frequency of meeting of the Assembly and the length of meeting should be reviewed in the light of the new pattern of business. We envisage the meetings of the Assembly being shorter than at present.

17.7 The Business Committee of the Assembly should more adequately reflect the involvement of the Synods in Assembly business. It should therefore consist of:

A Chairman and Secretary, the Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator, the Clerk and General Secretary, the Assistant Clerk, the Chairmen of the four Departments and one representative of each Synod. (This would mean a net increase from fourteen to twenty-three members.)

17.8 The printing and postage of Assembly Reports, Minutes and other papers cost over £3,000 in 1976. Considerable savings are already being made in this area and further economies are under consideration. We suggest, however, that only one *printed* set of papers is necessary, and that these should be the full minutes including copies of the reports received by the Assembly. This would obviate some of the present difficulty of having to refer to two sets of papers for each Assembly. Papers sent out prior to a meeting of the Assembly would be in a less permanent and less costly form.

18. Executive Committee The present Executive Committee meets three times a year and can also meet in emergency to act on behalf of the Assembly. It consists of 76 members, half of whom are appointed by Synods (not District Councils) and some of whom may well not have attended the previous Assembly. We recommend that Synods' nominees should normally be from among those who attend the General Assembly immediately prior to their year of service, that the size of the Committee be reduced and that its frequency of meeting be reviewed in the light of other changes.

19. We suggest the reduction of Synod representation from 48 to 36 and of ex-officio members from 28 to 15 (details are given in draft resolution 10(j)), making a total reduction from 76 to 51. This would increase the proportion of Synod representation and reduce the cost of meetings.

20. Assembly Departments The Departments and the staff who operate from Church House are the executive arm of the General Assembly and its Committees (see second paragraph of section 9(5) of Scheme of Union). Their primary responsibility therefore is to the Assembly; they are charged with implementing its decisions. We feel, however, that they should be more directly concerned to serve Provinces and local churches. To do this they must be freed from having to gear all their work to meetings of the Assembly, but this would ensure the strengthening of lines of communication throughout the Church.

21. Communication is not dependent simply on the production of paperwork. Indeed, the amount of material sent out from Church House to local churches has often been a cause of frustration to both parties, much good material being too little used. It is very important that members of the staff at Church House should be free to spend time encouraging the use of what they have produced.

22. Bound up with this are differences of priority and structure at Assembly and local levels. The departmental pattern which is necessary for the proper ordering of work at the centre is not universally reflected in Synods, District Councils or local churches, and it would be unhelpful to impose this pattern throughout. The point of coordination, we feel, should be at Church House where the various priorities and structures of the different councils of the Church are drawn together.

23. We are aware of the Report on Organisation at Church House prepared in 1975 (see Reports to Assembly 1976, page 3), and have discussed this with the General Secretary. It is clear that many matters of detail have been implemented already and that steps are being taken to follow up the more far reaching recommendations regarding co-ordination of work between Departments and of information sent out to the churches. We particularly value the widening ability of Church House staff to speak with knowledge of areas other than their own speciality; this is of great benefit when they are visiting Synods. We believe, however, that further action on the Report needs to be taken with all urgency, and that changes should reflect the points made in paragraph 20 above; but we feel that the detailed working out of this recommendation is best left to those whose daily work at Church House enables them to reconcile the needs of the churches with the demands of working with other denominations and ecumenical bodies.

24. Synod Offices There is considerable variety in the way Synod offices are functioning. We recommend that if this has not already been done each Province should consider appointing a Personal or Administrative Assistant who can relieve the Moderator and Clerk of much of their routine work. Provinces should ensure that the duties of each are clearly understood both within the office and in the Province.

25. Lines of Communication To achieve some standardisation of lines of communication to Synods and to avoid the confusion, ignorance and duplication of work which have sometimes arisen we recommend the following:

25.1 Only matters on which the Provincial Moderator is personally expected to act should be referred directly to him.

25.2 When letters are sent to a Synod concerning Synod matters, they should be addressed to the Clerk, and a copy should be sent to the Provincial Moderator. Correspondence should not normally be addressed to an Administrative or Personal Assistant.

25.3 When a letter of general concern is sent to a nominated person within the Synod (e.g. the Provincial Treasurer), copies should be sent to the Clerk and Moderator for information.

26. Costs Comparisons between present costs and those involved in running the two previous denominations are virtually impossible due to changes in boundaries, changes in structures and inflation. However, where rough comparisons can be made there is evidence that the new structures are already saving both on manpower and money. The following evaluation of *travelling costs* (the major item of expenditure) for 1975 indicates that costs are certainly not excessive and are much lower than has been suggested.

	<i>1975 total</i>
General Assembly (one meeting)	£6,025
Executive Committee (3 meetings at £400)	£1,200
12 Synods (mostly two meetings at an average cost of £150 per meeting)	£3,600
65 District Councils (between 3 and 10 meetings at an average cost of £12 per meeting)	£4,000

27. Any substantial savings accruing from our proposals would be seen in holding expenditure down in the face of inflation; but we do anticipate positive benefit in other ways. We do not feel able to recommend any more stringent economies in view of the possible consequences. (Some suggestions we have received would have involved greater cost or would have put an undue burden on a few busy people such as Provincial Moderators.)

28. **Conclusion** We conclude that the present structure is basically sound, that drastic economies cannot be made without incurring a serious loss of efficiency and spiritual effectiveness and that Synods and District Councils are necessary to the present life of the United Reformed Church. Certain changes of emphasis are required, however, and there is need in some places for a more imaginative use to be made of the freedom and flexibility inherent in the Scheme of Union.

Ronald Bocking, *Chairman*
Malcolm G. Hanson, *Secretary*

WORKING PARTY RE STRUCTURES: APPENDIX

Flexibility in District Councils and Synods

1. **Freedom** The Report has stressed that the Scheme of Union lists the functions of District Councils and Provincial Synods, but deliberately refrains from giving any more precise indication as to how these functions are to be discharged. Behind this approach lies the recognition that there are many local differences of geography, distance and strength of resources, both in terms of personnel and material, and that these variations make it imperative that District Councils and Synods be left free to exercise their responsibilities in the way best suited to their local circumstances. The Report states our conviction that some of the concerns which have been expressed to us arise out of too little exercise of this freedom of action which already exists. This appendix is an attempt to spell out this point in more detail. It is merely illustrative; it does not give a pattern. We are indicating certain points where this freedom should be applied; we do not recommend any particular answer.

2. **Procedures** This 'free' pattern of the URC means that each Provincial Synod is responsible for creating, in consultation with its District Councils and local churches, the best procedures by which to discharge its business with the maximum efficiency, the minimum delay and with reasonable economy. Synods need, e.g. to set up clear procedures for handling such matters as trust and building decisions, so that there is no confusion about who is responsible for preparing reports, how these are to be handled swiftly and efficiently, and who has authority to act. Clear distinctions also need to be established between Synods and District Councils concerning the handling of matters relating to Church Life, Church and Society, World Church and Mission and Finance. On some matters where both carry responsibilities it should be decided which Council takes the major responsibility, so as to avoid duplication of effort and failure to act. Some Provinces may decide to work mainly through strong District Councils with the Synod and its committees acting largely in a stimulating and co-ordinating capacity. Others may decide to operate more at the Provincial level with more, and therefore smaller, District Councils. Some may seek a more even balance between the two. The 'weight' that is given to the different Councils and the way they operate is very much in the hands of those involved.

3. **Local knowledge** We would, however, consider it to be one of the normal functions of a District Council, when passing on recommendations to Synod, to make a full critical assessment of the issues involved, keeping in mind not only the local need, but also the effect on other churches and the ecumenical situation. The local knowledge possessed by a District Council is vital here.

4. Committees The efficient discharge of business can be assisted by the proper use of committees; but they should only exist when and while they have a job to do. It is important that their terms of reference be stated clearly, preferably in a document to which all can refer, and that the extent of their authority is clear. Some committees are advisory, formulating the issue so that the larger body can make a swift decision; others are executive and have powers to act in line with established policies; some are both. Whether or not committee structures follow the pattern of Assembly Departments or Committees should depend on local need and resources. In any case periodic review of committee structures is wise. It is worth adding that sometimes a 'correspondent' is as effective as a committee.

5. Special events There is scope for organizing events such as conferences for Ministers, Elders, Lay Preachers, Junior Church Leaders and young people; also training days, quiet days, family days and work parties; mutual help may be offered in relation to buildings, etc. There is a great variety of ways in which the life of the churches in an area may be strengthened. It does not matter whether this is done on a Provincial basis, or by a District or in a smaller area, so long as it is done. Synods are responsible as part of their oversight for ensuring that activities of this nature are being undertaken, but that does not mean that Synods have to do all the work themselves.

6. Roles The value of District Council lies in its close and continuous connections with the local church. With its intimate knowledge of the local situation it can help and advise on problems and opportunities. The value of Synod lies in its drawing together churches from a wide area, in providing a forum for discussion of major items of policy, mission, unity and social concern. Its worship may be especially inspiring to those who normally worship in small congregations. It expresses something of the corporate nature of the Church and can be a stimulus both to the local church and to the General Assembly. Beyond this there is wide scope for the development of local patterns which will aid efficiency and deepen mutual trust so that the whole Church works together.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the Report.
2. The Assembly urges all Councils and Committees of the Church to keep in mind the need for full consultation with all concerned before decisions are taken, in the terms of paragraph 10 of the Scheme of Union, which reads:
'Decisions on the part of any Council shall be reached only after the fullest attempt has been made to discover the mind of the other Councils or of local churches likely to be affected by the decision.'
3. The Assembly encourages Synods and District Councils to make full use of the flexibility implicit in the Scheme of Union so that structures may be adapted to local needs.
4. The Assembly asks Synods to keep their committee structures under review so as to ensure that Assembly reports and District Council business can be dealt with quickly and efficiently.
5. The Assembly encourages Synods to maintain a Synod Office which can provide assistance both to the Provincial Moderator and to the Synod Clerk. The appointment of a Personal or Administrative Assistant is desirable, but where such an appointment is made Synods should clarify the Assistant's responsibilities in relation to the Moderator and the Synod Clerk.
6. The Assembly instructs its Committees wherever possible to keep in close touch with their corresponding Synod Committees and to provide them with information and stimulus as well as seeking their help.
7. The Assembly instructs the Business Committee to consider the question of corresponding members to the Assembly and the possibility of inviting observers from other major Churches in England and Wales.

8. The Assembly instructs its officers to pursue the propositions in the Report on Organisation at Church House, and particularly to consider the coordination of material from Church House, Assembly Committees, etc., for Synods and local churches, with a view to:
 - (a) Determining priorities in the context of an overall policy,
 - (b) Ensuring that sufficient material is provided to enable the realistic implementation of proposals, but in such order and quantity as the Church can reasonably be expected to deal with in a responsible manner.

9. The Assembly sends the Report of the Working Party on Structures of the United Reformed Church, and the following draft resolutions, to Synods, District Councils and local churches for discussion and comment. (Comments to be sent to the Secretary of the Working Party, the Revd. M. G. Hanson, 5 Towers Avenue, Jesmond, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE2 3QE, by December 20th 1977. In the light of these comments resolutions will be brought before the next meeting of the General Assembly for ratification the following year.)

10. DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

(For further consideration by the 1978 and 1979 General Assemblies.)

- (a) All reports and recommendations to General Assembly shall be transmitted to Synods for information and discussion before coming to the Assembly, unless urgency demands their immediate attention in the Assembly.
- (b) Representatives to the General Assembly shall be appointed by Synods instead of District Councils, keeping in mind the need for:
 - (i) Adequate representation of all District Councils;
 - (ii) Continuity of representation;
 - (iii) Knowledge of particular aspects of the life of the Church.
- (c) The total membership of the Assembly from all categories shall not exceed 375, of whom at least three-quarters shall be appointed by Synods.
- (d) Representation at the Assembly from Synods (ministerial and lay in equal numbers) shall be at the rate of one per 1,000 members, plus one per an appropriate number of 'places of worship' to bring the total to a minimum of 282, i.e. three-quarters of 375. (In 1975 this would have been 176, plus 1 per 18 places of worship, i.e. 111, making a total of 287.) Each Synod shall be entitled to an additional representative if necessary to bring its total to an even number.
- (e) Departments and Standing Committees of the Assembly shall be represented at the Assembly by the Chairmen of the Applications, Business and Nominations Committees, the Chairmen of the four Departments, together with three representatives from each Department.
- (f) Theological Colleges shall be represented through the Ministerial Training Committee of the Church Life Department.
- (g) The World Church and Mission Committee shall be entitled to appoint four missionary representatives to the Assembly.
- (h) Past Chairmen, Presidents and Moderators of the General Assembly shall be ex-officio members of the Assembly for the three years following their year of service.
- (i) In the light of these proposals and in the light of further experience, some consideration shall be given to the frequency of meeting of the Assembly and to the length of meeting.
- (j) The Executive Committee shall review its frequency of meeting in the light of these proposals, and shall consist of:

Three representatives from each Synod, including the Moderators, together with ex-officio members as follows: the Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator, the Clerk and General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Assistant Clerk, the Legal Advisers, the Chairmen of the four Departments and of Business, Applications and Nominations Committees.

Those nominated by Synods shall normally have been members of the Assembly immediately prior to their service.
- (k) The Business Committee of the Assembly shall consist of:

A Chairman and Secretary, the Moderator, Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator,

the Clerk and General Secretary, the Assistant Clerk, the Chairmen of the four Departments and one representative from each Synod.

- (l) District Councils shall no longer be responsible for considering applications for recognition of students for the ministry, nor resignations from the ministry, but shall transmit such cases to the Synod for decision.
- (m) Synods shall have the power to determine, in consultation with the District Councils and churches concerned, the boundaries and number of District Councils within their Province. All such changes shall be reported to the General Assembly.

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

Report for 1977

The Committee appointed in 1972 to conduct negotiations between the United Reformed Church and the Churches of Christ submits its final report, now circulated to all members of Assembly, for the judgement of the two Churches. In so doing the URC members wish to set on record their sense of privilege in having shared in a series of discussions conducted at a high level of mutual trust and understanding. While the size of the two Churches is very different and their theological positions quite diverse, the trust engendered in honest conversation has, we believe, laid a foundation for a union which, if it is accomplished, will be to our mutual enrichment and have significance for other churches beside our own. The process to be followed in the URC is less demanding than that required of the Churches of Christ, and this needs to be sympathetically understood. We submit the proposals believing that what is said about Baptism does indicate a way of reconciling hitherto conflicting positions, and that the proposals about ministry are appropriate to the new insights and needs of our time.

Norman Goodall, *Chairman*
Arthur L. Macarthur, *(Secretary, M&EW at Home Committee)*

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly approves the Proposals for Unification submitted by the Joint Committee for negotiations between the Churches of Christ and the United Reformed Church and agrees to proceed in accordance with them.
 2. The Assembly resolves to agree the scheduled amendments as defined in the Proposals for Unification as amendments to the Basis of Union and the Structure of the United Reformed Church to become effective on the date of unification as defined in the Proposals for Unification.
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THE REPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL MODERATORS 1977

Deployment and the Nature of a 'Call'

1. Whenever the proposals for the deployment of ministry are discussed, someone invariably asks 'How does a minister's sense that he is called of God to a particular pastorate fit in to all this?'. It is of course a crucial question. In each of the traditions which united to form our Church, the right of the local church to call the minister to whom it believes it has been led by God, and equally the minister's responsibility to decide whether he believes the church's call was from God, was not simply a long cherished custom. It is derived from a Biblical insight into the very nature of the Church and its ministry. Nothing in the deployment proposals now before us invalidates this. If 'The Communion of the Holy Spirit' really is the bond of our unity, then the needs of the *whole* Church for ministry must be a major factor in a local church's and a minister's consideration of a particular call. This is not to by-pass the Holy Spirit, but rather to know him for what he is. 'Every local church for itself' is no more Christian a principle than 'every man for himself'.

2. Other Councils of the Church as well as the local church have their responsibility to seek to discern where God calls ministers to serve. It is their assessment of the relative needs and opportunities of one area compared with another which forms the basis of deployment proposals. Neither an individual minister nor a local church can claim to have a monopoly of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They always need to check with their brethren in the appropriate Councils of the Church that they may find out what the Spirit is saying to them.

Consultation with other Churches

3. All of us have good reason to know that in these days no denomination can consider the best use of its resources, whether in buildings, money or manpower, in isolation from other denominations. While we are glad to see an increasing number of local unions with Methodist and United Reformed churches, the continued organic separation of the two denominations, inevitably creates problems for these local unions. In order to help churches in facing these difficulties we have responded to the initiative of the District Chairmen of the Methodist Church and our representatives have begun to meet regularly with them. We are at present engaged in drafting an updated memorandum of advice to local Methodist/UR churches who are contemplating or have already achieved union. There is now a considerable amount of local experience to draw on and a sufficient number of effective unions for useful advice to be provided. The valuable work already done in a previous memorandum by the Revd. Alan Davies of the Methodist Church and Dr. John Huxtable has given us a basis on which to work.

4. We hope it will prove possible for us to meet similarly with our opposite numbers in other Churches, and we are thankful that this kind of inter-Church consultation is increasingly possible at local, regional and national levels.

Local URC Unions

5. In addition to local church unions across denominational barriers, the uniting of two or more United Reformed churches continues to take place. Where conversations with a view to such unions are being initiated we urge churches to seek advice on the best use of buildings. It has been our experience that the problem as to which buildings are best suited for a united church's witness is most likely to be resolved when someone of acknowledged expertise from outside the local situation is asked to give an objective assessment.

Housing for Ministers in Retirement

6. This is one of our continuing concerns though we believe the situation generally to be better than it was three or four years ago. We applaud the intentions of churches and groups in offering manses surplus to their needs, for the use of retired ministers. However, unless a house can be made available when and where a minister wishes to retire, this is no real answer. The more urgent need is for the raising of a capital sum from which the Church can buy houses, or make loans or grants to assist in the purchase of houses. The most likely source of substantial gifts is from the sale of property and from bequests of property or money, specified for this purpose.

The Care of Ministers

7. We accept gladly our responsibility for a ministry to ministers, but inevitably the day to day care of ministers rests with the local church, and especially with the elders. We wonder if elders always remember that their pastoral obligations include the minister, his wife and family. On the practical level this should mean seeing that he has at least one day off a week, and making responsible provision for necessary manse redecoration and repair, in such a way that the minister or his wife do not have to keep asking for this work to be done. Many churches are beyond reproach in these matters, but there is a large enough thoughtless minority to give us cause for concern. Ministers also need the support of their elders if they are to avail themselves of opportunities for 'in-Service training'. Admittedly some of them have to be persuaded that they can be spared from their pastorates for a week or two – but that too, is surely part of the job of a sympathetic elders' meeting. These are only a few of the ways in which a local church can fulfil the promises made at Induction Services – to encourage, maintain and strengthen the minister.

Personalia

8. In the course of the year we have taken our leave of Douglas Smith and Vernon Lewis. Douglas and his wife have settled happily in their new home in Bognor and are enjoying a busy 'retirement'. Vernon has fully recovered his health and we wish him and Mrs. Lewis every blessing in their new ministry at Malvern Link. In their places we have welcomed Peter Chesney and Cyril Franks, who have quickly and effectively adapted themselves to the particular ministry of Provincial Moderator. We shall soon be saying good-bye to Charles Haig and Bill Samuel who are retiring after seventeen and fifteen years respectively of Moderatorial service. They have both been and remain brothers beloved, and while we shall miss them from our meetings, we are sure that both of them, with their special gifts and experience will continue to be used in the service, not only of the URC, but of the Church Catholic.

The Blight of Defeatism

9. While there are features of Church life which we find depressing, there is also a great deal to encourage, especially if we can be delivered from what has been called 'parochial self-absorption' and rejoice in the advances the Gospel is making elsewhere – for example in Africa and Latin America. Our chief responsibility is of course, under God, for the life and witness of our own Church, and here, too, the picture has its brighter side. The enthusiasm and the numbers of people of all ages who have responded to Provincial summer gatherings – so that for instance some 4,000 members of our church families in Yorkshire spent a day last summer together in worship and recreation; the fact that in writing 'Through Eastern Windows' one of the author's problems was to choose from among many enterprising and advancing churches, the seventeen whose story could be told within the compass of a reasonably sized pamphlet; the quality of the candidates for the ministry at recent Assessment Conferences, together with the number of 'enquirers'; the growing disenchantment with materialist values and the increasing awareness of so many entirely outside institutional religion, that life has a spiritual dimension – these are at least as significant as the other side of the story which we know only too well. Of course, none of us must play the ostrich, but the time has come to call a halt to our near-obsession with declining church membership figures and with the rate at which local churches are closing. Even closure can have a positive value, when as in two Somerset villages, the remaining URC members have said 'We are going to worship with the Anglicans, because we get on so well with them, and the Rector is such a friend of ours'. There is good apostolic, not to say dominical, authority for thinking on the things which are lovely and of good report, and for taking courage.

CHURCH LIFE DEPARTMENT

Chairman: The Revd. Dr. Kenneth Slack

Secretary: The Revd. Robert O. Latham

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

INTRODUCTION

1. During this past year concern has been expressed that too much printed material was being 'poured on' the churches, and that the churches were being asked to consider too many important issues which required a reply by 31 December. The concern was wider than that of the Church Life Department and embraced the whole of the United Reformed Church, the reports of the British Council of Churches, of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, as well as the Ten Propositions of the Churches Unity Commission, and the Proposals for Unification with the Churches of Christ.

2. It is recognized that at the present time life is complex and there are many ecumenical concerns which find expression through the wider Councils of the Churches of which all our churches should be aware. The recent BCC report on *The Child in the Church* is a good example. Further both the *Ten Propositions* and the *Proposals for Unification with the Churches of Christ* demand the active consideration of every local church, for that is part of the decision-making process of our Church life today.

3. Other material which is produced is for the enrichment of church life and is intended to assist the local church in its life and witness. For example the Orders of Worship which are appearing in preparation for a Service Book; Partners in Learning which is used by about seventy per cent of our churches; Stewardship material and project material like *Ending for Life*. Of this material we would say that it is for those who can use it. Each church takes what it wants. There is no obligation on every church to use everything.

4. The question remains, 'Is there too much material?' Is it possible to suggest priorities in presenting issues? Is it desirable to suggest that some decisions should be made at Assembly level, others at Synod, others at District, and others again at the local church? If this last suggestion is feasible not all the material about every issue would need to be disseminated to every church. The question is one of acknowledging the responsibility of the various *Councils* of the Church for the whole Church. The Church Life Department wishes this concern to be shared with the General Assembly.

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. Dr. Lesslie Newbigin

Secretary: The Revd. Robert O. Latham

5. **Chairmanship** The Revd. Lesslie Newbigin has been welcomed as Chairman of the Committee.

6. **Central Training Grants Committee** An acute problem has arisen during the year concerning the financing of candidates for the ministry. For the academic year 1976-77 the Colleges had expended £18,742 in student grants over and above what was available from the annual income of their bursarial funds; about half the students were in receipt of Local Authority Grants which covered their expenses, the other half needed bursarial support which was insufficient. The Colleges and Trust Funds had agreed to co-operate through a Central Training Grants Committee which would recommend to each of the Trust Funds, according to their Trust Deeds, what grants to make, in an attempt to ensure that all students were treated fairly. It is hoped that certain recently formed Trust Funds will also co-operate and so augment the meagre funds which are at present available, which in 1976 amounted to £2,000 only. An increased allocation from the Unified Appeal is also necessary, if sufficient money is to be made available for ministerial training.

7. **Recruitment for the Ministry** In a very real sense the 'recruiting agent' for the ministry of the Church is none other than the Holy Spirit. We believe that He calls us to co-operate with him, and it is in this Spirit that what is loosely called recruitment is carried on in our Church. We have held two *Inquirer's Conferences* during the year. One at Manchester and the other at Westminster College. 30 'inquirers' have attended and the nature of the ministry has been explained. Those who attended were appreciative and some appeared later as commended candidates. Further conferences are planned. In addition we have produced an informative leaflet which should be available at the General Assembly.

8. **Assessment Conferences** Three assessment conferences have been held during the year at which 31 candidates appeared. The Committee has considered the role of the Assessment Conference in relation to the functions of the District and Synod Ministerial committees and make the recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5 below.

9. **Lay Training and Ministerial In-Service Training** This work is being co-ordinated by the Revd. Dr. Stephen Mayor of Westminster Cheshunt Colleges in collaboration with the Department. All but two of the Provinces have appointed 'officers' for each of these functions and a consultation has been held in Westminster College and guide-lines agreed. There is no intention of creating a uniform pattern, but in each Province the 'officers' are expected to find out what courses and resources are available locally, to know what is available nationally, and to encourage ministers and members to take advantage of the facilities for training and retraining.

10. **Roll of Ministers** Examination results for 1976:

Part I: Passed: Mr. David Morgan (Southern)

Part II (i): Passed: Mrs. Rosemary Humphrey (South Western)

Mr. Brian Coward (Wessex)

Mrs. Margaret Munford – part only (South Western)

Part II (ii): Passed: Mrs. Evelyn Anwyl (Eastern)

Mr. Gordon Palmer (Southern)

Over 55's: Passed: Mrs. Eileen Seymour (Wessex)

Mr. Joseph Warren (Eastern)

Mr. Cedric Carr (Wessex)

The candidates for Part I with the exception of Mr. David Morgan who is working in Nigeria, have all been transferred to the new non-residential College based Course 3. There are three Course 3 candidates attached to Westminster and seven to Manchester, and a good beginning has been made on these courses.

11. **College Reports** The reports of Colleges are in Appendix 1, but change in personnel has been so great that it calls for special mention.

12. **Manchester** The Principal Dr. Edgar Jones retires in June 1977 after a distinguished career first at Yorkshire College, then at Manchester where he was elected Principal in 1968. The governors have appointed the Revd. Eric Hull, BA, BD, as Principal. Mr. Hull has served the College since 1961 as lecturer in New Testament. In addition the Governors have appointed the Revd. Dr. Stanley Russell as Lecturer in Theology and the Revd. Roger Tomes as Lecturer in Old Testament.

13. **Mansfield College Oxford** The Principal, the Revd. Dr. George Caird has been appointed to the Dean Ireland's Professorship of Exegesis of Holy Scripture in Oxford University. Dr. Caird is the first Free Churchman ever to hold this office and the URC rejoices with him and congratulates him. The College Governors have appointed Dr. Donald Sykes as Principal from June 1977. Dr. Sykes has been Tutor in Theology since 1959.

14. **Westminster and Cheshunt Colleges** The president of Cheshunt, the Revd. J. E. Newport has accepted the call to become minister of the joint Methodist/URC church in Winchester, and the Cheshunt Governors have appointed the Revd. Dr. Stephen Mayor as acting President, and after due consultation with the appropriate bodies, wish him to be recognised by the URC as a member of the teaching staff of Westminster College, and to be designated the Cheshunt Professor of Pastoral Studies, and they undertake to guarantee his salary and allowances for an initial period of five years.

15. **New College, London** The closure of New College, London marks the end of an era in ministerial training in London for Congregational and URC candidates. See resolution No. 7 and College report.

16. College Statistics

College	October 1976 Total No. in Training for URC	New Candidates for URC October 1976	Estimated No. for URC - Ministry 77, 78, 79	Actual No. entered URC 1976	Total No. of Theol. students (incl. Post. Grads)	Total No. of places available
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Westminster/Cheshunt	18	7	5, 6, 7	1	37	61
New	—	—	— — —	4	4	—
Manchester	33	15	8, 5, 9	6	40	104
Mansfield	4	4	— — 4	1	15	36
Swansea	2	—	— — 2	—	29	40
Bala Bangor	—	—	—	—	—	—
Queen's Birmingham	1	—	1 — —	—	(104)	(114)
Roll of Ministers	6	—	5 — 1	2	—	—
Totals	64	26	19 11 23	14	125	241

(bracketed figures cols. 5 & 6 not included)

- NOTES: 1. New College, London has no URC students, and will cease to operate in June 1977
 2. Queen's Birmingham is recognised by URC
 3. The ROM courses are being phased out — all new candidates are attached to Colleges on Courses 3 and 4.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly approves of the setting up of a Central Training Grants Committee, and encourages the various Trust Funds, and the member churches, through the Unified Appeal, to make available sufficient money to provide for the training of accepted candidates for the ministry of the URC.
2. The Assembly reaffirms that a Synod Committee, after receiving reports from the Districts and the Assessment Conference decides whether or not a candidate be accepted for the URC ministry.
3. The Assembly agrees that the Assessment Conference be given the responsibility of recommending to the Provinces the type of course and the College most suitable for each candidate.
4. The Assembly agrees that each Assessment Conference be staffed by 8 assessors, at least two of whom should be members of the teaching staffs of the recognised Colleges who, in addition to the normal assessment interviews, would interview each of the candidates and make recommendations concerning their training, should they be accepted by the Provinces.
5. The Assembly agrees that the list of Assessors be revised to include members of the teaching staffs of the Colleges, and also some persons with expert knowledge of personnel selection.

6. The Assembly grants the request of the Cheshunt Governors that the Revd. Dr. Stephen Mayor be recognised by the Assembly as the Cheshunt Professor of Pastoral Studies in Westminster College, and that the guarantee of his salary and allowances for an initial period of five years be accepted with thanks to Cheshunt Governors.
7. The Assembly records the outstanding contribution made by New College, London, its staff and students over many generations, dating back to 1673, and in particular at this time receives with appreciation and thanks the retiring members of staff:
 - The Principal Revd. Dr. Charles Duthie (appointed 1964)
 - The Revd. Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall (Lecturer in Church History) (appointed 1945)
 - The Secretary Miss Margaret Canning (appointed 1949)
 and notes that the New College Trust which is being set up is intended to provide financial assistance for Ministerial and Lay Training.
8. The Assembly receives, and expresses its thanks for their significant services to the Church in the training of our ministers:
 - The Principal Revd. Dr. George Caird
 - The Principal Revd. Dr. Edgar Jones
 - The Revd. J. E. Newport, ex President of Cheshunt College
9. The Assembly receives and recognises as teachers of our ministry the newly appointed Principals and Lecturers of our recognised Colleges:
 - The Revd. Eric Hull, Principal elect of Manchester College
 - Dr. Donald Sykes, Principal elect of Mansfield College, Oxford
 - The Revd. Dr. Stephen Mayor, Cheshunt Professor of Pastoral Studies at Westminster College, Cambridge
 - The Revd. Dr. Stanley Russell, Lecturer in Theology, Manchester
 - The Revd. Roger Tomes, Lecturer elect in Old Testament, Manchester College.

CHAPLAINS TO THE FORCES

17. The United Reformed Church conducts its work in the Forces through the United Board. Of its serving chaplains, the Revd. D. A. Harries has retired from the Navy on appointment to a charge in the Church of Scotland; the Revds. A. J. Spivey and D. Friend have retired from the Army, leaving no URC chaplain in that branch; the Revd. Kenneth Darbyshire, presently serving as Principal Chaplain (Church of Scotland and Free Churches) in the RAF, is also due for retirement in 1978. This will leave the Revds. F. A. Beattie and S. L. Williams in the Navy and the Revd. C. G. Prenton in the RAF. Vigorous steps are being taken to fill some of the consequent vacancies, either by younger men able to serve long-term or by a minister perhaps about 38 able to accept a short-service commission. Otherwise, since it is of great importance that the work should be done, it will be right to ask whether the Baptist Church can take up any of the URC appointments.

18. Along with these our full-time chaplains the URC contributes a great deal to this ministry through the considerable number of officiating chaplains engaged at the present time. Both full-time and officiating chaplains are assured of the prayerful support of the Church in this demanding field of service.

SUPPLEMENTARY MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. John Williamson

Secretary: The Revd. Roger Tomes

19. **Local Pastors** During the year the committee corresponded with all those on the Register of Local Pastors. The replies indicated that they felt that their place in the ministry of the URC was not as clear as that of ministers and elders. They might find themselves treated as ministers by the local interdenominational fraternal, and yet in their own church ordaining elders without ever having been ordained themselves. The proper

time to re-examine their place in the URC's ministry will be when the outcome of the talks with the Churches of Christ is known, with their proposals for auxiliary ministers. It should be added that local pastors were unanimous in appreciation of being members of District Council and Provincial Synod in their own right.

20. **Lay Preachers** A second expository sermon competition was held in 1976, and members of the Congregational Federation shared in the adjudication. The prizewinners were: 1. Mrs. Anne Ashworth (Marton URC); 2. Miss W. P. Wenyon (Local Pastor, Tunbridge Wells Group); 3. Mr. H. G. B. Toobe (Prenton URC). A third competition, in which lay preachers are invited to submit Easter sermons, is being held this year.

21. The course *Exploring the Faith* is proving popular in both the URC and the Methodist Church. 163 URC members were engaged on the course at the beginning of February. The following have completed the Pastoralia course during the year: Mrs. Wynn Young (Northern Province), Mr. P. Blezard, Mrs. K. Woodhouse (North Western Province), Mr. W. H. Elliott, Mr. J. B. Fidler, Mr. M. Marshall (Mersey Province), Mrs. A. J. Archer (West Midland Province), Mr. J. R. Hardy (Eastern Province) and R. J. Gill (Southern Province).

22. **Deaconesses** Our five deaconesses are serving at the following churches: Durham St. Hartlepool (Lilian Blythin); Harlow (Eileen Gooding); Sherwood, Arnold and Burton Joyce, Notts (Mollie Fletcher); Openshaw (Pat Parrish); and Crossway Central Mission, London (Kay Salvage). They meet annually for a conference, and last year were joined by former deaconesses and by Pat Robinson, who is working with Asians in Birmingham.

23. **Shared Ministries** The committee has written to a number of groups of churches served by minister(s) and a number of lay preachers. In most cases the arrangement is similar to that of the traditional Methodist circuit plan, but in one group at least (Royston - 7 churches) the preachers have a monthly consultation and a bi-monthly meeting with two elders from each of the churches. Preachers are thus able to learn about the courses followed in each church and a certain amount of continuity is achieved. New ideas in worship are generally first used at joint services for the whole group. Pastoral visiting has been organised so that ministers and others visit those in a geographical area rather than the membership of a particular church. This growth in pastoral responsibility is very welcome: the secretary of a church in the Erewash Valley group says: 'From being just a lay preacher moving from church to church . . . I have become a pastor.' The committee commends these ways of group planning for shared ministries with lay preachers, especially to oversight pastorates, and to interim moderators.

24. **Secretary of Committee** The Revd. Roger Tomes completes his term of office at this Assembly as Secretary of the Supplementary Ministries Committee. He has had the task of supervising the training of lay preachers and local pastors, establishing links with tutors, and helping those already trained to find their place in the changed situation of the URC. In addition, he has been mainly responsible for the editing and production of *Exploring the Faith*, the new ecumenical Lay Preachers Course (Methodist, Baptist URC). His care for detail, concerning persons and doctrine and records has been outstanding and we are grateful for all that he has accomplished. He is to be succeeded by the Revd. Charles Meachin.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. J. Edward Mather

Secretary: The Revd. Michael J. Davies

25. **Youth Leadership Training** The training programme is developing in an encouraging way. A new full time Training Officer, the Revd. E. F. Cattermole, BSc has been appointed to the Southern and Wessex Provinces. He joins the existing team of Brian Harris, Bernard Grimsey and the Revd. John Oldershaw. The South West Province has appointed its own honorary Training Officer jointly with the Baptists and courses have also been organised by suitably qualified volunteers in several other areas. Before long any youth worker wishing to take the URC Introductory Course should be able to do so and we are grateful to the Department of Education and Science, the King George's Jubilee Trust, Local Education Authorities and Trusts, which make grants towards the cost of this important work.

26. **Manifesto for our Future** The FURY manifesto, which was received by the General Assembly last year, has been presented, usually by FURY members, in a number of local churches and District Councils and this process is proceeding. Meanwhile young people are seeking to implement the Manifesto themselves in a variety of ways through their involvement in social and community work and their publication GOAD (Go out and do), through a new evangelistic work camp project at Lancaster, through Youth Worship Teams, etc.

27. **'Ending for £ife' Project 1977/8** A great deal of effort is being put into the new project which seeks to educate young people in world development issues and to raise money for investment in the Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society, a World Council of Churches agency seeking to make capital available at low rates of interest for projects in the Third World. A resource kit, including filmstrip, games, poster, fund-raising ideas, is available for £1 from the Youth Office and three special areas, South India, Latin America and Zambia, have been chosen for special study. A youth party visited South India last Summer and it is hoped that a group will go to Zambia this year, so first hand knowledge will go into the material produced. The FURY Assembly in January 'draws the attention of the URC to the 'Ending for £ife' project asking it to consider the challenge it is making, in addition to the 1% appeal, and to urge Districts and local churches to encourage young people to participate.'

28. **The FURY Assembly** was held at Swanwick, January 14th-16th, 1977 jointly with a consultation of Provincial and District Youth Secretaries. In all there were about 170 people present including 104 young people representing 50 districts and 44 Youth Secretaries representing 38 districts and 8 Provinces.

29. **The Youth Secretaries** undertook a review of Youth Work in the URC since Union and agreed that basic policy should not be changed at this stage. It asked the Youth Committee to give further consideration to open club work, communication with the disadvantaged young person, ecumenical developments in youth work and the problem of isolated young people in our churches. The importance of youth leadership training was again stressed and some felt that training should be obligatory for all youth workers in the Church. The FURY Assembly devoted much of its time to preparation for the 'Ending for £ife' Project and the implementation of the Manifesto. Amongst its other concerns it (1) welcomed the *Ten Propositions* and hoped they could lead to increased visible unity of the Church in this country; (2) asked the Church to consider its giving to CWM in the light of the 10% cuts in sterling grants to overseas Churches; (3) expressed its approval for the WCC attitude on the South African 'Homelands'; and (4) pledged its support for the World Development Movements campaign for a fair price for tea.

30. **5th Anniversary of Union Celebration** A youth weekend will be held in London October 7th-9th, 1977 when it is hoped that groups of young people will come from all over the country for a time of fellowship, celebration, social activity, sight-seeing and worship, culminating in a service of thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey on Sunday afternoon at which the preacher will be the Revd. Dr. Kenneth Slack, MBE.

31. **Uniformed Organisations** The Guide and Scout movements and the Brigades constitute about five eighths of URC youth work and they are a very important part of FURY. It is encouraging that the URC Guide and Scout Fellowship and the Boys Brigade URC Council of Companies, which hitherto have each organised separate fund-raising projects for their members, have agreed to participate in the 'Ending for £ife' Project. The Youth Committee is co-operating with the Children's Committee on matters relating to Christian Education in the Uniformed Organisations.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly welcomes the FURY project *Ending for £ife* and urges District Councils and local churches to give young people every help and encouragement to participate.
2. The Assembly notes the concern of FURY at the effect of cuts in sterling grants to overseas churches through CWM and urges all local churches to make every effort to meet their Unified Appeal target.

3. The Assembly welcomes the initiative of FURY in planning a celebration of the 5th anniversary of the Union, October 7th-9th, 1977 and asks Districts and local churches to co-operate in making this a meaningful event in the life of the Church and to encourage groups of young people to attend.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. C. Cyril Franks

CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. Donald H. Hilton

Secretary to both committees: The Revd. C. Keith Forecast

32. **The Child in the Church** Education within the Church received a valuable new emphasis in 1976 with the publication of the British Council of Churches report *The Child in the Church*. This clearly sees children as members of the church community in their own right, not merely as 'the church of the future' and urges churches fully to reckon with the implications of this for worship, education, nurture and mission. The committees have started to work out the report's recommendations and have encouraged local churches to do the same. In particular, the discussion paper *Ministry to Children* published at the 1976 Assembly and designed to foster concern for the declining number of children in our Church and the quality of nurture afforded, has been promoted. If the number of requests for this paper is anything to go by, the matter has become a high priority among us – over 10,000 copies have been distributed. The paper requests those who discussed it to share their discoveries with the whole Church by forwarding them to the Committee Secretary. We would remind churches of this. Meanwhile, in Birmingham, Dorset and Chelmsford, working parties are examining the subject in detail and depth and hope to have something useful to say within the next twelve months.

33. **The Story of the People of God** In 1970/71 the Baptist, Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches requested a new British Lessons Council Syllabus to replace *Experience and Faith* as a basis for the *Partners in Learning* education programme. It was hoped that the new syllabus would take account of the developing awareness of the local church as a worshipping and educative community of adults and children, and of the relationship between an educational syllabus and the Joint Liturgical Group's Lectionary. In the autumn of 1976 the syllabus *The Story of the People of God* was published. The committees have examined this carefully. In a number of ways the new syllabus is an improvement upon its predecessor. It makes a real attempt to provide an all age programme for the whole local church. It seriously tries to relate needs within the church to the changing pattern of RE in the day schools. There is still some doubt, however, as to whether it has succeeded in resolving the tension between syllabus and lectionary, whether its church-orientated theological stance (as contrasted with the world-orientated perspective of *Experience and Faith*) is generally acceptable, whether it gives complete enough coverage to the whole range of Biblical teaching, and whether it can, on its own provide an adequate basis for weekly educational material. However, after carefully considering all the issues involved, and with the support of the Doctrine and Worship Committee with whom full discussion has been held, the committees accept the document on behalf of the URC and express the hope that the *Partners in Learning* Editorial Panel will use it as a major resource for its future work.

34. **Training Together** The value of training for the work of teaching in the Church is, we hope, accepted by all. The value of doing this ecumenically is not always so readily seen or experienced. The local branch of the Christian Education Council is often an agency through which this can take place and within which denominational resources can be pooled to the mutual good. Sometimes University extra-mural departments and WEAs offer facilities which churches are reluctant to take up. We urge Districts and local churches to foster this kind of co-operation. The course *Training Together* published by the Inter-Church Training Group (30p) provides a useful basis for ecumenical training.

35. **Training for Worship** There is a growing recognition that, while we have brought all kinds of insights to bear upon the education of our people in the meaning of the Faith, we have

been slow to give centrality to what is in reality our primary purpose: that is, training for Christian worship. The committee plans to give itself much more urgently to this task, and meanwhile is publishing a paper designed to share experience of worship which effectively integrates children and adults.

36. Work in Provinces and Districts The work of Christian Education in the URC can only take place with any degree of success if it is taking place in the local church, supported by District and Province. With this in mind, the committee has held a consultation with the District and Provincial officers and attempts are being made to ensure a complete national network of such people. A paper has been prepared, setting out the areas of work a District and Provincial Christian Education Committee might be expected to cover.

37. Schools and the Church The present debate about Religious Education in Schools has heightened the need for churches to take seriously the nurture of the young. It is being seen more clearly that we should no longer expect the school to carry the responsibility of nurturing children in the Christian Faith, but that this is the task of the Church, the community of Faith. Both the report *Child in the Church* and the recent Free Church Council discussion document *RE in County Schools* are helpful in this respect. The committee believes it to be vitally important that local churches ecumenically should get to know the situation in the schools of their own area in this respect, and then examine the content of their own educational programme. The committee will give more time to this important issue in the future, but meanwhile it seeks to alert churches to it and has prepared a discussion paper to help them.

38. The Lord's Prayer General Assembly has previously commended the use of the new version of the Lord's Prayer, published by the International Consultation of English Texts, together with the traditional version. To assist local churches to do this, the committee has published a leaflet in its 'Christian Education Series' (Number 14) entitled *The Lord's Prayer – for today* (Price 3½p) giving the history of this version.

39. Personnel During the year a number of committee members have resigned and their places taken by newcomers, whom we welcome. In particular, we note the departure at this Assembly of the Revd. Donald Hilton, who has been Chairman of the Children's Committee since the inception of the URC. Both in this role and previously as secretary of the Youth and Children's Committee of the Congregational Church, he has given unstintingly of his vision and energy to the educational task of the Church. During this year he has also been President of the National Christian Education Council. We take this opportunity of expressing our regret that his tenure of this office within the URC has come to an end and of recording our warm gratitude for all he has done.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly draws attention to the discussion paper *Ministry to Children – 2: Worshipping Together* as a guide to those seeking to integrate children and adults more fully in worship.
2. This Assembly draws the attention of Provinces and Districts to the paper *Christian Education – A Checklist* and invites Councils and Synods to use it as a basis for their work in this field.
3. The Assembly, accepting that responsibility for the nurture of children in the Christian Faith is primarily that of the Church, draws the attention of local churches to the discussion paper: *Ministry to Children – 3: Nurturing in the Faith*.

PILOT PANEL

40. Pilot's is the URC's non-uniformed organization for boys and girls aged 7-14 years. It seeks to involve them fully in the life of the local church and through it to fulfil their promise to learn, pray and serve all they can in the world wide Church of Jesus Christ. There are at present some 120 companies with about 2,400 Pilots and 400 Officers. Of these companies 8 are in continuing Congregational Churches, 2 are in the Congregational Union of Scotland and 3 are new 'Associated Companies'. (1 Church of Christ, 1 Anglican and 1 Baptist.)

41. The interest shown by some churches of other denominations has led to the formation of 'Companies Associated with the URC'. Steps are taken to ensure the approval of their own denomination and to avoid any clash of loyalties that the children might feel in the use of material produced for a church other than their own. We are not actively seeking such companies, but we treat every enquiry sympathetically.

42. During the past year we have had 27 new companies registered – the highest for some time. The increase is partly due to the desire of some churches to find a mid-week activity for 7-14's and although Pilots may not be the answer to all needs we do commend it to local churches seeking such an activity. Information and advice is obtainable from the Master Pilot at Church House.

43. The appointment of our former Chairman, the Revd. C. Keith Forecast, as Christian Education Secretary means that we welcome a new Chairman – Mr. Graham Burnett. It was also decided to combine the posts of Master Pilot and Chief Pilot Officer; Keith Forecast will become Master Pilot when Michael Woolnough's appointment comes to an end this year. The committee wishes to record its thanks to Mr. Woolnough for his care and oversight during the past 5 years and to wish him well for the future.

DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. Dr. John Huxtable

Secretary: The Revd. Donald McIlhagga

44. **Ordination** As requested by the General Assembly last year the following Statement on Ordination prepared by the Doctrine and Worship Committee was sent to Synods for study, prior to its consideration by this Assembly.

PREAMBLE

45. The Holy Spirit gives many and varied gifts to the Church. What he gives to individual members is for the benefit of the whole body. We call such gifts 'ministries' because they equip the Church to serve her Lord fully in the world. The Spirit constantly calls forth new ministries to meet changing needs.

46. By the Holy Spirit, some members receive gifts which enable them to assemble the community of believers, build it up in faith, hope and love, and point it continually to its dependence on Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. These particular gifts may be described as formative because they establish the community and are central to its life.

47. In the providence of God, these gifts of the Spirit have been focussed and specialised by historical development in particular functions which include at least the following:

- (i) *Proclaiming* the mighty acts of God in Jesus Christ
- (ii) *Teaching* in the sense of searching into and explaining the biblical record and the shape and meaning of Christian discipleship in all spheres of life.
- (iii) *Presiding over* the worship and sacramental life of the community.
- (iv) *Pastoral care* and service within the community (and to others on its behalf).

48. Several different ways of providing for the orderly exercise of the (formative) gifts of the Spirit are theoretically possible in the life of a particular church or denomination. The patterns which have developed historically should neither be treated lightly or regarded as immutable.

49. Believing that they have received the appropriate gifts of the Spirit, the URC currently appoints Ministers, Elders, Deaconesses, Local Pastors, and Lay Preachers to one or more of the particular functions of proclaiming, presiding, teaching and pastoral care.

50. In our usage, the words 'ordain' and 'ordination' are used to describe and define two centrally important offices, those of Minister and Elder. This usage allows and encompasses considerable variety of conviction within a unity of thanksgiving for the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

THE MEANING OF ORDINATION

51. The Ministry is a necessary gift of God to the Church, though it is not superimposed on the Church but emerges from it. The Church supervises the training and tests the vocation of likely candidates (one such test is to ensure that the person is called to a particular sphere of work). Being satisfied that such persons have the necessary qualifications, the Church ordains them. (1) They are ordained in order to be representatives of Christ to the people among whom they are to minister, and of the Church in its corporate approach to God, and therefore for the specific tasks of preaching, the administration of Sacraments, and the exercise of pastoral care. (2) Their ordination makes them ministers and authorizes them to perform these functions without further special permission. Ordination is to the office of a minister in the Church of God without limit of time. At ordination the Church, recognizing the persons' gifts, prays that now and increasingly they may be duly equipped by the Holy Spirit for the work of the ministry.

52. The same applies to a considerable extent to elders. Elders are not related to the Church in the same way as ministers, but they are formally set apart for government and pastoral care within the Church; the status thus formally conferred on them is held for so long as God wills; though the period of their service is determined by the church, and at their ordination the church, recognizing their gifts, prays that now and increasingly they will be duly equipped by the Holy Spirit for the work of the Eldership.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

53. (1) Does ordination make any difference to the persons ordained, and if so what? Some have held that ordination is no more than a public and formal recognition that these persons have already been made ministers by God, but it was the general view that in ordination the Church in the name of Christ (or Christ acting through the Church) confers on them the office of a minister, authorizes them to perform all ministerial functions, and puts them in the ways of receiving the gifts they need for their work in answer to the prayers of the Church.

(2) Should the ministry be a whole-time job? Certainly at the point of ordination the candidates should intend that the ministry should be their sole or at least primary occupation, and that their sphere of service should be entirely at the disposal of the Church. Some qualifications of this principle, however, are permissible in practice.

- (a) It may be necessary for economic reasons for ministers to support themselves by some other occupation.
- (b) In certain situations it may be important for ministers to undertake some secular work in order to demonstrate that they are not living in a spiritual enclave unrelated to the life of the general community.
- (c) Ministers may undertake some secular work in order to give pastoral and spiritual help to their fellow employees. Such activities are allowable if not of too exacting a character and out of keeping with the ministry of the Church.
- (d) More open to question is the idea that ministers can properly have a vocation to do some ordinary secular job in a Christian way or as a representative of the Church. This seems to confuse the vocation of Christian lay folk with the special vocation of ministers.

54. **Footnote** ('It has been the practice of both Congregationalists and Presbyterians to ordain women to the ministry, of Congregationalists to elect them to the diaconate and of Presbyterians to ordain them to the eldership. In the United Reformed Church all ministries shall be open to both men and women.' Manual para. 26.)

55. **Schedule 'C'** Schedule 'C' in the Scheme of Union lists the Affirmation to be made by Ministers at Ordinations and Inductions. The committee asks the General Assembly for permission to consider this Schedule with a view to its revision, with the object of shortening and simplifying it in such a way as to confine it to those questions necessary to test the candidate's personal commitment to the doctrine of the Church, and the work of the ministry, and to avoid unnecessary repetition of items in Schedule 'D'.

56. **Orders of Worship** During the year the committee has completed work on the following Orders of Worship and offers them for the use of the Church:

Wedding Service

Thanksgiving for the birth of a child/Dedication of Parents

Ordination and Induction of Ministers
Service for Healing (with the Healing group)
Commissioning of a Local Pastor (with the Supplementary Ministries Committee).

As the committee receives comments on orders of worship these are carefully noted, and will be taken into account when the orders are being revised. The following orders or items are in preparation:

- The Funeral of a child
- The Dedication of Property
- Ordination and Induction of a Deaconess
- Ordination and Induction of Elders (Revised)
- Hymn Book stickers to include:
 - (i) The Lord's Prayer, Acclamations
 - (ii) Sursum Corda, Sanctus and Benedictus.

57. **Worship** – help to congregations, conferences, etc. A number of the members of the Doctrine and Worship Committee would be prepared to make themselves available, or advise on the availability of others to help local churches, Conferences, etc., to discuss worship. Requests should be made in the first instance to the Secretary of the Church Life Department.

58. **Hymnology** The Church Life Department has been requested to set up a small sub-group of the Doctrine and Worship Committee to monitor what is being written in new hymns and music and where necessary to disseminate information.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the Statement on Ordination prepared by the Doctrine and Worship Committee as a valuable contribution to our understanding of Ordination.
2. The Assembly instructs the Doctrine and Worship Committee to consider Schedule 'C' with a view to its revision to avoid unnecessary repetition.
3. The Assembly commends to ministers and churches the orders of worship published by its Church Life Department.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALING GROUP

Chairman: The Revd. David H. Dale

Secretary: The Revd. Charles K. Meachin

59. One of the major tasks of the group during the year has been the continuing one of drawing together various approaches to Christian healing. Whilst continuing to encourage the view that the sacramental aspect of Christian healing is vital, we are also concerned to see our understanding of Christian healing broadened to include medical, sociological and psychological factors and the whole seen as part of our theological understanding of the Atonement. This debate is proving lively and fruitful and will, no doubt, continue to be part of our programme during the coming year. The group shares in the ecumenical work of the Churches' Council for Health and Healing.

60. **Order of Service for Healing** Prepared by the group, has been well received by our churches and is available from Tavistock Bookshop, price 15p.

61. **Study Kit on Health and Healing** We have given much thought and time preparing this kit. It consists of three basic elements:

- (i) Healing within the total ministry of the Church
- (ii) A Theological Statement on the Ministry of Healing
- (iii) Bible studies on Christian Healing.

These are supplemented by papers on related subjects: Facing Suffering and Death; Worship and Healing; Confession; Prayer and the Healing Ministry and a general paper on Health. A book-list is provided together with a list of healing guilds, fellowships and centres. It is hoped that the Kit with its basic papers, and questions for discussion, will not only provide a basis for group discussion but also continue the general discussion to help clarify the Church's view on Christian Healing. The kit is available, price £1.20 plus 14p postage, from Tavistock Bookshop.

CHAPLAINS' AND STUDENTS' WORKING PARTY

Chairman: The Revd. Dr. Leslie Green

Secretary: The Revd. Michael J. Davies

62. The working party has continued to deal with many aspects of the work of Chaplains in Higher Education, but wishes to bring before Assembly one particular matter of concern for consideration. Last year the working party drew the attention of the Assembly to the weakening of the thrust in Christian enterprise, best exemplified in the work of the Student Christian Movement in earlier days, and subsequently taken up by denominational societies in the 1950's. There has been a decline in the number of URC societies in the Universities and Colleges and even Free Church and Ecumenical Societies seem to attract relatively few students. Where there are strong student groups, especially in the conservative evangelical tradition, there is concern that the student experience of Christian commitment is limited to the period in University and College. There seems to be a deep need and opportunity for Christian education and fellowship which not only meet the needs of the young adult but provide for growth. Many graduates, including those who have found a spiritual home in a Christian Union or denominational society whilst undertaking higher education, find it extremely difficult after graduation to settle down within the life of a local church. Some attempts have been made to meet this problem (e.g. the 1662 Society in London) but we are not convinced that this special treatment always serves the best interests of either graduates or the Church. The steady diminution of the number of children involved in the life of the Church and the earlier age at which they move out of its direct influence prompts us to ask that the URC should give urgent attention to the Christian Education of the young adult. This would mean relating the work of chaplains and students to the needs of the Church in a more positive way and at the same time seeking opportunities for young adults to contribute in their own way their considerable gifts and insights as a major resource for the growth of the Church. The working party has therefore asked the Church Life Department Central Committee to consider how local churches can be encouraged and helped to respond to the needs and possibilities of this particular age group.

IN CONCLUSION

63. Arising out of the reports of the Christian Education Committee and the Chaplains and Students Working Party is a concern for young adults, and also for those in and around our churches with whom we find it difficult to communicate, and for whom our current educational approach is not appropriate. The department has set up a working party to examine this deep range of communicatory, pastoral and educational questions, and will appreciate any contributions to the investigation into a vital area of church life.

64. The Department wishes to remind all churches of the importance of keeping adequate registers of Membership; Baptisms; and of children dedicated but not baptized. In the light of the proposals for Union with the Churches of Christ the significance of the last category assumes greater importance.

65. **New hymns** A group has been set up to keep a watching brief on new hymns and music, and to disseminate any relevant findings. Contributions should be sent to the Secretary, Church Life Department.

The Assembly agrees that

this report be received.

CHURCH LIFE DEPARTMENT: APPENDIX 1

COLLEGE REPORTS

WESTMINSTER AND CHESHUNT COLLEGES, CAMBRIDGE

1. **President J. E. Newport** After 17 years' association with Cheshunt as Tutor and President, and serving for the last eight years as Professor of Applied Theology in the joint college, President J. E. Newport left Cambridge in January to return to the pastoral ministry.

The Church as a whole, and the college in particular, are indebted to him for the contribution he made to training students for the ministry during these years. The Revd. Dr. S. H. Mayor has taken over full responsibility for oversight of practical training of students, in addition to his work as director of the lay training programme.

2. Students of the College

Third Year: J. Breslin, BA
J. Graver
D. Lawrence, BA
Jean McCallum
D. Stec, BA

Second Year: E. Freeman
R. Lowes, BA
Janet Sowerbutts
J. Titlow
D. Williams, BA
A. Argent (Congregational Federation)

First Year: D. Bradburn
D. R. Brett
Sheila Dickson
I. G. Jones, BA
C. T. McKenzie
N. Setchell
D. Tatem, BA

Course 3: Mrs. J. Clarke
Mr. N. Prattent
Mr. E. T. Wells

Overseas students doing special courses (6): 2 from USA, 2 from Australia, 1 each from New Zealand and Brazil. Associated visiting scholars (4), one from Australia, 1 from Korea, 2 from USA. Roll of Ministers candidates (4), URC ministers on sabbatical leave (2). Total number reading theology at all levels – 37. To fill vacant rooms in the residential wing we have 24 undergraduate lodgers, bringing the community total, apart from teaching staff, to 61.

3. The college is now part of a wider theological community comprising the four Cambridge Theological Colleges, 2 Anglican, 1 Methodist, 1 URC. A measure of joint teaching has already been achieved and more is planned. Students from the other three colleges attend chapel services and eat in Westminster on a rota system and Westminster students do the same in Wesley House. On Sunday mornings and on special occasions during the week, the whole community of up to 180-200 people meet for worship and fellowship in the Westminster and Wesley halls respectively. These arrangements have involved considerable changes in traditional ways of doing things but they have provided our students with a valuable opportunity of doing theology in an ecumenical setting.

4. The Reid Memorial Lectures were given this session by a distinguished theologian, Professor Markus Barth of Basel, Switzerland, son of Karl Barth.

5. We record the death of a former Principal, The Revd. Dr. Roy Drummond Whitehorn. We honour his memory and acknowledge our indebtedness to his dedicated ministry.

6. The two major problems facing the college are accommodation for married students and finance. We plan to ease the former by converting an existing building in the college grounds into 2 residential flats. The financial problem can only be met by the Church recognizing the vital work that is being done in the college and continuing its generosity in support of it.

THE CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGE, MANCHESTER

7. **Students** The College Roll numbers 116, the highest in the history of the College. 104 will reside in College. There are thirty-three training for the URC ministry, two for the Churches of Christ, and one Moravian. There are also seven college-based non-residential students preparing for the URC ministry. There are thirty-three women students. There are ten students from overseas, including two from the British Council. The increased numbers have been made possible by the conversion of rooms to study-bedrooms.

8. With the large increase in the number of women students we welcome as Senior Resident Miss Janet Oakley, BSc, a former hostel student who now has an appointment in the Manchester area. The Chairman of the Student House this session is Mr. Paul Quilter. The Senior Theological Student is Mr. John Lloyd Humphreys. Mr. Simon Swailes is on leave at

St. Andrews on a Diploma Course in Pastoral Theology. Mr. Dafydd Jones hopes to do a similar course next year. Mr. Timothy Harwood is spending the year studying at Bangalore.

9. **Staff** We are delighted to report that our Senior Lecturer, the Revd. J. H. E. Hull, has been appointed Principal-Elect and will succeed Dr. Edgar Jones, who retires in July at the end of the session. Welcome to Dr. Stanley H. Russell who has already begun work in the college as Lecturer with special responsibility for Theology. After training at New and Mansfield Colleges, Dr. Russell has had pastorates at Oundle and Weldon and at Wakefield, and was Tutor at Adams United College, South Africa from 1962 to 1967. With his clear thought and incisive expression he will make a distinctive contribution to the teaching team.

10. Welcome also to Dr. Peter Leung, an Anglican on the staff of Trinity Theological College, Singapore, who has come to Manchester for a session through the programme of reciprocal mission of CWM. We are also delighted to report that we have appointed the Revd. Roger Tomes, MA, BD, as Lecturer in Old Testament Studies, to begin his work in the autumn of 1977. The College is grateful for the service given over the past four years by the Revd. John Salsbury, BA, as part-time lecturer. Mr. Salsbury taught first and second year students in Theology and Philosophy of Religion and shared in Pastoralia classes.

11. We record the death of the former Principal, Revd. Dr. Gordon Robinson early in 1977, and our appreciation for his long and dedicated service to the former Congregational Church in England and Wales as well as to many generations of ministerial students.

12. **Congratulations** to the Revd. John E. Young, MA, BD, a former student of the Yorkshire College and current Chairman of the College Education Committee, on his election as Moderator of the General Assembly for 1977/78. Attention is also drawn to Mr. Young's prayer handbook for CWM, *Praying with Jesus*, an excellent production. Congratulations also to the Revd. Cyril Franks, former student of Paton College, on his appointment as Moderator of the Southern Province.

13. **Open Courses** The joint provision of Open Courses and Evening Lectures by the Baptist, Methodist and Unitarian Colleges along with The Congregational College, continues to make available wide variety. This year twenty different courses are available, varying from a single day or part-day to a weekend or a series of weekly lectures; varying also from Biblical Archaeology to Good Use of Church Buildings, or from Church and State in Russia Today to the Sermon on the Mount. An attractive folder with details of all the courses has been produced.

14. **Settlements** Graham Spicer has been called to West Bromwich; Peter Roche to Oldham (Union St. and King St.); Paul Floe to Wellingborough; Alan Finch to Twyford and Woodley, Reading; Douglas Farquhar to Darwen; Paul Pells to Liverpool.

15. Students of the College

<i>Final Year</i>	1971	T. J. Harwood, BA	Bradford
	1972	S. Swailes	Purley
	1973	P. Frampton	Hove
	1973	N. George	Irthlingborough
	1973	A. M. Gudgeon	Dunfermline
	1973	P. Brooks	Bristol
	1973	V. Openshaw	South Africa
<i>Third Year</i>	1973	P. Quilter	Bristol
	1974	C. Warner	Aylesbury
	1974	D. Spence	Blackpool
	1974	B. W. Acty	Southport
	1974	J. L. Humphreys, BA	Cobham
<i>Second Year</i>	1974	D. J. Jones, BA	Swansea
	1975	R. E. Wright	Kettering
	1975	Thelma Robinson	Morecambe
	1975	R. Pagan, BA	Great Malvern
	1975	P. Baker	Harrow
	1975	Christina Flashman, BA	Harrogate
	1975	S. Fisher, BA	Lindfield, Sussex

	1975	G. McGowan	Rochdale
	1975	H. Bates	Ryde, IOW
	1975	Rowena Gates (Churches of Christ)	Leicester
	1975	J. Abakumov (Moravian)	Bradford
	1975	S. Roberts	Eastham, Wirral
<i>First Year</i>	1976	Eileen Sambrooks	Bradford
	1976	Christine Craven	Wilmslow
	1976	C. V. Skinner	Leatherhead
	1976	R. E. Cornish	Portsmouth
	1976	J. W. Steele	Halifax
	1976	R. S. Hayward	Chatham
	1976	D. S. Webb	Southport
	1976	R. J. Mortimer	Wimborne
	1976	J. Filzak	Kettering
	1976	R. J. Fowler	Petworth
	1976	Daphne Garrow	Sellyoak, Birmingham

16. College-based Courses

<i>First Year</i>	Hazel Catton	Middlesbrough
	J. H. M. Jolliffe	Kington
	W. Ford	Harrogate
	C. A. Weston	Leicester
	Brian Harris	Newcastle
	Kenneth Sheldon	Buckley
	Edith Wynn Young	Stockton-on-Tees

MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

17. At the end of the year 1975-76 two students completed the ordination course: one has been ordained at Morecambe, the other has been accepted by CWM and is spending a year of further training at Selly Oak. Three other students took the Honour School of Theology, one with a First Class and the others with Seconds good enough to allow them to proceed to postgraduate studies at Basel and Tokyo. Two students completed the DPhil in Theology, and one (in his second term of Theology) was awarded the Junior Hall Houghton Septuagint Prize.

18. This year, out of ninety-two students in residence, fifteen are reading Theology. Six are taking the ordination course, four for the URC, one for the Congregational Federation, and one for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. There are one each from Scotland, Australia and Ceylon, and six from the United States. In addition two students who are completing research degrees at other Oxford colleges are joining in some of the practical training classes with a view to entering the ordination course next October. The names of the URC ordination candidates are:

David George Cornick, BA (Oxon)
 Peter Leslie Flint, BA (London)
 Gillian Avril Jones, BA (Sussex)
 David Martin McLellan Skit, BA (London)

19. After a year in which we were without a Lutheran World Federation Fellow we have welcomed the Revd. Dr. Merlyn Satrom, who has come from California to occupy that post for three years. We have also added two lecturers to our strength, Mr. S. Sayer in Economics and Mr. R. J. MacLeod in Politics. The Principal has been elected to Dean Ireland's Professorship of Exegesis of Holy Scripture in Oxford University and Dr. D. A. Sykes has been appointed to succeed him.

20. With deep regret and great gratitude for his service to the College we record the death of our Treasurer, Mr. K. W. Thorndyke, OBE.

21. We also record the death of a former Principal of the College, the Revd. Dr. Nathaniel Micklem, CH, and we commemorate with thanksgiving and affectionate gratitude those great services to the College and the Church by which he has put so many of us for ever in his debt.

NEW COLLEGE, LONDON

22. **Students** Settlements in 1976 were as follows:

Stuart A. Bidmead, BD	Haywards Heath
Sheila Massey, BD	Ellesmere Port and Little Sutton
Brian O'Neill, BD	Spencer Street, Leamington Spa
Adrienne Savage, BD	South Leeds Team Ministry

The Revd. Clifford Pitt was awarded the degree of PhD for a thesis evaluating the teaching of P. T. Forsyth on Church, Ministry and Sacraments. The final group of undergraduate students consists of four who are preparing for other forms of service than the ministry of the United Reformed Church. They will sit the BD examination in June 1977.

23. **Staff** The Revd. Dr. H. K. Moulton has continued to give valuable help in the teaching of New Testament. The Principal and the Revd. Dr. G. F. Nuttall have been fully engaged in the work of several University committees.

24. **General** The decision taken by the Board of Governors in September 1974 to terminate the work of New College, in its present form, by the end of September 1977 was made inevitable by a conjunction of circumstances, the chief of which was the proposal of the Murray Committee for the future shape of the Faculty of Theology in the University of London. The process of phasing out which followed upon this decision is now in its final stage. The hostel was closed at the end of June 1976 in order to allow the Open University to make suitable alterations to the buildings. A large and valuable part of the considerable library has been transferred to the Dr. Williams's Library, where as a New College London collection it will be accessible to readers and researchers from Britain and other countries. Other sections have been sold to Universities and Theological Colleges in England. The Charity Commissioners have agreed in principle to the setting up of a New College London Foundation which will support both initial and in-service theological training in the years to come. The precise form of the Foundation is still under discussion, but it is hoped that it will be possible to satisfy the Commissioners in time for the Foundation to operate as from the beginning of October 1977.

25. As an heir of many Dissenting Academies, New College has sought to combine liberal and ecumenical elements with the evangelical centre of its life and work. In giving thanks to God for what it has been enabled to do over a period of almost three hundred years, it looks forward to serving the Gospel and the Church in new ways for many years to come.

MEMORIAL COLLEGE, SWANSEA

26. **Students** We have 29 students taking the BD and Diploma in Theology courses of the University of Wales during the present session (1976-77). Of the 18 who follow the BD scheme 4 are already ordained (two Anglicans, one Unitarian and one Welsh Independent), one is a URC candidate, 2 Congregational Federation, 1 Unitarian and 4 Welsh Independent while the rest are contemplating other fields of service. Of the 11 Diploma students 3 are Welsh Independent candidates, one is Baptist, two are Unitarian and the rest non-ministerial. In addition we have one student who has completed his Diploma but is now pursuing the College Diploma in Practical Theology course; one student who is pursuing a pre-theological degree course at St. Andrews; and four MTh candidates.

27. **Successes** Seven of our students completed their BD degree in 1976, five with Upper Second Honours and two with Lower Second Honours. One completed his Diploma. Five are settled in pastorates.

28. **Staff** The Revd. Dr. Pennar Davies has now resumed the full responsibilities of the Principalship. Dr. E. Lewis Evans's temporary service as Lecturer has been much appreciated by his colleagues and his students. Dr. Elwyn Davies is editor of Yr Ymofynnydd and the Revd. Dewi Eirug Davies co-editor of Y Tyst. The latter has published in Welsh a history of the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen, which is now part of the heritage of the College at Swansea.

29. **Activities** The College is a participant in interdenominational discussions about the future of theological education in Wales and developments in in-service training. The Theological Faculty Board of the University of Wales has recently conferred at the College. Dr. Beverley Littlepage is conducting a course for our students on contemporary social problems. Our Lay Training project on Saturdays continues to fulfil a real need. Under the

care of the College the Dr. Williams Lecture has been delivered at Swansea this session, the Lecturer being Dr. John McLachlan and the Chairman the Revd. Kenneth Twinne, the Dr. Williams Librarian.

30. **URC Ministerial Students**

Elwyn James JOHN

He is in his third year at College

CHURCH AND SOCIETY DEPARTMENT

Chairman: The Revd. John Johansen-Berg, MA, BD

Secretary: The Revd. John P. Reardon, BA

1. **Introduction** In presenting our report this year we are conscious of the view expressed by some in past years that we should limit the areas of our concern. Church and Society covers a wide range of topics, many of which are controversial, and it is clear that a subject fully presented and discussed one year should not normally reappear for several years. We have tried to major on two or three topics so that we can present them thoroughly, but other matters have come to us through the ecumenical and Provincial framework within which we work, and other issues have thrust themselves on to our agenda because of crisis situations which we cannot ignore.

2. **Sexual Ethics** The subject of major concern has been sexual ethics. In setting priorities at our first residential meeting, the area of individual needs and personal ethical problems was high on our list. Following an Assembly discussion three years ago, the Department appointed a working party in 1975 to consider changing attitudes in society towards sexual ethics, and to suggest ways in which help could be given to churches and individuals. The working party was chaired by the Revd. Dr. Stephen Orchard, and its other members were Mrs. S. Acty, Dr. Muriel Bradshaw, Mr. R. Hine, the Revd. M. R. Jackson, Dr. Alwin Latham, Mrs. A. Roberts, the Revd. Dr. S. Russell, the Revd. A. Trinder and the Departmental Secretary, and the opinions of others were sought and considered.

3. Consideration was given to some of the continuing problems of sexual behaviour such as sexual relationships before marriage; extra-marital relationships including those associated with the so-called mid-life crisis; and homosexuality. Such problems had to be seen in the context of a contemporary Christian understanding of human sexuality, the importance of human relationships for personal growth, and the nature and potential of marriage and family life.

4. The Department recognises that there are some within the Church who call for statements about sexual ethics and related matters, and there are times when such statements may be needed and helpful. However, the working party, considering that these matters directly concern personal relationships and personal moral attitudes, believe that such problems are best dealt with in a pastoral context. It has therefore prepared study and discussion material on some of these themes for use in churches to help their members to understand and care for those who face difficult problems in their most intimate relationships.

5. We feel that the working party has done a thorough job and has given local churches helpful material in meeting their pastoral responsibility to provide opportunities for young and older people to explore questions and problems relating to personal relationships and sexual ethics. We therefore commend the work of the sexual ethics working party to the churches, and hope that they will examine their programmes, activities and the quality of their fellowship to see how far they are able to be helpful and supportive to their members.

6. **Re-marriage of Divorced People** Questions relating to divorce and re-marriage were raised with the Department in a paper from the North Western Province and by the Cheshire District of Mersey Province. We felt it an important area for ecumenical discussion, and urged the British Council of Churches Division of Community Affairs to tackle it. That Division's response is the production of material on preparation for marriage and present trends in marriage. It did not feel that matters concerning church discipline in re-marriage were properly its concern, since they must be dealt with by individual denominations. After some preliminary study our Department agreed to undertake a thorough piece of work on the Biblical background of marriage, the change in social patterns which has led to an increase in the divorce rate, the need for increased pastoral care, and to consider whether there was a need for any change in our normal practice in the re-marriage of divorced people. We hope to present a report at the next Assembly.

7. **Abortion** We are presenting to this Assembly a discussion paper on abortion. In the public debate on this issue some call for amendments to existing legislation. At last year's Assembly we made extensive reference to discussions in the Methodist Church on abortion, and since then we have studied the matter further, greatly assisted by a paper prepared by the Revd. Dr. Duncan Forrester. That paper, considerably amended in the light of the Department discussion, is now presented to the Church, not as a document stating our position but as a discussion paper to help church meetings and elders meetings to share in the current debate and so help to form public opinion in any move to amend the present legislation on abortion.

8. **National Health Service** The Department prepared a submission to the Royal Commission on the National Health Service based on views expressed by URC members in response to a notice in 'Reform' and specific requests for opinions. Emphasis was placed on the importance of primary health care teams and on a network of hospitals sufficiently close to those teams and to the communities they serve. Concern was expressed about the impersonality of some modern health centres and the anxieties caused by long delays with consultant services. We urged the Royal Commission to recommend support for hospitals for the terminally ill, for extension of facilities for geriatric care, the mentally handicapped and alcoholics and for a strengthening of the work of the Health Education Council, particularly with regard to smoking and drinking. Comments were made about Community Health Councils and their election processes, and about the need for greater cooperation between voluntary and statutory bodies in contributing to community health. We rejected current suggestions for introduction of payments for attendance at surgery and for home visits and hospital care as retrograde and as contrary to the principles on which the NHS is established. Copies of the submission are available from the Department on request (with a foils cap s.a.e.).

9. **The Nuclear Programme** The development of British nuclear plant has been an issue of major public concern for some months now. As a follow-up to our training conference on social action, the North West was chosen as an area where it might be possible to engage in an experiment on church involvement in social action, and the nuclear issue seemed an appropriate area of community concern. One of our congregations in Lancaster (Trinity) agreed to look at the subject. Representatives of the Department met with representatives of the congregation and of a local organisation to discuss the issues. Later the congregation agreed that the subject was an important one for the community, that there were unknown factors of potential danger to the population, and that an examination of the issues was a priority. The congregation organised a public meeting on the nuclear energy programme.

10. Our Department, having discussed some of the factors involved, agreed to make representations to the appropriate government departments, urging that the nuclear programme be slowed down until the dangers had been assessed. All these actions reached their culmination at the time British Nuclear Fuels made their application to extend their plant at Windscale, so we perhaps played some small part in helping the Minister for the Environment to call in the application to allow for further public debate.

11. A number of organisations have been very active in environmental issues concerning nuclear development, but comparatively little has been said by the churches. It is to the credit of the BCC that it organised a two day enquiry on the issue. Considering the fact that many of our local churches are in areas where nuclear developments could pose a major hazard to health and life, the example of our Lancaster church could be followed with profit to the community. At this stage it is not a matter of expressing opposition to the programme but of demanding that dangers be properly assessed, unknown factors thoroughly researched and less dangerous alternative sources of energy explored before major developments take place. The range of issues, and more particularly the development of fast breeder reactors, should be a matter of special concern in our churches until clear answers are given on these questions of public safety.

12. **Ireland** The situation in Ireland continues to be the subject of hope and despair as we see the changing fortunes of varying attempts at reconciliation. Though the past year has again been dominated by acts of violence, it has been a great encouragement that the peace movement has attracted so much support. To give symbolic witness for peace and to find practical ways of implementing the heartfelt desire of many for reconciliation are daunting tasks in the present climate of confrontation. The peace people and all in the Irish

churches who are constantly attempting reconciliation ask for and need our prayers and support.

13. The BCC has launched a fund to support practical projects aimed at reconciliation. We commend the appeal to our churches and hope that the response enables more practical work to be done to bring hope in a situation which can so easily engender despair. We hope too that it will encourage the people who work peacefully and quietly and yet see how often violence catches the headlines and destroys constructive endeavours.

14. For those seeking to understand the situation of conflict, a recently published book, 'Violence in Ireland', is a report which gives much helpful background. People in the British Isles should not be overwhelmed by seemingly intractable problems in the Irish situation to such an extent that they give up the search for peaceful solutions. In such a difficult historical context, it will require bold and imaginative thinking and steps of faith to resolve the conflict in a way which will carry most of the people of differing persuasions in Ireland and gradually overcome the violence which may continue for some time. Let us pray that the search for a just solution and the understanding that this fosters between people who have a common faith in Jesus Christ may lead to stronger, rather than weaker, links between the people of these islands.

15. **South Africa** Since the last Assembly when we briefly reported on the Moderatorial visit to South Africa, the printed Report of the visit has been published. In the interim the independence of the Transkei has been proclaimed but unrecognised by any country other than South Africa. The Report highlights some of the factors that make the Homelands weak in regard to statehood, such as lack of land, poor quality of land, unconsolidated areas, lack of economic strength, and absence of much of the population due to migrant labour. The World Council of Churches and the BCC in urging non-recognition see the nub of the issue as the total apartheid policy of South Africa in which the separate development of the Homelands plays an integral part. The Report bears out much of this in its description of the Homelands visited and its assessment of the ideal solution to the problems of an apartheid society. It recognizes that there are some special factors in the history of the Transkei which may indicate that it should be looked at apart from the issue of the Homelands generally. What comes out more strongly in the Report is the need for economic assistance in the Homelands because of basic poverty and debilitating disease.

16. We believe that the ideal in South Africa is a multi-racial state covering the whole area, and we think it likely that most people in the Homelands would favour such a solution. We suspect that the South African government views the Transkei not so much as a special case but rather as a test case which would lead to further separate development. Some in the Department believe that recognition should hinge on certain key factors which would make South African intentions plain. Citizenship should be a matter of personal choice, giving Xhosas who live in white areas the opportunity to retain South African citizenship; the Transkei should be given much greater economic assistance from South Africa as of right, since its citizens helped to generate the present wealth of South Africa; there should be an expression of local opinion in the Transkei, with international assessors, to find out whether the citizens prefer independence or an alternative, such as continuing within the Republic of South Africa, presumably in the hope that it will become a multi-racial state.

17. We hope and pray that just solutions may be found for South Africa without the violence in the situation at present. A system in which black people are denied equal political, social and economic opportunities is clearly unjust. The way in which black and white will share power and wealth in South Africa is something that people in the Republic will have to work out together. We owe to the underprivileged and repressed in the situation both encouragement and practical support. In the short term we are sharing in activities, like those sponsored by Christian Concern for Southern Africa, to try to improve the position of black workers in British firms in South Africa. In the long term a heavy responsibility rests on the government in South Africa, on black leaders of whom many are still in detention, on church leaders and officials in organizations like the Christian Institute, to find a way forward politically before it is too late. We must support them in prayer and in any practical way possible.

18. **Rhodesia** At the time of writing it seems that yet another initiative for a peaceful solution of the Rhodesia situation is being frustrated. If this proves so it will be a matter

of great regret. Considering the patience of black people in the years of negotiation and the unyielding nature of some white opinion there, it surely deserves serious consideration that our own government should resume direct responsibility for Rhodesia, calling on support by black people and no doubt by many white citizens also. Whilst we support HM Government's long expressed intention not to intervene militarily in Rhodesia, we feel that our government has a right and a duty to intervene constitutionally. Geneva was seen by many as a final attempt to negotiate directly with Mr. Smith and other representatives in Rhodesia. If Mr. Smith withdraws from these negotiations the time has come for HM Government to negotiate directly with representatives of black opinion with a view to moving to majority rule in Rhodesia. We urge HM Government to continue its efforts in that direction.

19. One World Week Ecumenical discussions about world development have led to proposals for an annual autumn programme of development education under the title 'One World Week'. We are involved in those discussions in the hope that churches may be encouraged to organise One World Weeks in the autumn of 1978. We will send further details to all churches as soon as possible.

20. Other Matters Other important matters on the Department's agenda are the discussions in the WCC and BCC on human rights; the future of the Churches' Council on Gambling; British support for the Programme to Combat Racism; religious education in county schools; the churches' contribution to race and community relations. Members of the Department are involved in the BCC's 'Britain Today and Tomorrow Programme' and, in particular, in that part of it concerned with violence, non-violence and social change. The Department is always ready to share these concerns with local churches, Districts and Provinces.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly draws to the attention of elders meetings and church meetings the Report of the Sexual Ethics Working Party and urges them to initiate discussions of these important topics and to consider the pastoral responsibilities which arise.
 2. The Assembly commends the discussion paper on Abortion to Districts and church meetings and urges them to send reports on such discussions to the Church and Society Department so that the Department may be able to speak more effectively for the Church in any submission on future legislation.
 3. The Assembly alerts congregations in areas where there is nuclear plant to the current debate about the potential danger involved in the development of such plant, and recommends that such congregations seek a meeting with their local Member of Parliament to discuss the issues.
 4. The Assembly commends to all congregations the British Council of Churches Appeal Fund for projects in Northern Ireland and urges continued prayerful support for all those who work for justice, peace and reconciliation in Ireland.
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WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

1. During the past year the Department has been engaged in almost every aspect of the work implicit in its title. Details are given in the attached Reports from the Departmental Committees. Visits have been made to Churches in Europe, America and Africa, while a new relationship has been opened up by the Secretary's visit to Rangoon. At home, work has continued on the concerns of mission, inter-church relationships and inter-faith affairs.
2. In this widespread context two issues have dominated the scene:
First. Consideration of the Ten Propositions has taken up a great deal of the time available to both Home and Central Committees. The Department prepared an interim Reply which was sent, by authority of the Executive Committee of Assembly, to the Churches' Unity Commission, and was circulated throughout our Church. It had been hoped to submit a definitive Reply to Assembly but further explication of Proposition VI given by the Commission has raised issues which appear to require more consultation throughout our Church. Therefore we propose a further interim reply as indicated in the full statement presented with this Report.
3. The Department has fulfilled the remit regarding relationships with the Methodist Church, given it at last Assembly. A detailed statement is given in the Report of the Home Committee.
4. Second. Much care and time have been devoted to the consequences of the reorganization of the Council for World Mission. The Assembly Executive has authorised the appointment of a Personnel Secretary and Committee, and further a Secretary for Communication. We rejoice to welcome the appointment of the Revd. Iorwerth Thomas who brings his experience with CWM to the work of Personnel. The Department is seeking a suitable nomination for the Communications Post. The new CWM will come into being on July 18th and we submit a resolution to be sent on behalf of the Church on that occasion.
5. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches will be holding its Centennial Consultation at St. Andrews next August. We expect to have at least three representatives present at the meetings, but it is hoped that the preparatory booklet 'The Glory of God and the Future of Man' will have wide circulation and use throughout our churches.
6. The appointment of the Revd. Principal A. G. MacLeod as Chairman of the Mission and Other Faiths Committee terminates at this Assembly. The Department would put on record its profound appreciation of the experienced leadership he has given during the past five years in that area of its responsibility.
7. The Department has recommended to the Finance and Administration Department that URC aim to raise £356,400 for CWM work in 1978, an increase of 8% over the 1977 figure.

Brian M. Pratt, *Chairman*
Boris Anderson, *Secretary*

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK AT HOME COMMITTEE

Church, Society and Gospel

8. There is currently a three-fold programme for joint consultation and action by the British churches, in the fields of unity, social concern and evangelism. The Churches' Unity Commission, for the English churches, and the Commission of the Covenanted Churches in Wales have been seeking to bring their member bodies to more definite stances on the matters that affect unity; the British Council of Churches has been stimulating and co-ordinating a broadly based investigation of major issues facing 'Britain Today and Tomorrow', to look at Britain as it is and envisage it as it might be; and a number of

different initiatives have come together in an enquiry whether the time is ripening for a nation-wide effort of evangelism.

9. This report is prepared at a juncture when none of these three aspects of ecumenical effort has reached a point where the way ahead is clear.

10. The URC is due to carry further its response to the Ten Propositions of the Churches' Unity Commission on the basis of a draft to be submitted to this year's Assembly out of work done by the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee on the many comments received from URC councils and local churches. Similar drafting is going on in other churches, aided by replies from the Commission to questions already put to it in the interim responses of the churches.

11. In Wales the general work of the Commission of the Covenanted Churches is supplemented for the URC Province by continued development of co-operation with the English-language work of the Presbyterian Church of Wales and consideration of the structures by which this co-operation can best be maintained.

12. The BCC programme 'Britain Today and Tomorrow' has as its target date November 1977, when a special BCC Assembly will receive the results of two years' efforts over 1976 and 1977. This will be, we hope, a beginning of new action by the churches along with all men and women of goodwill for a new development of citizenship.

13. If indeed the churches thus begin to see the way ahead to greater unity and clearer goals for society, the time will be ripe for them to declare together the gospel which is the basis of their unity and the sure ground of hope for individuals and communities. The Committee has been encouraged by the requests for its own papers on Evangelism and looks forward to continued responses from the churches on this vital matter. We are still following up the Theses for discussion on Mission in Rural Areas presented to the 1975 Assembly.

14. While the Joint Committee is handling all matters connected with the conversations with the Churches of Christ, this Committee welcomes the publication of the final report and hopes that it may be the means of a further and important step forward in the quest for unity.

Relations with the Methodist Church

15. The Assembly of 1976 instructed 'the Department to consider whether the time is ripe for an approach to be made to the Methodist Church with a view to union of the Methodist and United Reformed Churches in England and Wales, and through the Secretary of the Conference to consult with the appropriate committee of the Methodist Church and to report to the Assembly of 1977'.

16. This matter was carefully discussed from the URC point of view at meetings of the Department's Central and M&EW at Home Committees following the 1976 Assembly and the General Secretary was asked to approach the Secretary of the Methodist Conference, the Revd. Dr. Kenneth Greet, to secure appropriate consultation. Dr. Greet referred the matter to the President's Council, a widely representative advisory body, and they in turn, having expressed their general judgement, authorized the five Methodist representatives on the Churches' Unity Commission to meet with those appointed by the URC. The Department appointed as its representatives the Chairmen of the Department and of the M&EW at Home Committee, the General Secretary, the Revd. Charles Haig, the Revd. R. R. Bance (from the Northern Province) and the Revd. J. N. Murray (minister of a local united URC/Methodist Church). The Assembly may thus be assured that a variety of standpoints was represented in a careful assessment of the issue.

17. The considered advice now submitted to the Assembly is that this particular time, when the two churches are committed to the exploration through the Churches' Unity Commission of a multilateral advance towards visible unity, is not an appropriate moment at which to initiate a new bilateral conversation on union. This was the judgement of the President's Council, confirmed at the joint meeting of URC and Methodist representatives.

18. The Church's Unity Commission was informed of this recommendation to the URC Assembly, which will be reported also to the Methodist Conference, in a statement which positively emphasized the conviction that what is required today is a movement towards unity over the widest possible range of churchmanship, to enable the churches to discharge together their missionary task in the rest of this century.

19. The recommendation expressed in the proposed resolution is in no way intended to restrain growth in co-operation through local partnership with the Methodist Church. Rather that local partnership is seen as one aspect of the multilateral movement towards unity. The URC has a variety of local partners and local Methodist churches are as widely involved in local projects with the Church of England as they are with the URC. It is encouraging to learn that in some places discussion of the Ten Propositions has sparked off a fresh interest in the local Council of Churches. The proposed resolution on relations with the Methodist Church, therefore, looks to a strengthening of the means of liaison for supporting all forms of ecumenical co-operation and local sharing.

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

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK ABROAD COMMITTEE

20. **The new CWM** During 1976 it became clear that the lines of development for the future of CWM which had been proposed at Singapore in 1975 and incorporated in the report 'Sharing in One World Mission' enjoyed the support of the great majority of the Churches to which CWM is related. A Preparatory Committee met in Hong Kong in October to make recommendations regarding arrangements for the inauguration and other immediate matters of concern. The cordial atmosphere which reigned at this meeting and the careful way in which preparatory work had been carried out augur well for CWM as it moves forward into the new relationships.

The Abroad Committee has spent a good deal of time during the year in examining the most suitable ways of dealing with the new responsibilities which will devolve upon the Department as a result of the changes. The following areas have been of particular concern:

21. **Relationships between URC and the new Board** URC will have four members on the new Board. It is suggested that each should serve on a Committee of the Department, or on a Committee of another Department, so that they may have first hand up to date knowledge of the situation in URC.

22. **Advocacy and Information** Provinces will no longer have members of the Board able to bring information direct from the CWM Board and Committees. CWM itself will no longer be providing advocacy material aimed almost exclusively at the needs of the UK Churches. It is therefore proposed that a Secretary for Communication, responsible to the Central Committee, should be appointed for an initial period of three years to cover the important first years of the new organization.

23. **Personnel** URC will take over a wide range of responsibilities from CWM in connection with candidates, students from overseas, the training and support of those going to work overseas or coming to work in this country, as well as with St. Andrew's Missionary College at Selly Oak, Birmingham, to mention only the main heads. In order to deal with these matters, a Personnel Committee of 10 people is to be added to the Committees of the Department, having a full-time secretary. The Revd. Iorwerth Thomas, at present Personnel Secretary with CWM, has been appointed to this post.

24. **Relationships with other UK members of the CWM** A consultation was held on November 9th and 10th with representatives of the Congregational Federation, the Union of Welsh Independents, and the Congregational Union of Scotland. The Revd. George Bembridge of the Congregational Union of Ireland, which is not becoming a member, also attended. The meeting dealt usefully and harmoniously with topics of general interest. Contact will be maintained through secretaries, and by means of an annual consultation on the lines of the present meeting.

25. **Finance** From the share of the Unified Appeal available for CWM will be transferred the items at present paid for by the Council which will become the responsibility of URC. A net figure will then be paid to CWM.

26. It may be hoped that after all the planning that has been done, the changeover will be smooth and the experience of taking part in the new CWM an exhilarating and rewarding one.

27. **Concerns** The reorganization of CWM took place against an uneasy background for the church in many countries. The position of the church, and of individuals within it in countries as far apart as Korea and South Africa exercised the minds and aroused the concern of the Committee, which attempted to keep as well-informed as possible on developments.

28. **Visits and relationships** The Revd. Boris Anderson, returning from the CWM Preparatory Committee in Hong Kong, was able to visit Burma, and make the acquaintance of ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church of Burma, mainly in the Rangoon area. The Revd. S. S. T. Evans on a visit to the United States, had a useful meeting with American sister churches to discuss the creation of a British-American Pastoral Exchange Programme which would make it easier for exchanges to be arranged. The Revd. Arthur Macarthur also visited the United States. Plans for the more fruitful development of contacts, based perhaps on correspondence relating to certain areas of thought and interest, are still being discussed. Professor Martin Cressey attended the Conference of European Churches' conference on 'European Theology challenged by the World-Wide Church' in Geneva, and presented a useful report. The report of Principal George Caird and the Revd. John Johansen-Berg on their visit to South Africa in 1975 is available in book form. Mr. John Gilbey attended the Synod of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar on behalf of CWM, and the European Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches held at Herrnhut in East Germany and learnt something of the opportunities and constraints in church life in that country.

29. **Guests** Six European Churches accepted the invitation to send members to attend the 1976 Assembly. This gave an opportunity for a discussion as to how the churches of Europe might become better acquainted. Thought continues based upon some of the suggestions made.

30. **St. Andrew's Hall Missionary College, Birmingham** The Committee heard encouraging reports of the work done at St. Andrew's, in which URC and CWM have a considerable interest. In all, 123 students were involved in the College during the academic year 1975-76, representing 37 countries. The scope of the courses available within the Selly Oak Group and their adaptability to the needs of overseas students, or those going overseas from this country, is a great asset in the training work of the Church. To keep ahead of inflation is a constant and increasing problem, as in all colleges.

31. **Missionaries** Three URC missionaries retired and seven resigned from CWM during the course of the year. Five were appointed.

32. **Chaplaincies** Very encouraging reports have been received by the Committee regarding the work of the Chinese and Ghanaian Chaplaincies. Members were particularly pleased to learn that the Churches of Ghana had agreed to the reappointment of the Revd. Ben Tettey as Chaplain for a second three year period.

33. **Money** The Unified Appeal target of £300,000 for CWM was met in full. It seems to the Committee particularly important that all churches should in 1977 again endeavour to meet their Unified Appeal target in full, so that the full budgeted figure may be sent in the first year of the new CWM's existence.

J. E. M. Gilbey, *Chairman*
Boris Anderson, *Secretary*

MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS COMMITTEE

34. It has become clear to the Committee over the past two to three years that a large number of different organizations and groups are working in the field of inter-faith relations in this country. Too often however, these groups work in isolation and in ignorance of each other's activities. Experience gained in one area in ways of approach, in community development, in evangelism and the like, is thus not easily available in similar areas elsewhere. Some inter-denominational group is required to co-ordinate the work that is being done, so that experience can be shared and action encouraged wherever the situation demands it.

35. The Committee has been in consultation with the officers of the BCC on these questions, and is glad to report that the Council is to discuss them at its April meeting. Dr. Leslie Newbigin, a member of the Committee, is to present a paper as a basis for discussion, which could well lead to a significant opening up of the theological and practical questions arising from the relation of Christianity to other faiths. The Committee plans to meet early in July to discuss the implications of the BCC findings for the URC and will try to keep the Church informed.

36. The Festival of Islam of 1976 took place without causing the antagonism that might have been expected. Judged by numbers visiting the various exhibitions, the Festival did not arouse as much interest as did earlier exhibitions of Egyptian and Chinese treasures. But the publicity given to Islam and to the Muslim presence in Britain has encouraged some churches in the task of building good relationships with their Muslim neighbours.

37. It is Hospital practice that patients of faiths other than Christian are put on the list of Free Church Chaplains, the great majority of whom are ill-equipped to minister to them. The FCFC published a series of four articles in 1975 in the Free Church Chronicle, on the needs of Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Muslim patients. More practical advice for Chaplains is required and the Committee have approached the FCFC with the suggestion that a supplement on the matter of ministering to patients of other faiths be added to the Hospital Chaplain's Manual.

38. The matter of religious education in multi-faith schools has again been before the Committee and it is hoped that in a series of articles in Reform on the general question of religious education in schools, the special problem of religion in multi-faith schools will be discussed.

39. Relations with Jewish people remain a concern of the Committee. Revd. T. P. Strachan attended a summer school in Denmark and our consultant, Revd. R. H. Lewis, attended the annual conference of the Council of Christians and Jews and reported frank discussions taking place. Jewish members attended when he conducted Sunday worship. The Committee made a grant of £200 towards the Council's magazine 'Common Ground'. Another Committee member, Revd. Peter Chave, has close liaison with the Birmingham Jewish community and is involved in special study. The consultant played a leading part in persuading a national bank to change the wording of one of its training cards that had an unintentionally derogatory reference to Jews. Mr. Lewis writes: 'Antisemitism, in common with other forms of prejudice, tends to thrive during times of inflation, and there are some disturbing signs of it in booklets being sold. It is important to be on guard against any such.' Ministers and lay people are reminded that the Committee can subsidize a certain number of people on courses and summer schools concerned with Jewish-Christian relations.

Alan G. MacLeod, *Chairman*
Boris Anderson, *Secretary*

WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT: APPENDIX 1

REPORT OF COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE TEN PROPOSITIONS AS AT JANUARY 31st 1977

Further replies continue to be received and studied, but at the date set the position was:

1. **Statistics** 216 replies received
189 are from local churches
6 from Elders Meetings
17 from District Councils
4 from Synods.

In addition, but not included in the report, 4 from individuals.

2. **Views** This represents about 11% of churches. Some Provinces have a much larger proportion of replies than others – notably the Southern Province where District Councils collected replies and collated them. Some discussion which is known to have taken place has not been reported. The care given to the subject has been considerable and in some areas it is apparent that United Reformed Churches have been more involved in discussion than other denominations. The response is still patchy and the conclusions drawn are, therefore, unreliable as a representation of the total view of our Church.

3. There is widespread support for the general principles and welcome for the advance made. Less than 10 replies were wholly against. 67 are fully in favour: 106 in favour but with reservations or questions which could result in dissent if doubts are not resolved.

4. **Questions and Doubts** The areas of doubt and question are varied, but there is some consensus. There is widespread support for the word diversity and equally widespread fear of imposed 'uniformity'.

5. The value of 'structure' as a way of expressing the common life of the churches is seriously questioned and there is fear that argument about change of structure will divert us from the real mission of the Church. The word 'clarify' occurs in many replies. The need for common 'rites' is very much in question.

6. There is widespread fear that the phrase 'good standing' will be legally interpreted and an insistence in many replies that the 'table' must be open to all who 'love the Lord', though at least one reply acknowledges that this may be a more restrictive fencing of the tables than 'membership'. Some of the replies ask whether all received into the Church by confirmation in childhood are to be regarded as 'in good standing'.

7. Several replies ask for more support for local unity and one for amendment of the Sharing of Church Buildings Act. Another asks that all churches should have 'The Christian Church' on their notice boards.

8. There are voices urging the inclusion of the Salvation Army and Quakers and one the retention of 'eldership' in any progress towards unity.

9. The meaning of the phrase 'visible unity' is questioned frequently and again this is linked with questions about the need for structural adjustment.

10. There are several matters about baptism: some responses indicate fears that it be made obligatory; some that infant baptism may be threatened; one that we will make life too difficult for Baptists.

11. The largest group of questions or objections related to Proposition 6. 83 want to know the content of the common ordinal or object to the suggestion that such should be required. Several ask why, if the ministries are to be mutually recognized without further ado, there should be need for a common ordinal afterwards and why, if a variety of rites of baptism will serve, there has to be one rite of ordination.

12. We need to ask for clarification of the first half of six as well as the second, since several replies ask what need there is for a common ordinal when the present ministers are to be accepted straightaway. Is this a misunderstanding of the meaning of 6 – do the episcopalians so understand it? We need to explore the content and intention of the act of recognition if we are to be loyal to the questioning in our churches and to be in a position to respond honestly to the Proposition. Questions about lay preachers and the lay administration of the sacraments are voiced in some replies.

13. Only two or three replies indicate that the need to accept episcopacy has been weighed and accepted.

14. Several replies raise doubts about Proposition 7 and either query its sincerity, its collision with points in Propositions 5 and 6, or its operation. The latter group of questions seems to be linked with the fear of structured uniformity and asks what body, old or new, will adjudicate.

15. Some of our churches have made suggestions about other steps that might be taken, e.g. could all our buildings be taken into common ownership and a variety of patterns of worship take place within each? Could common funds be built up for use by all the Churches? What about an Ecumenical Journal?

16. **General Comments** This evidence must be regarded as inconclusive and leaves a heavy responsibility with the General Assembly itself. The replies are widely different in character and style, and several are open to more than one interpretation. Reading them confirms the view that our interim response was in the right mood and raised most of the points that need to be raised. A major new emphasis to come out of the replies is on the fear of uniformity, especially a fear that formulae will restrict the liberty of local churches. Some of this represents a reaction against changes resulting from the formation of the URC. Many things are said on this theme which suggest that there is great need in the URC for a programme of education in self-understanding of the positions maintained in the Basis of Union. The relationship between liberty and fellowship and the idea of responsibility for one another beyond the local church are themes that need much exploration. There are occasional protests against the diversion of time and effort on to this enterprise and from the 'real' work of the Church.

17. One aspect of this which is surprising, in view of the URC's own 'conscience-clause' (Basis 7(10)), is the degree to which Proposition 7 has caused alarm. Why, it is asked, should it be necessary if not because the bonds of uniformity are about to be tied upon us? Is it not denied by the requirements of mutually acceptable rites and a common ordinal? If members object to these will Proposition 7 secure their liberty to dispense with them and, if so, how? These are questions asked in various ways in the replies.

18. There are those who feel the Propositions go too far and that they will destroy the witness of the Free Churches, and others who feel they do not go far enough because they do not look to real acts of union. The weight of the questions about the common ordinal and about the three roles is difficult to estimate. Many are simply reserved judgements – 'May we please, see the Ordinal'. It is not possible to say whether the questioning will cease or turn into objections when the Ordinal is seen.

The draft of a further response which follows is for consideration by the Assembly.

WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT: APPENDIX 2

DRAFT FURTHER RESPONSE ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TO THE TEN PROPOSITIONS

1. **Preamble** This further response made on behalf of the URC has been prepared by the World Church and Mission Department as authorized by an Assembly resolution of 1976 and is forwarded to the Churches' Unity Commission by resolution of the 1977 General Assembly of the United Reformed Church.

2. This Church at the point of its own union committed itself to the search for further unity. The following quotations from the Basis of Union are significant:

'There is but one Church of the one God.'

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

'The CCEW and the PC of E humbly recognize that the failure and weakness of the Church have in particular been manifested in division which has made it impossible for

Christians fully to know, experience and communicate the life of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.'

'... they acknowledge their duty to unite. They see their union as a part of what God is doing to make his people one, and as a united Church will take, wherever possible and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people.'

3. The United Reformed Church, so committed, welcomes wholeheartedly the promise of further steps held out in the report of the Commission. We regard relationships such as are envisaged in the Ten Propositions as steps on a road, looking beyond them in hope of the day when Christians will not only recognise each other but accept each other in the fullness of mutual responsibility. We ourselves came together after many years of conversation and not without pain. We have discovered that even though we shared much in our heritage, much labour and much clarity is required to achieve unity. We recognize that the wider divisions of the Church can only be healed through patient endeavour. We, therefore, understand and accept that the process of drawing together will have to come gradually and welcome the direction set out in the Report of the Commission. It seems to us a proper present response to the urging of the Spirit manifest in so many ways, and if such new relationships can be sealed between us a new and hopeful day will be before the Churches, enabling us to proclaim the Gospel with a new authenticity and to bear more effective testimony to its message of reconciliation. *It is on this understanding and with this hope that the Assembly has, in the same year in which it adopts this response, resolved that closer relations with the Methodist Church be pursued not through bilateral conversations on union but through common participation in the Churches' Unity Commission, seen as a way to positive development of visible unity at both national and local levels. (*This sentence is, of course, conditional upon a previous decision of the Assembly.)

4. The United Reformed Church therefore responds to the Ten Propositions in the following ways with the indicated understandings of them:

5. The Propositions

5.1 We reaffirm our belief that the visible unity in life and mission of all Christ's people is the will of God.

5.11 The statements quoted above from the Basis of Union imply the URC's assent to this proposition. We agree to it.

5.12 The form of the proposition makes it clear that the search for unity can never be confined to one nation. We recognize the practical difficulties for union negotiations that this raises, particularly for a Church organized internationally as is the Roman Catholic Church, but we rejoice in the world-wide fellowship of Christians and will always ourselves reach out to make that dimension of the Church's unity visible. We are, however, able to record that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, to which we belong, has for long encouraged its member-Churches to seek unity within their own spheres. We hope that the universal goal to which this proposition rightly points will not prevent us from finding our unity within each place and nation. We would also emphasize the relationship between the unity of the Church and the unity of humankind, referred to in the commentary on this proposition and so central to the WCC Nairobi discussion of what unity requires.

5.2 We therefore declare our willingness to join in a covenant actively to seek that visible unity.

5.21 We agree with this proposition on the understanding that it refers to a covenant entered into following further substantial agreements which are being sought in respect of membership and ministry, and simultaneous with the implementation of the agreements. Twelve years have passed since the Nottingham Faith and Order Conference at which the idea of a Covenant to *seek* union was strongly commended. In all sorts of ways unity has become visible in local ecumenical ventures and in a widespread readiness to work together. The times have moved on and what is now required is to register actual progress towards unity.

5.22 It may help if we set out a form of words as illustration of what we have in mind for the covenant, though of course we are in no sense bound to this particular form.

'In acknowledgement of these agreements, we the Churches resolve that we will in

national and local services celebrate the new relationships thus established between us and solemnly commit ourselves before God and with each other to live, worship and work within that covenanted fellowship.'

5.23 This form of words indicates our understanding of the word 'covenant' in this context. We believe that the Basis of Union including a statement of faith, adopted by the United Reformed Church at its formation; provides evidence of doctrinal agreement with other churches sufficient for a covenant to be entered into.

5.3 We believe that this search requires action both locally and nationally.

5.31 We accept this proposition as being almost axiomatic. The setting of one element in the process over against the other is quite false. Local advances in ecumenical activity will often run into frustration so long as it is from within separated denominations. There is even some dishonesty in presenting a united church in local situations while those who work there are paid and controlled by divided churches. If mission and unity go together, then we ask why it is that we have come to accept ecumenical approaches as the relevant method of work in new towns and not in the older areas and in approach to the nation. We believe that the welcome speed of development in local ecumenism will increasingly be a rebuke to the national Churches if the national effort should continue to lag behind. At the same time we recognize that church unity at the national level requires the international context and correctives referred to above in our comments on Proposition I.

5.4 We agree to recognize, as from an accepted date, the communicant members in good standing of the other covenanting Churches as true members of the Body of Christ and welcome them to Holy Communion without condition.

5.41 The United Reformed Church, as did its two constituents, already recognizes the members of other Churches as true members of the Body of Christ, inviting them to Communion and receiving them into membership of the URC on sufficient evidence of their membership in the Churches from which they come. We accept this proposition on the understanding (i) that it positively extends within the life of the covenanting churches the range of recognition and welcome to Communion, and does not negatively limit the right of each local church of the URC to admit to the Lord's Table, and (ii) that to recognize someone as a member of the Church must imply that they require no further act of recognition on joining a local fellowship, however much it may be valuable to symbolize their welcome into their new church 'location', at which point some training in denominational emphasis may also be appropriate.

5.5 We agree that, as from an accepted date, initiation in the covenanting Churches shall be by mutually acceptable rites.

5.51 It is not possible to separate comment on this and the previous Proposition.

5.52 Experience in our united life has already made clear to us that the use of 'rites' has to be integrated with the realities of the spiritual life. Some within our fellowship emphasize the 'rites' themselves as making explicit the saving actions of God towards us. Others see the 'rites' as symbols which have value in making the truth visible but which in themselves are dispensable and whose effectiveness is questioned. While these two views are, we hope, reconciled in our Basis of Union, we know that they are still held in tension. The actual practice of discipline is affected by this tension and the Commission needs to be aware of a difference of attitude which we think may exist in other Churches as well as in the URC.

5.53 We are aware that one of the greatest problems confronting the Churches in England today is the bringing of men, women and children for the first time into effective relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church. We, therefore, believe that the main criterion for the acceptability of rites should be that they aid that relationship rather than the criterion that they retain traditional practices (e.g. concerning presidency at Confirmation). It is from this standpoint that we shall consider any clarification from the Churches' Unity Commission concerning mutually acceptable rites.

5.54 *We draw attention to the reports of the discussions between the Churches of Christ and the URC and to the agreed statements in the final report concerning the process of Christian initiation. We seem to have come to a mutually acceptable view by setting out two processes of initiation, both of which start with birth and a Christian celebration of it, reaching a stage of fulfilment in the acceptance into the full privileges and responsibilities of Church membership, but even at that stage only initiatory into a life of Christian obedience and growth towards maturity. Given a sincere exercise of church discipline and a spirit of tolerance, we believe this agreement may help to bridge the gulf between those who with equal sincerity have held to positions of paedo-baptists and believer-baptists and provide a basis on which to establish mutually acceptable rites. In general we take the plural 'rites' to indicate that more than one road will remain open for the approach to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership. (*This paragraph may need to be amended in the light of the Assembly's debate and decision on the discussions with the Churches of Christ.)

With the above comments, we accept this proposition.

5.6 We agree to recognize, as from an accepted date, the ordained ministries of the other covenanting Churches as true ministries of word and sacraments in the Holy Catholic Church and we agree that all subsequent ordinations to the ministries of the covenanting Churches shall be according to a common ordinal which will properly incorporate the Episcopal, Presbyteral and Lay roles in ordination.

5.61 The Churches' Unity Commission has stated that 'it should be understood that in Proposition 6 "episcopal" refers not to a general exercise of oversight (episcopate) but to the role of ministers specially set apart to a wide, crucial, and peculiarly responsible form of ministry distinguishable from the presbyteral ministry and from corporate and conciliar forms of oversight, though not exercised in separation from these; "presbyteral" refers to the role of those who exercise a ministry of word and sacraments, whether as do the priests of the present episcopally ordered Churches or as do the ministers of those Churches which have a single form of the ministry of word and sacraments; "lay" refers to the role of the laity both in the process leading to ordination (testing of candidature, training, call to a pastorate, decision to ordain) and in the act of ordination itself.'

5.62 The United Reformed Church already in practice says 'yes' to the first half of this Proposition, but in order to avoid confusion we feel it necessary to say that for us this means that we are ready always to receive the ministrations of all those ordained in the member Churches of the Churches' Unity Commission (and indeed in a far wider circle of Churches than that) and to receive such ministers into the ministry of the URC without further ordination. It is such a readiness that we look for in the other covenanting Churches. We do not expect the recognition to mean that ministers will be unconditionally transferable from one Church to another, as we acknowledge that every Church has a right to safeguard standards of training and to examine the personal qualities of those admitted to its ministry. The emergence of ecumenical centres of training and other developments may make such transferability automatic in the future, but we do not so understand this present proposal.

5.63 In the URC as at present, ordinations take place in acts of public worship and usually after ordinands have received the call of a local church; they are conducted by the District Council with the Provincial Moderator or his deputy presiding. The episcopal role is thus fulfilled in a conciliar manner and combined with the presbyteral, while the lay role is expressed in the involvement of lay people in the encouragement and oversight of candidature for the ministry, through the making of the call, through the concurrence of the District Council including its lay members and by the responses of the local church at the ordination service. We hold that the episcopal, presbyteral and lay roles are thus already represented in our practice of ordination, and desire that the episcopal churches will seriously consider the values inherent in the conciliar practice of ordination, which we regard as highly as they do the episcopal practice.

5.64 We recognize that any advance towards visible church unity in England that is to include the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches must honour the convictions of those Churches concerning the ministry of bishops and must find a basis for harmony between those convictions and the doctrine of the Church as held amongst us.

5.65 Since the inception of the discussion of the Ten Propositions in the URC, Proposition VI has been further interpreted for us by the Churches' Unity Commission in its

statement of January 18th 1977 as requiring the acceptance in some form of the ministry of bishops. We therefore need further comment from the Synods, District Councils and local churches of the URC, before we can as a General Assembly respond to the proposition. In particular we need comment on the two possible ways forward sketched by the Churches' Unity Commission so that we may determine whether either way or both or neither can be accepted by the URC.

5.66 We understand the two ways to be as follows:

(a) that the URC in entering into the covenant should agree to introduce and continue within its life a distinct ministry of bishops as an addition to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments which it already has. In order that such bishops in the URC might be fully recognized as such by all the covenanting Churches, in the initial ordinations of bishops for the URC (they being chosen by the URC itself) appropriate representatives of the covenanting Churches would associate themselves by word and action with such entry of new servants into the episcopal succession. This way is commended to us by those who believe that Christ's Lordship of his Church can best be made effective by an episcopal order through which his caring oversight can be personally expressed and the unity of the Church in Christ can be given this personal embodiment.

5.67 The second way (b) takes special note of the particular relationship reached at the point of covenant. At that stage the covenanting Churches will retain their separate life but will be in a new and committed relationship with each other, within which (first part of Proposition VI) the existing ministers of all the covenanting Churches will be mutually recognized and able on invitation to exercise ministry in each of them. It is therefore proposed that for the future every minister of the covenanting Churches shall be ordained in the name and by the customary authority of each of them. This way forward, which would include the extending of the ministry of bishops to all the covenanting Churches by the method of these common ordinations, would place the emphasis upon a common act of all the Churches, and would lead to the development of ecumenical loyalties and responsibilities, though the discipline of each covenanting Church would continue to be exercised towards its own members and ministers and each would retain its present pattern of ministry, whether this includes bishops or not.

5.7 We agree within the fellowship of the covenanting Churches to respect the rights of conscience and to continue to accord to all our members such freedom of thought and action as is consistent with the visible unity of the Church.

5.71 'Jesus Christ frees and unites.' The fellowship is constituted by relationship to Jesus Christ and not by any external constraints; every Christian is responsible to his Lord. The variety of gifts has been a mark of the Church from the beginning. It is, therefore, important that the unity of the Church should be expressed by a relationship to the 'one Foundation' and not either in creedal elaborations or ecclesiastical structures as such. It is, however, vital that every Christian accepts his fellow members in the one Body and does not allow private conscience to unchurch his neighbour. We accept this Proposition as rightly embodying the tension between individual and fellowship, and on the understanding that it gives the same protection to the individual and to the fellowship as does the relevant clause 7 (10) of the URC Basis of Union, and that the Proposition will be put into effect by the existing procedures of each Church for its own members and ministers.

5.8 We agree to give every possible encouragement to local ecumenical projects and to develop methods of decision-making in common.

5.81 This should happen with or without the Covenant and we hope the Commission will use its influence to encourage the development of a structure of co-operation through a fuller recognition of the work of the Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects in England through full commitment to national and local councils of churches and through specific schemes of co-operation of every kind.

5.9 We agree to explore such further steps as will be necessary to make more clearly visible the unity of all Christ's people.

5.91 The URC is committed by its very Basis to do this and will continue to search out ways of doing it, strengthened, we hope, by the new covenanted fellowship. We see this Proposition in terms of what is said in the introduction to these comments about being visibly one in body as well as in spirit

5.10 We agree to remain in close fellowship and consultation with all the Churches represented on the Churches' Unity Commission.

5.101 This we will strive to do, and will also maintain the best possible relationships with those Christian bodies not represented on the Commission. We express the hope that the British Council of Churches can in its new development further these relationships for the British Churches but also foresee a need for a body replacing both the Churches' Unity Commission and the Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects in England.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly resolves that at this time closer relations with the Methodist Church be pursued not through bilateral conversation on union but through common participation in the Churches' Unity Commission and other ecumenical bodies and by the development of local co-operation, and to these ends instructs the World Church and Mission Department to maintain close liaison with the appropriate agencies of the Methodist Church, particularly through a liaison group including representatives of the Department, of the Provincial Moderators and of local joint churches.
 2. The Assembly receives the further response to the Ten Propositions of the Churches' Unity Commission prepared by the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee and authorises its transmission to the Churches' Unity Commission as continued interim guidance in its work.
 3. The Assembly sends the further response to Synods, District Councils and local churches for discussion, particularly of the two possible ways forward in relation to Proposition VI, and authorizes the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee to issue a pamphlet of questions to assist the discussion and the collection of opinion – answers to be submitted to the Committee through the General Secretary by January 31st 1978.
 4. The Assembly instructs the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee to draw up a draft definitive response of the United Reformed Church to the Ten Propositions to be voted upon at the Assembly of 1978.
 5. The Assembly welcomes the news that the plan to reorganize the Council for World Mission on a basis of full equal partnership has been accepted by all its member bodies and will now be implemented. It sends its good wishes to the new Council for the success of its inaugural meetings and pledges its willing co-operation with the other member churches in the development of new policies and ways of working together in world mission.
 6. The Assembly approves the establishment of annual consultations between the UK member bodies of CWM and welcomes the opportunity this affords for sharing ideas and experience particularly in the spheres of publicity and missionary training.
 7. The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church sends warmest greetings to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches on the occasion of its centenary, wishes all success to the centennial consultation at St. Andrews, and prays for God's blessing on the future work and witness of the Alliance.
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FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

Chairman: Mr. Leslie Palmer

Secretary: The Revd. E. W. Todd

1. This year marks the culmination of an important piece of work in the Department. The Scheme of Union required us to produce a unified scheme of ministerial remuneration and the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee under the chairmanship of the Revd. John White, brought this to pass in January. Mr. White decided that this was the right time to retire from his work in this field, which extends over a considerable period and in which he became so expert. How he was able to combine this onerous task with his duties as Moderator of the East Midland Province, we will never know; we are very content just to express our sincere gratitude.

2. One other matter of personnel must be mentioned – the passing of Sir Sydney Caffyn and Mr. Kenneth W. Thorndyke. Although their sphere of activities was far wider than the Finance & Administration Department, this report would be incomplete without a grateful acknowledgement of the contributions made by them over many years.

3. A suspicious attitude towards those engaged in finance and administration is perhaps understandable but is one we must seek to break down. The staff of the department have been very glad to visit provinces and districts during the past year to endeavour to iron out problems and we hope that this process will gain ground. We plan to make facilities available during Assembly when we can meet members. It is most important to maintain a two-way channel of communication.

4. The process of framing a central budget which reconciles the vital needs of the Church with available resources becomes increasingly difficult. The Executive Committee has strengthened the Budget Committee to include representatives of the Moderators and three 'independent' representatives from the churches. This Committee will not only produce for each Assembly a Budget for the following year but it will monitor performance against plan throughout the year.

5. It is not, however, sufficient merely to produce a budget which covers central expenditure in the immediately following year – probably some 10% of the total expenditure of the URC. At last year's Assembly we produced some interesting facts and figures about the total economic viability of the URC unearthed by a departmental study group under the chairmanship of Mr. Allen Chapman, treasurer of the Southern Province. We hope to produce an updated version of this statement for the 1977 Assembly.

6. One of the subjects which the study group will be examining is the danger of our commitment for buildings sapping our financial strength to the point where the continued existence of the Church is threatened. There will be consultation with the provinces on how best to tackle this very big problem.

7. Possibly hard pressed church treasurers will find not a great deal of comfort in this report. Is there any encouragement for them? Certainly a word of gratitude. And what about the slogan: 'Have you covered that latest increase in giving with a covenant?'. Faithfully applied, this advice could work wonders in your local church budget.

MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. John White

Secretary: The Revd. E. W. Todd

8. **Unified Scheme of Ministerial Remuneration** The new scheme of Ministerial Remuneration has operated from January 1st 1977. The decision of the 1976 Assembly, that this should be so, created a heavy work load in collecting and tabulating the information and the

calculating of the assessments. Adjustments then had to be recommended by Districts (through Provinces) in the light of current groupings of churches and situations known only in the Districts. Inevitably, with a new scheme, there has been 'teething troubles', often caused by a surprising lack of knowledge in some places of a scheme which has been under discussion since 1974, laid before Assembly in full in 1975 and only modified in a few details since then. As one of the major difficulties with some churches is the size of the assessment it should be stated that the Scheme itself has not created a demand for any extra money. Whatever scheme of ministerial remuneration had been adopted, the amount to be raised by the churches would have been, at least, as much as is now required. The Committee is most grateful to all those in Provinces and Districts who have helped in the collecting and scrutiny of the forms and continue to help in establishing agreement on the amount of the assessments.

9. The Scheme is now known as 'The Scheme of Ministerial Remuneration'. The use of the word 'unified' does not need to be perpetuated. Without it we hope to avoid any further confusion with the 'Unified Appeal'.

10. **Basic Stipend** The Government Pay Policy at present in force will continue until July 31st 1977. Normally stipend increases in the United Reformed Church take effect from July 1st in any year. Any increase in the basic stipend during this current period of the present Pay Policy will be governed by that Policy. The maximum permitted increase to the basic stipend is £2.50 per week, i.e. an increase of £130 per annum and this will be the recommendation of the Committee.

11. **National Insurance, Status of Ministers** At the present time all clergy and ministers of religion in pastoral charge rank as 'self-employed' for National Insurance purposes, despite various mis-leading statements which have appeared in the press. A large majority of ministers of the United Reformed Church have expressed a preference for a change to 'employed' status (the Social Security Act permits this as an 'office holder' without requiring a contract of employment). In the meantime, a majority of the major denominations (notably the Church of England, the Methodists and the Church of Scotland) had taken a decision to request this change of status. It is a matter which will require consideration and a decision by the United Reformed Church as the change of status would mean an added annual expenditure of approximately £160,000 in respect of the employer's contribution.

12. After the Synod of the Church of England had reached its decision in July 1976 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the proposed imposition of a 2% Pay Roll Tax, which for the United Reformed Church would mean an additional annual expenditure of approximately £36,000. Together these two items would mean nearly £200,000 new expenditure each year.

13. The proposed Pay Roll Tax raised other important questions for charities in general and the churches in particular. The Churches Main Committee, therefore, decided to seek an interview with the Prime Minister through a special deputation, but at the time of writing the result of this interview is not known. The Government have, however, been informed that this proposed tax introduces an entirely new factor into the situation and that it may not be possible to give any decision from the churches by the date originally requested. We have been informed that the earliest date at which a change in the status of ministers for national insurance purposes would be effective is April 1978, when in all probability the Earnings Related Pension Scheme will become effective.

14. **Children's Allowances** Under the former Presbyterian Scheme, children's allowances were paid generally, irrespective of whether or not there was a supplement to the stipend and the cost had been allowed for in the assessments since that scheme came into being in the early 1950's. The Congregational practice on the other hand was to restrict the payment of children's allowances to ministers on the basic stipend. By the decision of the 1973 Assembly, the Presbyterian practice was preserved for the diminishing number of cases eligible for such allowances on the date of union; and the Congregational pattern was followed in all other cases. In calculating the rate of assessment, no allowance was made for the payment of children's allowances except on this restricted basis. Thus where a minister is on the basic stipend, any children's allowances will be a charge on the fund; in all other cases (with the exception of the limited and decreasing number of ex-Presbyterian ministers eligible on October 5th 1972), any children's allowance must be regarded as part of the supplement and the cost will fall on the local church.

15. **Pension Provision** If a change in status of ministers takes place, then as employed persons they will be covered by the Government 'earnings related' pension scheme, unless application is made to 'contract out'. The changes approved by the 1976 Assembly in pension conditions would probably permit a successful application for contracting out if this is necessary. If there is no change in status, there is no legal obligation as the Government scheme relates solely to employed persons; but even so, one would not wish ministers to be worse off pension wise; this seems to be unlikely. As the final decision on this whole matter depends on questions as yet unanswered by the Government no recommendation can be made at the moment.

16. The actuary of our own Pension Fund advises us that the changes agreed to in the Pension Fund last year and the latest valuation of the Fund requires a total contribution to the Fund of 15% instead of the current 12½%. The Committee therefore will recommend to Assembly that the churches contribution to the Pension Fund, which is raised through the assessment, shall be increased from 7½% to 10%.

17. **Pastors' Superannuation Fund & Pastors' Widows' Fund** These two Funds continue to be administered by the Committee to provide the maximum aid possible to retired ministers and ministers' widows. It is hoped that it will be possible to increase the income limits applicable to the Funds but no recommendation can be made until after the budget for 1977.

18. **Disturbance Allowance and other suggested benefits** The Committee has given consideration to suggestions made concerning further ways of meeting special and exceptional demands on ministers. All these would require new money and the Committee was of the opinion that no additional expense should be undertaken until the new scheme of ministerial remuneration had been in operation for at least a year.

19. **Assessment 1978** The main feature in the new scheme of ministerial remuneration was that every church would be provided with the opportunity of making its contribution to the maintenance of the total ordained ministry in the United Reformed Church. To do this the assessment has to cover more than just the basic stipend. Through the assessments the local churches are contributing to:

1. Stipends of ministers in pastorates
2. Costs of ministries in other situations
3. The basic stipend of Provincial Moderators, ministers on the Church House staff and four Professors at Westminster/Cheshunt College
4. All pension fund contributions due from the churches
5. Contributions to existing deficiencies on Pension Funds.

20. All the above items were previously raised from the churches directly or through the Unified Appeal.

21. The proposed increases in the basic stipend from July 1st, 1977 will require an additional sum which will amount to £119,600 in a full year. In addition to this, if Assembly agrees to the recommendation for the increase in contribution to pension, a further £55,660 new money will be required. It is not possible to suggest the rate of assessment until the accounts for 1976 have been received from the churches. Details of the new rates of assessment will be submitted to the July meeting of the Executive Committee and promulgated as soon as possible after that.

22. **Other Responsibilities** From January 1st, 1977 the main responsibility for the recognition of pastorates lies with the Provinces and the Deployment Committee. During the interim period until the full implementation of the Deployment Committee's recommendations there will need to be close consultation between that Committee and the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee and continuing liaison thereafter. The concern for housing for retired ministers is now the responsibility of the United Reformed Church Housing Society and will no longer be a matter for this Committee's report.

23. The Committee continues its endeavour to encourage and enable the churches to provide adequate remuneration and pensions for ministers of the United Reformed Church and hopes to see this done in such a way that will enrich the Church and enhance the ministry.

TREASURESHIP COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mr. J. E. Hooper

Secretary: Mr. C. M. Frank

24. The efficiency of the office has continued to improve and the work is now more up-to-date and accurate than at any time since union. The office is, however, still understaffed.

25. Some progress has been made in examining the money trusts coming from the former Presbyterian Church of England. In some sections it has now been possible to identify the balances which are legally required to be preserved and those which are expendable. These have now been segregated in the accounts. In many cases it has been found possible to amalgamate trusts which had the same object, thus reducing the amount of administration work involved. Work is continuing on the remaining trusts.

26. The progress made in the apportionment of the funds of the former Congregational Church has made it possible to include in the accounts at December 31st, 1976, the effect of the scheme now approved by the Charity Commissioners. From next year onwards, therefore, the comparative figures in the accounts will mean more as they will not be affected by the changes in income and capital which have been made in the past in anticipation of the final scheme.

27. Consideration is being given to the changes which may be required in the pension arrangements for lay staff at Head Office in connection with the new Government scheme which is due to start in April 1978.

28. Liaison has continued with Christian Concern for South Africa in connection with investments, and the Treasurer has attended a number of meetings relating to the policy of various companies in South Africa.

29. The year has been a very difficult one for the Investment Sub-Committee as it has been harder than usual to decide upon the best investment policy to pursue. Many more meetings have been held by the investment team in order to ensure that the best possible course of action is taken to obtain those investments which will be most beneficial for the funds concerned.

UNIFIED APPEAL COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mr. G. Vaughan Davies

Secretary: Mr. J. W. Paterson

30. The target for the Unified Appeal in 1976 was £569,000 although at the 1976 Assembly Churches were asked if possible to exceed their targets since a deficit was expected on the budget as a whole. In addition contributions for the Congregational Maintenance of the Ministry Scheme amounted to £92,550. In a difficult year the churches responded well to the appeal and approximately £640,000 being 97% of the total sought was received from Provinces as follows:

<i>Province</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Amount</i>	
1	Northern	45,537	
2	North Western	53,875	
3	Mersey	40,821	
4	Yorkshire	42,699	
5	East Midlands	32,729	
6	West Midlands	51,036	
7	Eastern	55,605	
8	South Western	38,493	
9	Wessex	55,129	
10	Thames North	90,088	
11	Southern	117,280	
12	Wales	16,752	
		640,044	
	Non-provincial sources	8,583	
		£648,627	98%

31. For the year 1977 the Assembly agreed a target of £600,000. This sum does not include the basic stipend of Provincial Moderators and ordained Ministers on the staff of Church House nor certain pension commitments which for the first time are raised as part of the maintenance of the ministry assessment.

32. In accordance with the wishes of the 1976 Assembly the Committee has reconsidered the method of allocating the Unified Appeal targets between provinces. After consultations with Provincial Treasurers 1977 Provincial targets have been calculated on a formula based as to 50% of the target on 1975 giving and 50% of the target on the maintenance of the ministry formula. In the future it is hoped that each province target will be based on the maintenance of the ministry formula.

33. At the time of writing the indications are that the Unified Appeal target for 1978 will be £648,000.

34. Publicity in 1976 was provided by a leaflet approximately 25,000 of which were taken by the churches and by a kit from which it is possible to make a poster to explain the Unified Appeal. The leaflet for 1977 has a completely fresh approach from those of the past three years, emphasizing the activities supported by the Appeal. A second leaflet will be available in June showing how each pound given to the Appeal is spent.

35. The committee suffered a serious loss during the year through the death of Mrs. M. Byatt. She had been a most valuable member of the committee since its inception. The Committee recorded the thanks for the work of the retiring members, the Revds. F. G. Wilson Dennet and W. S. Minnis; and Mr. R. E. Harding and welcomed four new members, the Revds. N. J. W. Appleton and J. Ticehurst and Messrs. C. Beety and B. W. Flynn.

36. This year sees the end of Mr. J. W. Paterson's term as secretary of the committee. His long experience of church finance in the Presbyterian Church of England before the union has been invaluable in helping to guide the committee through the financial teething troubles arising since the union. He goes with our warmest thanks.

37. The Committee is grateful for the support and forbearance of Provincial, District and Church treasurers without whose co-operation the committee could not function.

DEVELOPMENT IN NEW AREAS AND CARE OF EXISTING CHURCH BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. R. G. Walker

Secretary: The Revd. E. W. Todd

38. The Committee has considered applications for assistance with church buildings and, within the limits of its guidelines and the resources available, has given help by way of loan and/or grant in a large number of cases.

39. Apart from administering the funds available for this purpose, the Committee, through the Property Consultant, has been concerned about the Development Land Tax Act, the Community Land Act, and the scheme to give assistance with Listed Buildings. We shared in the representations made to the Government on the first two matters and the outcome is now law.

40. We recognize that the provision of funds for repairs to Listed Buildings could be of help to some of our churches, but, as yet, there is no indication as to when such funds will become available.

41. Perhaps the most serious long term concern of the Committee has been with the use which the whole church makes of its resources in land and property. A previous General Assembly (1974) approved the setting up of a development fund, but circumstances in the property market at that time were against anything further being done in that direction. The Committee has not lost sight of that resolution and is in the process of considering, along with appropriate representatives of each province, a policy in relation to property holdings which might be pursued within provinces. There is evidence that churches sometimes use their material resources as a means of finding cash for emergencies, so failing to make the best use of such resources, and greatly depriving the church for the future.

WELFARE AND EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd. D. A. Smith

Secretary: The Revd. A. L. Macarthur

42. The Committee has continued to take thought for those who have been in particular need during the year. Gifts given in the name of the Church have been very deeply appreciated not simply for the gifts themselves but for the sense of the care of the whole Church expressed through them. The funds for this purpose are now received through the Unified Appeal and the continued generosity which supports that Appeal enables the Committee to carry out a very significant piece of pastoral care.

43. Since last Assembly the Charity Commissioner's Scheme of Apportionment has affected the Funds at our disposal and now that it is better able to assess the resources accruing from both past traditions the Committee is giving its attention to future policy so that the resources can be fully and wisely used.

RESOLUTIONS

Maintenance of the Ministry

1. *The Assembly resolves:*
that with effect from July 1st 1977 the minimum rate of stipend payable to a minister in full charge shall be:
£2,030 per annum for the first ten years of service.
£2,080 per annum for the next ten years.
£2,130 per annum after twenty years.

2. *The Assembly resolves:*
that the Scope OV maximum shall be £1,450 per annum from July 1st 1977.
 3. *The Assembly resolves:*
that with effect from July 1st 1977 the salary scale for Deaconesses shall be:
£1,930 per annum for the first ten years of service.
£1,980 per annum for the next ten years.
£2,030 per annum after twenty years.
- (Note: Of these sums the local church provides £150 per annum towards heating and lighting costs.)*
4. *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' Super-annuation 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.
 5. *The Assembly resolves:*
that the total annual rate of contribution to the Congregational Ministers' Pension Fund and the Presbyterian Ministers and Widows and Orphans Pension Fund shall be 15% of the appropriate basic stipend, the ministers to pay 5% and the Church to pay 10%; the Church contribution to be raised through the Assessment.
 6. *The Assembly resolves:*
that the Executive Committee be given authority to determine the rate of assessment for the calendar year 1978.

Unified Appeal Committee

7. The Assembly thanks Provinces, Districts and Churches for their response to the 1976 Unified Appeal. It urges them to maintain every effort to reach or exceed their Unified Appeal targets in 1977. Assembly notes that 1977 Provincial targets are partially based on Maintenance of the Ministry assessment ratios and requests the Unified Appeal Committee to consider whether the 1978 targets should be completely based on Maintenance of the Ministry assessment ratios.

Treasurehip Committee

8. The Accounts for 1976 be adopted.

Budget Committee

9. The Budget Committee proposals for 1978 be adopted.
(The Accounts and budget will be available on the first day of Assembly.)

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT: APPENDIX 1

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING SOCIETY LTD

1. In order to arrive at some assessment of the need and requirements of ministers likely to retire in the short and medium term, a questionnaire was sent out to all ministers during the course of 1976.
2. Some 290 replies were received from ministers retiring within the next 10 years, which, since an average of about 35 ministers retire each year, represented a high rate of return.
3. The returns produced some perhaps surprising results. Almost exactly 50% of ministers indicated that they either owned their own house already or expected to make their own provision for housing on retirement.

4. Some 40% of ministers indicated that they had capital in excess of £2,000 available towards their housing requirements on retirement. While some of these indicated a preference for retaining their capital, many expressed a desire to share in the purchase of a house when they retired. Application has been made to the Registrar of Friendly Societies for consent to amendments of the rules of the Society which would enable the Society to make loans to ministers to buy houses or to enter into shared purchase arrangements.

5. The approval of the Registrar of Friendly Societies to change the name of the Society to its present title was obtained, but approval to other changes in the Rules, in order to widen the scope of assistance which could be given by the Society, is still awaited.

6. Within the last few months it has been learned that the Memorial Hall Trust is actively considering ways in which substantial funds for the provision of housing for retired ministers could be made available, but details of how this may work out in practice have yet to be formulated.

H. E. Greening

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION : APPENDIX 2

The United Reformed Church History Society

ANNUAL REPORT 1976

1. The Society reports another useful year during 1976. In addition to dealing with the usual flow of enquiries by visit and letter there was time for further work in sorting and indexing the Society's collection of archives. The big event of the year was the success of the Society's very well attended first week-end Summer School, held at Westminster College at the end of September, the theme being 'The Place of the Cambridge area in the English Reformed Tradition'. There was clear indication from all present that more similar week-ends be arranged and planning has begun for a second to be held in September, 1978.

2. Two issues of the Journal have been made, the second containing the Annual Lecture on 'Nonconformity and the American Revolution' delivered on May 3rd by the Revd. Dr. E. A. Payne, CH.

3. Much thought continues to be given to how best to secure proper care by local churches of old records and registers and the proper disposal of these (normally with local archive centres) when local churches close. It is hoped that with the co-operation of Synod and District representatives we will be able to prepare and keep up-to-date lists of where such items are deposited. Representatives of the History Societies of non-conformist denominations recently met at Dr. William's library to discuss this important subject and were interested to learn what we are trying to do.

4. During 1976 new members totalled 16 and we lost 9 by death, 7 by resignation and 5 by removal from roll because of non-payment of subscriptions. At December 31st the membership was 580 which included 34 libraries. In addition there are 60 libraries which receive or purchase copies of the Journal.

5. The 1976 AGM in May received with regret the retirement of the Revd. J. H. Taylor as one of the editors of the Journal and of Mr. R. J. Watson as librarian. Dr. Clyde Binfield and Mr. John Wagner were appointed and welcomed as successors and it was with regret that the resignation of Mr. Wagner for health reasons was received in August. Council is most grateful to Mr. Watson for returning on a temporary basis until someone could be found to accept the post which at the time of reporting is still vacant. Council wishes to express sincere thanks to all who have helped in any aspect to the Society's work during the year.

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 accordance 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 any report makes any proposal for action by the Assembly, then the motion on the report shall be 'That this report be received'. On this being passed, and before the consequent recommendations are proposed, any member may raise a matter arising from the report which is not the subject of a motion.
- (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) When the recommendations of a report have been disposed of, any member having given due notice, 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, except that resolutions presented on behalf of a Department or Standing Committee, of which printed notice has been given, do not need to be seconded. A 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. (i) 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.

NOTE: Changes were made in February 1977 by the Executive Committee to Standing Orders 3(iii), 3(vii) and 9.

Notes

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