

**The  
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY  
1983**

**23rd-27th May  
PARISH CHURCH — ST. PETER'S,  
THE DOME,  
Brighton**

**REPORTS  
TO ASSEMBLY**

The United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom  
86 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RT

Contents	Page No.
1. Business Committee Report .....	3
2. Executive Committee Report .....	4
3. Applications Committee Report .....	8
4. Church Life Department Report .....	10
5. Long Range Policy Group Final Report .....	37
6. Report of the Provincial Moderators .....	57
7. Deployment Committee Report .....	59
8. World Church and Mission Department Report .....	60
9. Church and Society Department Report .....	69
10. Finance and Administration Department Report .....	76
Appendices:	
1. Receipts and Payments of Local Churches ...	88
2. Receipts and Payments of Local Churches— Provincial List .....	89
3. Unified Appeal .....	90
4. Expenditure on Central Activities .....	90
5. Stipends of Ministers employed Centrally .....	91
6. Changes in Remuneration .....	91
7. URC Housing Association .....	92
11. Budget Committee Report .....	94
12. Communication and Supplies Committee Report .....	95
<b>For Information</b>	
a. The URC History Society .....	99
b. Schools linked with the URC .....	100
<b>Standing Orders</b> .....	102



**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**  
and other papers submitted to the  
**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**BRIGHTON, 23rd to 27th MAY, 1983**

**REPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

**Standing Orders**

The Business Committee has spent considerable time revising the Standing Orders 'B' shown in the book of Reports to General Assembly 1982, following Assembly's reference back. The Committee also took into account the comments and proposed amendments which were made on that occasion. So that Assembly may see the way that the Committee has worked in discussion and consultation, the procedure followed is set out below.

1. During the first meeting after the General Assembly the Committee considered the proposed changes suggested at the Assembly.
2. After consequent re-drafting, copies of the proposed changes were presented to the Executive Committee in November 1982.
3. The drafting revisions were considered by that Executive Committee and with minor modifications authorisation was given for these revisions to be circulated to Synod Clerks for appropriate consultation and comment or alteration, such comments or proposed changes to be considered at the February meeting of the Committee.
4. Comments were received from four Provinces and these, together with comments made by the Executive Committee, were then individually considered, and the Standing Orders printed at the end of the Reports to Assembly 1983.

We trust that the Assembly, recognising the time and consideration, together with consultation, that has now been given to this matter, will find the present draft acceptable.

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. The Assembly receives the report.
  2. The Assembly approves the revised Standing Orders as printed and resolves to conduct its business in accordance therewith.
-

# REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met on 8 July 1982, 4 November 1982 and 3 February 1983. In July the Committee welcomed Mrs. Joan Anderson, President of the New Zealand Council of Churches and a former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand.

2. **Constitution Review Group** In order to deal with the Synod Resolutions which the 1982 Assembly referred to the Executive, a group was established, the members being nominated by the Nominations Committee and appointed by the Executive. The membership is as follows:-

Mr Peter J. Bunker (Chairman)  
Mrs Winifred Clark  
Revd David Hannen  
Mr Ray Heritage  
Revd Michael Hubbard  
Revd David Miller  
Mr Norman Pooler

Mr John Rhys  
Revd Robert Smith  
Revd Harold Springbett  
Revd John H. Taylor  
Mrs Connie Winter  
Revd Bernard Thorogood (Secretary)

The Group has made good progress in its discussions and has reached a common mind on the major policy questions involved but needs more time to consider the detail. It will be proposing changes in the Structure of the URC regarding all four matters, the position of Ministers Emeriti in District Councils, the method of election of the Assembly Moderator, the District representation to Assembly and the clause 9.5.xi. The Assembly is asked to authorise the Group to refer its report and proposals to Synods, District Councils and local churches not later than 30 September 1983 so that they may be considered at the 1984 and 1985 Assemblies.

3. **Covenant Proposals** Following the failure of the Covenant Proposals to pass the General Synod of the Church of England, the Executive in July sent a message of encouragement to our locally united churches and to the Province of Wales, and authorised a general message to be sent to all local churches from the General Secretary.

4. **Disturbance Allowances** At the request of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee the Executive authorised an increase in grants to ministers on ordination or removal from £150 to £300.

5. **Provincial Moderator Review Groups** The Executive received two group reports which recommended the re-appointment of the Revd. Cyril Franks (Southern Province) and the Revd. Peter Chesney (Wessex Province) in the terms of the resolutions appended to this report.

6. **Provincial Moderators' Workloads** The Executive requested and received a report on this matter which had given some concern to the Review Groups. Recommendations regarding free Sundays and holidays, medical check-ups, and Synod administration were referred to Synod Clerks and to all future Review Groups, but it was not felt necessary at this time to propose any radical change in the pattern of Moderatorial service. A major concern for the future was seen to be the ecumenical engagements which can absorb a great deal of time in the large areas covered by Provinces.

7. **Assembly Committees and Departments** At two meetings the Executive considered papers which outlined possible changes in the present Departmental pattern, with special emphasis on the need for a Ministries Department. The Executive felt unable to make any recommendation until it had consulted Provincial Synods, and until all present Departments have had time to give the matter full consideration. It was therefore seen to be impossible to bring the matter to this Assembly. The Executive expects to discuss the matter again in July when reactions from Provincial Executive Committees are anticipated.

8. **Maintenance of the Ministry Committee** The Executive agreed to amend the membership of this Committee as follows:-

Chairman, Secretary, one person from each Province, a Provincial Moderator, the Chairman of the Pensions Sub-Committee and three other persons. Each Provincial member shall be appointed by the respective Province, and the Moderator shall be appointed by the Provincial Moderators. The Chairman, Secretary and the three other members shall be appointed by the Assembly.

9. **Standing Orders** The Executive discussed amendments to the Standing Orders of the Assembly, and advised the Business Committee on consultation procedure.

10. **Deployment Committee** The Executive advised the Deployment Committee that a Regional Ecumenical Officer could be considered in the category known as a 'Special Ministry'. In the light of paragraph 7 above, the Executive recommends that the Deployment Committee should be continued as at present until the 1984 General Assembly.

#### 11. **Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee**

11.1. **The Need** The need for a group in the central life of the Church, which can consider confidentially individual pastoral problems, has arisen in several ways. The Moderators' Meeting has found that it sometimes faces the difficulty of a minister who has to leave a pastorate and has no immediate opportunity to enter another, but the church has no means of coping with the interim period. The MoM Committee has found that it has to deal with individual cases of ministers who have ceased to exercise pastoral charge, and whose stipend is therefore in question. That Committee considers that the questions raised in such cases are not wholly financial and that it should not have to exercise discretion on its own. Several District Councils have found that the problems surrounding the conclusion of a pastorate may be more than the Council can deal with. These calls for help have been regularly coming over the last few years, and there are perhaps six cases in any year where greater help from the national church is requested.

11.2. **The Interim nature** It was the hope of the Executive Committee that a proposal for the establishment of this group would form part of a larger proposal to form a Ministries Department, but the process of discussion for that has proved to be longer than expected. The immediate needs therefore indicate that we must seek an immediate response. What is suggested in this report is seen as an interim measure. It is recommended that the life of this initial group be for three years or a shorter period if wider plans for organisational change are accepted by the Assembly and include a change in this group or its work. This method has the advantage that the initial trial period may indicate improvements for a later stage.

#### 11.3. **Terms of Reference**

- (a) The APRC will consider the cases of URC ministers which are referred to it by District Councils or Provincial Synods or their committees, following full discussion in those bodies, and when the continuation of a minister's service (i) within an existing pastoral charge or (ii) within the URC is in question.
- (b) The APRC will, after discussion with the minister concerned, seek to enable the minister's service within the URC to be continued, and to this end may indicate a course of retraining or therapy or counselling.
- (c) The APRC may initiate discussion about alternative forms of service for a minister, within or outside the URC, and may seek help (practical, financial, professional) in consultation with the minister from other parts of the URC or from outside bodies to make this possible.
- (d) The APRC may authorise the MoM Committee to provide stipend or part stipend and may authorise the Treasurership Committee to pay other necessary expenses (including accommodation costs) to a minister not in pastoral charge, for a specific period. Such period will not exceed six months in the first instance but may be renewed by the APRC. The MoM Committee or Treasurership Committee will accept this authority for payment.

(e) In any case where the APRC decides that such payments should be terminated and normal duties are not resumed, it will give at least three months notice to the minister.

#### 11.4. **Limitation on powers**

- (a) The APRC does not have to be consulted about and does not have authority over the process of ending the appointment of a minister in a pastoral charge, which process is a matter for minister, Church Meeting and District Council.
- (b) The APRC does not have authority to delete the name of a minister from the Roll of Ministers, but may act as adviser to the bodies concerned, i.e. District Councils, Synods and General Assembly. (9.5. xviii Scheme of Union.)
- (c) A minister may appeal against a decision reached by a council of the church in accordance with Section 11 of the Scheme of Union. Appeals in connection with the APRC may be made to the Executive Committee and finally to the General Assembly, and are presented in writing to the Moderator of the General Assembly who will decide how the business will be conducted, following the outline given in 1972 Assembly Report, Appendix IV.

11.5. **Confidentiality** It is evident that the work of the APRC will be confidential and pastoral. Nevertheless it will need to keep a record of its meetings. Decisions reached should be framed in such a way that they can be recorded, given to the person concerned and shared with others directly involved in the matter who need to know what has been decided. It would be inappropriate for the APRC as a body, or individual members of it, to divulge any additional information about ministers or churches concerned.

#### 11.6. **Composition**

A former Moderator of General Assembly who shall be Chairman  
Two lay people  
One minister in pastoral charge  
One Provincial Moderator  
The Honorary Treasurer  
The General Secretary who will act as Secretary

11.7. **Attendance** The minister whose case is being considered by the Committee shall have the right to meet the whole Committee, accompanied by a friend, if he or she so wishes.

The following will be invited to share in the discussion regarding particular cases, but shall withdraw before the decisions are made.

the Provincial Moderator of the minister  
a representative of the District Council most closely concerned  
a representative of the Provincial Pastoral Committee, or its equivalent, most closely concerned.

11.8. **Relationship to Structure** The APRC will be responsible to the Assembly. It may ask questions and seek advice from Assembly Committees and the Provincial, District and local organisation of the church. However, in the Reports to Assembly it will raise only such general matters as the group wishes to raise, will not report on individual cases, but may state how many cases have been dealt with, and will not be questioned about individual cases except as provided in 4(c) above.

11.9. **Nominating process and timetable** The five members to be appointed by name (Para 11.6) will be nominated to Assembly (or to the Executive Committee) by the Nominations Committee for a period in the first instance of three years or a shorter period if further organisational change is adopted by the Assembly, but re-appointment for a further period of up to three years should be open, with staggered dates to provide for a turnover of membership. In the first instance the formation of the Committee would follow as quickly as possible after General Assembly approval.

11.10. **Consequent Amendments** The Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration will need to have an addition to Section 3—

Ministers to whom remuneration for specific periods has been authorised by the Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee.

11.11 **Review** Not more than five years from the General Assembly which establishes the APRC, the Executive Committee shall undertake a review of the terms of reference, limitation on powers, confidentiality and composition of this Committee, and report to the next General Assembly with recommendations for any changes thought necessary in the light of experience.

12. **Future Meetings** The Committee agreed that its meeting in July 1983 should be a residential one for 24 hours, so that discussion of important matters might be at greater depth and in order to make possible worship and fellowship as the context for our business.

13. **South Africa** During the year the Executive authorised letters of greeting to Dr. Allan Boesak, new President of WARC, Dr. Beyers Naude and a letter to the Prime Minister of South Africa in support of Bishop Desmond Tutu.

14. **Shops Act** The Executive agreed to a statement of the Church and Society Department to oppose the Private Member's Bill abolishing all restrictions on shop opening hours, and asking for a more thorough consultation process before new legislation is prepared.

15. **Ministerial Training** The Executive agreed to a submission of the Church Life Department to extend the period set by the 1982 General Assembly for proposals on Post-Ordination Training, and set the timetable as reporting in 1984 for implementation in 1985.

B. G. Thorogood, *Clerk.*

## RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the Report for debate.
2. The Assembly authorises the Constitution Review Group to refer its report and proposals, according to 9.5.xi, not later than 30 September 1983 so that they may be presented to the General Assembly in 1984.
3. The Assembly reappoints the Reverend Charles Cyril Franks as Moderator of the Southern Province for four years from 1.9.1983.
4. The Assembly reappoints the Reverend Peter Sutherland Chesney as Moderator of the Wessex Province for five years from 1.9.1983.
5. The Assembly continues the service of the Deployment Committee until the Assembly of 1984.
6. The Assembly establishes the Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee in accordance with the provisions set out in Section 11 of this report.
7. The Assembly agrees to amend the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration by the following addition to Section 3:

Ministers to whom remuneration for specific periods has been authorised by the Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee.



## APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* The Revd Michael B. Stolton

*Secretary:* The Revd Bernard G. Thorogood

The Committee met three times during the year and reports as follows:

### 1. ADMISSIONS

**By ordination to the ministry** The Revds Christopher Charles Baillie, Geoffrey Bending, Irene Guendolen Bligh, Lilian Blythin, Robert Turnbull Brown, Mary Elizabeth Williamson Carrol, Elizabeth Jane Dawson, Wilfred Edgar Diggens, William Herbert Elliott (AR), Ronald James Ewart, Kim Fabricius, Mark Jeremy Fisher, George McArthur Gibson, Lindsay Hassall, Joan Johansen-Berg, Brian Stephen Jolly, Kenneth Frank James Knight, Harold George Henry Lanham, Beryl Lyde, James Ryan, John Clive Sutcliffe, Kevin Watson, Norman Arthur Whitaker, Hazel M. Whitehead, Alan Frederick Edward Wise.

**By induction to the Auxiliary Ministry** Ian D. H. Baillie, Joyce B. Elms, William Airth Kenny, James Edward Kidd, Alexander Martin, Henrietta I. Short, John Thomson Smith, Robert Williamson Steedman, Wm. J. L. Taylor, Jean Brown Tinto.

### By transfer from other Churches

Revd Kenneth Anderson	Church of Scotland
Revd Kenneth Bishop	United Church of Christ, USA
Revd Robert H. Duncan	Church of Scotland
Revd John Fraser	Church of Scotland
Revd Ann Jackson	Church of Scotland
Revd Karl E. Olson	United Church of Christ, USA
Revd E. Horace Thomas	Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa

### 2. DELETIONS

### By transfer to other Churches

Revd Martin George	Church of England
Revd James Hammond	Baptist Union

3. **CERTIFICATES OF ELIGIBILITY** Certificates were issued to six ministers, some of whom are already inducted to pastorates or in process of seeking a call.

4. **RECEPTION OF LOCAL CHURCHES** The Committee is happy to commend to Assembly the reception of five local churches formed on an ecumenical basis, each with a URC component.

5. **SECESSION OF LOCAL CHURCHES** The Committee has considered at length both general principles and particular cases, and is aware of the risk that pleas for secession may be brought forward where the grounds are of a temporary nature or based on a misconception of the URC. The Committee believes that it should recommend secession to the Assembly only when the case rests upon a long-standing and fundamental disagreement which the consistent efforts of District Council and Synod have failed to dispel. In now bringing resolutions concerning three local churches, the Committee considers that this is the conclusion of the ten year period when the changes effected in 1972 may not have been understood by a local church. Future cases, the Committee considers, could only be brought to Assembly on account of very exceptional circumstances.

6. **MUTUAL ELIGIBILITY WITH THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND** At the request of the Church of Scotland a conference was held in Edinburgh on 16 December 1982. There was concern in the Church of Scotland about the changed doctrine and practice of the URC through unification in 1981. It became evident that the present agreement would have to be modified to include a clause about 'accepting the doctrine and order' of the church to which a minister moves. In itself this requirement indicates that the two churches are no longer in a specially close relationship. It was seen by all at the meeting to be appropriate if the relationship now moves to one of equality with all our relations within the Reformed

family. This would enable the URC to be on an equal footing with its three sister churches in Scotland. At the same time it is necessary to protect the position of ministers who have moved under the terms of Mutual Eligibility. Similar resolutions are being placed also before the Church of Scotland General Assembly.

### RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly warmly receives the local churches known as
    - Sinfin Moor (East Midlands Province)
    - Dronfield (East Midlands Province)
    - St. Mark's Coulby Newham (Northern Province)
    - Cottingley, Leeds (Yorkshire Province)
    - Mosborough, Sheffield (Yorkshire Province)as local churches of the United Reformed Church.
  2. The Assembly agrees that the local churches known as
    - Tollesbury (Eastern Province)
    - Brimington (East Midlands Province)
    - Heaton Mersey (North Western Province)be permitted to secede from the URC.
  3. Assembly approves the following statement regarding Mutual Eligibility with the Church of Scotland:
    - i. The current agreement on the Mutual Eligibility of ministers be discontinued at a date to be agreed with The Church of Scotland.
    - ii. Ministers serving in either church at that date who have entered their service under Mutual Eligibility will be enabled to return with the freedom at present available, and if they have pension rights which have not been transferred, those rights will be preserved as though Mutual Eligibility were in force.
    - iii. Both churches agree to apply the procedure for Applications of Ministers which does not necessitate individual action by a General Assembly; in the URC the procedures set by the Assembly for ministers from churches in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches; in the Church of Scotland, Section 11d of its Regulations for admission would apply.
    - iv. In future cases of transfer of ministers, individual pension resources will be transferable to the church in which the minister is serving.
-

## **CHURCH LIFE DEPARTMENT**

*Chairman:* The Revd Richard F. Taylor

*Secretary:* The Revd Michael G. Dunford

### **IMAGES OF LIFE**

1. The main thrust of our work in Church Life this year has been GROWTH. Our aim is to discover and release resources for growth. This requires good strong roots. Equally it needs the branches and the fronds. . .
2. We are discovering that growth of Church Life happens when there is a clear commitment to mission. It is when the task of the Church outside itself is grasped that life flourishes the more. One of the favourite images of life in the Church is the shepherd. We need now to take up the image of the fisherman if the bias towards mission is to be maintained.
3. The Church Life committee is one of the joints and ligaments in the body of the URC. "It is from the Head that the whole body, with all its joints and ligaments, receives its supplies, and thus knit together grows according to God's design" (Colossians Chapter 2, verse 19). Discussions are progressing about the organisation of Church Life and its further development. We have learnt that we have to be much more open to each other than we had been before. We have also found that this openness to each other in love leads to very strong commitment together. This is a testing and searching process, and we welcome the challenge and the growth that is coming from it.
4. While the joints and ligaments are absolutely necessary, it is also vital that they do not prevent the new life springing up. All around there are signs of new growth: the recovery of the ministry of healing, the call to evangelism, the search for patterns of spirituality, the imperative for peacemaking, work amongst the ageing, projects to make new forms of work with the unemployed, the struggle for equal opportunities for women and for ethnic minorities, and all the work amongst young people. No committee organisation can try to "cover" these thrusts; what we can aim for is to encourage these new signs of Spring, and not get in the way!

Richard F. Taylor

### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

*Chairman:* The Revd Dr. Stephen Orchard

*Secretary:* The Revd Margaret T. Taylor

### **CHILDREN'S WORK COMMITTEE**

*Chairman:* The Revd Glyn Jenkins

*Secretary:* The Revd Margaret T. Taylor

5. Most of the work of the Christian Education and Children's Work Committees this year has been a continuation of work in which we were already engaged.
6. In addition to reports from ecumenical bodies involved with children, the Children's Work Committee has had on its agenda consideration of some of the developments in thinking about the place of children in the church, the provision of materials and care for handicapped children and their parents and an on-going consideration of the report from the BCC Consultative Group for Ministry Among Children, 'Understanding Christian Nurture'. The committee has been particularly concerned about the standards of some of our work with children and the urgent need for well qualified tutors to guide students taking the Equipped to Teach course. An urgent priority for the coming year will be to find and train tutors and encourage them and the students and churches to recognise the necessity for understanding and skill as well as love for children and commitment to serve. We

believe that many skilled in working with children do not offer their services because the church does not appear to value such skills. We are seeking ways of ensuring that the resources we have are more effectively used.

7. Another major concern of the committee during the year has been to consider the findings of the Children and Worship project and its implications for our churches. Children and adults from about 150 churches were asked to respond through written answers or through drawing to questions about their churches and their worship. These responses showed a need for help in understanding and in the development of new initiatives in music, in prayer, in participation and communication. For many, children as well as adults, the sacraments express the essence of the church. Parade services and family services are important since, for many parents as well as children, they are the only opportunity for corporate worship. Training and resources are needed to help ministers and others make the most of these opportunities. In some places churches are using Sunday in new and imaginative ways for worship and learning. Other churches are expressing an interest in exploring such possibilities. It appears that, while there is much to encourage us in places, further thought needs to be given to helping people understand what worship is and enabling children to share more fully. A paper will be available at Assembly giving suggestions for consideration by local churches. (See Resolution 2)

8. We are glad to recommend a new training course for those who work with 7-14's during the week, *'Help Yourself to Work with 7-14's'*. This is intended for self tuition and is prepared for CGMC and published by NCEC at £3.

9. The Christian Education committee has continued to be concerned about general questions of Christian education and nurture and the provision of suitable educational and training material. In particular we would recommend the Adult Study Programme material which consists of a series of monthly papers for discussion on a range of topics with suggestions for worship, suitable for house groups or women's meetings. This material can be used by a group without skilled leadership or can be adapted by a leader. We have received a report of a survey on elders' training and in the light of this will be considering what new initiatives might be necessary.

10. Our main task during the year has been the preparation of some material for new members. We were concerned to help members and churches to recognise the need for continuing training of members and to help new members to feel that they have a part to play in the life and work of the church which is recognised and for which they need on-going education. We were, therefore, glad to take up an idea from the former Churches of Christ and provide a series of twelve leaflets, one for each month of the first year of membership. These are designed to be discussed by the new member and an elder or more experienced church member. Like the Children's Work committee, the Christian Education Committee has become increasingly concerned about the lack of knowledge, understanding and spiritual development of many of our members and is giving urgent consideration to finding better ways of helping people to grow towards greater Christian maturity. (Resolution 3)

11. Both committees have been involved in discussions in the department and with other committees about training for worship, about structures and about co-ordinating some of our material and tutoring. We are concerned that any proposed changes in these areas should be such as to help us to be more effective in providing motivation and resources for Christian nurture for people of all ages in our local churches.

## YOUTH COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* The Revd Duncan Wilson

*Secretary:* The Revd Paul Quilter

12. This report has been strongly influenced by the 1983 FURY Assembly and is coloured by the joy, enthusiasm and hope for the future engendered by the event. If the delegates

who attended represent typical URC young people then our denomination will continue to be a live, vibrant witnessing community for many years to come.

13. Good things have happened during the past twelve months but these must be considered alongside events within society which will temper any feelings of success with a reminder of the continuing "task" before the Youth Committee.

14. High unemployment amongst young people, the limited success of youth opportunities programmes and the constant eating away of Local Education Authority Budgets will inevitably lead to alienated and bitter young people, many of whom belong in some way to the United Reformed Church or are young people to whom local United Reformed Churches minister. The Youth Committee's Training sub-committee wrestles, as do many others, to find answers enabling us to offer guidelines to churches. We rejoice in the expansion of the "Time for God" scheme, but express concern at the lack of United Reformed Churches who are able to offer places to potential volunteers.

15. Over the last year we have lived with the constant tensions created by our multi-cultural society and our resulting inability to come to terms with it. The focus of conflict frequently involves young people. The Youth Committee is trying to come to an understanding of the current situation and thus help others too. A working party has been set up to explore what work churches are doing with young people from different cultural backgrounds with the aim of positively challenging churches, particularly those in multi-cultural communities who do not appear to relate to that setting in terms of relationships with young people. We hope also that United Reformed Churches will be motivated to seek a greater understanding of the racial question.

16. One positive event which has led to a greater awareness and sensitivity towards understanding between different cultures and races has been the Zambia/India project. A visit of young Indian and Zambian people during last summer was indeed a great success. The response of churches all over the country has been marvellous and all who shared in the event itself have been enriched by the experience.

17. An ongoing task of the Youth Committee is to explore ways of assisting churches, districts and provinces in new ways of challenging young people with the Gospel and the deepening of faith to those who respond to the call of Christ. This year we have at times been almost swamped with the task of promoting, encouraging and supporting the Worship Project. Of course the climax of this project was reached on the 27th February and a full report will hopefully be available to the General Assembly. However, we have been delighted by the response to this project. Exciting things are happening all over the country. Without a doubt the project has acted as the catalyst for growth in many other ways than simply deepening young people's spiritual awareness and faith.

18. Sadly the story is not all good. We have been disappointed by accounts of failure. Failures brought about by lack of vision. The reluctance of some ministers and churches to expose their young people to an influence beyond the boundaries of their own church. Our disappointment is real because we recognise that there have been so many missed opportunities. However, it would be wrong to end any comment about the Worship Project on a pessimistic note for indeed the stories of success are considerable. We have been greatly helped by the Department of Education and Science grant of £8,000. Our only regret has been that we did not receive it until late October, otherwise it would have been used even more effectively than has been the case. We have been delighted with the response to the Worship Project pack.

19. Despite the fact that FURY has been in existence for over 10 years we are constantly hearing of young people in churches who have never heard of the national youth activities and all the resources available to help them in their local setting. The Youth Committee does not organise holidays as some believe. We assist in the organisation of all sorts of training events which are designed to help teenagers grow in faith, awareness of themselves and in leadership. We would like to expose more people to these events and have therefore made a real attempt to improve communications by the introduction of a subscription FURY mailing scheme and by improving publicity.

20. FURY exists for those aged 13-25. A great deal at all levels is done with and for those aged up to 18 but after that it tails off. The Youth Committee is making a very real attempt to explore what needs to be done, how it should be achieved and how to assist churches and districts to respond to what is considered to be a very important issue. It is likely that a sub-committee of the Youth Committee will be set up to handle what may turn out to be a mammoth task.

21. Finally, we wish to draw attention to a celebration taking place during 1983 with which we are sure the United Reformed Church would wish to associate. The Boys' Brigade movement is celebrating its centenary. No small achievement. At the same time we would like to take the opportunity of reminding the church that many churches have uniformed organisations attached to them and these young people are part of FURY, a fact which in reality has little meaning to many young people and this will be one of the priorities for the Youth Committee in the year ahead. We shall attempt to encourage a greater sense of belonging on the part of young people and a greater commitment to members of the uniformed organisations on the part of FURY and local churches too. (Resolution 4 and 5)

22. In conclusion the Youth Committee has covered a lot of ground in a year and we are pleased to report that both the Youth Committee and FURY are very much alive and anxious to grow in every sense of the word.

## PILOTS PANEL

*Chairman:* Mrs. Alma Kendall

*Secretary and Master Pilot:* The Revd Margaret T. Taylor

23. Pilots is a non-uniformed children's movement sponsored by the United Reformed Church and the Congregational Federation. There are also a number of Associated Companies in churches of other denominations. It seeks to provide a weekday opportunity for the Church's children in the 7-14 age-range to 'learn, pray and serve in the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ'.

24. The Panel is continually encouraged by the formation of new companies and the growing strength of the Pilot organisation. Although some companies do close, usually because those who have led them have moved away, there are a large number of new companies being formed and Pilots are an obvious asset to many churches throughout the country. 24 new companies have been formed during the last year and 9 were closed. There are 172 companies (URC — 137, Congregational Federation — 16, Associate — 19).

25. In recent years, the Panel has spent a lot of time in up-dating badges, crests and manuals. These have been well received by companies and maintained the attraction of Pilots for the 7-14 age-group, keeping materials relevant to children's needs in the Eighties. Annual summer camps continue to be popular. Some of them are always overbooked. They provide wonderful opportunities for the young people of our churches to be together and to share experiences so that they are better fitted for life and for the contribution they make to the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ.

26. Plans are afoot to celebrate (in 1986) the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Pilots in some special way.

27. A booklet describing the formation of a company and a pack of sample materials may be obtained from the office.

## DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* The Revd Dr Brian O. Johanson

*Secretary:* The Revd Dr Colin P. Thompson

28. Once again, the major focus of our work has been baptism. We are now able to offer the guidelines on baptism, originally requested by the 1980 Assembly with reference to

children whose parents are not church members and subsequently widened, in view of the difficulty of treating one problem in isolation from the whole issue. Many hours have been devoted to these guidelines by the committee, but especially by those who prepared the drafts. We commend to you the fruits of these labours, *Guidelines on Baptism* (50p), and very much hope that every elders' meeting and minister will study them carefully. They include a survey of the Biblical and historical developments of both believer's and infant baptism, and of the traditions the URC has inherited; the URC Statement on Baptism; and a series of guidelines to encourage local churches to formulate an appropriate policy on matters such as the availability of both believer's and infant baptism in each congregation, the question of children of non-members, pastoral responsibility of the congregation, and the reception of Christians from other Churches. In view of the refusal to agree to requests for rebaptism, we would like to stress the positive nature of alternatives (such as Confirmation, reaffirmation of vows, the Covenant service), and to ask whether the Church wishes us to produce a service for the affirmation of baptismal vows for approval by Assembly.

29. Two other booklets in the series are available. We likewise commend Alan Sell's *Guidelines on Church Discipline* (50p) mentioned in last year's report and dealing with a particularly sensitive range of issues. The third of the series is of a rather different kind: Charles Brock's *Guidelines on the Lord's Supper* (£1), illustrated with line drawings, identifies the principal elements in the central act of Christian worship, and suggests ways of deepening our understanding of it with material for study by individuals and discussion in groups. We hope that church bookstalls will keep the various *Guidelines* in stock and encourage them to be widely used. Others have been proposed on Marriage (and remarriage); Christian nurture in the home; Reading the Bible.

30. Baptism has also been before us in a much wider context. The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches has published *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, surely the most significant and complete ecumenical statement on these issues that has ever appeared. Not only does it represent the agreed views of Protestant and Orthodox theologians, but has also enjoyed full Roman Catholic participation. This is the first time the WCC is seeking a formal response from all its member Churches, and for the first time since the Second Vatican Council this is a document being sent to Roman Catholic churches throughout the world. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* does not come to us for revision, but for a response by the end of 1984. It asks us in particular how the statements relate to the faith of the Church through the ages, what consequences our Church can draw from them for its own life and its relations with other churches, and what suggestions we can make for the work of Faith and Order as it works towards its long-range research project 'Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today'.

31. It is a salutary reminder, in the wake of the failure of the English Covenant, that the ecumenical dimension is much wider than we commonly imagine. This document does not come to us as part of a church union package, but represents a theological convergence and says that for theologians of such different traditions to speak so harmoniously is unprecedented in the modern ecumenical movement. The text demonstrates the major areas of convergence, and the commentary highlights the differences overcome and the issues still unresolved. In this context we would like to encourage a wider use of the Common Certificate of Baptism agreed by some 20 denominations in the U.K., and a sign of our increasing unity. (Resolution 6)

32. Other matters remain before us. On human sexuality and training for worship we are working with other committees, and we are participating in a theological dialogue on the doctrine of the Trinity initiated by the British Council of Churches. We continue our explorations into the theology of art, and deal with issues brought to us from Provinces (such as a question about Free Church — Roman Catholic relations, following the Pope's visit, and answered by the General Secretary in his letter in the November Information Service), Districts (on elders in Methodist-URC churches) and local churches (on communion at wedding services).

33. The Joint Liturgical Group, on which we are represented, has produced its revised and expanded *Holy Week Services* and, since the joy of Easter is hard to understand with-

out the events of the week before, we commend this to the churches for the enrichment of their worship (full text including all biblical readings £4.50p; shorter congregational edition, 95p).

34. We conclude on a musical note. The new hymn book produced by the Methodist Church is due to be published in December, and the URC has continued to be represented on its Main Committee even after our formal withdrawal from the project. We are heartened to learn that the Guild of Organists and Choirmasters has increased its membership from 200 to 350, and a fifth branch has been formed in the Eastern province. We are sure that the proposed advice panel on organs will be valuable in assisting local churches with specialist skills. But it mourns, as we all do, the death of Erik Routley, whose outstanding contribution to church music brought him international distinction. He has left us a rich legacy in words and music.

## CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* The Revd John B. Simpson

*Secretary:* The Revd Charles K. Meachin

35. The Humber road bridge is one of the latest and notable examples of the union of theory and practice. It began on a drawing board with civil engineers pooling their knowledge of structures and strengths, and a blue print emerged. Before the bridge could be of any practical use however, theory had to be converted into reality.

36. Stewardship similarly helps to relate the faith we profess intellectually and emotionally to the actual situations and responsibilities of daily life. Christian Stewardship is primarily about Christian **living** rather than about **giving**. The committee seeks to encourage churches regularly to examine their life and to conduct a spiritual audit of their WORSHIP — PRAYER — INVOLVEMENT — GIVING — LEARNING. These are the areas where renewal can break out.

37. **Principles of Christian Stewardship** The principles of Christian Stewardship have been re-stated in the first of a series of Bible Studies for use in discussion groups. A new series of *Studies in Stewardship Principles* is being produced.

38. **British Council of Churches Stewardship Committee** The Committee shares fully in the work of the BCC Christian Stewardship Committee which brings together the members of denominational Stewardship Committees, together with Central Staff members, helping each other in the task of making local churches aware of the wider implications of Christian Stewardship other than time — talents — treasure. The search for ecumenical co-operation in Christian Stewardship has led the BCC Committee to seriously consider producing **common** Christian Stewardship material. It is hoped that this will begin with the production of a study kit based on the publication *Christian Stewardship in the 1980's*.

39. **URC Training Centre** The Church constantly needs to re-discover and develop its sense of community. A resource the URC lacks for the purpose of helping the local 'In Christ Community' to explore its mission, engage in training programmes and participate in vocational consultations is that of a ministerial and lay training centre. The committee supports the project currently being explored at Windermere, and welcomes comments from churches on the need and feasibility of such a centre.

40. **Co-ordinated Training Programme** The committee continues to share in the working party set up to do the much needed co-ordinated scheme of training to serve most of the training needs of the Church. It is hoped that the programme will focus on training rather than general education and include material for general training in church membership as well as for specialized tasks and responsibilities.

41. **Stewardship in Rural Areas** Following the most successful consultation held in Bath (November 1981) the committee still hopes that more opportunities will be provided through District and Provincial structures to enable representatives from rural churches to



meet together and share mutual concerns and opportunities. The committee welcomed the further consultation arranged by the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee (November 1982) at which each Province was represented, and supports the view that training for work in rural situations should be part of our Ministerial Training programme, including In-Service Training.

42. In expressing concern about the expense of ministry in rural/small churches the committee has requested the MoM Committee to consider ways of providing financial support for stipendiary ministry in these areas.

43. We note that small-membership churches are generally failing to avail themselves of the Stewardship resource pack, and we wish to be of help to such congregations which may be struggling to maintain a viable witness and on-going life.

44. **Christian Stewardship Programmes** The Committee continues to receive reports from Provincial representatives of the Christian Stewardship programmes taking place in local churches. Members of the Committee continue to visit local churches, Districts and Provinces helping to initiate training sessions and stewardship programmes.

45. **Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism (NIE)** The Committee express appreciation for the time, energy and inspiration given to the NIE by the Revd Roger Whitehead. The Committee noted that the BCC has agreed to take major responsibility for cooperative work to stimulate intelligent and effective evangelism throughout the country now that the NIE had ended.

## WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

46. Through our representatives we are involved in the planning of the Day which takes place every March. The themes and their origins — "The People of God — Gathered for Worship, Scattered for Service" from Northern and Southern Ireland in 1982, and "New Persons in Christ" from the Caribbean in 1983, remind us of the value of the event in terms of education and worship and also for international fellowship. In particular we are pleased to record that during their Golden Jubilee Year in 1982, the Chairman of the International Committee was Mrs. Jean Whillis, a member of the URC.

## TRAINING FOR WORSHIP

*Secretary:* The Revd Margaret T. Taylor

47. The working party on Training for Worship was convened at the request of the Christian Education Committee to continue the concern for training for worship which had been adjourned in January 1980, pending the publication of a book planned by the Joint Liturgical Group. That book has now been published under the title 'Getting the Liturgy Right'.

48. After considering the report of the previous working party, the new working party agreed that our aim should be —

'To help the people of God to worship God'

There are three aspects of this aim:

- a) Understanding the liturgy and knowing what it is about
- b) Helping people to be worshippers
- c) Developing the detailed skills of the practice of leading worship.

49. Any action planned to fulfil the aim needs to take account of the following points:-

1. To worship requires an interior response and a sense of the church as a community
2. There is often a gap between our theology and practice; unless we ask the relevant questions relating the two, we cannot help other people to worship.

3. Our starting point is the inadequacy of the worship experienced in some local churches and the need for help, expressed or unexpressed, in all three aspects. The basic motivation lies in people's need for more satisfactory worship.
  4. Unless there are deeply felt common concerns in the community, worship is not effective. 'Education' in the narrow sense — i.e. knowledge alone — can do little to change this.
  5. There is a readiness in the churches for greater freedom and participation in worship, interacting with growth and spiritual development.
  6. For worship to come alive people need (a) proper training in the faith and (b) experience of the presence of God, that is they need nurture/training in discipleship.
  7. Suitable material and programmes should be provided for them at each stage of their development.
  8. We need to recognise the sheer 'ordinariness' of worship — and to relate our own Christian beliefs and practices to what we do with other Christians each week and to what is expressed with them and offered to God through them.
  9. There is a place for good preaching, but not twice on each Sunday to a handful of people. Sermons need to be sufficiently learned, challenging and interesting. There is also a need for the recovery of sacramental worship.
  10. Worship is not putting effort into special events, but comes alive when there is an awareness of the presence of God.
50. A number of possible lines of action are being explored as follows:-
1. The possibility of a small pack, less precise than the 'Image' pack, to enable people to explore worship in more detail and depth. Such a pack should be aimed, not at congregations as a whole, but at particular groups for particular purposes, for example elders' meetings considering their responsibility 'to see that public worship is regularly offered and the sacraments are duly administered', (Manual 9 (2) (i)), and worship committees concerned with the preparation of acts of worship etc.
  2. A 'map' with a guide for those 'on a journey with Christ in search of spiritual maturity'. The guide should suggest a limited number of different spiritual classics and opportunities and resources for very different approaches to spiritual development. It should be attractively produced.
  3. The possibility of focussing on 'Worship' as a theme for the URC for one particular year, possibly 1985. The aim would be to help those churches who engage in worship week by week without questioning what they do or why, to use the ordinary structures of their worship with more understanding and life. The idea is to use a variety of ways, linked with the regular events and activities of the church, to spot-light worship and help people to worship. With the agreement of the departments, committees, and individuals concerned, it might be possible to pick up the theme in some of the following ways:
    - by the publication of a popular devotional URC book on worship
    - by the adoption of a theme related to worship for Forum
    - by the adoption of this theme by the National Lay Preachers conference
    - by some degree of concentration on worship in relation to other concerns
    - by staff and others asked to lead conferences of elders, districts, teachers etc.
    - by a series of articles in Reform, preferably such as to stimulate correspondence
    - by the Moderator adopting the theme of worship for his or her Assembly address.
  4. The possibility of some advocacy, through a leaflet in the Information Service or by other means, of good resources, with comments on how they could be used.
  5. the possibility of a leaflet in the 'Lay Preaching Matters' series on the relationship between personal and corporate worship showing how each sustains and is

sustained by the other in particular practical aspects.

The Working Party is exploring these further and would be grateful for comment. In the light of such comment these and other possibilities will be taken further by the working party or by one or more of the committees it represents, as appropriate.

## THE COMMUNITY OF WOMEN AND MEN

*Secretary:* The Revd Margaret T. Taylor

51. This working party on the Community of Women and Men in the URC has met three times in 1982, increasing its membership from six to ten to give a wider range of experience and contacts. We have become increasingly aware of the complexity of the issues, the feelings they arouse and the importance of the working out of the community of women and men not only in the secular sphere and in other denominations, but also in the United Reformed Church. We have by no means achieved perfect community of women and men in the URC, nor are we well along the right road as we had perhaps once believed. We realise that our thankfulness for the co-operation between men and women in the URC should be a spur to further action rather than a cause for complacency.

52. During the year the Working Party has sought to raise the consciousness of members of the URC to the importance of the issue, through a display at the 1982 Assembly, through articles in Reform, and by means of a questionnaire sent to Elders' Meetings in the Information Service in January 1983. We have also publicised the Study Guide 'Circles of Community' and advocated its use. We have prepared a leaflet, for circulation at this Assembly, explaining some of the issues and giving some of the facts, and hope to plan a more complete presentation for the Assembly in 1984, possibly through a lunch-time event.

53. Among the questions which remain before the working party are the following:

1. How can the talents of women members be developed, recognised and made more widely available?
2. What steps do we need to take to enable more women to share in the leadership of the URC?
3. How can women be involved without becoming part of the 'masculine' structure?
4. Should we once again encourage the formation of women's groups and, if so, what kind of groups and for what purpose?

54. The working party is grateful for the encouragement received from members of the Departments and committees and other individuals in the URC, and is in touch, through various members, with developments and thinking in the WCC, BCC and in Christian feminist groups.

## CO-ORDINATED TRAINING

*Secretary:* The Revd Margaret T. Taylor

55. This has proved a more difficult task than we anticipated, raising questions not only of scope and content, but also of the nature and methods of education and of training. The working party has appreciated the challenge to its thinking provoked by the comments of other departments. In the light of these considerations, the intention is to focus on 'training' rather than on general education and to include material for training for church membership and for special tasks and responsibilities.

## URC FORUM

*Director:* The Revd Michael G. Dunford

*Secretary:* Mrs. Betty Taylor

56. FORUM is an activity of the whole Church when members of all ages, from a few months to 80+, gather in August for a week's holiday conference at the Swanwick Conference Centre in Derbyshire. It affords an opportunity for a holiday combined with an experience of Christian worship, fellowship and learning, in lovely surroundings.

57. In 1982 the theme was 'Believing Today' and was led by the Revd Dr. Colin Gunton, who stepped in to replace the Revd Dr. John Huxtable who had to withdraw for health reasons. A full complement of 384 people came and explored the theme through many channels producing some exciting and imaginative ideas. The children and young people are catered for at their own levels, following also the theme of the week.

58. The Revd John Francis of Manchester (former Principal of Overdale College — Churches of Christ) will lead our thinking and worship on the theme 'Sharing the World Together' at the 1983 Forum with the Revd John Slow as Chairman.

59. Already bookings for 1983 indicate a continuing desire for such a week and where else could one get a holiday with full board, including extras, in such delightful surroundings, with 'conference' and sports facilities included, for £62, with reductions for children!

## CHAPLAINS AND STUDENTS' COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* The Revd Dr. Leslie C. Green

*Secretary:* The Revd Peter Peirce

60. In exploring the overall aim of the Department to serve by discovering and releasing resources, we have been conscious of the diversity of influences from institutions of Higher Education and the churches, which shape the context of chaplaincy work and profoundly affect its results. Some of these influences were highlighted in our report last year but these bear reiteration. We are still committed to the maintenance of values and priorities in a period of unplanned cutback and the evidence, both nationally and within particular institutions, is that attempts to achieve this maintenance are extraordinarily difficult and utilitarian solutions, however sophisticated, are inadequate. It would be one solution to see the chaplains' task as withdrawing from the complexity but such moves erode both pastoral and prophetic effectiveness.

61. The way individual chaplains work is equally diverse, full-time, part-time, focussed denominationally or ecumenically, and this makes special personal demands which require appropriate pastoral care of those involved. The after-math of the Papal visit and the Covenant debate has significant consequences for chaplains since their task is primarily one of mission often with an ecumenical vision, and their work is not unaffected by the decisions and actions which the churches have taken. We should not underestimate the effect of wider decisions and actions upon specific areas of ministry. We accept our responsibility for commendations, and we are particularly grateful to Yvonne Workman for dealing with these in the Autumn Term, but our response to conversion is not so easily predictable. Does it follow that the appropriate location of the new convert is within the tradition of those involved in that convert's evangelisation, any more than the sole response to lapsing Christians is to welcome them into another tradition? These are questions which are very explicit for chaplains whose primary focus for their ministry is within the institution rather than the church community and whose work is ecumenical rather than denominational, but they are implicit in all chaplaincy work.

62. We drew attention last year to the re-emergence of the Student Christian Movement which has always encouraged its members to take denominational loyalties seriously and critically. The new general secretary was appointed in November and there are burgeoning

signs of committed support from old and new senior friends. We hope this will continue and we shall be in a position to respond to the Assembly resolution of 1982 in our next report when a more accurate assessment of progress can be made.

63. We have been made aware of the serious effects on chaplaincy work of interregnums; this applies both to church-based as well as institution-based chaplains. The autumn interregnum is always critical for new students moving from home, but there are further considerations. Where ecumenical appointments are made, and other churches rely on us to act on their behalf, our failure to provide continuity of ministry can be both frustrating and annoying to them, and lead to misunderstanding and loss of co-operation. The Church recognises the need for interim moderators in vacant pastorates. We ask that Provinces who have the responsibility for chaplaincy appointments look carefully at this issue to ensure that everything is done to sustain the work during an interregnum and appropriate consultations made to minimise the disruption of these gaps in provision which can be more damaging than in a local church. Long or unexplained delay can create disappointment and disillusion for members in universities and colleges themselves, which makes the task of successors difficult. While chaplaincy provision is specifically a provincial responsibility, much time of the committee is spent in reviewing changes and seeking to alert to opportunities and responsibilities.

64. It is not always recognised that the majority of students are to be found outside the universities. It has traditionally been our practice to place our limited resources within universities. The ecumenical appointment of Alan Burroughs to be Chaplain/Counseller at Humberside College of Higher Education is an indication of the attempt to re-consider our tradition. This is a matter we intend to consider further, having regard to the implications of tertiary education and the resources, not least of the Manpower Services Commission, which are made available to Colleges of Further Education. Life skills in the curricula of the various Youth Training schemes are important elements and we should try to encourage appropriately their development.

65. We have attempted to provide opportunities for in-service training through conferences and consultation. We were well represented at the Bi-ennial Chaplains' Conference at Swanwick which enabled chaplains and staff to think together about our common ministry to Higher Education and face up to the actual decisions that confront Christians who seek to relate their faith to where their vocation commits them.

66. Other events have included the URC Students' Conference in London, 'Freedom to Believe', and the National Student Christian Congress in Cardiff, 'Against the Stream'. Apart from these national events, we appreciate the inestimable value of local initiatives for small groups who have engaged in activities which have led to changes in personal life, development of personal responsibility and committed self-discipline.

67. We are grateful to the Revds Ben Tetley and Chong Kah Geh for their special Chaplaincy ministries to the Ghanaian and Chinese communities, respectively. While these ministries continue, each has now completed his six-year term on the committee. We thank them for their service and hope to use both in the future on a consultancy basis.

## MINISTRY OF HEALING COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* The Revd David H. Dale

*Secretary:* The Revd Charles K. Meachin

68. **Introduction.** Increasingly we are being asked to consider how far our concept of salvation is wide enough to include body, mind and spirit. Are we concerned to win just souls for Christ or whole people? Are our churches centres of Christ's redemptive and healing power or just gatherings of like-minded people who cling together for mutual comfort and support in the face of a complex and increasingly threatening world? These are some of the questions that concerned us as a committee during the past year.

69. We are glad to see an ever-increasing concern with Christian healing in our churches.

There are notable examples of situations where the Church's ministry of healing is being practised with good effect. There are also situations and examples of healing which cause a good deal of hesitation and questions. Generally, however, there seems to be a certain wistful longing that healing might touch those in need within our churches, and in the wider community, more effectively than our present round of worship and church life makes possible.

70. The development of study groups, weekend conferences, the encouragement of deeper intercession on the one hand and more practical activity to meet the needs of those under pressure on the other, all seem to be required if we are to deepen the life and faith of our churches and make more effective our ministry of healing.

71. **Aims of the Committee** Further consideration has been given to the aims of the Committee. It is agreed that our overall aim should be to identify and release resources which will enable the Church to become a better and more effective channel for healing. This involves:

- (a) Necessary reflection and action to enable the Church to respond in a theologically mature and ecclesiastically responsible way to matters of health and healing.
- (b) The encouragement of people to become more expectant and open to the working of the Holy Spirit so that they may experience God's creative power to heal and save.
- (c) The development of healthy and healing relationships, so that people are more able to be at peace with God and one another, with themselves and their environment.

72. **Preventive Medicine** It follows that the Church must be concerned not just with healing of sickness but also with those activities and attitudes which will make for health. The growth of concern for preventive medicine is one of the more hopeful developments in our time. It is for this reason that we have put considerable emphasis upon the Church as an agent of community care. For the same reason we are contemplating the production of a series of papers dealing with health care. It seems, for instance, ill-judged to spend vast sums of money on high-tech. medicine without also encouraging people in such basic things as good diet, a reasonable amount of exercise, and some understanding of how to cope with stress. How much more could be done in research into tackling the psychosomatic aspects of ill health? We might also ask how we can help one another to cope with our illness and disabilities? How can we help people to help themselves, so that they become less burdened by illness and so less dependent on drugs and doctors and the established health care services?

73. **Churches' Council for Health and Healing** With the departure of the Revd Peter Smith from the secretaryship of the Churches' Council for Health and Healing that potentially valuable arm of the Church's ministry of healing has suffered another loss. Bishop Morris Maddocks has been asked to continue as Chairman and the Revd Denis Duncan has agreed to provide a number of hours each week to maintain continuity in the office at Marylebone Parish Church. Once again failure amongst the Churches to agree on how they can engage in joint mission, together with lack of supporting finance, seems to be a major part of the problem.

74. **Co-operation with others** A more hopeful sign for the future is to be discovered in the fact that representatives from the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and United Reformed Churches have agreed to meet together on an informal basis to see how they can co-operate and share ideas, expertise and material in the field of health and healing. During the past two years representatives from the Methodist and Baptist Churches have attended our committee meetings and they have extended the same courtesy to us.

75. It becomes increasingly obvious that there is a need for some training for the healing ministry and consideration is being given to the way in which we can co-ordinate, stimulate and expand this ministry.

76. The Free Church Federal Council is at present looking at the whole field of Hospital

Chaplaincy Training in the hope of setting up appropriate training courses for ministers. It has been agreed to consult with the Church and Society Department on the possibility of producing a series of papers dealing with 'Fear' — Fear of Disease, Fear of the Bomb (death), Fear of Meaninglessness (unemployment), Fear of Self-condemnation (guilt), etc. During the year we have had requests for help with publications, and permission to use material we have published, from the Church of Scotland, the Baptist and Methodist Churches, the Christian Medical Commission (WCC), the Health Education Council, the Churches' Council for Health and Healing and the New Era Centre, Sutton Courtenay. We have also been grateful for help received from many of these same bodies in the development of our own work.

**77. A Christian Understanding of Sexuality** Our recommendation that work be undertaken on this theme was accepted by the Church Life Department Central Committee. A small working party, with representatives from Doctrine and Worship, Christian Education, Church and Society, Youth and Ministry of Healing Committees, has begun work on the project. After acknowledging the work that has been done in this field by various other Christian bodies and encouragement from the Baptists, we felt that it could be helpful to have something tailored to our own particular needs. It is hoped that a study pack will be available in time for the Assembly in 1984.

**78. The National Health Service** The discussion paper *The National Health Service* did stimulate a measure of discussion in the pages of *REFORM*. We had no cause to regret publication of the leaflet but only that Assembly felt unable to accept it for discussion as it had not been circulated with Assembly papers prior to the Assembly. The Free Church Federal Council, in its own discussion of this subject, has chosen to use our leaflet as one of its background papers. In view of what has happened since Assembly, it seems a pity that we were not able to invite 'local churches, District Councils and Synods to give consideration to the way in which local congregations and individual churches can help maintain, improve and possibly broaden the National Health Service'. Our concern about these matters continues and we would urge that further consideration be given by our Church to the Black Report '*Inequalities in health*' with its disturbing findings that the poorest members of our community get the poorest health care. The Methodist Church has set up a working party to discuss the NHS and the Free Church Federal Council has appointed a member to serve on that group.

**79. Publications** The committee is grateful to all who have responded to the distribution of our literature on health and healing. The various leaflets: Why has this happened to me? Death and the Christian, Response to grief and loss, Going into Hospital, The Role of the Congregation in the work of Healing, the URC and the Ministry of Healing, the National Health Service, and the booklet In Hospital all continue to be in demand. The study pack *Health and Healing* has been revised and the *Church & Community Health* study pack is available for use as a second stage study programme. A leaflet *Mental and Emotional Suffering* has been prepared for distribution through the *Information Service*. Two further leaflets, *The Church and the Disabled* and *Visiting the Sick at Home and in Hospital* are also in production.

**80. Filmstrip** The filmstrip *Christian Healing in the Local Church* has been recommended by the Religious Film and Filmstrip Review Panel, AVA Magazine. It has been accepted by the Methodist and Baptist denominations for use in their churches and has received generally favourable comment from those who have used it. It is not meant to answer every problem connected with the Christian approach to healing or provide a detailed pattern for every church. It is designed to show the essential relationship between the sacramental and community aspects of Christian healing and illustrate the broad range of healing ministry open to the Church. For those who require further elucidation there is much material available in the revised *Health and Healing study kit* and our other publications.

**81. National Conference on Health and Healing** A second national conference was held at Swanwick from 22nd to 24th April 1983. The principal speaker was Dr. Una Kroll, who has had a keen interest in Christianity and Healing for many years and is at present involved

in Health Education in Hastings. There were sessions on Healing and Counselling, the Bible and Healing and personal experiences of healing.

82. There is much more to be done and we are only just beginning to see how it might be done. But, as a contributor to *Church Times* said recently in regard to the Church's ministry of Healing: 'The pain of the world knocks at our door. If we stop our ears, we have grown deaf to the voice of Jesus'.

## MINISTERIAL TRAINING COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* Mrs. Joan Boulind

*Secretary:* The Revd Michael G. Dunford

### INTRODUCTION

83. During a busy and demanding year we have welcomed our new Chairman, Mrs. Boulind, and been well served by sub-committees concerned with Additional Training, Auxiliary Ministry, Recruitment for the Ministry, the Ministerial Training Fund, and the Management of Westminster College, Cambridge. We continue to receive support and ideas from Synods, Districts and local churches and regard our work very much as a team effort. We maintain personal links with theological educators in many countries and, through visits and correspondence, have been in touch recently with Holland, East and West Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, United States, Papua New Guinea and South Africa, and with the Programme on Theological Education of the World Council of Churches. Relationships with colleagues in the Baptist, Methodist and Anglican Churches give us opportunities for the continual exchange of experience. All these contacts at home and abroad enrich our work of preparing men and women for effective ministry in the URC.

### REVIEW GROUP

84. The 1982 Assembly adopted the report of the Review Group "Preparing Today for Tomorrow's Ministry" as training policy for the future, and various committees and working parties are now following up each general idea and specific resolution it contains. One particular section concerning a **Post Ordination Training Scheme** for those newly ordained, has caused much debate in the church and we feel it is too early this year to bring to the Assembly the carefully considered scheme it requested. We have therefore sought and gained the permission of the Executive Committee to postpone our response until 1984. Meanwhile we welcome any further contributions to the debate. Whatever is finally proposed will have to be phased in over a reasonable period of time, to enable practical arrangements to be made and to be fair to students currently in training.

85. The Report stressed that training for the ministry is life-long, and underlined the importance of an **In-Service Training programme**. Regional In-Service Training Officers are currently reviewing what is done in the light of this report and are encouraging ministers and their churches to participate. A discussion paper on the subject is currently in the hands of every elders meeting and local group of ministers. Throughout the life of the URC the Revd Dr. Stephen Mayor has served as National Co-ordinator of In-Service Training and lays down this task on his normal retirement from the Ministerial Training Committee. We are indebted to him and are fortunate that he is able to continue arranging the Ministers' Refresher Courses at Westminster College and in offering general support for our work in the name of the Cheshunt Foundation. The administration of what we hope will be a developing programme is now to be undertaken from Church House by the Revd Charles Meachin. (Resolution 7).

### MINISTERIAL RECRUITMENT

86. The programme which was approved last year is now in operation, and stress on recruitment for ministry is being put on local initiative, particularly in the Province and the local church. Regional Vocational Conferences are to be held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 15th and 16th April, 1983; in Nottingham on 30th September and 1st October, 1983; and



Almondsbury, Bristol on 18th and 19th November, 1983. These will replace the National Enquirers' Conferences this year. Ultimately we believe God calls men and women to his service in many personal ways, and often through an act of worship or the influence of a fellow Christian. We must play our part, and therefore recommend a special Sunday in the autumn when the ministerial vocation can be stressed, and thus placed permanently on our agenda in the local church. (Resolution 8).

### **MANSFIELD COLLEGE**

87. We have noted with great interest that Mansfield College, Oxford is currently in process of revising its Constitution, under the auspices of its Council. The intention is to introduce a new and more effective structure of government in line with changes in the nature of the college which have taken place over the years. Representatives of the URC on the current governing body are fully involved in the debate, and formal negotiations are also taking place through an invitation to the Church to send a group to consider all the implications. Clearly the interests of our current and future ordinands programme, our representation on a new governing body, and of appropriate trust funds and property must all be preserved in any scheme that is to be put before the Charity Commission. Ultimately we believe that all concerned with the proposed changes will benefit.

### **AUXILIARY MINISTRY**

88. The flow of candidates for the Auxiliary Ministry is continuing and currently some 80 students are undertaking courses of study arranged either by the URC or on an external basis. To support this developing programme and to relieve some of the pressure on staff in Church House; it is hoped to provide some temporary part-time assistance in the autumn.

89. We have looked at the resolution from the Bristol Assembly — "The General Assembly, recognising its responsibility for the training of Auxiliary Ministers, asks the Ministerial Training Committee and the Budget Committee to investigate carefully the whole matter of the payment of training course fees and bring recommendations to the 1983 Assembly."

90. Very careful consideration has been given to this request by the Ministerial Training Committee, in consultation with the Board of Studies for the Auxiliary Ministry, and the Budget Committee, and we do not wish to propose to the Assembly that there is a need to change its general financial policy in this respect. The responsibility for the training of its ministers rests with the whole church, and financial resources are found from a number of different sources.

91. We deal with all candidates on the same principle, taking personal income into account but not demanding a contribution as of right. Normally Auxiliary Ministry candidates remain in paid occupations or pensionable situations, and are generally able and very willing to cover the cost of their training, or to make a contribution. For them, as for students for the full-time ministry, however, the Ministerial Training Fund is available to meet particular needs, alongside local trust funds, authority grants and congregational support. No candidate need be deterred for financial reasons. Nevertheless there is a legitimate concern about the way the payments of fees are made, and the matter has now been fully explored.

92. We have instigated two basic improvements to the current system. To avoid students having to seek financial help for themselves, we are encouraging the Province, generally through its Provincial Director of Training or Treasurer, to co-ordinate the necessary financial support. We are also reviewing the possibility of making some reduction to the cost of the URC Training Programme, in the light of practical experience, and monitoring very carefully the fees charged by external courses and our use of them.

93. In these ways we have responded to the original concern brought to the Assembly, and we acknowledge the help offered to all our students training for ministry in the URC.

### **VISITATION TO THE WELSH COLLEGES**

94. It is the policy of the Ministerial Training Committee to visit regularly those colleges within which URC ministers may be trained. From 25-27 November 1981, Mr. John Rhys, the Revds. Michael Dunford, John Morgans and Robert Way visited the Memorial College,

Aberystwyth and Bala-Bangor College, and the following is a summary of their report.

### **General Introduction**

95. The purpose of the Visitation differed from that which underlay previous visits to other colleges, in that although the two colleges have been recognised by the URC, only one URC student has been sent to Memorial College and no students from the former CCEW or the URC have been sent to Bangor for many years. At present both colleges draw students from the Welsh denominations, mainly from the Union of Welsh Independents and from evangelical Churches. As a result neither college has a particular confessional identity shaping its life. Both colleges treasure their principle of independence and their Welsh heritage. Both Welsh and English are used in lectures and written work. In Bala-Bangor Welsh is evidently the language of first choice, the three students whom we met in formal interview being happier to reply to our questions through the medium of an interpreter. Each college is placed in a town where other denominational colleges are to be found, and where the University of Wales has a School of Theology or Biblical Studies. Close links are maintained between the institutions within each town. Students study together for the Dip. Theol. or BD and the colleges' staffs form a strong part of the teaching resources enjoyed by the University. The students are given pastoral training outwith their University course, and are expected to occupy pulpits at weekends.

### **MEMORIAL COLLEGE**

96. After a long history of witness and teaching in various parts of Wales, nearly two years ago the College moved from Swansea to Aberystwyth. It is now resident in 38 Pier Street, a two-storied early Victorian House next to United Theological College (Presbyterian) where ministers for the Presbyterian Church of Wales are trained. Memorial College houses a library, lecture room and accommodation for six students. There is no Hall, the students catering for themselves on site. The academic staff live outside college. The college has six students, a fall from last years number of 16. Two of these will leave the college in June 1982. Five students are studying for the BD and one for the College Diploma in Practical Theology. Four of the students have been recognised as Ministerial Students according to the practice of their varying churches; two may be said to be still testing their vocation.

97. **Staff** There are at present four members of staff, but after the imminent retirement of the Principal Revd W. T. Pennar Davies (Professor Church History) the new Principal, the Revd Dewi Eurig Davies (Professor of Christian Doctrine and Ethics, Philosophy and Religion and the Study of Religions) will be accompanied by the Revd D. Elwyn J. Davies (Professor Greek and New Testament and Associate Professor of Philosophy of Religion and the Study of Religions in the University School of Theology) and Revd Guto Prys ap Gwynfor (Lecturer in Church History). The staff of Memorial College and of United College co-operate fully in the teaching programmes of the two institutions. The courses are provided in both English and Welsh, and the administration of the College is undertaken by members of the teaching staff. Consequently the staff have a very full programme, and the encouragement of research plays small part in the life of the College.

98. **Library** The College's library was split into two portions upon the removal to Aberystwyth. The College's older books, its treasures and most of its paintings were placed in the care of the National Library of Wales, and only the working library was transferred to the new building. It is evident that this has not been kept up to date for some years past, but the students have access to the University Library within easy walking distance. The Library is used as the College chapel and lecture room.

99. **Courses** The curriculum of the College is largely shaped by the demands of the BD of the University of Wales. This means that its courses are closely similar to those offered by the United Presbyterian College, by St. David's Lampeter, and by the University School of Theology. The degree is traditional in content and is not designed to be a complete course of training for the Christian Ministry. Pastoral training is given in the college throughout all the three years of residence. The students conduct morning prayers each day. The staff received the idea of providing secular and church placements for students as a part of the course with interest, and wished to place it upon their internal agenda for

future consideration. Thought had been given to lengthening the course by one year thus following the pattern at United College, where the fourth year is devoted entirely to pastoral studies. Students would not receive an LEA grant for this fourth year. Experiments in collaborative learning had not been undertaken, the staff considering that the limited time available was most fruitfully used in formal instruction. The informal style of life in the small and closeknit community enables the student's experience to be used as teaching material in many unforeseen ways.

100. Young ministers, upon being called to their first charge, are put under the watchful eye of a nearby senior minister. This is an arrangement made by the college through its extensive contacts in the churches; it is not an arrangement made by the denominational authorities.

101. **Christian Leadership Course** The College runs a Christian Leadership Course for lay people which is similar to our course for the Auxiliary Ministry. The aim of the scheme is to provide men and women able to serve the local churches in a part time capacity, and without stipend. The participants spend at least three extended weekends at the College during their course, and from time to time members of the staff go to certain centres elsewhere in Wales to meet and guide the students under their care. Most of the students are retired people, and their age makes a Church placement not a wholly satisfactory method of training. Since the course is staffed by teachers who are supported by the college, possible changes in academic life at Aberystwyth as a result of recent University grants Commission decisions will not hinder this course.

102. **Spiritual formation** The spiritual formation of students was discussed. The matters receives good coverage in lectures, but as a result of the discussion the staff appreciated the need to devise some way whereby students in training could learn to develop depth and stability in their devotional life. The visitor's lengthy discussion with the students in their common room had this as a major topic. The students expressed some degree of realisation that this dimension of their formation would greatly determine the outcome of their ministry. Although they felt some hesitation about the use of liturgies, written prayers, and the concept of a spiritual discipline, the students held their reservations in suspense, while the topic was discussed. Not all the students were convinced that they were called to be ministers, but were awaiting God's leading upon the matter. The independent background of the students and the wide range of denominational affiliations of the college means that no strong ecclesial awareness shapes the students' sense of direction or sense of call. Consequently the praiseworthy inward search for God's leading is held outside the awareness of those duties and opportunities which corporate denominational life can provide.

103. **Finance** The college is an independent institution, and although the visitors had no right of access to its financial affairs, full discussion of these as of every other topic was generously invited by the staff. The financial secretary joined us for this part of our discussion. The college is funded by public subscriptions, most of which come from individual churches. In common with other charitable foundations, the amount subscribed in recent years has not kept pace with inflation: indeed, the amount raised in 1979-80 was marginally less than in 1978-79. The decrease in the number of students has meant a decrease in the receipts from LEA's. The year 1979-80 saw a current account deficit of £4,371, being 17% of the total expenditure for the year. However, the sale of the building in Swansea and the purchase of that in Aberystwyth has released funds for investment. The income from these will not be shown until 1980-81. Although the college's reserves and investments gave confidence that financial pressures could be withstood for the next few years, it was agreed by all present that it was necessary for the college to gain more students if its life were to continue.

#### **United College**

104. The visitors were sent by the Ministerial Training Committee to visit Memorial College. However, they gratefully received an invitation from the Revd Elfed ap Nefydd, Principal of United College to meet him, his staff, and the teaching staff of the University School

of Theology. This college is responsible to the Presbyterian Church of Wales and trains students for its ministry. It is next door to Memorial College. The principal is a former student of Westminster College, and a fellow student of one of the visiting team. He expressed the hope that the present close co-operation with Memorial College will strengthen. Inevitably the independence of Memorial College, which makes it possible for them to have a Unitarian on their teaching staff, provides points for debate. The college has twenty students training for the ministry of the PCW, and has agreed to supply lodging for the students of Memorial College should the number of students there outrun the room available. The coming of Memorial College has enabled United College to reduce its teaching staff, and to share instruction with the staff of Memorial College. The links with Memorial College are close and may be expected to grow closer. Links with Bala-Bangor have not been established.

105. **Relation with the URC** The chief concern of the visit was to determine what substantial meaning our present relation with Memorial College and Bala-Bangor has. The staff at Memorial College expressed the hope that ordinands from Welsh congregations of the URC should be sent to Welsh Colleges to train. The discussion broadened from this to consider the need for the URC — which is largely English based — to become sensitive to the Welsh part of its heritage, and also the need of the Welsh denominations to become sensitive to the distinct horizons within which URC congregations in Wales live. It was agreed that, given the great difference that there is between serving as a minister in Wales and serving in England, there would be a great advantage to be had from URC students for congregations in the Welsh Province spending a part of their training in a Welsh College. Orientation courses could be provided for more senior ministers considering a move to a Welsh congregation. The staff at Memorial College considered this to be a major feature of any meaningful link which they may have with the URC.

106. The visitors recalled that the URC is committed to unity, and that the Welsh congregations of our Church were part of the Welsh Covenant. Since the colleges are already committed to a pattern of future Church Unity which is different from that affecting the English and Scottish congregations of the URC, we asked the staff to make sure that knowledge of the pattern of URC life elsewhere in these islands be given to the students.

107. The visitors wish to record their thanks to the Principal, Principal elect, staff and students of Memorial College for their welcome, their hospitality and their unstinting helpfulness in all our enquiries.

### **BALA-BANGOR COLLEGE**

108. **Courses** Bala-Bangor College was founded in 1841 and has served as a training college for the Congregational and independent churches. The buildings comprise a substantial late Victorian house with a hostel of similar age. At present fourteen students are studying for the degree of BD eleven of whom intend to enter the Ministry. A further eleven students are reading for research degrees. All students except one are from Wales, and all the ministerial students are from Welsh denominations. There has been a gradual increase in student numbers over the last ten years and they are now at a peak. There is no lack of applicants for places and the authorities are able to select those whom they choose to admit. The present upsurge of spiritual concern among the residents and students of this part of North Wales is believed to be part of the explanation for this happy state of affairs.

109. The visitors were made warmly welcome by the Principal of the College, the Revd Dr. R. Tudur Jones, and given freedom to raise points and to meet people involved in the life of the College as they wished. We were privileged to attend college worship on the morning of our stay. Such value as our visit has had stems largely from the generous attitude with which we were received. The report of our conversations which follows imposes order on a free-ranging and searching discussion.

110. Many of the young people entering the College have had no church background, and the teachers are able to assume little knowledge on the students' part. It is the college's task to train them to be patient with ideas. The college has a strong national consciousness, and although all courses are offered in Welsh and English, it is Welsh which is the main

medium of social intercourse.

111. **Pastoral training** Although the college is Independent, the Principal believes that there would be no difficulty in training students from our part of the reformed tradition. Pastoral training is given by the analysis and consideration of specific situations in the classroom. Although Church placements were seen to be a valuable means of gaining pastoral experience which weekly pulpit supply could not give, considerable practical difficulties would have to be overcome before they could be instituted. Training students to work in collaboration with other ministers and local church leaders was not a deliberate feature of the present course, but was seen to be of increasing importance in days to come. Vacation jobs taken by students were used to provide material for pastoral training sessions, and provided valuable contextualisation for future ministry. Training in spirituality is at present largely achieved by the students themselves in their own prayer groups. Further discussion upon the need to establish intending ministers in a devotional discipline which was independent of the group and which could maintain spiritual momentum in the loneliness of ministerial life then followed.

112. Some of the points which directly affected the life and training of the present students were raised with three of them the next day. We noted that the students saw future relations with other churches in the place of their ministry to be a matter of personal relationships at local level. They placed the emphasis there rather than at any wider ecclesiastical level because of their concern to preserve the independence of the local congregation. The visitors wondered if any formal instruction in how other communions reach decisions and approach key questions had been given. Their strong concern for the Welsh churches and Welsh tongue was plainly a major matrix of their outlook.

113. The national concern was echoed by Mr Dyfnallt Morgan (The General Secretary) and Revd Stanley Owen (the Chairman of the College Committee), but was accompanied by an expressed hope for positive contact between URC and the college, and an awareness of the need for each to come to understand the other's way of thinking.

114. **Finance** The finances of the college depend upon the generosity of subscribers. Inflation has brought problems, but the present influx of students has given a welcome help to current account. The falling real value of reserves and of annual subscriptions must give cause for anxiety. Staff salaries are minimal, though the University makes payment for the lectures which staff give to the students for degree courses. The college has had to bear heavy expense to bring the college up to the standard of safety required by the Fire Authority, and has not only suffered disruption of its work, but had to postpone much needed general cleaning and redecoration of the premises.

115. The visitors were unable to meet Professor E. Stanley John, the Principal's teaching colleague, on account of his indisposition. They were glad to meet Dr. Gwilym H. Jones, Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Dr. Gareth Lloyd Jones, sub-Dean. Their description of the course and its emphases confirmed that which had been received from the University staff at Aberystwyth. They expressed the opinion that foreseeable University Grants Commission changes would be unlikely to reduce facilities for the teaching of Theology in Bangor. Asked about placements of students in church or industry for a year, they said that this would be possible without disrupting the course too much, but that it would introduce some administrative complications which would not work to the students advantage. They welcomed the thought that the URC may be able to send them some students from outside Wales.

116. **URC representation** During a final conversation with the Principal about the representation of the URC upon the College Committee it was noted that the procedures of the college and of the URC differ. Whereas the College appoints its own committee (and has appointed certain representatives from the South Wales English Churches) the URC understands it to be its right to appoint its own representatives. It was a mark of the cordial goodwill which had been established between us that the Principal hoped that the two procedures could be honourably reconciled by the URC commending to the College committee persons whom that committee could appoint. The Visitors were aware that the massive

work load borne by the Principal as well as his scholarship and skill in teaching lie near the heart of the effectiveness of the College. His is an influence which would be a benefit to our denomination.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

117. Until the move of Memorial College from Swansea to Aberystwyth, one college was seen, in general, to serve the north of Wales and the other the south. This distinction of function has now been blurred though not discarded. Travel between the two centres is difficult, and each college is part of a different school of theology with its own expectations and patterns of life. The only formal link between the Colleges is the Faculty Board of the University. Each college is aware of the need for co-operation with the other, and aware also that there may no longer be a need for two Independent Colleges in Wales. Both colleges provide an education which is carefully directed towards the preparation of ministers for service in Wales. This provision cannot be duplicated in England, and is essential to the life of a United Kingdom denomination such as ours. (Resolution 9).

## COLLEGE REPORTS

### WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

118. **Changing patterns of College life** A number of factors are combining at present to change the patterns of College life. Over the years the Federation of Cambridge theological Colleges is developing a life in common; all four colleges are responding with deliberation to reports and reviews of their policies and programmes; rather more rapidly under economic constraints the University of Cambridge is having to adjust some of its habits. A high proportion of students are married and live in flats or houses rather than in the residential wing of the College. The fact that courses can be of one, two, three or four years length produces fluctuation of numbers when as in 1983, a large group of students leaves together. Sixteen will finish their courses, while only eight entered the College this academic year, two of them for short courses based on previous pastoral experience.

119. **Overseas Contacts** This year Miss Kim Clayton is in Cambridge as the first exchange student received from Columbia Seminary, Georgia, under the new arrangement with them; another student from Germany has spent a term at Westminster as part of a year with the Federation. The Principal's visit as Moderator to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and his sabbatical leave in New Zealand enabled him to renew contact with College alumni in both countries. The Revd Alan Amos and Mrs. Clare Amos have both joined the staff of Westcott House after serving in the Lebanon and Deaconess Margaret Hutchison, also at Westcott House, and Mrs. Mary Tanner, who has moved from there to the Church of England's Board for Mission and Unity, will be at the WCC Assembly in Vancouver. All these contacts are very important for the communication of a world perspective in ministerial training.

120. **Pastoral Care and Spirituality** In accordance with the Review Group resolution passed by the General Assembly, the Board of Studies has designated a chaplain for the College in the person of Professor Buick Knox, who will combine this responsibility with his Church History teaching. The Board itself takes seriously its pastoral duties; they were emphasised when thanks were expressed to the Revd Norman Leak on his leaving the post of Chairman. He is succeeded by the Revd Harold Springbett.

121. **Settlements** Settlements during 1982 were as follows: Chris Baillie, Northallerton; Irene Bligh, Zion and Flanshaw, Wakefield; Robert Brown, Long Ashton, Winscombe and Wrington; Lysbeth Carrol; Maghull and St. Stephen's, Bootle; Lindsay Hassall, Bridlington and Hornsea; Kenneth Knight, Brigstock, Corby and London Road, Kettering; James Ryan, Lea Road, Wolverhampton; Jean Hall is serving with the United Church of Zambia as chaplain of Njase Girl's Secondary School, Choma. Pauline Dankwa, who took the full course here in preparation for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana,

spent some months working in London prior to her return home for settlement and ordination.

122. **URC Ordinands** (arranged according to their year of anticipated entry into ministry)

**1983**

Martin Ambler  
Ann Cole  
Derek Gardiner  
Frank Hall  
Fred Hutchinson (Revd)  
Rhona Jones BA  
Ruth Mealand, BA  
Alan Pickles BA  
Victor Ridgewell  
Timothy Roffe, BA  
Michael Ryman  
Edward Symmons  
Clive Thomson  
Chris Wood

**1984**

Stephen Brown BA  
Bernard Grimsey  
Glyn Millington BA  
Jennifer Millington BA

**1985**

Colin Bones BSc  
David Brown  
Ron Forster  
David Hamblin  
Graham Sweeney  
(and external)  
Jeffrey Armitstead  
Elizabeth Scopes, MA

**1986**

Adrian Bulley  
Eileen Springbett  
(and external)  
David Jones

**THE CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGE, MANCHESTER**

123. **Internship Training** The third group of final year students is undertaking training at the college and in local churches. We are grateful to the ministers and pastoral groups in the churches and to a wide range of other persons who share in the training for what they are doing to make the internship year the valuable form of training it has become.

124. This attempt to make training contextual is only a beginning, and the college is studying possible ways and means of taking up the challenge of the URC Review Report to develop training within a secular context.

125. **Auxiliary and Lay Training** Under the aegis of the Manchester Christian Institute, the staff works with the staffs of the other local colleges in the new part-time course of training for the auxiliary ministry and lay people. Thirty one students are involved in years one and two. While this course shares certain features of similar Anglican schemes of training, it is run on the principle that training for ministry is best done while exercising it and students are expected to engage in some form of ministry and leadership while on the course and evaluate this regularly. The training is assisted by tutors who run regional groups in which students meet monthly. The academic work of the course contributes to the Certificate of Religious Studies of the University of Manchester Extra Mural Department.

126. **Ecumenical training in Manchester** There is a considerable amount of co-operation in ministerial training in Manchester. The College, following the recommendations of its own review group, is actively exploring the possibility of still closer links. A working party representing the four colleges of the city and the Northern Ordination Course has done a good deal of work and its recommendations are due to be considered by the various governing bodies.

127. **Mission 1983** The College Mission this year is at Ashton-under-Lyne. A team of students led by the Revd Roger Tomes is working with the Revd Arthur Chadwick and the members of the Albion URC.

128. **Students** We were pleased to have with us for the session the Revd Jaroslav Raich of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren. David Bedford is undertaking his year of internship training in the scheme run in Jamaica by the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman.

129. Settlements are as follows:-

E. Jane Dawson	Forest Hall URC, Newcastle
Mark J. Fisher	Eshe Road URC, Crosby
Brian S. Jolly	Cherry Tree, Mill Hill and Tockholes URC Balcburn Group
Harry G. H. Lanham, BA	Thamesmead Christian Community
Beryl Lyde	Stocke URC, Coventry
Jean de Rajaonarivony	Church of Jesus Christ, Antananarivo, Madagascar
Reginald V. Sago	Latimer Congregational, Stepney
John C. Sutcliffe	Ashbourne, Hognaston, Matlock and Wirksworth URC West Derbyshire Group
Norman A. Whitaker	Holt URC, Bradford on Avon.

Students presently in training at the College and the year of their expected entry into the stipendiary ministry:

1983	1984	1985
David R. Bedford BA	Hazel M. Addy	Kenneth Cox (Revd)
Hilary J. Collinson	Robert A. Barthram	Martin P. Ross
Andrew Francis	Robert J. Bushby	Noel J. Stancliff
Richard J. Gill (Revd)	Beryl A. Chatfield	Darren Wimbleton
Nigel M. Goodfellow	Helen M. Drummond, BA	<b>1986</b>
David A Herbert, BSc	Christopher J. Ford	Bethan D. B. Davies, MA
Peter C. Noble	Richard A. W. Goddard	Andrew Fairchild
John J. Roche	John A. Hardacker	Philip Jones
Geoffrey H. Sharp, BA	Martin T. Hazell	Martin Nicholls
Alan Williamson	Alex J. Jacob	Martin Whiffen, BA
	David C. Phillips	Philip J. Woods
	Timothy W. Royds, BA	
	Robert G. Shallcross	
	Nigel P. Uden	

## MANSFIELD COLLEGE

130. **Students** URC Ordinands number 18 out of 26 studying Theology.

<i>Final Year:</i>	Lesley Beale, BSc.MSc.Ph.D.	<i>Second Year:</i>	Paul Dean, BA
	David Bending, Cert.Ed		Hazel Martell, Cert.Soc.Sc.
	David Fox, BSc		Catherine Middleton, BA.PH.D
	James Gould	<i>First Year:</i>	Mitchell Bunting
	Lesley Charlton, BA		Gregory Thompson, BA
	Molly Kenyon, BA	<i>Year in USA</i>	Susan Durber(nee Pierce),BA
	Sheila Maxey, MA.BD.		
	Patrick Taylor, MA	<i>One Year's training</i>	Revd Kenneth Davis
<i>Course III:</i>	Patrice Sessions		Revd Wilfred Diggins
	Marie Roe, BA		

131. **Staff** The College greatly misses the Revd Dr. Merlyn Satrom and looks forward to the appointment of a successor as World Lutheran Federation Fellow. The Revd Dr. Gordon Kendal, Chaplain of Lincoln College and a graduate from Mansfield, has taken over in the meantime as a very acceptable tutor in Doctrine and Ethics. The Revd Charles Brock represented this country at a conference in Venice of the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. He is taking sabbatical in Jerusalem, along with the Revd Dr. Rex Mason, Lecturer in Old Testament.

## 132. Settlements

Geoffrey Bending, BA	Burnham
Ronald Ewart, MA	Marston and Oxford Polytechnic Chaplaincy
Kim Fabricius, BA	Sketty and URC Chaplaincy, University College of Swansea



George Gibson, BD  
 Kevin Watson, BA  
 Alan Wise, MSc.DTech.

Colindale  
 Rhyl  
 Parkgate and Neston

133. The Commemoration preacher was the Revd Dr. R. J. McKelvey, while Dr. D. I. Scargill preached at the Valedictory Service. Wednesday evening services maintain their place in the life of the College, preachers including the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Lord Mayor of Oxford, the Revds Terence Fretheim, Buick Knox, Arthur Macarthur, Lesslie Newbigin, Richard Taylor, Dr. Clyde Binfield and Rabbi Lionel Blue.

134. A new Interdenominational Christian Fellowship has been formed, with over 30 members representing a wide range of opinions.

135. With Spiritual Formation placed high in the Review Group Report, we have instituted a course organised by the Revd Justine Wyatt, Assistant College Chaplain and minister at Abingdon and the Longworth group, to cover studies in contemporary prayer life, aspects of the history of prayer and devotion, reflection on the Lord's Prayer for personal use, Bible study in churches and the devotional life of the minister.

136. **Centenary Appeal** The Appeal, launched in spring 1982, has made a sound start. We are very grateful for the support we are receiving.

### 137. COLLEGE STATISTICS

College	Total Nos. URC in Training	New candi- dates for 1982-83	Entry into the URC Ministry				Actual no. entered URC 1982	Total number of places available
			83	84	85	86		
Westminster Cambridge Congregational	28	8	14	4	7	3	8	61
Manchester	34	9	10	15	4	5	9	100
Mansfield Oxford	18	4	10	3	4	1	6	24
Queen's Birmingham	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>185</b>

### PERSONALIA

138. It is with sadness that we record the deaths of two men who offered great gifts to ministerial training. We pay our tribute to H. F. Lovell Cocks, MA.DD who served Yorkshire United College, and was Principal at the Scottish Congregational College, and then Western College, Bristol, and Erik R. Routley, MA.BD.DPhil who was one time lecturer, musician and chaplain at Mansfield College, Oxford.

## SUPPLEMENTARY MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* Dr Richard D. Jurd

*Secretary:* The Revd Charles K. Meachin

### AIMS

139. THE SUPPLEMENTARY MINISTRIES COMMITTEE HAS THE TASK OF SERVING AND CARING FOR LAY PREACHERS, LOCAL PASTORS, CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS AND DEACONESSES.

## LAY PREACHERS

140. District Councils continue to encourage lay preachers to train for inclusion in the Register of Nationally Accredited Lay Preachers; 1,063 names are on the Register. The Exploring the Faith Course (the qualifying course for URC lay preachers) continues to attract new students, 9 students having completed the course during 1982; 433 students are working through the course.

141. The committee is grateful to the tutors, appointed by District Lay Preaching Commissioners, without whom the course could not continue. The committee request District Councils, or Provinces, to cover the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by tutors.

142. In consultation with the Local Preachers' Studies Board of the Methodist Church, the committee (in response to a 1981 Assembly Resolution) has produced an Introductory Course to the Exploring the Faith course including material to help students acquire 'study skills'. The course unit costs £1.25p and has been produced in the same format as the Exploring the Faith course units, including self-testing and tutor marked exercises.

143. A Lay preacher's lapel badge for Nationally Accredited Lay preachers is available £1.00 (including postage).

144. The 8th Shergold Expository Sermon Competition was held in 1982. There were 12 entrants and the prize-winners were:-

1. Mr. Louis Brown, Redcar
2. Mr. J. Maddison, Bulwell, Nottingham
3. Mrs. G. Lenfestey, Guernsey, Channel Islands

Due to the small number of entrants over several years the committee have decided to discontinue the Shergold Expository Sermon Competition and use the income, in memory of Dr. Shergold, to fund a scholarship to enable lay preachers to attend study conferences.

145. New leaflets in the series 'Lay Preaching Matters' were produced during the year: 'The Call of the Lay preacher'; 'Speaking and Reading in Church'; Two posters: 'Recruitment' and 'Exploring the Faith' were distributed in the July 1982 Information Service and were received enthusiastically by our churches.

146. The committee have arranged a National Conference for Lay Preachers to be held at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, 3rd-5th June, 1983. The Revd Roger Tomes will lead the conference on the theme 'Christians and the Old Testament'.

## DEACONESSES

147. The committee maintains contact with four retired Deaconesses and has had the pleasure of making them a small gift at Christmas.

148. The committee pay tribute to the conscientious and caring way in which the Revd Brian Treharne has, on behalf of the committee, been responsible for the pastoral care of Deaconesses.

149. The committee was represented at the ordination and Induction of two former Deaconesses: Revd Lilian Blythin (St. Andrew and St. George URC Stockton-on-Tees) and the Revd Joan Johansen-Berg (Fulham Palace Road, London).

150. Miss Kay Salvage (Crossway Central Mission, London) has used her sabbatical study leave to study theological education by extension in Nigeria, to attend a counselling course, and a course concerned with the Care of the Dying.

## CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS

151. The committee welcomed the report 'Good News to the Poor', particularly Section 3, pages 14-15, recommending the financing of six CRCW's: 'Some special needs in new areas on mission are met by church workers who do not come under the category of maintenance of the ministry. There is great need for church-related community workers in city areas, such as those we have described and other places where the URC is currently engaged in work, but inadequate resources to employ them. It is urgent to set up a fund which would enable the employment of up to six such workers in the immediate years ahead'. The committee noted that the World Church and Mission Department are responsi-

ble for the 'working out' of the document and that the Budget Committee has noted the recommendations on the financing of CRCW's.

152. Ms Susan Burrell was commissioned by the East District Council for service at Plais-tow United Reformed Church, London E.13.

153. The committee has five CRCW's in training and is actively seeking suitably trained personnel to fill some of the vacancies for CRCW's. The development of the CRCW programme continues to depend upon the interest and goodwill of the Church, the availability of suitably motivated candidates, and the continued availability of funds to assist with the costs of training.

#### **LOCAL PASTORS**

154. As agreed at the 1982 General Assembly, that "after Assembly 1983:-

(1) those whose names appear on the list of those eligible to be placed on the Register of Local Pastors (but who are not in pastoral charge) should remain on that list. Such persons who wish to take up pastoral positions after 1983 should apply to become Auxiliary Ministers, their qualifications, training and experience being taken into account when assessment for extra training is made;

(2) those Local Pastors still on the Register of Local Pastors remain on the Register and that no new names be added" (Record of Assembly 1982, page 25). The committee in consultation with District Councils and Provincial Synods will continue to care for those Local Pastors remaining in pastoral charge.

#### **UNITED NAVY AND AIR FORCE CHAPLAINS' BOARD**

155. The URC chaplains currently commissioned are as follows:

Navy: The Revd Frank Beattie and Revd Sam Williams

Army: The Revd Alan Finch, Revd Hamish MacLagen and Revd Norman Setchell

Air Force: The Revd Geoffrey Prenton

During the year, Frank Beattie served at sea with the South Atlantic task force. Owing to financial limitations the number of commissioned chaplains is being slightly reduced, but there are occasional vacancies and any URC minister who has completed three years in the pastorate and is under 35 may ask to be considered when a vacancy arises. Such enquiries are welcomed.

156. Chaplains have a major opportunity to be in touch with young people with no church links, and also with service families. It is thus a pioneering ministry demanding pastoral and teaching skills. During these years of intensive debate on nuclear weapons chaplains face the moral issues raised, and share the tension of the Northern Ireland community when serving there.

157. The URC is grateful for the service of Officiating Chaplains (who undertake part-time ministry in local units) and Territorial Army Chaplains (who give the same time, including residential periods, as do TA members). Ministers are thus able to extend the range of their ministry.

158. The United Board serves the Baptist, Congregational and URC denominations. During the year we shared the sorrow of our Baptist colleagues in the death of a chaplain, the Revd T. G. Martin, in a helicopter crash. The Board said farewell to the Revd Dr. David Russell, the Chairman, on his retirement. The Revd George Mann, the Secretary, resigned after 40 years association with the Chaplains' service. The Revd Philip Schofield of Edware became Secretary and the Revd Bernard Thorogood became Chairman. The Board is planning a residential conference for all the chaplains next January.

#### **PREACHING FEES**

159. There is currently great diversity of tradition and practice in local churches regarding the offer of preaching fees to lay preachers, students, ministers and retired ministers.

Some local churches regard this as a duty, others consider that preaching may be regarded as voluntary service to the Church. There is a considerable change over the last generation as far as ministers are concerned, since now the URC accepts the responsibility for paying a reasonable stipend to all ministers in pastoral charge. The advent of the Auxiliary Ministry is a new factor to be kept in mind, and the emergence of a significant number of URC/Methodist unions where different traditions in this particular matter come together.

160. The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee has asked the Department for guidance concerning refunds to the churches in this new situation, and consultations have taken place. We consider that it would be reasonable to describe the new situation as one in which amounts paid for preaching no longer can be considered part of an expected and necessary income, but as expressions of gratitude for help given. Preaching fees for normal Sunday worship are not logically necessary these days, and imply unjustifiable distinctions between types of ministry and other service rendered to the Church.

161. There are, however, special categories, such as retired ministers and bona fide students, who should be borne in mind, and we would not wish to suggest that there should be taken away from churches or ministers the gift element. Full expense should invariably be offered in all cases.

162. Before we produce some considered guidelines for the Assembly to assist the MoM Committee, the Department welcomes any indications as to the mind of the churches on a matter which is distinctive to the URC.

#### **APPRECIATION**

163. We have valued the leadership which the Revd Glyn Jenkins has given to the Children's Work Committee and in particular his concern for recognition of the place of children in the worshipping, learning, serving and witnessing life of the whole church, and we express our thanks for all he has done. (Resolution 10)

#### **RESOLUTIONS**

1. The Assembly agrees  
that this report be received
2. The Assembly urges local churches to review their ministry to children in the light of the findings of the Children's Committee Children and Worship Project and to make such changes in their pattern of worship, education and the training of leaders which would seem likely to enable them to minister more effectively.
3. The Assembly asks local churches to review the provisions they make for the continuing Christian education of new members, commends the use of the course 'On the Way' for new members, and encourages elders and experienced members to participate in such education along with those recently received into membership.
4. The Assembly congratulates the Boys' Brigade upon reaching its Centenary and acknowledges the importance the Boys' Brigade organisation has played in the development and nurture of many boys and men in the Christian faith.
5. The Assembly requests all churches with Uniformed Organisations to examine the relationship between the organisation and the Church and look for greater opportunities to enhance the quality of Christian influence and involvement.
6. The Assembly welcomes the publication of Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry; encourages Provinces, Districts and local churches to study the text and consider its implications; and requests each Synod to set up a panel to monitor discussions and forward a Provincial response to the Doctrine and Worship committee by 30 November 1983; and further requests that wherever possible, debate should take place within an ecumenical context.
7. The Assembly notes that the co-ordination of the In-Service Training Programme for ministers is to be undertaken by the staff in Church House, and expresses its thanks

to the Revd Dr. Stephen Mayor for his valuable work since 1975 as National Co-ordinator.

8. The Assembly encourages all churches to set aside Sunday 20th November 1983, or a neighbouring Sunday, as a Day of Prayer for Vocation to the Ministry, and where possible to invite a theological student, to lead worship.
  9. The Assembly resolves that:
    - (a) the present recognition accorded to Memorial College, Aberystwyth and Bala-Bangor College as institutions within which ministers for the URC may be trained be continued;
    - (b) when it becomes clear that a student for the ministry or a minister who has never served in a pastorate in Wales is likely to receive and accept a call to such a pastorate the help of either Memorial College or Bala-Bangor (through a term of study or a special course) should be one of the resources made available by appropriate financing for preparatory study.
    - (c) the teaching staff of the Welsh Colleges continue to receive invitations to joint meetings of the staffs of the other recognised colleges;
    - (d) the councils and local churches of the Welsh Synod be asked to consider ways whereby close links of informed fellowship can be built between the URC and the Welsh Colleges;
    - (e) the academic staffs of the recognised English Colleges consider the possibility of a term's exchange between one of their members and one of the staff from the Welsh colleges;
    - (f) it nominates two persons for election to serve as their representatives upon the College Committee of Bala-Bangor, and two persons for election to serve upon the Executive Committee of the Memorial College, Aberystwyth.
  10. The Assembly records its thanks for the service rendered to the Church by the Revd Glyn Jenkins as Chairman of the Children's Work Committee.
-

# PREPARING THE WAY

Report of the Long Range Policy Group

## PRINCIPLES

### 1. HISTORY OF THE GROUP AND ITS WORKING

1. Prophets, visionaries and seers have, down the centuries, appeared within the Christian Community to open up the secrets of the future, to entice us onwards into bolder and more courageous actions in Christ's name. Some foretold the coming of the kingdom, some the betterment of the world, some offered just a dream. The very power of these visions and the persuasiveness of their telling have raised spirits and lifted human beings to endeavours beyond their expectations. But looking to the future cannot always be charged with mass drama and emotion. The work of God is an everyday task of prayer and action. Yet we are still required to see the renewal of His world as our mission.

2. If Christians, alone, in groups, local churches or in denominations are to influence the world about them and be clear-headed about their relationships with God and His people, they must think ahead. They must plan. The URC has been aware of this obligation throughout its short life and has constantly struggled to look beyond the immediate horizon. The Long Range Policy Group is the latest vehicle for looking ahead. It was established by the General Assembly in May 1980 which laid upon it the task of:

'ensuring that the URC at all levels and in all its departments is able to plan realistically, radically and hopefully for future development'.

3. This wide ranging brief arose from the earlier work of the Priorities and Resources Group which, under the chairmanship of one of our number, the Revd John Young, produced two valuable reports. With their efforts already before us (*Consider These Things*; 1979 and a final report to Assembly 1980) the Group felt it could look beyond the Church's domestic position and take a somewhat wider perspective.

4. Relieved of some of the groundwork and having decided not to take up matters of importance which had been recently and thoroughly aired (such as Christian education, the nature of ministry and covenanting), we nonetheless were aware of our limitations, not least because of our small number. Early on it was agreed that the subjects which were to be scrutinised should be limited in number. Twelve were chosen, covering a wide range of social and theological issues.

5. At the same time, it was recognised that each Topic would give rise to questions about resources — human and monetary — and organisational matters, as well as essential courses of action. It was envisaged that a discussion of each Topic would be accompanied by consideration of these constraints and possibilities. In December 1981 a consultative paper *Agenda for a Church in the World* was published followed by an article in *Reform*. The object was to stimulate wider comment and discussion. In addition to an open invitation to offer views, twenty-four churches were specially invited to comment on specific Topics. Experts from within and without the URC were also consulted.

6. The paper was an unrefined working document with little attempt having been made to polish the prose or sharpen the thinking. It was genuinely consultative. Indeed in the Introduction we invited readers to 'treat it more like a letter from a friend who is struggling with a problem. . .' Many responded in the manner of this invitation. Others used the text in a way which appeared to ignore its provisional status.

7. Within the considerable response there was both support and criticism, sometimes of a most trenchant sort. Undiluted conservatism jostled uneasily with pleas to be more radical. Such a range of reaction was thought to be very helpful as were elements of the commentaries we were offered.

8. Prior to publication of the Consultative paper, the Group had seen the end product of its work being a largish report to Assembly and for publication. Following the exercise

a lot of re-thinking took place. It became clear that another book-length report was unlikely to be very attractive to the Church. Instead of a once and for all handbook of planning, a relatively short report was agreed, which would address itself to the three levels of denominational organisation, which need to plan — local churches, Districts and Synods and Assembly. All twelve Topics were retained, but grouped together in a more coherent way. It was also acknowledged that looking forward, whether secular or ecclesiastical, could not be a once and for all activity. Some kind of continuing and monitoring group would need to be set up which would serve to remind the Church at all levels to continue its visionary work. As a consequence, definitive statements on each Topic became superfluous and the idea of illustrations of the guidelines to be set, was accepted. Thus this report offers only general approaches to each set of Topics, in the knowledge that local conditions and circumstances at different times will vary greatly, demanding tailor-made solutions. The decision to offer differing, but linked, reports to each of three levels of church life recognises the obligation on the Church as it gathers at each level. It implies that experimenting and re-shaping are integral tasks in the roles of Districts and Synods as well as for churches and the denomination as a whole. During the first decade of their existence these regional and local agencies have, on the whole, been unable to take a long range view. The Group has formed the view that there are vital activities to be carried out at these levels which demand planning.

9. What follows builds upon these two assumptions, that forward thinking is vital to the Church's development and that within the denomination it is an activity vital at all levels. Our commitment is also made clear, to engagement in ecumenical work.

## **2 BASIC CONVICTIONS ABOUT THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

10. The word 'church' has many meanings and the relationship between them is crucial. We know a local church in which we worship every Sunday, we are part of a national denomination which is called a Church, we share in a vast fellowship which we call the world Church, and we profess faith in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. The last is the great reality. It is known by faith, for we do not yet see its unity or its holiness. It is beyond our sight, and its components or members are finally known only to God. Into that reality men and women in every age and, today, in every culture are called by the Holy Spirit. This is the Church portrayed in the visions of Revelation in which all the people of God praise the Lamb of God before the throne of God.

11. The local church we see and serve is not that whole Church but represents it. It does so partially. For we know that the Church as we see it is formed not only by the will of God but by a host of social, economic, political and psychological factors. There is no 'pure' church, if by that we mean one which springs from the New Testament, untouched by history and culture. Our practice of worship, our understanding of ministry, our forms of church government and so on vary in different parts of the world and from generation to generation, and also from one social grouping to another in Britain. Yet at each point the church which we see and serve is a reflection in a locality of the whole great family of God. We hold that relationship in prayer and faith and experience. To make it dynamic, open-ended, hopeful, invigorating is a gift of the Holy Spirit to us here and now. For that is the fellowship of the Spirit.

12. By the word 'local' we often mean the immediate area around one worship centre. The 'local fellowship' means those who gather at one table of the Lord. We believe that we have to explore other localities. Just as a 'local church' is called together by God to witness in a town or village, we believe a District Council is called to witness in a District and a Synod in a Province. For those may well be the locations for the organisations and forces which shape our social life. The 'local church' on its own may well be unable to witness to those major powers. Similarly we refer to a 'national Church'. We reject as heresy the notion that national boundaries can ever define or limit the Church of God. But the nation is a historical and social context of prime importance for us all, and therefore the Church is called to have a national entity, a national mission and a national ministry. This means that we may not be content with a mission limited to one section of the nation, such as

middle class suburbia, but must reach out to the varied communities which form the habitat of the Church. In seeking the priorities for the URC we believe that each 'location' of the Church has to be taken with seriousness.

### 3 GOD WILL PROVIDE...

13. But why should a church have a long-range policy? Surely all is in the hands of God who will bring about what he wills; surely our best plans are tainted by sinfulness and God has a way of suddenly overturning them and showing us new directions; surely our faith teaches us that he will bring all things to an end at his chosen moment and all that it requires from us is to be faithful and ready. There is truth in all these comments. But far from preventing attempts to make policy they are a spur to thought and action. We are sinners, seeking to be obedient, ready for God's prompting, aware that he will lead us in his way, and precisely because of these convictions we dare to seek to discern his direction both for the moment immediately ahead of us and in the long-term. Christians know that their grasp of events is inadequate and that their projections are imperfect. But by God's grace we will still apply our hearts and minds and best endeavours to mapping out a course for his people to follow.

### 4 THE NEED FOR A CONTINUOUS PROCESS

14. This is a constant task for the faithful Christian. Reports on many subjects have come and gone and, however worthy, been forgotten. It is important that critical and positive appraisal of policies and objectives be built into the continuing life of the church at all levels. There is a danger of course in continual self-analysis; it can blind us to real need by making us pre-occupied with ourselves, not least our survival. But there is also a danger in just doing what we have always done because we have always done it. By allowing appraisal to lead to action and action in turn to lead to further appraisal and further action and so on hand in hand, God is able to use our faults and we go forward.

15. If the gifts of God in the beckoning future are to be discovered and sought after, we need to be practically as well as spiritually prepared. Within the denomination a small permanent group — but with changing membership — would serve to maintain our vigilance. The objective of the group would be to listen to, stimulate, support and comment on the forward planning of the Church at all levels. We strongly recommend that the General Assembly make provision for such a device.

### 5 THE LANGUAGE OF PRIORITIES

16. To plan the use of our resources is not a faithless task. The Kingdom of God has come, but it has not yet come. All the promises of God have been fulfilled in Jesus and yet we have only partially seen them. There is more to come; 'as a pledge of what is to come (God) has given the Spirit to dwell in our hearts.'

17. So how are we to shape the church to enable 'what is to come' to be grasped by ourselves, our neighbours and the world? Some things we could do would get in the way of that, others we believe, would release us to speak the word which God has put into our mouths and do the deeds he has put into our hands. Amongst all the claims placed upon us as a Church we have to decide what are the issues that most demand our attention.

The language of Jesus is the language of priorities:

'Set your mind on God's kingdom and his justice before everything else.'

'First go and make peace with your brother, and only then come back and offer your gift.'

'First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's.'

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind."  
That is the greatest commandment. It comes first.'



18. We have set out here the things that might help us to set our mind on God's kingdom and his justice, that would guide us to make peace with our brother, that would help us remove the plank from our own eyes and which would enable us to love God with our heart, soul and mind.

19. If we do not plan, our hopes would bear no relationship to our resources; the skills, wealth, knowledge and insights of some parts of the Church would remain isolated and departmentalised instead of being freed to be at the service of the whole Church; 'ad hoc-ery' would reign; objectives set would soon be forgotten and opportunities to learn from success and failures would be denied.

## **6 TOPICS FOR ACTION**

20. In the Consultative Document *Agenda for a Church in the World*, the group offered twelve topics which it felt were major areas of concern for the Church, both now and in the future. The list avoided subjects which had already been seriously dealt with in recent times. Instead they focussed on renewing the impact of the Bible on our life and the life of the world, the inherent weakness of our middle class church order in embracing those from other social and ethnic backgrounds, the need to bring women into a more central role in church leadership and to engage more fruitfully the talents of young people and old people. Linked with these subjects we identified communications as a key concern. Outside of the local church setting there were topics highlighting our obligations to the Church world wide and to radical action against the social maladies of our time. Finally, in asking who and what do you bless?, attention was directed at the criteria to be adopted in engagement with the secular world.

21. After considering the reaction to the Consultative Document the twelve original topics began to fall into a number of more general issues; a fresh understanding of Scripture, the importance of communications, mission in the city, people as resources, the church and social issues and the sense of being part of an international church. Careful consideration was given to the method of approaching these issues.

22. In each case we tried, in the first instance, to make ourselves aware of the URC's existing resources relating to the issue, then asked ourselves and others how these resources could be developed and how and where they should be deployed. We then went on to ask what training already existed and what would be required were the resources to be developed and deployed in this way and what communications would be required to let the world and the church know about it. Finally we considered what changes might have to take place in the structure of the Church, its ministry and its worship if the issue was to be confronted in this way. The results of this process are illustrated in the second part of this report.

## **7 ECUMENICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

23. The Group has tried to set out here matters which are of importance if the Kingdom of God is to be proclaimed. We have to remind ourselves that we are not its only citizens and that to try and work as if there were no others working to the same end would be to deny the nature of that Kingdom. The United Reformed Church is not the Kingdom of God, nor indeed is the whole Christian Church put together, and any truth we have grasped and any experience we have realised can only be partial. Of all the topics listed in the previous section none is denominational. Every one of them could be better and more fully entered into in company with Christians of other churches.

24. The United Reformed Church is not the only Church to set out on an exercise of this nature, nor are we the first. As our Churches, Districts and Provinces get together with their counterparts from the other Churches they will be open to the insights and experience that others have already had and will use this document as part of our contribution to a common agenda for mission in Great Britain today.

25. The Covenant is dead, but so are the limitations imposed by conversations confined to a restricted number of Churches. All things are once again possible. No artificial limits

are set to our ecumenical dreams. We can pray, plan and work with all those who call Jesus Lord.

26. Here is the chance to explore all Christian truth, to see if it is possible to find truth neither at one extreme, nor the other, not even in the middle, but encompassing the widely separated wings of churchmanship.

## **8 PLANNING LEVELS IN THE URC**

27. The URC is the product of a long process of negotiation, debate, decision and implementation. In short it is a product of planning. What was essential to bring the URC into being is just as necessary to keep it in being and in good heart and health. So much is accepted in the Basis of the URC which sets out a series of functions for Local Church, District Council, Synod and Assembly all of which require planning in order that they may be performed effectively. Take for example the first function of the Church Meeting: 'To further the church's mission in the locality'. For example, any church which decides to support the campaign to be led by Dr Billy Graham will at once find itself deeply engaged in planning. But this function of Church Meeting is not restricted to such one-off events. Mission to the locality needs to be its concern month in and month out. A similar function is given to District, Synod and Assembly.

28. A special responsibility for keeping these functions before the constituent parts of the church belongs to the Elders and Minister, locally, to the Provincial Moderator in District Council and Synod and to the Departments of the central office and the Executive Committee and Synods for the Assembly.

29. At each level of the Church's life planning is important and necessary. As yet, we have not learned how to carry it through as thoroughly as we should. It may be that planning is best done on some one occasion, say each year, by means of an elders' conference away from church premises, a residential District Council or Synod Executive/GP meeting in which nothing else is allowed to clutter the agenda.

30. A special opportunity for planning which is already available to local churches and District Councils is the so-called Quinquennial Visitation when colleagues appointed by the District Council confer with the local Church and report to the Council on its life and witness. This is an occasion when the local Church is helped to formulate its plan for its future life and service to the community.

31. Other occasions for similar partnership between the local Church and its District Council occur when there is a pastoral vacancy, when deployment is involved for stipendiary and auxiliary ministry, when some new ecumenical partnership or experiment is in view, when a manse has to be changed or becomes redundant, when a property survey calls for re-appraisal of church premises. Synod is also involved at these times and usually can bring expert help to the local church.

## **9. NEED FOR THE COURAGE TO PLAN**

32. We have to accept that we are at the present time going through a mixture of world recession and a new industrial revolution. We have a divided, suspicious world East and West, we have a divided economic world North and South and we have the tension and problems of relations between different nationalities both inside and outside our own country. The challenge to the Church is to plan to live within the type of society we expect to see in the next ten years and to help shape the attitudes, ideals and beliefs of this evolving society.

33. It is frequently argued that it is difficult for the Church to speak out because of the divided opinion amongst its members. No-one can deny that Christians have varying views on a whole range of matters, indeed this is a healthy sign, but the big question is whether Christians are satisfied with the sort of society we are developing today. If the majority are not, and we suspect that this is the case, then we should certainly try to find common ground amongst ourselves as to the direction in which the nation should be moving.

34. Examples of this concern include the growing problem of unemployment and its effect both on the family and society, the continuing nuclear debate including unilateral and multilateral disarmament, the findings of the Brandt report on the economic facts of the rich Northern hemisphere and the desperately poor Southern hemisphere, and the problem of race relations in our inner city areas.

35. Each of these items is on the agenda of the Church and Society Department but how will they be considered and acted upon in each level of Church life?

36. Clearly it is necessary to formulate a course of action to deal with these issues. Our discussions, conclusions and actions may be unpopular but we must not fear the dissent which could arise. For Christians to just sit and do nothing is to be complacent and not true to our faith. Nor can we be content with individual action by our church members as good citizens. The church is a corporate body in a world of corporate powers and cannot evade a responsibility to profess the gospel in their midst.

## **10 WHO SPEAKS FOR THE CHURCH?**

37. The Gospel is not ours, it is God's. He has given it to us only so that we can share it. Those who keep it to themselves lose it. We are bidden to go into all the world and preach it.

38. Our task is to communicate a Gospel, not to sell a Church. Nevertheless in this Church there are groups living out the Gospel, illustrating the Kingdom of God in their own lives, and those who can speak of ultimate realities in secular language and demonstrate it in political, social and economic structures. We have a liberality of tradition that is open to intellectual question and debate, deep roots of faith sustain many branches. The dignity of our worship does not prohibit informality. The warmth of our Church fellowships speaks of the household of God. There is much in our tradition and practice which should enable us to speak powerfully of the things of God in today's world.

39. Yet although the URC, in common with every other Church, will be judged by its power to communicate effectively with people outside its fellowship we have to say, with some reluctance, that we have not proved to be very good at it.

40. The conciliar nature of our churchmanship appears to have given us a general suspicion of leadership as well as a particular distaste for prelacy. It has also meant that in our desire to take all points of view into account at all times our corporate public statements are so broad as to lose any cutting edge. In a world dominated by media that love personalities and controversial statements we find ourselves at something of a disadvantage.

41. Yet is the concept of leadership so alien to our tradition? Certainly within the local church there is a very high expectation that the minister should speak for the church. Why is there not the same expectation of District Chairmen and Secretaries, of Moderators of Provinces, of the Moderator of General Assembly and its General Secretary? Do they not bear the same relationship to the Church in District, Province and nation as the Minister does to the local church? Are they not equally to be trusted? Are they not equally accountable to District Council, Provincial Synod and General Assembly as the Minister is to the Church Meeting?

42. The URC should be glad when an effective communicator appears in its midst and give every encouragement so that the Gospel can be heard and seen, should be more prepared to live with controversy and should be more aware of and give greater support to its publicity group.

## **11 SET FREE FOR ENTERPRISE**

43. The Church lives by the challenge of the Gospel. There is constantly a tension between what we are and what God calls us to be and to do. That tension is a challenge which may cause us to tremble because we see how weak we are. But this is also the most creative reality in church life, constantly offering to us new people to love, new social sicknesses to heal, new insights to share, new skills to employ, new fellowships to cherish and new

victories of grace to celebrate. Within the URC each local church and Council and Synod is encouraged to interpret the challenges of the Gospel and to respond with imagination. National structures exist to help that process, not to control or parcel it up, by providing resources where they are most needed.

44. We are concerned that the pattern of life of the URC may be reflecting the virtues of orderliness, consultation and corporate decision rather than making space for local initiative and personal enterprise. It is not that the virtues should be forgotten. They are part of the ethos of a Reformed Church. But if great challenges are to be heard and met with courage and joy we need to acknowledge the diverse calling of the Spirit in our hearts. Two centuries ago our predecessors heard the challenge of a pagan world and responded with many styles of overseas mission enterprise. A small community accepted great tasks and shared blessings through all the heartaches that followed.

45. We also must look at the challenges which demand more of us than we have in the bank. The size of the calling of God does not depend on the size of the congregation. It depends on being seized by the dimensions of God's love. Set as we are in a world of hunger, fear, separation, ignorance, commercialism run riot, violence — as well as a world of blessed beauty and friendship — the challenges to the way of Christ press on all his disciples. As we are part of the world we seek salvation not as a personal escapism from all that is evil, but rather as participation in the Kingdom of forgiveness and hope which is for all and which must be realised if death is to be overcome by life.

## 12 KEY POINTS

46.

- (i) District Councils and Provinces are 'Churches' which have a planning function and obligations to speak to their constituencies.
- (ii) The Church must speak to the world. At each level it must choose people to speak for it — and trust them until they prove unworthy of that trust.
- (iii) Facing up to the future before its very presence demands attention takes courage — courage and enterprise.
- (iv) Ecumenical partnership is an essential constituent in the mission of God's Church.
- (v) Planning cannot be left to God — but it is fruitless unless it becomes God's plan.

## PRACTICE

### INTRODUCTION

47. The first section of our report is entitled simply 'Principles' and this second part 'Practice'. Below, we take the groups of topics recommended for action and offer some general guidance about how they may be developed. No attempt is made to produce a blueprint or to suggest that all the possible options have been considered. Our purpose is to provide a list of mainly illustrative proposals for how each of the three levels of the Church might plan to tackle these important subjects.

48. The six subject areas group together the twelve topics set out in our *Agenda for a Church in the World*. Reference to the suggestions included in that document may also help those who choose to plan their future actions along the lines suggested.

49. It is the Group's hope that this report will stimulate more constructive thought about the future to enable sound and thoughtful planning. This second part of our report is designed as a tool-kit for local churches, Districts and Synods and the denominational structures to use in that process. The variety of styles in the following is not only related to mixed

authorship but also to our common conviction that some of our suggestions should be advisory, others illustrative and that some were of such centrality that they should be spelt out as imperative.

## **REFRESHING OUR HEARTS IN THE BIBLE**

50. One of the most important principles of Reformed Churchmanship is expressed in the words:

‘The highest authority for what we believe and do is God’s Word in the Bible made alive for his people today through the help of the Spirit.’

What does this mean for the life of the URC today and tomorrow? How are our beliefs and Christian living shaped by the Bible?

51. Faith may be shaped for example by the method of the Apostles’ Creed which is an arrangement of certain bible texts in a particular sequence. Action may be directed by one or other of the many ‘codes of practice’ in Old or New Testaments. Having learned these texts by heart we may then proceed to use them automatically as we learn and use the Highway Code. Is this what we mean?

52. Tradition suggests that the churches have fairly consistently held that this is one definite element in the nurture of believers. But it is an element which suffers neglect today. Is this neglect any longer justified?

53. Tradition also suggests that the Word of God which is made alive by the power of the Holy Spirit is more than a process of learning written words by rote. To come alive and refresh our hearts, the word of the bible has to be expounded and applied to our living situation and one of the gains of our time has been the development of principles to regulate this exposition and application of scripture. This aspect of the bible’s role in the life of God’s people also suffers neglect. It is pursued with great diligence in academic circles, in commentaries and the training of the ministry. It does not always reach into the pulpit and the discussion group to inform preaching and teaching. Still less are the processes of decision making brought to the scrutiny of God’s word in the bible.

54. This neglect of an important principle of our churchmanship must be remedied if our faith and action are to be re-vitalised and our shaken confidence restored.

55. That is not to say that our people have to become walking encyclopedias of biblical information, nor yet a holy group decorating every sentence of speech and thought with biblical words. Ideally it should not result in the creation of a biblical elite in our midst. Our target should take in the biblically illiterate, the curious and conscience-stricken as well as the serious student.

56. It has to be recognised that the bible itself provides models for exposition and application of its message in changing situations. Always this was a risky business. It still is and we may not dodge the risk. We can only pray that we will be helped by the Spirit and learn as we go.

57. The planning of our bible work in the URC is particularly susceptible to the method we have suggested. An exciting range of resources are there to be discovered and deployed. They include many modern translations of the bible; dramatic reconstructions and presentations of its message; commentaries of all sizes and shapes; skilled personnel in other denominations; in schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities; in radio and television; in the Bible Society and other bodies. The trouble is in one sense that the resources are so vast. They will run to waste unless their use is carefully planned at every level of church life.

Let us review some of these levels.

### **58. WHAT CAN WE DO?**

#### **1. As the United Reformed Church**

1.1 It is the contention of this whole report that Assembly Synods and District

Councils function in a churchly way. They are more than conferences or consultative bodies. They have a responsibility to show in their churchly capacity that they have a 'highest authority' for all they believe and do. We therefore welcome the decision to include time for bible study in each day's agenda of the 1983 Assembly. Our welcome is not just to pay lip service to a principle but to see the Assembly make a genuine attempt to find a way of relating its work to the witness of the bible. Whether we succeed at the first attempt or not we must persevere.

1.2 The special dimension which the URC (in common with other churches) can bring to bear upon any issue or decision is theological. In our tradition that means that the bible is central. We are properly ignored by society if we fail to make this clear in all our discussions and decisions. Assembly and its Church and Society Department should therefore examine the question how biblical insights can be most effectively fed into our debates.

1.3 We look to the Church Life Department to keep the bible in the forefront of its thinking and its work for the churches in teaching and training of every sort. We ask it also to help the Church at every level to exploit the wide range of resources which can build up understanding of the bible and lead the church and its people to respond to 'our highest authority'.

1.4 We affirm the centrality of scripture in the whole life of the Church in all its forms and actions.

## 2. As District Councils and Synods

2.1 District Councils and Synods could well follow the lead of the Assembly by beginning their meetings with a substantial piece of bible exposition and application. We urge them to give serious and immediate consideration to the place of the bible in their work. It might help if this task were given for a while to one person who would be expected to devote much time, thought and prayer in preparation to how the bible's challenge might best be presented to Council and Synod.

2.2 Do Councils and Synods have groups corresponding to the national Doctrine and Worship Committee? If they do not how do they deal with the biblical and theological aspects of their work?

2.3 Who are the people in your Province and District area who have special skills in bringing the bible alive in the retreats, training courses, ministers' schools, discussion groups and special events which are arranged from time to time? Ask someone to find out and keep an up to date register available to Districts and Synod.

2.4 Organise occasionally special training events and demonstrations for the benefit of leaders and others of the bible study/discussion groups becoming more and more a part of the life of the local church.

## 3. In the Local Church

3.1 Those who conduct public worship have to ask whether worship is shaped by God's word in the bible or by some other authority? A lectionary may not always be used but do we accept the lectionary principle that preaching is under the control of the readings?

3.2 The place of the bible in Junior Church work has been the subject of a continuous debate in our churches in relation to the programme of *Partners in Learning*. The debate is important and still goes on.

3.3 We might ask about the place of the bible in Elders' and Church meetings. How does our 'highest authority' work there? Scripture is often given only a formal place when it might be vital and refreshing, guiding and steadying.

3.4 Most of our churches run a variety of interesting and useful midweek programmes covering a wide range of human activities and concerns. How is the word of God in the bible brought to bear upon these often controversial matters? Take for example a talk on divorce or housing policy. Does the bible say anything on these matters? Who knows and who can interpret it?

3.5 Personal devotion raises particular problems for modern church members and we have great need for experimentation and research and the frank sharing of experience, good and bad. Christian discipleship and discipline come very close in this area of our living.

3.6 The local church has the first responsibility, in partnership with District Council, Synod and Assembly, for the care and refreshment in the bible of those men and women, committed members of the church whose vocation lies in the areas of civic, national and international life in which they are called to take decisions affecting people and affairs in significant ways. Too often, for example, politicians complain that the church fails them in their most urgent need. Is this an exceptional demand upon the church's ministry or has it to be met in a total church programme?

3.7 From time to time each church will feel the need for some special event to set and keep the bible firmly on the agenda of the whole fellowship and of individual members. Given careful preparation and planning and adequate follow-up such special events can make a valuable contribution in the continuing task of living under the authority of God's word.

## COMMUNICATIONS

59. The consideration of communication cannot be made an addendum to the consideration of the Church's life and mission, since it is logically and necessarily a precondition of them.

60. The communication task is therefore simultaneously a theological one and a technical one. It is a question both of what to say and how to say it, both of content and form, both of identifying the Gospel truth most relevant to a particular constituency and of identifying the format most likely to reach that constituency. The two must match each other. Communication cannot be considered as if it were just presentation, nor presentation as if it were just packaging — equally applicable to soap or salvation. To discuss communication without asking "communication of what? to whom?" is to misconceive the task.

61. Both media interest and internal communication would be much improved if the content and presentation of the Church's communication made them recognisably part of an "Agenda for a Church in the World". The media will take up anything we are saying or doing (especially doing) — which makes real impact on the life of the community. However, the ordinary membership is most interested in those communications which concern their life as human beings and citizens as well as Church people. The constituency for messages concerned with matters arising only within the life of the Church as an organisation is limited to those who have made a profession or hobby of Church life.

62. It has been said that all communication is interpretation of shared experience. It does not follow that every communication must be face-to-face and two-way, but even one-way communications have to be the product of much listening and interaction, and they must include signs showing this to be the case.

63. For an intelligible message to be received at all the communicator and the recipient of the communication must share some common ground, though the Christian communicator will interpret this shared experience in ways which may be new to the recipient.

64. The URC has two communication tasks, one internal and the other to achieve an ever closer rapport with the community around us while making our distinctive position continuously clear. All detailed recommendations have to be seen as part of this strategy.

## 65. WHAT CAN WE DO?

### 1. As the United Reformed Church

1.1 The primary vehicles of communication nationwide should be *Reform* and the Information Service. It is accepted that the circulation of *Reform* will be largely confined within the membership of the URC, but it can and does address them as human beings and as Christians rather than just as URC members.

1.2 A monthly embargoed handout of telling extracts from *Reform* could well be a good approach to the public media. The appearances on major radio and television programmes which the consultative document rightly regards as important could well develop gradually from such beginnings, and from some mentioned below — such as local radio. Of course, the quotations would have to be really telling, prophetic and related to the concerns of the community. We must accept that there is a distinct distrust of prophetic leadership; we feel safer with Committees. This is not restricted to the Christian Church — but we should know better. The experience of ordinary people raising many questions about the nature of life and the possibilities of prayer. Anyone answering these questions in a way which makes sense to the general community, or reporting particular experiences which illuminate them, has a claim to national attention — and may well be accorded it.

1.3 For *Reform* to play so significant a role it would be necessary greatly to enlarge its circulation. Its independence must not be comprised, but a good deal more denominational backing could be given to it. It might be desirable to consider issuing the magazine in Provincial editions, each with its own Provincial insert. If this were to reduce the amount of paper at present distributed postally, it would be a welcome reduction in the number of communication channels at present employed within the denomination.

1.4 The following areas of communication are being considered:-

- (a) Channel Four television
- (b) Teletext (Oracle and Ceefax)
- (c) Local Radio
- (d) Use of video
- (e) TV/Radio and Pastoral Care (one TV company has issued a report on linking viewers and counselling services)
- (f) Cable television
- (g) Satellite/Global TV

## 2. As District Councils and Synods

2.1 If the communication role of the Province is merely to funnel information from national to local level, or merely to facilitate administrative and financial co-ordination, it is likely to stifle rather than to serve the communication of faith. Its special role of articulating the faith of the Churches in its area might often be fulfilled by its drawing together the communication skills which are at present scattered among the individual congregations, and which need to be co-ordinated if they are to be effectively employed.

2.2 Too often we have treated local radio as it it were a miniaturised version of network radio with producers who would call on our most articulate people as occasional broadcasters. It seems likely and desirable that future developments will be much more in the direction of genuinely community broadcasting, and that local bodies such as groups of Churches will make their own programmes for local transmission. Perhaps each Province should be drawing together in a workshop the individuals (often young and not always fully stretched by local congregational life) whose combined talents and resources would make it possible for the URC to provide a constant flow of well-made programmes — documentary, devotional, disputatious or whatever.

2.3 From a communications point of view the role of the District is to provide the facilities needed by local Churches to perform their task of direct contact with their neighbourhoods. Audio-visual aids of a kind too expensive for local Churches could be held and deployed within Districts without too great a loss of availability. Just as a Province might gather a specialist group for public communication by local radio, so a District might gather one to service local Church house groups with private



video programmes tailored to the particular needs of an area. In both cases the necessary technology is now widely available and the cost is not prohibitive — see the *Grapevine* information sheet on Video for evidence of the way in which it is becoming an instrument of local community action, especially as used by somewhat political groups. However, the skills do need to be acquired, co-ordinated and applied with much thought to the particular needs of Christian communicators.

### **3. The Local Church**

3.1 Obviously this is the area for face-to-face communication between the convinced and the unconvinced. However, the gap between churchgoer and non-churchgoers is now psychologically so large that it seems unlikely that non-churchgoers will be able to overcome their inhibitions enough to present themselves at church services, no matter how well those services may be designed to meet their needs. We have to get alongside people in local community situations before we can interpret in a Christian way our shared experience of living in the area.

3.2 Some of these meeting places can be of the Church's making. An example would be the neighbourhood house group. It has to be an event with a valid life of its own, not just a little pond in which to fish for church members, but an open examination of the problems and opportunities of human life in any locality can raise many issues to which our faith is relevant.

3.3 Such groups do, however, need a focus and one natural focus in the domestic setting is now the television screen. Video material is necessary in order to fit suitable material into group meetings and that is the case even when the material is taken from public transmissions. Increasingly, groups will want video material specially shot to serve their particular needs and to make it possible for them to make a video contribution to the deliberations of other groups in the area.

3.4 However dynamic the church and its impact we must remember that if it is to function properly there is a need to give thought to publicity and communications. They are important within the church, between the local church and others, and between the local church and the community.

3.5 The revised format of the twice yearly Information Service has much to commend it, although it is not clear if the material prepared is being made available at local church level to the people who need to consider it.

3.6 Effective communication within any fellowship is essential for it to function without waste of time and resources. The simplest communication is a pulpit announcement. But this is the least efficient. The congregation is frequently not listening, the speaker gets tongue-tied, and the information is quickly forgotten. It is a useful way of emphasising certain things but should be avoided for general information. Its advantages: there is no cost, and it is up-to-date.

3.7 A duplicated news sheet is a convenient way to circulate information. It can be given to churchgoers as they arrive or leave and can, with the help of volunteers, be delivered to the household. The facts are set down in black and white and extended information can be given where necessary. It avoids a break in a service. Duplicated or photocopied with one copy per family, it can be quite cheap. On the other hand there is some cost involved and you need a typist and a machine. Some copies will get thrown away without being read and others will be read during the sermon. They will probably be 24 hours out-of-date when published.

3.8 Almost every church has its own magazine. Apart from the church noticeboard this is often the one way of making contact with people outside the church.

3.9 All the items mentioned in the paragraph dealing with the national church need to be considered but in particular the church should look to the local newspaper, because only a small percentage of people go to church and this is a way of letting the world know about the church. This is an area which should be pursued

## MISSION IN THE CITY

66. The cities of England, Wales and Scotland are multi-faith, multi-coloured, and multi-cultured. The rich rub shoulders with the poor, the powerful with the weak, the black with the white. In the midst of obvious public affluence there is incredible private poverty at the same time as private wealth lives on the back of public poverty; there is manifest injustice, racial tensions, bad housing, inadequate education, declining health care.

67. Here large numbers of churches of our order are set trying to announce the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That Gospel talks of peace, justice and reconciliation. It declares that the God who showed himself in Jesus is Lord of all.

68. How are the churches and their message getting on? We can tell of Southall, South Aston, South Leeds and South West Manchester, of Everton, Newham, Oxford Circus and Toxteth. We have men and women in many of our churches whose private and professional lives are dedicated to changing the world and redressing its balances. We have inherited a radical gospel and there are those amongst us who stand by the poor, share their lives and advocate their causes.

69. As was said in the report *Good News to the Poor* in common with, and at the same time as most other churches, we have for the most part deserted the inner city. The churches and chapels have become carpet warehouses, and we never did make any major impression on the large, post-war housing estates. We retreated leaving them to the artisan, the unskilled and the semi-skilled worker, the unemployed and the ethnic minorities and leaving them without the gospel. Their ways are not our ways, nor their speech ours, their causes alien to us.

## 70 WHAT CAN WE DO?

### 1. As the United Reformed Church

1.1 Take seriously *Good News for the Poor*. Accept that this is not an issue that requires of us an additional budget item but demands of us a major re-orientation of the way we live as a church, our patterns of ministry, the priorities we have. The budget committee would have to make some major recommendations to General Assembly as to re-allocation of financial resources.

1.2 The Missionary and Ecumenical work at Home Committee should call together consultations on mission in the cities of Britain. These should be ecumenical and should include people not only from those churches which are seeking to minister in inner cities, housing estates and ghettos but also people from other city churches to listen, make their contribution, make constructive criticism and to assess what contribution suburban christianity can make. These consultations should be at least regional.

1.3 The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee should be looking at ways in which ministerial expenses as well as stipends can be paid centrally and so release ministry into such situations.

1.4 The MoM Committee (or some other) should explore ways in which other forms of ministry (others, that is, than the ministry of word and sacrament) can be paid.

1.5 The Doctrine and Worship Committee should give consideration to a fresh ecclesiology, taking our Reformed understanding of churchmanship to new limits. We have always recognised the local church as a Church; there the people of Christ gather together to offer him worship, seek his will and commit themselves to working out the consequences of his demands for that local community. But we also gather together in Christ's name in District Council, Provincial Synod and General

Assembly. These too are the Church, no mere federations of local churches, and therefore require to work out what they should be doing in Christ's name in the District, the Province and the nation.

1.6 The Doctrine and Worship Committee, together with the Church and Society Department, should explore the Judeo-Christian tradition of God's concern for the poor. They should become involved in inter-disciplinary exercises, exploring the influence of politics and economics on theology as well as the influence of Christianity on social policy. 'Religion and the Rise of Capitalism', 'Religion and the Death of Capitalism', 'Religion and the Persistence of Capitalism'. 'Religion and the Persistence of Poverty'.

1.7 The Mission and Other Faiths Committee among with the BCC committee for Relationships with People of Other Faiths should continue their work and be given a higher place on the agenda of the church's life and a place within ministerial training.

1.8 The Church and Society Department should involve groups from all churches and none, who know about housing, health, education, race to evolve educational programmes for the whole church and monitor actual involvement in such issues by local churches and act as an exchange of information and support.

1.9 The Doctrine and Worship Committee should collect forms of worship which have risen out of inner city culture — litanies, liturgies, non verbal forms of worship.

1.10 The Ministerial Training Committee, in following the proposals of *Preparing today for Tomorrow's Ministry*, should ask if ways have been found of training people for ministry in a rigorous way which does not alienate them from their background, particularly if they do not have an academic tradition. Does this mean that for some the college-based training has to go and new styles be developed?

1.11 Perhaps the Church and Society Department could devise a package for church people on recognising their own prejudices. (We have heard of a technique devised by Stewart Foster and Gus Horespool in Leicester).

## **2. As District Councils and Synods**

2.1 Using all the expertise of all the churches in any city, identify those areas from which the church has withdrawn over the years, so that we may recognise a missionary frontier.

2.2 Using the expertise of professionals in the churches and in the university, polytechnic, social services, health services, education service, police force assess the needs of these areas, what are the causes espoused by the people? Given resources what would God want the churches to do?

2.3 There is a 'catch 22' situation in many cities. The city centre ministers and clergy have inherited a 'right of entry' into the power structures of the city, but their churches are the very ones which have been more or less deserted by people with professional expertise and knowledge. The suburban churches have received all that expertise and do not know what to do with it and have no such 'right of entry'. Identify city wide issues and, for example, education, health, media, policing, etc., and call together total expertise of all the churches around each issue. Look for flexibility which is part of the present structure of the URC. Note the pattern of the former Churches of Christ, allowing the possibility of several very local ministers. This was one of the patterns of Auxiliary Ministry as it was first conceived but which seems largely to have been overlooked in practice.

2.4 There are some individuals within the Church, both ministerial and lay, who by their professional interest, their political allegiance, their social grouping, or by the sheer accident of being in the right place at the right time, are granted this 'right of entry'. Districts should recognise where this is happening, support those who find themselves in this situation and use them to focus current community concerns within the District Council.

2.5 Suburban Christians are often the magistrates who sit in court when children come before them, they are the doctors, the nurses, the health administrators, they are the teachers, the school secretaries, they own the shops from which the people buy their food. There is a large educational task for District Councils and Synods to enable them to see just how much power they wield over the lives of others and the effect that it has.

2.6 What churches are there still existing in these areas? How are they supported by the District?

2.7 Seek for home-grown lay leadership amongst such churches, encourage it, nurture it.

2.8 Appoint someone to learn about other faiths. Send them to Selly Oak. Pay for them to go. Consider the introduction of third world ministry.

### 3. In the Local Church

#### Suburban

3.1 Appoint someone to read *Poverty in the United Kingdom* by Peter Townsend. Report to church meeting and lead discussion.

3.2 Read *Good News to the Poor* and report to Church Meeting

3.3 Along with people of other churches join issue centred groups and consider how your profession controls the lives of other people and consider how it might be different.

3.4 Examine your prejudice about people from other social and radical groups.

3.5 Consider appropriate patterns of partnership with inner city churches.

#### Inner city/housing estate

3.6 Examine the ways in which the local population has changed in recent years and ask how effective your church is at reaching those who have come recently.

3.7 Examine your prejudice about people from different social and racial groups.

3.8 Is the worship of your church expressed in the culture of the local people? Should it be? What would it look and sound like?

3.9 Send a group of your people to another church in a similar position in another city for a weekend (close your church if necessary). See what they do. Ask them back to your church.

3.10 Which of you church members could exercise ministry amongst you? Get him or her trained. Talk to the District as to how this could take place locally.

3.11 What do you know about the issues that really grip the people who live around your church? Is it housing, welfare benefits or heating bills? What has Scripture to say about such everyday needs.

## PEOPLE AS RESOURCES

72. The life of Christian discipleship places an obligation on us all to offer our time and talents to the furtherance of God's Kingdom. Many do find ways of giving faithful service which are fruitful and good. Every local church can offer examples of selfless giving. Yet those same churches are almost always guilty of the wilful neglect of valuable resources within their membership. All too often it is the familiar list of willing work-horses who are turned to when new tasks appear. Yet our church order attracts uncommonly gifted people, with knowledge and skills in impressive variety. Amongst our membership with its many talents and across the spectrum of theological and secular matters there are people of great distinction.

73. We use our human store-house less than well. In a society which has over three million people unemployed and increasing numbers of early retired there is energy and skill available as never before. There are those who need worth-while occupation and the

esteem that goes with it. Yet the principal workers in our churches are likely to be those in mid-life whose commitments are the heaviest. The converse of this situation is the masculinity of style which characterises church affairs. Despite our greater awareness than some groups, we continue to undervalue the talents of women. In some parts of our Church the talents of both young and old are neglected.

74. In carrying out the Gospel, ought we not to learn to value the latent talents of others; nurture those talents and capitalise on the cultural diversity which is found amongst them? Transfers of knowledge and know-how within the Church and with those outside who need its help are an essential part of the valuing of human resources. Is it not a part of ministry to identify the available human resources and to ensure their maximum effect?

## 75. WHAT CAN WE DO?

### 1. As the United Reformed Church

1.1 Ensure that the way we conduct our business is not scheduled and formulated in ways which exclude certain talents or kinds of people.

1.2 All Committees should examine their agendas and membership to consider the range of their work or more varied membership could increase their effectiveness.

1.3 The Nominations Committee should be encouraged to develop its current practice of ensuring adequate representation of women, young people, retired people and those from ethnic minorities.

1.4 The Talent Register should be the subject of serious annual review.

### 2. As District Councils and Synod

2.1 All URC people involved in public affairs (local councillors, Health Authority members, Community Health Councillors, officers of Chambers of Commerce, leaders of trade unions and political parties, etc.,) might be identified. The Church at local level could then support and amplify their contribution as well as being able to draw upon their experience and influence.

2.2 A local Talent Register to be compiled, which might incorporate those in 2.1.

2.3 Opportunities might be created for transfers of skills and knowledge across generations, between unemployed and employed, between cultural and ethnic groups. These might best be done in relation to specific purposes and tasks, e.g., young unemployed need to know the techniques for securing employment; creative use of redundant churches; planning of local missions.

2.4 Christian counselling services might be extended on city and regional bases. These might provide support for those in social need, which could use the professional skills within our churches. The task could be carried out ecumenically.

2.5 In a similar manner, consultancy service could be developed, where the occupational and professional skills of church people could be made available to the Christian community and to voluntary bodies. This too could be an ecumenical venture.

### 3. In the Local Church

3.1 Ensure that the challenges within the Church to develop stewardship of resources reach all the groups associated with the local church.

3.2 Consult the unemployed and those with enforced leisure as to what they want from the Church, both to give and receive.

3.3 At the time of considering the annual church reappointments, ensure that the Elders scrutinise who does which job and why. Charge them with presenting an account of the stewardship of human resources to the Church Meeting.

3.4 Approach the Manpower Services Commission and the local authority to see how the unused occupational and human service talents in your church might be

used to create employment, e.g. the establishment of co-operative work enterprises, sheltered workshops for disabled people.

3.5 Consider what skills and knowledge you need for the work of evangelism in your neighbourhood. Carry out a review of suitable people within your membership. Ask what is undertaken which might attract others.

## THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL ISSUES

76. Jesus came proclaiming the Kingdom of God. God rules over all. There is no place in which he does not rule. The task of the Church is to proclaim that rule. From the beginning it refused to accept that it was just the bearer of yet another private religion. It was its claim that it had something to say to, and demands to make upon, the whole of society that got it into trouble.

77. Much of our contemporary Christianity has been privatised and taken refuge in individual piety and 'spirituality' and has withdrawn its claim upon the public sector. Part of the task is to restore the emphasis on the Kingdom of God, to proclaim God's rule over the whole of life and not just the private parts of it.

78. The URC is the heir of a biblical and ecclesiastical tradition of radical involvement with social and political issues.

79. The practical complexities of most of the major contemporary issues are such that it would be unrealistic and impractical to expect our faith to give us simple, clear and agreed 'Christian answers'.

80. Nevertheless there are some matters on which we can agree. God is good and demands righteousness, justice and mercy of his people. The problems of translating the will of a transcendent God into what are essentially provisional social and political realities are immense. But the task must be constantly undertaken and continually reviewed. Without this constant review the provisional nature of all political positions and statements would be overlooked and treated as eternal truths. Policies, however treasured and venerated, must always be open to new facts and the experience of ordinary people. Those who are involved in the making and revision of these policies have a valid human and Christian commitment. It is a proper thing to do with a life and it is equally proper for a Church to encourage such commitment, nurture those who take it up, share their wrestlings and make judgements on their current priorities and suggested plans.

81. We must also remain aware that there is a plurality of concerns and positions which is proper within the unity of the people of Christ. It is only within that understanding that the Church becomes free to give mutual support to those of its members who are deeply involved.

## 82. WHAT CAN WE DO?

### 1. As the United Reformed Church

1.1 We should continue to use our Church and Society Department to raise the issues in our national life that call for the judgement of the Church.

1.2 We should continue to use that department to provide current data and information on these issues so that discussion and debate at all levels of the life of the Church is enlightened.

1.3 We should at least ask the question as to how far the Doctrine and Worship Committee should give consideration to these issues. They might well have a formative role if they were prepared to take a serious theological look at some of the issues before the nation and the nations, e.g. what theology of work can we realistically use to replace the Protestant work Ethic now undermined by recession and the micro chip? What should be the limits to the use of force by the state in a world of international terrorism, football violence, the national front and the anti Nazi league? To maintain the rule of law in a dangerous world do states have unlimited power and can they use unlimited force?

1.4 We should certainly be involving those in the 'front line', the politicians, the academic specialists and the experts of other churches. They should be encouraged to 'trouble' the Church with their concerns.

1.5 In as far as many of the current issues are international rather than national the World Church and Mission Department should enable the Church to hear those in other countries who can speak to us from their experience.

1.6 All the previous paragraphs assume that it would be right for the URC to give a substantial part of its time at General Assembly to considering these matters.

1.7 How do we nurture those amongst us whose calling it is to be involved in the creation of national policies? Perhaps a small group from within the Church Life Department might consider how people are encouraged to take up public life and how they are sustained in it once they have done so.

1.8 The Youth Department should continue to ensure that issues of major public concern are kept on the agenda of youth conferences.

1.9 One of the issues uncovered by our consultative paper was the intense debate as to how the structure of the URC should respond to Social Issues. In particular very strong feelings were expressed about the role of chaplaincies in industry, hospitals and town halls. It is clear that the issue is not whether the URC should be involved in these matters, but how it should be involved. This is a matter which concerns those looking at patterns of ministry for the future.

## **2. As District Councils and Synods**

2.1 National and international issues are not irrelevant to these Councils of the Church. It was a Provincial Synod which brought the question of disinvestment in South Africa to Assembly and steered the URC to a new policy on this matter.

2.2 Has a Province ever brought together all the URC people who are involved in local politics? It might well be a profitable exercise either to undertake alone or with ecumenical partners.

2.3 Districts and Provinces are in an excellent position to take up matters of local public policy on an ecumenical basis. There is scope for specialist groups to advise and inform debate at District Councils, Provincial Synods, Anglican Deaneries etc.

2.4 It is at District and Provincial level that detailed collection of data about social issues can be collected and distributed. One Province of the URC interviewed people from different sectors of public life on the actual effect of the 'cuts' and disseminated the results.

2.5 The training of auxiliary ministers and elders takes place within District and Province. During the training they should be exposed to the practical and theological complexities of making decisions on social issues. Those who have to face these decisions should be involved.

2.6 Districts and Provinces should keep a constant eye on their boundaries to make sure that they facilitate rather than hinder participation in the public life of their areas.

2.7 Issues of public concern should be part of the agenda of young people's conferences and a constant watch kept for young people with potential for public life. They should be challenged to consider such a commitment.

## **3. In the Local Church**

3.1 The Church Meeting is a proper place to consider national and international issues as well as those affecting the life of the local community.

3.2 Use the local people with specialist knowledge so that information is as full as possible.

3.3 Use theological expertise from other local churches both URC and others.

3.4 Make sure that young people have an opportunity to express their views.

3.5 Local churches should consider the possibility of direct intervention. A congregation which is a living part of its community knows the local authority and is known by them. A congregation which runs an elderly persons' day centre soon knows if the local authority's policies towards the aged merit support or criticism; one which runs a training workshop for unemployed young people soon gets involved with the debate on that issue; one which runs a hostel for young people at the point at which they leave local authority care soon knows how well or ill that care has been shown; one that runs a family centre on a housing estate soon knows about the effect of housing policies and effectiveness or otherwise of the Child Guidance Service; one whose members join in the Community Association is not long ignorant of the limited extent of transport or educational provision.

3.6 Those members who take part in public life should be encouraged to share with their fellow members their experiences and their moral struggle over priorities.

## **SENSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CHURCH**

83. The life of the Church, at every level, is an expression of the life of a world-wide body. However and wherever we serve Christ, we are linked with the people of God throughout the world. We can give to and receive from the world Church and any long-term planning must take account of the richness of this mutual relationship.

What can we do to make this relationship real?

### **1. As the United Reformed Church**

- 1.1 Ensure that links with the World Council of Churches are lively, creative and well-known throughout the denomination.
- 1.2 Develop the relationship with Churches in the Reformed tradition, especially through the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.
- 1.3 Promote material that encourages a sense of the world church among members.
- 1.4 Encourage offers of overseas service from church members.
- 1.5 Encourage churches to accept ministers from overseas as their pastors.
- 1.6 Promote a European awareness among URC members.
- 1.7 Ensure that the international dimensions on issues of justice, peace, development and racism are fully recognised.

### **2. As District Councils and Synods**

- 2.1 Constantly bring to the attention of local churches the dimension of the international church.
- 2.2 Share information on what has been done in particular churches to promote a sense of world Church.
- 2.3 Ensure the work among young people in Sunday Schools, Youth Clubs etc., has an awareness of the international.
- 2.4 Ask whether churches are considering calling ministers from overseas.
- 2.5 In District visitations invite churches to examine whether they are emphasizing sufficiently in their programme the international Church aspect.
- 2.6 Ensure that themes relating to the world Church are regularly treated at meetings.
- 2.7 Encourage the presentation of resolutions to Assembly on world Church issues.
- 2.8 Arrange for church members from overseas and those returned from study/work/service overseas to be known and used by local churches.
- 2.9 Set up events and exhibitions that promise a vision of the world Church.



2.10 Arrange for relationships with particular parts of the world Church, remembering specially those in critical situations.

### 3. In the Local Church

3.1 Ensure that the prayer-life of your church includes regular intercession for the churches, people and nations of the world (use the CWM Prayer Handbook, the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle of the WCC, etc.).

3.2 Celebrate World Church Sunday at least once a year.

3.3 Use the World Church materials of CWM and the PUB programme in your mid-week fellowship groups.

3.4 Learn about the Provincial list of those returned from serving overseas, lay and ordained, church workers, volunteers, or in professional employment, and invite them to your church.

3.5 Where appropriate, ensure that overseas students are welcomed and supported.

3.6 Consider inviting a minister from overseas to be your pastor.

3.7 Encourage members of your church to consider overseas service.

3.8 Examine your budget to see that it reflects your church's commitment to the work of God overseas.

3.9 Explore the possibility of twinning with a congregation overseas.

3.10 Hear the voices of Christians in critical situations.

3.11 Take on the One Per Cent for World Development Appeal as a regular discipline.

3.12 Look to bodies not necessarily linked with the church that pursue international aims, e.g., Amnesty.

3.13 Undertake ways of understanding different cultural systems.

### RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the Report
2. The Assembly commends the Report to all the councils of the URC for discussion and action.
3. The Assembly agrees to establish a permanent small national group to stimulate, support and comment on the forward planning of the church at all levels; and instructs the Executive Committee to bring detailed terms of reference and constitution to the next Assembly.

#### *Membership of the Group*

Malcolm L. Johnson (Chairman)

Revd Graham J. Cook

Derek Rawson

Revd John Richardson\*

Revd John Young

with the assistance of;

Revd Bernard Thorogood

\*Representing the British Council of Churches

## THE REPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL MODERATORS 1983

1. Reporting to you this year, we begin with a text, a fragment from Ephesians. Paul wrote (in chapter 4, vv 11 & 12, RSV): 'And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ.' Here are five (or perhaps really four) functions of the Christian community, and three objectives.

2. The first specific duty of a Provincial Moderator, as set down in the Manual, is to stimulate and encourage the work of the United Reformed Church within the Province', a not inconsiderable charge. This year, in response to that charge, we ask how all of us within the Church, ministers, elders and members, have measured up to Paul's model during the past year, and how together we may more closely follow it in the year ahead.

### 3. The Apostolic Role

Too often churches live as if under siege, holding on with yearning after the past and its glories and holding out against 'the enemy' in the naive hope that he will tire and despair. Too few churches appear to take seriously the call of Christ to 'Go'. We have heard the explanation: 'We don't have the people, the right people.' 'Our area isn't one where you can expect any response,' states one church. 'We've tried but nothing happened, no new members,' complains another despairingly. 'We haven't the know-how', claims a third; 'if the URC would only give a lead ...'

4. We are concerned, if not alarmed, that our churches don't seem hurt and anguished because millions live and die without knowing Christ or benefitting from his Gospel. 'What kind of minister does your church need?' we ask elders. But rarely do they reply: 'Someone who will share with us in reaching out to the community.' Nor do enough ministers regard their apostolic role as a priority. For generations this dominant note of the Church has been muted and candidates for the Ministry seldom hear it. Of course, there are happy exceptions. There are congregations, despite and even because of their limitations, where ways of apostleship are being sought under the constraint of the Holy Spirit. We have discovered no master plan, no foolproof way. Indeed, all of us may need to be fools for Christ's sake, if we are to demonstrate our belief in God's call to apostleship.

### 5. The Prophetic Role

'If the main function of an apostle is to go', writes Michael Harper, 'then the main function of a prophet is to listen'. A well-known advertisement extols the virtues of 'the listening bank'. A listening and responsive church is bound to be a church 'on the move'.

6. Most our churches, we must reluctantly report, do not appear to believe that God is speaking to them. Nor, we must add, do they seem to expect him to do so, and therefore do not listen. Yet we are sure that God has a word for our churches, everywhere and always. Unless we believe so, we are in a parlous state. Or is it that we do believe so but aren't truly listening?

7. Our day, like every other, needs to hear God's word. The Church must declare it, otherwise we could be guilty of standing between God and humanity. It may be true that some among us do not accept the Church's responsibility to address itself to the world with its contemporary problems, but such is no justification for silence. Nor must we hold back from speaking out on the plea that we shan't be given a hearing. Prophets have never waited to be assured of an audience.

### 8. The Evangelistic Role

We rejoice that there are churches among us where evangelism ranks permanently high in their life and work. Nevertheless, some churches are content to assert that Christian witness lies in the quality of the lives of individual church members, and that attempts to communicate the Gospel directly are unnecessary and even undesirable. Indisputably, sheer example is important; but we insist that the conveyed word is also as much needed as ever. Good works and generous donations to 'worthy causes', which are often seen as the primary way of confronting the world with the Gospel, aren't enough. We believe such

attitudes to be unrealistic, and we urge the churches to re-examine their response to the insistent call to evangelism.

9. We note the significant fact that where churches are growing in numbers and in the depth of faith and commitment, it is largely because at the heart of their life is the urge to evangelize. Nothing unites and strengthens a congregation like the focussing of resources and energies upon the evangelistic task.

#### 10. **The Pastoral and Teaching Role**

We are impressed again and again by the high standards of pastoral care exercised in almost every church. The needy are served as a high priority, with sometimes sacrificial devotion. And not only within the congregation. Who can estimate the support given by our churches, often out of all proportion to their size and numbers, to the voluntary social services? We need not be ashamed here, nor hide light under any bushel, though we mustn't be complacent.

11. But what of our teaching role? H. A. Hamilton in the late Fifties described us as 'two generations deep in paganism'. The judgement remains, and maybe the 'two' must become 'three' today. For, outside Junior Church, how many churches maintain regular and organised teaching programmes? Groups for this purpose draw the barest minority of our total membership. Paradoxically, however, there is evidence that people want to grow in the faith, and we clearly fail to understand the very word 'discipleship' if we do not see this.

12. History shows that a teaching and learning church is a pre-requisite to an apostolic, prophetic and evangelistic church. Our earliest foundation is a group gathered around Jesus to learn. How else could the church have been born? How else will it be nourished and sustained?

#### 13. **Personalia**

We look forward to Alasdair Walker's term of service as Moderator of the General Assembly. His colleagues offer him their support as he embarks on a very demanding year.

*(Two books have spurred our thinking as we prepared this report — Michael Harper's *Let My People Grow*, and Vincent J. Donovan's *Christianity Rediscovered*.)*

---

## DEPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* The Revd A. G. Burnham

*Secretary:* The Revd G. H. Roper

1. The Committee has continued the necessary task of sharing whole-time pastorates among the twelve provinces, and after consultation with provincial representatives has established new quotas which reflect the fact that fewer whole-time ministers will be available to local churches but also the welcome news that the pace of decline is slackening:

*(These are totals of pastorates and exceed the available number of ministers. At any time one tenth of all pastorates can be expected to be vacant.)*

	Quota for end of 1983	Quota for end of 1985
Northern	70	69
North-Western	82	79
Mersey	55	54
Yorkshire	65	63
East Midlands	62	60
West Midlands	76	73
Eastern	64	62
South-Western	59	58
Wessex	76	74
Thames North	83	81
Southern	105	102
Wales	56	55
Special Ministries	30	30
<b>Totals</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>860</b>

2. The Committee has devoted much attention to the initiation and review of 'special ministries'. We look to provinces to make proposals for these posts where the need and the local support for such initiatives are evident. The URC's contribution of stipendiary ministers for college chaplaincy, industrial mission and new experiments must be limited. We give a measure of priority to new area and other congregation-building ministries as well as backing a small but increasing number of inner urban projects. Where appropriate we encourage provinces to deploy auxiliary ministers or to seek funding for lay workers.

3. The failure of the Covenant proposals is a setback for ecumenical deployment but districts and provinces should still find plenty of opportunities for collaboration and sharing. No district or province should make a deployment plan without considering the ecumenical dimension or consulting other churches.

---

# WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT

## CENTRAL COMMITTEE

1. **A Year for Re-Assessment** The past year has been one for ecumenical re-assessment. Preparation for the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which opens in Vancouver on July 24th, has demanded of the member churches a deepened understanding of the Christian claim that Jesus Christ is the life of the world. The Ottawa General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in August 1982 brought a new awareness of what it means to belong together in the Reformed family, particularly in common responsibility towards situations of oppression such as that created by apartheid in South Africa. The Council for World Mission is in the process of the first six-yearly review of its work under the new constitution. In Britain the voting of the General Synod of the Church of England on the proposals for covenanting has led to re-consideration of ecumenical policy not in England only but by all the member churches of the British Council of Churches, a process further stimulated by fresh initiatives in relations with the Roman Catholic Church following the Pope's visit. All this adds up to daunting but positive agenda for the Department under a new Chairman and Secretary.

2. **Forward to Square One** In this situation a suitable motto is 'Forward to Square One'. The source of ecumenical and evangelistic work is already given in the person of Jesus Christ, in the divine purpose for all creation and in the vision of an inclusive church (see Ephesians ch.1). Yet these given realities are still to be adequately explored and communicated.

3. **Communication** In such forward movement the Department's Communication Group has a vital role. The Communication Group has completed the series of educational programmes based on the Department's work 'Participate in, Understand and Belong to the World Church' with the publication of PUB IV *Exploring the Christian Source in Britain*.

The Communication section has distributed materials produced by CWM and BCC and assisted local congregations wishing to develop their world mission education. It has helped initiate two ecumenical projects. One seeks to interpret CWM's concern for education in Mission for the member churches of the European Region and worship and study material is in preparation. In the other, churches and missionary societies aim to produce together a series of video programmes on world mission themes.

The value of conferences continues to be recognized and the Department has enabled URC presentation at the BCC Conference in May and been involved in organising the Swanwick World Mission Conference and the Departmental Spring Conference.

4. **Dialogue** A creative aspect of communication which has been developed more fully in this generation is the dialogue between Christians and people of other living faiths and ideologies and the Department as a whole is deeply involved in the task which is focussed by this year's report of the Mission and Other Faiths Committee and will be emphasised in the presentation of this Departmental report to the Assembly.

*Cressey*  
Martin H. Chesney, *Chairman*  
Boris Anderson, *Secretary*  
Helen Lidgett, *Secretary for Communication*

## MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK AT HOME COMMITTEE

5. Making the Word of Life visible in Mission, Unity and Evangelism is the aim of this Committee's work.

6. **Funding and Resources for New Initiatives in Mission** From the £15,000 per annum made available by the Budget Committee to assist local churches and Districts in new initiatives in mission, £10,000 of 1983's fund had already been allocated in January and promises made of £6,800 in 1984 and £6,000 in 1985. These grants meet requests for help in sup-

port of people in community work, youth work or field work supervision and towards meeting the expenses of ministry in a New Town situation, as well as the extension of premises for a church mounted community care centre. They are a contribution to be added to funding raised by local resource and by grants from Provinces, Districts and other Churches. The Special Ministries reserved for ministers from overseas, especially through CWM, to serve in URC are now being taken up, bringing special linguistic skills and cultural experience to our churches.

7. **Rural Mission** A consultation in November 1982 of leaders in rural churches drawn from every Province revealed a considerable URC presence in the countryside. Of our local churches 27% are rural. 18% of all URC members belong to these churches. As a response to that consultation one of our Provinces is bringing the question of the Church's support of rural mission before the Assembly. The Committee supports fully the aims of those resolutions hoping that fruitful debate in Assembly will ensue resulting in a clear commitment by our Church to rural mission.

8. **Good News to the Poor** Last year Assembly requested the Committee to consider the appointment of Urban and Suburban Consultants. The Committee sees no urgent need in the suburbs, and is unable to take steps at present towards appointment of an Urban Consultant without financial provision to sustain such a worker.

9. **Christian Unity after Covenant Failure** The resolutions to be proposed to Assembly indicate ways in which the Committee believes the URC could encourage new initiatives in Christian Unity, by mutual acceptance of church members and by opening the councils of the Churches to one another. We envisage the possibility of a dozen duly appointed representatives of other Churches, especially those with whom the URC is engaged in local partnership, being given voting rights in Assembly with a movement towards a similar proportion of representatives of other Churches being appointed to sit in Synods and District Councils. In helping to formulate the URC's response to the BCC/DEA paper on *Four Nations, One Church*, the Committee restated the URC's willingness for its Scottish and Welsh churches to move into new relationships with their immediate neighbours, should they so wish. But nonetheless it questioned the validity of the nationalistic approach to Church Unity in Britain, hoping that the search for God's gift of unity may enable us in each part of the Church to hear what is being said across the boundaries, and encourage us to look for those forms of cultural life which stimulate and enable great variations of local expression but also common decision making in matters affecting the whole. The BCC itself is confronting the question of its own nature and identity. How can it become more comprehensive of the whole range of church life in this country? How can it take up the initiatives in unity and evangelism bequeathed to it by the Churches' Council for Covenanting and the Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism? The Council is looking with even greater expectancy to the Standing Conference on Unity in Prayer and the Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects in England in the years ahead.

10. **Representation of LEPs in the wider councils of the Churches** We propose that Assembly instruct the Constitutional Review Group to consider any amendments necessary to the Structure of the URC to enable members of Local Ecumenical Projects which are listed in the Year Book to participate fully in the councils and committees of the URC whatever their denominational background.

11. **Evangelism** The Committee is inviting the Assembly to designate 1984 as a year of evangelism. Some churches will be engaged in the visit of Billy Graham and other evangelists to their regions. We hope that all our local churches will take up the evangelistic task in their own way in 1984, whatever that way may be, by reassessing and reinforcing their own proclamation of the Gospel. To help them to do so, we have proposed the appointment of an interdepartmental working party, widely representative of convictions and insights in the URC, to prepare material for local use and encouragement as well as a major presentation on evangelism at the 1984 Assembly.

David E. Marsden, *Chairman*  
Bernard Thorogood, *Secretary*

## MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK ABROAD COMMITTEE

12. it is of course impossible in the space available to give more than a brief impression of the work of the Abroad Committee. What follows is a résumé of a small part of a comprehensive programme of inter-church relationships.

13. **CWM** The URC again sent its full quota of £327,000 to CWM in 1982, thanks to continuing support in the local churches of the Unified Appeal.

CWM itself continues to serve the Church in six continents and the opportunities given since its re-formation for international and inter-regional dialogue has become a creative force in its life.

The Constitution of CWM requires a review, every six years, of its structures, life and work. The Review Group has reported to the member churches and we have made our own comments for the March 1983 meeting of the Group in Singapore. Training in Mission was seen by the Council at its 1982 meeting as the major educational concern over the next few years. If a local church is looking for stimulus in planning for mission the Department is always glad to provide advice and material, including papers on Training in Mission.

CWM is a world family, embracing different races and cultures, and our participation in it enriches our own life.

14. **USA** There have been significant developments in the past year in our relationship with partner Churches in the USA. Already the URC is being served by American ministers in a number of local churches, mostly on a short term basis. As well as extending this arrangement, we have welcomed the opportunity afforded by the Churches of Christ connection to share in the consultations of the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council, a world grouping of Disciples (called Churches of Christ in UK). This presents a whole area of new relationships and we need to be responsive to them.

15. **Europe (East)** Three URC representatives visited the Evangelische Kirche der Union in the German Democratic Republic for fifteen days in October 1982, following the visit made a year previously by a delegation from that Church. In a very different situation from that in Britain, e.g. no Religious Education in any state school, no advertising, and a political philosophy which exalts the service of the State as the "chief end of man", the Church stands firm, maintains a sturdy witness and attracts to its ranks young people of high quality.

The URC has accepted an invitation to be represented at this year's Luther Year celebrations in Wittenberg.

Two women from the EKU hope to attend the Yorkshire Provincial Women's Conference in 1983 and four other members of the Church to visit URC in May, some attending the Assembly.

A delegation from the URC recently visited the Reformed Church in Hungary and also the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren in Prague.

Two members of the Russian Church delegation to Britain in January spent some hours at URC Church House for a most useful exchange of information and viewpoints. We are grateful for our fellowship with these and other Churches in Eastern Europe, whilst our membership of the Conference of European Churches gives us a meeting place at which social and theological issues can be discussed by East and West together.

16. **Europe (West)** As well as the Pfalz Church in West Germany the Moderator was able this year to pay an official visit to the Protestant Church in Belgium, a Church of 35,000 members only but enjoying excellent relationships with the Catholics, and one with which we hope to strengthen our links. There is no diminishment of our long established fellowship with the Pfalz Church, eight pastors from which were here in October 1982.

A minister from the Swedish Mission Covenant Church has been working in a URC pastorate under the Pastoral Exchange Programme. There will be a delegation from this Church visiting the URC just prior to the Assembly.

Ministers and church members in Sweden are keen to exchange houses for holidays with URC personnel.

The relationship between the North-West Province and the Waldensian Church in Italy gets closer each year. There are opportunities also for young people from our churches to attend the Agape Camps in Italy each summer. Can local churches encourage their young people to participate, and give them some help towards the fairly modest cost?

17. **China** The visit of the delegation from the Christian Council of China to the UK was a highlight of 1982. It was good to have direct contact with churches in China again after a gap of thirty years and to learn of their growth and the strength of their witness. A small booklet, *the Church in China*, containing some of Bishop Ting's speeches in England, is recommended reading. It is already clear that future relationships between British and Chinese Christians must be on an ecumenical basis. Bishop Ting speaks of a "post denominational" age in China. A BCC delegation of twenty will visit China next December. Miss Alison Pagan will represent URC on the delegation, and we give her our good wishes.

18. **Chapaincies** We record again our gratitude to the Ghanaian and Chinese Chaplains, and to the churches which sent them, for the many varied ways in which they are contributing to the life of URC and to good relations between ethnic minority communities in London and society as a whole. Both Ben Tetty and Chong Kah Geh are approaching the end of their current terms of service, but the Department has asked for extension.

19. The Committee takes leave of Dr. Ruth Cowhig and Miss Maureen McQuitty who have both completed six years service during which they have given us particular help with the Waldensian Church and the American scene respectively. We thank them for their fellowship and service.

Derek Cole, *Chairman*  
Boris Anderson, *Secretary*

20. We congratulate Boris Anderson on the award by the Tainan Theological College of a Doctorate in Divinity. His service in the College from 1948 to 1963 is remembered there with great appreciation and he was greeted very warmly when he returned for the Degree Ceremony.

21. The Abroad Committee would wish to express its appreciation to Boris for his service as Secretary to the Abroad Committee. He brought to the work great diligence, a wealth of knowledge of the Church Abroad, high administrative skills, but not least a warm personal relationship with all those with whom he has worked and which we shall miss enormously.

Derek Cole, *Chairman*

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

22. The Committee records its thanks to its Secretary, the Revd Lorwerth Thomas, who retired in the summer, and to its Chairman, the Revd Tony Coates, who went to Geneva in November to work with the WCC. Miss Shelia Rudofsky has become Secretary and Mrs. Mary Marsden Chairman.

23. Since 1981 CWM has been studying the developing pattern of exchange of personnel within its member Churches and in July 1982 the European Region of CWM held a consultation on this subject and is encouraging other Regions to do the same. As part of the URC input to this consultation the Committee prepared a paper considering the aims of personnel exchange (not only with CWM Churches, but others, including Europe and America), reviewing the present developing scene and exploring further possibilities. The wide-ranging and expanding agenda of the Personnel Committee is a measure of the variety of types of exchange of personnel now taking place between Churches, and there are many more contacts made by Provinces, congregations and individuals. The Committee feels that each of these programmes provides opportunities for service, for learning and for expressing solidarity between members of the World Church, and encourages churches to take part



in such schemes and to explore ways in which those directly involved can pass on to others the joy and excitement and new insight which such encounters can bring.

24. The Committee particularly welcomes the further appointments made under the scheme for ministers from overseas to work in special ministries here, and hopes that churches and pastoral committees will keep in mind the possibility of help from overseas personnel when they are surveying the task of mission and evangelism on their doorstep.

25. The Revd George Hood has retired as Tutor at St. Andrew's Hall. the Committee wishes to thank him and Beth for their contribution to the life of St. Andrew's. We also welcome Miss Kristin Ofstad as the Tutor.

26. The following have completed their service with Churches overseas through CWM:-

- Miss Jean Bald: India
- Miss Jean Degenhardt: Bangladesh
- Miss Janet Flawn: Fiji
- Miss Marion Gilmour: Botswana
- Miss Sally Green: Papua New Guinea
- Mr Simon and Mrs Adelaide Knight: Madagascar
- Mr Ian and Mrs Leena Knowles: Hong Kong  
(now on our Roll of Members serving overseas in China)
- Mrs Mary (Pat) Martin: Botswana  
(now on our Roll of Members serving overseas in Botswana)
- Mr Timothy and Mrs Janet Meachin: Zambia
- Miss Kristin Ofstad: Papua New Guinea
- Miss Judith Rogers: Samoa
- The Revd Kenneth and Mrs Marian Strachan: Samoa

The following missionaries from overseas have completed their service with URC:

- The Revd and Mrs. Faitala Talapusi: St. James's, Sheffield

The following missionaries from overseas are serving with the URC:

- The Revd Charles and Mrs. Victoria Ahwireng: Presbyterian Church of Ghana: youth and community work in Halifax
- The Revd Chong Kah-Geh and Mrs. Shirley Chong: Presbyterian Church in Malaysia: London Chinese Chaplaincy and minister of the London Chinese URC
- The Revd Dr. Ferenc Kenez: Reformed Church in Hungary: pastoral ministry in Central London District
- The Revd Ben and Mrs. Margaret Tetley: Presbyterian Church of Ghana: London Ghanaian Chaplaincy
- Mr. Wickramasinghe Tilakarathne: Presbyterian Church in Sri Lanka; pastoral ministry in Swindon

The following students from overseas are supported by the URC:

- The Revd Clemanace F. A. Gbedi (Ghana) St. Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak
- Mr Chris Hesse (Ghana) St. Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak
- The Revd Edit Nagy (Hungary) St. Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak
- The Revd Shin Ik Ho (Korea) St. Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak

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

Mary Marsden, *Chairman*  
Sheila Rudofsky, *Secretary*

## MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS COMMITTEE

27. In Acts 19 we read that Paul spent a full two years of his missionary activity in Ephesus, firstly in the synagogue and then in the school of Tyrannus, in a daily "dialogue" with "the residents of Asia . . . both Jews and Greeks". The Greek words for "dialogue"

are variously translated, but mean that Paul deliberated freely (dialogizomai) and in a firm but conciliatory manner (peitho) on the issue of the Kingdom of God (Acts 19, 8-11). These verses immediately follow a reference to Paul's deep concern for the real experience of the Holy Spirit (19, 1-7), and are followed by a record of miracles he performed in Ephesus where "the word of the Lord showed its power, spreading more and more widely and effectively". (19, 12-20). Dialogue was inalienably part of Paul's understanding of mission, and his actions proved it in the multi-religious and multi-ethnic world in which he moved.

28. It is such a vision of mission through dialogue which inheres the work of the Mission and Other Faiths Committee. It is why we wholeheartedly espouse and commend to the URC Assembly the four principles of dialogue in the BCC. *Relations With People of Other Faiths: Guidelines on Dialogue in Britain*. "Dialogue becomes the medium of authentic witness" (Principle IV), provided it avoids intellectualism and "begins where people meet each other" (Principle I), seeking "mutual understanding and mutual trust" (Principle II) as did Paul at Ephesus. Furthermore, "dialogue makes it possible to share in service to the community" (Principle III), and so is a means of enabling us to become more effective agents of Christian love amidst the changes taking place in our own society as we learn to live together with people of other religious traditions. Such is the miracle which God offers us to perform in our multi-religious society.

29. The Committee commends these principles on the experience of its own work, particularly in the recent publication of the study handbook *Christians and Jews in Britain*. This is the cooperative work of a group of Jews and Christians who have been in dialogue over several years, and provide a first sequel to *With people of Other Faiths in Britain*. We hope that both these booklets will be used particularly in Christian education and ministerial pre-service and in-service training. Through its specialist consultants the Committee is developing positive relations with Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Valued pastoral guidance on the controversial issue of the new religious movements is available in *Who Are They?* and much practical use is being made of *Health Care of Ethnic minorities in Britain* — both being Committee publications. Many of these issues are handled in a study programme designed by the Communications Unit for use in local churches *Exploring Relationships With People of Other Faiths*(PUB. No.3).

30. Common to all these resources is the recognition that the issue of Britain as a multi-religious society must touch the life of the whole Church, whether or not we live in so-called immigrant areas. On behalf of the whole URC, therefore, the Committee recommends that the Assembly adopts as its own the BCC Guidelines as normative in our relations with people of other faiths.

David A. Kerr, *Chairman*  
Iorwerth L. Thomas, *Secretary*

## COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION 1982-1983

31. By its constitution the Council for World Mission has to review its work every six years. In 1981 the Council decided that this review would be carried out at its next meeting which is to take place in Singapore from July 4 to 15. A Review group was set up and materials have been prepared by this group and by the Executive Committee and circulated to member Churches for their study. Three Regional Consultations have been held, in the Africa, Europe and Pacific Regions in order to consider the issues that have been raised. Member Churches have also been asked to consider the issues and the Review Group is meeting again in March in order to bring together the responses that have been received. the Council will make decisions at its meeting in July and may refer some matters to member Churches for decision or for further consideration.

32. Stress has been laid during the past year on Education in Mission. The aim of Education in Mission is to create a climate of learning where the scriptures provide the fundamental principles for human contact, dialogue, sharing of ideas and corporate action in mission. Each member Church of CWM is being encouraged to engage in a six-step process — to clarify its understanding of mission, to identify programmes which can be carried through

to meet these priorities, to see what resources it has and what resources it may need to request from partner churches, and then to carry through these programmes and evaluate them. An Education in Mission Team has been chosen and its services have been offered to member Churches to help them identify and describe their priorities in mission.

33. During 1981-82 a group of ten young people drawn from ten different member Churches of CWM spent a year on a Training in Mission programme. For two terms they studied in Selly Oak, Birmingham, and engaged in pairs in church and outside work in five locations. then for 3-4 months the young people went in pairs to Samoa, South India, Botswana, Zambia and Jamaica to work with the Church, share their experience and learn about the Church and its mission. An assessment of the year's training was carried out and it has been decided to have another Training in Mission programme for 1983-84. Eight young people will spend a term in Jamaica and then two terms in Birmingham while eight others will commence their year in Birmingham and go to Jamaica in December. These programmes are a training for life, to deepen commitment and widen vision and understanding. They exemplify CWM's concern for partnership in mission.

34. CWM's four member Churches in Wales are inviting a CWM team to visit Wales from March 22 to April 11, to look at the life and work of the Churches and to prepare a report which focuses on 'Wales as a Context for Mission'. The four who are taking part are Mrs. Renuka Somasekar from South India, Revd Paul Chen from Taiwan, Revd Stanley Green, a missionary from South Africa working in Jamaica, and Revd Yvette Rabemila, CWM's Personal Secretary.

35. At the end of June 1982, after giving ten years of service to CCWM/CWM, Mr Philip Wade resigned as Finance Secretary. He has been replaced by Mr Aubrey Curry FCA, who served as a URC Council member on CWM's Executive Committee from 1977 until his appointment. Revd Maitland Evans will be returning to Jamaica in July this year and a replacement as Secretary for Education in Mission is being sought.

Barrie D. Scopes, *General Secretary*

## RETIRING OFFICERS OF THE DEPARTMENT

36. The Assembly will be aware of the changes impending in the staffing of the Department. All those in the Departmental Committees and in the office staff wish to express deep gratitude to David Kerr, who has led the work on Other Faiths with great skill, and to Martin Cressey and Boris Anderson who have guided the development of the Department since its inception. Amid the whole network of relationships and a quickly-changing ecumenical scene, their wisdom and energy have led the URC contribution. All the Committees of the Department have expressed this indebtedness.

Bernard Thorogood

## RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly concurs in the recommendation of the Council for Covenanting that, its work having been concluded, the Council be dissolved; with appreciation to its officers for their steadfast leadership.
2. The Assembly agrees with the recommendation of the Council for Covenanting that any residual funds in its account be transferred to BCC for further work on church unity.
3. The Assembly agrees that the resolution approved by the 1982 Assembly to accept the Covenant Proposals (Reports, p52, No.7) will not be presented for ratification.
4. The Assembly invites individuals and groups in the URC to share their vision and understanding of 'the visible unity of the whole church' in Church Meetings and District Councils for transmission to the MEW Home Committee

5. The Assembly, recognising that the aim of the Covenant Proposals to secure the mutual acceptance of members was widely welcomed.
  - a) believes that such acceptance is a powerful sign of visible unity,
  - b) re-affirms the welcome which is offered in the URC to the Lord's Table,
  - and c) requests the BCC to consider whether there are further steps in implementation of mutual acceptance now possible.
6. The Assembly, encouraging the further involvement of representatives of other churches in the councils of the URC, instructs the Constitutional Review Group to prepare for the Assembly such amendments to the Structure of the URC as would enable us to receive as voting members of Assembly, Synods and District

Councils representatives of other British churches.

7. The Assembly ratifies the following amendments to the Structure of the URC, approved by the 1982 Assembly under Clause 9/5/xi:

Paragraph 8(2) (Manual p21 lines 1 and 2) After the words 'and Provinces into Districts' the addition of the words 'or Areas of Ecumenical Co-operation'.

Paragraph 8(3)b (Manual p21 line 8) Add the words to the end of the sentence before the full stop 'and of each Area of Ecumenical Co-operation to be known as an Area Meeting'.

Paragraph 9(3) (Manual p23) The addition of the following sentence before the list of functions. 'The URC membership of the Area Meeting in each Area of Ecumenical Co-operation (hereinafter referred to as the United Reformed Church Committee) shall consist of the Provincial Moderator, all ministers and decesses engaged directly in the service of the URC within the Area, representatives of local churches within the Area, and such other persons as determined by the constitution of each Area Meeting as approved by resolution of the Provincial Synod'.

At the bottom of page 24 of the Manual, after the list of functions of District Councils, the following sentences are added:

'(i) to (xix) above describes also the function of Area Meetings, always understanding that such functions as relate solely to the work of the URC may be discharged by the United Reformed Church Committee of each Area Meeting. In this statement of the Structure of the United Reformed Church wherever the words District Council occur they shall be read as meaning Area Meeting in respect of those places where an Area Meeting has been duly established.

8. The Assembly welcomes the step being taken in Wiltshire to create joint Methodist/URC areas, sends greetings to the new Area Meetings, and suggests to District Council and Synods that this development may indicate a way forward in joint decision-making.
9. The Assembly, noting that some local covenants involving the URC have been approved, welcomes the development of such inter-church commitment to consultation, united prayer and joint planning whether at local church or District level.
10. The Assembly instructs the Constitutional Review Group to prepare for the Assembly any amendments to the Structure of the URC that are needed to ensure that Local Ecumenical Projects which are listed as URC local churches may be represented in the councils of the URC by people, who are in membership of the LEP, from other denominational backgrounds.
11. **The Assembly**
  - a) affirms the support of the URC for BCC as the main ecumenical agency in these islands for the development of common witness and unity,
  - b) accepts that increases in financial support may need to be above the rate of general inflation if the activity of the Council is to be developed.

and c) encourages discussion about the future shape of the Council so that the Roman Catholic Church may feel able to take a full part in this commitment to work together.

**12. The Assembly**

- a) calls the URC to an emphasis on evangelism in 1984,
- b) asks each local church to develop, ecumenically if possible, and with prayer, such methods as seem right to the fellowship,
- c) instructs the WCM Dept., to co-operate with other departments in preparing suitable supporting materials,

and d) suggests that the Assembly in 1984 makes a feature of this subject.

- 13.** The Assembly adopts as its own the Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Other Faiths formulated by the British Council of Churches. It urges Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches to accept them as normative in all relations with people of other faiths, and to work to discover ways in which to express them in practice.

# CHURCH AND SOCIETY

*Chairman:* Mr Raymond T. Clarke

*Secretary:* The Revd John P. Reardon

1. This report can only reflect a small part of the wide-ranging responsibilities, both national and international, which the Assembly entrusts to the Department. In its work the Department establishes direct links with local churches, Districts and Provinces to work with them on important contemporary issues and to discover how to influence the direction in which society moves. It believes that all churches should be helping and challenging their members to play their part in their own areas in improving the conditions and quality of life and in shaping the institutions of society for the benefit of the community. The Department attempts a similar involvement with institutions at national and international level. The General Election provides an important focus for Christian involvement in discussion of priorities for church and society. It must, however, be seen as part of a continuing Christian concern for the development of society, rather than as an occasional opportunity for involvement only every four or five years.

2. **Falklands Aftermath** The Department's report to the Assembly in 1982 was overshadowed by the conflict in the South Atlantic over the Falkland Islands. The debate in the Assembly showed just how difficult it was for British Christians to reach agreement about the measures being taken by the government and the proper role to be played by the United Nations Organisation. The dossier of church statements and resolutions on the Falklands crisis, compiled by the British Council of Churches, revealed wide differences of emphasis and opinion among Christians in all denominations.

3. Since then the BCC has adopted a long-term programme to coordinate the work of the various denominations in following up the issues raised by the Falklands crisis. These issues include questions about the role of the churches in strengthening the UN and other international instruments; further consideration of non-violent methods of peace-keeping and conflict resolution; the pastoral care of the islanders; a study of the lessons to be learnt for other situations, e.g. Hong Kong, Gibraltar and Belize, for which Britain still has some responsibility; the arms trade and the continuing concern for human rights in Argentina. In particular the Department welcomes the BCC's attempts to establish closer working relations with the churches in Argentina.

4. **Peace and Disarmament** Early in 1983 it had become clear that peace and disarmament issues were of major concern to all the churches. After all the work of the World Disarmament Campaign to press for progress towards peace at the Special Session of the UN on Disarmament in 1982 the outcome was disappointing and deeply disturbing to all who looked for signs of hope. The Special Session revealed the reluctance of the major powers to cooperate in the search for peace through disarmament. Governments which set great store by multilateral agreements towards disarmament were unable to progress beyond the declarations they had made at the earlier UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1978. Between those two UN Sessions, however, the threats to peace had increased and the relationships between East and West had deteriorated even further. The arms race has continued without abatement.

5. The desire for peace of Christians in the countries of Eastern and Western Europe has brought censure from governments of very different political complexions and persuasions. In the delegation to the BCC of church representatives from Eastern Germany and the Soviet Union peace and disarmament were priority issues for discussion and during 1982 conversations among church representatives in Western Europe were dominated by the same issues. In Britain, while many individual Christians and local churches have been pondering the claims of various groups which have put forward proposals for peace, the BCC has been seeking financial resources to establish a Peace Unit to serve as a forum for discussion and study of the conflicting views on peace and disarmament questions. The Department welcomes the initiative of the Presbyterian Church in the United States to

send fraternal workers to the churches in various parts of the world and will cooperate with the BCC in enabling such a worker to share in the Peace Unit and in the Department's work on peace.

6. In 1979 the BCC came to the conviction that Britain should not replace its independent nuclear deterrent as it aged and became obsolete. Now the publication of *The Church and the Bomb* has made all the churches indebted to the the Church of England working party for setting out its arguments and conclusions so clearly. That it does not speak for all Christians has been made obvious not only by the debate in the General Synod of the Church of England but also by the continuing and fierce debate in all the churches. The report deserves to be read by Christians of all traditions and persuasions in Britain, and indeed, far beyond these islands. The Anglican report spells out more fully the reasons why its authors believe that the use of nuclear weapons is entirely ruled out. It argues that the Just War theory, as this has been developed and refined within the Christian Church, cannot be invoked in support of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons, by their very nature if used, would injure and kill non-combatants, would harm countries not involved in the conflict at all, would seriously damage the environment and would inflict harm on generations of the yet unborn. It argues that nuclear weapons are always more evil than any conceivable evil which they could be used to combat or prevent. The report also argues that those countries which possess nuclear weapons are incapable of denying the right of other countries, which are developing nuclear potential, to acquire nuclear weapons of their own.

7. The report calls for an initiative by Britain in renouncing reliance on nuclear weapons and suggests that continued reliance involves gambling "with the lives and well-being of the innocent and the unborn". Its authors believe that if the challenge of nuclear disarmament is embraced then God will bless that response "and use it to bring hope and to extend His kingdom of justice and peace".

8. Christians will remain divided about the arguments and conclusions of the report, but cannot ignore its call for progress towards a more peaceful and a more secure world. The message of Pope John Paul II to the UN Special Session on Disarmament encouraged that body to continue its work for peace with these words: "Peace is not a utopia nor an inaccessible ideal, nor an unrealisable dream . . . peace is possible. And because it is possible, peace is our duty, our grave duty, our supreme responsibility".

9. A movement which is gaining support among people who hold different views about the merits of the unilateral and multilateral approaches to disarmament is the call for a nuclear freeze. This proposal, with the support of the United Nations General Assembly, calls on all nuclear weapon states to freeze the testing, deployment and production of all nuclear weapons by the signatories. It is intended to apply to both sides in the Cold War and is also meant to be verifiable. Its purpose is to halt the nuclear arms race for a period within which negotiations can be conducted without the constant pressure of continuing escalation. It would stop the whole process of escalation, including the impending stationing of Cruise and Pershing missiles. It would provide a framework within which further confidence-building measures could be taken.

10. If such a halt to the arms race could be achieved then opportunities could be taken to explore the concept of "common security" which was the central thrust of the report with that title published in 1982 by the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues under the Chairmanship of Olof Palme. That report, deliberately modelled on the Brandt Report which advocated a programme for survival, suggests that a doctrine of common security must replace the present expedient of deterrence through armaments. International peace must be based on a commitment to joint survival rather than a threat of mutual destruction. The freeze offers a first step towards this doctrine of common security.

11. No doubt the questions of peace and disarmament will loom large in the WCC Assembly in Vancouver. The churches of the world are peculiarly well-placed to contribute to the search for peace. In Britain through the BCC the recent encounters with Christians from Eastern Germany, the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union and Cuba, have

played their part in building bridges of Christian fellowship in a world where all too many chasms divide God's human family. The churches could play a much more significant role still in developing contacts with those whom politicians try to persuade us are our enemies and in programmes of peace education.

12. **Unemployment** On the domestic scene the problem of unemployment remains as urgent as ever. 1982 showed no abatement in the rise of unemployment. Early that year the British Churches launched Church Action With the Unemployed and many local churches have responded to the call to play their part in offering hope to the unemployed through pastoral care, counselling and "drop in" centres, through training and job-creation schemes and through programmes of education and attitude-changing. Several URC initiatives in different parts of the country have provided a challenge and stimulus to other churches to use their resources in schemes to assist the unemployed.

13. Several churches responded to the Department's suggestion circulated in the November 1982 Information Service that the Government should be pressed to restore the 5% cut in unemployment benefit. This was in the same spirit as the Assembly resolution of 1981 calling on the Government to review the benefits for the long-term unemployed.

14. The present level of unemployment with its waste of human resources and its attendant distress is intolerable in any society which claims to be caring and civilised. It remains to be seen whether the new Youth Training Scheme will succeed, and, while there are no easy solutions, politicians must be made to see the urgency of a situation which is creating so much havoc in so many people's lives and must give the search for solutions a very high priority in the formulation of their policies. In particular, society as a whole must be made to recognise the need for all to help those who are the victims of the present crisis. The unemployed should be enabled to live and be part of society rather than merely subsist on the fringes. Christians themselves will have to examine their own assumptions and prejudices. Too often in the past Christians have shared in the general tendency to "blame the victims" of unemployment as if they had created the problem themselves.

15. It is in the context of pastoral, practical and prophetic action that the churches need to search for new theological insights into the nature of work in society. If the so-called Protestant work ethic has ceased to have the relevance it once had then a new ethical understanding of the nature and place of work in the life of individuals and communities must be found. Christians bring to that task their insights into the nature and worth of all human beings as revealed in the love of God in Christ. In this task those in paid employment and those without it have much to contribute to each other's perceptions.

16. Although domestic policies have played their part in the creation of unemployment it must be remembered that the present crisis is international in scope and seriousness. The chronic unemployment experienced in the poorer countries for two decades is now growing in countries which have hitherto prided themselves not only on their ability to offer full employment to all their citizens but have extensively made use of migrant labour from other countries.

17. **The Welfare State** Two years ago the Executive Committee called on all congregations to find out what impact public expenditure cuts were making on local services. Many churches responded to this call and some have shared their findings with the Department. The original concern, first brought to the Assembly by the Mersey Province, arose because of considerable fears about the future of the Welfare State. That concern remains and Christians and local churches who care about the quality of life for individuals and the community at large must not allow serious deterioration without trying to influence what is happening.

18. The Welfare State in Britain evolved over several centuries and very largely as an expression of Christian principles. It assumed its present form in the period immediately after the Second World War beginning with the Education Act of 1944. Between then and 1951 it came about through a range of legislation providing services for all citizens irrespective of their income or social status. All citizens who have lived during the last 35 years have been nurtured by the "care" of the Welfare State in some way or another.

19. Many recent studies have shown how the Welfare State has failed to eradicate wide



inequalities in British society. Nevertheless they must not be allowed to detract from the major improvements in the quality and range of services which have greatly benefited the large majority of people. It is because the positive achievements of the past forty years are now under threat that the Department, in common with the BCC, is concerned to draw attention to the current trends and urges careful consideration of the options open to British society before all that is valuable is swept away.

20. In a time of recession and, indeed, demographic change it is obvious that governments and local authorities have to scrutinise their use and deployment of resources. The demand for improved living standards in times of stagnating economy presents any government with decisions about priorities. Public services were planned on the assumption that economic growth would continue indefinitely and there has been little systematic study of how the Welfare State could be adapted without losing its essential qualities.

21. The BCC has recently been urging the churches to take seriously the persistence of poverty in Britain. In spite of the Welfare State large numbers of people experience homelessness, various kinds of deprivation and hardship in living conditions, low pay and job insecurity. There are still many reforms needed to tackle such problems. The Department, through its Social Justice Advisory Group and its membership of Church Action on Poverty, hopes to share in shaping objectives to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable groups.

22. It has been argued that some of the early cuts in expenditure on welfare services were justified not only because of a stagnating economy but also to increase efficiency in services which had become slack in their use of resources. Nevertheless as the cuts continued even the most cost-effective services were being eroded and quality was further diminished by the consequent lowering of morale throughout the public services. There is now widespread fear that economies, however necessary they may seem, are being achieved by penalising those least able to help themselves. There is also a nagging fear that some of the economies will have detrimental effects on the lives of individuals and communities for a long time to come. For example, failure now to plan for the needs of the future elderly will impose intolerable burdens on the present generation of young people as their parents' generation grows older.

23. There are no easy solutions to the present crisis. In the current public debate some argue that the Welfare State must be maintained, if necessary by the injection of more resources; in a changing society the welfare services must show themselves to be flexible and capable of responding to and, indeed, anticipating social change. Others argue that the majority of people should be free to make their own choices about services by opting for private provision, thus leaving the state services to cope for the minority who will not be able to afford private provision. This would inevitably lead to significant shifts in resources and priorities and would only serve to accentuate the divisions in society.

24. The churches have had a long involvement in the development of community care and have seen the Welfare State as a framework within which the Christian values of justice and compassion have been offered to society as a whole. In the present changing scene the churches still have a role to play in proclaiming those values. In addition the churches in their own provision of welfare services and in their pastoral care for those who work in the statutory and voluntary services of the Welfare State have a vital contribution to make to its evolution. Many churches are adopting styles of ministry which show a clear awareness of the contribution they can make to the life of local people through a range of community services and through the development of their buildings for community use.

25. **World Development** Some of the values implicit in the Welfare State have been advocated as the basis for a new world order to remove the enormous division between the countries of the North and South. Three years ago the Brandt Commission put forward its *Programme for Survival*. Earlier this year it published a new report *Common Crisis* underlining again the urgency with which the problem of world poverty must be tackled. Some of the measures which they advocate have not changed since their first report. Virtu-

ally none of the long-range reforms they proposed then have been accepted or implemented and hardly any of their short-term emergency measures have been taken up. Meanwhile the global economy has slid into deeper recession and the most seriously affected have been the poorest nations and the poorest people within all nations. Again the new report emphasises that the road to recovery lies through international cooperation.

26. The Summit of world leaders at Cancun in October 1981 failed to set the world on the road to economic recovery and the gap between rich and poor continues to widen. Not only the world financial systems are in a precarious state but the food situation looks bleak. Hunger and malnutrition show signs of increase throughout the world.

27. The URC has played an important role among the churches in this country in emphasising the Christian imperatives both to care for the poor and to challenge the policies which keep them poor. The 1% World Development Appeal continues to emphasise the urgency of combatting world poverty and of the need to work for change in that direction in the policies of governments. The fact that the Appeal is gaining support and has raised a higher sum than last year is a sign that world development is still an important element in the church's witness to the nation.

28. In June there will be a new opportunity for the nations to meet to begin to solve the problem of world poverty. In Belgrade the Sixth Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will take place. Christians should be in the forefront of those urging the British Government to search for some common agreements on which the road to recovery for the world community can be based.

29. Even without broad international agreement there is much that Britain itself could do through its own aid programme as has been shown in the publication *Real Aid* produced by an independent group under the chairmanship of the new Director of Christian Aid. In particular the document urges the government to restore the aid programme to its fundamental purpose — that of helping the poorest. Many local groups have entered into dialogue with M.P.s on the basis of the report and there is much scope for continuing dialogue and pressure on this issue. Another feature of the group's recommendations, also endorsed by the BCC, is that the government should restore the programme of funding for development education, which it cut drastically in 1979. The Department, too, supports this recommendation because of the need for British people to understand the nature of the crisis the world is in and the role Britain could play in overcoming it.

30. As a sign of the importance the Department attaches to world development the Departmental Secretary has continued to chair the Churches Committee of the World Development Movement, which organises One World Week, and has continued to serve as co-Moderator of the Joint Task Force on Development Issues in Brussels, monitoring and seeking to influence the development policies of the European Community.

31. **Family Life** The Department continues to support the work of the Family Life Education Ecumenical Project and the Assistant Secretary has acted as its secretary for nearly two years. FLEEP is entering into partnerships to initiate local family life education projects in two or three areas of the country and hopes to expand its work and its influence as it gains experience and further resources. The Department also supports the work of Family Forum and has helped the national organisation to make contact with local churches as it has developed its regional networks.

32. **Sunday Trading** To try to respond to the growing concern among the churches, and among some M.P.s, at the private member's Bill proposing the removal of all restrictions on the hours of retail trading, including those relating to Sunday, the Department prepared a paper and resolution for the Executive Committee in February. While not opposed to changes in laws which have many anomalies in practice the Department believes that changes of so important a nature should only be introduced after widespread public debate in which all the implications can be examined and weighed. A Committee of Inquiry would provide a stimulus for such debate and could then offer the government the evidence on which carefully considered legislation could be introduced. The Department, while obviously concerned about the nature of Sunday as a day of rest, recreation and worship, also

pointed to the many other implications of change relating to the impact on the work-force, on all the service industries relating to retail trading, on patterns of working and family life, on retail prices and on the environment, particularly in inner urban areas.

33. **Ecumenical Cooperation** As always the Department has played its part in cooperating with many other ecumenical bodies, particularly the BCC. It has supported Christian Aid through the 1% World Development Appeal, it has related especially to the extensive work of the BCC's Division of Community Affairs and has relied on it for work on cable television, race relations and poverty in particular. The BCC's Division of International Affairs and its Human Rights Forum have been indispensable ecumenical agents enabling contact with Christians in many other countries and offering a basis for many approaches to the British and foreign governments.

34. Through the Churches' Consortium on Industrial Mission, the Churches' Council on Alcohol and Drugs, the Churches' group on Single Homelessness, the Education Committee of the Free Church Federal Council and many other such bodies the Department shares in the development of a Christian approach to many areas of public life.

35. **Department Structure** In addition to these many ecumenical contacts and commitments, the Department appoints, from time to time, its own advisory groups and working parties. It reviewed its existing advisory groups and decided to dispense with its World Development Advisory Group in favour of smaller ad hoc groups, from time to time, to carry out tasks determined by the meetings of the Department. A working party on Housing and Homelessness has recently been appointed, a Social Justice Advisory Group continues to focus on some of the inequalities and injustices in our community, and a re-formed Education Group will advise the Department on the Christian contribution to be made in the field of public education. The Industrial Affairs Advisory Group has given way to the development of a network of URC people involved in industrial life to help them and the denomination to respond to the trends and opportunities arising within that sphere.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That this report be received for debate.
2. The Assembly welcomes the publication of *The Church and the Bomb* and its discussion by the Anglican General Synod and urges study and discussion throughout the URC of the issues raised in it.
3. The Assembly believes that the development, production and proliferation of nuclear weapons are an offence to God and a denial of his purpose for humanity and therefore calls on Her Majesty's Government and the Governments of the other nuclear weapon States to freeze all research into and development, production, acquisition, testing and deployment of all nuclear weapons and to use the period of the freeze to work for substantial reductions in nuclear weapons and their eventual elimination by all States as first steps towards more general disarmament within an internationally agreed concept of common security.
4. The Assembly instructs the Church and Society Department to cooperate with sister Churches in Britain and throughout the world in a global fellowship committed to prayer, education and action for peace and calls upon local churches to explore and initiate programmes of peace education for their own members and for the communities they serve.
5. The Assembly urges all churches to engage in pastoral, practical and prophetic action to meet the crisis of unemployment and to provide opportunities for their members to examine their own assumptions and prejudices about work and its place in God's purpose for humanity.
6. The Assembly calls on the churches to promote or support local initiatives to meet the needs of the poorest most vulnerable sections of the community and to challenge local and national governments to give a higher priority to the elimination of poverty.

7. The Assembly urges Her Majesty's Government to enter into the negotiations at the Sixth Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development with some positive proposals to break the deadlock in North-South relations.
  8. The Assembly urges Her Majesty's Government to reintroduce a development education fund to encourage national organisations and community groups to promote deeper awareness of world development issues and of the role Britain should play in the search for a more just world.
  9. The Assembly urges Her Majesty's Government to establish a Committee of Inquiry to take evidence from a wide range of opinion about laws governing the present restrictions on the hours of retail trading and to make careful proposals for future change.
-

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

*Chairman:* Mr F. H. Brooman

*Secretary:* Mr C. M. Frank

1. **Receipts and Payments of Local Churches in 1981** Appendix 1 gives a broad analysis of the receipts and payments for 1979, 1980 and 1981 of those Churches which completed forms MM1. Because of changes in the form MM1, the headings of the analysis are not the same as those used last year (page 35 of the Reports to Assembly 1982). The differences are not very great however and the figures have again been given in annual amounts per member so that comparisons can be made.
2. It will be seen that total giving increased by 27% from 1979 to 1980 and by 21% from 1980 to 1981. These figures, like those for the preceding years, are higher than the rates of inflation (18% and 13%) and members and local treasurers are again to be congratulated on the continuing increase in the real value of giving.
3. A breakdown of the 1981 figures, Province by Province, is given in Appendix 2.
4. **Unified Appeal 1982** The Central Activities Budget for 1982 which was approved by Assembly 1981 provided for expenditure of £1,114,000 of which £1,018,000 was to be found through the Unified Appeal (pages 20 and 62 of the Record of Assembly 1981). When the Provincial Treasurers met in April 1981 to decide what each Province could contribute, the Provincial targets which they set totalled only £982,700, £35,300 short of the budget requirement. In the event, nine of the twelve Provinces met or exceeded their targets and the total receipts were only £30,838 below the Budget figure. The details are given in Appendix 3.
5. **Expenditure on Central Activities 1982** The accounts for 1982 had not been finalised at the time of writing this report, but we expect the expenditure to be about £1,170,000 an increase of £102,000 over 1981. However, as the figures in Appendix 4 show, this is a further reduction in real terms.
6. **Stipends of Ministers Employed Centrally** The usual information about the stipends and other conditions of service of ministers employed centrally is given in Appendix 5.
7. **Accounts for 1982** The accounts for 1982 will be published separately when the audit has been completed. They will be carried into the Record of Assembly in the usual way.

## MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* Mr D. C. McMurdie

*Secretary:* The Revd G. E. Hooper

8. Several significant changes have taken place in the Committee since the last Assembly. We were saddened by the sudden death of Mr J. A. Mulligan, the representative of the Southern Province. We also lost by retirement from the Committee the Revd Philip Wadey who has served us well for many years. And now we are to lose our Vice-Chairman, the Revd John Waller, who has expressed a wish to relinquish office as from the date of this Assembly. It is fitting that we should place on record our warm appreciation to these retiring members for their valuable contributions to the MoM Committee.
9. These losses caused us to review the composition of the Committee which was determined by the Assembly Executive Committee in November 1978. It currently provided for a Chairman, Secretary, a Provincial Moderator, one representative from each of the 12 Provinces and for co-option of up to three persons whose knowledge and experience would be of special help in the Committee's work. The review revealed that the Committee was not well balanced as between ministers and laymen. At one time the Provincial representatives included both in more or less equal numbers but the tendency recently has been for laymen to replace ministers as the latter retired from the Committee. The co-opted mem-

bers included the vice-chairman and the chairman of the Pensions sub-committee.

10. It was thought that it would be helpful to the Committee if the balance were redressed and to this end the Assembly Executive agreed to amend the Constitution of the Committee whereby the Chairman of the Pensions sub-committee becomes a member of the parent committee ex-officio. This, together with the impending retirement of the Revd John Waller will allow for the appointment of three other persons of whom it was suggested at least two should be Ministers and the third a woman with preference being given to a woman Minister or the wife of a Minister.

11. **Progress of the Fund** 1982 was another good year for the MoM Fund. We budgeted for an income of £5,097,000 and in fact received £5,126,000. We are very grateful to local Churches, Districts and Provinces for their loyal and responsible support.

12. Expenditure was £4,937,000 compared with a budget of £5,097,000. The difference arose mainly because the fund was called upon to pay fewer full-time ministers than expected, but this was partly off-set by a further growth in the number of part-time ministers.

13. As a result, there was a balance available at the end of 1982 which the Committee has dealt with as follows:-

- (i) The addition of £25,000 to the Stipend Payment Reserve increasing it to £450,000 in order to maintain it at the level of one month's expenditure.
- (ii) The addition of £30,000 to the General Reserve increasing it to £250,000 in order to maintain its true value in relation to the basic stipend.
- (iii) The transfer of £125,000 to the Pension Fund in addition to the £394,000 provided in the budget. This will reduce the amounts which will be required in the future.

14. **The Basic Stipend** In its review of the basic stipend the Committee had in mind that the Assembly last year gave its approval to the MoM budget for 1983 noting that it allowed for an increase of 7½% in Ministers' stipends to take effect from 1 July 1983. After further careful consideration the Committee had no hesitation in recommending to Assembly that this augmentation in basic stipend should be implemented from 1 July 1983 (Resolution 4). In making this recommendation the Committee was very encouraged to find that the Provinces were offering contributions totalling £5.4m to meet a budget requirement in 1983 of a similar amount.

15. Although we have had several years experience in operating the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration, in budgeting for future requirements it must be recognised that this is not an easy task when we are forecasting for nearly two years ahead and there will be variations in the number of ministers during this period. With the current rate of inflation in mind and the prognostications for it over the next 12 months the Committee is thinking in terms of a 5% increase in stipends in 1984 which is the figure we have allowed in the budget for next year (Resolution 5).

16. **Ministers' Allowances** Throughout the year, the Committee has given much time and thought, not only in Committee but also outside of it, to two other major issues affecting the well-being of our Ministers. One concerns the adequacy of allowances while the other, which is dealt with later in the Report, has to do with their pensions.

17. **Ordination Grant and Disturbance Allowance** When the Committee began its review of Ministers' allowances it quickly recognised that the amounts specified in Appendix B to the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration were now inadequate. As a matter of urgency the Committee recommended to the Assembly Executive an immediate uplift in the Ordination grant and Disturbance allowance pending a more detailed study of the issues involved. The Executive concurred and resolved that:-

- i) the grant payable to ministers upon ordination shall be increased from £150 to £300 effective for ordinations from 1 June 1982.
- ii) the Disturbance allowance shall be increased from £150 to £300 effective for removals from 1 July 1982.

18. As the more detailed study progressed it was felt that these allowances were still insufficient and that with inflation continuing, whether upwards or downwards, there would be need for annual revisions of the scale of allowances on the present basis. To avoid frequent reviews and to ensure that Ministers are not unduly out of pocket when they move to a new pastorate in obedience to a call, it was agreed that in future the value of these allowances should be expressed in terms of a percentage of the whole time basic stipend and the figure we are recommending is 12½%.

19. In the course of this study the Committee thought that there was little difference in the objectives of the Ordination grant and the Disturbance allowance. While the former is paid to newly ordained ministers to help them settle into their first pastorate the latter is paid to established ministers to help them with the extra expenses that are necessarily incurred when moving to a new pastorate. It seemed logical therefore to merge the two into one grant to be known as a Resettlement Grant.

20. We also felt that if the reason for making a Resettlement Grant is valid it is likewise logical that it should be paid also to a Minister retiring whether he is moving out of a manse or a privately owned home, into a retirement dwelling. Moreover, we thought that where ministers die before retirement, whether they have reached retirement age or not, their spouses should also receive a Resettlement grant upon changing their place of residence.

21. The Committee also considered that some clarification of persons entitled to benefit was needed as some ministers come from other denominations and other organisations. It was therefore agreed to recommend that normally all such persons coming from another denomination at home or overseas or Christian society or charitable organisation or from secular employment and who change their place of residence to take up their new pastoral charge would be entitled to the Resettlement Grant.

22. **Ordination Loan** In line with the principle which we recommend for ministers' allowances we suggest that the interest free loan available to ordinands to help with the furnishing of a manse should be related in percentage terms to the whole-time stipend; we recommend a loan up to 20% repayable over a period of not more than five years.

23. **Removal cost of Ministers Retiring** The main change that we suggest to assist ministers retiring with their removal costs is to follow the principle we have advocated for other allowances, the grant payable in this respect not to exceed 10% of the whole-time basic stipend. It is also proposed that this grant should in future be known as the Retirement Removal Grant.

24. The Committee recommends that these miscellaneous grants and the Ordination loan should be payable whether or not the manse or retirement dwelling is church-owned.

25. In making the above recommendation the Committee recognises that situations might arise which are not completely covered by them, such as an ecumenical appointment. It is thought that in other situations the Committee should have discretionary power to pay in whole or in part the above grants and ordination loan and Assembly approval is sought for this.

26. The Committee further recommends that the revised grants should apply from 1 June 1983 except that for ministers entering upon final retirement from a pastoral charge and incurring costs of removal the Resettlement Grant and the Retirement Removal Grant shall be effective as from 1 January 1983.

27. As the foregoing recommendations in respect of Ministers' allowances envisage substantial changes in the existing provisions, the Committee recommends that paragraph 6 of the Plan (Miscellaneous Allowances to Ministers and Churches) should be deleted in its entirety (it being noted that paragraph 6.2.1. was deleted by the 1982 General Assembly) and replaced with a new paragraph 6 embodying the above changes. The proposed new paragraph 6 is set out in Resolution 6.

28. **Part-time Ministers** The Committee in conjunction with the Church Life Department devoted a considerable amount of time to a review of the position of part-time ministers. Its recommendations are incorporated in an amendment to paragraph 3 of the Plan

for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration, Resolution 7. These recommendations clarify the circumstances under which Ministers (A.R.) and Local Pastors may be paid from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund, provide for ministers undergoing further training required by the Ministerial Training Committee to receive adequate financial support, and express the view of the Committee that remuneration from the MoM Fund should no longer be extended to part-time ministers who are in full-time other employment.

29. **Pensions** The Congregational Ministers Friendly Society was finally dissolved and all payments due to members have been made. The final account will be published with the other accounts when audit is completed.

30. **Actuarial Valuation** The valuation of the URC Ministers Pension Fund as at 31.12.1981 was completed in October 1982 and reveals a satisfactory position. Provided that the special contribution of £426,000 per annum (as shown in the 1983 Budget — Assembly Record 1982) is continued in the MoM budget each year up to and including 1995, a small deficiency of £21,000 is brought out by the valuation. It is recommended that no action be taken on this small deficiency.

31. **Rules** A number of amendments to the Rules of the Pension Fund are submitted to Assembly (Resolution 12). These are mostly concerned with facilitating limited membership of the Fund during service in part-time ministries, whilst retaining the right to full membership in suitable cases. The principles involved were referred out to Provinces for discussion and all comments were carefully considered.

32. Discussion of the draft rules with the Superannuation Funds Office has continued through our Actuaries, and a number of changes have to be made which will not affect benefits or contributions.

33. Pastors Superannuation Fund and Pastors Widows Fund. Increases in available benefits are to be made from 1 July 1983, the rate of allowance per year of ministerial service being raised to £14 and £10.50 respectively. The income limits will again be increased in harmony with national figures for personal allowances.

## CHURCH BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* The Revd M. J. Husselbee

*Secretary:* Mr D. Banwell

34. In 1978 the CBC was requested to take a more active role in property matters both with regard to general guidance to Provinces and the financial assistance given to churches undertaking work to their buildings. Since then the Committee has issued a number of explanatory papers and reports on a wide variety of matters affecting property management and insurance. At the same time the number of applications for financial help has risen steeply, as is shown by the following figures:-

	1979 — 25 applications
	1980 — 30 applications
	1981 — 52 applications
	1982 — 71 applications
January	1983 — 27 applications

35. At the meeting of the Church Buildings Committee on the 8 February 1983 the Committee faced a minor financial crisis. Requests for grants, when added to the grants that had been promised but not paid, exceeded the expected income of the Fund for the year, and requests for loans, when added to the outstanding loans, and loans promised, equalled the total resources of the fund.

36. Committee therefore felt obliged to review its guidelines and effective from the applications received after 9 February 1983 they are as follows:-

- a) The Committee will not normally make grants except under exceptional circumstances.



- b) The limit of loans granted by the Committee will be increased to 50% of the cost of the project subject to an overall maximum of £50,000.
- c) Interest at 7% p.a. will be payable on all outstanding balances.
- d) A repayment of not less than 4% of the total sum advanced must be made each quarter in respect of each loan, save that the first repayment need not be made until the anniversary of the date of the advance of the loan.
- e) To encourage churches to employ professional consultants to advise in property matters, in respect of professional fees a grant of 50% of such fees will be given and a loan of 50% up to a maximum grant or loan of £5,000. This does not apply in the case of fees for the purchase and sale of manses which can be included in the total price of the dwelling, thus attracting up to 50% loan.

37. Depending upon the requests that come before the Committee, it would not rule out the possibility of further reconsideration of the guidelines in the course of 1983.

### **Manses**

38. The previous report of this Committee on Manses presented to the General Assembly in 1981 was referred for discussion to Provinces, Districts and local churches. Provinces were asked to inform the Committee of the responses, especially to suggestions about greater Provincial involvement in the management of Manses, in time for a further report to be made in 1983.

39. The responses received have for the most part maintained that the present system of management is satisfactory and therefore the Committee is not making any recommendations for changes at this time.

40. However, the applications received for financial assistance from this Committee reveal that the purchase and maintenance of Manses sometimes are burdens beyond the resources of the local churches. In other cases, churches fail to exercise a proper care for Manses because no one has specific responsibility for that care.

41. Therefore, the Committee would stress the need for a continuing careful oversight of the condition of Manses by District Councils through pastoral visitations and is considering the usefulness of annual schedules to be completed by churches, recording work done in the maintenance and repair of Manses and other church property similar to the practice of the Methodist Church and the former Presbyterian Church of England.

## **RETIRED MINISTERS' HOUSING COMMITTEE**

*Chairman:* Mr H. Greening

*Secretary:* Mr R. S. Carruthers

42. The Committee has received the resignation of the Revd Michael Davies, the Revd Arthur Macarthur and Mr J. Banks. It is glad to place on record its thanks to all of them for their willing service. At the year end, arrangements were in hand for the appointment of their successors.

43. In 1982 the Society provided for the housing needs of retiring ministers, retired ministers and the widows of ministers by the purchase of 15 houses, bungalows or flats and the allocation of four vacant properties, one of which had been bequeathed to the Society. In addition at the year end the Society was involved in the purchase of a further three properties. During the year four properties were sold and a fifth one sold subject to contract; at the year end four other properties were vacant. All the properties sold were in areas in which there was no current or immediate future demand for Society housing.

44. In 1982, donations to the Society, including covenants, amounted to £65,094 making a total of £222,000 received since January 1980. In addition £74,750 was received by way of loan from the Memorial Hall Trust Grant to the United Reformed Church and a further £55,191 from bequests, including one house valued at £22,000. At the year end the Society

had borrowed £63,000 from the General Funds of the Church.

45. The cost of repair, maintenance and administration of the Society's Properties exceeded rental income in 1982 by £1,948. In consequence consideration will be given early in 1983 to an increase in rents. The introduction of the Fair Rents Scheme has been in abeyance pending the receipt of further legal advice.

46. In October the Society increased its maximum limit to £23,000 per applicant and raised the maximum purchase price of a property for joint purchase to £35,000. It is expected that there will be at least 20 applications from ministers who will be retiring in 1983.

47. The 1982 Assembly passed the following resolution:-

"The Assembly, concerned that adequate housing provision be made for retired ministers, agrees to raise through Synods the money necessary to house retired ministers by direct assessment of the churches, as an essential part of the full cost of ministry".

48. Provincial representatives, acting through the Central Committee of the Finance and Administration Department, asked for more information about retirement housing needs in the 10 years to 1992. Two surveys were conducted in December 1982 and the information will be subject to constant review. The indications are that the peak of housing needs will occur during the next five years.

49. No eligible application for housing has been refused or delayed for lack of funds, and the Committee affirms that the responsibility accepted by the URC, in the General Assembly Resolution of 1979, will be honoured. The Resolution read:-

"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".

(Page 22, No.3 (v) of the Record of Assembly 1979)

50. In order to meet the needs the Committee will continue to seek donations and legacies, will seek loans through the Treasurership Committee, and will, if necessary, raise finance by mortgage on properties. At the present time, therefore, no assessment on the Churches is being made.

## **WELFARE AND EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE**

*Chairman:* The Revd M. D. Whitehorn

*Secretary:* The Revd B. G. Thorogood

51. The Committee has been enabled to respond to many individual cases of need and so to express the care of the Church. The members of the Committee are grateful for this privilege.

52. The Christmas distribution to those ministers on pension and to the widows of ministers was made at the rate of £50 to couples and £35 for single people and totalled £24,275. A wave of appreciation reached us, particularly stressing the value of being remembered by the Church as a whole.

53. Grants from the Fowler Welfare Fund are made to ministers' families for equipment and clothing on entering a new phase of school life. The Committee adopted a scale of maxima according to family income, from £70 to £20.

54. The Committee noted evidence that public expenditure cuts do cause very inequitable burdens, particularly when families face heavy expenditure for special educational courses.

55. In addition to the main Welfare Fund of the Church, which is replenished by the Unified Appeal, the Committee administers:-

The Gray Bequest

The Medical Assistance Fund

The Orchard House Fund  
St. Martin's Fund  
Schools Fund

St. George's Holiday Fund  
Fowler Welfare and Scholarship Funds

56. Of these funds, only the Orchard House and St. Martin's Fund are available to lay people. Within the former Churches of Christ there was a Christian Fellowship Association to which members contributed and which could help anyone in need. This Association remains in being and the Committee is in close touch so that cases may be referred.

## UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST

*Chairman:* Mr J. A. Cumming

*Secretary:* The Revd B. G. Thorogood

57. The United Reformed Church Trust is a Company limited by Guarantee whose affairs are administered by its Directors. The Directors are appointed by the General Assembly but the Trust is not an Assembly Committee and it has not previously reported to the Assembly. However, the Assembly will wish to have a report this year concerning the following resolution which was adopted by Assembly 1982:-

"The Assembly expresses its opposition to apartheid in South Africa by adopting the policy of progressive disengagement from the economy of South Africa commended by the British Council of Churches in November 1979.

Being aware of the obligation of the directors of the United Reformed Church Trust to use their judgement to administer the funds entrusted to their care in the interests of the beneficiaries of the various trusts, Assembly urges the directors to review the investments with a view to not holding shares in companies having a significant involvement in South Africa, so far as their legal obligations permit".

58. The Trust holds property on behalf of the United Reformed Church and a number of charitable bodies associated with it. Its real property includes the Church Offices and many Churches and Manses which it holds as trustees for the local church or a similar body. It also holds investments for a number of funds and trusts of which the largest are:-

The URC Ministers' Pension Fund	— £m 6.1
The Common Investment Fund	— £m 3.8
The Investment Pool	— £m 2.4

59. These funds are invested in fixed interest securities (mainly gilts) and in equity shares of companies. The resolution is directed at these equity holdings and in implementing it, the Trust has had the benefit of advice from the Investment Sub-Committee of the Treasurership Committee.

60. The resolution speaks of "shares in companies having a significant involvement in South Africa". The extent of a company's "involvement" could be considered by reference to its assets, its turnover, its sales or its profits and could be measured either against the whole of the company's business or against the whole of the South African economy. Only a limited amount of information was available as regards most of the companies in question but it did not prove to be difficult in practice to decide whether any involvement in South Africa was "significant".

61. Where the involvement appeared to be significant, the Trust had next to consider whether it could sell the shares. The resolution refers to the Directors' obligation to use their judgement to administer the funds entrusted to their care in the interests of the beneficiaries of the various trusts, and in the final line, it recognises that this is a legal obligation. It is also a moral obligation:-

- i. to the trustees and beneficiaries of the trusts whose funds are invested in the Common Investment Fund and the Investment Pool;
- ii. to the Ministers and widows now on pension and to the Ministers and their

- wives who may one day be entitled to benefit; and
- iii. to those who provided the funds whether by gift or legacy, or by their giving through local Churches and the MoM Fund to the large annual additions made to the Pension Fund to provide for increases in current pensions and future expectations.

The Assembly may be assured that the Directors of the Trust are fully seized of this obligation and will not fail to meet it.

62. What then does the obligation require in practice? It requires the Directors to exercise their judgement, having considered the advice of their brokers, to determine how much of the funds shall be invested in gilts and how much in equities; and as regards the investment in equities, to seek a balance that will provide a proper level of security and income on the one hand and on the other some growth in capital value to off-set the effects of inflation. This is the "balanced portfolio" in which holdings are spread over the most important sectors of the market and the individual holdings within each sector have regard not only to the company's performance and prospects but also to the spread of products and the geographical spread of its activities.

63. Already the Trust had no holdings in Brewers or in Tobacco. It has taken the view that avoiding these sectors did not impair the balance of our portfolio or conflict with the Directors' obligations. But between them they contribute 8.8% in value to the FT Actuaries Share Index. To withdraw from other major sectors would reduce the spread of investments to an unacceptable extent.

64. Their examination of the available information led the Directors to identify five holdings in companies which might be considered to have "significant involvement in South Africa":-

British Petroleum  
Shell Transport and Trading  
Barclays Bank  
Rio Tinto Zinc  
Babcock International

This is not of course a conclusive judgement that the interests are significant, merely a judgement on available information that the holdings might warrant consideration under the resolution.

65. The Trust sold British Petroleum and Babcock International and it has advised the Church and Society Department that it is ready to sell its holdings in Barclays Bank and Rio Tinto Zinc in implementation of the resolution, believing that the balance of the present portfolio will not be prejudiced as a result.

66. The Directors consider that the Trust must retain Shell. Oils are the largest sector, 10.74% in value. Other oil companies do not have the spread of interests either commercially or geographically that are to be found in Shell and BP and these, the two major companies in this sector, are both involved in South Africa. The Trust has sold BP but considers that it must retain Shell.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. Assembly receives the report of the Finance and Administration Department for debate.
2. Assembly adopts the accounts for the year ended 31 December 1982.
3. Assembly notes the satisfactory results of the Unified Appeal for 1982 and thanks all those who have contributed in money, advocacy and administration.
4. Assembly resolves that from 1 July 1983 the whole-time ministerial basic stipend shall be increased by 7 ½% to a sum of £4,730 annum.
5. Assembly gives approval to the Maintenance of the Ministry budget for 1984, noting that it allows for an increase of 5% in ministers' stipends payable from 1 July 1984.

6. Assembly approves the deletion of Paragraph 6 of the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration and its replacement by the following from 1 June 1983 excepting that for ministers entering 'upon final retirement' (6.1.1.), and incurring cost of removal 'on final retirement from a pastoral charge or from a full-time appointment of the United Reformed Church' (6.3.) the new entitlements shall be effective as from 1 January 1983.

6. **Miscellaneous Allowances for Ministers**

The PLAN provides for other financial entitlements as follows:-

6.1. **Resettlement Grant**

6.1.1. Every stipendiary minister, whether whole-time or part-time shall be entitled to a Resettlement Grant upon setting into his/her first pastorate and each subsequent pastorate or into a full time appointment of the United Reformed Church and upon final retirement always provided that the settlement involves a change in his place of residence and such grant shall not be payable more than once in every three years. Where the pastorate is part-time the grant shall be pro-rata according to the proportion of whole-time basic stipend in respect of the pastorate to be served. Where a ministers' years of service up to normal pension age have not all been whole-time the proportion of the Resettlement Grant on retirement shall be determined by the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee.

6.1.2. The Resettlement Grant shall be 12½% (Twelve and a half percent) of the current whole-time basic stipend or such other amount as the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, shall from time to time determine.

6.1.3. In the case of a minister who dies before retirement (no matter whether he/she has already passed retirement age or not) his/her spouse shall be entitled upon first changing her/his place of residence to the equivalent of the Resettlement Grant that would have been payable to the minister had he/she retired and moved at the date of his/her death.

6.2. **Ordination Loan**

An interest free loan, as a help towards the furnishing of a manse, is available to ordinands for the whole-time stipendiary ministry: this loan shall be up to 20% of the current whole-time basic stipend repayable over a period of not more than five years or such other amount and period as the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, shall from time to time determine.

6.3.1 **Retirement Removal Grant**

The full cost of removal, within the United Kingdom, shall be paid once only to a minister on final retirement from a pastoral charge or from full-time appointment of the United Reformed Church (or to the spouse of a minister who dies before retirement) provided that at least two tenders have been obtained and normally the lowest figure claimed and that in any event the grant payable shall not exceed 10% (ten percent) of the current whole-time basic stipend or such other amount as the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, shall from time to time determine.

6.3.2. Notwithstanding what is written above in paras 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 in a case of husband and wife being ministers their combined entitlements shall not exceed that of one whole-time minister.

6.4 **Discretionary Power**

In a situation other than those covered above the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee shall have discretionary power to pay in whole or in part, a Resettlement Grant, Ordination Loan and Retirement Removal Grant.

- 6.5 The above Resettlement Grant, Ordination Loan and Retirement Removal Grant shall be payable no matter whether or not the 'manse' or retirement dwelling is Church owned.
- 6.6 Grants and loans expressed as a percentage of the basic stipend shall be rounded to the nearest £10 above.
7. Assembly approves the deletion of all the wording in para 3 of the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration after the end of line 3.2 and its replacement by the following wording:-

Ministers to be included:-

- 3.3 Recognised Ministers of the United Reformed Church serving whole time a single church pastorate or a joint or a group pastorate, or holding a special appointment with a Province.
- 3.4 Recognised ministers of the United Reformed Church holding whole time chaplaincies (to such number as shall be determined from time to time by the General Assembly) in the appointment of whom the United Reformed Church has agreed and whose remuneration is derived in whole or in part from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund of the United Reformed Church.
- 3.5 Recognised ministers of the United Reformed Church serving as Provincial Moderators or holding stipendiary appointments in the central offices of the Church; and those ministers inducted to teaching posts at Westminster College.
- 3.6 Recognised ministers of the United Reformed Church holding appointments in ecumenical situations approved by the Committee.
- 3.7 Such ministers of other denominations working in ecumenical situations or otherwise serving the United Reformed Church, as the General Assembly shall, from time to time determine.

Whole-time Ministers NOT to be included

- 3.8 ministers ordained under Assembly Resolution (A.R.) who have not completed such further training as is specified by the Ministerial Training Committee; and Local Pastors.

Part time Ministers to be included:-

- 3.9 ministers (or retired Ministers), Ministers (A.R.) and Local Pastors who are not in full time other remunerated employment.

Part time Ministers NOT normally to be included

- 3.10 Ministers, Ministers (A.R.) and Local Pastors who are already in, or enter into, full time remunerated employment.

Ministers NOT to be included:-

- 3.11 Auxiliary Ministers

Students to be included:-

- 3.12 Students for the URC ministry giving ministry with District Council approval in vacation periods to URC pastorates which are in pastoral vacancy.
- 3.13 Students in special situations. Where an ordained minister is undergoing further training required by the Ministerial Training Committee and has pastoral oversight of a local church the minister may be paid such stipend and allowances as may be agreed by a group consisting of representatives of the local church, the Provincial Moderator, the District Council, the Ministerial Training Committee, the College where the minister is studying and the central MoM Committee, who shall agree from which sources the money shall be paid.

Special Cases to be included:-

- 3.14 Ministers to whom remuneration for specific periods has been authorised by the Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee.

3.15 Such other special cases as are accepted by the central Maintenance of the Ministry Committee.

8. Assembly agrees that all part-time ministerial appointments shall be for stated periods and thus subject to regular review by a District Council, the recommended period being for not more than five years for those under normal retirement age, and in accordance with Assembly resolutions for those age 64 and over.
9. Assembly agrees that all existing part-time appointments will be reviewed by District Councils in order that they may be brought into line with the approved revised wording of paragraph 3 of the PLAN by 30th June 1986.
10. Assembly approves that paragraph 4.1.1 (second sentence) shall be amended to read:-  
In the case of "part time" pastorates the proportion of whole time basic stipend which is appropriate, having regard to the work involved, shall be determined by the Provincial MoM Committee upon the recommendation of the District Council, subject to the approval of the central MoM Committee.
11. Assembly approves an increase in the maximum weekly payment to students (referred to in para 3.12. of the PLAN) from £30 to £32 or such figure as shall be determined by the MoM Committee from time to time.
12. Assembly approves the following changes to the Rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund:-

Rule 13c.

Delete 'full-time'

Rule 14a

In line 2 before 'service' insert 'full-time' and add new paragraph at end:-

"If a minister serving a local church is inducted to or reduces his commitment to that of part-time service whilst under pension age his entry to the Fund or his continuing contributory membership of the Fund shall be at the discretion of the Committee. Limited membership may be allowed under this discretion and in such cases contributions due and the benefits available in respect of the period of limited membership shall be based upon the proportion of basic stipend being paid for the part-time service and not on the full basic stipend. The Committee may however having regard to the length of any previous full-time service, to the age and health of the minister, to the fraction of basic stipend being paid and to the purpose and pensionability of any other employment allow full membership of the Pension Fund in appropriate cases contributions then being payable on full basic stipend."

Rule 15

Add new paragraph

- c. Where limited membership only has been granted under Rule 14a. the percentages quoted in paragraphs a. and b. of this Rule shall apply to the proportion of basic stipend being paid.

Rule 18

Add at end

The pension will be proportionally reduced in respect of any year of limited membership granted under Rule 14a.

Rule 20

Add new paragraph

- c. If a member at the time of ill-health retirement is a limited member under Rule 14a. any uncompleted years under paragraph b. above shall be reduced to the proportion that the number of pensionable years under Rule 18 bears to the number of years membership of the Fund.

Rule 22

At end of paragraph a. add

save that in the case of a limited member who has at no time during membership of the fund been paid the full basic stipend the lump sum shall equal only a proportion of one year's basic stipend at the date of death. In such a case the proportion shall be equal to the greatest proportion of basic stipend which has in any year been paid to him during membership of the fund.

At the end of paragraph b. add

In the case of a member who is at the time of his death a limited member under Rule 14 a the pension to which the member would have been entitled had he survived to the normal pension age shall be calculated by assuming the same average proportion for each future year as the entitlement in years at date of death bears to the number of years membership of the Fund.

Rule 25

Add at end

Pensions granted under Rule 29 in course of payment shall be increased on each occasion when the basic stipend is increased by a percentage, equal to the increase then made in the basic stipend.



## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION — APPENDIX 1

Receipts and Payments of Local Churches in 1981, expressed as £s per annum per member.

	1979	1980	1981	Increase%	
				1981 over	1980 over
<b>Receipts</b>	£	£	£	1980	1979
Giving and Legacies (note 2)	53	67	81	21	27
Loans and Grants	3	6	7		
Other Income	18	26	27		
	74	99	115	16	34
 <b>Payments</b>					
Ministry Cost (note 3)	33	43	50	18	32
Churches and Halls (note	21	27	29		
Unified Appeal and Benevolent Gifts	8	9	11		
Other Payments (note 5)	9	18	23		
Transfer to Reserves	3	2	2		
	74	99	115	16	34

### Notes

1. The above figures are taken from forms MM1 (the Annual Finance Information Sheet). The 1979 figures cover 127,460 members; those for 1980 117,000 members, and those for 1981 113,000 members although the returns are not complete, the amounts per member enable comparisons to be made.
2. Giving includes offerings, covenants, donations and special efforts.
3. Ministry Costs include MoM contributions, pulpit supply, manse upkeep, rates, heating etc, and car expenses.
4. Churches and Halls includes upkeep, heating etc.
5. Other Payments include capital works and loan repayments.

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION — APPENDIX 2

Receipts and Payments of Local Churches in 1981, expressed as £s per annum per member

### NATIONAL

#### TOTAL

#### PROVINCE NUMBER

	£	1 £	2 £	3 £	4 £	5 £	6 £	7 £	8 £	9 £	10 £	11 £	12 £
<b>Receipts</b>													
Giving	78	61	74	78	81	75	71	84	79	81	93	85	59
Legacies	3	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	4	4	7	7	1
	81	63	76	80	82	78	72	85	83	85	100	92	60
Loans & Grants	7	3	3	4	8	7	5	10	6	5	13	10	2
Other Income	27	11	21	19	41	27	25	34	28	27	43	28	26
	115	77	100	103	131	112	102	129	117	117	156	130	88
<b>Payments</b>													
Ministry Costs	50	43	43	51	52	46	47	57	52	54	62	52	42
Churches & Halls	29	16	29	28	38	30	32	30	30	28	41	29	20
Unified Appeal	6	5	5	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	8	7	5
Benevolent Gifts	5	2	3	2	4	3	4	6	6	5	7	5	3
Capital Works & Loan Repayments	14	3	11	11	20	8	7	21	15	12	27	20	13
Sundries	9	6	7	8	9	7	7	8	8	9	13	10	6
Transfers to Reserves	2	2	2	(4)	2	11	(1)	—	—	2	(2)	7	(1)
	115	77	100	103	131	112	102	129	117	117	156	130	88
1981 Total	115	77	100	103	131	112	102	129	117	117	156	130	88
1980 Total	99	66	95	97	109	96	91	110	104	98	124	108	82
Increase %													
1981 over 1980	16	17	6	7	20	17	13	17	13	19	26	20	7
1980 over 1979	34	13	44	54	36	30	25	37	31	37	24	39	55

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION — APPENDIX 3

### Unified Appeal 1982

Province	1981		1982	
	£	% of target	£	% of target
1. Northern	61,642	93	72,237	88
2. North West	79,000	99	89,107	101
3. Mersey	63,061	99	73,323	102
4. Yorkshire	72,919	104	72,037	100
5. East Midlands	52,037	100	60,574	101
6. West Midlands	68,555	97	77,613	99
7. Eastern	68,036	102	74,981	104
8. South West	56,166	99	66,974	101
9. Wessex	80,087	95	94,311	100
10. Thames North	104,884	100	117,017	104
11. Southern	138,378	102	153,186	102
12. Wales	<u>29,387</u>	95	<u>33,771</u>	96
	874,152		985,131	
Other receipts	<u>1,498</u>		<u>2,031</u>	
	875,650		987,162	
Budget	<u>898,000</u>		<u>1,018,000</u>	
Shortfall	<u>22,350</u>		<u>30,838</u>	

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION — APPENDIX 4

### Expenditure on Central Activities

Up to 1976, the expenditure on central activities shown in the annual accounts and financed mainly by the Unified Appeal included an element for supplementing the stipends and pensions of former Congregational Ministers. From 1977, a contribution from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund has been deducted from the expenditure. If both the provision and the contribution are taken out, the figures for expenditure are broadly comparable year by year. They are set out below and in the right hand column we have shown them in terms of 1973 £s, ie adjusted for inflation by reference to the Retail Price Index.

	Expenditure	At 1973 prices
1973	£ 482,000	£ 482,000
1974	508,000	452,000
1975	537,000	398,000
1976	583,000	351,000
1977	732,000	378,000
1978	773,000	363,000
1979	825,000	355,000
1980	989,000	360,000
1981	1,068,000	342,000
1982 (provisional)	1,170,000	336,000

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION — APPENDIX 5

### Stipends of Ministers Employed Centrally from July 1982

1. **Provincial Moderators** The stipend of Provincial Moderators is £5,868 per annum (plus any children's allowances). They are provided either with a house free of maintenance costs, rates, heating and lighting, or with a house allowance in lieu. Travelling expenses, telephone costs etc., in connection with church business are refunded. A car is provided, maintenance and running costs being met by the Church subject to an adjustment for private use. The Moderator may provide his own car and claim mileage allowances.

2. **Ministers at Tavistock Place** Stipends range from £5,868 per annum for Assistant Secretaries to £8,712 for the General Secretary (plus any children's allowances). The other arrangements are similar to those for Provincial Moderators but fares between home and Tavistock Place are met by Ministers.

3. **Preaching Fees and Travelling Expenses** When Moderators and Staff Secretaries visit a church or attend a meeting in the course of their official duties, any fee or reimbursement of travelling expenses paid to the Officer is accounted for to the central funds of the Church.

4. **Academic Staff at Westminster College** Stipends range from £5,868 to £6,468 per annum (plus any children's allowances). The housing provisions are the same as those for Provincial Moderators.

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION — APPENDIX 6

If the Resolutions proposed by the Department are adopted by the Assembly, Appendix 'B' to the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration will be as follows:-

Approved Rates applicable to the Plan

para		as at July 1 1982
4.1.1.	Basic Stipend, whole time	£4,730
	Maximum Stipend, part time	75% of whole time
para		
4.1.2.	Children's allowances	
	From 1 January 1982, no new children's allowances are payable but existing allowances are continued for children receiving allowances in December 1981, at their existing rates for each child until his/her 19th birthday whilst continuing at school. The annual rates are:-	
	for children born 1 January 1963 to 31 December 1971	£140
	for children born 1 January 1972 to 31 December 1976	£100
	for children born 1 January 1977 to 31 December 1981	£ 60
para		
6.1.	Resettlement Grant	12½% of current whole-time basic stipend (rounded to £10 above)
para		
6.2.	Ordination Loan	Up to 20% of current whole-time basic stipend (rounded to £10 above)
para		
6.3.	Retirement Removal Grant maximum allowed for removal cost	10% of current whole-time basic stipend (rounded to £10 above)

para		
7.	Pulpit Supply Fees (maximum refund per service) per service:-	
	where the Church contributions is up to £1,500p.a.	£4*
	where the contribution is in the range £1,500-£3,000p.a.	£8*
	where the contribution exceeds £3,000p.a.	£12*
	* plus reasonable travelling expenses.	
para		
11.4. &		
11.5.	Administrative charge per month	£3
para		
14.	Maximum weekly payments to students	£32
	Maximum weeks for which payment made	10

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT — APPENDIX 7

### The United Reformed Church Housing Association Limited

*Chairman:* Mr D. C. F. Haggis

*Vice-Chairman:* The Revd M. J. Davies

*General Manager:* Mr D. Jones

*Secretary:* Mr D. J. Rawson

1. Since the 1982 Assembly, the Association has made considerable progress in respect of both the local management and development programme aspects of its activities.
2. On the 1st April 1982 the Association's first Local Management Committee, based on the East Dulwich URC, took over responsibility for the management of St. James's Cloister. at Dulwich, a sheltered scheme for the elderly comprising 18 flats with a resident Warden. The Dulwich LMC which provides a pilot scheme on which the future management of all succeeding housing projects by the Association will be based, has proved extremely successful, a conclusion confirmed by the Housing Corporation in their Report on a Monitoring Visit to the Association in October 1982.
3. Following consultation between the Association and the Headquarters of the Housing Corporation, the Association was invited to extend its activities beyond the South East of England to two further regions of the Corporation, and the Committee of Management after very careful consideration in terms of priorities, opportunities and needs, decided to expand its involvement to the Wales and East Midlands Regions of the Housing Corporation. The Association hopes to have ongoing consultations with the Corporation with a view ultimately of operating throughout the country. Meanwhile, three of the four schemes which were allocated funds by the Housing Corporation in the 1982/83 programme have satisfied the Corporation's requirements on viability, and the Association is hopeful that the fourth scheme will also be approved. Authority is awaited for the expenditure of some £130,000 on Major Repairs to "Goodspeed" House, comprising nine flats built by the Association in 1929 at Poplar.
4. The Association's "bid" to the Housing Corporation for Capital Funding of 12 schemes within the 1983/84 programme amounts to nearly £6 million in respect of 217 units, together with £490,000 for actual development work at the Hither Green URC and Ray Lodge URC sites. The submission includes an application for £215,000 for Major Repairs to "Goodwill" House, a block of 15 flats at Poplar, which was built in 1931.
5. The acquisition of sites on behalf of the Association has not proceeded as quickly as had been anticipated and, in consequence, the Association, as yet, has received no Acquisition Allowances from the Corporation. Therefore, from the "cash flow" viewpoint, the

Association continues to be dependent on the interest free loans which various generous churches and individual members have kindly made available. Since many of these loans will terminate in 1984, further offers of sizeable short term interest free loans would be very welcome to maintain the Association's viability for the next 2 to 3 years.

---

## BUDGET COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* The Revd R. O. Latham

*Secretary:* Mr C. M. Frank

1. In presenting the Budget for 1984 the Committee wishes to express its thanks and appreciation to the churches which in this past year have made a significant increase in contributions, so that 9 of the Provinces have exceeded their targets and two others exceeded 95%. We see this as a sign of confidence and growth, for the Unified Appeal is the barometer of our concern for the wider life of the URC. It sets out responsibilities for Overseas Mission, for Social Responsibilities, for Ministerial Training and Education, for Mission at home and our ecumenical commitments, and by the gifts of each Church member enables us as the URC to meet them. Thanks be to God.
2. The Committee has noted a suggestion that all resolution presented to the General Assembly which involve expenditure in excess of that provided for in the current budgets should be accompanied by a reasonable estimate of the cost in the first year and the expected cost in subsequent years.
3. The Budget we have to consider at this Assembly is that for 1984. Following the decision of Assembly '82 we have made provision for the equivalent of six full-time Youth Leadership Training Officers, and have increased our contributions to the British Council of Churches. We have provided for the reorganisation of the Communication and Supplies section, which now includes the Bookroom and the general servicing of all Departments with regard to supplies and dispatch of goods.
4. We have noted with satisfaction the decrease in the national rate of inflation, but inasmuch as we are budgeting for 1984 we have taken a cautious line and allowed for salary increases of 5% in line with the MoM Committee. With regard to other costs, we have increased these by 5% 7% depending on the type of expenditure involved. This has resulted in a total budget figure of £1,260,000. It will require a contribution of £1,157,000 through the Unified Appeal, an increase of 5.2% over the amount required by the Budget for 1983. The Provincial Treasurers have indicated that such a figure would be acceptable.
5. The Detailed budgets will be published in the accounts booklet issued to Assembly members.
6. Let us keep up the good work and know the joy of making a gift of thanksgiving for the whole life and witness of our Church.

### RESOLUTIONS

1. Assembly receives the report of the Budget Committee.
  2. Assembly approves the budget for 1984 which provides for an expenditure of £1,260,000.
-

# COMMUNICATION AND SUPPLIES COMMITTEE

(formerly Publications and Publicity and Tavistock Bookshop)

*Chairman:* The Revd Edmund Banyard

*Secretary:* Percy Bush

1. We welcomed the Revd A. R. Forsyth to the Committee.
2. The Chairman completes his six years in office at the 1983 General Assembly. In view of proposals relating to URC Departments and the retirement of the Secretary, the Nominations Committee has been asked to re-appoint the Chairman until 1984.
3. After four years, the Editor of the Year Book, the Revd E. W. Todd, has expressed his wish to relinquish that responsibility as from the completion of the 1984 issue. Mr. Todd took on this onerous task as part of his service to the URC during his retirement. He brought to the task his considerable ability to handle and organise a great deal of detailed information. Many persons have noted the improvement in accuracy and timing of the operation. The Committee records its deep appreciation to Mr. Todd.

## **Administrative Services to Central Office**

4. These continue as essential back-up to the work of the departments. With the new arrangement for the accounts it should be possible to see the total cost of office supplies in one account.

## **The URC and the Media**

5. This has become an increasingly important area of activity during 1982, with consequent demands on staff time. Concern about new television channels, information outlets, involvement in local radio, and the possibilities presented by video, led to a request that the Publicity Group set up a special consultation on 'The URC and the Media'. Just over twenty representatives from the Publicity Group, Staff Secretaries and some engaged professionally in communication met for twenty-four hours.
6. The consultation presented several concerns and recommendations to the departments of the URC and to ecumenical bodies, and has sought the co-operation of District Secretaries, Provincial Moderators and Synod Clerks.
7. Among the issues raised are:-
  - (i) That there be use of and familiarisation with video in ministerial training;
  - (ii) That there be some introduction to involvement in local radio for theological students and that through in-service training encouragement be given for work in local radio;
  - (iii) That involvement in local radio should be seen as a valid ministry and in certain cases incorporated in 'scoping' of a ministry;
  - (iv) That church members be encouraged to recognize and develop their potential in local radio;
  - (v) That the use of video in training and promotion work especially in local house-groups be seriously explored.
  - (vi) That synods and districts be asked to consider the appointment of at least six 'media' training officers, giving at least one day per week.

Subsequent developments indicate that there may be need for selected persons to share in group work relating to pastoral care through the media.

8. After approval by the Executive Committee, the Committee is working on these recommendations in this new area of responsibility. It is hoped to include some informal video film making and viewing facilities as an interest feature at Assembly.

## **Ecumenical Service.**

9. These have continued as effectively as in recent years through the Religious Film and Filmstrip (and Video and Tapes) Reviewing Panel, through AVA Magazine and through



active membership of the British Churches' Committee on Channel Four.

### **Printing and Publishing Services**

10. Reform has one of the heaviest postbags in the office, which reflects the lively interest it creates among its readers. The failure of the Covenant for unity ended a major debate in its columns, but other topics quickly took its place, including responses to unemployment, Christian attitudes to abortion, the mission of rural churches, the use of new media of communication, the ways in which our ministers are called, concern for the poor, and the nuclear debate. Dozens of letters were written to a wife who wrote about the anguish of her husband's nervous depression. There are signs, though, that more of our people are losing the reading habit — and some then complain that they do not know what is going on. Reform is looking for ways to increase its readership. It has continued to be self-supporting financially.

11. Vigorous promotion of and publicity for Reform at local church level is essential and is an important part of mission and ministry. The long term Policy Review Group have considered the importance of Reform as part of the effort for effective communication. As from the July issue, Reform will be printed on better quality paper, and will have a high quality cover.

12. For the first time since 1972 there seems to be an easing back in the requirements for in-house printing. After regular increases for ten years, this is very welcome.

13. With the reorganisation of the Section, we introduced a new formula for charging for in-house printing, based on a multiple of cost of materials. With rising wages and salary costs, this may be slightly to the advantage of the departments. Given the new formula the charges totalled £12,348 compared with just over £13,000 in 1981. External printing handled on behalf of departments amounted to nearly £12,000.

14. The printing programme during 1982 included the *Year Book*, *The URC Diary*, *Being an Elder* (reprint), *Junior Work Handbook*, *The Covenant*, *Good News for the Poor*, *Health and Healing Kit* (reprint), *Who Are They?*, 1% Appeal Leaflets and Posters, *Alcohol Abuse, Equipped to Teach* (course book), *In Hospital* (reprint), *Preparing Today for Tomorrow's Ministry*, *Youth Leaders' Training Course*.

Income from many of the above publications is credited to the initiating department.

15. Congregational Praise still sells well although it is now thirty years since it was launched. Substantial reprinting costs could arise within a year or so.

16. An annual publication by and for the URC will be launched with a book on worship by the Revd Bernard Thorogood. We hope the book will appeal to a large number of URC members and worshippers; it will be available before Christmas at an attractive price and marketed mainly through the URC for members to buy for themselves and to give to others.

### **Distribution Services**

17. During 1982, we centralised all former departmental distribution operations. It is not possible to calculate the number of extra orders/requests which have been handled within Distribution and Supplies because of that, but when put alongside the response to the regular issue of updated catalogues and regular advertising in Reform the turn-round of orders has risen to nearly 7,000 and gross receipts have risen from £93,571 to nearly £117,000. Mrs. Lynette Field has continued to apply her skills with considerable expertise not only in organisation but in transferring information to the URC computer.

18. The Information Service is the regular official communication medium between Central Office and local churches. There are now two major mailings, one in June and one in November, with a 'mini'-mailing in January if required. Information Service packs are normally sent to Church Secretaries. They now contain three groups of material — 'For Action', 'For Discussion', 'For Information'. Extra packs are available by subscription, £3 per year.

### **Finance**

19. It will be noted that the URC Accounts include only summary information. This section's entry will be found under General Fund (Page 8). Some members of Assembly will

be interested in the major income and expenditure which are compressed into that summary. They include, in round figures:-

(i) Reform		
Total income, including subscriptions and advertising revenue		£66,300
Total expenditure, including salaries, printing, postage, etc.		£57,300
Approx. margin taken into General Fund Statement		<u>£ 9,000</u>
(ii) Publishing and Retailing operations		
Gross income:	Non-URC items/publications	£62,225
	URC items (Year Books, Diaries, Congregational Praise, Departmental items)	£54,713
		<u>£116,938</u>
Expenditure:	Non-URC items/publications	£ 55,000
	Costs regarding major URC non-departmental items/publications	£ 21,534
		<u>£ 76,534</u>

There are stock adjustment figures which partially offset the above.

20. It should be noted also that under the reorganisation, Communication and Supplies has absorbed all postage costs for distribution of free material. This has reduced postage in 'Central Office Costs' by over £1,000 compared with 1981 and kept that item £4,000 below budget provision. The 'net cost' of the section is shown as £21,000.

### Local Activity

21. Inevitably, the outworking of 'Communication and Supplies' involves a great deal of routine and practical work — planning, editing, printing, purchasing, selling, distributing. The Committee members and staff of the section are mindful of the other dimension of their work, for which there is all too little time and resources, i.e. stimulating and developing local and regional activities in the business of communicating. A series of 'Communication Leaflets' has been launched. These appear twice per year in the Information Service.

22. But how do we stimulate, develop, or even know about local radio involvement or workshops, local training events in church magazine production, audio-visuals, local relations with the press, and all the other facets of communication, now including video, and soon, cable television?

23. To tackle these areas of concern, so as to make some impact requires expertise, manpower and resources. We have made a very modest bid for such resources for 1984 — but these will provide only a few hours **clerical** back-up for whatever can be arranged or squeezed from present staff time or supplied by further voluntary service.

### Percy Bush

24. Percy Bush retires on 17th September, 1983, having served in Church House since the inception of the URC. He was recruited to the Central Offices staff of the Congregational Church in 1967, primarily for his experience in the field of audio-visuals, but he soon found that his main work lay in other directions. Although in recent years he has assumed an increasing responsibility for all that comes under the heading of the Church and the Media, he has principally been concerned with the preparation and distribution of the Church's publications. Here he has brought to a job in which there was frequently more paper than people, his faith and commitment as a Christian playing a full part in his local church community. The Committee invites the Assembly to place on record its indebtedness to him.

### RESOLUTIONS

1. The assembly receives the report of the Communication and Supplies Committee.
2. The Assembly requests the respective Committees, Departments, Provinces and churches to note the issues raised by the Consultation on the URC and the Media,

as set out in 7(i) to 7(vi) and actively to seek ways to implement them.

3. The Assembly places on record its indebtedness to Mr. Percy Bush for his work as Secretary for Communication and Supplies (formerly Publications and Publicity). It would particularly emphasise his consistent work to improve the preparation and distribution of the Church's publications. The Assembly wishes him well in his retirement.
-

## THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 1982

1. At its 1982 Annual Meeting in Bristol the Society heard a lecture by Dr Pennar Davies on the subject of "Eighteenth Century Welsh Hymnody". It was good to hear Dr Davies, especially in the sympathetic surroundings of an eighteenth century room at the New Room, Bristol. A new pattern of Lecture will be given at a Study Day or Week-end each autumn, while the Annual Meeting will continue to be held at the time and place of the Assembly. It is our hope that each Annual Meeting will be followed by talks or other presentations of the history of the URC in the place where the Assembly is held. This should be of general interest to members of Assembly, who would be invited to attend.

2. A very enjoyable Study Weekend was held at Trefeca in September. All places were booked. Apart from lectures and talks by members and guests, visits were made to places of interest in the locality, both in search of Dissenting Academics and "in the steps of Howel Harris". Sunday morning worship was shared with the congregation of the picturesque and ancient Meeting House at Maesyronnen. It was good to see a strong representation from Wales itself at the meeting. We are planning our 1983 study day at the Congregational College, Manchester on Saturday October 29th.

3. The work in the Library has continued steadily and has concentrated on improving the cataloguing of our holdings of books and archives, for the better retrieval of information. Most of our enquiries continue to be genealogical and biographical. We have been very glad to receive copies of local church histories as they are published and items from the central administration. In addition to small artefacts we are now acquiring tape, film and slides.

4. Steps taken by the Council to contain our expenditure have been effective and our finances are sounder than a few years ago. We need to maintain membership at the present levels and continue to attract welcome gifts from friends for this to continue to be the case. New promotional material for recruiting members is available from the Library and Provincial representatives.

5. It continues to be a matter of amazement and gratitude that the Society achieves so much with such slender financial resources. We are indebted to all the volunteers who work for the Society and our many friends around the country who serve our common interest in church history.

## SCHOOLS LINKED WITH THE URC

1. Eltham College and Walthamstow Hall, Sevenoaks (the Schools for Missionaries' children) have joined the Three Schools Committee of Caterham, Silcoates and Wentworth Milton Mount, making it now 5 schools, linked with the URC.
2. The numbers of Ministers' and Missionaries' children in September 1982 were: Caterham 15, Silcoates 15, Wentworth Milton Mount 16, Eltham 8, and Walthamstow Hall 9.
3. Milton Mount Foundation continues to give generous help for most of the above children of ministers but, as reported last year, has had to discontinue for the time being assistance for new entrants at Caterham and Silcoates. It is important, however, that Ministers should know that Caterham and Silcoates are ready and willing to make up the loss of the Foundation grant for new entrants.

### Caterham

4. In September, 1982, there was a record number of 679 pupils in the Main and Preparatory Schools (8-18) — namely, 188 boarders and 491 day pupils, including 25 girls in the Sixth Form of 174. The Government Assisted Places Scheme applies to the School.
5. On the academic side, the A-level results were pleasing and the top 23 boys gained distinctions in the more advance Special papers taken. This year also a number of places were gained at Oxford and Cambridge, including 3 Awards.
6. Two valued members of staff left after July: Mr G. A. Ireland, the Director of Music for 11 years, and the Revd R. D. Robinson, our first Chaplain, who after 6 years at Caterham is now Minister of <sup>Oxford</sup> Oxford URC. The new Chaplain is the Revd R. W. Lewis, MA, BSc, who came to us having served as a missionary in India and then a teacher at Norwich High School. Mr. A. D. Leach, BA, B.Mus, the new Director of Music was a Music Scholar at King's College, Cambridge and comes to us having taught at Merchant Taylor's School, Northwood.
7. The Boarders' Choir has sung at a number of URC and other churches and there was a most successful recital at the Purcell Room, Festival Hall, London
8. Mr. J. R. Hawkins is now in his second year as Headmaster of the Preparatory School which continues to thrive in its happy family atmosphere. With aid from the Parents' Association, new tennis courts, library improvements and computers have been provided.
9. Mr. J. C. Hall, JP, MA, LLB, Senior Tutor and Admissions Tutor for St. John's College and member of Emmanuel Church, Cambridge, has joined the Board of Governors.

### Silcoates

10. The School was very pleased to be able to offer its facilities for the Yorkshire Province's Family Day which was held at Silcoates for the first time in June. It is estimated that 3,500 visitors from all parts of the country were present to take advantage of the multitude of activities that had been arranged, and it was a great pleasure to be able to welcome so many friends, new and old, to the School.
11. Two Governors who have given outstanding service to the School have retired this year. Mr. Ralph Sweeting after 46 and Mr. Jack Elsom after 33 years' service. Dr. J. C. G. Binfield, the representative of the General Assembly, has been elected Vice-Chairman of the Board, and other additions to its membership this year are Revd Alan Gaunt, an Old Silcoatian, representing the Mersey Province, and Revd Brenda Willis.
12. The Governors have opened Sunny Hill House School as a Pre-Preparatory School for boys and girls between the ages of 3½ and 7, and the Chairman of its Board of Management is Mr. J. E. M. Gilbey. At the beginning of its third term, numbers in the School have reached 50.

### **Wentworth Milton Mount**

14. 1982 brought the retirement in July of the Headmistress, Miss. N. A. E. Hibbert, after 21 years at the school which she served with dedication and distinction. The expanded and modernised facilities bear witness to her insight, and generations of girls have benefitted from her clear guidance. At Speech Day, after other presentations, the whole school joined in singing to her a setting of Aaron's Blessing specially composed by a member of staff for the occasion.

15. The new Headmistress, Miss. M. Vokins, MA (Oxon), has taught in a variety of schools in this country, France and the USA and, like Miss Hibbert, is an Elder of the URC.

16. The normal pattern of academic work, extra curricular activities (including the school play "As You Like It") and outings, has continued throughout the year. The Upper Sixth distinguished itself by producing 5 girls destined for Medical School.

17. In May, the first representative Conference of these three schools linked with the URC took place at Wentworth Milton Mount. There were three visiting speakers: Revd Iorwerth Thomas considered The Relationship of our Schools with the World Church; Mr Laurie Campbell, Headmaster of Kingswood School and Chairman of HMC Bloxham Project on Religious Studies in Schools, posed the question "What is a Christian School?", and Revd John MacKelvie, Minister of Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, discussed The Relationship between our Schools and the Local Churches.

---

# STANDING ORDERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

1.

## The Agenda of the Assembly

At its meetings the Assembly shall consider reports and draft resolutions prepared by its Departments and Committees, resolutions submitted by Provincial Synods, and resolutions and amendments of which due notice has been given submitted by individual members of the Assembly.

The Business Committee shall prepare, before each meeting of the Assembly, a Draft Order of Business, and submit it to the Assembly as early as convenient in the programme.

The resolutions arising from any report or section thereof shall be taken in the following order:

- (i) resolutions of the Department or Committee of which due notice has been given,
- (ii) any relevant Synod resolutions,
- (iii) duly seconded resolutions submitted by individual members of the Assembly.

If notice has been given of two or more resolutions on the same subject, or two or more amendments to the same resolution, these shall be taken in the order decided by the Moderator on the advice of the General Secretary.

2.

## Presentation of Business

- 2a. All reports of Departments and Committees, together with the draft resolutions arising therefrom, shall be delivered to the General Secretary by a date to be annually determined, so that they may be printed and circulated to members in time for consideration before the date of the Assembly meeting.
- 2b. 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. This notice should include the names of those appointed to propose and second the motion at the Assembly. If the motion introduces new business to the Assembly, the Synod may, subject to the agreement of the General Secretary and the Chairman of the Business Committee and at its own expense, circulate a statement in support.
- 2c. A local church or District Council wishing to put forward a motion for consideration by the General Assembly shall submit the motion to its Provincial Synod for consideration and, if thought fit, transmission to the Assembly, at such time as will enable the Synod to comply with Standing Order 2b. above. In the case of a local church the motion must be submitted to the Synod through the District Council.
- 2d. 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 a notice in writing of a motion (which notice must include the name of a seconder) to be included in the Assembly agenda. If the subject matter of such a 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 which shall advise the Assembly as to the procedure to be followed.

3.

## Resolutions

- 3a. When a report has been presented to the Assembly the first motion on the report shall be "That this Report be received for debate". On this being passed, and before any consequent recommendations are proposed, any member may speak to a matter arising from the report which is not the subject of a motion. It shall not be in order to move an amendment or a reference back motion to this motion. The passing of

this motion shall not be deemed to commit the Assembly to the acceptance of any matter contained in the report.

- 3b. During a meeting of the Assembly and on the report of a Department or a Committee, notice (including the names of proposer and seconder) shall be given to the General Secretary of any new resolutions which arise from the material of the report, and of any amendments which affect the substance of resolutions already presented. The Moderator shall decide whether such resolution or amendment requires to be circulated in writing to members before it is discussed by the Assembly. During the course of a debate a new motion or amendment may be stated orally without supporting speech in order to ascertain whether a member is willing to second it.
- 3c. No motion or amendment shall be spoken to by its proposer, debated, or put to the Assembly unless it is known that there is a seconder, 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.
- 3d. A seconder may, if he/she then declares the intention of doing so, reserve his/her speech until a later period in the debate.
- 3e. It shall not be in order to move a resolution or amendment which:
  - i. contravenes any part of the Basis of Union, or
  - ii. involves the Church in expenditure without prior consideration by the appropriate committee, or
  - iii. pre-empts discussion of a matter to be considered later in the agenda, or
  - iv. infringes a decision reached by the Assembly within the preceding two years, or
  - v. is not related to the report of a Department or Committee and has not been subject of 21 days' notice under 2d.The decision of the Moderator on the application of this Standing Order shall be final.
- 3f. 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.
- 3g. 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.
- 3h. An amendment which has been moved and seconded shall be disposed of before any further amendment may be moved, but notice may be given of intention to move a further amendment should the one before the Assembly be rejected.
- 3i. The mover may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly, alter a motion or amendment he/she has proposed.
- 3j. 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 to withdraw unless such permission shall have been refused.

#### 4. **Speeches**

- 4a. Speeches made in presentation of the report and resolutions of any Department and its committees shall not in aggregate exceed 45 minutes, and speeches made in support of the report and resolutions of any other non-departmental committee having direct access to the Assembly shall not in aggregate exceed 20 minutes, save by the prior agreement of the Business Committee. The proposers of any other motion of



which due notice has been given shall be allowed an aggregate of 10 minutes, unless a longer period be recommended by the Business Committee or determined by the Moderator. Each subsequent speaker in the debate shall be allowed 5 minutes unless the Moderator shall determine otherwise.

- 4b. When a speech is made on behalf of a Department or Committee, it shall be so stated. Otherwise a speaker shall begin by stating his name and accreditation to the Assembly.
- 4c. Secretaries of Standing Committees and full-time officers of Departments who are not members of the 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.
- 4d. 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 or the amendment, as the case may be, shall have the right of reply, but must strictly confine himself/herself to answering previous speakers and must not introduce new matter. Such reply shall close the debate on the motion or the amendment.
- 4e. The foregoing Standing Order (4d) shall not prevent the asking or answering of a question which arises from the matter before the Assembly or from a speech made in the debate upon it.

## **5. Closure of Debate**

- 5a. In the course of the business any member may move that "The question under consideration be not put". Sometimes described as "the previous question" or "next business", this resolution takes precedence of every motion before the Assembly and as soon as the member has explained his/her reasons for proposing it, and it has been seconded, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that such a motion is an unfair use of the rules of the Assembly. Should the motion be carried the business shall immediately end and the Assembly proceed to the next business.
- 5b. In the course of any discussion, it is competent for any member to move that the question be now put. This is sometimes described as "the closure motion". 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 it has been seconded. When an amendment is under discussion, this 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 or amendment as the case may be retains the right of reply before the vote is taken on the motion or amendment.
- 5c. The resolutions described in Standing Orders 5a. and 5b. above are exceptions to Standing Order 3c., in that they may be moved and spoken to without the proposer having first obtained and announced the consent of a seconder. They must, however, be seconded before being put to the vote.

## **6. Voting**

- 6a. Voting on any resolution whose effect is to alter, add to, modify or supersede the Basis, the Structure and any other form or expression of the polity and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church, is governed by paragraph 9(5)(xi) of the Basis of Union (cf. The Manual).
- 6b. Unless the Assembly decides that there shall be a ballot, every other question shall be determined by a majority of the votes of members of the Assembly present and voting as indicated by a show of hands.
- 6c. To provide for voting in the case of a paper ballot, and to assist in taking a count of

votes when the Moderator decides that is necessary, the Nominations Committee shall appoint Tellers for each Assembly.

**7. Questions**

- 7a. A member may, if two clear days' notice in writing has been given to the General Secretary, ask the Moderator or the Chairman of any Department or 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.
- 7b. A member may, when given opportunity by the Moderator, ask the presenter of any report before the Assembly a question seeking additional information or explanation relating to matters contained within the report.
- 7c. Questions asked under Standing Orders 7a. and 7b. shall be put and answered without discussion.

**8. Points of Order, Personal Explanations, Dissent**

- 8a. A member shall have the right to rise in his/her place and call attention to a point of order, and immediately on his/her doing so any other member addressing the Assembly shall cease speaking until the Moderator has determined the question of order. The decision on any point of order rests entirely with the Moderator. Any member calling to order unnecessarily is liable to the censure of the Assembly.
- 8b. A member feeling that some material part of a former speech by him/her at the same meeting has been misunderstood or is being grossly misinterpreted by a later speaker may rise in his/her place and request the Moderator's permission to make a personal explanation. If the Moderator so permits, a member so rising shall be entitled to be heard forthwith.
- 8c. The right to record in the minutes a dissent from any decision of the Assembly shall only be granted to a member by the Moderator if the reason stated, either verbally at the time or later in writing, appears to him/her to fall within the provisions of paragraph 7(10) of the Basis of Union.
- 8d. The decision of the Moderator on a point of order, or on the admissibility of a personal explanation, or on the right to have a dissent recorded, shall not be open to discussion.

**9. Admission of Public and Press**

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.

**10. Circulation of Documents**

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

**11. Records of the Assembly**

- 11a. A record of attendance at the meetings of the Assembly shall be kept in such manner as the Executive Committee may determine.
- 11b. The minutes of each day's proceedings, in duplicated form, shall be circulated on the following day and normally, after any necessary correction, approved at the opening of the afternoon session. The minutes of the closing day of the Assembly shall normally be submitted at the close of the business and, after any necessary correction, approved.

- 11c. A signed copy of the minutes shall be preserved in the custody of the General Secretary as the official record of the Assembly's proceedings.
- 11d. As soon as possible after the Assembly meeting ends, the substance of the minutes together with any other relevant papers shall be published as a "Record of Assembly" and a copy sent to every member of the Assembly, each Synod, District Council and local church.

**12. Suspension and Amendment of Standing Orders**

- 12a. In any case of urgency or upon motion made on a notice duly given, any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting so far as regards any business at such a meeting, provided that three-fourths of the members of Assembly present and voting shall so decide.
  - 12b. Resolutions to amend the Standing Orders shall be referred to the Business Committee for report before being voted on by the Assembly (or in case of urgency, by the Executive Committee). The Business Committee may itself from time to time suggest amendments to the Standing Orders, which shall be subject to decision by the Assembly.
-





