

**The
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
1979**

**8th-11th THE CITY TEMPLE
Holborn Viaduct, London, EC1A 2DE**

**REPORTS
TO ASSEMBLY**

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

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The United Reformed Church

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES and other papers submitted to the GENERAL ASSEMBLY LONDON, May 8th-11th, 1979

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. A greater volume of business has come to the Executive Committee at its three meetings this year.
2. **Fen Place** The Committee received full reports of progress towards the sale of Fen Place to the Civil Service Benevolent Association and was encouraged by the assurance that every care would be given to the well-being of the present residents whose continued residence at Fen Place is secure.
3. **Ministers' Stipends** The Department of Employment raised questions concerning the increase on Ministers' Stipends awarded by the last Assembly and reports were received at two meetings of the consequent negotiations which ended with a letter expressing the Minister's regret at the action taken.
4. **Secession of Local Churches** Questions concerning the legal process resulting from Assembly decisions to release local churches from membership of the United Reformed Church were remitted to the Applications Committee which, after consultation with the legal advisers, reported that it was entirely within the discretion of the Assembly to decide whether to grant requests to secede. When such requests are granted, it is for the Charity Commission to establish a new scheme for the administration of the property. The legal advisers were encouraged to examine with the Commissioners the clauses of any such Scheme which relate to the disposal of the property in the event of closure.

During the year the Executive approved resolutions to secede in the case of Pepper Street, Moberley, Trinity, Crosskeys and Lion Street, Blainavon and agreed that the church at Bethesda Fro be recognised as a fully constituted church of the URC.

5. **Business Committee** On reports from the Business Committee:
 - (a) New proposals were submitted governing the way visitors from other Churches might be received at the Assembly and these were accepted subject to consultation with sister Churches concerned. A consequent amendment to the Basis of Union, deleting the category of corresponding member, was proposed and referred for consideration by Districts and Synods.
 - (b) Approval was given to the circulation of a sheet setting out the revisions to the Manual made since 1972.
 - (c) It was resolved that the *Assembly of 1980 be held in the Victoria Hall, Sheffield, from Tuesday, May 6th, to Friday, May 9th.*
 - (d) It was also resolved that the *Assembly of 1981 should be held in the Pavilion, Bournemouth, from Monday, April 27th, to Thursday, April 30th.*

The Yorkshire and Wessex Provinces were thanked for the invitations which made these arrangements possible.

- 6. Structures Report** A number of matters were taken up resulting from the Structures Report received by the Assembly:
- (a) It was noted that since the proposal to include three additional representatives of Synods in the membership of the Assembly was made under paragraph 9(5)(f) of the Basis, these must be either ministers or elders.
 - (b) Synod representatives on Central Committees were encouraged to secure discussion in Spring meetings of their Synods of matters being brought to Assembly, and Synods were asked to afford time for such discussion.
- 7. Deployment** A considerable discussion of the theological understanding of the work of the Deployment Committee was initiated by a paper presented by the Revd. R.W. Courtney and some issues were referred for further consideration by the Church Life Department.
- 8. Inter-departmental Committees** A group of Committees have come into being which are not related to Departments and the Executive agreed to include as well as the Chairmen of the Business, Applications and Nominations Committees, the Chairman of Christian Stewardship, Deployment and Budget Committees as ex-officio members of the Executive, and at a later meeting added the Chairman of Publications and Publicity.
- 9.** The Moderator was encouraged to pay an official visit on behalf of the URC to the offices of the World Council of Churches, and the Executive was encouraged by his report.
- 10. Appointment of Provincial Moderators** The Executive received reports of groups appointed to bring proposals for the appointment or re-appointment of Provincial Moderators for the Northern, Mersey and East Midlands Provinces and submits resolutions accordingly.
- 11. General Secretaryship** A report was also received from the group appointed to bring a nomination for appointment as General Secretary and this is submitted as an appendix to this report.
- 12. Westminster College Staff** The Committee authorised the group on Nominations to the Staff at Westminster College to bring proposals for the appointment of a Principal and of a Professor of Old Testament Studies in succession to Principal A.G. Macleod. The proposals were brought to a later meeting and will be submitted to the Assembly under the report of the Ministerial Training Committee.
- 13. Recruitment to the Ministry** The Ministerial Training Committee enunciated a policy for raising the level of recruitment to the full-time ministry. This caused some debate, but the Executive agreed that it should be put before the Assembly.
- 14.** A number of matters concerning the work of the Youth Committee were dealt with.
- 15. FURY** In order to enable the representatives of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth to be full members of Assembly, an appropriate amendment to the Scheme of Union was sent for discussion in Synods and Districts and is submitted for the approval of Assembly and for ratification in 1980.
- 16. Youth Leadership Training Officer** Approval was given to the appointment of a full-time Youth Leadership Training Officer for the East and West Midlands Provinces, subject to consultation with the Provinces concerned and with the Budget Committee.
- 17. Youth Activities Officer** Permission was also given for the appointment of a part-time Youth Activities Officer to be funded out of fees charged for such activities.
- 18. Palatinate Church** The World Church and Mission Department reported that special celebrations of the twenty-first year of the Covenant with the Palatinate Church had taken place in Speyer and in the City Temple.
- 19. Churches' Council for Covenanting** At the instance of the Department it was agreed that the URC should take part in the Churches' Council for Covenanting set up as a result of the work of the Churches' Unity Commission whose final report was noted. The Nominations Committee later brought forward the names of six who were appointed to represent the Church on the Council.

20. **Personal Episcopacy** The Assembly's request for a paper on Personal Episcopacy was considered and in view of developments since Assembly, it was agreed that this be prepared in a modified form. The resultant pamphlet, **Personal Episcopacy — a URC View**, was circulated in the January Information Service, and now to Assembly members.

21. **Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism** The attention of the Executive was drawn to the official launching of the Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism and to material now being issued, some of which had been included in the Information Service.

22. In connection with the Finance and Administration Department the Executive bade farewell to the Revd. E. W. Todd on his retirement and expressed its gratitude to him for his distinguished service as Secretary of the Department.

23. **Sickness Benefit** Detailed proposals concerning the payment of sickness benefit to ministers were submitted in July, referred to ministers for comment, and after amendment in the light of these comments were adopted at the November meeting in the following form for implementation from January 1st, 1979:

During absence on sick leave, ministers shall have the amount of their sickness benefit deducted from stipend under the following conditions and by procedures here set out:

- (a) Ministers shall encash the sickness benefit cheques received from the Department of Health and Social Security.
- (b) Ministers shall notify the Manager of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund of the amount of the sickness benefit each time it is received.
- (c) The Manager shall then reduce the next available stipend payment by the amount of sickness benefit notified (DHSS benefits are non-taxable).
- (d) Treasurers of local churches shall pay the fees and expenses of pulpit supplies during the minister's absence on sick leave and reclaim the total cost from the Manager of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund at suitable intervals, following a similar procedure to that used in a pastoral vacancy.

24. **Lighting and Heating Allowances** The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, in response to a request for clarification of the method of paying allowances for the lighting and heating of manse, issued an information sheet in August, and at the November meeting a report was received as follows:

The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee has considered the matter of the Heating and Lighting Allowance and has decided that the full entitlement as provided for in the Scheme shall be paid, but always with a sense of Christian responsibility on the part of both minister and church as stated in the Information Sheet to ministers and treasurers dated 20th August, 1978.

25. **Maintenance of the Ministry Fund** The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee reported some anxiety regarding the state of the Fund. Several factors had contributed to a more rapid expenditure of reserves than had been expected and it would be necessary to recoup these by means of future assessments.

26. **Membership of Maintenance of the Ministry Committee** A request was brought to the Executive Committee that the members of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee should in future be recruited on a different basis, and in view of the special nature of its work it was agreed that the Committee shall consist of:

A Chairman and Secretary and one person from each of the twelve Provinces and a Provincial Moderator. The Chairman and Secretary shall be appointed by the Assembly on the recommendation of its Nominations Committee; each Provincial member shall be appointed by the respective Province; the Provincial Moderator shall be appointed by the Provincial Moderators. The Nominations Committee may, on the recommendation of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, nominate to the Executive Committee or General Assembly for appointment up to three other persons whose knowledge and experience will be of special help in its work. (Where applicable, Provincial Synods are invited to consider appointing those persons at present serving on the Committee and whose term of office extends beyond May 1979).

27. **Disturbance Allowances** Debate took place regarding the application of the rule accepted by the Assembly about the payment of Disturbance Allowances. The decision of the Committee that this only applied in the case of ministers moving from one pastorate to another within the URC was accepted, but the Committee was encouraged to exercise discretion in other cases where there was clear need.

28. **Part-time Ministers** A report was submitted concerning Part-time Ministries and the fact that these as yet have no place within the Deployment Quotas. A group representing the Maintenance of the Ministry and Deployment Committees was asked to examine the position.

29. **Budget** At the November meeting the Budget Committee sought and was given advice regarding the Budget for 1980. In view of the pressures upon churches in connection with the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund, the Committee was asked to prepare a Budget with a ceiling of £770,000 (an increase of 10% over 1979), even though this would require the omission of three items requested, viz.:

£13,000 for the extension of the work of the VLTO's.

£14,000 for the appointment of a full-time Secretary for Stewardship with supporting staff.

£14,000 for an Associate Secretary in the Church and Society Department with supporting staff.

30. **Unified Appeal** The Chief Accountant was able to report to the February meeting that the target for the Unified Appeal in 1978 had been reached, but that the expected shortfall on the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund had occurred.

31. **Programme to Combat Racism** The Executive gave considerable time at its November meeting to a discussion of the action of the Programme to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches in making grants to the Patriotic Front and to the reactions of the Churches to the announcement. After consideration of a number of amendments the Committee eventually resolved as follows:

1. (a) The Executive approves the action of the General Secretary in issuing through the Information Service the paper entitled 'The URC and the Recent Grant to Zimbabwe Patriotic Front'.
 - (b) The Executive urges the WCC to give careful consideration to the ways in which it publicises its work in this area and asks that prior notice be given to the national officers of Churches before the publication of new proposals for grants.
 - (c) The Executive reaffirms the full commitment of the URC to membership of the WCC and reaffirms its support of the general aim of the WCC Programme to Combat Racism which is to oppose racism wherever it is expressed.
 - (d) The Executive affirms its support for all those who in situations of racial injustice strive in non-violent ways to eradicate racism and expresses its abhorrence of the atrocities carried out by both sides in the conflict in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.
 - (e) The Executive notes that the available evidence indicates that grants from the WCC Special Fund are used for the humanitarian purposes for which they are requested and given.
 - (f) The Executive supports the aim of the Special Fund to give from donations specifically received for the purpose, grants for humanitarian activities of organisations that combat racism as a symbol of support in their struggle for justice.
2. The Executive recognises that the humanitarian tasks in and around Rhodesia/Zimbabwe are vast and increasing, and encourages the WCC to use the network of its Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service generously to help in the meeting of those needs. The Executive strongly encourages the members of the URC to support for this purpose the work of Christian Aid as the British part of that network.
 3. The Executive still looks with hope to a day when out of conflict there may come such reconciliation that men and women of all races may under God dwell together in full freedom and in mutual esteem.

These were circulated in a letter to all local churches.

At its January meeting the Executive noted the decision of the Central Committee of the WCC endorsing the grants and the Programme, but resolving that the Special Fund should carry its own administrative costs and proposing a consultation with member Churches on the further work of the Programme.

32. Bingham Report At the instance of the Church and Society Department the Secretary was instructed to forward to the Prime Minister a resolution urging a full enquiry into the Bingham Report. Government assurance that such an enquiry would be held was reported at the next meeting.

33. It was also agreed that the URC should become a member of the Churches' Council on Alcohol and Drugs.

34. Ordination of Local Pastors After a careful discussion it proved impossible to reach full agreement as to the implications of the decision to offer ordination to Local Pastors, and the officers of the Assembly, together with two representatives of each of the Church Life Department and the Applications Committee, were instructed to meet and to submit a clarifying statement for the acceptance of the Assembly.

35. Publications and Publicity The Publications and Publicity Committee provided the Executive with a comprehensive report of its activities, including the work of the Bookshop and the publication of *Reform*. It showed how the Committee, with limited resources, endeavoured to bring significant news of URC life to public notice. The Committee was encouraged to continue along the lines set out in the report.

36. National Crisis At the February meeting the Moderator submitted a personal statement concerning the political and economic situation, stressing that the underlying causes are moral and spiritual resting ultimately in the worship of Mammon. While the Executive was not asked to endorse the statement, it asked that it be made known to the Press and considered in the churches. The Editor undertook to print it in *Reform*.

37. Nominations Committee The Nominations Committee brought to each meeting proposals for the filling of vacancies, most of which will be covered by its report to Assembly. In accordance with the decisions of Assembly four Committees were appointed, namely the Joint Liaison Committee with the Churches of Christ, Chaplains and Students Committee, Ministry of Healing Committee and a Committee on Nominations to the Teaching Staff at Westminster College. The Executive Committee resolved to share in the work of the Churches' Council for Covenanting and in November appointed six representatives. The Revd John Simpson was appointed Chairman of the Stewardship Committee. Mr F.H. Brooman, CB, was nominated as successor to Mr Leslie Palmer, CBE, as Honorary Treasurer of the Church. Mr Derick Banwell was appointed as Secretary of the Committee on new areas and buildings.

Considerable attention was given to methods by which the representation of women and lay persons on Committees could be increased in conformity with agreements made at the time of Union. It was noted that in the case of the Committee where representation is from Synods, this could only be secured where Synods submitted a number of names and left the final choice to Assembly.

38. Directors In accordance with the powers given by the URC Act and delegated by the Assembly, Directors were appointed during the year to the following County Unions Inc.: Dorset, Devon and Cornwall, Lancashire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire, Berkshire, South Oxon and South Bucks, Yorkshire, Gloucester and Herefordshire and to CUEW Inc.

39. Huxtable Prize As no entries had been received for the Prize set up as part of the Church's acknowledgment of the distinguished service given by Dr Huxtable, it was agreed that the balance in the account should be added to the testimonial gift and handed over as Dr Huxtable retired from his further service as Executive Officer of the Churches' Unity Commission.

40. World Development Officer Permission was given to the Church and Society Department to negotiate with the appropriate Department of the Government a possible appointment

of a World Development Officer. The Department was asked to report further when it was known what grant aid might be available. No financial commitment from the central funds of the Church was foreseen or authorised.

41. Retired Ministers' Housing Discussion took place at two meetings as to whether the Retired Ministers' Housing Society could or should set up special residential facilities for those no longer able fully to care for themselves. It was finally agreed on the motion of the Revds G. Stachell and M.J. Davies, that facilities already provided by other societies should be explored and fully utilised through the care of the Provincial Moderators and the Councils of the Church. Those knowing of such facilities were asked to draw them to the attention of the Moderators.

42. Housing A proposal brought by the Revds M.J. Davies and J. Johansen-Berg for general approval to be given to the extension of the work of Presbyterian Housing Ltd through the four South-Eastern Provinces, and the change of its name to the URC Housing Society Ltd was referred to the Church and Society Department with a view to its consideration by the Assembly should the four Provinces and other bodies concerned indicate their support.

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

A.L. Macarthur, *Clerk*

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly re-appoints the Revd John Howard Williams as Moderator of the Northern Province for a period of seven years from September 1st, 1979.
2. The Assembly re-appoints the Revd John William Patrick Williamson as Moderator of the Mersey Province for a period of seven years from September 1st, 1979.
3. The Assembly appoints the Revd John Francis Slow as Moderator of the East Midlands Province for a period of seven years from September 1st, 1979.
4. The Assembly thanks the Revd John White for his service to the Church as Moderator of the East Midlands Province of the Congregational Church in England and Wales from 1960-72 and of the URC from 1972.
5. The Assembly resolves, subject to ratification at the Assembly of 1980, to amend the Basis of Union by the insertion of the following clause in section 9(5) governing the membership of the Assembly:

'Such number of representatives of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth as the Assembly shall from time to time determine.'

6. The Assembly resolves, subject to ratification at the Assembly of 1980, to delete paragraph 9(5)(h) from the Basis of Union with effect that there shall no longer be a category of 'corresponding members' of the Assembly.

(Note: If both resolutions 5 and 6 are carried and ratified the new clause concerning FURY representatives will be numbered 9(5)(h)).

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: APPENDIX 1

GENERAL SECRETARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd R.J. Hall

Secretary: Mrs Sheila Tull

1. The special Committee was appointed at the 1978 Assembly and was charged to bring to the General Assembly of 1979 a name for appointment as Clerk to the General Assembly and

General Secretary of the United Reformed Church.

2. The Committee began by considering the work of the General Secretary and the qualities we should look for at the present time. Following our discussions we have suggested to the Executive Committee some aspects of the work which we believe should be discussed with the General Secretary when appointed.

3. As a result of our prayerful and careful considerations through four meetings we are now able to bring to the Assembly the name of the Reverend Bernard George Thorogood, presently General Secretary of the Council for World Mission, as Clerk and General Secretary.

4. From the beginning of our negotiations Mr Thorogood made it clear to us that he could not leave his present work before September 1980, and preferably not before January 1981. We fully understood his position, in view of the brief period in which the Council for World Mission has been developing its new pattern of work. Nevertheless we became increasingly convinced that Mr Thorogood has the experience and qualities needed in the next period of the life of our Church and that it would be right to seek to make some interim arrangements between the time when the present General Secretary is due to retire (August 31st 1979) and when Mr Thorogood could begin. We were also agreed that if it were at all possible it would be for the good of the Church if the present General Secretary were to continue in office, probably with further assistance from the Revd R.O. Latham, at present Deputy General Secretary. Two members of the Committee were commissioned to discuss these possibilities with the Revd A.L. Macarthur and the Revd R.O. Latham.

5. We can now gratefully report that both are prepared to extend their service to the Church if the Assembly so desires. Mr Macarthur is prepared to postpone his retirement until after the Assembly of 1980 and Mr Latham is willing to act as General Secretary for the remaining months until the Revd B.G. Thorogood takes office. In view of this however he asks that his successor as Secretary of the Church Life Department shall be appointed so that he may take office by the Assembly of 1980 at the latest.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report of the General Secretary Review Committee and resolves to appoint the Reverend Bernard George Thorogood as Clerk to the Assembly and General Secretary of the United Reformed Church as from a date not later than 1st January 1981 and preferably earlier.
2. The Assembly requests the Reverend Arthur Macarthur to delay his retirement as Clerk to the Assembly and General Secretary until 31st May 1980.
3. The Assembly resolves that the Reverend Robert Latham shall be acting Clerk to the Assembly and General Secretary from 1st June 1980 until the Reverend Bernard Thorogood takes office.
4. The Assembly instructs the Nominations Committee to bring to the Executive Committee a name for appointment as Secretary of the Church Life Department, to succeed the Reverend R.O. Latham not later than the Assembly of 1980.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: APPENDIX 2

DEPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd A.G. Burnham

Secretary: The Revd G.E.H. Roper

1. **Provincial Quotas** In a period when the number of full-time ministers is declining, the Assembly's deployment policy has had some success in protecting certain Provinces from the worst effects of the decline. Representatives of the Provinces met the Committee in September

1978 when aspects of the policy were discussed frankly. The next round of Provincial Quotas was presented, which the Committee hope will be achieved by the end of 1981:

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	
71	84	58	69	60	77	66	62	77	88	108	56	total 876

2. **Special Ministries** The Committee has approved the following 'special ministries': Lincoln, Mosborough (new developments), Penrhys (Ecumenical project) and Stevenage (Industrial Chaplaincy). With a limitation of thirty special ministries, the Committee intends to review all agreements that were in existence in 1974.

3. **Oversight Ministries** The Committee is glad that many Provinces have been able to take advantage of some helpful offers of oversight ministry, though we share the concern of the MM Committee that the recent unrestrained expansion causes a serious unbudgetted strain on the fund. We have been glad to agree to cooperate in a joint working party on this subject.

4. **Full-time Ministry** The question has been asked as to the meaning of 'full-time'. The nature of a minister's work makes this impossible to answer in terms of 'nine-to-five' or 'so many hours a week'. It is a minister's own responsibility to answer this for himself. It may be argued that what a minister does with his leisure hours is his own business. However, a national scheme of remuneration makes equity between ministers necessary. The extreme possibilities were illustrated in the memorandum on the Scheme (1975 GA Reports pp104-5) where paid hospital chaplaincy work on one day a week was contrasted with paid teaching work on five mornings a week. The former does not militate against 'full-time' scope, whereas the latter does.

The Committee does not wish to burden the Church and its ministers with rules but simply reminds District Councils of their responsibility under the Scheme of Union 'to exercise oversight of the ministry' and 'to care for all the churches'. District Councils might wish to establish some limit (say, ten hours a week) beyond which any outside employment would require the Council's approval. In the end, however, this is a matter for the conscience of the individual minister.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: APPENDIX 3

COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE MANSE SYSTEM

1. The 1977 Assembly, aware that there are strong arguments both for and against the ownership by ministers of their own houses, resolved to appoint a committee to reconsider the present practice of providing manses. The Executive Committee in its brief to this Committee asked us to bear in mind economics as affecting the minister and the local church, deployment of ministers, acceptability to ministers and families and retirement housing policy, and to recommend whether the present options should continue or whether a mandatory system should be adopted.

2. **Present Position** The normal arrangement is for the minister to be provided with a manse, free of rent, rates and maintenance costs, as part of his conditions of service. This has not always been the practice: before the last war some Congregational ministers had to provide their own houses. It is open to a local church to agree with its minister that he will provide his own housing in return for a housing allowance. The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee offer guidance, if requested, on the basis for calculating the allowance. However, we are not entirely happy with the advice which has been given and would ask the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to review it. In general terms they suggest that the allowance should be calculated in two parts. The first part covers the revenue cost of rates, insurance and repairs and redecoration (averaged over three years) and the second provides an annual allowance of a percentage of the capital cost of the home.

3. At the time of the 1978 Assembly we issued separate questionnaires to ministers and church secretaries to seek their views and suggestions together with the basic information we required to fulfil our tasks. We were greatly assisted by the number who responded and by the care they had obviously taken in framing their replies.

4. **What is a Manse?** This question is at the heart of the matter. No attempt has been made to lay down national standards as to the accommodation to be provided in a manse. Perhaps this is right, circumstances vary widely.
5. We received evidence of congregations which treated the manse as a physical extension of the Church and which took it for granted that meetings would be held there; others treated the manse simply as the dwelling of the minister and his family.
6. The general view was that the manse was certainly the home of the minister and his family but that it was additionally (and this is of equal importance) the base from which most ministers carried out their ministry and therefore that it could never be simply a private house.
7. Our survey disclosed that 32 ministers had no study and that 23 ministers had studies in their manses which were used additionally for other purposes. We believe that a separate room should be provided in the minister's house for his use as a study and office to enable him to pursue his work with the minimum of disruption to the privacy of the other members of his family. If that is not possible, then an adequate room should be provided on church premises.
8. **Why not encourage all Ministers to own houses?** We find there are several compelling reasons why it is neither practicable nor desirable for all ministers to become owner-occupiers. We recognise the long-term financial advantages of home ownership but in our view the discussion of this issue has been too much concerned with these and too little with the needs and wishes of the minister and his ministry, his family and the local congregation.
9. The manse system suits our pattern of Call, concurrence and acceptance, with vacancies which may last for several months. It enables a minister to consider a call without being influenced by problems of selling his house and buying another.
10. In many places an incoming minister would have great difficulty in finding a suitable house available for purchase. Some communities are housed almost entirely in rented accommodation; some have no houses (or few, and these rarely on the market) adequate for use as a manse. In practice, despite shortcomings, the existing manse is often the best house available from which to exercise a ministry. Because of its location, because it is known as the minister's house, because it provides a study and most of all because it offers vacant possession when it is needed, the manse is the best place for the minister to live and fulfil his ministry.
11. Property prices vary greatly from one part of the country to another and even over short distances. Although the suggested formula for calculating a housing allowance takes account of the house price, it is still the case that many ministers could not raise a deposit to put down on a suitable house in the more expensive areas.
12. It is still true (though less than in the past) that on average our ministers move more frequently than other people. The cost in fees of buying and selling a house can be considerable.
13. While a church may find it possible to pay the recommended housing allowance from the invested proceeds of a manse sale during the first ministry after such a sale, they are unlikely to be able to do so subsequently, and it is highly improbable that they would be able to purchase a manse for a successor without having to raise considerable new money. On the rising house market of recent years some churches have suffered severe loss, and succeeding ministers have been ill-housed as a result. The owner-occupier minister has made a capital gain at the expense of the church and his successor.
14. We already have a number of joint pastorates with the Methodist Church and other denominations. Should a national covenant for church unity be entered into we might expect more interchange of ministers with the Methodist Church and the Church of England. (Both these denominations provide parsonage houses for their ministers). A change to ministerial owner-occupation could inhibit interdenominational flexibility.
15. The Committee recommends the continuance of the manse system but urges that steps are taken to lessen its disadvantages.

16. **What is our obligation to ministers and their families?** Rather more than half the families in England and Wales own their own homes. Housing which is tied to a particular job is not popular and relatively uncommon. We take it as certain that in the ordinary way persons of the same background and standing in the community as ministers would expect to own their own homes.

17. In our questionnaire to ministers we asked the simple question of those living in a manse, "Would you prefer to live in a house of your own?" The answers were

YES	377
NO	253

When we went on to ask "If you were assured of a home in retirement (and for your wife if she survives you) would you consider it better to stay in a manse meanwhile?", the answers were

YES	472
NO	154

This is the nub of the problem. These answers and many of the comments made to us illustrated the worries of ministers and their wives as to the uncertainty surrounding their housing in retirement or for the widow and family should the minister die first.

18. If the United Reformed Church wishes to continue the manse system, then it must accept a responsibility for housing retired ministers and ministers' widows (including those whose husbands have died in service). Considerable progress has been made in these areas and this is increasingly being recognised by ministers, but more will be needed before the Church can be said to have reassured ministers, their wives and families. The provision of the first retirement manses by the Congregational Memorial Hall Trust during the period of our survey has made a difference to the climate of opinion. The activities of the URC Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited and the response by the provinces to Assembly's request that a tenth of sale proceeds should be devoted to retirement housing have become more widely known. The total number of retirement homes overseen from 86 Tavistock Place or by trustees in the provinces is about 100. The houses provided by Memorial Hall are a welcome supplement to this provision. A modest charge designed to cover basic costs is levied from the occupants of these homes. The URC Retired Ministers' Housing Society is launching an appeal for half a million pounds to meet the need of those retiring in the next five years. The sale of Fen Place will also release funds for the purchase of individual retirement homes.

19. Some ministers would prefer a loan on retirement to enable them to buy their own home, others would seek to share the ownership of the dwelling with the Church. These aspirations seem to us to be wholly reasonable but it would be unreasonable to expect church funds to be lent interest-free or at low rates to assist private purchases. At present the Retired Ministers' Housing Society is willing to enter into co-ownership arrangements with a minister upon retirement, thereby assuring the minister and his wife security of tenure for the rest of their lives and providing the Church with a stake in the house which will ultimately be realised and applied to the housing of others thereafter.

20. We do not know of a source within the denomination nationally which is at present willing to make a loan to a minister on retirement. A number of ministers expressed a preference for such an arrangement. We may add that it should not be assumed that they would necessarily be refused a mortgage by a building society. Provincial and national committees with funds for retired ministers' housing should consider the possibility of advancing loans on an 'interest only' basis, with repayment secured on the eventual sale of the property.

21. The Church has a duty to those ministers who suffer long-term sickness or disablement and to the widows and children of those who die in service. Local churches, welfare and trust funds usually provide significant help in these cases but the Committee asks the denomination to recognise the peculiar responsibility for housing which rests upon the church because of its adherence to the manse system.

22. **Should there be a mandatory system?** We believe we have been asked a question to which there is no perfect answer at any point in time. The situation is a developing one. It is the established custom that the minister shall be provided with a manse as a part of his stipend. We note that, whilst a majority of ministers would prefer to own their own homes, the great

majority consider it better to live in a manse so long as they can be assured of a home in retirement and for their wives should they survive them. We are not surprised that a minority, but a not insubstantial minority, hold a contrary view.

23. We noted the strength of feeling on both sides of the argument in some of the evidence submitted to us. We formed the impression that more attention could be paid to the housing wishes of the minister and his family, and to the condition and adequacy of the manse (and the constraints upon the local church) when the minister meets representatives of the congregation to discuss the possibility of his joining them. The District Council is represented in such discussions by the interim moderator and if some change in the local arrangements is mooted which will need the approval of the district it is good that their advice should be sought at an early stage. It can never be right that, for whatever reason, the manse becomes a source of friction between minister and congregation.

24. The house has not yet been devised which would be equally suitable for a single minister and for a minister with a large family. Provincial loans and grants can help pastorates to provide adequate dwellings for the ministers actually called, and their families. A change of ministry may require selling and buying because the existing manse is unsuitable for the newcomer; such transactions should not preclude the possibility of providing a family manse in future. Some churches assume that they will never call a minister with a family; this would seem to restrict the freedom of the future church to call the right person.

25. The Committee received a disturbing number of reports of inadequate maintenance by local churches. We recommend District Councils to take note of the condition and facilities of the manse when making periodic visitations and before concurring in calls.

26. It was submitted to us that we must come down on one side or the other to avoid the possibility of the Church becoming polarised between those congregations which provide a manse and those which do not; and between ministers who require a manse and those who do not. We believe this view to be wrong. It must remain the responsibility of the local congregation to agree with its minister what is right in their situation so long as the national church is able to provide the overall support by way of retirement and other housing.

27. We are unable therefore to propose a mandatory system. We believe, indeed, that the Church has been correct in allowing the situation to develop and should continue to do so. Some ordinands (particularly from Course Three) already own houses; some ministers have accumulated savings or received legacies and are able with the income from other employed members of the family to afford a mortgage. We recommend that it shall still be open to a local church to negotiate with the minister to provide his own housing, and that the element in housing allowances for recurring expenditure should be revised regularly to take account of changing costs. Ministers should realise that while they would gain tax relief on mortgage interest they would lose tax relief on heating and lighting and would not be entitled to the 50% reduction in rates applicable to a manse. Where a manse stands empty because the minister provides his own house, we urge elders and trustees to consider letting rather than sale. We would draw attention to the need for a written agreement (normally prepared by the Trustees' legal adviser) incorporating a notice under the Rent Act 1968 that possession of the manse may be recovered for occupation by a minister (under Case 11 Schedule 3 of that Act).

28. **In Conclusion** It seems to us that –

- (a) congregations should understand
 1. the wish of some ministers to own their own homes,
 2. the need to respect the privacy of the minister and his family and the extent to which meetings at the manse can be an intrusion on that privacy,
 3. their duty to maintain the manse as they would their own home.
- (b) equally that ministers should understand
 4. the potential burden they might place on some congregations if they were to insist upon buying their own home,
 5. the limitations of church expenditure and the difficulties in getting repair and maintenance jobs done promptly.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That this report be received.
2. That the provision of a dwelling for the minister shall continue to be part of the normal conditions of service.
3. The Assembly recognises that adherence to the manse system implies a responsibility to offer a home in retirement to any minister who would otherwise be homeless, and equally to offer a home to any minister's widow. The Assembly therefore
 - (a) urges members to respond generously to the appeal made by the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Ltd.,
 - (b) commends those provinces which have set up funds for housing the ministry in retirement and calls for imagination and flexibility to be exercised in their use,
 - (c) encourages synods, trustees and local churches to take opportunities which arise to release resources for the housing of the ministry in retirement,
 - (d) requests those responsible for the application of funds which could be so used to consider making loans to enable ministers to buy homes for their retirement,
 - (e) requests the Finance and Administration Department to ensure that a home is offered to the widow and any dependent children of a minister who dies in service.
4. The Assembly acknowledges
 - (a) the wish of some ministers to be owner-occupiers and
 - (b) the problems such a course can create for the stewards of the Church's material resources;
 - (c) the desirability of reviewing housing allowances annually.
5. The Assembly requests District Councils to take note of the condition and facilities of the manse, or of alternative housing arrangements, before concurring in calls and when making visitations.
6. The Assembly calls upon local churches whose minister does not have the use of a separate room as a study to provide one.

J.A. CUMMING, *Chairman*
G.H. ROPER, *Secretary*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: APPENDIX 4

ORDINATION OF LOCAL PASTORS

1. It became apparent that two interpretations were being placed on the resolutions adopted at the Assembly of 1978 authorising the ordination of Local Pastors. On the one hand it was argued that such ordination, while confirming the immediate position of any Local Pastor, nonetheless made him eligible at a later stage for a call to any vacant church. On the other hand it was held, not least by those who brought the proposal to the Assembly, that the phrase 'shall not alter previously agreed terms of service' applied to future service as well as to the ministry presently exercised. The Executive Committee was asked to resolve this difference of judgment, but after discussion referred the question to the officers of the Assembly, together with two representatives of each of the Applications Committee and the Church Life Department, asking that a definitive resolution be brought to the Assembly. The group met on a day when weather prevented a full attendance. However, the following interpretation was accepted and has since been circulated to the group and to others interested, and having been modified in the light of comments received, is submitted as an agreed proposal.

The Assembly agrees that:

the ordination of a Local Pastor under the resolution of the Assembly of 1978 authorises

him/her to exercise the ministry of Word and Sacraments in the name of the United Reformed Church and therefore makes him/her a minister of the Church Universal.

so long as he/she continues to minister in the same sphere as at present, conditions of service shall remain as previously settled.

should such a minister wish to be eligible to be called to a stipendiary charge, the Ministerial Training Committee shall consider what further training, if any, he/she shall be required to undertake. Having satisfactorily completed such training as may have been required, he/she shall be eligible to be called and inducted to any vacant charge.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: APPENDIX 5

PRIORITIES AND RESOURCES GROUP

Chairman: The Revd John E. Young

Secretary: Mr S.T. Lunt

1. Towards the end of 1977 and beginning of 1978 a number of financial pressures built up in the URC. The sudden rise in costs to the Church of ministerial training, the need to increase stipends, the need for additional appointments to the central staff and the burden on the local churches from Unified Appeal and MOM assessments were notable factors in causing the pressure. About the same time St. Paul's URC, South Croydon produced a most workmanlike paper in response to the Structures Committee Report and also attempted to assess the financial position facing the URC in the 1980s.

2. Over against this, others in the Church were saying that we are 'learning to live with decline' and should be adopting bolder policies to reverse the trends too long accepted by us.

3. In subsequent discussion, it was generally felt, that financial pressures are probably symptomatic of deeper seated ills and this led the Executive Committee to embark on a wide ranging review of the Church's priorities and resources for the coming decade. At its meeting in February 1978 the Executive agreed to set up a small group to undertake this review and outlined its task as follows.

1. To examine the actual and potential resources of the Church and to relate them to its major objectives. The group should, therefore, review past trends in income and expenditure and on the basis of best guesses do a projection of probabilities for the next and the subsequent five year periods.

Where gaps between resources and tasks become apparent, the group should display the options, consider the pros and cons and make recommendations.

2. To consider the various points of control over resources, local, provincial and national, and indicate ways in which its proposals can be implemented.

3. To conduct this enquiry taking account of resources, human, financial and in property, and endeavour to see these in relation to each other and to the total mission of the Church.

4. For the sake of speed and ease of operation it was decided that the group be small and London-based, but in order to ensure that it be in touch with the real situation in the Church, two or three 'test groups' should be set up in other parts of the country to monitor the work of the Central Group.

5. The group was constituted with five members:

Chairman: The Revd J.E. Young,
Mr. P. Chan,
The Revd K. Fisher,
Mr. S.T. Lunt,
Mr. F.S. McWhirter,
The Revd J.D. Waller.

6. The Revd A.L. Macarthur and Mr L.R. Palmer have acted as consultants to the group, attending many of its meetings and helping in a variety of ways. Mr. F.S. McWhirter was replaced, after his untimely death, by Mr R.N. Nicholson. The group has now met on eleven occasions since April 1978. The Yorkshire, West Midlands and Wessex Provinces accepted a suggestion that they should set up small monitoring groups and have co-operated with the central group most usefully.

7. The task given to us is a formidable one and we still have far to go. The URC has not previously attempted this kind of review and policy making. Neither of the uniting churches did much in this way either so we have had to devise our own method of working. We now submit an interim report issued as a separate paper in the belief that the whole Church needs to be engaged in what is really a piece of corporate planning. There is a certain novelty about such a broad undertaking, and it will prove to be daunting and demanding, but it will also have its own special rewards for us all.

RESOLUTION

The Assembly welcomes the Interim Report of the Priorities and Resources Group and commends it for discussion in Synods, District Councils and local churches. It encourages all those concerned to send comments to the Revd J.E. Young not later than 30th, November 1979, and urges the group to continue its work, taking the comments into account, and to bring to the Assembly of 1980 proposals for the development of the life and mission of the URC in the next decade.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Chairman: The Revd John B. Simpson

Secretary: The Revd Charles K. Meachin

1. In September 1978 we published our CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP STUDY/ACTION PACK which has followed the general outline of the Church of Scotland's Membership in the Church programme. The pack contains entirely new material to help local churches look at their corporate life, and we hope that churches are finding the material useful in promoting discussion and deeper commitment to the Church. 1,000 packs have been purchased by local churches. Provinces and Districts are engaged in a training programme to help local congregations 'unpack the pack' and mount Christian Stewardship programmes.

1.1 We believe that Christian Stewardship is not a matter for a Campaign once a decade or only for those occasions when church life is at a low ebb. Christian Stewardship, properly exercised, is constantly on the agenda of the live congregation.

2. We recognise that many people have pre-conceived notions of what Stewardship means; this is not helped by the fact that in some denominations 'Stewardship' means 'Money'. This is not our priority; money is but one of the five essentials of church life to which we address ourselves. To enable churches to explore WORSHIP — PRAYER — INVOLVEMENT — GIVING and LEARNING we recommend Provincial and District Training Days and Weekends. A number of churches have from experience testified to the value of these gatherings, and we would wish that all Provinces and Districts would take the subject seriously.

3. Ideally, we need people who have more time to devote to promoting Christian Stewardship in the Provinces. We are having to rely on a few enthusiasts who are in full-time pastorates or employment. Has the time come for us to encourage the appointment of full-time stewardship officers and of scoping some pastorates part-time, enabling the minister appointed to such a charge to devote at least half his time to this District and Provincial responsibility?

4. Some congregations have become accustomed to living with declining membership and financial poverty, but this is not a situation which just has to be accepted. Evidence from many churches which have taken stewardship as a genuine challenge from God gives us great encouragement. We seek to share evidence of hope, to encourage bold experiment and local community life, remembering that the church is a fellowship to which we belong, not a building we attend. God's call is always a challenge. We meet that challenge expecting that obedient response will lead to the growth, not the decline of the church.

4.1 'Growth' and 'renewal' are at the heart of our thinking, and we plan for growth. Renewal is an experience both personal and corporate which Christians long for when they pray for the Holy Spirit. Renewal reminds us that experience of God and not buildings is at the heart of our Christian hope. Membership of the church fellowship does make great demands, but we have discovered that our people most readily respond to great challenges.

5. The FURY Christmas Conference 1978 undertook to study the Stewardship Themes, and one thing we learned from the young people was that the Church often forfeits the respect of the young because it makes too few demands upon them rather than too many. Our young people do not want to be time-servers within the Church, they want the requirements of Mission laid before them. We therefore commend the underlying themes of the Stewardship programme to all our members.

6. We are encouraged that the BRITISH COUNCIL of CHURCHES STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE are planning to place Christian Stewardship as a major issue on the agenda of the Autumn 1979 meeting of the British Council of Churches. A conference of stewardship advisors from all member denominations is to be held in July 1979 to consider 'CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP in the 1980's':- — What the Bible Says? — What does Christian Stewardship mean for the National Church? — What does Christian Stewardship mean for the local church? — What does Christian Stewardship mean for individual Christians? — What does Christian Stewardship mean for the world? — What do we do about it?.

The Revd C.K. Meachin is Chairman of the BCC Stewardship Committee.

7. With the encouragement of the Department of World Church & Mission, consultations are proceeding with the COUNCIL for WORLD MISSION to explore the possibility of how CWM might help in promoting Stewardship in the URC. Other Member Churches, The Church of North India, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and The Presbyterian Church of North East India have active Christian Stewardship programmes.

8. The Committee wish to record their appreciation for the devoted and distinguished leadership of Mr Ronald S. Martin for guiding the Committee as its first chairman and for his persistent concern for Christian Stewardship in the life of our churches.

RESOLUTIONS

1. *The Assembly* draws the attention of Provinces and Districts to the National Stewardship Training Conference to be held in the Congregational College, Manchester 28-30th March 1980 and urges each District to ensure that it is represented at the conference.
2. *The Assembly* is encouraged by the number of churches who are carrying through Christian Stewardship programmes and requests them to send reports of their experiences, and copies of the literature and material they have produced, to the Secretary for Stewardship.

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 following normal courses: The Revds Brian William Acty, John Mackenzie Chisholm, Sheila Dickson, Leslie Hamsen Drayer, Stephen H. Fisher, Eric Freeman, Ivy Halden, Timothy John Harwood, John Lloyd Humphreys, Rosemary Dorothy Humphrey, James H.M. Jolliffe, Dafydd J. Jones, Roy Lowes, Margaret Munford, Robert Michael Norris, Robert Pagan, Christine Pinnell, Thelma Robinson, Ronald Reginald Prestoe Smith, Janet Elise Sowerbutts, David Michael Spence, John Leslie Titlow, David Andrew Vincent, Joseph Warren, Stephen Woods.

By Ordination following the Assembly Resolution with regard to Local Pastors: The Revds Maurice James Bennett, Peter Blezard, Sydney Boffey, Leslie James Brockett, Kenneth Thomas Brooks, John William Candler, Bertrand Lakes Chalmers, Leslie Clegg, George Coombs, Kenneth Cox, Ernest Charles Crewes, William Arthur Davis, William Thomas Henry Evans, Leslie Fidge, Richard John Gill, Charles Henry Goodall, John Edward Hewitt, Frederick Hutchinson, Arthur L. Kenworthy, Henry Enoch Kingston, George Stephen Knott, Nigel John Lemon, Andrew Lorimer, William James Manwaring, Jack Desmond Owen, William Edward Royle, Norman Singleton, Walter Edward Sutton, Ellis Tomlinson, Frederick William Webb, Winifred Phyllis Wenyon, Stanley Phillips Whitfield, Henry Herbert Wiles, Edwin James Williamson, Frederick William Worrell.

By Transfer from other Churches and Council for World Mission: The Revds Robert Banham, David G. Beattie, Ronald Bell, (Dr) T.A. Burkill, Brian Goble, Malcolm Hamblett, Richard Hambly, Peter Hartley, Thomas Hawthorn, R.J. McKelvey, Ronald E. Richter, James Schofield, Cecil Ernest Stewart, (Dr) F.H. Welshman, Gordon Rainey Workman.

2. DELETIONS:

By Transfer to other Churches: The Revds Jeffrey C. Davison, (Dr) Charles S. Duthie, William R. Findlay, Cynthia Livingstone, John Pagan, Oliver J. Searchfield.

By Resignation from the Ministry: The Revds Robert C. Bailey, J. Margaret Boaden, John F. Britten, Charles Thomas Campbell, (Dr) John K. Gregory, Richard V. Turner.

3. **CHURCHES** The following changes, to which reference is also made in paragraph 8 below, were made by the Executive Committee: Deletions — Blainavon and Crosskeys: Admission — Bethesda Fro.

4. **LOCAL PASTORS** During the year District Councils reported the ordination of 35 Local Pastors under the terms set out in the resolution of the Assembly in 1978. Difference of opinion arose between the Church Life Department and the Applications Committee as to the interpretation of the qualifying clauses governing the conditions of their subsequent ministry. The Executive Committee set up a small group representing both views to bring a definitive recommendation to the Assembly.

5. **CERTIFICATES OF ELIGIBILITY** 3 Certificates of Eligibility were issued during the year in accordance with the rules.

6. **MINISTERS LISTED 'D' IN THE YEAR BOOK** The position of ministers listed 'D' in the Year Book was considered at both meetings and the Committee now submits a resolution to the Assembly setting out a process whereby District Councils can exercise appropriate oversight over such ministers resident in their areas.

7. **APPLICATIONS PROCEDURES** The Assembly in October 1972 laid down procedures to govern the actions of the Committee in handling applications from ministers of other Churches. These are set out on p.50 of the Agenda and Reports submitted to that Assembly which even then asked the Committee to consider possible revision. In the developing ecumenical scene and as the United Reformed Church has grown in self-understanding, it has become clear that some revision is required to take account of these changes. Revised rules are set out below and a resolution authorising their adoption is submitted for decision by the Assembly.

8. **SECEDING CHURCHES** The Committee took recommendations for the release of two churches from membership of the United Reformed Church as urgent matters to the Executive Committee. This was done on advice from the Provincial Moderator that further delay would be unwise. In accordance with the report to last Assembly, the Committee, with the constant help of the Legal Advisers, has considered the processes to be followed in such cases. The Legal Advisers are in consultation with the Charity Commissioners with a view to the issue of draft Schemes related to those churches so far released. One point of principle urged by the Committee was also supported in the Executive Committee and is under consideration. No Schemes have yet been made.

9. **CASES** The advice of the Committee was given to three Provinces raising particular cases of difficulty in respect of three students for the ministry. The advice given was that the service to be undertaken by two of the students did not constitute 'a special and approved ministry' and that in the third case a conscientious inability to conduct services of Infant Baptism made it impossible for the student concerned to accept the ordination vows of the URC.

10. **MINISTERS OF OTHER CHURCHES** In answer to enquiries attention was drawn to the position as set out for the Assembly in 1973 indicating the conditions under which ministers of other Churches may minister in URC churches.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly resolves that each District Council, as part of its oversight of the ministry, shall keep a Roll of those ministers resident within its bounds who are neither in pastoral charge nor retired, being marked 'D' in the Year Book. It shall consider the names on this Roll annually and make any proposals for revision to the Synod through the Provincial Moderator. Where the Synod considers that such revision is required, it shall make any appropriate recommendations through the Applications Committee to the General Assembly.
2. The Assembly adopts the regulations regarding the eligibility of ministers of other Churches for entry into the ministry of the URC, set out in Appendix 1 below, in place

of those laid down in 1972 and authorises the Applications Committee to act in accordance with them.

PS. The Committee discussed its future Chairmanship and unanimously resolved to ask the Nominations Committee to use its special discretionary powers and to propose that the present Chairman be appointed for a further period of three years. This was done not simply because of the excellence of his performance, but because the Secretaryship will change in that period and methods of working are still being established. Continuity of Chairmanship is, therefore, very desirable at this stage. The members of the Committee are happy to know that the Nominations Committee has agreed and we trust the Assembly will endorse the judgment.

APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: APPENDIX 1

REGULATIONS REGARDING ELIGIBILITY OF MINISTERS OF OTHER CHURCHES

1. Before a local church issues a call, the Provincial Moderator, in consultation with the appropriate District Council, must satisfy himself that for one of the following reasons the minister concerned is eligible because

- (a) he is a minister of the United Reformed Church
- (b) he is a minister whose name is on the CWM Roll in the current URC Year Book
- (c) he is covered by the mutual eligibility agreement with the Church of Scotland
- (d) he has been issued with a certificate of eligibility by the Applications Committee.

2. The Applications Committee is empowered to issue a certificate of eligibility for call, without recourse to the Assembly, in the case of a minister from any member church of the British Council of Churches or the World Alliance of Reformed Churches or partner Churches in the Council for World Mission who satisfies the Committee that

- (a) he is in good standing in his own Church
- (b) his course of training for the ministry was at least equivalent to that required of students for the ministry of the URC and/or that he has special gifts or qualifications which would make him of service in the ministry of the URC.
- (c) that mutually acceptable arrangements can be made with regard to pensions cover.

The Applications Committee, in consultation with the Ministerial Training Committee, shall have the right to require further training for the ministry before issuing a certificate of eligibility. Where such training is required the cost shall be a charge on the Ministerial Training Fund.

3. Any applicant denied a Certificate of Eligibility under paragraph 2 shall have the right of appeal to the Assembly.

PUBLICATIONS AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd Edmund Banyard

Secretary: Percy W. Bush

1. With the operation of the 'Six Year Rule' the committee loses the services of the Revs D.W. Ager (Chairman of Tavistock Bookshop Sub-Committee since 1972), Dr Robert Duce (Chairman Reform Sub-Committee since 1974), Mrs P. Pavitt (Hon. Sec. General Publications and Services Sub-Committee since 1972), Mr T.I.M. Smith (Acting Chairman General Publications and Services Sub-Committee). The Committee records its sincere thanks for the services rendered by these long-standing members.

2. With experience from six years' work, the Committee plans to channel most of its business through the main committee. Thanks are also recorded to some co-opted members of the former sub-committees who will not be serving on the new committee.

3. A report of the work of the Committee and section was considered by the Executive Committee at their meeting in November 1978. As requested special attention was given to the church's need for some Public Relations provision.

Finance and Resources

4. The total cash turnover for the section is about £160,000, against which the net budget provision for 1978 was £16,000, plus a special advance/loan of £12,000 to Tavistock Bookshop to finance a re-printing of Congregational Praise. However, in 1978, through under-spending on staff and credit from money earned, the net cost to URC central funds was £10,600.

5. Over the three years from 1976 to 1978 the net budget provision for the section has decreased from £19,200 to £16,000 and the actual net cost of the section has been £12,000 (1976), £11,000 (1977) and £10,600 (1978), less any transfer of trading profits from Tavistock Bookshop.

6. However, we believe that economy is not the only criterion in communications, and this report indicates some aspects of communication for which the Church should make provision.

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

7. We believe that Reform makes a substantial contribution to the thinking and witness of the URC. It also serves to strengthen the cohesion of our denomination. We hope that Assembly members will view it as their publication and ensure that it is actively promoted in their provinces, districts and churches. Schemes for local promotion are frequently notified to local church distributors.

8. Local churches have shared the committee's frustration at the uncertainties about delivery dates and wrapping. Difficulties were very acute during 1978. Strong complaints have been lodged with the printers, and should an alternative supply at comparable cost be located, alternative arrangements will be pursued.

9. A further marginal decline in orders, tighter budgets for many of our regular advertisers and still (more slowly) rising costs make it increasingly difficult to sustain Reform as a self-financing enterprise. However, with economies and better than expected advertising revenue, the outcome for 1978 showed a satisfactory balance, after meeting all identifiable costs and allowing for office provision and 'overheads'.

General Publications and Services Sub-Committee: *Acting Chairman:* Mr T.I.M. Smith

10. The Committee has advised departments on aspects of proposed publications whenever possible. The heavy demand on in-house work has continued to increase and in addition to new publications several former publications have been re-printed. Over a five month period in 1973, 5.1 major resale items were produced each month. Of these 1.1 were produced in the house. Over a three month period in 1978, 17 comparable items were produced each month, of which 15 were done in the house. Day by day supervision of preparation, printing, paper and publication stocks, and internal monitoring, estimating and costing absorb more and more time.

11. The need for extra staff provision to cope with the new factors in 10 above and the substantial increase in work expectations since 1972/3 (some of which could be contained within the budget) were dealt with in the special report to the Executive Committee. Some skills which are necessary for printing and lay-out work earn high reward in commerce and industry.

12. Due to the substantial increase in the work load, the resignation of our former machine operator, and mechanical difficulties with the printing machine, some 'in-house' jobs needed to be placed with an outside printer who was willing to work from our plates and originals.

13. Sales at wholesale prices to Tavistock Bookshop have amounted to nearly £5,000. Nearly half of this is credited to initiating departments other than P & P section. The total net income for printing and publication work credited to this section for wholesale sales and in-house work charged to departments was approximately £5,000 (excluding Reform).

Publicity Group: *Chairman:* The Revd Philip Schofield

14. There are clear indications that the media are more aware of the work and influence of the URC than was the case. This awareness, fostered by the Group, has resulted in a number of requests for participation in various interest and news broadcasts. The chairman is now a member of Radio London Workshop and more URC members are commanding print space in religious journals. The 1978 General Assembly received considerable, mainly sympathetic, attention in press and radio. A conference for those involved in press and radio is under consideration.

15. In the Publications and Publicity paper submitted to the Executive Committee in November, the value of some ongoing public relations facilities was emphasised and suggestions outlined. This Group will continue as a sub-committee of the Publications and Publicity Committee.

16. Several Provinces are seeking ways of setting up their own Publicity Group. Some kind of inter-communication provision is being worked out.

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

17. Despite difficulties restaffing and the need to contain expenditure, the bookshop has maintained the best service possible to churches, ministers and members. Mr Mark Rogers resigned as manager at the end of 1978. Mr Donald Finnan was appointed manager and has made a good start in resolving some long-standing difficulties.

18. Sales for 1978 were £89,000 (approx.) (1977; £86,000). Sales at the General Assembly were £1,286. Details appear in URC Accounts. The Committee commends the manager and staff for their work during a difficult period.

19. In undertaking a major review of the Bookshop the committee identified those items which are financially viable and help sustain the general book-selling side, which, while not paying for itself, is important. Increased use of the bookshop for all relevant supplies will help ensure the continuance of this service.

20. Mr Kenneth Davies (St. Albans) joined the committee as Hon. Secretary and brings considerable expertise from the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report of the Publications and Publicity Committee.
2. The Assembly requests the Treasurership Committee to explore ways of increasing the capital resources of Tavistock Bookshop.
3. The Assembly requests the Treasurership Committee to consider provision of Public Relations facilities.
4. The Assembly endorses the intention to transfer the main accounting work and appropriate control and monitoring of Tavistock Bookshop to the Finance and Administration Department.
5. The Assembly urges local churches and all members of the URC to promote and use Tavistock Bookshop and Reform.

THE REPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL MODERATORS 1979

Hopeful Signs

1. In 1978 there were churches that added to their numbers, experienced more meaningful worship and increased their effective service.
2. In a small village the United Reformed Church had few children and still fewer elderly members. A young family joined them, soon to be joined by two more families of young parents and children. They were warmly welcomed and given the opportunity to share in the life of the church. The elderly members encouraged them when they offered leadership and their ways were accepted, though not always understood. Now there is a lively young fellowship.
3. In a small town an ecumenical project centred in a new housing area has broken down the barriers between newcomers and those between the new and old inhabitants. Quite early in the life of the united witness plans are ready for the new worship centre to be extended.
4. In a cathedral city the churches are united in an inter-denominational team of ministers and lay folk serving the city centre. On the outskirts of the city, in a new development area, an ecumenical project has been launched and quickly established to become the centre of the community's life.

Cause for Concern

5. Similar stories of other churches could be told, but it is also true that there are many churches which struggle, sometimes serving but rarely converting. Others just run down as they have been doing since the turn of the century.
6. It is interesting to note that nationally the rate of decline in the number of church members has fallen for the first time since 1972. Having reached 4.7% in 1977 it fell to 2.8% in 1978. Between 1972 and 1978 the total membership has fallen by 15.9% and the number of children by 24% (after falling by 7.8% in 1974 it was only 2.2% in 1978). In this period there has been a decrease in the number of pastorates, caused mainly by grouping churches. There are 94 pastorates seeking a minister and no ministers out of charge. The students due to leave college in June are now candidates, but this intake will not match the loss of ministers by death, retirement and other reasons. The gap between pastorates and ministers available for a move grows wider each year. Our system of settlement of vacant pastorates depends upon the mobility of ministers. If the number of vacancies increases or ministers become less mobile then the Church faces an increasingly serious problem. Throughout the country, and particularly in the northern half, where it is always more difficult to settle pastorates, there are churches where the length of vacancy is counted in years instead of months. The indications are that without major changes the problem will continue to grow.
7. There are twice as many buildings as ministers but less than 200 members to a minister even after allowing 30 ministers for special pastorates such as industrial and academic chaplains and new town ecumenical projects. These figures indicate that we are not short of ministers for the number of members, but the members being principally gathered together in small groups make difficult the provision of pastoral care for all.

Buildings

8. The great majority of our buildings were erected in the last century to serve communities as they were at that time. They were also erected in days of denominational expansion so providing a multiplicity of buildings. The membership of the church is scattered through these buildings and many are caught up in the struggle to maintain the building and the pattern of church life that they have known through the years. It is as much as they can do to maintain what they have and in some cases the struggle is without success. Such are the demands made upon these people that there is little endeavour or even desire to understand the attitudes and needs of the community around. The attachment to a particular building can mean that resources necessary for provision and maintenance of ministry and mission in areas where there is none are tied up in bricks and mortar. There are areas where the disposal of one or two buildings could release assets to extend the work and witness of the Church in the remaining premises without denying to any member a place of worship and opportunity of service. There are also buildings which if liberated from their traditional usage could serve the community in

welfare work, Youth Clubs and day conference centres.

Membership

9. To become a member of the Church requires a person to make one of the major decisions of his life. He is committing himself to a way of life which the world does not readily accept and it can only be maintained by a strong belief. Anyone seriously taking this responsibility of commitment to Christ is taking a decision requiring the help of the whole Church just as much as that required by one who is ordained to the full-time ministry. It is the responsibility of every local church to provide adequate training for those wishing to become members. There is considerable material prepared by the departments of the Church to aid new members in their quest. District Councils should see that these and other aids are made available to those churches needing them. The District visit to the local church will provide an opportunity to enquire about the church's methods of preparing candidates for membership.

10. Preparation for the final act of commitment should impress upon the candidate the importance of the vows he will make at the time of such commitment. At this time the candidate becomes part of the whole ministry of the Church, and we should seek a more meaningful description of the occasion than just that of 'being received into membership'. The new member is committing himself to Christ and that commitment is confirmed by the whole Church as it is in the ordination of Elders and Ministers.

11. The Church of England Synod's Board of Education in 1972 stated that "The Church is faced today with a situation in which the great majority of its members do not have sufficient understanding of their faith and its relation to life for it to have any considerable effect upon their decisions and choice or indeed to ensure its survival in the midst of contemporary criticism and doubt". We would urge the church to lay emphasis on the preparation for membership and the continuing teaching of members so that we can deny the statement and justify a high concept of membership of the Christian Church.

Elders

12. Ordination to Eldership is an extension of one's ministry as a church member into new spheres and responsibilities. The Elder stands in a particular relationship to the ordained minister and to the members. He will be expected to respond to the leadership of one and the proddings of the others. There will always be someone in need of his understanding and pastoral care. Concern for the life and work of the church will be his continuing responsibility. Often, when meeting with the Elders of a vacant church to discuss the future, Moderators are disappointed by the response to the questions about mission and ministry. The responsibilities of an Elder make great demands upon a person. There are few for whom preparatory and 'in service' training would not be a benefit. For the majority it is essential. District Councils should ensure that such training is available and encourage local churches to take advantage of it.

Ministry

13. It is part of our tradition to have a high concept of the ordained ministry and that those called of God to serve in this way should be adequately trained and then set apart by ordination. When called to the whole-time ministry of the Church the minister should be relieved of the necessity of undertaking secular occupation for gain so that the whole life can be given to this ministry. The work of the ministry becomes more and more demanding in a world of ever growing knowledge and increasing education amongst the people. Methods of training will need to be under continuous review so that the minister is theologically able to make God real to men and is a pastor exercising a ministry of reconciliation. It is his responsibility to lead people in worship and his own nearness to God brings others into the Presence whilst their supporting ministry sustains him.

Support for the Full-time Ministry

14. A considerable measure of support for the full-time ministry has been provided by the lay preacher and in these days he has increasing and more demanding responsibility in the interpretation of the Word. The service of the lay preacher is part of the whole ministry of the Church. The serious responsibility of this ministry is recognised by the Church in the training provided and acceptance of those who offer to serve in this way. The local church should give due recognition to those who fulfil this part of the whole ministry of the Church.

14. Through the years and throughout the whole Church phrases such as "tent ministry" and "worker priests" have been heard and in varying ways such ministries have been fulfilled. We are now moving towards an auxiliary ministry to which members will be called and after training, ordained to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. We rejoice in this opportunity within the whole ministry of the Church but stress the need for as full and adequate training as possible, making use of existing facilities of our own and other denominations. Members should appreciate the demands made upon those who answer the 'call' to this particular ministry and support them in every way possible. The ministry of the Church is the ministry of the whole Church with its varying tasks and responsibilities, all of vital importance in the fulfilment of the Church's mission, requiring adequate preparation and care by the whole Church and the dedication of each individual.

The Wider Church

15. We rejoice in the developing work of the Council for World Mission and the growing sense of interdependence between the churches of the Council. This needs to be emphasised in the local church where something of the appeal of the missionary has been lost and not yet replaced by this sense of sharing and contributing. The local church begins to understand the joy of the wider Church as it shares within its own District and Province with the other local churches and makes its contribution to the life and work of the District and Province while at the same time receiving from the wider fellowship.

16. The United Reformed Church has a particular responsibility for encouraging the unity of the Church. The Union of 1972 was seen by many to be the forerunner of further union. Hopes for a positive development from the Ten Propositions by the work of the Council for Covenanting in England have been dampened by the decision of the Church of England over women ministers. At the same time we still look for a recognition of varying forms of episcopate and understandings of ministry. We rejoice in the continuing growth in local unity. Now, more than ever, we should encourage in established communities in town and village that kind of co-operation and joint witness that is possible in local ecumenical projects.

Personalia

17. We have welcomed to our team Michael Davies, Colin Evans and Fred Kaan. They bring with them wide experience and specialist knowledge in varying fields by which we and the whole Church are enriched. We look forward to their continuing service and pray it will give them joy and satisfaction.

18. This year we shall bid farewell to our brother, John White. He has served a total of nearly 20 years as Provincial Moderator and has been greatly valued among us for his shrewd judgement, wise counsel and unflinching pastoral concern. He carries with him into retirement our affection and gratitude.

CHURCH LIFE DEPARTMENT

Chairman: The Revd Dr Kenneth Slack

Secretary: The Revd Robert O. Latham

INTRODUCTION

1. The Department is conscious that it brings before the 1979 Assembly a very considerable weight of business for discussion and decision. This is as it should be. Other departments are concerned with the relation of our Church to society as a whole and our commitment to mission at home and abroad. One department services the whole operation in finance and administration. All else falls to the Church Life Department – ministry in all its forms, the Church's doctrine and worship, our care of children and youth and of students, and the task of Christian education. For the first time the Department presents reports from fully constituted committees within the department on both the ministry of healing and on chaplains and students. (The Department also has oversight of our relationship to work in H.M. Forces).
2. Right preparation and decision-making here therefore is of crucial importance to the future and well-being of our Church. To take but one instance – is the Ministerial Training Committee right to discern that there is need for a vigorous and sustained campaign to make known the claims of the full-time stipendiary ministry upon men and women, and to alert the Church to the temptation that the institution of an auxiliary ministry might weaken our efforts at such recruitment? Are the proposals being developed for that auxiliary ministry on the right lines? Decisions on such issues will greatly affect our Church.
3. Again, how does the Assembly view the proposal to abandon the order of deaconesses, in the light of the new forms and opportunities of ministry? What kind of accreditation, and therefore what kind of training, should be given to the lay preachers who are responsible for leading the worship of one third of our Church's services?
4. What are the factors which make for growth in a local church? What kind of servicing do local churches, in all their immense variety, need from the wider church if they are to be effective in their worship, their mission and their work of Christian education?
5. It would be wrong to disguise from the Assembly that there are sharp financial issues underlying some of these questions. This is obvious in relation to the training of more ministers (and their eventual maintenance), or the adequate preparation of an auxiliary ministry. But it is there constantly as the Department faces the demands upon its small staff. We do not delude ourselves that mission and renewal are guaranteed by a larger staff at Tavistock Place. The evidence, nevertheless, is that churches that are trying to grapple with the complexities of their task in today's world seem to require rather more specialist help than they did in more straightforward days. Considerable thought will have to be given to all this as priorities are established in the next year or two.

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Rt. Revd Dr Leslie Newbigin

Secretary: The Revd Robert O. Latham

6. **Personalia** The retirement of the Revd Principal Alan MacLeod of Westminster College is recorded with great gratitude for his long and outstanding service to the Church in training men and women for the ministry during a turbulent period. He enjoyed the confidence of his colleagues and led the College into close ecumenical co-operation in the Federation of Cambridge Theological Colleges where his careful scholarship and warm friendships have been much cherished. His care for the College building, including the recent re-roofing, has been unsurpassed, and our hope is that his expert guidance in this and many other aspects of College life will be available for a long time to come, as he plans to continue to live in Cambridge.

(Resolution 1)

7. **Report of the Nomination to Teaching Staff of Westminster College** Following the intimation of the retirement of the Revd Principal Alan MacLeod, and the recommendation of

the Ministerial Training Committee that the report of the Visitation of Westminster College be accepted, in particular in connection with the appointment of an Old Testament Professor, the Committee proceeded to consider nominations for the Principalship and the Chair of Old Testament.

8. The committee considered possible candidates for the Principalship and decided to interview Revd Professor Martin Cressey, MA. They unanimously recommend to Assembly that he be appointed Principal as from 1st September, 1979. (Resolution 2)

9. After wide consultation and the consideration of many possible candidates for the Old Testament Chair, the Committee interviewed two candidates and unanimously recommended the Revd Dr Walter Houston, MA, DPhil., minister of Garston United Reformed Church be nominated for this Chair. (Resolution 3)

10. The Ministerial Training Committee warmly supports both nominations.

11. **Report on Westminster College, Cambridge** The visitors appointed by the Committee visited the College from May 17-19, 1978. They shared in the life of the College in Chapel, Lecture room, dining room and in many interviews with staff and students. The visit had been prepared well by the College and the staff provided written summaries of responses to most items on a previously agreed agenda.

12. The visitors sought to evaluate what was being done in the light of the statement in the Commission on the Ministry Report 1975.

37. A course of theological training should aim at helping a student to grow in understanding of God, of himself, of other people and of our developing society. It should aim to produce a continuing learner open to receive and to profit from an enquiring study of the Bible and of life. Ministry in the future must enable the Church to be more open to the world and the forces at work within its structures and to offer a Gospel that is relevant to the whole of man's life.

13. They met with the Principals of the other Theological Colleges which with Westminster now form the Federation of Theological Colleges and welcomed the introduction of the Joint Syllabus for examination 1978-79, for which all students in each of the Colleges will be enrolled by their College, which will decide the number of subjects and the order in which they are to be taken. The teaching for each subject will be arranged by each College, either separately or in collaboration. The Colleges will also prescribe courses for their own students which are not covered by the Federation examination system.

14. The contribution of Westminster Staff was greatly appreciated, particularly in biblical exegesis. The connection with the University was also valued by the Federated college staffs who did not wish to do anything to weaken the Faculty (a real possibility in the present financial circumstances). The visitors saw the development of a strong federated faculty in close contact with the University Faculty as an important element in the English Theological scene. Principal MacLeod and Professor John O'Neill have lectured in the University, and Professor Buick Knox continues to do so. The visitors recommended that more students be encouraged to attend lectures in the University Faculty of Divinity.

15. The College course itself provided a comprehensive training, with emphasis on textual exegesis of both Old and New Testaments, Reformation and Modern Church History, Christian doctrine and ethics, and pastoral studies. A variety of teaching methods were employed from the formal lecture with opportunity for questions and discussion, to a colloquy on detailed textual exposition, and seminars on practical pastoral problems.

16. The visitors noted that the teaching load was heavy, and that of the Principal particularly so, with the addition to his College lectures and seminars of 10 hours a week for the supervision of Federation students; his membership of the Faculty Board of Divinity, as well as the work involved in the administration and maintenance of the College.

17. The visitors recommended that there should be provision of a "sabbatical term" for all members of staff, and that the duties of the Principal be redefined, in view of the pending retirement of Principal MacLeod.

18. The Student House comprised 20 URC ministerial candidates, plus 4 taking Course 3, the College based non-residential course, with 6 more prospective Course 3 candidates. In addition there were 12 overseas visiting scholars, and 22 University student lodgers. The visitors inquired about the students awareness of changing patterns of ministry in the Church, and suggested that the College investigated the possibility of forming student-teams, preferably ecumenical, covering the three year period, which could work together on academic, liturgical and practical projects. They also suggested that forms of training be introduced which enabled students to relate their previous experience to the work of the ministry.

19. The staff expressed their concern for the Course 3 students. They were not satisfied with the present arrangements, and asked the Ministerial Training Committee to reconsider the provisions for both Courses 3 and 4.

20. The visitors met the wives of the married students who have voluntarily arranged weekly meetings under the oversight of Mrs Cressey. They needed to be given every opportunity to share in the life of the College and to realize the help there was available during the years of their husbands training, without any suggestion of compulsion.

21. The Library was visited, which is a valuable asset, and is being increasingly used by international scholars. The buildings too were inspected, and the honorary architect, Mr G.D. Hamilton made himself available. He assured the visitors that the buildings were in good order, that the roof restoration was excellent, and that the College was the finest example of Victorian architecture in Cambridge. He paid a handsome tribute to Principal MacLeod's constant care.

22. The finances of the College were in good order. The gross expenditure in 1977 was £66,907. The contribution from URC central funds towards these costs amounted to £22,390. The contribution of the Cheshunt Foundation was also noted. In addition to financing the Cheshunt Professor of Pastoral Studies, the Foundation also provided £6,818 in grants to students, £2,000 to costs of Administration, Library, and the Applied Theology Department, plus £1,500 for the further education of ministers. A total of £10,318 in the year 1977-78. The contribution of the Cheshunt Foundation to the total life of the College was now fully integrated, and greatly appreciated.

23. The visitors concluded their inspection with the conviction that the standard of teaching was excellent, the approach and application of students was highly commendable, and the future of ecumenical training was encouraging in preparing candidates for the ministry of today and tomorrow, and that without much extra effort twice as many candidates could be trained if the Church provided them. Now that Westminster College is part of the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges the continued support and maintenance of the URC should be guaranteed. The College represents our goodly heritage for all of which we give thanks to Almighty God.

24. The visitors were the Revd Dr Lesslie Newbigin, Revd Dr Cyril Blackman, Revd Robert Way, Revd Robert Latham, and Mr Leslie Palmer.

25. The Ministerial Training Committee received this report, considered it in detail, and took the necessary action.

26. The Congregational College, Manchester The new Principal of the Congregational College, Manchester is the Revd Dr R. John McKelvey, and the committee requests the Assembly to receive him and recognize him as the Principal of one of our recognized Colleges. (Resolution 5)

27. Auxiliary Ministry The Assembly instruction to plan for the selection, training, and inauguration of an Auxiliary Ministry has been carried out. The committee submits its report under Appendix 1. (Resolution 6)

28. Recruitment to the Ministry Concern has been expressed at the apparent acceptance of a trend of a decreasing number of full-time ministers, with little or no effort being made to increase the number of candidates for the ministry. The proposed introduction of an Auxiliary Ministry does not imply a need for fewer full-time ministers.

29. Over the last ten years (1969-1978) the URC has ordained an annual average of 24 ministers, excluding ordained lay-pastors and deaconesses. During the next ten years (1981-1990) the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee anticipates an annual retirement rate of 25 ministers. Furthermore, there is a current *net loss* to the URC Ministry of about 5 ministers each year. (Net loss means early retirement, death in service, resignation, emigration, transfer to other work, etc., compared with postponed retirement, immigration, transfer to other work, etc.) The Committee is heartened that this net loss is much lower than in previous decades.

30. The Committee urges the URC to increase the number of candidates for the full-time ministry to provide for an intake of at least 20% above replacement needs, so as to fill more vacant pastorates and to initiate ministry in new areas. Numerically, the phrase "20% above replacement needs" means *between 30* (25×1.20) *candidates* to replace retirements alone *and 36* ($(25 + 5) \times 1.20$) *candidates* to cover both retirements and net loss. In sum, we are currently ordaining 24 new ministers annually — we wish to see this increased to between 30 and 36, i.e. by between 6 and 12 candidates each year.

31. The committee is working on the assumption that God is actually calling to the ministry more men and women that at present hear His call. The committee has already received preliminary papers on methods of recruitment and is currently organising a survey of ministers to ascertain the present patterns of our recruitment. (Resolution 7)

32. **Ministerial Training Fund** This fund has been established to provide for the increasing demand for maintenance and tuition grants to ministerial candidates; during 1977-78, £57,243 was made available. During 1978-79 the amount will be £60,500. This fund has been created by a grant from the Reserve Funds of the Church in 1978 of £30,000; a grant from the Memorial Hall Fund of £20,000, and grants from some of the Provincial Funds, amounting to £18,000 as well as from the historic Trust Funds, amounting to £6,000. In addition there has been £20,000 from the Unified Appeal.

33. In 1979 the Unified Appeal allocation has been increased to £30,000. An application has been made to Memorial Hall Trust for a further grant. It is hoped the Provinces and the Historic Trusts will continue to contribute. Some collections have been received taken as Thank-offerings at Ordinations and Induction services, and these are to be encouraged. The committee still looks to the day when the funds of the New College Trust will be available, for there could be a deficit by the end of 1980 of £15,000.

COLLEGE REPORTS

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

34. **Out-going students** At the end of the 1977-78 session seven candidates for the URC ministry completed their training and began their ministry: Sheila Dickson in Stamford Hill and Upper Clapton, Eric Freeman in Ecclehill, Bradford; Peter Hartley in Haydock, Roy Lowes in Bilton, Harrogate, Janet Sowerbutts in Balham and John Titlow in Combe Down, Bath. Another student, David Vincent was commissioned by CWM to work with the Church in Papua, New Guinea.

35. **Membership 1978-9** There are nineteen URC students in residence, seven in each of the first two years, and five in the third. Six are women and ten are married, with sixteen children between them. Four overseas students have been in residence, a Lewis and Gibson scholar from Canada, a Presbyterian minister from Cuba, a teacher from the U.S.A. and a pastor from Nigeria. The Cheshunt Foundation has provided support for four URC ministers to spend a sabbatical term in the College. There has been an impressive gathering of visiting scholars on sabbatical leave from teaching appointments in Australia, New Zealand, Iceland and the U.S.A. In addition to residents in Cambridge there are ten Course III candidates under the supervision of the College. That makes 52 students of theology associated with the College, who with the twenty-two undergraduates occupying our vacant rooms bring the total community up to 74.

36. **Federation** The College is now effectively part of the Federation of the four colleges, Wesley, Westcott, Ridley and Westminster. The total number of theological students in the

Federation is 150 and the combined teaching staffs add up to seventeen. In the Michaelmas Term all the Federation students, working in groups, were involved in a jointly organised course on worship and in a two-day conference on the Ministry, led by the Moderator, the Rt. Revd Bishop J.E.L. Newbigin. In the Lent term inter-college seminars were led by visiting experts on Youth work, the Child in the Church, Religious education in schools, Marital counselling and church dynamics. All URC students undertake an assistantship in a local church under the supervision of its minister, and there is a wide choice of placements available in the social services, hospitals, education, industry and similar situations. Such extra-mural work is an integral part of the course. Our students have been participating in the joint courses for the Cambridge Federation Examination in Theology and take their turn with other students in moving from one college to another for classes. Our own classes in the college have grown considerably, up to 30 or more in some cases, as students from Wesley, Westcott and Ridley attend them. Similarly, the chapel and the dining hall are nicely full in the evening as we work out our policy of worshipping and eating together.

37. Visiting speakers Guest speakers at Friday evening Community nights have introduced discussions on topics as diverse as Rhodesia, Jewish-Christian relations, marriage and re-marriage, the Second Vatican Council, Experimental archaeology and the Shroud of Turin.

38. Library An immense amount of work on re-cataloguing has been done by the Librarian with the voluntary help of two professional librarians from overseas, who have been associated with the college, backed by 'faculty' wives and families. The library continues to be a tremendous asset to the college and its members.

39. Commemoration The 1979 Commemoration celebrations are to be held on June 6th when the lecture at 3 pm will be given by Prof. W.D. McHardy of Oxford on some aspect of Biblical translation.

40. Acknowledgement We are grateful to the many friends who support the college in various ways: to the Cheshunt Foundation for its support of one member of staff, its bursaries for students and its help towards the cost of administration, maintenance of buildings and the library; to the honorary Bursar, Mr F. Kelly; to Mrs R. Richardson in the college office; to the kitchen, catering and domestic staff. The Principal wishes to pay a personal tribute to his colleagues on the teaching staff for their constant help and encouragement and especially for their commitment to the college's work of theological education.

41. URC Ordinals

<i>1st Year (7)</i>	<i>2nd Year (7)</i>	<i>3rd Year (5)</i>
Hazel Day	Jenny Austen B.Sc.	D. Bradburn, NDA.
D. Gillespie	E. Mary Davies B.Sc.	D. Brett
H. St.J. Gray, B.Ed.	R. Hine, BA	I. Jones, B.Sc.
R. Helmn, B.A.	Catherine McIlhagga, MA	N. Setchell
Stella Jones	T. MacMeekin B.Sc.	D. Tatem, B.Sc.
Margaret Nuttall, MA	J. Paul, BA	
P. Trow, B.A.	D. Williams, MSc.MI.Biol.	

Course III students: Mrs J. Clarke, Mrs S. Daldorph (Eastern Province); Mr K. Knight (South-west); Mrs D. Lloyd, Mrs P. Wardle (Southern); Mrs S. Nuttall (West Midlands); Mr T. Poh (Thames North); Mr J.D. Staples, Mr E.T. Wells, Mr R. Wiggins (Wessex).

THE CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGE, MANCHESTER

42. Students The College Roll at present numbers 117, of whom 106 are in residence: 28 are in training for the URC ministry, 4 for the Churches of Christ and one for the Moravian Church. Three students also are engaged upon College-based non-residential courses. Mr C. Warner was awarded a WCC scholarship and is now engaged in further study in India and is obviously gaining a great deal from the experience.

43. Staff The College rejoices in the appointment of the Revd Dr R.J. McKelvey as Principal, who came into residence for the beginning of 1979. This has enabled the other members of staff to revert to their normal duties, co-operating closely with the Northern Baptist and Hartley Victoria Methodist Colleges, and with the Faculty of Theology of the University of Manchester.

44. **Open Courses** The College has continued to work with the other Theological Colleges and the Manchester Christian Institute in offering open courses on Biblical Topics. In the autumn term the themes were Daniel and Revelation, whilst in the spring term a series was held on the nature of the eucharist for the benefit of the northern Manchester Churches.

45. **Settlements** Brian Acty was ordained and inducted to the West Leeds team ministry; Stephen Fisher to Middleton & Castleton; John Humphries to Bridgend & Pontcymmer; James Jolliffe to Wellington, Somerset; Dafydd Jones to Ely, Cardiff; Robin Pagan to Horncliffe & Norham; Thelma Robinson to Milnrow & Littleborough; David Spence to Northwich & Frodsham.

46. **URC Ordinands**

<i>Fourth Year:</i>	G. McGowan	Rochdale
<i>Third Year:</i>	Christine Craven	Wilmslow
	R. Cornish	Portsmouth
	W. Ford	Knaresborough
	R. Fowler	Petworth
	J. Filsak	Desborough
	R. Mortimer, B.A.	Wimborne
	Eileen Sambrooks	Bradford
	C.V. Skinner	Leatherhead
	J. Steele	Halifax
	D. Webb	Southport
<i>Second Year:</i>	S. Collinson, B.A.	Ossett
	R. House	Woking
	R. Jones	Swansea
	S. Larkin	Morecambe
	M. Piper, B.A.	Chelmsford
	P.S. Rand, B.Sc.	High Wycombe
	D.L. Smythe, B.A.	Belfast
	P. Snell	Guildford
	C. Weddle	Gateshead
	Christine Wright	Beaconsfield
<i>First Year:</i>	Jane Dawson	Tunbridge Wells
	M. Fisher	Kingston upon Thames
	I. Fosten, B.A.	Pettswold
	J. Hopkins	Winsford
	B. Jolly	Tottenham
	C. Sutcliffe	Chelsea
	N. Whittaker	Bristol
<i>College-based Course:</i>	D. Greenwood	Stockport
	B. Harris	Newcastle upon Tyne
	Edith Wynn Young	Thornaby on Tees

MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

47. **Students** Of 19 students studying Theology, 10 are directly preparing for the ministry of the URC.

<i>Third Year:</i>	David Cornick, B.A. (Oxon)
	Peter Flint, B.Sc. (Lond.) B.A. (Oxon)
	David Skitt, B.A. (Lond., Oxon)
<i>Second Year:</i>	John Burgess, B.Sc. (Wales)
	Graham White, B.A. (Oxon), S.M. (M.I.T.)
	Justine Wyatt, B.A. (York)
<i>First Year:</i>	Richard Church, B.Ed. (Birm.)
	Brian Hunt, B.A. (Dunelm)
	Richard Wolff, B.Sc. (Lond.)
<i>Course 3:</i>	Alan Davis, B.Sc., M.Sc., D.Tech.(Manch.)

There are four students researching in Theology and one engaged on the Diploma in Theology.

48. **Staff** No changes have taken place in the tutorial staff in Theology. The College is grateful to the Revd John Thornton who was, with the Revd Charles Brock, Joint Chaplain to the John Calvin Society which concerns itself with the URC students in the University. We wish him well in his work in Sherborne and welcome the Revd Caryl Micklem as his successor. We have enjoyed the company of five Sabbatical Visitors in Theology.

49. As Fellow in Politics we are glad to have appointed Dr Michael Freeden, as Lecturer in English Language Dr Joanne Zuckermann, and as Lecturer in Geography Mrs Pamela Berry.

50. While maintaining the links with all the theological colleges associated in working for the University Certificate in Theology, Mansfield students are now particularly connected with students from Regent's Park College in pastoralia classes.

51. The College congratulates the Revd Dr Jack McKelvey on his appointment as Principal of the Congregational College, Manchester and the Revd Dr Walter Houston who is taking up the Professorship of Old Testament at Westminster College, Cambridge.

MEMORIAL COLLEGE, SWANSEA

52. **Successes and settlements** Seven of our students were awarded the degree of B.D. (Wales) in 1978 with second class honours, one being placed in the first division and the others in the second. One student who gained first class honours in 1977 has now been granted a Department of Education and Science scholarship for research. Stephen J. Woods, B.D., is ordained at Pen-y-wain and Elim, Cwmbran.

53. **Students** We have 25 students on the College Roll. 16 are pursuing B.D. courses and 8 the Diploma in Theology courses of the University of Wales. One is in his final year at St. Andrews. 14 of our students are contemplating the Christian ministry, 8 with the Union of Welsh Independents, 1 with the United Reformed Church, 2 with the Congregational Federation, 2 with the Baptists and 1 with the Unitarians. We have also five M.Th. candidates (researching in New Testament studies and Welsh Church History).

54. **Staff** The Revd D.L. Trefor Evans presides over the Theological Section of the University of Wales Guild of Graduates, while the Revd Dewi Eirug Davies edits its periodical, *Diwinyddiaeth*. Dr Elwyn Davies continues to edit *Yr Ymofynnodd*.

55. **In Memoriam** We record the death of the Revd Dr E. Lewis Evans who lectured at the College throughout a recent session. He was well known as a historian and especially for his book on the Welsh mystic Morgan Llwyd. He was awarded his doctorate by the University of Kiel for a dissertation of Jacob Boehme who greatly influenced Llwyd.

56. **Activities** The College continues to take its part in discussions about the future of theological education in Wales.

57. **URC Ministerial Student** Mark Healy (in his first year at College).

58. The Extraordinary Meeting of Subscribers, our final authority, had now decided, to join the new University School of Theology of Aberystwyth, the Aberystwyth-Lampeter School of Theology. There we shall be co-operating with the College of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the English speaking branch of which is in close ecumenical fellowship with the Welsh province of the URC. There will also be academic co-operation with members of the staffs of the University College at Aberystwyth (of mixed denominational allegiances) and of St. David's University College, Lampeter (at the moment all Anglican apart from the Principal who belongs to the Society of Friends).

59. COLLEGE STATISTICS

	Total No. URC in training Oct. 1978	New candidates for URC Oct. 1978	Estimated Nos. for URC Ministry				Actual No. entered URC 1978	Total No. of Theol. studnets (incl. Post Grads)	Total No. of places available
			79.	80.	81.	82.			
Westminster	29	11	7	11	11		7	52	61
Manchester	31	7	2	12	10	7	8	33	106
Mansfield	10	4	3	3	4		1	19	36
Swansea	1	1	—	—	1		1	25	
Bala Bangor	—	—	—	—	—		—	—	—
Queen's Birmingham	1	—	1	—	—		—	—	—
TOTALS	72	23	13	26	26	7	17	129	203
							1977	1978	
Assessment Conference	—	attendances					38	40	
Inquirer's Conferences	—	attendances					51	40	

MINISTRY OF HEALING COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd David H. Dale

Secretary: The Revd Charles K. Meachin

60. It is encouraging that the Study Kit *Health and Healing* has been taken up not only amongst our own churches but also by the other denominations.

61. A major study has been undertaken by the Committee into the *Role of The Church in Community Health* and it is hoped that this will be available in study/action pack in the near future. Our aim is to consider the question of Christian healing in a broader context, to see that health is something that we must discover together and to enable our churches to take up the opportunities being afforded us today to co-operate more effectively with all who are engaged in pastoral and health care in the community. The pack will include papers on: Church and Community (Basic paper); Medical Aspects of Healing: the Minister-and-Doctor Relationship; The Place of Charismatic Renewal in the Life of the Church; Bible Studies on Church and Community; Practical Papers relating to Corporate Aspects of Health: The Causes of Stress in Large Organisations and Ways to Reduce them: the Role of the Churches, Voluntary Organisations and Voluntary Services: Human Relationships.

62. A booklet *'In Hospital'* has been prepared. This includes readings and prayers which can be used at the bedside or by those who are patients in hospital.

63. Doctors and ministers are constantly being faced by the question "Why has this happened to me?". We have in production a leaflet on this theme.

64. We continue our representation on the Churches' Council for Health and Healing.

65. There was a lively and widespread response to our first Health and Healing Consultation for URC ministers and elders in November when 130 people came to Christ Church and Upton Chapel, London.

66. The present resurgence of concern for Health and Healing comes at a time when questions are being asked about the nature of man and how best his needs may be met. It offers our churches a tremendous opportunity to affirm their faith in a spiritual interpretation of man and the Universe. As it becomes clearer that we all need healing, so it becomes evident that healing cannot be the province of any one group or profession. If true healing has to do with persons, and persons in relationship, it can surely best be realised when modern knowledge, powerful in its potential, sophisticated in its technology and tremendous in its scope, is allied to a religious view of life and a more complete view of man.

67. There is an urgent need for the present responses in both Church and Society to be properly understood and our resources, medical, social and ecclesiastical, to be co-ordinated and channelled so that they may work together for the healing of man and the redemption of society.

SUPPLEMENTARY MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Chairman: Revd John W.P. Williamson

Secretary: Revd Charles K. Meachin

LAY PREACHERS

68. As a result of the questionnaire sent to all churches to discover the extent to which our lay preachers lead worship Sunday by Sunday, it would appear that at least one third are conducted by lay preachers. The committee considers that more resources must be made available at District, Provincial and National Level for the recruitment, training of and encouragement of lay preachers.

69. 300 students are working through the new Exploring the Faith course. Four have already completed the course.

70. The committee in consultation with the Methodist Church and the Baptist Union has arranged for the Exploring the Faith course to be revised. It is hoped that the revision will result in a more cohesive study course produced in a more attractive form.

71. The committee records its appreciation to Mrs Barbara Wilson for the way in which she has looked after the day to day administration of the Lay Preachers' Certificate Course from the inauguration of the United Reformed Church until her retirement in December 1978.

72. The committee is preparing a series of information leaflets which will bear the general title *Lay Preaching Matters*. The first four leaflets — (1) Practicalities, (2) The Lay Preaching Commissioner, (3) Training Opportunities, (4) Team preparation for Worship, will be issued during 1979.

73. The fourth Expository sermon competition was held in 1978. There were 37 entrants and the prize-winners were: (1) Mrs F. Herring (Hednesford), (2) Mr H.J. Oliver (Morpeth), (3) Miss P. Hanlon (South Woodford). The 1979 competition will have the theme *Our Greatest Entrustment is the Gospel*. Text: Psalm 51 vv 10-13. Lay Preachers are invited to submit a sermon by 30th June 1979.

74. The following accredited lay preachers have completed the Pastoralia course during the year: Mrs O. Long (Southern), Miss E. Brown (Thames North), Mrs D. Wright (Thames North), Mrs Alma Beech (Wessex).

75. The committee arranged a consultation for lay preaching Commissioners in March 1979 to consider with them, 'Lay Preaching, its place and future in the United Reformed Church'.

National Accreditation of Lay Preachers

76. **Present Accreditation Procedure** Lay Preachers in the United Reformed Church are accredited by District Councils (see the Scheme of Union 9(3) (vi). (Page 24). District Councils vary in the requirements for accreditation, some District Councils accredit lay preachers with little or no training or experience, other District Councils require a Lay Preachers' Certificate

together with preaching experience. Since transfer of accreditation from District to District is usually automatic, standards of training and qualifications vary within Districts.

77. Suggested National Accreditation Procedure The Supplementary Ministries Committee recommends that the United Reformed Church establish a Register of Nationally Accredited Lay Preachers. The Register to be administered by the Supplementary Ministries Committee. The advantages of such a scheme include a national standard of training and qualifications for lay preachers, providing a goal towards which the lay preachers can work, and recognition nationally that a high standard of training has been achieved. Such a National Register would accord with the practice in most other denominations. It is hoped that District Councils in exercising their responsibility in accrediting new Lay Preachers will set standards which, where-ever possible, are the same as those required for National Accreditation. (Resolution 8)

78. Local Pastors During the year 26 Local Pastors in charge of local churches have been ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments.

79. Auxiliary Ministers Members of the Supplementary Ministries Committee have been fully involved in the planning for the selection, training and suggestions concerning Auxiliary Ministers and the committee supports Resolutions in the Ministerial Training Committee report.

80. Church Community Workers Miss Gillian Robinson is at present resident in St. Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak, Birmingham training as a Church Community Worker. The Supplementary Ministries Committee in consultation with the World Church and Mission Department is working out the implications of the leaflet "The Training and Employment of Church Community Workers" with special reference to the exchange of personnel planned by CWM's Constitution. Consideration is also being given to the financing of Church Community Workers.

DEACONESSES

81. Deaconesses and the Ministry Of the five serving deaconesses in the URC, four hold positions of pastoral responsibility for local churches, administering Word and Sacraments on a regular basis by appointment of District Councils. The present and ever-increasing needs of local churches for ministry are likely to ensure that this pattern continues, and the original intention of the Deaconess Service to provide and finance an extra specialist agent to promote work in areas of need and few resources has less and less prospect of being realised. The difficulty of any longer defining for deaconesses a separate role from that of the ministry makes a policy of recruitment difficult, and the new alternative of training as a Church Community Worker (CCW) seems to provide an option more attractive to some, and to men as well as women. In the Baptist and Methodist Churches the increase of women ministers has led to similar fall-away in the number of deaconesses and in their case further recruitment has ceased altogether.

82. The decision of the 1978 Assembly to ordain Local Pastors has removed the last remaining argument for keeping deaconesses separate, viz, their somewhat shorter and different training, and the advantage of flexibility provided by being extra to the Deployment quota.

83. In view of all these gradually changing circumstances, the serving deaconesses are prepared, with one exception, to become ministers, if the Assembly is willing to offer them ordination.

84. In bringing the Deaconess service in the URC to an end in this way we would pay tribute to the very important role it has played in the Presbyterian Church of England since the 1920's. It did much to demonstrate the true ministry which women could offer in ways that won the support of many prejudiced against the ministry of women as such. They pioneered many new churches, trained teachers and youth leaders, upheld many community projects in difficult areas, and challenged the Assembly in many ways to new missionary endeavour at home. Those who have for so long supported the Women's Home Church Association (WHCA) which raised the money and supervised the service, should not feel their effort have now been thrown aside. Circumstances have changed, but the good effect of their work is now part of the life of the whole Church. We thank God for the vision and dedication of those who maintained this service for so many years. (Resolution 9)

85. Chairman of Committee The Revd John W.P. Williamson, MA. completes his term of office at this Assembly as Chairman of the Supplementary Ministries Committee. The committee wishes to record their appreciation for his distinguished leadership during the past six years.

His care for people — Lay Preachers, Deaconesses and Local Pastors — and his friendly encouragement have marked his distinctive chairmanship.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd C. Cyril Franks

Secretary: The Revd C. Keith Forecast

CHILDREN'S WORK COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd Glyn Jenkins

Secretary: The Revd C. Keith Forecast

86. Last year's Assembly passed a resolution welcoming proposals for co-operation between the Churches of Christ and the United Reformed Church whereby the Revd John Oldershaw and the Revd Keith Forecast would serve as secretaries respectively for Youth and Christian Education on behalf of both Churches. As part of the outworking of these proposals, the Christian Education and the Children's Work Committees now serve both denominations, Churches of Christ representatives having joined those from the United Reformed Church. We are only at the beginning of this arrangement, and for its development much will depend upon what may happen concerning the total relationship of the two denominations. We are able, however, to report a harmonious start and the beginnings of plans to make the cooperation effective across the country. Meanwhile the Christian Education and Children's work committees, who collaborate over most matters, present a combined report.

87. **The Church as a Community of all ages** The publication three years ago of the BBC report *'The Child in the Church'* spurred us to a new consideration of the nature of the place of the child within the People of God. We are convinced that children belong to the Church as of right — that they are not 'the Church of tomorrow', but, with young people and adults, the Church of today. Experience teaches us, however, that this principle needs to be constantly restated and reinterpreted. If the Church takes it seriously, it seems to us that its effect will be felt not only in worship and learning (though even in these areas we believe we still have much to learn about its implementation) but also in our systems of pastoral care, in the way we arrange the corporate life of the congregation, in our decision making, and in our service to others and our proclamation of the Good News. Accordingly, the committees plan to embark upon a three year programme to help local churches to interpret this. The publication of support material is envisaged, including literature, posters and cassettes, together with some training of District Christian Education and Children's Work Officers. 1979 seems an appropriate year in which to embark upon such a programme, for it has been designated *'The International Year of the Child'* by U.N. and part of the Churches' response to this has been to set out to take children more seriously within the Church. (Resolution 10)

88. **Partners in Learning** The United Reformed Church cooperates with the Methodists and Baptists to produce 'Partners in Learning — a Church Community Education Programme', which is published by the National Christian Education Council and the Methodist Division of Education and Youth. During the year, the first major investigation has taken place to discover the extent and manner of its use in our church. It would appear that about half our local churches use it, the most popular alternative being 'Scripture Union' (used by about 40%).

89. Our enquiries brought to light a number of criticisms of the material, and our representatives among the writers have been appraised of these, as has the Joint Publications Board itself, so that the quality may be improved. Nevertheless, much appreciation was voiced, both of format and content, and there was a general feeling that there had been many improvements over the years. The committees therefore intend to continue to advocate the curriculum. It is the only material over the writing of which we have any direct influence as a Church, being represented at both writing and editorial level. It is soundly based educationally and liturgically. It is a proven means towards the integration of an educational programme for adults and children and thus assists churches to develop as worshipping and learning communities. We therefore commend it. At the same time, recognising that many prefer to use other material,

we would emphasise that we are at the service of all the churches whether they choose to use 'Partners in Learning' or not. (Resolution 10)

90 Decline and Growth The Assembly of 1975 drew the committees' attention to the marked decline in the number of children in our churches. Following the 1976 Assembly, three working parties were set up — in Birmingham, Dorset and Chelmsford and district. They did a thorough investigation in their own areas and we are grateful for their cooperation. The rate of decline is greater in the city than in the country (23% in Birmingham in the last five years). Reasons however, seem to be the same in all three areas, and because it is helpful for churches to understand what is often happening to them, we summarise these. They include:

- (a) the decline in the birthrate over the same period;
- (b) the decline in the number of adults in the Church;
- (c) the higher average age of church members, with a consequent reduction in child-bearing capacity;
- (d) the closure of some churches: whereas most adult members will usually join other churches, children whose parents do not attend are less likely to do so;
- (e) the shift of population from areas where churches are established to new areas where churches are fewer, together with a reluctance of people (especially children) to form new attachments;
- (f) the general climate of uncertainty regarding Christianity;
- (g) the increase in the number of adherents of other religions;
- (h) a new 'permissiveness' on the part of parents in relation to the church attendance of their children;
- (j) a reduction in the number of church members willing to lead groups of children in their Christian education and to be adequately trained for the work;
- (k) the failure of some churches to present themselves as communities that have a real place for children or to offer worship that seems alive or relevant to young people;
- (l) a loss of nerve and enthusiasm, evident in some churches in some places.

91. This pattern of decline, however, is not the whole story. The committees have been encouraged to note that there are churches where there is considerable growth both in numbers and, seemingly, in effectiveness. Accordingly questionnaires were sent to 36 local churches nominated by their Provincial Moderators as growing churches. While we would be hesitant to draw firm conclusions from a comparatively small sample of churches, we are able to report the following:

- (a) Growth is by no means always through the transfer of members from one local church to another. In most growing churches members are joining who had no previous connection with the church or whose connection had lapsed.
- (b) Sixty per cent of the churches reported growth among adults and children, whereas only 11% reported growth among children only — an indication that the situation among children has a great deal to do with the situation among adults.
- (c) Fifty per cent of the churches report increase among their children. In most churches the largest group of children is in the 7-10 age range.
- (d) As may be expected, some growth derives from residential development in the neighbourhood of a local church; this is, however, by no means the only factor accounting for growth.
- (e) Visitation of new residents by representatives of the church often brings results.
- (f) Young families attract others in the church.
- (g) A major factor in every case of growth is whether the church is friendly and caring — where such concern reaches out into the community through minister and members growth often results.
- (h) The leadership of the minister is crucial.
- (i) The educational curriculum used is not on its own a significant factor.

- (j) An imaginative mid-week programme for all ages makes a real contribution.
- (k) While recruitment and stewardship campaigns and the influence of the charismatic movement as such rarely seem to result in sustained growth, more sustained prayer is often given as a reason.

We draw the attention of those wishing to plan for growth to the 'Church Growth' programme organised by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Details of consultations arranged in various parts of the country may be had from the Revd Eddie Gibbs, Bible House, 146 Queen Victoria Street, London E.C.4.

92. Education of Adults In 1975, upon the recommendation of the Commission of the Ministry, the Assembly invited all provinces to appoint a Lay Training Officer. Most provinces have done so, and their work has hitherto been coordinated by Dr Stephen Mayor of Westminster College. The line between Lay Training and Adult Education has always been a fine one, however, and now the Christian Education Committee and its secretary have assumed responsibility for Lay Training.

93. During the year the *Churches Association for Adult and Continuing Education* has come into being. This ecumenical body will seek to coordinate and strengthen the work of Christian Education among Church members and foster its relationship with non-church bodies at work in this field. The United Reformed Church is playing its part in this new development.

94. Requests are received from time to time for material for adult study groups in local churches. The committee believes that more than sufficient material for such use is available, published by the various departments of the church and other bodies, and including the adult section of 'Partners in Learning'. It has therefore published a paper entitled '*For your study group*' which briefly indicates this wealth of material, and it proposes from time to time to draw specific attention to certain items and encourage their use.

95. Women's work The United Reformed Church has no separate organisation or movement for women, for we believe that they should take their full part as adult members of the Church. Yet almost every local church has at least one women's meeting. The Christian Education Committee believes that such meetings can be seen as adult educational opportunities. A *resource box* of books, pamphlets and programme ideas has therefore been assembled, containing for the most part samples of material already available from the departments of the Church for adult use, together with a few items specifically designed for women's meetings. One of these boxes is now in every province and many districts have also purchased one. Local churches are encouraged to borrow the box, examine its contents, and then to order copies of such material as will be of use in their own meetings. The contents of the boxes will be revised from time to time and we shall therefore welcome any suggestions.

96. Teacher Training 26 districts have so far responded to the Assembly resolution of 1978 calling upon them to appoint Teacher Training Consultants to promote the training of teachers for work among the children in the church. The Children's Work Committee is encouraged by this, and while it realises that suitable people for this work are not easy to find, urges those districts which have not yet been able to make this provision to do so as soon as possible. *Guidelines* for the kind of activity in which Teacher Training Consultants might be expected to involve themselves are available from the Secretary.

97. Education Sunday This hitherto predominately Anglican observance is now held on the ninth Sunday before Easter; and is being arranged ecumenically. We participate in the planning, encouraging our churches to involve themselves in activities that may take place locally, involving the schools if possible.

98. Publications In addition to publications referred to above, the Committee has published the following during the year:

Handbook for Holiday Clubs, price 60p published on behalf of the Methodist Division of Youth and Education, the Churches of Christ Christian Education Department and ourselves.

Baptism and Church Membership, price 2p, another in our series of discussion papers concerning our ministry among children.

The English Bible – a Consumer's Guide, price 5p – notes by Roger Tomes on twenty translations of the Bible in current use in England.

99. **Personal** Among those members of the committees who come to the end of their terms of service this year are two to whom we wish to express particular gratitude. The Revd Cyril Franks has been chairman of the Christian Education Committee since the inception of the United Reformed Church and, before that, held a similar post in the Congregational Church for some years. We record our thanks to him for his interest in and support of our work. Miss Mary Burnie has, throughout her life, been influential in the educational work not only of our Church but far beyond. It is impossible for us adequately to express our gratitude to her for her persistent encouragement and inspiration. We wish both these friends well.

PILOTS' PANEL

Chairman: Mr Graham Burnett

Secretary: The Revd C. Keith Forecast

100. Churches everywhere are finding increasing value in weeknight work among children. Uniformed Organisations are expanding and junior youth clubs are coming into being. The United Reformed Church has a non-uniformed organisation for the children of the church, designed to provide a structure and a programme for such activities.

101. The past year has seen considerable change and expansion in this movement. The new badge, bearing the World Council of Churches 'boat' symbol and the FURY fish, followed by the production of tee-shirts bearing the emblem, paved the way for a complete revision of all the programme material, which has not yet been completed. We are pleased to report that more than twenty churches have started new companies and others have found their work revitalised. There are now 140 companies.

102. Pilots is a church centred organisation. Its programme is flexible and adaptable. It caters for boys and girls together. It can function with a minimum of regular leadership, particularly when this is supplemented by occasional specific help from other adults in the church. It is capable of capturing the enthusiasms of children and of fostering their sense of belonging to Christ and his Church. The local weekly programme is supplemented by regional activities from time to time and by four camps, likely soon to expand into five or six, organised in different parts of the country.

103. The Panel expresses its gratitude to hundreds of devoted leaders throughout the land without whom the movement could not exist and commends the organisation to all wishing to develop their work among children. (Resolution 11)

YOUTH COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd J.E. Mather

Secretary: The Revd John Oldershaw

104. **Youth Secretary** The appointment of the Revd John Oldershaw, a Churches of Christ Minister, as Youth Secretary for the United Reformed Church and Churches of Christ has led to the creation of a joint Youth Committee working on a common agenda. Whilst this increased co-operation is in its early stages it will undoubtedly be of great benefit to both Churches.

105. **Statistics** The statistical returns received indicate that the numbers of young people in Uniformed Organisations has increased since last year, to about 53,000 whereas the number of young people in other types of activity has declined slightly to 25,000. However, it is difficult to give accurate comparative national figures since the number of churches failing to complete statistical returns has increased. This is a matter of concern because application for grants often require information about membership figures and our case can be damaged by an apparent decline due to lack of information. There are also young people connected with local churches and participating in national activities and District events, but, because there is no youth activity in their local church, they are not included in the statistics.

106. Publications The 'On the Job' papers have proved to be a very valuable aid to youth workers and some 25 titles are now available. Youth leaflets and the activity poster continued to be produced and the booklet "Youth Work in the URC" has been revised and reprinted. A "FURY is. . . ." poster competition resulted in a "FURY" poster being sent to all churches in the Information Service, and provoked additional interest in the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth.

107. Activities The activities programme has again been enlarged with two former Churches of Christ holiday conferences being fully incorporated into the scheme, and the increased number of international visits. During 1979 young people's visits are planned to the U.S.A. the U.S.S.R., Spain and Zambia, and the URC will host the Anglo-German Exchange. An exchange programme with the Irish Council of Churches has also been planned. In all of these emphasis is placed on meeting Christians in other countries and learning more about the Christian faith.

108. Steps are being taken to appoint a part-time Activities Officer to cope with the work involved in the organising of activities. This will be funded by a levy on the fees charged to the young people and by grants.

109. Ending for £ife The FURY educational and money-raising Project concerning the Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society ended in July. Its educational value cannot be calculated, but it is gratifying to report that, though the original financial target was £5,000, the amount raised by December 31st was £10,716 after all expenses had been deducted. The Finance and Administration Department are in the process of investing this money in the Society, in the name of the United Reformed Church. Meanwhile, we take this opportunity of recording our congratulations and gratitude to all those who participated.

110. Youth Leadership Training There are three full-time Youth Leadership Training Officers serving the URC and Churches of Christ. Plans are in hand for the appointment of a fourth in the near future. Bernard Grimsey has been re-appointed for a further service of three years in North West and Mersey Provinces. Substantial grants towards this important part of the Church's work continue to be received from the Department of Education and Science, the Kings George's Jubilee Trust, Local Authorities and Trust Funds, but unless there can be a substantial increase in the funds available for this work there can be little development of the team to cover the whole of the URC. The Youth Committee has expressed its concern that the Budget Committee did not feel able to include money for the development of the YLTO programme in the 1980 budget.

111. The Youth Committee regrets that the Budget Committee and Executive Committee feel unable to include new items in the budget for 1980. Whilst particularly concerned that provision for additional Youth Leadership Training Officers is not to be included, the Youth Committee looked more widely at the life of the Church and felt that the URC should be expanding its work.

112. World Festival of Youth and Students The Youth Committee was represented at this Festival in Havana, Cuba by Stephen Brown and Lyn Carruthers. The increased number of Church representatives in the British delegation had an effect upon the delegation and the conference.

113. Representation by young people In 1974 the General Assembly urged District Councils to include at least one young person in the representation of the District at the General Assembly. The FURY Assembly is pleased to note that many Districts find it possible to do this, and now asks that young people should also be represented at District Councils. This has proved to be of value in some districts and is commended for wider consideration. (Resolution 12)

114. Training Bulletin The YLTOs have suggested that the Youth Work Training Bulletin should be expanded in scope to become a training bulletin of the Department servicing the Lay Training Officers, Teacher Training Officers and others interested in training. This would contain reviews of training material, reports of training events, and descriptions of techniques. This has been approved and the first issue was published in March.

DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd Dr John Huxtable

Secretary: The Revd Donald McIlhagga

115. A Book of Services The work of revising the services for inclusion in a URC Book of Services is now complete and the material has been collated for the printer. It is expected that it will be on sale later in 1979. We hope to include Order Forms with the June Information Service. The contents of the Book are:

1. Preface
2. An Order of Sunday Worship
3. The Lord's Supper with seasonal sentences and dismissals and alternative Thanksgivings, with seasonal prefaces.
4. Baptism and Confirmation and Membership Transfer
5. Blessing of Children and Dedication of Parents
6. Wedding Service and Blessing of a Civil Marriage
7. Funeral Services, service before a Funeral, scattering or burial of ashes
8. Ordination/Induction of Ministers
9. Ordination/Induction of Elders
10. Commissioning of a Missionary
11. Commissioning of Accredited Lay Preachers
12. Induction of a Provincial Moderator
13. A service for Healing
14. Laying of a Foundation Stone, Dedication of a Church and prayers for the Dedication of Church Property
15. Liturgical items, viz Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, URC Confession of Faith, Te Deum, Benedictus, Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis, Gloria Patri, Agnus Dei, the Lord's Prayer
16. A Lectionary (two-year cycle)
17. Psalms cycle (one year) with hymn book references

116. A new main Hymn Book A proposal will come before the Conference of the Methodist Church in July 1979 to prepare a new hymnbook. It is probable that it would seek cooperation from other Churches in the preparation of this book. It is proposed that if an invitation should come from the Methodist Church then we should discuss with them the terms on which we might cooperate.

117. Affirmations to be made by Ministers at Ordinations and Inductions (Schedule C). The Doctrine and Worship Committee noted the form in which the Church Life Department submitted its revisions of these affirmations to the 1978 General Assembly and has during the year been monitoring the discussions at Provincial and District level. In the light of these and of further discussions in the Committee we wish to submit our original proposals, which the Department supports.

Note: The revision set out below for use in Ordination and Induction Services, will follow immediately the reading of the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D), and must be considered in that context. At some other point in the service provision will also be made for a statement concerning the circumstances of the call. The minister may also make a personal statement of his own call to that office.

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

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

He shall then ask:

1. Do you confess anew the faith of the Church?
I do.
2. Do you recognise in the call to serve here the summons of God himself, and do you mean to be, above all else, his minister?
I do.

3. Will you faithfully proclaim the good news of forgiveness, renewal and eternal life for all who put their trust in Jesus as Lord?
I will.
4. Will you strive to be faithful, in all the duties of your ministry, and to live a holy life, conducive to the harmony and unity of all God's people?
I will.
5. Do you believe that the Church is God's people gathered by his love to serve him in reconciling the world to himself?
I do.

(Resolution 13)

118. A statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D) At the suggestion of the General Secretary in the light of numerous comments made to him, the committee has considered an alternative form of this statement which may be used instead of that in the Basis of Union or its "Liturgical" version, but is to be understood in the same sense as these, and submits the following for approval:

With the whole Christian Church
the United Reformed Church believes in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God calls his Church to live completely for him
Such a life is God's gift
always being received from his Spirit
through the Word
through Baptism and Communion,
through our life together as Christians.

Our Church's highest authority
for what Christians do and believe
is God's Word in the Bible.
With the Holy Spirit's help
we can understand together its meaning for today.

In early times the Church set out its belief
in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.
Our Church thankfully accepts their witness
to the universal Christian faith.
From our own past we also value
what Congregationalists and Presbyterians declared
when they stated their Churches' faith
and tried to show where it leads.

Our Church believes that its Basis of Union
shows the essentials of Church life,
both Catholic and Reformed.
In the Basis of Union our Church sets out
what it believes,
how it is shaped and governed,
and how it aims to live.
Our Church has the right to change its Basis of Union,
and is ready to do so
should that be demanded by our obedience to Christ.

In the United Reformed Church
we believe that Jesus holds us together in one body
in the freedom of the Spirit.
This freedom gives room for differences.
Because of this our Church upholds
the rights of personal conviction
Keeping us together in fellowship and faith
our whole Church must decide
when differences of conviction
hurt our unity and peace.

Christ gives his Church a government distinct from the government of the state. In things that affect God's call to live completely for him the Church cannot take second place to the state but must serve the Lord Jesus, its only king and head. Our Church believes that state and civil authorities are called to serve God's will of justice and peace for all humanity, and to respect the rights of conscience and belief.

The United Reformed Church promises to pray and work with all the churches for visible Christian Unity. We pray that this will come in the way Christ chooses so that peoples and nations may be led to love and serve God and praise him for ever.

(Resolution 14)

119. Marriage and Divorce At the request of the General Assembly the Committee discussed the experimental order of Worship 'Prayer for Release from Vows' published by the Church and Society Department. The committee believes that the following points should be taken into consideration when evaluating it:

1. The resources of God's forgiveness need to be made available when there is human desire for it.
2. When a member of the Church has been divorced this fact should be acknowledged within the Christian Community.
3. Vows taken to God have an absolute character and for the church to suggest release is possible is appropriating what God alone can do.
4. It follows there is a logical contradiction in taking a second vow.

This does not make a second marriage wrong but it means that contradiction has to be lived with, taking 'what went wrong', through forgiveness, into a new marriage, for the good of the couple concerned.

120. Membership The Committee has been competently and conscientiously served by several gifted members since 1972, and it wishes the Assembly to thank them at the end of this period of service.

(Resolution 15)

CHAPLAINS AND STUDENTS COMMITTEE

Chairman: Revd Dr Leslie Green

Secretary: The Revd Bruce Stuart

121. The Committee met four times last year. It comprises four Chaplains, both full-time and church-based, three members of teaching staffs and four students. It promotes the work of URC and Free Church Chaplains and student societies in Higher Education. It is also concerned with overseas students and with Further Education. With regard to the latter, the National Ecumenical Agency for Further Education is working actively towards the appointment of a full-time officer and hopes this appointment will be made within the next few months.

122. The Committee is currently updating its list of URC Student Societies. The register of Chaplains is revised annually. The Committee is served in each Province by Link-men. The Committee edits an occasional newsletter and has prepared a paper for the use of both Chaplains and Districts entitled "What is Chaplaincy?". The Committee is grateful to the Editor of *Reform* for his publicity of student activities.

123. The Secretary represents the denomination on the National Committee of Chaplains in Higher Education. The encouragement of new posts for Chaplaincy work is one of this Committee's main concerns.

124. **Conferences** A number of URC Chaplains attended the biennial ecumenical Chaplains' conference at Swanwick in September 1978. Immediately prior to this, a consultation for URC Chaplains was held at Derby and was organised by the student members. In February 1979, the fourth national URC students' conference was held at Headingley St. Columba URC in Leeds. It drew students from Birmingham, Bristol, Derby, Leeds, London, Newcastle, Oxford, Sheffield and Worcester. These conferences follow the former Presby'-Cong. Soc. tradition and have worked best when local URC student societies have borne the brunt of the organising, drawing on local resources for speakers and programmes.

125. The National Student Christian Congress was held at the University of Aston in April 1979. It proved to be a remarkable and encouraging gathering of representative bodies from many different theological perspectives within student Christianity. John Bunker, Bernard Moss and Bruce Stuart participated in the organising committee.

CHAPLAINS TO THE FORCES

126. The URC has gain worked through the United Board in its ministry to the Forces. Its part in the full-time chaplaincy service has been at a reduced level during the year. The Revd Hamish MacLagan, of Thames Ditton, volunteered for a short service commission in the Army and is at present stationed in Cyprus. Our other serving chaplains are the Revds F.A. Beattie and S.L. Williams in the Navy and the Revd C.G. Prenton in the RAF. The Church is indebted to all our chaplains for their continued faithfulness in this difficult ministry.

127. Two URC ministers gave serious consideration to appointments with the Navy, but these did not eventuate. These vacancies were subsequently filled by ministers of other Churches. A vacancy exists for a URC minister to serve in the Army. Ministers interested in this or in future vacancies in the other services should get into touch with their Provincial Moderator or with the General Secretary. A number of URC ministers give a very significant service as officiating chaplains in many parts of the country.

128. During the year several names of young people entering the services have been forwarded from local churches to the office and sent on to the appropriate chaplain. It is especially important to make this sort of contact at the beginning of a service career. The nature of Service duties in this period makes unusual demands on many of the young people involved and the task of the Church within the Services is of special difficulty and importance. There is need to remember and support all our chaplains, both full-time and officiating, as well as those they seek to serve.

RESOLUTIONS

- (i) The Assembly accepts with regret the resignation of the Revd Principal A.G. MacLeod, M.A. from the offices of Principal and Professor of Old Testament Language, Literature and Theology as from August 31, 1979 and resolves that he be recognised as Principal Emeritus.
 - (ii) In accepting the resignation of the Revd Alan Gordon MacLeod, M.A., from the office of Principal of Westminster College and the Chair of Old Testament Studies therein, the Assembly desires to place on record its deep sense of gratitude for all that he has done for the Church — both at home and overseas — and for the College.
2. The Assembly resolves that the Revd Martin Cressey, M.A. be appointed Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge from September 1st, 1979.
3. The Assembly resolves that the Revd Walter Houston, M.A., D.Phil, be appointed Old Testament Professor at Westminster College Cambridge as from September 1st, 1979.
4. The Assembly instructs the Cambridge District Council to arrange in consultation with the Senatus, for the installation of the Revd Martin Cressey as Principal of Westminster

College, Cambridge, and for the induction of the Revd Dr Walter Houston to the Chair of Old Testament studies.

5. The Assembly recognises the Revd Dr R.J. McKelvey as Principal of the Congregational College, Manchester and agrees that he be received by the Assembly, marking his appointment as Principal.
6. The Assembly:
 - (i) resolves to amend the Scheme of Union, paragraph 7 (21) by adding the following words:

'others serve as auxiliary ministers under the same oversight but continuing in other occupations and earning their livelihood within them':
 - (ii) accepts Appendix 1, i.e. the paper printed as an appendix to the Church Life Report as working guidelines for the institution of this auxiliary ministry:
 - (iii) instructs the Ministerial Training Committee to proceed with the preparatory planning and training of tutors for an auxiliary ministry:
 - (iv) supports the inclusion in the Budget for 1981 of an additional sum of £15,000 in order to provide the necessary resources in that year and meanwhile authorises the Ministerial Training Committee to use resources in the Ministerial Training Fund.
7. The Assembly resolves that in consultation with the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee and the Deployment Committee, the United Reformed Church should seek candidates for the full-time ministry at a recruitment level of 20% above replacement needs.
- 8.1. The Assembly resolves to establish a Register of Nationally Accredited Lay Preachers, to be administered by the Supplementary Ministries Committee.
- 8.2. The United Reformed Church will admit to the Register of Accredited Lay Preachers those who:
 - (a) are members of the United Reformed Church;
 - (b) have been commended by their Church Meeting to their District Council;
 - (c) have been accredited as Lay Preachers by their District Council;
 - (d) have completed the Lay Preachers' Certificate of the United Reformed Church to the satisfaction of the tutors and assessors appointed.
- 8.3. The Assembly resolves that the Supplementary Ministries Committee may modify or dispense with the requirements in 2(d) on grounds of age, qualifications and experience and asks the Supplementary Ministries Committee to give sympathetic consideration to those experienced lay preachers who do not hold a lay preachers' Certificate particularly during the initial stages of the scheme.
- 8.4. The Assembly instructs District Councils to prepare a list of lay preachers who under 2 or 3 above they wish to recommend to the Supplementary Ministries Committee for the inclusion on the register of Nationally Accredited Lay Preachers.
- 9.1. The Assembly authorises District Councils to ordain to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments those deaconesses presently serving in charge of local churches within the District.
- 9.2. Deaconesses so ordained shall be eligible for appointment as full-time Ministers subject to call and to the agreement in each case of the District Council, the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, and to any necessary alteration in deployment quotas agreed by the Deployment Committee. Meanwhile they shall continue to serve in their present charge in accordance with terms previously agreed with the Supplementary Ministries Committee.
- 9.3. Their names will appear in the Roll of Ministers together with a record of their service as deaconesses and the date of their ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments. They shall be entitled to remain in the same pension scheme as formerly.
- 9.4. Any deaconess not wishing to become a minister shall be permitted to continue as at present, under the appointment of the Supplementary Ministries Committee.

- 9.5. Recruitment and training of further deaconesses in the URC shall cease forthwith.
- 9.6. Negotiations shall proceed with the F & A Central Committee to adjust the sources of payments of deaconesses once they become ministers, and to alter the sums required by the Unified Appeal and the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund accordingly, making allowances for the present housing arrangements until they receive a call to a new appointment.
- 9.7. Any funds given for the Deaconess service, when no longer required, shall be available to the Supplementary Ministries Committee to help fund Church Community Workers.
10. The Assembly, recognising the validity of the principle that the local church is a worshipping and learning community of all ages:
 - 10.1. encourages the Christian Education and Children's Work Committees to embark upon a programme to help local churches interpret this principle;
 - 10.2. draws the attention of local churches to the value of an integrated educated programme;
 - 10.3. once more commends the Church Community Education Programme 'Partners in Learning' as a curriculum for this purpose.
11. The Assembly expresses its pleasure at the expansion of the children's organisation 'Pilots' and commends it to local churches wishing to develop their ministry among boys and girls.
12. The Assembly approves the Youth project to invite young people from the C.S.I. and Zambia to visit Britain and encourages them to raise the money required for these visits.
13. The Assembly, having instructed the Doctrine and Worship Committee to revise Schedule C to avoid unnecessary repetition, accepts the withdrawal of the version of Schedule C submitted last year and approves the revision as set out in this report, subject to ratification in 1980.
14. The Assembly receives this revision of Schedule D for consideration by Provincial Synods, and District Councils, with a view to it being ratified by Assembly 1980.
15. The Assembly records its thanks to the retiring committee members who have served with distinction, and in particular to Mr John Ross whose theological contribution has been outstanding and whose service extends without a break from 1943 in the Presbyterian Church of England Doctrine Committee through to 1978 in the United Reformed Church Doctrine and Worship Committee.
16. The Assembly agrees
that this report be received.

CHURCH LIFE DEPARTMENT: APPENDIX 1

Report of national consultation held at the Manchester Diocesan Conference House, Crawshawbooth, Rossendale, Lancashire. Monday 6th to Wednesday 8th November, 1978 with revisions and additions by the Ministerial Training Committee, the Business Committee and the Church Life Central Committee.

AUXILIARY MINISTRY

I

1. As part of the proposals for unification with the Churches of Christ, the General

Assembly of 1977 agreed that provision should be made for an auxiliary or non-stipendiary ministry in the Church. The Assembly of 1978, faced with the failure of the plan of unification, nevertheless resolved to amend the Basis of Union so as to provide for such a ministry, and instructed the Ministerial Training Committee to continue its planning for the selection and training of Auxiliary Ministers, and to submit proposals to the Assembly of 1979 for implementation.

2. In the course of widespread consultation with groups representative of the Provinces, the Ministerial Training Committee has been led to the conviction that the Assembly should now confirm the decision to develop an auxiliary ministry. However, the discussion of this matter in the context of the traditions and needs of our own church has led us to suggest certain changes in the details of the proposals which had been formulated in the context of the tradition and experience of the Churches of Christ. We therefore recommend that the Assembly of 1979 should confirm the addition of the following words to paragraph 7(21) of the Basis of Union as a sufficient authorisation for such a ministry: “. . . others serve as auxiliary ministers, under the same oversight but continuing in other occupations and earning their livelihood within them.”

3. In our view, the above words are a sufficient addition to the Basis of Union to enable the Church to proceed with the development of an auxiliary ministry with freedom to learn from experience; the further additions proposed in the Assembly resolution of 1978 appear to us to be unnecessarily detailed, and likely to be unduly binding on the Church.

II

Among the reasons which lead us to recommend the confirmation of the Assembly's decision to authorise an auxiliary or non-stipendiary ministry are the following:—

1. The New Testament evidence shows that the ministry of the apostolic church was not tied to a stipendiary system. While Paul asserted the right of the preacher of the Gospel to the support of the Church, he refused to exercise this right in his own case. The early expansion of the Church depended upon a non-professional ministry.
2. At many times and places, and notably in our own time, we have witnessed the rapid missionary expansion of churches which rely upon a non-stipendiary ministry.
3. The United Reformed Church includes a very large number of small churches, many of which are potential centres of growth. We ought to see that all are furnished with a ministry of Word, Sacrament and pastoral care of the highest possible standard, acknowledged and authorised by the whole Church. This cannot be achieved solely by a full-time stipendiary ministry.
4. There are 'unevangelised areas' in the life of contemporary Britain — sectors of society where there is little or no relevant Christian witness. A ministry of those already working in these areas could open the way for the birth and growth of Christian congregations within them, developing a style of life, worship, teaching and ministry appropriate to their needs.
5. There are members of the Church whose talents for various aspects of ministry have in the past lain dormant because there has been no recognised place for them in the accustomed pattern of Church life. Their talents could be awakened and brought into use by the challenge of need for such leadership near at hand, and of suitable training available without having to leave present commitments to work and family.
6. Some of our sister churches, notably the Church of England, have already some years of fruitful experience in the development of a non-stipendiary ministry, and this encourages us to believe that the Spirit may be leading the Church in this way.

In the following paragraphs we indicate the lines along which we think that the auxiliary ministry might be developed, allowing freedom for modification in the light of experience. (This ministry is open to both men and women of the United Reformed Church, and in the following narrative the pronouns are intended to include both sexes).

III

1. An Auxiliary Minister is one who is ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments but continues in a secular occupation, using his gifts both within that occupation and within the life and worship of the Church. He will exercise his ministry in association with a local Church and a stipendiary minister.
2. The Auxiliary Minister will be under the oversight of the District Council, which will arrange for his ordination to the ministry, and his induction to a particular sphere of ministry for a stated term of service, which may be renewed. The term of service to be no more than five years in the first instance.
4. There will be a variety of situations in which auxiliary ministers might serve
 - (a) in pastoral charge of a small local church;
 - (b) as an assistant minister in a large church, perhaps with special responsibility for one aspect of its work;
 - (c) in situations of outreach (e.g. in industry, in community development, in hospital chaplaincy, in government or in one of the professions), where their main ministry would not be in the local church but in the community where they work and live.
5. The training of Auxiliary Ministers will therefore need to include both certain basic elements and a selection from a variety of subjects chosen with reference to the person's availability, previous experience and training, and opportunities for and forms of ministry.
6. Because of the variety of training, a person moving from one type of ministry (auxiliary or stipendiary) to another might require additional training. The decision as to what such "additional" might be in each case should be made under the guidance of the Ministerial Training Committee in consultation with the District Council.
7. Such a varied pattern of training and of ministry implies also a pattern of collegiality in which the varied skills and abilities of different ministers contribute to a whole ministry. The detailed working out of such a collegial pattern will be the responsibility of the District Council.
8. If an Auxiliary Minister is required to move because of his secular employment, he will be available for ministry in the new place if he is called by the local church and District Council, but will not automatically exercise a ministry there unless so called.
9. The introduction of an Auxiliary Ministry does not take away any responsibility from the stipendiary ministers, elders, or church members for mission and outreach, but rather provides further stimulus and help to each. The Ministerial Training Committee is committed to a policy of growth in respect of the recruitment, training and deployment of stipendiary ministers. The present proposals for Auxiliary Ministers are in no sense a substitute for this policy.

IV

1. *Who are possible candidates?*

They must be of proven Christian experience and service and must have shown capabilities for leadership. They must be willing to and able to undergo specific training and to devote much of their leisure time to this ministry.

2. *How are they called?*

It is God who calls men and women to the ministry. Sometimes he makes his call known by raising a conviction in a person's mind; sometimes by prompting a person's colleagues to invite him to undertake this task. However, it comes, the call must be tested by the wider Church, so that both the individual and the Church may be convinced that the call is from God.

3. *Selection Procedures*

Candidates for the Auxiliary Ministry will be required to go through the same selection procedures as candidates for the stipendiary ministry, which are:

- (i) to obtain the commendation of their own local church through elders and church meeting;
- (ii) to be commended by the District Council;
- (iii) to attend a national Assessment Conference;
- (iv) to be accepted by the Provincial Ministerial Committee.

V TRAINING

1. All candidates will be required to share in a regular, preferably monthly group tutorial, which will enable them to relate their study courses to their life situations; to appreciate the theological implications of many contemporary issues; to reflect on the learning process itself; to translate these insights into common acts of worship and to deepen their spirituality and faith. The exercise will be practical and will provide for group interaction and mutual criticism, as a preparation for participation in a team ministry in the United Reformed Church.
2. The content and form of training will be related to the individual's needs and talents and future ministry. Within inevitable limits each candidate will be dealt with individually, and some parts of his training will be planned with specific forms of ministry in mind: e.g. industrial chaplaincy, ecumenical team ministry, counselling, religion and medicine, community work, rural ministry, etc. Candidates will choose one or more of these fields for specialised training.

There are however basic elements in training for the ministry which necessarily form part of the studies of all candidates for the auxiliary as for the stipendiary ministry. These include the Bible, with emphasis on the exegetical study of set texts; Church History: an outline, with special study of one period; Christian Theology; Pastoral and Social Theology, including practical training in worship, preaching, communication, evangelism, Christian education and pastoral counselling, and the devotional life; other world views, including the major world religions; Christian ethics; and an introduction to the forces, pressures, and conflicts facing the individual and society in the modern world.

Such a programme is necessarily extremely demanding; but the challenges before the minister today make some study in all these fields essential. It is by such study that the candidate is initiated into the wealth of Christian belief and understanding and equipped to initiate those to whom he will minister. Some candidates will see their specific ministry as requiring further study in other fields than in those mentioned above.

It should be made clear that this summary of elements to be included says nothing about *method*. Specific projects may be mounted which cut across traditional subject boundaries, and inductive forms of learning in which a student is helped to make discoveries for himself, may play a large part.

3. This course of training will be comparable to that of the Open University courses, which often require a commitment of as much as 10 hours a week, over a period of 3-4 years. Exemptions will be granted in respect of previous academic achievements, and of personal experience and ability.
4. The first year in each case will be regarded as probationary.

VI ADMINISTRATION

Administration will be the responsibility of the several Councils of the Church, as set out below, and will require the appointment of a National Training Officer, Group Tutors, and Personal Tutors, whose functions are described under the Councils to which they will be responsible:

A. National

1. The Ministerial Training Committee will be responsible for the training of Auxiliary Ministers.
2. It will set up a permanent Auxiliary Ministers sub-committee, which shall include a qualified person in each major subject, and some Group Tutors.
3. The tasks of the sub-committee will be:
 - (a) to supervise the setting up of the course, including the training of Group Tutors, and the availability of financial resources;
 - (b) to provide the basic course units;
 - (c) to set and maintain national standards;
 - (d) to decide whether existing courses may be recognised as alternatives for parts of the course, and what exemptions may be granted to individual candidates;
 - (e) to ensure that the agreed selection procedures for all candidates are observed;
 - (f) to adjudicate whether or not a candidate has successfully completed the course;
 - (g) to issue a certificate to those who have successfully completed the course.
4. A National Training Officer, will be designated who will service the Auxiliary Ministry sub-committee.

B. Provincial

Provincial Synods will be responsible for:

1. the acceptance of candidates for the Auxiliary Ministry as outlined above under 'selection procedures'.
2. The oversight of all candidates by annual report and interview and to determine their eligibility for a call.
3. The appointment of Group Tutors in consultation with the National Training Officer and the District Council concerned.
4. The functions of Group Tutors:
 - (i) to conduct regular (monthly) tutorials for Auxiliary Ministry candidates in a province or region;
 - (ii) to promote and co-ordinate the training of Auxiliary Ministers;
 - (iii) to assess practical training;
 - (iv) to recommend equivalent courses to any of the national study units from resources in their province or region; e.g. Anglican Diocesan; Extra Mural University; Open University; or Polytechnic, etc.;
 - (v) to share in the appointment and supervision of personal tutors with District Council and the Provincial Moderators.

C. District Councils will be responsible for:

1. The concurrence to a call of an Auxiliary Minister to a local church or group of churches, and for his appointment to situations of missionary outreach (III 3c) and

in such cases for his attachment to a local church.

2. The ordination and induction of Auxiliary Ministers in consultation with the local church and the Provincial Moderator.
3. The oversight of all 'team ministries' involving Auxiliary Ministers (and only in exceptional circumstances appointing Auxiliary Ministers to situations without adequate support from stipendiary ministers).
4. The review of all Auxiliary Ministers appointments before the end of the agreed term of service, on the understanding that they are renewable.
5. The initiation of negotiations in consultation with the Provincial Moderator for the provision of an Auxiliary Minister in a particular pastorate or for transfer to another pastorate.
6. The oversight of the necessary financial arrangements in each case.
7. The number of Auxiliary Ministers who will serve as members of the Council.
8. The appointment of personal tutors in consultation with the Provincial Moderator and Group Tutor.

The function of Personal tutors

To encourage and enable the candidate to tackle the course, in consultation with the Group Tutor.

- D. **The Local Church** will be responsible for:
1. The encouragement of suitably gifted members to offer for the Auxiliary Ministry.
 2. The call of one or more Auxiliary Ministers with the concurrence of the District Council;
 3. The support of any Auxiliary Ministers attached to the local church while engaged in outreach situations.
 4. The provision of finance to cover the agreed expenses of Auxiliary Ministers related to the church, after full consultation with the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee concerning 'allowable expenses' in relation to assessment quotas.

VII FINANCE

The following rough estimates of costs are on the basis that in the first year there could be an average of one candidate for the Auxiliary Ministry from each District.

1. Candidates will normally be expected to cover the expenses involved in books, travel etc.
2. In cases of need, churches/districts/Synods may be able and willing to cover a candidates costs, and those incurred by Group and Personal Tutors, and the monthly tutorials.
3. The Ministerial Training Fund will be the final resource under the aegis of the Ministerial Training Committee.

Possible costs 1979/80

Initial training of Group Tutors	
one week £30 per head – 12 tutors + 6 staff	£ 500
Group Tutorials	£ 900
Ecumenical and Extra-Mural courses	£ 6,750
Expenses (Tutors travel etc.)	£ 850
Student Grants	£ 1,000
	<hr/>
	£10,000
National Training Officer (part-time, pro tem)	£ 5,000
	<hr/>
	£15,000

VIII

The Church Life Department, through its Ministerial Training Committee, welcomes the guidelines worked out for the inauguration of an Auxiliary Ministry in the United Reformed Church and commends it to the General Assembly.

Because the guidelines have departed from the pattern as presented in the Scheme of Unification with the Churches of Christ, which was accepted at the Assembly of 1978, with the instruction to the Ministerial Training Committee to 'continue its planning for the selection, training and detailed consideration of the proposals and suggestions', the Department is advised now to present modified proposals to this Assembly, which can be ratified at the Assembly of 1980. In doing so it regrets the delay involved, and requests Assembly for permission to proceed with the initial planning and training which will be necessary, before the scheme can be implemented.

The Assembly:

- (i) resolves to amend the Scheme of Union, paragraph 7(21) by adding the following words:
'others serve as Auxiliary Ministers under the same oversight but continuing in other occupations and earning their livelihood within them':
 - (ii) accepts Appendix I, i.e. the paper printed as an appendix to the Church Life Department Report as working guidelines for the institution of this Auxiliary Ministry:
 - (iii) instructs the Ministerial Training Committee to proceed with the preparatory planning and training of tutors for an Auxiliary Ministry:
 - (iv) supports the inclusion in the Budget for 1981 of an additional sum of £15,000 in order to provide the necessary resources in that year and meanwhile authorises the Ministerial Training Committee to use resources in the Ministerial Training Fund.
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CHURCH AND SOCIETY DEPARTMENT

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

Secretary: The Revd John P. Reardon, BA

1. **Introduction** The winter of 1978/79 might be described as another 'winter of our discontent'. There is ample evidence of conflict in our world — in Iran, Rhodesia, Northern Ireland, South Africa. In our own towns and cities there is industrial confrontation and there is conflict on our streets spilling over from situations abroad. Discontent simmers under the surface and conflict creates uncertainty and insecurity that are explosive.

2. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you." We can go forward with inner peace and quiet confidence but, as Christians, we cannot withdraw from areas of conflict to some pietistic haven of personal security. Much of our report this year is concerned with situations of conflict and the search for peace. Whether overseas or at home we cannot simply pretend that there is no conflict. We must recognise our involvement in it and share in the search for an answer. The cross is set up in the midst of conflict but the cross is a costly answer. Jesus did not choose or teach an easy way. The Christian church has taken the cross at its symbol, the symbol of a costly sacrifice. We need to face conflicts knowing that to achieve peace will involve us also in costly sacrifices.

3. **The International Year of the Child** Children represent tomorrow's world. Yet what chance do we give them? What kind of world do they inherit? There are children in our country who grow up in social deprivation; some are in homes where violence is a regular occurrence. Some children in other parts of the world spend most of their childhood as refugees or as onlookers in civil war. It is vitally important that we should spend a year focussing on the needs and opportunities for the world's children. The United Nations Organisation has designated 1979 as the International Year of the Child, calling on every country to:

- (a) review their programmes for the promotion of the well-being of children, and to mobilize support for national and local action programmes according to the conditions, needs and priorities of each country;
- (b) heighten awareness of children's special needs among decision-makers and the public;
- (c) promote recognition of the vital link between programmes for children on the one hand, and economic and social progress on the other;
- (d) spur specific, practical measures — with achievable goals — to benefit children, in both the short and long term on the national level.

4. The Year offers opportunity for the churches to consider the provision of services for children in their own areas in cooperation with local statutory and voluntary organisations, and to study the plight and needs of children in the poorest countries. A paper to assist churches to study the themes of the Year was circulated in the January Information Service and further copies of that paper and other leaflets are available from the Department.

5. **Re-marriage** The Papers on 'Marriage, Divorce and Re-marriage' have been well received. We appreciate the care with which this subject has been debated in many Provinces, Districts and Church Meetings. This is an area of basic importance in our churches, and ministers in particular are often faced with difficult decisions about re-marriage. The Papers have helped to focus debate on the issues and we hope that there may be some positive results in provincial care and in local preparation for marriage and marriage enrichment courses.

6. The Department was asked to reconsider, in consultation with the Doctrine and Worship Committee, the service of 'Prayer for Release from Vows'. Accordingly, some of our members met with that Committee to hear their comments and then we considered what they had said.

7. The service of 'Prayer for Release from Vows' was devised to fit a particular pastoral situation of a person who feels the need to be released from the vow, after the irretrievable breakdown of marriage and when a legal divorce has been obtained. We feel that it is worth having a form of service which meets that need. At the same time, we accept that there are many other occasions when a service simply recognising the end of the previous marriage and seeking forgiveness for failure is all that is needed. We have devised another service which

includes those two elements. We suggest that both services are presented for consideration and use as part of the ongoing process of seeking to discover the mind of Christ as we meet varied pastoral needs.

8. Churches' Council on Alcohol and Drugs The Temperance Council of the Christian Churches, founded in 1915, has changed its name and constitution to become the Churches' Council on Alcohol and Drugs from 1st April 1979. By resolution of the URC Executive Committee it was agreed to apply for membership. Each denomination will be represented by six members on the General Council and have been asked to aim at a membership subscription of £250, as against £55 which we have previously given.

9. The Council will continue to concentrate on the use and abuse of alcohol, recognising that alcohol and drug abuse are similar and often related. The Council will aim to advance education in the effects of alcohol and other drugs and to discourage their excessive use. Research and campaigning will feature in the work of the Council, and it will continue to publish occasional booklets and reports. The Department will work with the new Council as it did with its predecessor and information about its activities can be obtained from the Departmental Secretary.

10. Churches' Council on Gambling Last year we reported on the proposals for winding up the work of the Churches' Council on Gambling and the formation of a National Council on Gambling. Although the Churches' Council has now ceased its work with the retirement of its Secretary, plans for a National Council seem unlikely to materialise, at least for the time being. The Churches cannot raise enough money between them to sustain the work and there are few other organisations willing to participate in a new Council. This is particularly serious during this interim period between the publication of the report of the Royal Commission on Gambling and any legislation based upon it. The Churches will now be ill-equipped to make a significant contribution to the public debate once legislation is announced.

11. Ecumenical Issues A wide range of social responsibility matters are currently being considered by the Division of Community Affairs of the British Council of Churches, and we play our part in this process. We mention four to give some idea of the range of ecumenical work in this field.

- (a) 'Energy for My Neighbour' was a programme issued by the World Council of Churches to focus Christian concern on the need to conserve and to share energy resources. There is now a Scottish Edition of this programme giving a more specifically British background to the material. The Programme gives helpful study material for church groups and sets out ways in which energy consumption can be reduced and practical projects of energy sharing be adopted.
- (b) The Nuclear Debate has occupied the BCC recently, particularly in the context of the Windscale Enquiry. David Gosling has prepared a Paper describing the BCC's involvement in this debate and the setting up of an Energy Group. This group will be based in the Midlands and will consider increasingly urgent urban problems posed by energy needs and broader national issues.
- (c) Economic issues are also under review in the Economic and Industrial Advisory Group. Last year a report, 'The Consumer Goods Society', was published to provoke discussion of the benefits and disadvantages of a society based on a high consumption of goods. Considering all the conflicts in our society arising from relative claims for higher income, fuelled by increasing costs in our consumer society, this booklet raises important issues. A follow-up is being prepared in a critique on 'Man the Producer'.
- (d) Electoral reform has been raised on several occasions but there has been no consensus of opinion. During this year there will be two Consultations arranged by the Division of Community Affairs to study the effects of the introduction of Proportional Representation in other countries and to assess the likely political effects and the ethical importance of electoral reform in this country. A URC member, Dr Clyde Binfield, will chair this exercise and we look forward to the resulting report.

12. World Development For ten years we have focussed a commitment to the world's poor in the World Development 1% Appeal, which has called on all members of our churches to give 1% of their annual take home pay, over and above all that they give to the church, world mission, Christian Aid and other causes. The money thus raised has been sent through

Christian Aid to overseas programmes to help the poor to help themselves, and ten percent has been given to the World Development Movement for political action and development education in this country to persuade public opinion and politicians that Britain must adopt more constructive overseas aid and trade policies.

13. The Appeal has raised close on a million pounds over the ten years and there is evidence from both Christian Aid and the World Development Movement that it has been put to good use in a world where millions of people suffer from a lack of the basic necessities for living and where the policies of governments like that of Britain still need to be challenged and changed. In 1977/78 the amount raised by the Appeal was £100,000 and by the end of January 1979 over £95,000 had been raised for the 1978/79 Appeal, with three months income still expected. However, less than a quarter of our churches present the Appeal to their members, thus effectively undermining its political impact.

14. Our Department has reconsidered the Appeal and our world development activities and with the help of a generous grant from the Ministry of Overseas Development, called a conference of representatives from District Councils in January to advise on the future emphasis that world development should have in the URC. In the light of that conference the Department believes that we should continue to mount the 1% Appeal, but that some changes in the allocations should be made to emphasize the educational aspects of world development.

15. It is proposed that all the monies going overseas should continue to be channelled through Christian Aid, the ecumenical agency which has worked so effectively on our behalf. Overseas allocations should increasingly be made to the overall programmes of Councils of Churches in the developing countries, rather than to specific projects, thus enabling Christians in these countries to determine their own priorities for development spending. Priority should be given to the poorest people to enable them to gain more control over their own lives through food production, health care, education, employment and social welfare schemes.

16. It is, however, increasingly obvious that all the efforts of the poor to help themselves are seriously undermined by the lack of progress in international negotiations about world development. In May 1979 the Fifth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development will meet in Manila, in the Philippines, but the issues from the previous meeting three years ago remain largely unresolved. International progress is tragically slow and developed nations must bear the brunt of criticism. Attitudes in the population of Britain are hostile or apathetic to the plight of the poor and world development does not have high priority in political debate and action. We, therefore, believe that a higher proportion of money raised for development should be used for education and political action in this country.

17. The Appeal has always had a strong political intention and allocations to the World Development Movement have helped that body to publish, campaign and lobby to try to improve Britain's contribution to the struggle against world poverty and economic injustice. Some churches have supported local world development groups working to influence local public opinion and politicians. In 1975 many of our churches cooperated with WDM in the Foodshare Campaign and successfully persuaded the Government to increase its fertiliser allocation to developing countries. Through the pressures of WDM supported by many other organisations, including the churches at local and national level, the Government's aid budget has continued to increase in cash terms during the past few years of financial stringency, and at the international level WDM has represented its supporters at major UN conferences to study and press for ways of breaking the confrontation between rich and poor nations.

18. Our churches could play a more important part in influencing public opinion than hitherto, and to equip them for that task we suggest that some of the money raised through the Appeal should be used to promote development education in the churches. We would also continue to support the World Development Movement and help our churches to engage in specific political action with its help. The promotion of the Appeal, hitherto financed by Christian Aid, should be paid for by the Appeal itself, otherwise other donors to Christian Aid are paying for our Appeal. We suggest that 15% of the money for the Appeal should be used to support the World Development Movement, the promotion of the Appeal and the educational programme for our churches. The Department would make decisions annually about the proportions of that fifteen per cent for these aspects of the world development programme.

19. When the Appeal was launched, in the optimism of the late 1960's, it was believed that world poverty was a particular challenge to Christian conscience. Jesus had had a special concern for the poor and the disadvantaged, and it was thought then that his concern should be reflected in the Christian's response to human need today in a self-tax which would be a sign of commitment to the human family and a sign of Christian hope and love which refuse to be paralysed in the face of human suffering and deprivation. We believe that the cynicism and pessimism of the late 1970's is an even greater challenge to Christians to reach out in love and hope, to those who continue to experience poverty, disease and hunger, through sharing of resources and through an attack on the causes of underdevelopment in the attitudes and policies of countries like our own.

20. **One World Week** Many churches in the URC took part in the One World Week in October 1978 in their localities. Over 500 places in England, Wales and Scotland observed the week, and local activities were varied, including church services, prayer vigils, public meetings, exhibitions, multi-cultural evenings and study groups. The Week, sponsored by the World Development Movement's Churches Committee, was financed by grants from the Ministry of Overseas Development, Christian Aid, and the main denominations, including the URC. A further One World Week is planned for 1979 from 21st-27th October, and this year's theme will be 'Just the Job' to concentrate on employment and unemployment in Britain and in developing countries. The theme offers an interesting opportunity for world development education and the Department urges our churches to participate fully and imaginatively in it. Further details can be obtained from the One World Week Director, 240 Ferndale Road, London SW9.

21. **Disarmament** In 1978 the United Nations Organisation held its much heralded Special Session on Disarmament. A second Session will probably be held in 1981 to review progress. Between now and the time of the second Session the Church should share in the general public debate of the need for disarmament and possible measures which could be agreed.

22. The first Session has made a small beginning on a tremendous task. We need not be disappointed that these first steps were so tentative provided the second Session is able to go much further.

23. Amongst the successes of the first Session were the general recognition of the importance of the subject, since it was agreed that in the long term it is a question of disarmament or annihilation; France and China took part in disarmament debates for the first time; it was agreed to set up an Advisory Board, to begin a study of the link between disarmament and development, and to revise the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva so that it will be more public and more representative. The work of non-governmental organisations was recognised, as was the value of unilateral measures in disarmament.

24. On the debit side, there was no comprehensive test ban treaty agreed and the non-proliferation treaty was not accepted by a number of countries. No time limit was given for agreements in the Final Document and there was a difference of opinion on whether nuclear or conventional weapons should be reduced first.

25. In his speech to the Special Session, Dr Philip Potter, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches said:

"Disarmament is not the affair of statesmen and experts only, but of every man and woman of every nation. We are dealing here with the issues of life and death for human kind. They are not technical, but human and therefore political issues. This means that every effort must be made to dispel the ignorance, complacency and fear which prevail. Political decisions can only be made when people are fully aware of the facts and are enabled to discern the options before them. The churches have a very distinctive role to play because they have the criterion of faith in the God of hope whose purpose is that all should be responsible for each other in justice and peace. Therefore they will continue to rouse the conscience of people and encourage them to demonstrate by attitude, word and act that peace and justice are not ideals to be cherished but realities to be achieved."

26. Dr Potter pledged the involvement of the churches in the search for disarmament. There is much to be done before the next UN Session and the church can help by presenting and debating some of the moral questions involved. Is it right for the world to spend four hundred

thousand million dollars a year in military expenditure when there are fifteen hundred million people with no effective medical service and five hundred and seventy million people seriously undernourished? Are we as followers of Jesus content to accept the world's assumptions in terms of settling disputes with force? Can we continue to put national sovereignty before the need to realize a concept of world citizenship?

27. In Britain there is plenty of scope in following up our own Government's proposal at the first Session. Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary attended the Session and proposed measures for strengthening the role of the United Nations in peace-making and peace-keeping. We have been in correspondence with the Foreign Secretary on the question of following up the British proposal and were encouraged to receive a copy of Dr David Owen's speech to the UN General Assembly (27 September 1978) expressing our Government's commitment to the concept of UN peace-keeping and making specific offers of assistance in peace-keeping operations.

28. The Society of Friends has published an Information Pack, 'Disarmament — time for action not words'. There is much basic information contained in this document, reasonably priced at 30p; District committees and Church Meetings which want to give serious consideration to the issues raised would do well to use such material. The time between now and the next Special Session should be used to familiarise the public with the basic issues and the urgency of the task before us. By conveying the conclusions reached by study groups and committees to Members of Parliament we can help to ensure that our Government plays a full and constructive part in future Disarmament Sessions.

29. **Human Rights** Following the resolution at last year's Assembly, a small Working Party has looked at the question of human rights and URC responsibility in this field. We feel that we should play our part in ecumenical work on human rights. There are special links between our church and other churches which enable us to take special initiatives on some issues; our hope is that such links might be developed. In the past we have engaged in special projects on human rights when there has been a missionary contact (as in Taiwan) and we feel that there could be more creative links with the Reformed Churches of Eastern Europe.

30. Other ecumenical bodies help to bring Christians of east and west together, such as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches; our participation in such bodies is an expression of fellowship with and concern for those churches.

31. In the sphere of human rights we should make use of the expertise and information services of other agencies such as Amnesty International, the BCC Human Rights Forum and the 35's Group.

32. We must avoid political selectivity, pressing equally for human rights whether the repression is from the 'right' or the 'left'. Our concern should find expression in a number of differing areas round the world. At the same time, we have to be selective in the work we can effectively carry. Our links with Reformed Churches in Eastern Europe and the current state of affairs on human rights in those countries will help us in determining where we can make our most effective contribution.

33. There are various ways in which we can express concern on human rights, both as individuals and as churches. Church members on tours in Eastern Europe can make a point of attending church services. Believers in those countries can receive great encouragement from the presence of visiting Christians even when there is no verbal communication. As churches we might emulate the Netherlands Reformed Churches which send Easter greetings each year to selected prisoners of conscience. Church Meetings can learn more about human rights deprivation by inviting speakers from Amnesty, the 35's and similar groups.

34. We hope to give guidance to local churches when there are situations in which we as a Church have a special contribution to make. We encourage local churches and Districts to discuss human rights and to seek to be better informed and more active in giving support to sister churches in countries where denial of human rights is all too common.

35. **South Africa** In general we have continued to express our concern on Investments in South Africa through the work of Christian Concern for Southern Africa. Its latest report, (British Banks and South Africa), provoked a major policy debate in the CCSA Council. The

Report is closely reasoned and the conclusions flow from the argument so those who seek to understand the conclusions should read the Report as a whole or a fairly full summary of it. In the Introduction the conclusions of the Report are summed up as follows:

"We conclude by proposing a frame of reference for British banking in South Africa in which the principal feature is the achievement of equal political rights for all by peaceful means over the ensuing decade. The application of this framework to the report's findings lead to the conclusion that British banking relations have done more to sustain the status quo in South Africa than to disturb it. This suggests either that banking efforts to promote change have to be intensified or that British banking relations with South Africa should cease. It is acknowledged that the first option offers the possibility of material advances for certain sections of the black community, but it is argued that it would do little to further rapid political change. While the second option could entail burdens for the black community, it does offer the possibility of generating greater pressure for peaceful change in the short term."

36. The Report ends by setting out recommendations to the British Government, to British banks and to the Churches on the action which would have to be taken in order to give effect to the conclusions. These include:

- The termination of guarantees and credits for British exports to South Africa.
- The halting of loans to South Africa by British banks and the divestment of their South African interests.
- The promotion of wide debate by and in the British churches to stimulate national awareness of the issues and wide support for the proposed actions.

37. Part of this programme is not new to us, since there has been a campaign concerned with loans to South Africa and a resolution to the Midland Bank AGM in April 1976, opposing loans to the South African Government or its agencies, was sponsored by Church shareholders, including the Church Commissioners, the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. The Banking Report goes further in that it favours withdrawal of British banks from the South African scene. The Report looks at British banking involvement in South Africa and reaches the overall conclusion:

"This is that the current contribution made by British banks to meeting the needs of the black community in South Africa, whether in their primary role as bankers or in their subsidiary capacities as employers or public benefactors, does not constitute a sufficiently significant challenge to the status quo to compensate for the very considerable level of actual and implied support that their involvement provides for the maintenance of white supremacy and its apartheid policies. In short, British banking relations do more to sustain the status quo in South Africa than to change it."

38. Two policy options are then given as that of continued involvement with a substantially increased effort by British banks to help bring about a speedy and orderly transition to majority rule; or to sever all existing banking links. After examination of both options, it favours the latter whilst recognising that some people, including members of church bodies supporting CCSA, will favour continuing a policy of constructive engagement.

39. The United Reformed Church at present favours the policy of constructive engagement, but we recognise that the practical steps we have taken to implement this policy have been limited. We must therefore give serious consideration to this Report. We must ask whether the time-table of change in South Africa will allow change to come peacefully on the present basis or whether more radical non-violent action needs to be taken from within and without in order to achieve change without violence.

40. **Bingham Report** Many people have been greatly distressed by the revelations made in the Bingham Report which show that oil sanctions have been evaded, seemingly with the knowledge, if not with the consent, of government ministers. Our Department discussed the possibility of taking up the issues directly with the companies concerned, Shell and BP, but we decided that the first step was a proper Parliamentary enquiry to discover the extent of Government involvement. You will see in Executive minutes the resolution which expressed

our concern. The Government has subsequently announced that there will be an Enquiry and its findings will be made public, though the evidence will not.

41. A group of people representing a number of missionary societies and denominational committees met to consider following up the Bingham Report in other ways. It was decided to try to present a resolution to the Shell AGM censuring the directors of the company for the supply of oil to Rhodesia in defiance of sanctions and calling on them to abide by sanctions while they remain in force and to disassociate themselves from any subsidiary refusing to honour sanctions. The Department approached the Finance Department in the hope that the URC could support such a resolution.

42. **Rhodesia and the Programme to Combat Racism** The Programme to Combat Racism is concerned with situations in many different countries but there is no doubt that the grant to the Patriotic Front has aroused more debate about its operations than any other grant it has given.

43. First let us say something about Rhodesia and the Internal Settlement. The BCC has issued a number of study documents about this situation over the years and we have taken our own stand as a denomination. In general terms we have agreed with the principle of no independence without majority rule and this, together with other principles, has been the basis of negotiation by successive British Governments. The Internal Settlement gave grounds for hope because it resulted from round table discussions by black and white and gave the appearance of an agreed settlement for shared government. To some extent it does so but there are two major problems. The first is that the black leaders had been forced to concede a number of basic convictions in order to bring about any settlement, and in so doing, they have lost the support of many people. Second, although the proposed settlement claims to give majority rule, the basic principle set out by the British Government and looked for by the international community, there are conditions attached to this. If, as Christians, we seek to make a judgment on the Internal Settlement, it is of great importance that we understand the issues involved. The BCC publications on Rhodesia and a report recently published by the Catholic Institute for International Relations, 'Rhodesia after the Internal Settlement', are helpful in such a study.

44. The Programme to Combat Racism was set up by the WCC as an expression of support for all those who are caught up in a struggle against racism. The WCC realised that for years the Church had voiced its opposition to racism but did little in practical terms to help victims of racism. The Programme has a Special Fund which gives grants for humanitarian purposes, which include concern for the health, education and legal defence of victims of racist oppression and for their families. Such grants may be given to organisations resisting racism in violent ways but this in no way expresses support for the use of violence or any financial contribution to violence. The grants are made specifically for non-violent purposes. Grants are relatively small and much greater sums are required for such welfare purposes as the liberation groups in Rhodesia have. The groups involved in violence have access to funds and sources of supply for arms which rule out any necessity to break their word about the use for humanitarian purposes of the small sums provided by the Programme.

45. The Executive, in the resolution brought by the Chairmen of the two Departments most closely involved in the subject, reaffirmed support of the general aim of the Programme, which is to oppose racism and its support of those who in non-violent ways strive to eradicate racism. In this, we have simply underlined the position we have taken since debating the issue when the Programme was set up. During the years since then we have acted as a channel, sending monies received specifically for that purpose either directly to the PCR or through the BCC. We make no direct grant from central funds to the Special Fund and we do not propose that we should do so; however we draw to the attention of our membership the existence of the Fund, the nature and reasons for its projects and invite any who wish to do so to send donations for the Fund to Church House.

46. The rights and wrongs of using violence to bring about liberation is not the issue here. We have debated that issue on various occasions and it is clear that our membership is divided on the issue. The issue here is the measure of our concern for victims of violence in a racist situation. Help for those who are hungry or ill in refugee camps, education for those who want to know how to work effectively for a just and free society, legal help for those who are harassed or put in prison because of racial prejudice; these are the areas of concern for the Programme to Combat Racism.

47. Those who wish to study the issues will find that a useful set of Papers is available from the Community and Race Relations Unit of the BCC. This is an area of conflict not only in Rhodesia, but also in our own society as people take differing views on the issue. People have a right to differing views, but as Christians we also have a responsibility to find out the facts of the situation and to relate the situation to the teaching of our Lord before we speak and act.

48. **European Parliament** On June 7th 1979 the electorate of this country will vote for 81 representatives to a European Parliament of 410 members, elected to reflect the concern and commitment of over 250 million West European electors. We believe that it is the duty of all Christians to be active, enthusiastic and responsible participants in this extension of parliamentary democracy to an international level for the first time. That does not mean that we support all that the EEC has done or that we have unrealistic hopes about its future. We do believe that the Community could have an important and creative role in Western Europe and in the rest of the world in the next decades. It is vitally important that the churches help their members to consider some of the big issues that are implicit in the election. To this end the BCC has produced a leaflet offering questions to be put to candidates about such issues as democratic control of the Community's policies, human rights, environment, world development, relations with Eastern Europe, and the enlargement of the EEC to include Greece, Spain and Portugal. The World Development Movement has also provided a study paper on the relationship of the EEC to developing countries, as a contribution to the election. We commend the election and these papers to the attention of all our churches in the hope that they will urge Christian participation in the election campaign and at the ballot box.

49. **Faith, Science and the Future** From July 12th-24th 1979 the World Council of Churches is holding a major conference in Massachusetts to continue its study of the theme "The Struggle for the Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society". The Conference will bring together some 400 scientists, theologians, technologists and people from other disciplines, to consider the theological and ethical dilemmas posed by modern biological research and the development of nuclear energy. It will consider the development of appropriate technologies in different kinds of societies; the ethical and social issues involved in the transfer of technology between rich and poor countries; the re-examination of traditional political and economic principles, policies and systems in the light of the search for a sustainable society; and the consequences of these issues for Christian social thought and witness. The URC will be represented by Professor Geoffrey Dimbleby, of London University. A book of Preparatory Readings for the Conference, entitled 'Faith, Science and the Future', can be obtained from the British Council of Churches, price £4.65. It contains questions for study and discussion and the Department would welcome comments on it from individuals and church groups.

50. **Conclusion** This Report gives some idea of the wide spectrum of concerns of the Department. We continue to be closely involved in a similar range of issues in the Divisions of the British Council of Churches and we are grateful that a great number of issues, which would be beyond our competence to tackle, are considered in those Divisions and we are able to share in the benefits of that work. We are grateful to Provincial Synods and Districts for the careful consideration they give to our reports and for the way in which some of them set up Working Parties on particular social issues and produce reports that are helpful to the rest of us. A Report on 'The Use of Sunday', produced by the United Reformed Church in the Channel Islands, is an example of a local initiative by one congregation. Our Department has given consideration to priorities in terms of what work we can tackle but we welcome suggestions of work that would be helpful from member churches and Synods. We hope that our Reports and Study Papers go some way in helping our membership in the tasks of social responsibility and of proclaiming Christ in word and action.

51. **Postscript: Department Chairman** With this Report the Department's Chairman, the Revd John Johansen-Berg, ends his term of office, which he has served since the URC was formed in October 1972. John Johansen-Berg has made a significant contribution to the Church through the enthusiasm and insights which he has brought to the Department. His presentation of reports to the Assembly and his service to the churches have placed us all in his debt. The Department places on record its gratitude for his outstanding leadership over seven years.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly *commends* the annual World Development 1% Appeal to all member churches, urging them to present it to their own membership for individual response; and *agrees* that 85% of all money raised should be used for overseas development programmes through cooperation with Christian Aid, and that 15% of all money raised should be used in this country to finance development education, the promotion of the Appeal, and political action for world development including support of the World Development Movement.
2. The Assembly *commends* the One World Week 1979 to the member churches, urging them to use it as an opportunity for development education and ecumenical cooperation.
- 3.(a) The Assembly *urges* HM Government to continue to negotiate, as a matter of urgency, for a comprehensive test ban treaty with regard to nuclear weapons; to continue to work for mutual and balanced force reductions in Europe; to press for reductions in stockpiles of nuclear and conventional weapons; to investigate the possibilities of redirecting some of our own arms expenditures into areas of social need at home and into world development projects abroad; to set up research projects into the use of unarmed units in civil conflicts and in certain other confrontations where at present armed units are used in default of any alternative being available.
 - (b) The Assembly *urges* Districts and Church Meetings to study the issues raised by the UN Special Session on Disarmament and draws attention to the Information Pack on the subject (published by the Society of Friends).
- 4.(a) The Assembly, recognising that the policy of constructive economic engagement with South Africa is not sufficiently effective in bringing about social, economic and political changes which are fundamental, and realising that the seriousness and urgency of the situation require more fundamental changes in such areas if an escalation of violence in Southern Africa is to be avoided, *agrees* that the possibility of disengagement should be considered carefully, *recommends* Provinces to make possible the study of the collection of Papers on Investment prepared by the Church and Society Department to summarise current research reports on the issues, and to consider the implications of the various options.
 - (b) Assembly *requests* the Treasurership Committee to write to all banks in which the URC has shares to request them to halt loans to the South African Government and its Agencies.
 - (c) Assembly, in view of the statement made in November 1977 by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Denis Healey, giving an assurance that HM Government intended to discourage investment by British industry in South Africa, *urges* HM Government to implement such a policy, including the ending of export guarantees and credits for British exports to South Africa.
5. The Assembly *urges* its member churches to encourage their congregations to consider the important issues raised in the direct elections to the European Parliament and to play a full part in the election process.

WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

1. There are 'work in progress' signs all over this year's departmental committee reports. No startling development is recorded but the Assembly is asked to give its mind to a pattern of witness and service which is central to the task of the URC.

2. At home the work of multilateral conversation has passed into a more concentrated phase concerned with convenanting in both Wales and England. In both cases issues concerned with ministry, and in particular with the ministry of bishops, are beginning to come into focus here in Britain as formerly they did in South and North India, Pakistan and Bangladesh — issues needing solution in order that the churches may move forward into unity of life and mission.

3. The URC's relationships with churches abroad, particularly with our partners in CWM, carry with them a mutual responsibility in mission. It is important that the churches in Britain should learn from churches elsewhere that the quest for unity cannot be successfully pursued unless in the context of a commitment to mission, and, conversely, that a commitment to mission, as, for instance, in our new towns, involves a willingness to unite with others. CWM, the Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism and the Churches' Council for Covenanting are all parts of one response to the present situation.

4. One of the obvious spheres for learning from Christians in other places is that of mission and other faiths. This is an area where the URC has been a pioneer in Britain; we can take pleasure in the way in which this concern has now been taken up more broadly within the British Council of Churches through a committee in its Conference for World Mission (CFWM as distinct from CWM — what a problem initials are!). Our own Mission and Other Faiths Committee is in process of revising its handbook of advice for our local churches.

5. The Personnel Committee is also nearing the end of an editorial task in setting down ways by which men and women can offer service across the boundaries of churches and nations. The Communication Group, reflecting the personal world-wide sharing in which we all have our part to play, has published a second set of P.U.B. programmes entitled "Exploring Christian Service".

6. All this work, as described in more detail below, makes up the continuous role of the WCM Department and its officers. We shall try to give the Assembly some insight into ways in which the programmes impinge on the life of our local churches.

Martin H. Cressey, *Chairman*

Boris Anderson, *Secretary*

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK AT HOME COMMITTEE

7. What sort of Church must the United Reformed Church become in order to play its part in the mission of God in Britain in the last decades of the twentieth century? What sort of local churches doing what style of thing does the task of communicating the Gospel in the diverse communities of our nation require?

8. These questions run through all the committee's work. We feel that some of the answers to them are already emerging, whilst for other answers we seek and quest and listen.

9. **Decision Making in Common** We need to be a Church which can reach decisions about e.g., Ministerial deployment, use of buildings etc., in much closer co-operation with other churches. The Committee has been trying to build up a picture of how we can do this in Provinces and Districts so as to help a more effective decision making everywhere. We have continued to encourage the appointment of Ecumenical Officers and Churches' County Committees.

10. Churches Council for Covenanting in England With the reception of the definitive responses to the Ten Propositions, the CUC had finished its work. Now those churches who felt able, even with qualification, to affirm the Ten Propositions have formed the Churches' Council for Covenanting in England. They have invited those churches which could not affirm all the propositions to join them as observers. The Council's task is to enable the churches to strive together to draw up a form of Covenant which will result in the mutual recognition of ministry and members so that the churches of Britain can serve and witness more effectively. In the Autumn we shall hold a Consultation of representatives of every District with committee members and the United Reformed Church members of the Churches' Council for Covenanting in England. This consultation will consider regional oversight in the URC and will study the pamphlet "Personal Episcopacy — a URC View", which the General Assembly asked us to prepare and which has already been issued to the Church.

11. Council for World Mission We are sure that we need to be a Church which is a full partner in the Council for World Mission in receiving as well as in giving. Our leaflet "Sharing in Mission" indicates some of the ways in which we can draw upon the resource of World Church personnel in our local mission in Britain.

12. Rural Areas Our study over the years in the field of rural evangelism and rural ecumenism has led us to the conviction that a Rural Correspondent who would keep in touch with thinking and experience in rural mission and liaise closely with the Rural Ministries Group and the Arthur Rank Centre at the National Agricultural Centre at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, could make an important contribution to the effectiveness of the United Reformed Church. We are consulting with the Deployment Committee and with the Moderators to try to discover how such a person possibly based in a limited scope rural pastorate would be found and appointed.

13. Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism Through the reports of our members on the Initiative Committee and the Council of Reference, our Committee has been monitoring the emergence of the Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism. We are determined to help our church play a vigorous and thoughtful part in this nationwide initiative up and down the land. A contribution of £1,000 has been sent by the United Reformed Church to further the initiative. Now we are inviting the Assembly by resolution to encourage all of our churches to engage in local initiatives and to avail themselves of the resources available through the Nationwide Initiative.

14. Models for Mission Study of a confidential report on the Skelmersdale Ecumenical Centre and the Dansholme Ecumenical Parish has stimulated the Committee to grapple with the criteria for evaluating local ecumenical projects. This has convinced us that we need to become much more a Church that knows what it is doing. We need to grow in awareness of how traditional or other sorts of models of church life shape our policies and how our policies assume certain models and objectives for church life. We are continuing to stimulate debate in the Church on how small churches can grow in mission. We also ask ourselves such questions as, "Is the Church planned into the life of the new community by the thoughtful and caring provision of plant and professionalism or does it take shape in the hands of people who come to live in that community, seeking aid to create the plant and acquire the professional leadership to become the sort of things they want?" We hope in the coming Assembly year to allocate Committee time for a more extended quest in this field of models for mission.

David E. Marsden, *Chairman*
Arthur L. Macarthur, *Secretary*

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK ABROAD COMMITTEE

15. Council for World Mission The fact that the Unified Appeal target was achieved means that we are able to meet our full financial commitment to CWM in its new guise. The Committee welcomed the Revd Lee Ching Chee, Education Secretary of CWM at one of its meetings, and the Revd Paul Rakotoarivony, who spent five months working in the church at Upton-by-Chester. A consultation was held in June for those sent from churches overseas to work in connection with URC. Many factors which would lead to a satisfactory orientation were dealt with. In July a further consultation on CWM in Britain was attended by

members of all URC departments and dealt with the pastoral financial and administrative questions raised. URC representatives attended a consultation of the CWM European region in November. This meeting included members of the U.K. churches and also the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. In information and education work the objective is to make the world church real to church members and help them to feel part of it. A number of publications and kits have been prepared and are selling well. Selected congregations have been asked to give their own judgement as to their success or failure in missionary education. The Swanwick Conference is now arranged by the U.K. members of CWM Swanwick 1979 was fully booked and accounted a good conference on the theme "Joy".

16. North America A delegation of three leading members of the United Church of Christ in the USA met URC representatives in July to renew relationships between the two churches. A special URC group has been studying ways of widening contacts with churches in North America and the numerous members of the Reformed tradition living in this country.

17. Overseas Students A beginning has been made in creating an Overseas Students Hardship Fund. The Committee has spent a good deal of time thinking how best overseas students might be helped within and beyond the context of existing chaplaincies. The Committee recommended to CWM that a grant be made to the World Student Christian Federation, feeling that CWM might be well placed to judge the important and effectiveness of WSCF under new leadership in developing nations.

18. Europe The 21st anniversary of the URC's covenant with the United Protestant Church of the Palatinate was celebrated in both countries in June and September. A joint theological conference on the theme "Covenant" was also held at Landau in June. The Evangelical Church of the Union, with Synods and congregations in both German Republics, has expressed a desire to deepen its relationships with the URC. The Chairman of the Committee represented the URC at a ceremony to make the union of the three Belgian Protestant Churches in Brussels in November. A grant was made to the Annual Anglo-French meeting, this time on the theme "Dying and Rising" in which a number of URC ministers and lay people have been participating for a number of years. The Committee has taken a number of steps aimed at promoting closer contacts on both the personal and official level between members of the URC and the churches of Europe.

19. World Alliance of Reformed Churches The World Alliance, shaken over the last few years by currency fluctuations, ended its financial year without a deficit, and looks to the future with more confidence than a few years ago. A European Council is planned for Rumania in 1980, and a World Assembly in 1982. A number of reports on ecumenical problems, the results of lengthy study and negotiation, are now available, and should be of considerable assistance to churches in their local situations. The Evangelical Church of Spain, now in a freer position than for many years, is looking forward to closer co-operation with the URC.

20. Ghana The Secretary was able to attend the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and to renew contacts with that church.

21. Korea A grant has been made to the News Sheet "Korea Communique" one of the main independent sources of information for Korean Christians.

22. General Remarks The Committee has covered a good deal of ground, and the opportunities are endless. Whilst feeling that certain existing areas of concern must continue to have sustained attention, the committee is anxious to remain open to new opportunities and needs, and to deal with them within the limitations of its resources. At the present time, communication is of great importance. Beyond the inevitable formal work of any committee, it is clear that priorities must relate to the concern on the local and individual level to bring churches and individuals together in love and fellowship in their work, worship, hopes and aspirations.

John E. Gilbey, *Chairman*

Boris Anderson, *Secretary*

MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS COMMITTEE

23. The Committee has concentrated its attention this year upon the task of giving concrete expression to the general definition of policy and objectives approved by the 1978 Assembly. In light of various reports reaching the Committee from local churches which are encountering the complex and often controversial issues of relationships with people of other faiths, Committee members are agreed on the need for two main areas of advance:

i) **Education through study projects**

- a) A new four-part information and study handbook (to replace the 1974 manual on *The Local Churches Approach to those of Other Faiths*) is in preparation, intended for publication in early 1980.
- b) Following the publication of the handbook, information packs (including visual, literary and practical aids) on the different religious groups in Britain will be prepared.
- c) Plans are in hand for an overnight conference in October 1979 to which we hope to gather a group of mainly URC people to discuss the development of the Committee's interests in Judaism; this will be the first of a regular annual conference on issues relating to our relationships with people of other faiths.
- d) The Committee will encourage and enable members of the local churches to take advantage of the many study opportunities which other organisations are making available (e.g. on religious education in a multi-faith society; social and theological issues; specialist study programmes).

ii) **Education through pilot projects** Through the **Information Service** the Committee has drawn attention to several examples of what particular churches are already doing in terms of ministry in multi-faith communities. The Committee will continue to encourage and, as appropriate, assist such "pilot projects", and in addition will try to stimulate the development of new projects, particularly in urban centres, through research, visitation and occasional small grants.

24. The Committee feels well-equipped in **human resources**, from both within the denomination and through ecumenical links, to sustain the planned advances:

- a) Each Committee member has assumed a "consultant" responsibility for particular areas of concern, and the consultants are learning to be in touch with local situations, and are eager to make their knowledge and experience available through writing, visitations, etc.
- b) The Committee works closely with the BCC Committee on Relations with People of Other Faiths, and is grateful to be able to call on the assistance of the BCC Secretary and other BCC committee members.
- c) The Committee is in touch with several useful resource people in local URC churches, many of whom are returned CWM missionaries eager to share the benefits of inter-faith experience overseas with congregations at home; the Committee urges the need for continuing imagination in the placement of returned missionaries with experience in this field.

25. The Committee continues to give attention to the desirability of including secular ideologies within its mandate. It is still unclear how this may best be done, but provisional arrangements have been made with the existing consultants.

David A. Kerr, *Chairman*
Boris Anderson, *Secretary*

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

26. **Missionary Regulations** During the year the Committee has completed two publications "URC Missionaries serving overseas through the CWM: Sending Church Responsibilities and

Service Regulations", and "Missionaries from overseas serving within the URC through the CWM: Receiving Church Responsibilities and Regulations". Each Province has a copy. The regulations may seem formal and impersonal, but we believe that they are the essential framework within which we exercise our care as a church for people. Missionaries, at home and overseas, are part of the church where they are, and need its care and support.

27. Missionaries from Overseas An exciting development subsequent upon the re-organisation of CWM is the possibility of missionaries from overseas serving within the URC. There are four areas where such missionaries might be particularly useful:

- i) In the white homelands where an international outlook may be lacking.
- ii) In ecumenical team ministries where the presence of an overseas member on the team would strengthen its total witness.
- iii) In racially and/or religiously mixed areas, where an all white ministry would be an anomaly.
- iv) Work among immigrants and overseas students, involved directly with such groups or acting as a bridge between them and local churches.

There are indications that serious thinking about such appointments is going on at several points in the URC and the Committee have been delighted to accept one well thought out application from a local church. We also commend the initiative of the Upton-by-Chester church in welcoming the Revd Paul Rakotoarivony of Madagascar, and are grateful to them for their useful evaluation of the experience which they have made available to the Committee. We urge World Church and Mission Committees to consider whether they are able to play a part in this exciting development in our church life. We envisage that most posts for missionaries from overseas will be funded by the church at local, district or provincial levels or from non-church sources (e.g., for community work in multi-racial areas) or a combination of both, but we feel that nationally the URC should support certain appointments which meet all criteria except the availability of local finance. We invite the Assembly to instruct the Deployment Committee to take this into account as they determine the number of special ministries supported by the church. (See Resolution Below).

28. Students from Overseas At any time the URC is responsible for a number of students from overseas, mostly church leaders, who are studying in the U.K., usually at St. Andrew's Hall, to fit them better for service at home. In vacations we try to introduce them to the life of the URC and are always glad to receive offers of hospitality from local churches or Districts, particularly for Christmas and Easter.

29. Making World Mission Real The value of the old style missionary deputation was that World Mission became real as you met people involved in it. Such deputations are now hardly ever arranged, but there are plenty of people around, other than missionaries on furlough, who can help in that way: students from other churches (see 28 above), missionaries from overseas (see 27 above), young people who have gone on the Zambia and South India journeys, missionaries returned from Service overseas, expatriates resident in the U.K. We urge that such people be used to bring home to people the reality of the world mission of the Church.

30. People The following have been accepted as missionaries to serve overseas:

- The Revd Norman and Mrs Olive Kemp – (Samoa – Pastoral Work)
- Mr Michael Pillora – (Papua New Guinea – Community Work)
- Mr Colin and Mrs Jill Potts – (Samoa – Education)

The following have been commissioned to serve with other churches of CWM:

- The Revd Raymond and Mrs Mandy Adams at Putney URC on 10th December 1978 for service with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.
- The Revd Derek and Mrs Carole Lindfield at Pulborough URC on 14th November 1978 for service in Botswana with the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.
- The Revd David Vincent at Cheam URC on 11th December 1978 for service with the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.
- Mr Michael Pillora at Carrs Lane URC on 17th December 1978 for service with the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

The Revd Norman and Mrs Olive Kemp at St Albans URC on 7th January 1979 for service with the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa.

The following have completed their service:

The Revd Derek and Mrs Anne Wales from Zambia to the United Church, Winchester.

The Revd Richard and Mrs Mary Hambly from Samoa to Prenton URC.

Mr Roger and Mrs Christina Burgess from Botswana to teaching in Cheshire.

The Revd Robert and Mrs Joan Banham from Zambia to oversight Watling URC, Mill Hill.

The Revd Dr Robert and Mrs Myrtle McKelvey from South Africa to the Congregational College, Manchester.

The following students from overseas are supported by the URC:

The Revd Chung-Jen Su of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

The Revd Hong Sung Bang of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.

The Revd Jonah Masaka of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (Mashonaland Presbytery).

All at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak.

A full list of URC missionaries appears in the Year Book.

A.J. Coates, *Chairman*

I.L. Thomas, *Secretary*

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly welcomes the report on the first steps in the Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism and the general direction which it is being given, urges local churches to take an active part in shaping the enterprise, to use the resources being made available by the Initiative Committee, and to co-operate with area committees as they are set up, by supplying information and in other ways.
2. The Assembly invites the Council for World Mission to send representatives to visit the URC for consultation about the mission of the church in this country.
3. The Assembly agrees that the present office of Consultant on Jewish Affairs be now designated as Adviser on Jewish Affairs with an ex-officio place on the Mission and Other Faiths Committee; and that the Revd R.L. Lewis serve as Adviser for the period 1979-81.
4. The Assembly urges the Development and Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to find means in terms of quotas and finance to support three special full-time ministries of missionaries from overseas within the URC in England and Wales.

WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX 1

COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

1. To suggest that we are able to distinguish failures and successes in our new life of CWM would be claiming too much. But if we are to report all then we can refer to the things that happen as we hoped they would and those that seem to run counter to our hopes and plans. We know that we are learning to trade the purposes of God in both.
2. We are seeing the start to the multi-directional flow of people. At the beginning of 1979

several new missionaries are starting on their service. Some are from the URC and from the other churches in the UK. But two are from Samoa, destined for Zambia; a married couple from South India are off to teach in the Gilbert Islands; a Taiwanese is probably heading for New Guinea and a Samoan for Bangladesh. The churches in the UK are beginning to place their needs before the Council. These people represent hope fulfilled.

3. The common purse of the Council has received contributions from all the member churches. Of course the imbalance of money resources across the world means that some have very little money to share. But when we consider the budget today we are not just looking at British or European money, and we are grateful that every member is sufficiently serious about membership to make a contribution.

4. At the beginning of 1978 the member churches took fresh responsibility for the practical care of missionaries. This was a critical moment for some people who were used to lifelong care from Livingstone House, and we have been concerned to see that all the churches have been able to pick up the various duties. We can record with gratitude that there have been no major lapses in financial, administrative or pastoral caring, and in some places fresh relationships have blossomed through church care.

5. New friends have joined the company. During this year we have been glad to welcome the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, the Presbyterian Church of North East India and the Churches of Christ to CWM membership. The quality of sharing in our meetings has been exciting, and we are beginning to learn something of each other's strengths, as decisions are made by the Executive Committee.

6. One problem area is to do with personal involvement by church members. There is constant pressure in the UK for projects, and without doubt these can create a sense of personal caring. But project money is less and less acceptable to the poorer member churches which seek help in regular ways for the unglamorous aspects of church life. We have come to no clear view on how CWM can best help the newer member churches to enliven their congregations in serving the world. Another matter for review is whether the Council should attempt to take more initiatives in missionary enterprise or simply to try to respond to needs expressed by the members. And we have a lot of work to do in clarifying what kind of church service is missionary service, what has a proper claim on the common purse.

7. As we prepare for the second Council meeting in Hong Kong we invite the comment and criticism of the member churches and especially ask for their supporting prayer.

Bernard Thorogood, *General Secretary*

WORLD CHURCH & MISSION DEPARTMENT: APPENDIX 2

REPORTS FROM LIAISON COMMITTEES

1. Methodist/URC

The Committee has met twice during the Assembly year. As well as advice sought by local situations on matters specific to themselves, three main areas of concern to all Methodist/UR local churches have occupied the Committee. These were the application of the rules of the two churches about assessments and the payment of Ministers, common membership and membership tickets and the essentials for local constitutions. A working group has been assigned the task of preparing an agreed statement on the financial questions. On the matters of membership, it was recognised that mutual recognition already exists between the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, and local churches should feel free to use membership tickets as they wish, either by producing their own form, or by adding their local information to the Methodist ticket, or by producing a local URC ticket to use alongside the Methodist one. A check list of essentials for constitutions is being prepared. All these matters, together with a Model Sharing Agreement for use with URC owned property, will have their place in a third revision of the Letter of Advice. Following the success of last year's meeting at Trowbridge, a summer consultation with local united churches in the North is planned at Rawdon.

2. Churches of Christ/URC

The Liaison Committee set up between the Churches of Christ and the URC has had two meetings which have enabled the representatives to be abreast of developments. Various aspects of co-operation have been considered and fostered and pending decisions about policy that are to be taken in the Churches of Christ this summer, liaison will be maintained at all useful levels. The joint work of the Revd Keith Forecast and Revd John Oldershaw in serving both Churches has begun well. Any further specific developments that arise by time of the Assembly will be reported verbally.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

Chairman: Mr. L.R. Palmer

Secretary: Mr. C.M. Frank

1. Once again, it is satisfactory to be able to report that the Unified Appeal target for 1978 was reached. Our warm thanks go to all who made this splendid result possible, the more so because we realise the difficulties faced by Provinces, Districts and Churches. We have a feeling, in the Department, that some churches do not give their full support to the Unified Appeal because their members do not know what it is all about, despite the publicity which is regularly sent to all churches. Details of Provincial totals for the Unified Appeal are given in the Appendix.

2. Mounting costs make the control of central expenditure ever more difficult. In the event the first draft of the Accounts show that overspending in some areas was offset by under-spending elsewhere, and as income exceeded the budget a satisfactory surplus will be shown on the Accounts.

3. A deficit in the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund in 1978 was not unexpected but what is unsettling is that our latest estimate of income at the beginning of 1979 is lower than we had originally thought. The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee will need to come to Assembly with the clearest possible picture of the position.

4. Thanks to the new Maintenance of the Ministry system it is possible to give a more detailed report on the pattern of expenditure in our churches and members of Assembly are invited to study our Economic Survey based on the year 1977. This reveals, for example that 45% of local churches' expenditure goes on Ministry and 33% on their buildings. On the income side, 46% comes from offerings and covenants, including the tax recovered, and 13% from special efforts. Surprisingly large amounts come from investments, trust and rents and as many churches have none of these, others must be well provided for.

5. If, as seems very possible, inflation takes an upward turn, all churches will be at greater risk. They will be more likely to survive their difficulties if they budget accurately, make the position clear to church members and monitor progress regularly. Church members are more likely to respond if they have a clear idea of what membership involves.

6. The new organisation of the Department reported to the 1978 Assembly is working well. Unfortunately recruiting difficulties still beset us: we remain indebted to a substantial number of voluntary workers.

7. The Department concur with a view expressed by Development in New Areas and Care of Existing Church Buildings Committee that this Committee's name whilst adequately describing the functions of the Committee, is somewhat long, and its abbreviation "DINAC" is not clearly understood by many people. Assembly will note the suggestion that the name be changed to "Church Buildings Committee".

8. Report from Mr. R.S. Martin:—

"Assembly will be sorry to note the retirement of the first Treasurer of the United Reformed Church, Mr Leslie Palmer CBE at the end of the year. Mr Palmer inherited two very different approaches to financing and accountancy and under his leadership a unified approach to the financial problems of the Church has been achieved. Few people, outside the staff of the Finance Department, will know the hours that Leslie Palmer has given to the Church. On many weeks he travels from Bath on three days in the service of the Church. Assembly will miss his cheery approach and will wish him well as he continues to serve the wider church on the Board of Christian Aid."

Detailed reports on Departmental Committees follow.

THE MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mr N. Tinsley

Secretary: The Revd G.E. Hooper

9. Assembly 1978 bade farewell to the Revd Ernest Todd who was the author of the Scheme of Ministerial Remuneration that came into being on 1st January 1977. The Church is fortunate that the Revd George Hooper and the Revd Richard Gill are available as Committee Secretary and Manager respectively, to continue the work started by Ernest Todd. Alongside the staffing changes the Committee has slowly been developing a new concept of administration during the course of the year to reflect separately the secretarial and managerial functions previously held together by Ernest Todd.

10. Assembly 1978 requested that the Scheme of Ministerial Remuneration be republished. The Committee has been able to go further than this in adding to it a series of administrative notes that had, in the main, previously been published as separate documents over a period of four years. It is the hope of the Committee that these Notes will be of considerable help to local Treasurers in the administration of the Scheme. The whole document should provide a good starting point for consultation on necessary changes during the coming year.

11. A further administrative improvement during 1978 was the publication, for the first time, of assessments in full detail. This new information has been welcomed. It resulted in a large number of queries arising from previous years. Handling these has taken time but the Committee is persuaded that the giving of information and sharing in consultation is a necessary aspect of its work and it will continue this policy.

12. **Finance** The wider application of computer techniques in the Department is a considerable aid to improving budgeting and forecasting. When the revised assessment and surcharge were put to the 1978 Assembly it was made known that a substantial withdrawal, of the order of £133,000, would be necessary from the accumulated surplus of £259,000 at the 1st January 1978. During the year it became clear that this withdrawal would be greater. At the time of drafting this report final figures are not available but preliminary results show a deficit of about £175,000 on the years working. Staffing difficulties have precluded complete investigation of the reasons for the increase in the deficit but it is clear that it is not primarily due to the decision of Assembly in 1978 to increase the basic stipend of ministers above the recommended by the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee. At the time of writing there is considerable doubt of the outcome of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund in 1979 and a late report will be furnished indicating inter alia whether the proposed increase in stipend for 1979 can be maintained, and whether other means are necessary to minimise the expected deficit in the current year.

13. Assembly 1978 approved the proposal that ministers stipends should be increased by 15% from 1st July 1979. At that time it was expected that this would be an advance on the going rate nationally, and would provide a further step in improving ministers stipends. At the time of writing this report it appears that 15% will only, at best, be marking time. The Committee's recommendation will be brought to Assembly.

14. The Committee are proposing a further stipend increase in the middle of 1980 of 15%, and will be proposing increased assessments for 1980. In so doing, the Committee feel it would be unwise to raise the percentage of the assessment about 50% of the net assessable income since this might discourage Churches in raising money.

15. At the 1978 Assembly the Committee undertook to consider the practicality of linking United Reformed Church ministers stipends with salary scales of some other body, and some alternatives have been examined. The most promising links would appear to be with teachers' and social workers' salaries and changes in these will be monitored. However, no formal linkage is proposed at this stage since it would be fatal for the fund to be faced with an increase which the Church could not afford to pay. At the time of writing the National Union of Teachers have put in a claim for 35% increase in salaries. It is interesting to note that the Congregational Federation has in fact decided to link its basic stipend with a grading in the teaching profession but its decision is not mandatory on the local churches.

16. Another possibility, perhaps as a part of a national wages policy, would be to establish relativities with stipends in other denominations and to achieve some sort of agreement with the Government about limits within which changes could take place. Experience in the summer of 1978 with government officials about the pay increases approved at Assembly 1978 does not encourage this idea but national policy may now be changing in a way which proves helpful.

17. It is, of course, one thing to determine what is a fair level of remuneration and another to decide whether the money can be found by the churches to maintain that level. We may well be faced in the next few years with the agonising choice between the right level of stipends and the present level of manning.

18. The Committee are grateful to the many churches and their officers who responsibly meet their assessments on a regular basis. The viability of the whole scheme of Maintenance of the Ministry depends upon every Church meeting its assessments on the due date and in the manner prescribed. To put it more bluntly, if individual churches do not pay their assessments, there will be too little money to pay ministers. In this connection the Committee are concerned that a sizeable minority of churches are not co-operating, either by failing to submit financial returns, or by refusing to accept direct debits. This lack of co-operation not only increases the burden of the churches who do co-operate, but adds considerably to administration, and hence costs, which the church has to bear. The Committee are enlisting help of the Province and District officers in order to clear the outstanding matters of difficulty.

19. Future of the Scheme An up-dated annotated edition of the Scheme was sent to every church in the autumn of 1978, and further copies are available from the Finance and Administration Department. The Committee are aware that there are a number of elements of the Scheme which require attention and are setting up procedures whereby the whole scheme is to be reviewed, in consultation with members of the church at every level, with a view to bringing recommendations for revisions to Assembly 1980. Already many suggestions for revision have been received, some rather contradictory, and the Committee has decided that these will best be dealt with together rather than piecemeal.

20. Pension Funds Work is continuing on the revised rules of the Pension Fund to bring into being Assembly's wish that there be one Pension Fund. Both Pension Funds are being actuarially valued at 31st December 1977. It is expected that there will be considerable actuarial deficits in both funds, and the Committee will keep the Assembly informed about this situation. Deficits arise because pensions being paid at the present time, are partially inflation-proofed in that some are automatically increased when ministers' stipends are increased and further, when the last actuarial valuation took place as at 31st December 1973 it was envisaged that stipends would increase at a very much slower rate than has in fact happened. This is a problem shared by many other pension funds.

21. Budget 1980 The 1980 budget prepared for the Committee is based on the following factors:—

- (a) There will be an average of 850 ministers in the full-time ministry of the United Reformed Church paid from the fund.
- (b) There will be an average of 140 ministers in part-time (over-sight) situations paid from the fund.
- (c) That every church in the United Reformed Church accepts its assessment worked out in accordance with the formula approved by Assembly.

If more ministers are charged than the specified number, or there is an appreciable shortfall in assessments paid the fund cannot continue without further emergency increases in assessments. A joint sub-committee with the Deployment Committee is examining a more satisfactory way of forecasting the number of part-time ministries for which the Fund is called upon, often at short notice, to provide stipends.

TREASURERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mr R.S. Martin

Secretary: Mr C.M. Frank

22. In his report to the Assembly last year, Mr J.E. Hooper referred to the lengthy process of examination of the many funds of the former Presbyterian Church of England with a view to their consolidation. It was largely through the energetic efforts of Jack Hooper that this task has been completed. His untimely death in April 1978 was a very great loss to the Church and in particular to the Finance and Administration Department. Although a tribute was paid to him in the Assembly last year, it seems appropriate that a more permanent record of our appreciation of his work should be included in this report.

23. In the course of the year the staff superannuation scheme of the former Congregational Church was finally wound up and active members were transferred either to the Ministers' Pension Fund of the United Reformed Church, or to the Social Workers' Pension Fund, an independent fund to which all lay members of the central office, who are working for more than half-time, belong. With the changes in the Government scheme operating from 1st April 1978, the Committee thought it right to alter the pension arrangements for the lay staff who qualify, so that they are now members of a "final salaries" scheme, in place of the previous "money purchase" scheme.

24. The Committee is glad to record that the Unified Appeal slightly exceeded the target of £654,400. Although this was quite a satisfactory result, yet it is a fact that the continued increase in costs means inevitably that the present rate of annual increase in giving to the Unified Appeal barely keeps pace with the increase in expenditure necessary to maintain our current work. If the United Reformed Church is to embark on new projects and experiments, then the giving to the Unified Appeal will have to be increased by more than the recent average of about 10%. Bearing in mind the need for substantial increase in the income for the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund, the Treasurership Committee has yet to be convinced that the churches are prepared, both to pay proper stipends to its ministers and lay workers and, at the same time, to expand its missionary endeavours at home and overseas.

DEVELOPMENT IN NEW AREAS AND CARE OF EXISTING CHURCH BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd R.G. Walker

Secretary: Mr. D. Banwell

25. The Committee was sorry that the retirement of Ernest Todd as Departmental Secretary has meant that it has had to seek another Secretary. We are fortunate that Mr Derick Banwell, a solicitor who has recently retired as General Manager of Runcorn Development Corporation has agreed to be secretary of the Committee, and has agreed to be available to the Church for up to one day per week. All requests should be addressed to Mr Banwell at the Central Office, save that when grants or loans have been agreed by the Committee, any correspondence regarding these should be addressed to the Chief Accountant.

26. During the year grants and loans have been made to local churches to assist in schemes of repair, improvement and extension, within the guidelines laid down by the Committee, and as a supplement to the efforts of local churches themselves, and help from provincial funds where possible.

27. It has been increasingly apparent that the resources available through this Committee are not sufficient for the share expected of the URC in major ecumenical schemes, and this is a special problem under consideration. It must also be borne in mind that the Charity Commissioners' scheme governing most of the funds administered by DINAC limits their use to URC purposes, and in the case of ecumenical involvement there must be careful consideration of the terms of sharing agreements.

28. The Committee, through consultations and correspondence, has sought to share with

provinces a concern for the good stewardship of the property resources of the whole Church. A number of provinces have committees which include experts on buildings, and some have produced manuals on property maintenance to help local churches. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the provision of property, its maintenance and development, and (where this arises) its disposal, are matters that affect the resources of the whole Church, and action should be based on the best advice available. The Committee will be glad to give any help it can in these matters. The Secretary has been asked to liaise with provinces with the purpose of gathering information on the best methods of managing property.

29. The release of government funds for the repair of "listed" buildings has now begun, and DINAC has already processed some applications for this purpose. As yet, the kind of help likely to be available is not known. In the long term it would be helpful if, at least at provincial level, listed buildings (of special architectural or historical interest) were known.

WELFARE AND EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd D.A. Smith

Secretary: The Revd A.L. Macarthur

30. This Committee controls the funds which are available to the Church for the relief of distress particularly amongst the ministry, both active and retired, and their families. Whilst the funds are not in any way extensive, sufficient is available to meet small requests which may be directed in confidence to the Secretary of the Committee or through the Provincial Moderators.

31. During the year the Committee received the assets of the Christian Witness Fund and plans to continue making the allowances formerly paid by this fund.

32. The work of the Committee is by its nature largely unseen, but letters received from those who benefit from it, make it clear that there are many areas of personal need in our society and that the actions of the Committee have a value beyond any gifts given. The Church is able through such gifts to show its concern and continued care and there are many to whom this is a spiritual reassurance.

33. The main support for the Welfare Fund is now through the Unified Appeal and all who contribute can be assured of the material and spiritual significance of this work.

URC RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING SOCIETY LIMITED

Chairman: Mr H.E. Greening

Secretary: Mr F.A.W. Lodde

34. 1978 was a busy year, during which the Society purchased no fewer than twelve houses and flats to meet the desires and requirements of Ministers who retired. Four houses which were no longer suitable, or required were sold. It was also a good year for bequests of property and for legacies and donations. The Society received three houses and £25,478 by these means, and without this substantial help would not have been able to fulfil its obligations.

35. Early in the year the decision to sell Fen Place was taken, and confirmed by the General Assembly, and the implementation of this decision has occupied a good deal of the time and concern of the Committee. A purchaser, the Civil Service Benevolent Fund, has been found, and the terms of the transaction provide that the present residents of Fen Place may remain there for as long as they wish. At the same time several of those residents who expressed a wish to leave have been re-housed.

36. During the year the Central Finance Committee asked the Society whether the members of its Committee should also be regarded as a Committee of the Finance and Administration Department and a resolution to implement this proposal will be brought to Assembly. The

Central Finance Committee also proposed guidelines for the provision of housing for retired Ministers and Ministers' Widows with which the Committee concur, and these will be laid before the Assembly for approval.

37. In order to provide finances for the provision of housing the Housing Society are during 1979 launching an appeal for £500,000.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Revd A.L. Macarthur

Secretary: Mr C.M. Frank

38. The report of this Committee set up by the Assembly Executive is included here for the convenience of the Assembly.

39. In 1978 the Committee gave consideration to applications from Departments for extension of their work. Provincial costing showed the following costs would be involved in 1980:—

Provision of Assistant Secretary for Church & Society Department	£14,000
Provision of Secretary for Stewardship	£14,000
Extension of Youth Training Officers scheme to cover whole country	£13,000

(these costs include all ancillary help etc.)

40. The Committee raised the matter with the Executive in November 1978 and stated that they were uneasy about including these items in the budget bearing in mind the following facts about the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund all of which would result in increased requests for support from church members:—

- (a) the reserves of that Fund were severely reduced by the end of 1978
- (b) the assessments set for 1979 are already putting some strain on churches
- (c) the 15% increase agreed by Assembly for introduction in July 1979, together with any further increase in 1980, will require further major increases in the assessment by that year
- (d) there is almost certainly a major deficiency in the capital of the Pension Fund which will require to be met from the Maintenance of the Ministry assessments over a period of years.

41. The Executive instructed the Budget Committee to prepare a budget for 1980 ensuring that the total sum asked from the churches should not exceed £770,000 (an increase of 10% over 1979 figures).

42. The result for 1978 and the prospects for 1979 in respect of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund confirmed the forecasts made in November. While the Committee was immensely encouraged by the way the Churches met their Unified Appeal targets, realization of the amounts which would be required from churches to meet their immediate obligations to the ministers of the Church and those on Pension led the Committee to confirm the view that the total set by the November Executive was right.

43. The Committee is especially grateful to those Provinces who are able to forward contributions early in the year. Expenditure from the proceeds of the Appeal is continuous throughout the year with the result that it is usually over-spent right up to the end of the collecting period. Were more Provinces enabled to make substantial monthly contributions this position would be reversed and some interest would be gained.

44. A budget on the agreed basis will be presented to the Assembly in hope of the generous response of the Church.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Assembly notes the satisfactory response to the Unified Appeal of 1978 and records its thanks to all who contributed to this.
2. Assembly receives and adopts the Accounts for the year ended 31st December 1978.
3. Assembly approves the change of name of the Development in New Areas and Care for existing Church Buildings Committee to Church Buildings Committee.
4. Assembly adopts the following as guidelines for the housing of retired ministers and ministers' widows:—
 - a) The United Reformed Church delegates to its Finance and Administration Department the responsibility for providing housing for retired ministers and ministers' widows and this it exercises through the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited an independent Company operating within the Finance Department.
 - b) The Housing Society within its resources has approximately 50 houses and this stock is being increased by legacy and purchase. The Society also has in its control a number of houses belonging to the Church and used for housing retired ministers and ministers' widows.
 - c) The Memorial Hall Trust, and certain Provinces are active in the provision of housing for retired ministers and ministers' widows and the Housing Society seeks to co-ordinate requests. The Society is able to enter into joint purchase agreements with ministers and ministers' widows. The Memorial Hall Trust does not do this.
 - d) The Society appeals for funds to enable it to provide the kind of housing required by retired ministers and ministers' widows.
 - e) The Church regards it as a matter of integrity that retired ministers and ministers' widows should be adequately housed and supports the Housing Society in its appeal for funds and its objects.
5. The Assembly approves the appointment of a "Retired Ministers Housing Committee" within the Finance and Administration Department to have oversight of matters concerned with the provision of retirement housing for ministers and ministers' widows and to manage the properties held on behalf of the United Reformed Church. The Committee shall consist of all the members of the Committee of Management of the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited, with the ex-officio officers of the Department.
6. Assembly approves the Budget for 1980, presented by the Budget Committee.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT: APPENDIX 1

The Unified Appeal produced 100% of the target £654,400 as follows:—

		1978		1977	
		Total	% of target	Total	% of target
Province	1 Northern	48,230.26	107%	39,705.34	99%
	2 North Western	52,621.69	99%	48,088.46	100%
	3 Mersey	48,442.91	99%	39,829.16	102%
	4 Yorkshire	47,581.49	95%	40,676.38	92%
	5 E. Midlands	35,010.81	100%	34,817.79	94%
	6 W. Midlands	50,779.06	102%	47,032.29	100%
	7 Eastern	52,902.07	103%	50,121.04	100%
	8 South West	42,288.10	101%	37,964.46	100%
	9 Wessex	58,771.37	100%	52,144.35	98%
	10 Thames North	86,248.59	103%	82,069.17	103%
	11 Southern	109,718.95	102%	105,516.72	106%
	12 Wales	22,966.69	82%	21,528.67	98%
		655,561.99		599,493.83	
Non-Provincial items		2,559.02		3,475.89	
		£658,121.01		£602,969.72	

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT: APPENDIX 2

STIPENDS PAYABLE TO CERTAIN MINISTERS EMPLOYED CENTRALLY AS FROM JULY 1978

1. **Provincial Moderators** The stipend of provincial moderators is £3,420 p.a. (plus childrens' allowances where applicable). In addition provincial moderators are provided with a house, free of maintenance costs, rates, heating and lighting, or if they prefer, a house allowance in lieu. Travelling expenses, telephone costs, etc. in connection with church business are also refunded. A car is provided and maintenance and running expenses met by the Church, subject to an adjustment in respect of private motoring. If preferred, the moderator can provide his own car and claim mileage allowances.

2. **Ministers at Tavistock Place** The general entitlements are as for provincial moderators, though fares between home and Tavistock Place have to be met by the ministers. Stipends range from £4,500 p.a. for the General Secretary to £3,036 p.a. for Assistant Secretaries (plus childrens' allowances where applicable).

3. **Academic Staff at Westminster College** Stipends range from £3,370 p.a. to £3,164 p.a. (plus childrens' allowances where applicable) housing costs, fuel costs, telephones are as for moderators.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION: APPENDIX 3

The United Reformed Church History Society

ANNUAL REPORT 1978

1. The Annual Meeting of the Society will be held at St. Andrew's Church, Holborn at 1 p.m. on Tuesday 8th May 1979 followed at 1.30 p.m. by the Annual Lecture entitled "Ordination: some notes on a tradition" to be given by our President, the Revd Dr John Huxtable.
 2. A most successful Summer School Weekend was held at the Congregational College, Manchester in September. It was a time not only of study but of fellowship and the officers much appreciated the opportunity to hear of the interests and opinions of members. It is a sign of the individual activity of members that the editors of the Journal have more articles to hand than they can expect to publish in 1979.
 3. Individual members of the Society scattered around the country, play an important part in the conservation of church records and the writing of local church histories. The advice of the Officers and committee is always available to them and to many other enquirers. In recognition of their work several Provinces have made grants to the Society for which we are most grateful. The Library at 86 Tavistock Place is open from 10.30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays and written enquiries may be addressed there.
 4. We are grateful to those who act as representatives for the Society in the Provinces and Districts of the Church, and have attempted to fill the gaps in our coverage during the year. Through our representatives we launched a membership drive which added 47 members during the year. We lost 7 by death, 6 by resignation and 1 by removal from the roll. We believe that the journal and services offered to members represent excellent value for our modest subscription.
 5. With others we learnt, with great regret, of the death of the Revd J.E. Newport, a member of the Council and a contributor to the journal. We have welcomed to the Council, as new representatives of the Church, Mrs Mary Davies, the Revd Peter Jupp, Mrs Sheila Tull.
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STANDING ORDERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Questions

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

Notices of Motion

2A. By Provincial Synods:

- (i) A Provincial Synod may deliver to the General Secretary not less than six weeks before the commencement of the annual meeting of the Assembly notice in writing of a motion for consideration at the Assembly. If the motion introduces new business to the Assembly, the Synod may, subject to the agreement of the Clerk of the Assembly and the Chairman of the Business Committee and at its own expense, circulate a statement in support.
- (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 'The 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 paragraphs (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.

Circulation of Documents

29. Only documents authorised by the Clerk of Assembly in consultation with the Chairman of the Business Committee may be distributed within the meeting place of the Assembly.

