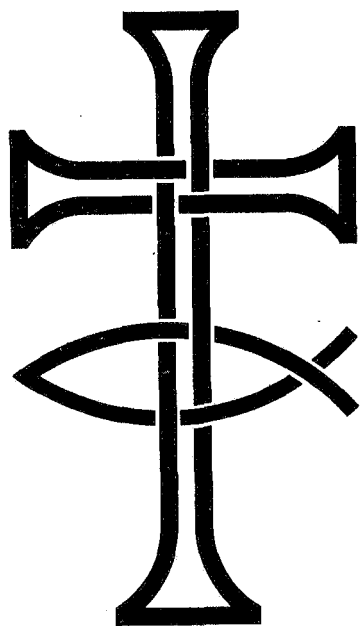

The United Reformed Church
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
1990**

May 14th - 18th

WOLVERHAMPTON

REPORTS

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THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd A J Wells

Secretary: Mr H L Gunn

1. I am grateful to the secretary and all members of the committee for their attendance, thought and contributions to our meetings over another year. The result of some of our deliberations can be seen in the following paragraphs.

2. The committee has considered what is meant by the phrase *to receive a report for debate* and concludes that a) no acceptance of the content of that report is implied and b) no amendment of the report is possible at that stage. However, if the Assembly is asked to adopt, accept or approve a part or the whole of the report, then it can be amended from the floor or may be referred back to the committee which produced it. Ideally, and to avoid any misunderstanding, those parts of a report whose adoption, acceptance or approval are being sought should be reproduced within the text of the appropriate motion. Practically, exact reference to the body of the report will be sufficient as long as Assembly understands that the passage under consideration may now be amended.

3. The committee has given a lot of thought to the practicalities of voting and the counting of votes at Assembly, following concern expressed by one Province. We are sure that it is not necessary for every vote to be taken by ballot, but we understand the concern and therefore propose to Assembly the adoption of an amendment to Standing Order 6b. (**Resolution 2**)

4. General Assembly 1991 will be held from 29 April to 3 May in the Forum Conference Hall of the English Riviera Centre, Torquay, in the South Western Province.

5. The committee has reflected carefully upon last year's residential Assembly and considered the questionnaires which members returned. The overwhelming majority opinion was favourable and we therefore propose that another residential Assembly be held in 1992 at York. The format would be similar to that of last year but consideration will be given in detail to the *sectional meetings* about which some dissatisfaction was expressed. Financing will also be on a similar basis, i.e. with the Unified Appeal meeting the usual costs including travel, and Provincial Synods meeting the balance in ways which seem appropriate to them. (**Resolution 3**)

6. We are grateful to the Revd Tony Coates and all who have contributed to the revision of the Manual in inclusive language. This is distributed as a separate publication with this book of Reports and the amendments concern inclusive language only. The changes are shown in italics and help us to fulfil the Assembly resolution of 1984 which stated *The Assembly asks Departments and Committees to take steps to ensure that all future publications use inclusive language.* (p22, Record of Assembly 1984) No exercise by the General Assembly of the function of constitutional amendment shall have effect unless the procedures detailed in Section 10 of the Manual are followed. It is necessary, therefore, for Resolution 4 a) to be passed by a majority of two-thirds of the members present and voting on this occasion, and by a simple majority at next year's General Assembly.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the report be received for debate.
2. Assembly agrees to amend Standing Order 6b (Manual p79) to read:
 - 6b. Motions before the Assembly shall be determined by a majority of the votes of members of the Assembly present and voting as indicated by a show of voting cards, except
 - a) if the Assembly decides before the vote that a paper ballot be the method of voting,

or
 - b) if, the show of cards indicating a very close vote, the Moderator decides or a member of Assembly proposes and the Assembly agrees that a paper ballot be taken.
3. Assembly agrees
 - a) to hold a further residential Assembly in 1992.
 - b) that the venue shall be the University of York.²
 - c) that the dates shall be Saturday 4 July to Tuesday 7 July 1992.
4.
 - a) Assembly approves the amendments to the Manual, indicated by italics in the document circulated with the book of Reports.
 - b) Assembly refers the amendments so approved to Provincial Synods and sets the date of 31 December 1990 for any Synod to resolve that these amendments *be not proceeded with*. [Manual 10(i)e]

MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT

Convener: Revd Anthony G. Burnham
Secretary: Revd Michael G. Dunford

INTRODUCTION

1. Whilst detailed work is attended to by our main committees and their specialised sub-committees, it is through the coming together of Provincial representatives and committee officers in the cut and thrust of regular debate that the Department sets its priorities and agrees policy. The following reports reflect the pattern and our methods of working. **(Resolution 1)**

SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Peter J Brain
Secretary: Revd Michael C Diffey

2. The agenda of this committee is perhaps best described as that remaining when the more clearly defined tasks of the other two standing committees are taken away. Thus we deal with some policy matters affecting ministers in general and some affecting specific groups, with some matters of personal support and some of statistical overview.

3. Certain specialist ministries necessarily have their own individual representation on our committee. In addition to enquiries directed to the Department, any person so named in this report is willing to be consulted.

United Board

4. The United Board (UB) which oversees URC and Baptist chaplaincies in the armed services remains in touch with the committee through correspondence with its Secretary, Philip Schofield. He reports a complement of 13 UB chaplains, of whom 5 are URC ministers, including Revd Jackie Petrie in the RAF, the first woman chaplain in post since the war. There are 4 probable vacancies for URC ministers, 2 in the Navy and 2 in the RAF; a recruitment leaflet was circulated by the Board.

Industrial Mission

5. The link with the world of Industrial Mission, a responsibility shared with Church & Society Department, is kept by having a serving industrial chaplain, Tina Pinnell, on the committee and by our contact with the Churches Consortium on Industrial Mission, through which we receive advice over applications for new IM posts and renewals of existing ones.

6. Currently 7 URC ministers are working in IM full-time with MOM funding which is also given to a further 5 IM posts; together this represents around 20% of our financial support for 'special' ministries. There are at least 15 other URC ministers, probably more, who do some IM work part-time, paid or unpaid. It would be good to have more people sharing in the URC 'Urban-Industrial Mission Network' and its conference each November.

Chaplaincy in Higher and Further Education

7. Chaplaincy in Higher and Further Education continues to have a high priority even though the sub-committee formerly responsible for this work has been discharged, with many thanks especially to Sally Abbot who served as convener. Kevin Swaine remains as Co-ordinator for these chaplaincies, offering a link and a support.

8. Currently 5 URC ministers are working in Higher Education chaplaincy full-time with MOM funding which is given to a further 8 posts; together this also represents around 20% of our financial support for 'special' ministries. But most HE and FE chaplaincy work is done by local ministers based in pastorates and again we thank them for this 'extra mile'. The student link-up scheme was widely used again this year; it remains very important for referrals to be made promptly - November is too late.

9. There have been moves during the year to co-ordinate chaplaincy support across denominations and this committee would wish to see it done on a fully ecumenical basis, developing the existing Liaison Group (CHELG) into an effective instrument for this purpose, which is how we interpret the commitments made during the Inter-Church Process. However it is also being proposed within the Free Church Federal Council that a Free Church appointment be considered, sponsored by the national FCFC, alongside existing Anglican and Roman Catholic structures. As is evident in other contexts, this alternative will not be easy to resolve and we shall work at it during the year.

Ministries in the Community

10. The sub-committee responsible for Ministries in the Community, represented on this committee by their convener Ernest Cruchley, inevitably spends most of its time on the Church-Related Community Worker (CRCW) programme. Currently 6 CRCWs are in post (one half-time) paid from the MOM Fund following Assembly resolution in 1987; 2 students will complete training in 1990. A major review of this programme is now underway, with a report due to come to Assembly in 1992. The first consultation was held in September 1989 when it was agreed to appoint a part-time fieldworker, Jean Sames of Westhill College, to interview past and present CRCWs and others and report to a second consultation in June 1990. We are very grateful to the Paul S Cadbury Trust for funding this review.

11. The sub-committee recognises the problems involved in establishing CRCW posts, not least because of the need to raise substantial local costs as with other ministries. There are also problems (over deployment, training, etc) which result directly from the small size of the programme. We are keen to reiterate our belief in church-related community work as a necessary element in contemporary mission, primarily though not solely in urban priority areas. Such work is of course not limited to the CRCW programme and we are keen to offer guidance, if not paid staff, to churches and Districts who are interested in this field.

Community Churches Consultation

12. We commend the biennial Community Churches Consultation, to be held at Salford on June 27/28 1990. The theme this time is 'Engaging with the Powerful'.

The Churches Community Work Alliance

13. The Community Work Resource Unit of the British Council of Churches is due to cease operations in the summer of 1990. Lengthy discussions about an appropriate successor body have led to a proposal for The Churches Community Work Alliance. Its objectives are:

- a) to embody community work into the life and mission of the churches;
- b) to develop theological insights relevant to the church's involvement in community and to long-term social and economic change;
- c) to encourage and develop good community work practice; and
- d) to provide support to community work projects and community work practitioners.

14. The Alliance will be a distinct trust body owned by the denominations and ecumenical bodies yet retaining a necessary measure of independence. The plan is to employ two or three people and to raise the equivalent of another salary to be spent on regional development projects. The Department has consulted with the budget committee and an item has been placed in the budget for 1991 which will pay the contribution sought from the URC.

Ministers in Secular Employment

15. As reported last year, there are at least 112 ministers in secular employment among those listed in the Roll either as 'D' or as Auxiliaries ('A'). Their circumstances vary greatly but, by and large, they appear to feel that their workplace ministry goes unrecognized by the church, which finds it hard to distinguish it from that of a similarly-employed committed lay person. They have little training and less support to meet what is often expected of them by colleagues at work. We also feel it important to keep those among them who would be eligible to be called, informed of vacancies in the pastoral ministry while at the same time strengthening the church's recognition of their workplace ministry.

16. This committee will therefore try to keep in direct contact with ministers in secular employment and will circulate an appropriate mailing at least once a year. We have written to urge Districts to ensure that those who organise fraternal (or equivalent) avoid where possible the effective exclusion of those in secular employment. It is important for the councils of the church to have the benefit of the training and experience of these ministers.

Pre-Retirement Course

17. Following a highly successful pre-retirement course for ministers and spouses in 1988, it was repeated, again at Windermere, in 1989; such was the demand that a supplementary course was needed in March 1990. Attention has been given to housing, personal finance and pensions, health and well-being, as well as more general approaches to adjusting to retirement. The Department and the Windermere Centre, as joint organizers, now plan to run these valuable courses annually.

Employment Practice

18. In 1988 Assembly welcomed the Report 'Employment Practice in the United Reformed Church' and invited District Councils in particular, and others who wished, to respond by June 30, 1989. In the event only 34 responses were submitted, 14 from Districts. The working party had to decide whether silence on the part of the majority implied general agreement, general disagreement or a deep determination to take no notice and make no changes. One District described the Report 'excellent and most helpful', another called it 'tendentious and questionable'.

19. However, we dare to assume that the church will welcome more or less firm guidance on certain procedures and practices, which is why the working party has carried on to turn some of the recommendations into resolutions before Assembly. We are seeking national acceptance of what is best, while recognizing valid reasons for variation.

20. The working party has chosen not to revise the complete text of the Report, though there are a number of changes that might have gone into a second edition. References in parenthesis here refer to the Report as printed in Reports to Assembly 1988 and published separately by the Ministries Department; for convenience this is reprinted as **Appendix I**.

21. There is no such thing as a normal pastorate; we have tried to frame resolutions which will apply to groups, teams and other joint pastorates as well as offering help in ecumenical situations.

22. We are aware that several bodies have put into practice the suggestion made by the General Secretary in his introduction to the Report, that 'you may find that to read this Report alongside your present way of working reveals certain gaps in what your church or District Council is doing and you may decide that those gaps could be dealt with straight away'. We hope this further report and debate will encourage this process within the councils of the church.

23. We are grateful to the members of this working party for their efforts over some years and for this final, still unanimous, report. **(Resolution 2)**

Taking it further

24. The remit was to consider the position of full-time stipendiary ministers. We believe that almost all these provisions ought to apply to part-time stipendiary ministers and that many of them should be taken seriously when the appointment of non-stipendiary ministers to pastorates is being made. The Ministries Department will be producing guide-lines for applying the principles of the Report to these ministries.

Vacancies

25. Several correspondents challenged the Report's order of events leading up to the declaration of a vacant pastorate and the start of the search for a minister; the revision of paragraph 2.2.5 in Note A makes the same points as in the Report but is now more of a check-list than a timetable.

26. In the matter of filling a vacancy, while recognizing a great variety of situations, we wish to affirm not only that certain things are done but also that they are done in the best order.

27. The Ministries Department will be producing a paper on the role and duties of the Interim Moderator. (2.2.6)

28. We again commend the procedure for introducing husband and wife ministers to separate pastorates. (2.3.8/9) **(Resolution 3)**

Variation

29. In the Report the working party wrote: 'We believe that a District Council should be free to attempt rescoping of a pastorate, regrouping churches or otherwise reorganising its ministerial resources, other than when a minister leaves, retires or dies'. (2.4.1) Two Districts felt this power already existed; another threatened that 'any attempt to go down this road would require more than a simple resolution of Assembly'.

30. Nevertheless we feel that a more flexible use of resources is a prerequisite for a living, mission-minded church. It will be extremely rare for such a policy to be developed by a District Council without the support of the minister in post, but we invite Assembly to establish their authority to do so. **(Resolution 4)**

Costs and Expenses

31. In the 'Plan for Partnership' the United Reformed Church has sought to establish the principle that ministry is provided on the basis of need while the costs are shared on the basis of ability to pay. In recent years the sum required to meet the locally-borne costs of ministry has risen substantially. This has had the effect of undermining that principle, with the result that ability to meet local costs has become a major criterion in the scoping of pastorates. We have therefore written to the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee asking that their working party on ministerial stipends should consider how the rising costs of the various categories of locally-borne ministerial expenses might be better shared within the United Reformed Church.

32. There is a second, distinct problem. Part 3 of the Report gives some of the findings of our questionnaire about the differing levels of ministerial expenses being paid across the country. As a result, we believe it is right to seek some means of checking on the four key elements payable (travel costs, heat and light, manse maintenance and general administration expenses). We have amended the earlier specific recommendation for a Personnel Secretary, though in some Districts this will be the means chosen to fulfil what is at heart a question of relationships and trust. **(Resolution 5)**

Other financial matters

33. The view of the Maintenance of the Ministry committee is that a national car loan scheme would be 'very costly, both in financial and administrative terms'; we are bringing no resolution. Nor are we able to offer general guidance as to the balance of advantage as between church-owned and minister-owned vehicles. (3.4.2)

34. On the matter of an additional grant at ordination to enable the purchase of office furniture and equipment, we note that the Maintenance of the Ministry committee declines to change the present arrangement, whereby a standard Resettlement Grant (12% of stipend) is paid and an Ordination Loan (20% of stipend) made available interest-free over 5 years. (3.3.3)

35. On the matter of travel costs we remind pastorates with non-motoring ministers of their obligation to meet the full cost of travel (including some by taxi fares as well as by bicycle). We believe it is important for mileage rates to be more equitable across the country and welcome the decision of the Maintenance of the Ministry committee to publish annually a set of recommended mileage rates. (3.4.3/4)

Pregnancy

36. Since writing the Report the working party discovered that the present practice of the Maintenance of the Ministry committee is to offer pregnant ministers the choice of either carrying on with minimum disruption of work or taking formal maternity leave, with the agreement of the pastorate. The stipend is maintained, though in the latter case the pastorate cannot reclaim pulpit supply fees. Alternatively, the minister can choose to resign and the vacancy be handled in the usual way, saving that special consideration will be given to occupancy of the manse and that an ex-gratia payment is made from the Fund to compensate for the non-availability of some state maternity benefit. This generally acceptable policy may need to be complemented by greater support of the minister in person.

37. Having received several comments, the suggested timescales for consultation and decision following a birth have been amended.

38. Several respondents pointed out that the demands made on ministers who are new fathers should also be relaxed. **(Resolution 6)**

In-Service Training and Support

39. In the Report the working party expressed a wish to see some element of obligation in In-service training as well as an awareness that the present system needed an overhaul to ensure greater take-up. We agree, but point out that there would be financial and administrative consequences of more in-service training being done. Therefore, the Ministries Department will hold a review of In-Service Training provision, including consideration of the role of Provincial In-Service Training Officers and In-Service Training financing, and will report to Assembly.

40. When it comes to the evaluation or appraisal of ministry we judge that there is more work required to enable even preliminary consultations to take place. The Ministries Department will circulate information on the matter. (2.5.1/5)

Equal Opportunities

41. We are aware that a resolution such as we are bringing may be a cause for contention within the United Reformed Church. One correspondent regarded the conviction that men and women are equal partners in ministry as 'a foundation-stone of the United Reformed Church'. We agree and reaffirm paragraphs 4.4.1-5 of the Report. **(Resolution 7)**

Grievance

42. It should be the policy of the church both in matters of discipline and grievance to avoid a legalistic framework. Case law in this field as it applies to ministers is uncertain. This proposal for a relatively informal procedure should not be confused with the provision for appeals as between councils of the church. **(Resolution 8)**

NOTE A (a revision of 2.2.5 in the report)

Declaring a Vacancy

The best current practice in declaring a ministerial vacancy contains the following elements. **The order and timing of events will vary according to circumstance.**

(NB: 'District Council' here implies 'or the appropriately authorised committee or officers of District'; District procedure needs to be clearly agreed and understood on such matters, including who can give concurrence to calls.

Similarly, 'Elders' stands for the equivalent group in an ecumenical or 'special category' ministry situation).

1 The minister informs the Elders of receipt of a call to another post or other reason for leaving; normally three months' notice of a move is given. At the same time, the move is referred to District Council.

2 District Council initiates discussion with the pastorate with a view to appointing an Interim Moderator (or sometimes more than one to churches in a joint pastorate). The role and duties of Interim Moderator(s) should be clearly defined.

3 District Council arranges one or more meetings with the Elders and the Provincial Moderator to discuss the question of the scoping of the vacant pastorate.

4 The pastorate prepares a 'PASTORATE PROFILE'. In a joint/shared or ecumenical situation a job description is also prepared.

5 The pastorate prepares, and District Council agrees, draft 'Terms of Settlement', to be finally negotiated with a prospective minister. District Council needs to confirm the suitability of the manse; this may be deferred until concurrence of a call to a particular minister is being considered, but any improvements should be done before an induction.

6 District Council determines the 'scoping' of the pastorate (ie. is it to be whole-time, part-time or somehow shared) and declares a vacancy.

NOTE B (a revision of 2.3.5 of the report)

Filling a Vacancy

The best current practice in filling a ministerial vacancy follows the order given here. **This basic framework will be adapted for group pastorates, team ministries, ecumenical or 'special' situations.**

(NB: 'District Council' here implies 'or the appropriately authorised committee or officers of District'; District procedure needs to be clearly agreed and understood on such matters, including who can give concurrence to calls.

Similarly, 'Elders' stands for the equivalent group in an ecumenical or 'special category' ministry situation).

1 When the vacancy has been declared, the Provincial Moderator gives information about the vacancy to the Moderators' meeting.

2 If a candidate can be identified, that minister is shown the 'Pastorate Profile' and asked about letting their name go forward.

3 If the minister agrees, the name with their 'Personal Profile' is given to the pastorate.

4 An invitation may then be given to meet the Interim Moderator and Elders. These meetings/interviews should be carefully handled; some guidance is offered in Appendix D of the report.

5 If the minister and Elders both agree, Church Meeting (or equivalent) will invite the candidate for a weekend, to include leading of services, social gatherings, etc.

6 Elders' Meeting and Church Meeting (normally with the Interim Moderator chairing) will take place as soon after the weekend visit as possible; the Elders are free but not obliged to make a recommendation to the Church Meeting.'

(If more than one local church is involved in the call, the decision of each should be taken concurrently at one or separate meetings).

7 Any decision is communicated, by telephone and confirmed in writing, to the candidate immediately after the meeting; it should include a report on the attendance and the voting figures.

8 If a call is provisionally accepted, the position should be communicated to the District Council as soon as possible, with a request for concurrence.

NOTE C (a revision of Appendix E of the report)

A Declaration of Equal Opportunities Policy

1 The Church will behave as an 'equal opportunity employer organisation' and not discriminate between ministers on grounds of race or sex.

2 The Church affirms in its Basis of Union that 'all ministries shall be open to both men and women' and at Assembly in 1987 adopted a Declaration on Racism.

3 The Church works to combat racism and sexism and is committed to positive action rather than containing the issues.

4 The Church is aware of possible barriers to women and to black people within the structures of the Church in ministry and other posts; this has to do with expectations, position, role and status.

5 The Church will therefore establish appropriate methods of monitoring the appointment, call and position of women and black people in the ministry and of considering appropriate action where necessary.

NOTE D (a revision of 4.7.2 of the report)

A grievance procedure

1 The purpose of a grievance procedure for ministers is to give a legitimate place of complaint and to solve the problems as quickly and as simply as possible. A timescale should be agreed in each case which should normally be dealt with inside three months.

2 It is important that grievances are treated seriously, because they are genuine to the person concerned.

3 It is important to discover whether the grievance is legitimate.

4 In the first instance the minister with the grievance should approach the Provincial Moderator; however if the grievance involves the Moderator, the minister should approach the District Secretary or Synod Clerk.

5 The Moderator should approach both parties within one month of the request, respond to the grievance and where possible effect a reconciliation. If the Moderator is a party to the grievance, the Synod Clerk or another mutually acceptable person should act.

6 Where immediate reconciliation is not possible, a small independent group should be established by the appropriate council of the church, consisting of lay people and ministers, men and women.

7 Either party should be able to challenge the composition of the group which should reflect the nature of the grievance (e.g. if it concerns equal opportunities, finance, etc. members of the group should be seen to have some knowledge of the issue).

8 The group should then meet with both parties who may be accompanied. The group should again attempt a reconciliation but, if this is not possible, should arbitrate between them.

VOCATIONS COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Michael B Stolton

Secretary: Revd Michael G Dunford

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PASTORAL CARE

43. Much of our work is confidential and we are careful to maintain a correct and sympathetic relationship with those who are applying for ministry in the URC and those who work within the councils of the Church. We are continually grateful for the co-operation and understanding which help us undertake our important responsibilities.

ROLL OF MINISTERS

(as at 28th February 1990)

44. **Admission to the Roll of Ministers** (from 1st March '89 to 28th February '90)

45. (a) **By ordination** - stipendiary:

Shirley Mountcastle, David Yule, David Witts, Jeanne Ennals, Brenda Russell, Daphne Williams, Erica Beglin, Jacqueline Petrie, Alan Wharton, Russell Furley-Smith, John Kingsley, Colin Biggs, Stephen Brown, David Thomas, Rudolph Dixon, Craig Bowman, David Hilborn, Mia Kyte, Andrew Willett, Sally Willett, Paul Ellis, Josephine Williams, Cecil Macaulay, Gillian Gibson, Charles Croll, Gethin Rhys, Simon Copley, Elizabeth J. Brown, Taco Bos.

46. (b) **By ordination** - auxiliary

Peter Lovett-Hargis, Reginald Charles, Robert Thomson, Roger Woodall, Barbara Plenderleith, Dora Frost, Kenneth Aitchison, George Perrott, John Mackereth, John Thompson, Tresna Fletcher, Douglas McFarlane, David Lee, John Maitland, Pamela Richardson, Kate Pryde, Margaret Latham, Gillian Brown, Colin Knight.

47. (c) **By transfer from other churches**

Revd Leonard Bhagwandin (from Presbyterian Church of Guyana)
Revd Anthony Bosschaert (from Church of England)
Revd Dr. Robert S. Paul (United Church of Christ USA)
Revd Bryan W. Imbush - Auxiliary Ministry (Methodist Church)

48. (d) **By reinstatement:**

Revd Daniel Wall

49. (e) **Transfer within the Roll of Ministers:**

Auxiliary to Stipendiary: Revd Robert A. Maitland.

50. **Ministers of other churches serving the URC**

Revd Baden Pearce (Methodist)

Revd William Graham (Presbyterian Church of USA)
Revd Peter Adgie (Presbyterian Church of USA)

51. **Deletions from the Roll of Ministers** (from 1st March '89 to 28 February '90)
52. (a) **By resignation:**
Revd David Fidler (A)
Revd Ralph Oakden (A)
Revd Pat Ashton
Revd David Lea
Revd Clifford Taylor
Revd Neil Macmillan
Revd F. G. Wilson Dennett
53. (b) **By transfer to other churches:**

Revd John Martin to the Uniting Church in Australia.
Revd Harold W. Turner to Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.
Revd Mitchell Bunting - to Overseas List - secondment to the Church of Scotland in Tiberias.
54. (c) **By committee decision**
Revd David John Mills
55. **Certificates of Eligibility** to serve the URC have been granted to 11 ministers in the past year.
56. **Roll of Accredited CRCWs**
Simon Loviett
57. We note with sadness that 44 ministers have died during the past year and tribute is paid to them during the Assembly.

RECRUITMENT OF MINISTERS

58. The higher intake level of stipendiary candidates is being maintained, alongside a steady flow into the auxiliary ministry, and this is a cause for continuing thankfulness. There is no cause for complacency, however, because the number of churches in vacancy seeking a minister with no name to consider does not drop; we are merely holding our ground and matching the number of those who are retiring. Therefore we continue to press for more candidates through vocational events, Enquirers' conferences, Ministry Experience Weeks, and we encourage and support Provinces in their own advocacy. A visit to the United States as part of a sabbatical programme by Michael Diffey enabled firmer links to be established with those American churches who assist us through our Overseas Recruitment Scheme. They are fully conversant with our needs, bearing in mind that we seek full time, experienced ministers who are able to offer at least four years pastoral service in the first instance. Alongside this we remind the churches of our need for more Lay Preachers and Church-related Community Workers. A new publication: **More about the CRCW ministry** is now available.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE FOR MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES

59. We continue to monitor the Assessment Conference programme, as described in our report to the York Assembly. Next year we shall have a clearer picture of the value or otherwise of arranging only one conference per year for stipendiary candidates. We consider attention needs to be paid also to the assessment of CRCW candidates currently introduced at auxiliary conferences. We are also offering advice

to the Nominations Committee as to the best way to build up an effective and fully representative assessment Panel.

60. The present Assessment procedure has been in operation since the inception of the URC, but some revision seems appropriate in the light of experience.

61. Local churches have found difficulties in not knowing what is expected of them, and subsequently the District Council has often been unaware of potential problems and opportunities in relation to those they have interviewed. It may also be more beneficial for the District Pastoral Committee (or its equivalent) to see a candidate initially, before the local church is asked to make an assessment, so that a more objective understanding of the application before them can take place in the first instance. There are also those who feel that final decisions should be taken by the national Church through its Assembly Assessment Panel, rather than by the Provincial interviewing group. There are several factors which suggest a fresh approach to assessment might be desirable.

62. The whole Church assumes financial and pastoral responsibility for its ministry, and whilst the contributions of local church, District Council and Provincial Synod are valid parts of the assessment procedure, due weight needs to be given to the overall responsibility of training and support by the whole Church, mirrored in the national assessment conference. At all levels there are a variety of skills available in the interviewing process, together with a considerable amount of personal and local knowledge. These need to be retained, but careful thought given to the fact that greater in-depth consultation is possible at national assessment level, due to the length of time set aside for this process and particular expertise being made available. In moving a resolution to re-align the present arrangements, the Vocations Committee is commending a wider and more effective consultative procedure so that final decisions are actually the result of close co-operation between all the councils of the Church, rather than a series of positive steps which sometimes bear little relation to each other.

63. We are therefore proposing that for a trial period a new order of assessment should be tested, as follows:-

District Pastoral Committee (or its equivalent) assessment
Local church commendation
District Council recommendation
Provincial recommendation
National Assessment Conference
Synod concurrence.

64. Under this suggested procedure the District Council, after consultation with the District Pastoral Committee (or its equivalent) and the local church, would pass a recommendation to the Province. Province would then be responsible for deciding whether or not a positive recommendation could be forwarded to the National Assessment Conference. Any candidate who does not receive consent to proceed beyond the Provincial stage would, however, be given opportunity to attend the National Conference should that be agreed, on the basis of appeal within the Province. Should there still be disagreement once all the processes outlined above have been completed, further negotiations would take place to reach a common mind. The Provincial Synod would then be asked to ratify the decision taken through the whole consultative procedure. **(Resolution 9)**

CRCW ACCREDITATION

65. Following the 1987 Report on Church-related Community Workers, we have paid attention to the need to record a list of those who are nationally accredited and

we are working to the following procedure agreed with the Departmental committees involved:

66. "The Roll of URC Accredited CRCWs shall contain the names of CRCWs who:
1. have gone through the assessment procedure and been accepted as a candidate; and
 2. have satisfactorily completed the prescribed training; and
 3. have been appointed to a project approved by the URC.

67. The Vocations Committee will keep the Roll under review removing the names of those who have not served in post for more than 5 years, after due consultation with the Ministries in the Community sub-committee, the Support Committee and the individual concerned. A note to this effect will be placed in the Year Book. Names will be restored to the Roll at the commencement of fresh employment in a URC approved post.

68. We shall also keep a list of those who have been on our accredited Roll, or who are eligible for accreditation, and are still available for a post in the future."

TRAINING COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs. Elisabeth Jupp
Secretary: Revd Michael G. Dunford

INTRODUCTION

69. The committee has wide ranging responsibilities, and once again at the end of another year we can only express gratitude to all the members of its sub-committees for work done on behalf of the whole church. Particularly we are grateful to all those churches, Provinces and individuals who have responded to the National Appeal for ministerial training and thereby acknowledged the needs expressed by the whole Church and offered support for our programmes.

70. We have had some significant discussions on trends in ministerial training as well as giving oversight to the whole programme and all this has been marked by those themes which are at the forefront in the field today. There has been **collaboration** as those with a wide range of gifts and experiences in and outside the life of the Church, at home and abroad, have worked together on particular tasks. We have begun to share a belief in the value of **integration**, as the courses provided for lay preachers, CRCWs, ministers, are seen in relation to one another and not in isolation. We have expressed the view for many years now that training must be **contextual** and we have paid attention to the realities of local church life and the need for the Church under the right leadership to engage in its mission to the world. Finally, we have been enabled to act **ecumenically** in a number of ways, both in our regular training programmes, and in discussions about the future of CRCW training.

INTERNSHIP TRAINING

71. The colleges have discussed the report on Internship Training chaired by the Revd. Dr. Leslie Green. Whilst there has been no need at this stage to refer the basic guide-lines approved by Assembly for amendment, modifications are evolving as a result of early experiences and the report. The timing of the Internship year to permit

theological reflection is important, as is the need to avoid internship students being regarded as assistant ministers.

LEAVING CERTIFICATES

72. Discussion on the status of the Certificate led us to the following understanding and emphasised the balance of responsibilities between the colleges and the Provinces.

73. Ordinands preparing for ministry in the United Reformed Church undergo training on courses prescribed by the General Assembly which determines the "standards and scope of an adequate ministerial training and education" (Basis of Union 9 (5) (v)). Throughout the training process, colleges in the case of stipendiary candidates, and the Board of Studies in the case of auxiliary candidates, keep closely in touch with the sending Provinces who are also responsible for local support, and if necessary for the discontinuance of a particular candidacy.

74. On completion of the agreed course of study and bearing in mind the need to exercise a judgement on the overall fitness of the ordinand to exercise ministry in the URC, the colleges grant to stipendiary candidates a Leaving Certificate, or the Board of Studies to auxiliary candidates a Certificate of Completed Study.

75. It is then the responsibility of the Synod, through whatever procedure it decides (e.g. the power could be delegated to an officer or committee of the Synod) to declare that a candidate is eligible for ordination. (Basis of Union 9 (4) (vi)).

76. No ordination or appointment can take place until the appropriate Certificate has been issued by the recognised training authority and the Synod has declared that eligibility has been established. It is unwise for any local pastorate or District Council to enter unconditional commitments with a student until that stage has been reached properly: this does not preclude the issue of a call to a student in the final year of a course or its being sustained by a District Council provided that these actions are clearly indicated as being conditional upon the issue of the certificate and the Synod's declaration of eligibility. Such conditional actions are indeed pastorally necessary for those students who are under financial pressure to begin their work and ensure the receipt of a stipend in late June or early July. The appropriate Certificate must have been produced by the time of ordination.

THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE

77. Following the reception of the report of the Ecumenical Inspection of Queen's last year, the Principal, the Revd. Dr. James Walker and the tutor responsible for our students Revd. Dr. Stephen Dawes, attended our committee and reported on the responses of the college. We continue to take an active interest in the way they will follow up the recommendations. One significant new proposal has been to set up a URC 'Oversight' Committee to enable us to meet with our students regularly and to engage with the staff in discussions on training matters.

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

78. We continue to be responsible for staff through a special Nominations Committee which will now be concerned to offer to Assembly the name of a successor to the Revd. Janet Sowerbutts as Director of Pastoral Studies. We record our appreciation of her service over the past five years in this important post.

79. The Secretary has reported on the Cambridge Federation Examination in Theology where most of our students write essays rather than sit for examinations,

their record being currently high. There are now determined efforts to attain some form of University accreditation.

NORTHERN COLLEGE

80. Further developments in Northern College following the Visitors' report to Assembly (1988) are reflected in the college report. We were particularly interested to receive a report from the Revd. Dr. David Peel on his first year's work as Tutor in Community-based Training.

THE TRAINING OF CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS

Introduction

81. In 1987 the Department reported fully on the relatively new ministry of CRCWs in the URC, and outlined the current training provision and the ways in which it might be further developed and improved. (Assembly Reports p.70 paragraphs 81.1-6). This has now been given full attention in the Department by a special working party and there follows our final report to the Church.

The Issues

82. Two major difficulties had been identified in the present programme. (1) The failure so far to integrate effectively the professional and theological aspects of the foundation training. (2) The narrow range of the programme which cannot easily adapt to the needs of those who candidate as professionally qualified workers; people with family ties who cannot embark on a residential full time course; nor to those who are already in post as a worker of some kind or another who have had little or no training.

83. Other issues emerged related to staffing, the numbers in training at any one time, finance, accreditation both professional and ecclesiastical, and In-Service Training. Even more basic has been the need to take account of the Inter-Church Process and honour our ecumenical commitment to the other main-line churches. Whilst we do not pretend to have come up with all the answers at this early stage or to find long term solutions to all the problems, we have faithfully tackled each issue and can now offer a way forward that should bring about an immediate improvement and in the longer term a sound training that will be attractive, practical and comprehensive.

An Ecumenical Basis

84. On three occasions we have been involved in carefully planned and significant ecumenical consultations brought about largely by URC initiative in which we have helped the churches to look at this emerging community-linked ministry, and on two occasions specifically addressed the matter of training. Everyone is at a different stage, and we are the forerunners in identifying the place of what we term CRCWs.

85. Our objective has been to work out if possible with our partner churches training options which will be helpful to all concerned, and incidentally take care of a major problem we have of drawing together viable training groups of students. Clearly we are some way off from this goal because they have different styles of workers, or recruit workers to posts for a limited period with no commitment to training or redeployment, but we are all committed to being fully in touch, to share details of any planning and to make any courses we sponsor as open and as ecumenical as possible.

86. These conversations have been very valuable and we believe we have begun a process which will have important implications for the future.

Accreditation

87. Any training programme which we recognise and support must lead to appropriate accreditation and employment, both within the Church and outside it. The Assembly has already agreed to its basic requirements for CRCW accreditation and we are building on that. Professionally the qualifications of Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) and Certificate in Community and Youth Work (CCYW) are recognised and for our purposes also, with a strong preference now for the latter rather than the former. Moves are being made in the professional field to provide accreditation of workers in other ways, particularly recognising essential practical skills and experience. The Church should be alert to the new possibilities for a broader range of workers who can then be also recognised in our midst.

Training Options

88. The Working Party considered a number of options, including the possibility of moving away from the Birmingham base at St. Andrew's Hall, of encouraging Provincial or regional training courses and of enrolling individual students on any one of a wide range of courses available on the open market. None of these seemed wise, either because we preferred to keep an academic, full-time training route open, or because they detracted from the benefits of a URC group studying together in a recognisable base.

89. Finally, we considered two options and we propose that both should be available from September 1990, thus opening up new possibilities built up on existing foundations:-

(1) *The Selly Oak Option*

Training of CRCWs has been in existence since 1980, and comprises a two year professional qualification (CQSW or CCYC) provided by Westhill College and a one year theological training at St. Andrew's Hall. As a result of our enquiries, help from the staff and extensive discussions, we can offer this to the Church as a continuing option. Three major developments indicate improvements for the future. Closer working relationships between St. Andrew's Hall and Westhill College are being established. Seminars are planned throughout the professional training period to bring about greater integration between the two strands of study. A part-time Tutor (6 hours per week) for the CRCW programme has now been appointed and we believe that Kate Breeze, with all her personal experience as a CRCW in post, will be immensely helpful in the situation.

We can also see possibilities in the Selly Oak situation of liaison with the Methodists who also train some candidates for the new Wesley Diaconal Order there.

(2) *The Salford Option*

Details have now been worked out by the Salford Urban Mission, an ecumenical training agency comprising Methodists, Baptists, Catholics, Anglicans and URC, to offer a training course for Church-linked Community Work. To use their own words it will be contextual, integrated, accessible, rigorous and flexible, and is designed to be helpful to all the denominations with their different requirements and to us in our need to provide an alternative to the Selly Oak option for particular URC candidates. It is noted that it will be possible to enrol students with or without professional qualifications, (where three or one year options can be taken up as appropriate) and those who are available for full or part-time study. Theological facilities will also be made available by contacts with the Northern Federation of Theological Colleges and

thus Northern College. This is an ambitious project, but being carefully worked out by the Staff Team, and the SUM Training Committee.

We have been particularly helped by the Revd. Chris Warner a URC trainer, and Mrs. Joan Cartledge the Training Research and Development Worker.

We consider it to be potentially a good option, available from September 1990, but one which should be carefully monitored, and reviewed after the first three years.

Integration

90. It is our commitment to provide a course of training which is acceptable both professionally and theologically and that these two elements should be blended in an integrated programme. The Department is keeping this goal firmly in mind and sees the potential whilst acknowledging practical difficulties. This element will be the subject of careful review in 3 years.

In-Service Training

91. Throughout our discussions we have appreciated the fact that basic training can only take a worker into the job with essential tools. There will be a continual need for further training, and we will ensure that this is provided, with the necessary resources to back it up.

Finance

92. All our discussions with potential training bodies have included attention to the financial aspects. We are operating from the present experience at Selly Oak, which parallels financial support for students on the same basis as that for stipendiary full-time ministerial training. In other words, we are able to offer to pay for fees and student maintenance on the LEA basis, taking into account additional study weeks, placement costs and personal circumstances. We believe we have a sufficiently flexible and fair system to match the developing situation which we believe should henceforth include Salford.

Continuing Oversight

93. We would see a need for a specialist group to give oversight of the training programme as it develops and to guide the Assembly at the time of review in 3 years time. The competent group within the Department is the Ministries in the Community sub-committee and this can take on this responsibility now with proper liaison with the Training Committee.

94. We recommend:

- (a) That the URC continues to use and support the CRCW Training Programme at St. Andrew's Hall, and encourages that body to continue to explore closer co-operation with Westhill College, and greater integration of the professional and theological aspects of the course, and review progress in three years.
- (b) That the URC commends appropriate CRCW candidates to the Salford Urban Mission for their new course of study and action training, both full time courses and 'on the job' training, and reviews progress in 3 years from its proposed commencement in 1990.
- (c) That the URC continues to explore with other denominations possibilities of further ecumenical development of training situations.

- (d) That all courses of training which we mount for CRCWs shall take full account of the various accreditation procedures necessary for both professional and denominational requirements. **(Resolution 10)**

MANSFIELD COLLEGE

95. The Revd. Robert Way presented a very encouraging report from the team of Visitors to Mansfield College. It is clear that the Ordination Programme is responding positively to current needs of ministerial leadership in the URC. We are grateful for the graphic picture presented to us in their report and invite the whole Church to participate by enabling us through the proposed resolutions to follow up matters which take the college into the future. **(Resolution 11)**

BOARD OF STUDIES FOR AUXILIARY MINISTRY

Student numbers

96. The number of students in training for the auxiliary ministry remains at a fairly constant 70 and this is a cause for great satisfaction. They are helped by Provincial Directors and tutors both on the URC course and on ecumenical courses, and supported by committees and by their local churches.

Provincial Directors of Training

97. We are greatly indebted to these hardworking people, all of whom have other and onerous duties, who provide the key to the effectiveness of the whole Training Programme. Without them we would be lost. They meet annually in Consultation, together with the National Director of Training, when we expect and get a 100% attendance and we are constantly in touch with one another in the course of our work.

Local Ministry

98. A few more candidates now offer for the Model I local form of ministry and we wish to encourage this further. A number of local courses of an ecumenical nature are being considered as an alternative to the URC course of 2 years which is currently provided.

ACCM Paper 30

99. The Church of England is reviewing the financial basis of all its courses. Because we also are involved, we have been invited to share in a Working Party which is bringing into effect the recommendations now agreed by the House of Bishops and representatives of the group led by the Bishop of Lincoln have met with us already. This will have the beneficial effect of providing a more unified training across the country and of rescuing some smaller courses that are not financially and educationally viable. Already we share in the regular Inspection of the Courses and make known our particular needs and requirements as a denomination.

The Significance of Summer Schools

100. Each year we organise two Schools for students on the URC course (about 35 students), and open them to students on other courses for at least once in their training. These are much appreciated, particularly by those who have to study in some isolation. They express the community of students and demonstrate once again the potential leadership which is being offered to us by God. Auxiliary Ministry now forms an important part of our total ministry and we are privileged to have the opportunity to know them and to train them for the future.

LAY PREACHING SUB-COMMITTEE

101. The Methodist Church has decided to combine two of their training programmes for lay preachers in a new course commencing in 1991. This will mean

that they will phase out 'Exploring the Faith' by the end of 1993. Discussions are taking place between the Ministries Department and the Methodist Church's Local Preachers' Office about URC involvement in the New Course, having particular regard to the growing number of joint Methodist/United Reformed Churches and areas. The Training Committee has agreed that the URC should recognise this new Methodist Course as an option for the training of our lay preachers and accept the offer to supplement distinctively Methodist material with appropriate URC elements.

102. A Training Committee working party, convened by Donald Hilton, has begun the lengthy process of revising '*Exploring the Faith*'. A prior task is to address questions and issues relating to the nature of the ministry of lay preaching, the experiences of those who have been involved in the present course, the working party on Integrated Training and the ecumenical dimension.

INTEGRATED TRAINING

103. We are fully involved in a working party concerned with exploring the possibilities of integrating in some way the various training programmes and resources currently available in the URC for lay preachers, elders, ministers, CRCWs, youth leaders and members, of identifying gaps to be filled, and offering some rationale of what we should be doing.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

104. The Provinces are each largely responsible for the in-service training of their own ministers. The committee sponsors the national Refresher Courses which in 1989 took place both at Westminster and at Windermere, to accommodate auxiliary as well as stipendiary ministers. This pattern will be repeated in 1990 except that it is hoped that most ministers who have completed three years since ordination will attend the refresher course together at Westminster.

MINISTERIAL TRAINING FUND

105. The committee was encouraged by the 1989 Assembly's approval of the **national appeal** for funds to assist with the expenses of training for the interim period before the Unified Appeal assumes full responsibility for this in 1991. We continue to be aware of the need to give simultaneously the best possible stewardship of the denomination's resources.

The committee continues to consider actively the problem of **student accommodation** and notes with gratitude for example the provision of a house for students at Mansfield College by Wessex Province.

106. Similarly the committee has continued to keep a watching brief upon the effects of the **Community Charge** on our students and their families. We have publicly stated they should not be unduly disadvantaged.

107. The same policy applies to the proposed **Student Loan Scheme** and we have joined with other main line denominations in making representation to the Government believing the proposed legislation to be unhelpful and unfair.

Joint meeting with World Church and Mission Department and the Congregational Federation

108. The committee held an Open Forum at its September meeting with representatives from the World Church and Mission Department and the Congregational Federation and discussed matters of common concern to both denominations within the ambit of this committee, starting with a comparison of the

training structures of both denominations. The committee was particularly interested in the Federation's experience of a foundation course.

109. Pastor Graham Adams, the General Secretary of the Federation, reported on the World Council of Churches Limuru Conference on Ministerial Formation for Today's Mission, and the concern for good training for the context and mission of the churches.

110. The Revd. Michael Dunford reported on the Visitation by the five theological educators in 1987, and the subsequent publication "Partners in Practice", which raises a number of sharp questions about the way we train our ministers. The Revd. Charles Brock brought us up to date with the work of the URC working party on Urban/Rural Mission. The meeting concluded with a discussion on the current ecumenical scene. The committee was glad to have pioneered such an interchange of ideas in an open atmosphere, and believe that there are a number of ways in which we might now cooperate with one another in the future. *(See Appendix II)*

CHANGING PATTERNS OF MINISTRY

111. There have been three major elements in our work as a Department over the past two years in relation to changing patterns of ministry and the perceived needs of the Church.

112. First, a debate has been encouraged through a discussion paper sent to local churches. Responses have been many and varied and have helped us greatly in our own debate. We see the issue currently focussed in two specific areas as reported below. However, we envisage much more to be done, and have set up a small group led by the General Secretary, to draw out the important issues against the background of a debate which is also taking place in other parts of the Church. We believe that a pattern is emerging which can provide the churches with leadership to help them in their mission. Our report this year is but part of that process:

The Use of Ministerial Resources

113. We have sought to move on from a Deployment policy, which has had rather negative connotations, towards a positive effort to discover the ministerial needs of our churches through a questionnaire to District Councils, and then a proper use of our resources. A working party, convened by Dr. Colin Baxter, has been working on this for us and their report is now being studied. *(See Appendix II)*

The Auxiliary Ministry

114. We gave notice at the Assembly last year that we wish to recommend a change in the title of 'Auxiliary'. Since then we have discussed the matter fully taking into account the comments we have received, and now recommend that the title be discontinued.

115. It is now ten years since it was decided to institute the Auxiliary Ministry. We thank God for this gift and for the devotion of over two hundred women and men serving in this way. Unfortunately the title **auxiliary** has given some people the impression that this is a lesser ministry, even second-rate or second class. It implies that they are auxiliary, helpers, assistants to the proper minister. Attempts were made to argue that they were auxiliary to the Church but this did not persuade many who believed this to be true of all ministers. In secular circles, **auxiliary** carries overtones from 'auxiliary nurse' and 'auxiliary firemen' etc, which are believed to be roles for the less skilful who assist the real pros. **Auxiliary** has even been misunderstood as our title for women ministers. Finally, nearly every one of our auxiliary ministers dislikes and many detest this much misunderstood title.

116. In the belief that we should abolish the distinction between ministers in normal church life, we propose that the title of 'auxiliary' be dropped. It will be necessary for training and payment purposes to retain the distinctions, and here we recommend that the simple designations of **stipendiary (SM)** and **non-stipendiary (NSM)** be adopted.

117. In the discussions leading to the setting up of this ministry, it was often referred to as "a non-stipendiary ministry". **Auxiliary** was chosen to avoid defining ministry in financial terms. Increasingly, however, people now distinguish the other ministry from auxiliary by use of the description **stipendiary**. To describe some of our ministers now as **non-stipendiary** will help people to see the unity of our ministry more clearly, because of this focus on one basic difference. This would also reflect a pattern adopted by other member churches in the ecumenical scene.

118. We are aware that this change of name raises an important issue in relation to membership of the councils of the Church and careful consideration will need to be given to the changes necessary in the Basis of Union. We also consider it a good time to look at the various distinctions we make within the Roll of Ministers and reflected in the various designations in the Year Book. Our recommendations for change, therefore, only represent a first step in a new direction. (**Resolution 12**)

PERSONALIA

119. We extend our thanks to those members of our committees whose period of service ends at this Assembly. In particular we express warm appreciation of Tony Burnham's skilful leadership. We have all benefited from his drive, energy and enthusiasm. To say that there has never been a dull moment would be an understatement!

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report of the Ministries Department for debate.

Employment Practice

2. The Assembly receives the Report on 'Employment Practice in the United Reformed Church' in paragraphs 18-42 and Appendix I of the Book of Reports for debate.

3. (a) The Assembly encourages the preparation of Pastorate Profiles and Personal Profiles to assist ministerial movements and commends the general use of the revised forms produced by the Ministries Department in this connection (revisions of Appendices A, B and C of the Report).

(b) The Assembly recognises in Note A (Paragraph 2.2.5. of the Report revised) summary of the best current practice for declaring a ministerial vacancy and encourages its general adoption.

(c) The Assembly recognises in Note B (paragraph 2.3.5. of the Report revised) a statement of best current practice which could form the basis for locally agreed procedure in the filling of vacancies.

4. (a) The Assembly encourages District Councils to keep their requirement for and deployment of ministers under review.

(b) Assembly authorises District Councils to renegotiate the scoping of pastorates at a time other than during a vacancy and urges that this right be spelt out when concurring with all future calls.

5. The Assembly instructs District Councils to designate an appropriate person or committee to examine annually the level of ministerial expenses being paid by pastorates and to address any apparent problems.
6. (a) The Assembly encourages District Councils to make available ministerial help (e.g. a temporary colleague) for a pregnant minister.

(b) The Assembly instructs District Councils to start discussions with the pastorate and the minister within 8 weeks of the birth in cases where consideration may need to be given to rescoping the pastorate, and to conclude such negotiations within 26 weeks.
7. The Assembly adopts the statement 'A Declaration of Equal Opportunities policy' at Note C (a revision of Appendix E of the Report).
8. The Assembly commends the grievance procedure set out in Note D (a revision of paragraph 4.7.2. of the Report) for use in appropriate cases.

Assessment Procedures

9. The Assembly authorises the Vocations Committee to revise the assessment procedure for ministerial candidates in accordance with paragraph 59-64 of the Book of Reports with effect from 1st January 1991 for a trial period of not more than 5 years, and calls for a report in 1994.

10. CRCW Training

The Assembly receives the report of the Training Committee on the Training of CRCWs in paragraphs 81-94 of the Book of Reports, supports their recommendations and calls for a report in three years.

Mansfield College

11. The Assembly receives the report of the Visitors to Mansfield College, Oxford in November 1989 and supports their recommendations. (Appendix II (A))

Auxiliary Ministry

12. (a) The Assembly determines that the designation 'auxiliary ministry' shall be discontinued. For essential administration purposes the designations 'stipendiary (SM)' and 'non-stipendiary (NSM)' shall be used. (See paragraphs 114-118 Book of Reports).
- (b) The Assembly asks the Vocations Committee to consider the implications in relation to the Roll of Ministers, and to advise accordingly.
- (c) The Assembly asks the Business Committee to assist the Ministries Department in preparing appropriate amendments to the Basis of Union.

APPENDIX I

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE IN THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

(PAGES 3-20 OF THE REPORT AS PUBLISHED IN 1988)

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The matters addressed in this report have been raised in several quarters within the United Reformed Church in addition to the Ministries Department, under whose auspices it has been produced.

1.2 The annual report of the Provincial Moderators has more than once drawn attention to the difficulties experienced by ministers at the various stages of their working lives. The report on *Stress in the Ministry*, accepted by Assembly in 1987, specifically highlighted matters which may adversely affect the minister. The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee and officers are aware of some problems in the implementation of the *Plan for Partnership*, parts of our report are intended to reinforce what is contained in the Plan.

1.3 The Support Committee of the Ministries Department resolved in April 1986 "to set up a small working party to clarify where the responsibilities of a model employer lie within the structures of the United Reformed Church and to suggest how they might be better exercised for the well-being of ministers and of the whole church".

1.4 We are only addressing the circumstances of stipendiary ministers; in this report, therefore, *minister* refers to a full-time stipendiary minister of word and sacraments. Others must examine the situations of part-time ministers, auxiliary ministers or lay people variously employed within the URC.

1.5 The responsibilities of a model employer are spread throughout the church. In part ministers are a self-regulating profession, protective of their freedom to organise their lives as they feel led; in part they are a group of employed staff with terms and conditions laid down nationally; in part they are members of co-operatives, sharing in Councils and Synods and Assembly with other church members in decisions affecting their prospects and livelihood. The precise legal status of ministers is a matter for the Churches Main Committee and has (thankfully) not been on the working party's agenda.

1.6 Our report seeks to clarify the best of current practice, offers some suggested improvements, and attempts to locate within the church's structure the responsibility for ensuring that the best practice is adopted.

1.7 Certain features of secular employment - but not all - offer helpful models for considering the position of ministers. We shall refer, for example, to in-service training, preparation for retirement and the production of a curriculum vitae (cv), where secular precedents seem helpful.

Similarly certain employment legislation which is not strictly applicable to ministers may be nevertheless recommended. For example, in one matter of principle the working party believes that the United Reformed Church should clearly accept the role of an equal opportunity employer (see 4.4 and Appendix E). If in the recruitment, training or placing of ministers there is prejudice against women, or black or disabled candidates, this must be confronted and resolved.

1.8 We have consulted in person with Revd Bill Mahood, Mrs Judy Stockings, Mr Clem Frank, Revd Michael Dunford and Revd Bernard Thorogood. We are indebted to Revds Brian and Susan Nuttall for the substance of section 2.3.9. We have received several letters from individuals. Some Provinces have shared their own papers on matters which are addressed here. We have consulted documents, including: the booklet *Guidelines for churches seeking a Minister* published by the Baptist Union; the forms and procedures used by the Uniting Church in Australia; a *church planning inventory* from the Hartford (USA) Center for Social and Religious Research; reports from Government and other statutory bodies, e.g. Commission for Racial Equality. None of these individuals or bodies is responsible for our report though we have been glad to incorporate good ideas and clear statements.

Working Party

This is a unanimous report from the working party:

Mr Jim Coull (convener), a management consultant and formerly Managing Director in the engineering industry;
Revd John Waller, Provincial Moderator and convener of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee;
Revd Elizabeth Nash, industrial chaplain, former member of the Support Committee;
Revd Peter Brain (secretary), minister, convener of the Support Committee.

THE JOB

2.1 The starting point of a similar working party in a secular situation would be to clarify the *job description*, a document setting out the tasks expected of the employee with the skills and qualifications required, plus a statement of the authority to be exercised and the accountability to others. The Christian ministry is only in part susceptible to this approach. The minister is a person set apart both to do and to be; the doing can to an extent be planned and measured, the being cannot. Our report is self-evidently more about doing than being. We offer procedures and proposals which will enable the work to proceed more efficiently which in this case means to the greater glory of God.

Declaring a Vacancy

2.2.1 The sequence of events surrounding a vacancy offer a good opportunity to review the post concerned, the life and work of the pastorate (or "special category" ministry) and the prospects for a new minister. We return below (2.4.1-3) to the need for such reviews other than at a vacancy.

2.2.2 We RECOMMEND(1) that every pastorate should prepare a full self-description. This is not always done at present. Too many ministers arrive with misunderstanding and there are often misconceptions on the part of the local pastorate. This can lead to unnecessary tension as the report *Stress in the Ministry* points out (para 3.2). It is, after all, better to break an engagement than a marriage. We offer a pro forma for such a self-description (Appendix A); some Provinces already use something similar.

We RECOMMEND(2) that such a form (with the proposed terms of settlement) be completed before a District Council formally declares a vacancy. We deal below (4.2.1) with the parallel need for a full self-introduction of a prospective minister.

2.2.3 Where the post is a joint pastorate between two or more local churches (or between a local church and another recognised ministry), the pastorate profile should be prepared by a joint group who should ensure that those involved in both

parts of the job are aware of the needs, demands and expectations of the other; thus only one full-time post is prepared, not two!

2.2.4 The responsibilities of employer throughout a ministerial move belong jointly to the District Council and the local pastorate, with the Provincial Moderator. The District's role, especially in the period up to the declaration of a vacancy, is crucial and too easily undervalued. Implementation of the equal opportunity policy on behalf of the District Council or local church (4.4.1-5 and Appendix E) is particularly relevant when a pastorate profile is being prepared and possible ministerial candidates for a vacancy being considered.

2.2.5 We RECOMMEND(3) the best current practice, up to the point of declaring a vacancy to be as follows, (with emphasis on the implied *normally* throughout):

(NB: *District Council* in recommendations 3 & 4 implies "or the appropriately authorised committee or officers of Districts"; District procedure needs to be clearly agreed and understood on such matters, including who can give concurrence to calls. Similarly, *Elders* stands for the equivalent group in an ecumenical or "special category" ministry.)

- i) The minister informs the Elders of receipt of a call to another post; normally three months' notice of a move is given. At the same time, the move is referred to District Council and confirmation of the position is given to the Provincial Moderator.
- ii) District Council initiates discussion with the pastorate and Provincial Moderator with a view to appointing an Interim Moderator (or sometimes more than one to churches in a joint pastorate). The role and duties of Interim Moderators should be clearly defined. (2.2.6)
- iii) District Council arranges one or more meetings with the Elders (or equivalent group) and the Provincial Moderator to discuss the question of the vacancy. The information concerning the church(es) and the proposed terms of settlement may be prepared before or after such a meeting.
- iv) After receiving the information about the pastorate and agreeing the proposed terms of settlement, District Council then determines the *scoping* of the pastorate (i.e. is it to be full-time, part-time or somehow shared) and declares a vacancy.

2.2.6 The duties of an Interim Moderator will vary considerably depending on local circumstances. They should always include taking the chair of any meeting (of Elders, members or special group) where there is discussion of the ministerial vacancy, and taking the chair when a candidate is being introduced and interviewed. The Interim Moderator is the link of *mutual* representation between the local church and the District Council. It will be found helpful if the expected duties are set down in writing, however informally.

Filling a Vacancy

2.3.1 The procedure for filling ministerial vacancies contains distinctive features which have aroused argument. See recommendation 4 (below).

2.3.2 Candidates are considered consecutively, not concurrently. However, a short-list of more than one is interviewed for other church posts.

2.3.3 There is reliance on the relatively closed system of the Moderators' meeting to discover candidates. Open advertisement is discouraged, though a list of vacancies

is circulated to stipendiary ministers quarterly. Such a system makes it difficult to avoid structural discrimination on grounds of sex or race, however hard those who are operating the system try. The Commission for Racial Equality in its Code of Practice stresses the close link between good employment practice and equal opportunity; "the more unstructured and subjective procedures are, the more likely unlawful discrimination is to occur". We offer Recommendation 22 below (4.4.5) as an attempt to review our own practice in this context.

2.3.4 There can also be strong resistance by ministers (on grounds of personal conviction/convenience) against any element of constraint or direction - even by the Holy Spirit! We know that ministers are sometimes reluctant to consider certain pastorates, e.g. in demanding urban or rural situations. We are not bringing a recommendation on strengthening the authority of the church in the matter of the movement of ministers. However we wonder whether there may be examples of where asserting the right to personal conviction in this context may damage the mission of the church.

2.3.5 We RECOMMEND(4) the current best practice for filling a vacancy to be as follows (again assuming a liberal scattering of *normally*) but that this procedure be kept under scrutiny:

- i) When the vacancy is declared, the Provincial Moderator gives information about the vacancy to the Moderators' meeting.
- ii) If a candidate can be identified, that minister is shown the papers prepared about the pastorate and asked about letting his/her name go forward.
- iii) If the minister agrees, the name with their c.v. (see 4.2.1) is given to the pastorate. An invitation may follow to meet the Interim Moderator and Elders. These meetings/interviews should be carefully handled; we offer some guidance on their conduct in Appendix D.
- iv) If the minister and Elders both agree, Church Meeting (or equivalent) will invite the candidate for a weekend, to include leading of worship, social gathering, etc.
- v) Elders Meeting and Church Meeting (with the Interim Moderator chairing) will take place as soon after the weekend visit as possible; the Elders are free but not obliged to make a recommendation to the Church Meeting.
- vi) Any decision is communicated, by telephone and confirmed in writing, to the candidate immediately after the meeting; it should include a report on the attendance and the voting figures. A decision to send a call should be communicated to the District Council as soon as possible, with a request for concurrence.

(Clearly, this basic procedure will be adapted for group pastorates, ecumenical or 'Special Category' situations.)

2.3.6 We would point out that the primary *employer responsibility* of District Council covers the period before the vacancy is declared, though the requirement to concur with a particular call and to be responsible for the induction is an important safeguard. The earlier oversight of the production of a description of the pastorate, the agreement to the *terms of settlement* to be offered and the actual declaration of the vacancy are much more significant.

Married Couples

2.3.7 There are over 30 couples within the URC where both partners are ordained. Though in most cases at least one partner is an auxiliary minister, it is necessary to reckon with this distinctive group in establishing best employment practices, not least when changing posts is involved. We draw attention to a ruling by the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee on the entitlement of married couple ministers to certain payments (manse expenses, removal expenses, ordination loans, etc.)

2.3.8 We RECOMMEND(5) the following procedure for introducing husband and wife ministers to two *separate* pastorates; NB: the procedure described above will apply when two ministers are job-sharing.

- (i) Preliminary visit by both ministers to see both areas, church buildings, the intended manse, etc and to meet Interim Moderators and Church Secretaries, and to clarify which minister is to candidate for which pastorate.

Then if ministers and pastorates wish to proceed:

- (ii) Consultation between pastorates to clarify lines of communication.
- (iii) Both ministers meet both Elders Meetings (or equivalent).
- (iv) Elders Meetings may confer together or separately after visit.

Then if ministers and pastorates wish to proceed:

- (v) Ministers visit over a weekend, include leading of worship etc.
- (vi) Both Elders Meetings consider their separate responses to the weekend.
- (vii) Interim Moderators (or Church Secretaries) report the responses to each other and to the ministers.

Then if both Elders Meetings are willing to recommend a call:

- (viii) Church Meetings meet separately but at the same time, all parties accepting that if one pastorate decides against a call, neither minister would accept a call.
- (ix) Interim Moderators report jointly to ministers.

Finally, if both ministers and both pastorates are willing:

- (x) Calls are confirmed in writing.
- (xi) Pastorates set up joint committee to deal with matters concerning manse, terms of settlement, etc.
- (xii) Inductions are planned, preferably for the same or consecutive days.

Variation

2.4.1 We believe that District Council should be free to attempt rescoping of a pastorate, regrouping churches or otherwise reorganising its ministerial resources, other than when a minister leaves, retires or dies.

2.4.2 We RECOMMEND(6) that District Council resolutions declaring a vacancy should reserve the right to consult with minister(s) and pastorate(s) with a view to redetermining the scoping etc agreed prior to an induction. No-one can foresee what the situation will be after 4 or 5 years of a ministry. An initiative can come from any of the parties. It seems right for District Council to be in a position to exercise oversight with maximum flexibility.

2.4.3 We believe that the District Council clearly has this responsibility, and presumably the authority, under the *Basis of Union* implicitly. This needs to be spelt out with the understanding that the concurrence of the pastorate(s) is required, and that the minister(s) should agree but cannot veto. (See also 3.7.1)

Evaluation

2.5.1 We are persuaded that not only ministers in fixed-term posts benefit from some form of deliberate evaluation of their ministry. Yet only they are subject to it. The issue of evaluation or assessment is one where the analysis of ministry as a combination of doing and being mentioned above (2.1) is of vital importance. To attempt to examine the quantity and quality of what has been done is too often perceived as an examination of the minister's being, of personality, identity or spirituality. Hence the distinct questions of the evaluation of ministry and the personal support of the minister are usually, perhaps inevitably, confused.

2.5.2 The highly structured, promotion-orientated, management-by-objective approach has no place in the assessment of ministry. But we are conscious that over £5m is spent by the church every year on stipends for ministers with almost no attempt to discover what might constitute value for money.

2.5.3 Accountability is a theological theme, with its ultimate dimension in the divine judgement. We RECOMMEND(7) that consultations on evaluating ministry are convened in each Province (or between two neighbouring Provinces) at which some of the resources in the field can be examined. What is required is a means of enabling ministers to engage, preferably with a trusted colleague, in self-assessment which should be stretching and encouraging, reassuring and renewing. This may sound ideal, especially in Districts where ministers are few; but we are sure that such practice would benefit minister and church alike.

2.5.4 In this context the documentation drawn up by a pastorate at the time of a vacancy can be helpful; it is one reason for our recommendation that it be produced with care and thoroughness. It should have outlined the broad aims of the pastorate, the existing work, the hopes or dreams, the resources; it might well have included specific tasks expected of the minister or areas in which fresh leadership was required. Such initial documents are soon overtaken by events, but they still provide a framework for some appraisal of one's own ministry in terms of doing. It is for the minister's personal support group or chosen colleague to keep an eye on the being.

2.5.5 In parallel with this recommendation concerning ministerial evaluation would be one advocating a regular *mission audit* to be undertaken by the local church(es); indeed one without the other is unbalanced. However, this is outside our terms of reference so we can only allude to the possibility.

THE TERMS

3.1.1 Though the terms and conditions of a minister are normally spelt out before any call is sent, not all Districts insist on a written statement. This is not good enough.

3.1.2 We RECOMMEND(8) that District Council should only declare a vacancy after confirming, in the confidence of the appropriate committee, that the proposed terms of settlement meet the terms of the Plan. We offer a pro forma (Appendix B), similar to those in use in some Provinces, for completion by the pastorate. The information, would then go to any minister who was considering the vacancy, along with other details about the post, as suggested above (2.2.2).

3.1.3 Use of standardised procedure seems to us an important step towards ensuring that all ministers enjoy at least the basic conditions set out by the General Assembly when it adopted the *Plan*. We have discovered considerable variation in policy and practice around the country, quite apart from the serious breaches of the *Plan* revealed by our direct enquiries.

3.1.4 We are aware that the complex and uncertain tax position of ministers is liable to be changed at any time though the thrust of our comments and recommendations is unlikely to be fundamentally affected by any ruling. The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee will keep ministers informed.

3.1.5 It will clearly benefit ministers if regular expenses can be paid on the imprest principle (of an agreed float which is then topped up) rather than having to spend their own money and being reimbursed later.

Questionnaire

3.2.1 In December 1986 we circulated a questionnaire about terms and conditions. Percentages given here are of 83 replies (from 96 enquiries); this represents 10.8% of the 765 full-time stipendiary ministers in pastorates or "special category" ministries, a large enough percentage for general conclusions to be drawn.

Manse expenses:

3.2.2 In answer to the question "are manse heating and lighting bills paid in full?", 86% ticked 'yes' but 14% 'no'. This may mean that over 100 ministers are not receiving this element of their entitlement; if so, it is a clear breach of the *Plan*. There is some anxiety over the open-endedness of the provision of heat and light for manse, not least because many pastorates need to budget such expenditure quite tightly. Ministers and treasurers need an arbiter to deal with any tension; we suggest a procedure below (3.5.4 and Recommendation 14).

3.2.3 13% record manse redecoration *not done*, ie. not provided by the pastorate. The reference in para. 6.3.1 of the *Plan* implies proper internal and external decoration of a church-owned manse. Even where interpretation is varied, promises made to a minister must be kept; where an arrangement is spelt out before an induction, the District Council must ensure that it is done.

3.2.4 In anticipation of guidance from the Churches Main Committee and our own Maintenance of the Ministry Committee in the matter of the Community Charge (Poll Tax), to replace domestic rates, we offer no comment in this report.

General expenses:

3.3.1 19% answered *no* to the question "are general sundry working expenses met (in cash or in kind)?" Again, this appears to mean that around 145 ministers subsidise these expenses out of their own pocket.

3.3.2 On the payment of telephone accounts, it appears that 38% of ministers have the total bill paid; 46% contribute to the cost of private calls; 16% are worse off in one way or another. We RECOMMEND(9) that, contrary to the implication of para 6.3.4 of the *Plan*, telephone accounts should be paid by the pastorate; it is important, for tax purposes, that the telephone account is in the name of the church, not the minister. We recommend that ministers should reimburse the cost of personal telephone calls to their treasurer on a quarterly basis.

3.3.3 From the start, every minister needs a desk and some other office equipment (filing cabinet/s, typewriter or equivalent, etc.). We RECOMMEND(10) that the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee consider making a grant at ordination to enable ministers to obtain office furniture and equipment.

Travelling:

3.4.1 Probably the sorest point affecting the reimbursement of ministers is that of motoring costs. Across the country there is a wide range of conditions, from the 20% who are provided with a car and only pay for private petrol to the 11% who receive under £1,500 pa to run their own vehicle.

3.4.2 We note that the *Plan* assigns responsibility for actual provision of a vehicle to the pastorate; we discovered that 59% of ministers run their own. In either case, purchase of the vehicle can be difficult. Perhaps more ministers would buy their own car if finance were easier. Several Provinces have loan funds for this purpose, though resources vary considerably around the country, as do the terms of car loans. We RECOMMEND(11) that these be consolidated in a national car-loan scheme. A policy of fleet provision for all ministers would probably be neither acceptable nor workable.

3.4.3 We RECOMMEND(12) that the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee publish a set of recommended mileage rates every year, to cover the use of church-owned and personal vehicles, and that these become the basis for agreements reached with ministers. For tax purposes, it is important that these do not include a lump sum element.

3.4.4 We are aware of several ministers who do not drive; we RECOMMEND (13) that full reimbursement of all travel expenses be promptly paid by the pastorate in such cases, to allow for some taxis as well as public transport or bicycle costs.

Supplements:

3.5.1 In our survey, some 27% of ministers indicated that they receive a supplement to the basic stipend. In some cases (which our questionnaire was not designed to reveal) this may be instead of paying actual expenses as incurred; this practice is to be discouraged, if only on grounds of tax liability problems. But our finding does suggest that a large number of pastorates and ministers are persuaded that the national agreed stipend needs to be augmented in their situation.

Strain

3.6.1 It is obvious that financial matters can put considerable strain on the minister (and the minister's family) and the pastorate. In particular we note three problems which have been raised with us.

3.6.2 If the local expenses are to be met in full, it may become evident that the pastorate cannot pay them - or will default on Maintenance of the Ministry or Unified Appeal contributions to do so. In over 100 cases, the pastorate apparently cannot afford to offer the minister in post the full provision set out in the *Plan*; that these include several pastorates where there are already heavy pressures on the minister. We must question the apparently collusive nature of District Council's

concurrence in situations where this is known. We are moved to ask whether the United Reformed Church as a whole can afford the present number of stipendiary ministers, several of whom are in effect subsidising the church. Such failures to honour the Plan must be unacceptable.

3.6.3 This is a complex matter and extends beyond our terms of reference. We note that the Executive Committee is already addressing the relationship between a call to recruit more ministers and the difficulty of raising more money to pay them. We therefore RECOMMEND(14) that the specific question of the difficulty of raising adequate local costs of ministry be urgently addressed by a separate inter-departmental inquiry, to which this working party would be ready to give evidence; alternatively the matter might be included in the remit of the Central Funding and Advocacy Group which will report directly to the national Executive Committee.

3.6.4 The second problem is also essentially one of relationships. It should not fall to the minister to initiate an enquiry into the level of expenses being paid; it is easy to say 'let the minister complain' but that is wrong, whether the pastorate is well-to-do or poor. We RECOMMEND(15) that with the annual returns submitted from pastorates is included a statement of the current level of expenses being paid, under agreed headings, and that each District (or Province) appoint an individual (personnel secretary) with responsibility to check with each minister annually precisely the level of expenses being paid. Where a problem arises, discussions should involve the District or the Provincial Treasurer (to help the local church), the personnel secretary (to support the minister) as well as the minister concerned and the local pastorate. Our recommendation implies that these officers of the wider church should act annually as arbiters of each local situation; they must be trusted to do so in fairness with confidentiality.

3.6.5 The third issue derives from the view that certain ministers might be more open to accept a call to urban priority area work if they could make provision for the private, residential education of their children; this clearly could not be a financial call on the local pastorate. We invite the Trustees of the Milton Mount Foundation to clarify and publicise their policy in grant-aiding such children. To quote *Faith in the City*: "Many UPA clergy and their wives find it a privilege to bring up their children in a multi-cultural area.....For some it is an opportunity, for some it is stressful and hard to cope with, for many it is a combination of the two." (para 6.8,9). We would suppose that a survey of URC ministers would reveal a similar situation.

3.6.6 Another factor affects the ministers directly. Most insurance companies, including the two with direct links to the United Reformed Church, find it necessary to charge high premiums for insurance cover for building contents and personal belongings in problem postal districts. We echo the call made in *Faith in the City* (para 6.94) for help with premiums in such cases.

3.6.7 We RECOMMEND(16) that the inquiry proposed above (Recommendation 14) address the question of introducing differential payments for ministers serving in certain areas where, in addition to above-average stress, there are above-average costs. Already the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee expects to have to respond to varied community charge levels with differential payments.

Variation

3.7.1 We have recommended above (2.4.2) that the minister(s), pastorate and District Council be able to negotiate alterations to the scoping or description of a post at any time, rather than only having this possibility at a vacancy. It follows that this renegotiation will include the terms of settlement as agreed prior to an induction. Our Recommendation 6 makes clear that this renegotiation can be initiated by any of the three parties involved.

3.7.2 Occasionally a change may become necessary because of a decision of General Assembly to vary the terms of the *Plan*. For example the ruling to exclude payment of stipend to part-time ministers who are in full-time remunerated employment was, in the view of one Province, an imposed change of agreed terms of settlement to the detriment of at least one minister already in such a position. We have been asked by the General Secretary "to consider the authority placed in the General Assembly to make decisions for the whole church and its ministry in relation to agreements reached between a minister, the local church and the District Council". We offer the following opinion to help the determination of this matter.

3.7.3 The terms of settlement agreed prior to any induction will include reference to national stipend and local payments. There are differences between the two elements in the settlement, though neither is legally defined in terms of the Contracts of Employment Acts.

3.7.4 The payment of local expenses etc. is a matter for the three parties to any induction to agree; if, as we have recommended, there is some flexibility built in from the outset, any change is a matter for local agreement. On the other hand, the payment of a stipend is governed by the rules laid down by Assembly and embodied in the *Plan*. We would affirm that Assembly has the right to make changes to the *Plan*, after full consultation and debate, though no Department, Committee or Officer has power to impose a change without approval of Assembly.

3.7.5 Any minister at induction will accept the authority of General Assembly as set out in the *Basis of Union*; any local church or District Council will also acknowledge this. Consideration of particular cases is outside our remit but we have no sense of arbitrary unfairness on the part of Assembly in the particular instance which led to the reference by the General Secretary.

3.7.6 We are reassured by the statement issued jointly by the conveners of the Ministries and Finance and Administration Departments: "Realising that occasions may occur when new procedures or rules need to be made because of new circumstances or needs, the Departments give the assurance that particular pastoral considerations will be given to the way in which such new procedures or rules are applied to ministers who may be adversely affected." This affirms the authority of Assembly while defining that power in terms of the care which must characterise the church.

Maternity

3.8.1 The United Reformed Church should have suitable arrangements for the possible pregnancy of its women ministers. We have been made aware of some problems for ministers in this situation.

3.8.2 We RECOMMEND(17a) that District Councils appoint an Interim Moderator to assist in a pastorate where the minister is pregnant, from the 29th week of pregnancy till 29 weeks after the birth. The duties of such an Interim Moderator will vary from the minimal to the substantial; District Council will take account of the particular circumstances.

3.8.3 We assume that a serving minister remains on stipend throughout pregnancy. We RECOMMEND(17b) that representatives of the District Council and the minister discuss the future of the pastorate at a time normally about 4-5 weeks after the birth. If the minister is to continue as before, there is no break in payment of stipend, expenses, etc; if she is to resign from the pastorate, stipend should continue until 13 weeks after the birth; if some other arrangement is sought (e.g. rescoping of the pastorate), the minister and District representatives in consultation with the Provincial Moderator, should seek to resolve the matter within 13 weeks after the birth.

In cases of illness or incapacity, the existing provisions of the Plan (para 6.1.3.1-4) apply. We also ask the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to clarify procedures for reclaiming Statutory Maternity Pay.

3.8.4 One correspondent told us: "Women ministers with families have experienced lack of imagination or even prejudice when they have attempted to resume their active ministry"; it is at such moments that the claim to be an equal opportunity employer is tested.

Earning more

3.9.1 The difference between a stipend and a salary seems semantic today. The level of basic stipend is supposed to be enough for a minister not to have to earn a living elsewhere. We consider that there would certainly be much more pressure to raise this stipend if it was realistically expected fully to satisfy that criterion, though it is outside our brief to comment on the stipend level. In 1986 the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee reported to Assembly its work on the adequacy of stipends: "Given the circumstances of ministers and their families...differ so widely, any concept of "adequacy" is hard to define." They continued (Reports p32): "The basic stipend should be *sufficient to enable ministers and their families to live without undue financial worry...* The stipend should not be tied directly to the remuneration of any other employment because no direct comparison can be made. However there does need to be regular reference to general income levels, the index of retail prices...and the stipends paid by other denominations."

3.9.2 However, the fact is that most, if not all ministers have opportunities to perform their ministry and earn extra money at the same time. Our concern is not with the need of such ministry nor the value of it, both which are evident, but with the payment involved.

3.9.3 There is provision in the *Plan* (para. 7) for District Council to approve additional paid work provided that "where more than one day per week is involved, the central MOM Committee may reduce the stipend by an appropriate amount after consultation with the minister's District Council and Provincial Moderator". We are told that this provision has never been invoked; perhaps it would seem penal to apply.

3.9.4 Alongside the teachers or hospital chaplains, some ministers are gifted writers or broadcasters. God has given a gift to be used; it is one thing to exercise that gift, another to expect to be paid extra for it while still drawing a stipend from the church. Other ministers, with attractive church buildings or in a particular community setting, may expect to spend significant amounts of their time on the preparation and conduct of weddings; this is their ministry, for which they already receive a stipend. Similarly, some ministers have a large number of funerals.

3.9.5 The argument over preaching fees paid to stipendiary ministers is similar, though distinctive. The Ministries Department is bringing a revised statement about the policy to Assembly in 1988, following the debate in recent years. As to the practice, we would comment that widespread confusion of the terms *fees and expenses* is a barrier to the resolution of the matter; if proper travelling and other expenses are calculated and paid, the residual issue about hardship or expectations will be much easier to solve. (See note)

3.9.6 The whole area of additional earnings from ministry is most sensitive. We can bring no recommendations. If General Assembly were wholly the employer, a ruling concerning the possible repayment of such additional earnings (Anglican-style) into the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund could be proposed, debated and determined. As it is, this is a matter of personal conscience; any constraints are moral, not legal. *Note: Assembly passed the following resolution in 1988.*

Assembly passed the following resolution:

In the matter of Preaching Fees, the Assembly agrees that:

- a) the amount paid should always cover the actual expenses incurred by the visitor, whether minister or lay person, in undertaking the leadership of worship;
- b) and may, at the discretion of the local church, also include a gift,
- c) during a vacancy or sickness both a) and b) will be reimbursed, with a maximum figure being set by the MoM Committee from time to time, both for a single service and for a whole Sunday.

THE MINISTER

4.1. The United Reformed Church has produced several reports on the ministry over the years, most recently *Stress in the Ministry* in 1987. This section of our report concentrates on certain issues where best practice in employment might help.

Candidating

4.2.1 In order to assist the introduction of minister and pastorate we have already recommended a fuller self-description of the pastorate. We RECOMMEND(18) that every minister, especially in the context of a possible move, completes a curriculum vitae (cv). We offer a pro forma (Appendix C). Such a document is common in business and the professions. A prospective church has the right to expect reasonable disclosures of information about the minister, even if certain personal matters are properly excluded. The contents of a cv are controlled by the minister.

In-Service Training

4.3.1 No responsible employer would leave in-service training of staff (IST) to chance or to demand as we do in the church. Despite Assembly resolution, references in the *Plan* and other exhortation, only 67% in our questionnaire recorded IST as done. 22% actually recorded it as *not done*, (whether in pride or sorrow we do not know!).

4.3.2 We note that the Ministries Department is planning to produce a report on sabbaticals; we have addressed our comments to the other IST provision.

4.3.3 In every Province there is an In-Service Training Officer; this responsibility may be held by a full-time Training Officer or by a minister as an extra duty. We RECOMMEND(19) a thorough review of the system of Provincial In-Service Training Officers, such a review to include consideration of IST financing, which varies between Provinces. The ISTOs need much clearer brief, more training themselves and better exchange of information around their network.

4.3.4 Changes in the social context of ministry, e.g. between rural, suburban and urban pastorates, require a form of *induction training* if the minister is to be better prepared for a new post. We RECOMMEND(20) that every minister should complete one week's in-service training, within 6 months of moving to a new post.

4.3.5 We RECOMMEND(21) that District Council ensure that the terms of settlement include a commitment to support the minister's annual period of IST, with time off granted by the pastorate.

4.3.6 We could wish to see an element of obligation over IST. At least we hope that our Recommendations will result in a more attractive package, comprising a better set of options, a clearer statement of the pastorate's willingness for the time away, better guidance available from ISTOs and the provision of adequate funding. This should raise the 67% to a more acceptable proportion. There being no stick, the carrot must be effective.

Equal Opportunities

4.4.1 We are glad that according to the *Basis of Union* "all ministries shall be open to both men and women" and that Assembly in 1987 adopted its declaration on racism (Record pp 11-12).

4.4.2 We restate our belief that the United Reformed Church should observe the best practice of an *equal opportunity employer* in respect of ministers, even though the legislation may not strictly apply.

4.4.3 Discrimination is more than statements like "we do not want a woman or a black minister", although such statements are being made in the church. It is related to the structure of an organisation and the expectations we have of the work people will do. Women may have different career patterns; we do not always value the particular skills and experience they bring. A statistical examination of the place of women in the church shows that we do not use them as widely in the more influential places as we do male ministers. This is known as structural discrimination. It does not mean that people set out deliberately to exclude women or black people but that underlying expectations and assumptions mean that they are excluded.

4.4.4 We have not enquired into the specific experiences or options of black ministers or URC members. We RECOMMEND(22) that the working party on racism which prepared the declaration for Assembly will go on to pursue its own question: "why is it that black people do not play much part in District Councils, Provincial Synods or General Assembly?" (1987 Reports p 22) and examine whether there are barriers to black people offering for the ministry.

4.4.5 We RECOMMEND(23) that the United Reformed Church adopts a policy of equal opportunities, in a declaration such as Appendix E, and that the Ministries Department regularly monitors the advocacy, recruitment, training and deployment of ministers in the context of such a policy.

Support

4.5.1 We echo the comment of *Stress in the Ministry* (para 6.5): "there are few professions that leave their practitioners so independent and sometimes so isolated as the church". We too have asked their question: "why do ministers regard it as an intrusion into their privacy to receive ministry?" We would address two specific matters only, personal support and marriage breakdown.

4.5.2 However self-regulating a profession the ministry may be, we must insist on better practice in the area of support. We need more than crisis management. If there is to be more and better support of ministers as persons we RECOMMEND(24) that a District or Provincial committee (as determined in a Province) with the Moderator check regularly that every serving minister has access to one of the support structures mentioned in *Stress in the Ministry* at (para 6.5, items 1-5).

4.5.3 We again draw attention to *Stress in the Ministry*. In section 5 the particular circumstances of the minister's family life, especially if things go wrong, are sensitively set out.

4.5.4 That report calls for a *code of practice* in cases where a minister's marriage breaks down. We are not convinced that such a document, seeking to meet every practical contingency, would be practicable or appropriate.

4.5.5 Alongside their pastoral role, Provincial Moderators must be in a position to offer practical help, according to each set of circumstances. For example, in such cases there is usually delay, and it may be that the church will accept some responsibility towards both partners, if only to ensure adequate legal and welfare advice to enable provisional arrangements to be agreed until such time as the court rules on the matter.

4.5.6 We believe that, insofar as provision of housing is part of overall entitlement of a serving minister (the stipend package), there is a degree of responsibility on the part of the church towards a separated spouse. Some Provinces have been able to act generously in particular cases. Assembly in 1982 agreed that welfare funds might be used for not more than 12 months towards housing costs of a separated spouse if a Provincial Moderator presents a case. We RECOMMEND(25) that this 12-month

rule be reviewed by the Assembly's Pastoral Reference Committee and, if it is found to cause hardship, Assembly must be told and invited to reconsider whether its policy over discretionary payments needs revision, what the possible costs would be and where the finance might be found.

Discipline Procedure

4.6.1 A statement on suspension, resignation and deletion from the roll of ministers is being brought to the 1988 Assembly by the Vocations Committee at the request of the Executive Committee. We have therefore refrained from comment on what would otherwise have been an important item within the remit of this working party.

Grievance

4.7.1 Where the complaint is in the other direction, i.e. where a minister is aggrieved about attitudes or actions on the part of a pastorate, District Council or Provincial Synod (or individuals representing any of these bodies), the first priority is to resolve it informally, with the involvement of District and Provincial representatives as appropriate. Such serious issues rarely arise without warning signs. They do seem as likely to arise as matters which might lead to discipline, however, and it is doubly important for the minister to know where he/ she stands.

4.7.2 In the light of the preceding comments, we RECOMMEND(26a) the following outline of a relatively informal grievance procedure which seeks to highlight where the responsibility lies:

- (i) The purpose of a grievance procedure for ministers is to give a legitimate place of complaint and to solve the problems as quickly and as simply as possible.
- (ii) It is important that grievances are treated seriously, because they are genuine to the person concerned.
- (iii) It is important to discover whether the grievance is legitimate.
- (iv) In the first instance the minister with the grievance should approach the Provincial Moderator; however if the grievance is against the

Moderator, they should approach the District Secretary or Synod Clerk.

- (v) The Moderator should approach both parties, respond to the grievance and where possible make effective a reconciliation.
- (vi) Where immediate reconciliation is not possible, a small independent group should be established by the appropriate council of the church, consisting of laypeople and ministers, men and women.
- (vii) Either party should be able to challenge the composition of the group which should reflect the nature of the grievance (e.g. if it concerns equal opportunities, members of the group should be seen to have some knowledge of the field).
- (viii) The group should then meet with both parties who may be accompanied by a friend. The group should again attempt a reconciliation but, if this is not possible, should arbitrate between them.

4.7.3 Because the responsibilities of employer are spread throughout the church's structure, we further RECOMMEND(26b) that Assembly makes clear the responsibility of District Council in this regard and that of Provincial Synod vis-a-vis the District.

Retirement

4.8.1 A good employer will retain a genuine concern for and link with employees into retirement; this will be in part financial (because of pensions), partly pastoral (though welfare officers etc.). No less can be expected in the church.

4.8.2 Pastorally the minister and widow(er) have a special claim on the attention of the church, not least because of the adjustment required from a leadership role to a new one. The procedure for this varies; it includes regular Moderatorial visits and/or District care. It is relatively easy to keep track of retired ministers but we believe that some widow(er)s slip out of touch. And inevitably the level of local pastoral care varies in different churches. We RECOMMEND(27) that every Province (or District) regularly review its procedures for a) maintaining lists of ministers and widow(er)s resident in their area, b) determining how often on average they should receive an official call, and from whom, and c) agreeing on any annual gifts.

4.8.3 It is inevitable that some ministers will continue to serve, full-or part-time, after retirement age. A shortage of ministers may increase this tendency, and the church should take care lest this becomes undue pressure.

4.8.4 Where a minister has retired and is living in a house provided by the URC Retired Ministers Housing Society (RMHS) there can be a problem if it is suggested the minister accept another pastorate. We received this assurance from the chairman of the Society: the Society is "required to charge churches calling a retired minister already occupying one of our properties a more realistic rent than that paid by our tenants"; but "neither the officers of the Society nor the Moderators are aware of any case in which the minister has determined not to take a part-time pastorate for this reason."

4.8.5 Financially the retired are not all receiving the same, since they were in different Pension Funds. Some of those who are now in their late 70's and 80's may suffer considerable hardship if insufficient contributions were paid by them or on their behalf, as happened with some Congregational ministers and churches, of if no

provision was made officially, as was the case with Churches of Christ ministers' widows. One correspondent pleaded for a special addition for the over 80's; another was worried least regular Christmas gifts should become taxable. Both these last concerns have been recently addressed within the Finance and Administration Department. In the circular PEN/ARI (April 1987) the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee states that "widows and widowers of pensioners are usually paid 50% of their spouse's pension" and claim that "Pensions paid to members of the URC MPF who were never members of the funds of the former churches are paid at the same rate" as those who were. The actuarial arguments are outside our terms of reference but we invite the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to reassure the church over the matter of the oldest pensioners and non-pensioner widow(er)s in their next report to Assembly.

4.8.6 Serving ministers are expected to belong to the URC Ministers' Pension Fund (MPF) although there is no legal obligation to do so. The recent legislation allows for portability of pensions; the church would discourage ministers from transferring out. We cannot reproduce here the arguments on the matter set out in the leaflet PEN/ARI referred to above.

4.8.7 We can, however, draw attention yet again to the anomaly that provision of housing is an integral element in the stipend package of the serving minister, though it is not reckoned into the calculation of superannuation. The logic of that entitlement is that provision of basic housing should be part of the pension provided by the URC through the MPF, or otherwise by the church, e.g. by a housing association or by sheltered housing provision of some kind. We cannot find a flaw in that logic. The chairman of the RMHS expects "to be able to meet the needs of those retiring in the foreseeable future". We RECOMMEND(28) that, within the conditions already applied by the RMHS relating to length of service, personal circumstances, etc., the church should *guarantee* assistance to every minister at retirement to obtain adequate housing. Incidentally, there can be no question of provision of heat and light or other manse costs which are paid to the serving minister by way of working expenses; but they are of course payable to any serving minister over retirement age.

4.8.8 Two correspondents echoed a concern expressed to us by the Moderators over preparation for retirement. We understand that an average of 25 ministers retire each year. We are pleased that the Support Committee is arranging a pre-retirement course for ministers and their spouses in 1988, and we RECOMMEND(29) that this becomes a standard provision.

APPENDIX II (A)

MANSFIELD COLLEGE

The Revd. Robert Way presented the report of the Visitation in November 1989:

1. From 6th-10th November 1989, Mansfield College, Oxford received a team of visitors appointed by the Training Committee of the Ministries Department. The visitors were Dr. Ann Stevenson, the Revd. A. G. Burnham, and the Revd. R. J. Way (Convener). We wish to record our thanks to the Principal of Mansfield, Mr. Dennis Trevelyan, to the Director of Ordination Training, the Revd. Charles Brock, to the Fellows and members of the Senior Common Room, and to the Ordinands for their generous welcome and unflinching helpfulness throughout our stay.

2. Mansfield College is at a point of profound structural change. It was founded in the last century to be a hall of Theological Learning and a resource for the training of dissenting ministers. In the period since 1955 the college widened its scope to become a Permanent Private Hall of the University. It established a Senior Common Room with Fellows of a wide range of disciplines, and has taken undergraduates for a number of different faculties. Mansfield was still first and foremost a Theological Hall and the non-theological fellows with the graduate and undergraduate students were seen to be in a supporting role. This has now changed. A new constitution has been established with the agreement of the Charity Commissioners and the General Assembly. This makes ordination training no longer the main *raison d'être* of the college, though still a major and significant part of the college's structure and academic character. The other disciplines no longer feel themselves to be merely in a supporting and secondary role. Dennis Trevelyan, a distinguished former Civil Servant, was appointed Principal during the course of this year. Under the new constitution, the Trustees of the college have a high proportion of United Reformed persons upon it by statute. The staffing and endowment appointed for ordination training generously reflect the sense of debt which the college holds to the rock from which it was hewn. These resources are directed to Ordination Training by college statute, and not on yearly decision of the governing body. The outcome of these changes has been to make Mansfield more like a college of the University than it has been in all its former years. The next stage in Mansfield's plan is to be accepted as such. This requires its present endowment to be increased significantly, but there is every reason to hope that formal incorporation into the University will come within a few years.

3. Because of the new constitution of the college, we did not, as in former years, visit the college as such, but only the ordination training programme within it. This limitation upon our brief in no way hindered the college as a whole from generously affording us every liberty we required.

4. There are five members of the teaching staff -

The Revd. J. Charles Brock - Fellow for Ordination Training and Director; Liturgy, Pastoralia;

Dr. Donald A. Sykes - Honorary Fellow, Patristics, Greek

The Revd. Justine S. Wyatt - Spirituality, Reformation Studies, Internship Year. The Revd. Yvonne C. Workman - Ethics, Students' placements.

The Revd. Tony Tucker - Pastoral Psychology, Internship year, Placements.

Mrs. Carolyn Brock gives instruction in speech and Church music.

Each of these is active in a local pastoral charge with the exception of Dr. Sykes and of the Revd Tony Tucker who is giving service to Mansfield and to the District Council as Pastoral Convener.

Lecturers who are members of other theological halls in Oxford (Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic and Baptist) also teach our students, whilst the lecturers who are members of Mansfield also teach theirs. Mansfield College is seeking an incumbent for a new Fellowship in New Testament Studies, and is confident of being able to appoint a scholar of high and established international repute during the course of this academic year. It is expected that a Lutheran Tutor, funded by the Lutheran World Federation will be in residence by September 1990.

5. In 1980, the Assembly, acting upon the advice of the visitors to Mansfield in 1979, encouraged the college to introduce training in spirituality into the course. Assembly also encouraged the college to shape the course so that instead of preparing the students to give pastoral maintenance to the church, it prepared them to lead the church in Mission. Both these matters have been taken by the college in to their consideration. The Revd. Justine Wyatt (who was an ordinand at Mansfield at the time of the last visit) was in 1980 and in the first year of her ordination, appointed to her present post in college. She has given courses in Spirituality during her years there. More far reachingly, the direction of the course at Mansfield has been influenced by "Partners in Practice" the report of the Overseas Theological Educators who visited Britain in 1987.

6. Currently the 25 ordinands following the programme are mainly graduates, though from a number of Universities and various disciplines. As advanced students they form the Middle Common Room with other graduate students of the college. Their advanced status, the character of their studies, and their average age, separates them from the younger members of the college. Their training is enhanced when they make opportunity to listen and to share with their younger colleagues. The ordinands live out of college in houses and flats in various parts of Oxford by choice. We saw little evidence that they regarded Mansfield merely as a place to be attended for instruction whilst the pivot of their life lay elsewhere. They evidently belong to one another and Mansfield is the place where this fellowship has its primary root.

7. The ordination programme trains students for the stipendiary ministry of the United Reformed Church and the Congregational churches by a two or three year academic course based on the University Certificate of Theology or (more rarely) the B.A. degree in theology. A year's internship training normally completes this, but it may, exceptionally, fall between the second and third year of residence. The college also offers training in those aspects of ministerial formation which lie outside the formal requirements of the Certificate of Theology or of the Degree.

Auxiliary ministers who are seeking appointment as stipendiaries are required by the Assembly to take a year in college. The college oversees these students and provides them with suitable course work and internship placements where appropriate. They are as well incorporated into the life of the other ordinands as one can expect.

The college is considering the possibility of providing training for auxiliary ministers bearing in mind our ecumenical commitments, but still holds the matter open whilst the questions of principle and practicality are discussed.

8. The course is characterised by three themes: Contextual, Ecumenical, Collaborative.

9. The course is contextual. Ordinands each have a placement in a local church or other institution near Mansfield which changes each year of their course, the local

churches differing in their social setting and character. In this way it is hoped that a variety of Ministerial experiences are brought to bear upon the studies taken. Ordinands are encouraged to study with their minds alert to the assumptions of the society in which they are to serve, especially when these are held intuitively and not intellectually. The ordinands are absorbing models for analysis from their course teachers. Although living in the non-academic community, it was not always plain that they were managing to listen to their neighbours. Nonetheless in the classes which we attended, we constantly overheard internal conversations going on between the subject being studied, its significance for the world, and its implication for pastoral practice. The teaching made such inner debates natural to the ordinands and it can only spell good for the life of the church in coming years. Some of these classes take place in students' homes in industrial and racially mixed areas where relevant underlying questions cannot be avoided. The aim of the teaching is to produce clear thinking which is expressed in relevant words and practice. The ordinands' experience from their past careers and present lives is taken seriously and used as a resource. We live in the context of what God has accomplished and is seeking to accomplish in Jesus Christ. To understand the experience of everyday in the light of that context is a part of sharing the Good News. Ministers are to open the eyes of the world so that it may see life in ways which spring from the gospel. Its not easy, and we are glad that students have opportunity to practice the art whilst still in their college days.

10. The course is ecumenical. There is no Theological Federation as there is in Cambridge and Manchester, but Mansfield and the three Anglican colleges all use the certificate of theology as part of their curriculum. The Baptist College sends only one of its students to the certificate course, preferring to train its students by means of the Bachelor's degree. The students on the certificate course share seminars and lectures together, though the wide range of electives makes this sharing much less thoroughgoing than would otherwise be the case. The certificate course is taught by University teachers and by the staffs of the colleges involved. Mansfield and Ripon College, Cuddesdon work especially closely in providing combined courses in some of the subjects which lie within and outside the Certificate curriculum. Shared tutorials are not so prominent a feature of the course as we had hoped, and this deprives students from different traditions of the opportunity to share this searching experience of learning in years which lay the foundation of future ministry.

11. The course is collaborative. Within the course arranged by the college, deliberately little time is spent on formal input from the teaching staff by way of the traditional lecture. The aim of the staff is to provide a framework of ideas and of information within which the students take it in turn to provide a paper or a proposal, and to lead discussion. The relaxed relationships between the staff and the students, and among the students themselves, tend to take feelings of threat out of this pattern. Self imposed standards appear to be high, but making mistakes does not lead to rejection or to loss of dignity. These are profitable exercises, and students from different denominational colleges frequently work in teams to prepare them. The emphasis on team effort as distinct from solo performance is bound to shape the relationship which the ordinands will build with their elders and their congregation and other ministers in years to come. Each year the ordinands are invited to evaluate the course they have taken. This is a positive exercise and of value to both teachers and to the taught. The report makes fascinating reading and reveals that our future ministers are avid readers of *Which?* It reveals that the ordinands may not totally share the collaborative vision of their mentors. Instead of seeing themselves and their teachers mutually engaged in a shared piece of creative Christian service, they sometimes appear to regard the course as a consumer item which ought to cater for their desires and to be approved or disapproved accordingly. The collaborative character and value of the course will be enhanced should the present attempts of Revd. Yvonne Workman to involve ordinands' spouses in the life of the college be met with success.

12. The training offered is likely to prove to be an excellent preparation for ministry and mission in the Church. The content of the course and the way in which it is taught appear to enable the ordinands to appropriate landmarks for understanding and self-expectation which will enable them to grow in skill and maturity in following years. The sheer busyness of the course, especially in the second year, may be a negative factor. There needs to be space for growing insights to settle in peoples' minds and for them to be integrated into their characters. The staff are giving thought to this and we welcome it.

13. The pattern of worship at Mansfield is always in flux. In accordance with the visitors' suggestion in 1979, the present pattern of scripture readings in chapel is based upon a lectionary. From Monday to Wednesday this reading provides the backbone of the worship offered, and is followed by a period of shared spontaneous prayer. These services are led by ordinands in turn. On Thursday morning Lutheran matins are said or sung. On Friday the Eucharist is celebrated. A worship class takes place weekly in chapel, and on Wednesday a sermon is preached before the college in the course of a service of worship. The preachers on Wednesday evening are often from outside college and provide a stimulus to the thinking of those present. The preacher normally spends an hour with the ordinands after hall. Worship is offered on Sunday evening. These services, except for the weekly sermon class, are open to all members of the college, but the attendance is largely confined to ordinands. The music in chapel is under the care of Mrs. Carolyn Brock. All the services we attended reflected care for the worship of God, and were an encouragement in Christian living.

The ordering and conduct of worship is largely in the students' care, and we found their freedom to experiment with set patterns or less structural worship commendable. We were encouraged to find that the form chosen on a particular day was the result of common decision and not of individual whim. May we encourage those who plan and conduct worship to remember that the chapel is a place of prayer for the several hundred men and women who are members of Mansfield, and that the services should offer them all an entrance to the good things of God. In 1979 the visitors hoped that worship would soon be shared by the ordinands of the theological halls. That hope has yet to be realised, but the recently appointed Principal of Wycliffe Hall independently expressed his desire for this to the Director and to the visitors. We can only encourage the suggestion.

14. We were provided with a record of last year's examination marks. The course is exacting and the University's standards are high, and ordinands are not selected solely on the basis of academic ability. The marks gained were generally middle to low *beta* with a sprinkling of *gammas* and even fewer *alphas*. We recall that the course makes engagement with the world a strong feature, and that this shifts the focus of students' away from purely academic endeavour. We also recall that the course is a determinedly practical course which is designed to prepare men and women for the hard task of ministry and mission. We hope that these facts may be brought to the attention of those who design the Certificate course. The visitors noted that this shift away from academic emphasis is one outcome of the new approach to ministerial training which the college has adopted.

15. The financial position of the college and of the Ordination Programme within it has improved enormously since the last visit of the assessors. The centenary appeal has released the generosity of a wider group of well disposed people not just the church, and the new appeal to establish a substantial endowment fund is being regarded confidently by the Bursar. A recent bequest has provided generous endowment for the New Testament Fellowship. The buildings have been renovated, spalling stonework has been replaced and the complex is now weathertight and much warmer and drier than heretofore. The theological library has been given welcome space of its own and has an adequate annual income for it to accomplish its purposes. The students appear to have adequate access to the books they need.

16. Reflections and observations.

- (a) Some of the students and staff contended that the hierarchical pattern of life in college with its different common rooms and high table is not a helpful context for the training of ministers. It is to be supposed that the majority of undergraduate and graduate students, as well as the senior members of college approve of this pattern. It may be that this pattern can be used by the ordinands as a reflection of the patterns which shape society and hence as a contribution to their contextual training. This situation is another consequence of Mansfield's aim to become a college of the University. Doubtless yet further consequences will manifest themselves and we encourage the Director of the programme to give imaginative consideration to what restrictions upon space, time, and staffing and finance may come to light in the future so that healthful adjustments to the new and chosen context of life within the University may be made.
- (b) The ordinands in the second year spoke of the pressures upon them. This seems to be a complaint not without substance, though we noted that those who said that they were affected by it were active in calling and participating in extra meetings and discussions. Pressure of this kind is a constant condition of ministerial life, and present experience may constitute good training. Staff and students have been considering the replacement of the present 8 week terms by 10 week terms. Though not a perfect solution, this would bring Mansfield into line with the other theological halls and make it possible for some of the pressures to be eased. Thought could well be given to the best use which could be made of the leisured weeks which follow examinations, and the moving of some courses from the second to the third year could also be taken into mind.
- (c) Although 15 out of the 50 URC students who have studied at Mansfield in the past 10 years have proceeded to higher degrees, in some parts of the Church regret has been expressed that Mansfield no longer makes the production of theological scholars a high priority. The course at Mansfield is an excellent course for the preparation of men and women to minister in the churches and in the world, but it is true that thought needs to be given by the Church to the enterprises of academic theology and to providing skilled teachers for the Church of the day after tomorrow. The faith is commended in places of learning by Christians of learning; this is a part of the mission to which the Church has been called. The present course is directed towards promoting the mission of the Church. It sees the mission to include high scholarship but to be wider than high scholarship alone. Nonetheless disquiet remains in the Church, and the visitors encourage the director of the programme and the other teaching staff to make their aims clear to the Church, to explain these roots aims in the Christian tradition, and to make clear how the aspirations of former times are being respected in contemporary methods of training.
- (d) The course is designed to train ministers who shall lead the church in mission. It makes unspoken assumptions about the nature of mission. There are other understandings of mission current in the church, and we were not certain that the students were being given a sympathetic awareness of them. This is necessary if needless incapacity to serve parts of the church is not to occur in later ministry. It is at this point that our concern about the spiritual development of the ordinands comes to a focus. They need to learn a deep and disciplined prayerfulness at this stage in their lives. Without it will they be able to fulfil their ministerial duty of praying for their people, will they find it difficult to find common creative ground with local churches which build upon other understanding of

mission, and will their own style of mission lose the grace of bringing the presence of God to the notice of the world?

- (e) The number of staff has risen by two since the end of the last academic year. This has eased the pressure of work considerably and made more searching teaching and preparation possible. However, we consider that the wise practice of having the teaching staff also in pastoral charge has certain drawbacks. It becomes almost impossible for the staff to give themselves adequately to their teaching, their research, their preparation, their administrative responsibilities, or to the pastoral care of their churches. That their attainment in these fields has generally been as high as it has, has only been at the expenditure of reserves of personal energy which may prove to be to the individual's and the churches' cost in coming decades. The Director, thanks to the presence of the Revd. Yvonne Workman who is his colleague in a local church as well as in Mansfield, was able to take sabbatical leave last academic year. This is his entitlement as a fellow of the college. The other staff are lecturers and as such have no sabbatical leave as distinct from normal In-Service Training. We urge the Assembly through the Training Committee to consider ways whereby sabbatical leave may be provided for all the staff on the ordination Programme at Mansfield. This may involve careful negotiation with the college authorities, but it would bring benefits to the college and give these members of staff the same access to study leave as is enjoyed by the staff in our other colleges.

The present staff of the ordination programme have been appointed to their college duties in a variety of ways. We appreciate that there are differences between appointment to such a post and the receipt of a call from a local church, but we wondered if the Reading and Oxford District of the Wessex Province may wish to consider if such appointments should receive the concurrence of the wider church. We were glad to hear that it is the intention of the Director to issue public advertisements when posts fall to be filled in future. The present complement of staff is bound to change over the years. We ask the Director, in consultation with his colleagues, to consider ways in which this transition can be eased with the minimum of disruption to the course and to the Ordinands' interests.

- (f) We noted the absence of Philosophy of Religion from the ordination course except as a rarely chosen elective, and we regretted it. Most of the ordinands have no grounding in philosophy. A well taught course would equip them with conceptual tools which would be useful for understanding and for clarifying questions which they are certain to be asked in their ministry. More important still this study would force them to question ill-based assumptions and secondhand beliefs of their own. The discomfiture of it would set them free for more effective ministry.
- (g) We commend the fact that staff and students are positively encouraged to take part in the councils of the Church and to accept responsibility in them where this is appropriate. The experience gained there is shared with fellow students and made a resource for training.

17. We are excited by Mansfield. The ordination course is boldly experimental whilst being carefully planned and taught by dedicated teachers. It demands much of the ordinands; the quality of the course and of the teaching is made plain by the wholehearted response which they give to it. Mansfield is undergoing a period of far reaching change. Change always brings disquiet, exhilaration, and not a little untidiness. There is more change to come, and we are confident that Mansfield will continue to use its passage as a positive resource. Our suggestions have not been made to stop mistakes from going further, but in the hope of enabling admirable

ideas achieve their deserved success with yet more vigour. Mansfield has given much down the years; its present bestowals may differ in style from those of former days, but are still rich in quality and merit the gratitude and encouragement of the Church.

The Visitors recommend that:

- 1) We record our thanks to the Principal, the Fellows, the lecturers and the Ordinands of Mansfield College for their ready welcome and their courteous help in the conduct of the visit.
- 2) We commend the way in which most of the findings arising from the visit of 1979 have been implemented, but once again urge the college:-
 - (i) to make contact with Black and Pentecostal Churches in this country, in order to learn from their style of ministry;
 - (ii) to discern and to implement ways by which the private devotional discipline of the ordinands may be encouraged and given depth.
- 3)
 - (i) We are glad to hear that a new constitution has been drawn up for Mansfield College, we rejoice in the hope that Mansfield may soon become a constituent college of the University.
 - (ii) We request the Ministerial Training Committee of Mansfield College to consider what changes of opportunity this new context may bring for the Ordination Programme, and to report to the Training Committee in due course.
- 4) We encourage the Ministerial Training Committee of Mansfield College to consider the most suitable length of term for Ordinands, to consider whether the value of the training would be enhanced if some of the courses taken in the second year were to be given in the first or third years, and requests them to take action appropriate to the conclusions reached.
- 5) We request the college to take active steps to encourage shared worship among the Theological Halls of Oxford.
- 6) We commend to the Director the inclusion of Philosophy of Religion as a required part of the curriculum.
- 7) We encourage the college to consider the training of candidates for the auxiliary ministry within its provisions for the Church.
- 8) We commend the intention of the Director to advertise teaching posts at Mansfield when they fall vacant.
- 9) We request the Training Committee to inform the Church upon the present aims and character of the training given ordinands at Mansfield College.
- 10) We request the Training Committee to consider the issues raised in paragraphs 14 and 16 (c) both in relation to Mansfield College and ministerial training generally in the URC.
- 11) We request the Training Committee to consider ways whereby sabbatical leave may be provided for all the teaching staff on the ordination programme.
- 12) We commend the members of Mansfield College to the care of Almighty God and pray that their endeavours may be guided towards the achievement of good ends.

APPENDIX II (B)

COLLEGE REPORTS

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Make a Joyful Noise.....

1. The worship in the college chapel is at the heart of the community's life; it is now enhanced by a repaired and renewed chapel organ and also by considerable musical skills in the current student body, skills much in evidence at a concert to celebrate the work on the organ.

2. The celebration was also of the generosity of the Friends of Westminster and Cheshunt Colleges, who provided the funds for the work; their eagerness to support the college is a great encouragement to staff and students. So a joyful noise is heard morning by morning and in the Friday evening services with visiting preacher - a noise produced this year once again by over forty students, their families, the staff and visiting Senior Associates from the U.S.A.

...Unto God, All Ye Lands

3. Chapel worship constantly reminds the worshippers of God as present Lord, so that theological study is never abstracted from Christian life and service. The presence of overseas students, this year two from Columbia Seminary, Georgia, and one from the Comenius Faculty, Prague, keeps open windows to the world beyond Britain.

4. This year has brought a fuller awareness of Eastern Europe, through this Czech visitor, through a student holiday visit to Hungary, focussed on the parish of a recent sabbatical visitor, and of course through the extra-ordinary changes in all the Eastern European countries, in many cases reported first hand by correspondents among former visitors to the college.

Mark Ye Well Her Bulwarks

5. Another phrase from the Authorised Version Psalms is appropriate for reporting the considerable amount of work done by the Management Committee this year in assessing the needs for repair and development of the main building, the options for re-development of the back portions of the site to help finance such works and most importantly in looking for ways of providing more housing for students with families. By the Assembly of 1991 it should be possible to give a clearer picture of a way forward.

Relationships with the University of Cambridge

6. For these readers are invited to find their own Psalm quotation! There has been a recent increase in the number of Westminster College students studying for the Theology and Religious Studies Tripos as part of their preparation for ministry; five are currently doing so, after many years of only one or two such students. The electors of the Lewis and Gibson Scholarships are supporting this development by awarding the scholarships to cover the additional cost of the University courses and the Cheshunt Governors have greatly welcomed the endowment of a new bursary by Mrs. Helen Harris in memory of her late husband, the Revd Stephen Harris, this too for a student taking the Tripos.

7. The Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges is making good progress in negotiating a validation of its certificate by the University Faculty of Divinity, though the process involves some complex issues.

Mission and Evangelism

8. This heading needs to appear regularly in reports on the college because it is the centre of thinking about future planning both in the College and the Federation. This will affect all areas of the work and is also focussed through particular events such as an ecumenical mission in Stone, Staffordshire, and a survey of the 'religious geography' of Cambridge itself.

Staff Changes

9. The nomination of the Revd Janet Sowerbutts to be Moderator of Thames North Province brought great pleasure to her colleagues and all associated with Westminster College, coupled with a deep appreciation of what she has contributed in what now seems five very short years. She has been encouraged despite her departure to have her sabbatical term, now in preparation for new duties!

10. A new Director of Pastoral Studies every five or seven years brings a fresh insight to the vital link with the local churches but staff changes, of which there have been a number all at once at the Federation, and particularly at Westcott House, bring also a sense of loss to the continuing team. 'One generation shall praise thy works to another'.

MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

Students and staff

11. There are 25 students for the URC currently in training in Mansfield and another 13 in theology out of a total of 170 students in the college. We have added Revd's Yvonne Workman and Tony Tucker as half time staff and will be appointing a full time New Testament tutor. We hope to have a half time Lutheran Lecturer by October, giving us 7 on site tutors. The ratio of staff to ordinands is 1:8 taking into account that the staff believes in part-time college work so that they can be in pastoral charge in local churches. We have had visiting theologians and ministers from Britain and abroad who have graced the college, and good relationships exist in practical ways between Mansfield and the 11 other theological colleges. Wycliffe Hall, Ripon College, Cuddesdon, and Regent's Park College have been much involved in teaching and student exchanges. Mansfield hosted the annual URC students' conference.

12. **Mr D. J. Trevelyn** began his Principalship in September coming from his previous post as First Commissioner of the Civil Service. He brings managerial experience and wide contacts for our future development, plans which include raising £5.5. million by 1994 for full college status, new buildings, and work on new course and conference developments. He is keen to work closely with the churches.

13. **Revd B. G. Thorogood** continues as Chair of the Ministerial Committee which has control of the ordination course. The committee has a membership of 16 including one member from the Congregational Federation (who is currently its President) and the Principal and Director of Ministerial Training are ex-officio.

14. **Mrs. Linda Higgins** has been appointed as Ministerial Training Secretary.

15. **Dr. Donald Sykes** has been appointed Honorary Fellow and **Mr. George Carras** has returned to America after 7 years of New Testament tutoring.

URC Visitation

16. The college welcomed a visitation from the URC Training Committee chaired by the Revd Robert Way and included Revd Tony Burnham and Dr. Ann Stevenson. The college is grateful for their challenges and support. We expect to be able to fulfil their recommendations.

Wessex House

17. A large house for 6 ordinands was purchased and fitted out by the Wessex Provincial Trust for use by the college for which we are very grateful. It is placed in the poorer part of Oxford, close to some Anglican College houses. We will be developing work among the poor with Ripon College, Cuddesdon which will be integrated into the college and University training for ministry.

18. **College preachers** included Gareth Moore (Blackfriars) Verna Cassells (Selly Oak) Keith Forecast, Alan Billings (Cuddesdon), Elaine Bardwell (St. Stephen's House), Martin Conway (Selly Oak), Brian Marshall (Westminster Oxford), Martin Hazell, Brian Mountford (University Chaplain) Robert Patkal (Wembley) and college staff.

NORTHERN COLLEGE, MANCHESTER

19. It is gratifying to find that the increasing time devoted by students nowadays to placements and practical courses has not been at the expense of academic excellence. Students of the college have again distinguished themselves in the University examinations.

20. We are now getting more into the swing of things in our new course of integrated training, with Dr. Peel devoting the major portion of his time to this. The course is still a pilot project, and a good deal of time is spent on monitoring and developing it. However, the advantages of this type of training are now clear enough to us to encourage us to enrol more students on the course and we shall be grateful therefore to hear of candidates who would value the opportunity to earth their training as fully as possible in the life of a local church and community.

21. The course taken by most of our students follows more traditional lines and has a year's internship at the end. The review of internship initiated by the URC has been studied by the college and a number of developments are in hand. This also demonstrated the need for a more comprehensive examination of our training and a review will begin in the autumn.

22. Another stimulus to our thinking in the college and in the Federation is the report **Partners in Practice**. Based on a visit to theological colleges of this country by representatives of the churches of the Third World, this report is an interesting example of "mission in reverse" in which the churches of the northern hemisphere are challenged to listen to the younger churches of the southern hemisphere. The report asks us to look at a number of things which affect not only the college but also the Federation.

23. The need to broaden our horizons in our worship and in our training which was made by the inspectors continues to challenge us. We benefited greatly from having Mrs. Lucy Hong Luming of Shanghai for a year and plans are in mind to have another student from overseas. One of our students spent a year in Jamaica and another has hopes of spending some time with the younger churches. Also the student who won last year's Travel Award used this to go abroad.

24. The membership of the Governing Board of the college has had quite a shake-up. The retirement of a number of our older members provided the opportunity for a critical look at the composition of the Board. In appointing the new Governors we have sought to widen our geographical representation and increase the number of females and younger members. At the same time we have created a new committee to deal with advocacy.

25. One of the first tasks of the Advocacy Committee is to plan our first Open Day. This is to be held on the 17th March, 1990.

26. We are pleased to report that our first Mona Powell Fellow, the Revd David Stec successfully completed his research on the targum of the book of Job at the University of Manchester and been awarded his Ph.D. The new Mona Powell Fellow is the Revd Susan Durber, who is undertaking research in the parables of the gospels.

27. We have made progress in ensuring that our weekly college service is more of a collaborative offering, and we have plans to provide more help for students in evaluating Sunday services conducted by them.

28. The idea of a regional centre that would serve as an extension centre of the Federation and also has an ecumenical facility of local churches for training ministry has been on the agenda for some time. We regret however that we have to report that we have not made any progress so far in planning such a centre.

29. We have drawn attention on previous occasions to the adverse effects of government policy on the staffing of the Faculty of Theology in the University of Manchester and the concern of the General Assembly that the John Rylands Chair of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis should be maintained when the present occupant of the Chair (Revd Professor B Lindars, SSF) retires in June 1990, has been communicated to the University. We await the outcome of the case which is being prepared by the Faculty of Theology.

THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM

Student numbers

30. A particularly large first year intake has increased our numbers above last year's to 68 plus 3 visiting overseas students and 3 part-time students. The denominational breakdown is 40 Methodist, 24 Anglican and 5 URC students, (including one undertaking non-residential training on the West Midlands Course). The average age of the student body remains at 35. The proportion of women students has reduced to 32%. The majority of students are pursuing college courses but 4 are studying for the BA in Theology at the University of Birmingham, 18 for the post-graduate Diploma in Theology and 8 are doing research for higher degrees.

Staffing

31. Two new members of staff arrived in September: Revd Dr Christina le Moignan, a Methodist minister and Revd Bridget Woollard, an Anglican deacon, to maintain our full complement of 7 full-time staff and one half-time. Revd David Parker was on sabbatical for the summer term of 1989 completing work for his book on Codez Brezae and studying Latin manuscripts of the Bible. Revd John Wilkinson submitted a PhD thesis on "The Black Christian presence in the mainstream churches in Great Britain with specific reference to the Church of England" to the University of Birmingham in December. Two more of our existing staff have been given Recognised Lecturer status at the University.

Administration

32. We are continuing to implement the recommendations of last year's Inspectors' report, and various aspects of college administration have been improved, though the Working Party on management structures has not yet completed its work.

33. Careful attention continues to be paid to the buildings and finances by the Bursar and an advisory committee. Two houses for staff members have been purchased off-campus, freeing two three-bedroomed flats on campus for students. Work has begun on a three-year programme to improve the kitchen facilities.

Developments

34. Revd Arnold Johnson, a retired Methodist minister, has been appointed part-time chaplain.

35. Much thought has been given this year to the major curriculum revision and review necessitated by a change in policy on the part of the Church of England. It is hoped that our new curriculum and assessment procedures will be in place by September 1990.

36. Negotiations have begun with the University and the Selly Oak Colleges about the possibility of a B. Theol. degree to replace the existing Certificate course.

37. In an attempt to enable the small group of URC students to feel more a part of the college and to give due recognition to their place in the college community, a URC oversight/pastoral committee has been set up on the initiative of the Principal, and a member of staff (Revd Dr Stephen Dawes) has been given particular responsibility for the URC students.

Mission

38. In addition to continued involvement in the life of the city and its wide variety of churches and faith communities, the college was heavily involved in the Citywide Celebrations with Desmond Tutu in April 1989. This year's college mission is to be in Crosby, Liverpool.

39. Our three overseas students are from the Church of China, and the Lutheran churches of Estonia and Czechoslovakia. Given the momentous events in all of those places in the autumn of 1989 the college has felt what it is to be part of the world church. Our annual exchange with the seminary at Tamil Nadu in South India during the spring term continues.

40. The curriculum review has attempted to keep in mind the principles of the "Faith in the City" report and has attempted to provide a mission perspective to the whole of the new curriculum.

41. In addition the annual month's Joint Course with the Roman Catholic seminary at Oscott on the subject of the Eucharist has again proved most beneficial, and we are discussing whether to continue this topic or to move to one which would include a broader range of issues on church and ministry.

APPENDIX II (C)

STUDENTS IN TRAINING 1989/90 (as at 28th February 1990)

NORTHERN PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Ruth Crofton (Northern), Timothy London (Northern), Peter Grey (Northern).

Auxiliary

Steven Orange (NEOC).

NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Elizabeth Byrne (Westminster), Alison Chart (Northern), Christopher Searle (Northern), Duncan Goldie (Westminster), Philip Nevard (Mansfield), Lythan Nevard (Mansfield), Robert Warwick (Mansfield), John Mitchell (Northern), Norman Riley (Northern), Stephen Sutcliffe (Northern), Revd Jim Forster (Northern), Eric Massey (Northern), Revd Andrew Lonsdale (Northern), Hamish Temple (Northern).

Auxiliary

Audrey Boon (MCI), Brenda Ford (MCI), Paul Brewerton (URC), Howard Farson (MCI), Vivian Langfield (MCI)

MERSEY

Stipendiary

Andrew Dawson (Northern), Sandra Dears (Northern), Paul Holmes (Northern), Heather MacLeod (Northern), Heather Gabbott (Northern), Philip Smith (Northern).

Auxiliary

Peter Brown (MCI), Susan Flynn (MCI), Trevor Legge (MCI), Kathleen Watts (URC), Linda Elliott (MCI), Alison Hall (Northern).

YORKSHIRE

Stipendiary

Peter Clarkson (Northern), Margaret Herbert (Westminster), William Nicol (Mansfield), Derek Redfern (Northern), David Fraser (Westminster), Rowena Francis (Northern), David Haslam (Northern), James Kissack (Mansfield), Fran Kissack (Mansfield).

Auxiliary

Iain Bentley (MCI), Julia Martin (MCI), Mirella Moxon (MCI), Marjory Swift (MCI), Brenda Sugden (MCI), Allan Blue (MCI).

EAST MIDLANDS

Stipendiary

Paul Barrett (Westminster), Martyn Coe (Northern), Graham Maskery (Northern), Angela Wood (Northern), Enid Slater (Northern), Maxwell Shepherd (Queens), Ruth Haward (Northern), Keith Brown (Westminster), Ian Smith (Westminster).

Auxiliary

Leslie Watson (URC), Revd Reginald Moore (EMMTC), Alison Brooks (EMMTC), Douglas Watson (URC), Grenville Fox (URC), Maureen Buxton (URC), Betty Chadwick (EMMTC), Barbara Flood-Page (EMMTC), Stephen Gilbert (SADMTS), Edward Landon (URC), Helen Matheson (URC), Paul Burton (URC), Rodger Charlton (URC).

WEST MIDLANDS PROVINCE**Stipendiary**

Thomas Bayliss (Westminster), Jane Stranz (Mansfield), Timothy Huc (Westminster), Kristin Ofstad (Westminster), Paul Stokes (Westminster), Peter Cruchley (Mansfield), Simon Walking (Mansfield), Kevin Jones (Westminster), Bill Frame (Queen's), Timothy Key (Northern), Jeffrey Hancocks (Queen's), Pat Nimmo (Queen's)

Auxiliary

John Bassett (MCI), Kenneth Newborough (WMMTC).

EASTERN PROVINCE**Stipendiary**

Roy Cole (Westminster), Margaret McKay (Westminster), Allan Smith (Mansfield), Geoffrey Clarke (Northern), Fleur Houston (Westminster), Bill Thomas (Mansfield), Neil Messer (Westminster), Revd David Robertson (Westminster), Andrew Snell (Westminster).

Auxiliary

Jacqueline Knight (URC), Irene Hinde (URC), Jeremy Priest (URC), Owen North (St. Albans), Mary Irish (URC).

SOUTH WESTERN**Stipendiary**

Ray Sowersby (Westminster), David Pickering (Mansfield), Sandra Pickard (Mansfield), Harold Bignell (Westminster), Peter Crocker (Westminster), Susan MacBeth (Mansfield).

Auxiliary

Andrew Pugh (URC), Pat Ford (SWMTC), Heather Pencavel (URC), Richard Gray (SDMTS), Myra Dillistone (SWMTS), Valerie Price (SWMTS), Gwyneth Jones (SWMTC).

WESSEX**Stipendiary**

Douglas Burnett (Westminster), Susan Cox (Westminster), John Wilkinson (Westminster), Eddie Boon (Northern), Brian Clarke (Northern), Kenneth Ellis (Northern), Andrew McLuskey (Mansfield), Richard Turnbull (Northern), Samantha Caton (Northern), Frank Cochrane (Mansfield), Revd Jim McCormack (Mansfield), Revd Patrick McManus (Mansfield).

Auxiliary

Bill Connell (SDMTS), Maureen Ponsford (SDMTS), Thea Jones (WMMTC), Birgitta Johnson (SDMTS), Ann Collins (URC), Peter Norris (SDMTS), Margaret Tilley (SDMTS), Keith Green (URC).

THAMES NORTH

ep

Stipendiary

Derek Jones (Westminster), James Pettitt (Westminster), Stephen Newell (Mansfield), Marlene Hunter (Northern), Keith Hagon (Northern), Simon Thomas (Northern), Richard Bittleston (Westminster), Revd Martin Truscott (Westminster), Martin Kitchener (Westminster), Brenda Denvir (Mansfield), Janet Lees (Mansfield), Heather Gleeson (Westminster), James Brown (Westminster).

Auxiliary

David Aplin (Oak Hill), Stewart Bullen (St.Albans), Malcolm Childs (Southwark), Norman Croft (URC), Robert Green (Oak Hill), Martin Legg (Oak Hill), Christine Willis (URC), Johnathan Hyde (Oakhill), David Skipp (URC), Peter Norcross (URC), David McNair (URC), Pat Crawshaw (URC).

SOUTHERN

Stipendiary

Paul Bedford (Westminster), Jean Black (Westminster), Jeanne Ennals (Westminster), David Harkison (Westminster), Simon Copley (Northern), Robert Day (Northern), Ranald Macdonald (Westminster), Valerie Reed (Northern), George Watt (Mansfield), John Braund (Westminster), Geoffrey Davis (Westminster), Margaret Juhasz (Westminster), David Littlejohns (Westminster), Adrian Skelton (Queen's), Neil Thorogood (Mansfield).

Auxiliary

William Gray (URC), Karen Street (URC), Marie Thistle (URC), Alex Aldridge (URC), Marina Jeffrey (URC), Meriel Chippindale (URC), Rosalind Harrison (URC).

PROVINCE OF WALES

Stipendiary

Andrew Mills (Westminster), Philip Webb (Northern), Keri Eynon (Westminster) Sally Thomas (Northern), Ruth Whitehead (Mansfield).

Auxiliary

Albert Barraah (URC).

COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

Stipendiary

Gwen Collins (Westminster)

CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS

Marie Trubic (Thames North), Helen Madden (Northern), Marilyn Allen (West Midlands), Bethan Galliers (Southern), David Twine (South Western).

Auxiliary Courses

CDTI	Carlisle Diocesan Training Institute
MCI	Manchester Christian Institute
EMMTC	East Midlands Ministry Training Course
NEOC	North East Ordination Course
Oak Hill	Oak Hill Non-Stipendiary Ministry Course
SADMTS	St. Albans Diocese Ministerial Training Scheme
SDMTS	Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme
SOC	Southwark Ordination Course

SWMTS
EAMTC
WMMTC
URCURC

South West Ministry Training Scheme
East Anglian Ministerial Training Course
West Midlands Ministerial Training Course
Auxiliary Ministry Training Programme

APPENDIX II (D)

Training Statistics

	Students in training February 1989	Students in training February 1990	Anticipated entry into URC service			
			1990	1991	1992	1993+
Westminster	40	41	12	13	10	6
Mansfield	23	25	7	5	10	3
Northern	44	42	19	7	1	1
Queen's	5	5	1	2	1	1
	112	113	39	27	30	17
Auxiliary courses	67	71	17	18	26	10
CRCW training	5	5	2	1	2	-
	184	189	58	46	58	27

APPENDIX III

Summary of the report from the MINISTERIAL RESOURCES WORKING PARTY

consisting of Colin Baxter (Convener), Peter Brain Secretary), Maureen Roberts and Roy Smith.

1.1. This working party was set up to address the issue of 'deployment'. However at our very first meeting in April 1988 we agreed that what is required is not a recalculated deployment formula for full-time stipendiary ministers (FSMs). Though we offer an interim recommendation as to dealing with the perceived shortage of

FSMs (see below, 2.6.), this is very much a stop-gap while the Church as a whole comes to terms with the larger questions of its need and its resources.

1.2. Though other approaches would have been equally valid, we have chosen to report under the headings 'full-time stipendiary ministers' and 'other ministers'.

1.3. We have seen our task, along with others as part of a Departmental programme, as four-fold:

- (a) to involve Districts and local churches in policy-making;
- (b) to assess the perceived needs for ministry nationwide;
- (c) to broaden the understanding of the church about patterns of ministry; and
- (d) to help prepare a debate on crucial issues at Assembly.

1.4. We have had some success in the first two. During 1988/9 a questionnaire was circulated nationwide. Our figures are derived from District Council responses which were themselves based on consultation with local churches. Fuller displays of District returns are available on request. The figures are precise enough for our purposes, even though they do not always add up, not least because responses arrived over several months!

1.5. Though our ideas have evolved as we met, we have not shifted from our basic twin convictions, arrived at in 1988, now expressed thus:

- (a) every local church ought to have a minister of its own (but self-evidently all cannot have a full-time stipendiary one);
- (b) the United Reformed Church should offer oversight (direct or indirect) to every local church from a stipendiary minister.

1.6. We would hope these would be the basis of any policy statement brought for Assembly approval, which we hope might be done not later than 1992. We offer this report as one contribution to the on-going debate.

1.7. The implications of our first conviction (a) are several, but one is this: we have been told that joint pastorates with only one shared minister (usually stipendiary) are generally perceived as being in decline, whereas those with their own minister (irrespective of category) are showing confidence and often growth.

Full-time stipendiary ministers (FSMs)

2.1. There are 701 FSMs serving in local pastorates.

2.2. There are 150 reported current vacancies for FSMs. In a typical month around 50 pastorates are either not yet formally scoped or are in process of being filled, leaving about 100 for consideration by the Moderators who are unable to suggest any name for between 30 and 50.

2.3. There is a reported 'need' for 16 extra FSMs in addition. This is a lower figure than some felt would emerge from the survey, since the United Reformed Church has over 1800 local congregations.

2.4. This total 'requirement' of 867 (701+150+16) might be arbitrarily reduced by 10% (the permitted buffer under the old deployment quota) suggesting a national total requirement of 780, a net figure of some 80 more FSMs than available.

2.5. However, for several reasons we are not prepared simply to conclude that the United Reformed Church must set about finding 80 more FSMs. The Department will need to examine more carefully the basis for calculating any longer-term target for the number of ministers needed, and only then to consider whether the number of FSMs included in such a target should indeed be 780 for the pastoral ministry. (see 1.6. above). Cost is one reason, but by no means the only one, for not pressing ahead to find so many FSMs.

2.6. But it cannot be denied that some means must be found in the short-term of sharing the apparent shortage, which an imminent peak of retirements will exacerbate. We feel the best way to do this, given the diffuse nature of authority in the United Reformed Church, would be to ask all Provinces to settle for the national average of vacant pastorates (approximately 18% at the time of the survey) as a target for the next two years. Currently half the Provinces are above this figure, half below.

2.7. More creative use of vacancies might be explored, especially if they need to be longer. The name 'vacancy' itself is full of negative connotations, and it is inaccurate (and possibly offensive) if a non-stipendiary minister remains in post.

2.8. The issue of whether Assembly might insist on posting a particular minister to a particular pastorate has been raised and cannot be dismissed out of hand. A closely related question is to ask whether the 'call' as traditionally understood has absolute primacy in a national church. Nor must we overlook the fact that to have a deployment policy implies that the FSM is free to move (open to a call), unlike other ministers; this raises issues of family ties, spouse's income, etc.

2.9. We also believe that the church needs a nationally agreed understanding of what constitutes a 'full-time' post, without which a deployment policy cannot be consistent. At present this is defined as 'what the District thinks'. We should encourage every District regularly to review its requirements for ministry. Any 'formula' for overall ministerial needs should be based on District needs and resources; it should reflect not only the strength/weakness of the URC (number of local churches and members to be served) but also the potential for mission (social factors, population change, ecumenical possibilities, etc.)

2.10 We noted that Provincial practice varies considerably over the collection of MoM contributions, especially over the treatment of vacant pastorates. We feel it would help if this was rationalised, not least to avoid misunderstanding if the next minister was not a full-time stipendiary.

Other ministers

3.1. There are 110 part-time stipendiary ministers (PSMs) in pastorates, and 35 current vacancies for PSMs reported in the survey. On average they are paid for half-time.

3.2. There is a reported 'need' for 184 PSMs, a net increase of 39. This need is not evenly spread nationwide as different Districts and Provinces have different approaches. In any case the supply of PSMs must be regionally limited. Many are retired FSMs and there is no certainty that they will be available where they are needed. In other words, it is hard to recruit PSMs as such but they must be a feature of any comprehensive policy.

3.3 There are 76 Auxiliary Ministers (Models 2 & 3) in pastoral charge, as distinct from Auxiliary Ministers Model 1 who always serve as associate or assistant to a minister in pastoral charge, and Model 4 whose ministry is at work or exercising a particular skill within the District Council. Undoubtedly some vacancies declared

for a stipendiary minister (full or part-time) might well be filled by a suitable non-stipendiary.

3.4. There is a reported need for 202 auxiliary ministers, which would mean an increase of 126.

3.5. The main thrust of this side of the survey is to confirm the view (see 1.5. above) that each local church should have - and actually wants - a minister of their own. We feel this strengthens any call for a major expansion of the non-stipendiary ministry programme.

3.6. Though CRCWs do not come into the reckoning as far as filling pastoral vacancies is concerned, it is interesting to note a reported need for 69, as compared with 6 currently in post. We may take some of the figures with a pinch of salt but it does indicate a growing appreciation of the ministry of community work across the country. This finding will be fed into the current review of the CRCW programme.

January 1990.

COMMUNICATIONS AND SUPPLIES COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd David Netherwood
Secretary: Mrs Carol Rogers

PUBLICATIONS

Reform

1. When Reform began in 1972 readers wrote to say what they wanted of it. High on the list were 'the human side of our faith and witness, spiritual help, digests, comments from experts, overseas news, the good work our leaders do outside their own Church' and no 'laborious articles, asked for 'less of that controversial material that is undermining faith' and at the same time 'lively, adult controversy'.

2. All this we still try to do, and not to do (apart from offering occasional 'instructions on giving'). As a reader recently pointed out, the cover price, which at 7p in 1972 was 2 / times the ordinary letter post is today - at 50p - just 2 / times; and *Reform* pays its way.

3. The Editorial and Management Board is working hard to make sure more people know about *Reform* and would welcome help. It still reaches more people in the URC than anything else the church produces - and publishes their views advertises their needs and offers them jobs. No doubt it could always be better than it is; it could certainly be better used and more widely enjoyed.

Annual Book

4. The annual book for 1990 is " *On Judging Caesar* " by Bernard Thorogood. It is hoped that copies will be available from the Assembly Bookstall.

5. The 1989 book, *Children of the Wilderness*, by David Jenkins and Stephen Thornton continues to sell well. Previous titles are also selling steadily and are being stocked by many Christian Bookshops, which ensures a readership beyond that of the URC .

Year Book

6. The 1989/90 Year Book was published in October 1989. The editors appreciate accurate information on Church Returns Forms, especially regarding telephone numbers and post codes, and early notice of additions and amendments.

Diary

7. The 1990 diary has reverted to a Sunday start to each page as requested by many people, while retaining the new shape. Sales have continued to increase. The 1991 dairy will be available in August and early orders would be appreciated.

DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPLIES

8. The on-going work of the section continues throughout the year peaking during the latter part with the publication of the Diary, Year Book, Prayer Handbook, 1% Appeal literature and the Annual Book. In 1989 *Threads of Creation* was published and has been sold both to individuals and to a number of Christian Book Shops.

9. Recognizing that it is sometimes difficult to order goods unseen encouragement is given to Provinces, Districts and local churches to take a selection of materials for special events. Most Provincial Synods carry a range of materials on their bookstalls and material is also passed on to be sold at some District Council meetings. These items are usually supplied on a sale or return basis, the postage costs being met centrally.

10. A number of churches have a book agent registered through the Publisher's Association. By including the URC Bookshop as one of those nominated, a discount will be given on most items supplied.

PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

11. Brian Cooper continues to act on behalf of the URC as honorary Press Officer.

12. A new media pack has recently been distributed to radio and television stations, and religious and secular press, both nationally and locally and Press Releases are issued on all major topics.

13. Churches are encouraged to inform local radio, television and newspapers of events of interest.

BROADCASTING

14. The government white paper "Broadcasting in the Nineties: Competition, Choice and Quality" continues to involve the committee in discussion. The URC, through the General Secretary, was a signatory to a letter sent to the Home Secretary from 10 churches and church bodies as the bill began its committee stage, which outlined the concerns felt about the bill. The bill in its present form enables religious organizations to own independent radio stations but denies the freedom of owners to express their views on religious matters. Some Christian groups are lobbying to have the same freedom of expression as anybody else, but most churches are against such a move - fearing American style religious broadcasting and the limiting of Christian expression to the ghetto of a Christian station. In the meantime local churches are encouraged to lobby MPs to ensure that the church's concerns for the retention of quality and diversity of programmes, especially in the fields of religion and education is heeded.

ECUMENICAL INVOLVEMENT

Churches Advisory Council for Local Broadcasting

15. The secretary continues to serve as a member of CACLB representing the URC. The appointment of a full term officer has meant that CACLB is now one of the main agencies working in the area of broadcasting.

Media Awareness Project

16. Additional funding has extended the work undertaken by the project. The secretary is a member of the ecumenical committee and as part of the sub group working on new materials. The pattern of work will change from small workshops for 10 -15 people to larger consultations with 50 or 60 present.

17. There will be 27 such events in 1990 throughout the British Isles and participation is encouraged.

IN HOUSE PRINTING

18. The purchase of a desk top publishing unit has brought new patterns of work. The equipment now available should enable "camera-ready " work to be produced for most items originating from within the departments. The printing of smaller items will continue to be undertaken in-house, but the lack of finishing equipment and floor space means that all larger items will continue to be sent to outside printers.

INFORMATION SERVICE

19. The Information Service is sent out three times each year to all church secretaries and to subscribers and people in special categories. From the feed back gleaned the Information Service Packs are well received and well used.

VIDEO

20. New titles have been added to the video library and the number of loans continues to rise. Titles chosen are generally those which can be used in house/study groups as discussion starters and titles which are useful to those working especially with young people.

COPYRIGHT

21. The *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* reached the statute books in 1989. The act clarifies some of the areas covered by copyright legislation but has not resulted in any relaxation of the regulations, rather the opposite. For local churches the main area of difficulty is in the reproduction of words and music in hymn sheets, orders of service and overhead projector transparencies, together with items included in church magazines. It must be remembered, however, that the legislation not only covers such items but also Performing Rights, Mechanical Copyright Protection , the making of videos, (e.g. of wedding services) and the recording of television and radio programmes. A leaflet, *Copyright and the local church*, produced by the Pratt Green Trust was sent to each church secretary through the Information Service in September 1989. The secretary is willing to help with matters of copyright, either by seeking copyright clearance on behalf of individual churches for special events, or by providing the information whereby the church can seek permission. Copies of *Understanding Copyright* and *A Question of Copyright* by Eric Thorn are available at the Assembly Bookstall and are recommended to all churches.

Resolution 2

STAFF AND PERSONALIA

22. This Assembly will be the last at which the **Revd David Netherwood** will present the report as Convener of the Communications and Supplies Committee. The **Revd Edmund Banyard** also retires from the as Convener of the Editorial and Management Board of *Reform*. The committee is grateful to both for their expertise and service over the past years.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives this report for debate.
2. The Assembly urges all provinces, districts and local congregations to ensure that they are keeping within the law as covered by the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988*, giving special regard to Hymn Book Supplements, Service and Hymn Sheets, together with items reproduced in church magazines.

PROVINCIAL MODERATORS' REPORT 1990

1 The Provincial Moderators report in 1989 provided the Assembly with a comprehensive look at the role and opportunities of local congregations viewed from the standpoint of our being a denomination which includes many "small" churches. The report encouraged churches to view their "smallness" creatively, positively seeking renewal and revitalisation.

2 This report goes on to ask further questions concern-ing our style of life as congregations, pressing for an urgency from us all as we face the challenges of a new decade.

3 One such challenge is to concentrate on doing the basic tasks if the church so well that the quality of our witness, worship and commitment is unmistakable. In other words we need to be striving with all our heart, soul, mind and strength at all times to offer the best. This report asks: "are we doing the basic tasks really well?"

QUALITY WORSHIP

4 One fundamental sign of the Church is its celebration of God's mighty acts: its re-living of the story of the faith in worship, through proclaiming the good news and sharing the communion meal of bread and wine. We cannot be satisfied with anything but the best in our offering of worship, whilst recognizing that it will always fall short of God's glory and never be worthy of his promised presence.

5 Ministers and lay preachers have specific training (and should take opportunities of continuous training) to enable the church's worship to be well-prepared and well-presented. One of their skills is to wrestle with the scriptures and seek within them God's living word for today. Sometimes this needs to be done in private study and devotion, yet it can also take place within house fellowships, family groups, Bible exploration groups and Elders groups as well as ecumenically and with the wider church. The proclamation of the good news in worship needs skills of imagination, understanding and communication.

6 Whilst many dedicated leaders of worship spend hours in preparation, week after week, it would be good if more and more members were sharing the responsibility. It would be creative also to see lay preachers used not as diary-fillers but actively linked to pastorates or groups of churches so that their skills can be used creatively.

7 Quality music enriches our worship. Not that we expect (or need) a brilliant organist in every church! Music can be provided in a variety of ways and churches should work hard on improving this aspect of the worship. The advent of the electric keyboard and the availability of instrumental groups has helped many small churches involve young musicians in offering good quality leadership. The Moderators look forward to the new hymn book expected next Easter and encourage the churches with worn-out, damp, moth-and-dust-corrupted specimens (and comparable contents) to start saving immediately!

8 Moderators experience worship in a great number of churches. They value this opportunity immensely and we come across a variety of joys and disasters! Encourage-ment grows when churches are thinking through their worship and planning their themes and content; when con-gregations expect to participate through readings, prayers, drama and music. What a delight it is when imaginative preparation and creative leadership lead worshippers individually and together to experience that which is beyond silence, beyond the words and music; the joy and wonder of God's presence.

QUALITY CARE

9 Quality pastoral care is also essential to a living local church. Churches which take their pastoral task seriously are alert and alive. Their silent and patient caring can have a transforming influence on countless lives. Some churches ~"touch" many more people than their membership numbers imply. No one can measure the enrichment such loving, pastoral care brings to individuals and neighbourhoods.

10 Sadly, the Moderators are aware that some of the harshest criticisms of ministers by congregations often come when pastoral responsibilities are not fulfilled, and when leadership is faulty or insensitive. Similarly, there is harsh criticism heard of the church by people on its fringes or outside its fellowship when they experience (at a funeral, for instance) an unwelcoming and insensitive approach by Christians.

11 Churches seem best able to cope with rapid change when pastoral relationships are strong. At the start of a new ministry there is an opportunity to build a strong pastoral foundation which can be continuous and dependable. The challenge to change must not be softened because of the need for caring relationships. Knowing one another, we challenge one another to grow in faith and commitment.

12 Elders have the responsibility for the pastoral programme of a congregation. This ought to be close to the top of the agenda of Elders' Meetings every month. It means all Elders having responsibility for those on their pastoral lists and ensuring that regular visiting takes place of all age groups. This does not mean that they have to do it all themselves, but they need to ensure it takes place. Elders can sometimes share over-sight with trusted and trained visitors who are not elders. They can also produce a network of caring: putting people in touch with one another and paying particular regard to new arrivals and contacts. This will often mean encouraging house groups and informal get-togethers in neighbourhoods. The need for Elders and Ministers to share this role, observing careful confidentiality, is essential for the health of a congregation.

13 Some churches are training elders and other pastoral visitors to increase the quality of care they provide. Some churches have set an elder aside to administer a pastoral care scheme and to develop and extend this ministry alongside and within the church and community. Some of our stronger churches are those which take this aspect of their work as a priority. This ensures that such congregations are personal in their approach and do not ignore and overlook the skills and contributions of each person to the total life of the congregation.

14 Pastoral care is servant-evangelism. It avoids the "hard-sell" and yet it proclaims the good news clearly and unmistakably. It follows Jesus' model of ministry closely, coming alongside individuals in their question-ing, their pain, their joy and celebration. It shows the world that God is present and reaching out to touch and welcome, to forgive and transform.

15 Pastoral care is prayer-filled. It demonstrates and proclaims God's presence without continually having to put it into words. Yet, at the right place and the right time, prayer quite naturally flows into spoken words. Such moments are special and intimate.

16 Pastoral care is not posting a communion card through a door or waving in the street or saying "How are you?", hoping the person will just say "Very well, thank you." It is a congregation with eyes open to people's need yet with ears closed to idle gossip; a people alert to individual loneliness yet mouths sealed from prejudice and pre-judgement.

QUALITY DISCIPLESHIP

17 The urgent note sounded in this report applies not only to our quality of pastoral care and of worship but also to our wider commitment to Jesus Christ, his world and his Church.

18 Quality discipleship sounds arrogant. Christians know very well that they are hollow vessels, brittle and of little worth. Yet, the Gospel speaks of raising us from death to life. To care half-heartedly, to worship half-heartedly, is inappropriate to followers of Jesus Christ.

19 Perhaps the saddest sight in local churches is to see quality Christians who have become tired, worn-out, dis-spirited. Some have given year after year of service to the church and are simply exhausted. They agreed to be elders, teachers, secretaries forty years ago! Of these, some have hung grimly on to jobs, refusing to allow others to take over. Others have tried unsuccessfully to delegate responsibilities while countless people on the fringe of church life have been content to sit back and be served. The sensitivity to distinguish between faithful long service and an arrogant possessiveness of responsibility can only come from open, loving conversations within the church community.

20 As churches continue to experience numerical decline, it is time to plead urgently for a renewal of commitment on the part of every person. That doesn't always mean sucking people into church jobs for the main work has to be done outside, in our places of employment or leisure. But it does mean all of us committing ourselves to the basics which are being stressed in this report: pastoral care, worship, discipleship. That is the bottom line. Every Christian is called to give 100% to these.

21 When this happens our giving financially will arise not from duty but from delight. We will give because we are thankful beyond words. In the community of faith our lives are strengthened, healed and opened up to our neighbours, our world.

22 This report recalls us all to fundamentals. As Moderators we do not stand apart from the challenge. We share the sense of failure and of opportunity. We enter the nineties together, eager to serve our churches, ready for the challenges God will reveal to us.

PERSONNEL

23 We will soon say farewell to Michael Davies, whose wisdom and insight have been a rich resource to us for many years. We wish him health and joy in his new sphere of service.

24 During the last twelve months we have been delighted to welcome John Humphreys, the new Moderator of the Province of Wales. It has been significant that, at a time of crucial changes in Eastern Europe, we now have in the team someone who has lived and worked there.

RESOLUTION

1. The Assembly receives the Report of the Provincial Moderators for debate.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Brian Nuttall
Secretary: Mr David Butler

Appointments made since last Assembly

1.1 A major task this year has been the nomination of representatives to serve on the new Ecumenical Bodies arising from the Inter-Church Process. Some 26 people from the URC will be involved at various national levels; their names appear in the Appendix to our report, which will be issued nearer to the date of Assembly.

1.2 We have nominated representatives to attend the Assemblies of other Churches in Britain and Europe during 1990 and three to represent the URC at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Canberra in 1991.

1.3 We have asked the Executive Committee to extend the appointment of Mr Roger Tolman as National Youth Training Officer from 30th June to 31st December 1990. An appropriate Appointment Group is being formed to seek a successor to serve from 1st January 1991. Both the extension of Mr Tolman's term and the appointment of a successor are subject to the necessary funding proving available.

1.4 We have also asked the Executive Committee to confirm the appointments of the following Youth Leadership Training Officers, all for five-year terms:

Mr Wallie Warmington, West Midlands Province, w.e.f. 18.9.89; Mr Ivan Andrews, South Western Province, w.e.f. 1.1.90; Miss Janet Turner, Northern and Yorkshire Provinces, w.e.f. 1.1.90;
Mr Colin Capewell, Wales Province (joint appointment with Methodist District), w.e.f. 1.2.90.

1.5 We have nominated a Convener (The Revd David Dale) and nine other members to form, with ten from the Province, the East Midlands Provincial Moderator Review Group and to bring a recommendation to Assembly in 1991. We have nominated tellers for the election of the next Moderator of Assembly, and have filled some twenty mid-term vacancies on standing committees of the Church and among representatives to other bodies. We are pleased to report that the remaining places for Provincial representatives on the Advocacy Group have now been filled.

1.6 The Executive Committee has endorsed all the above nominations.

Departmental Secretary, Church and Society Department

2. The Revd John Reardon having been appointed to the post of General Secretary of the new Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, an Appointment Group has been set up to recruit a new Departmental Secretary for the Church and Society Department. We hope to bring a name to Assembly.

Committee Officers

3. A particularly large number of committee officers complete their term of service at this Assembly. In addition, the Revd Michael Davies has resigned from the Convenership of the Advocacy Group. The Mission and Other Faiths Committee has requested that the Revd John Parry's term of service as its Secretary be extended. We nominate the following to serve from the end of this Assembly:

- 3.1 Convener, Health and Healing Committee:
The Revd Robin Hine (to 1996)
- 3.2 Secretary, Mission and Other Faiths Committee:
The Revd John Parry (to 1992)
- 3.3 Convener, Maintenance of Ministry Committee:
Mr Alistair Black (to 1996)
- 3.4 Convener, Editorial & Management Board of REFORM: The Revd Brian Baker (to 1993)
- 3.5 Convener, Forward Policy Group: Mr Raymond Clarke (to 1996)
- 3.6 Convener, Advocacy Group: The Revd Julian Macro (to 1996)

We hope to include nominations for the Convenerships of the Ministries Department, the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee and the Communication and Supplies Committee in a supplementary report to be presented at Assembly.

4. The Editor of the Prayer Handbook is appointed at the Assembly two years before his/her first book. We therefore nominate the Revd Kate Compston to serve as Editor of the 1993 to 1995 books.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report for debate.
2. The Assembly appoints Committee Officers, as set out in paragraph 3 of the report.
3. The Assembly appoints the Revd Kate Compston to serve as Editor of the Prayer Handbooks for 1993 to 1995 inclusive.
4. The Assembly appoints Committees and Representatives of the Church, as set out in the Appendix to the report.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Convener: Dr Mary Ede
Secretary: The Revd John Reardon

1. **Ecumenical Commitment** In this year leading up to the creation of new ecumenical instruments throughout Britain and Ireland the work of the Department has continued to reflect the ecumenical commitment which is a central feature of our Church's life. Involvement in the work of the British Council of Churches, through its Christian Aid, International Affairs and Community Affairs Divisions, has helped to shape the agenda of the Department and has demanded considerable proportions of staff time. Christian Aid will continue its work as the recognised agency of the majority of Churches in these islands but careful negotiation still continues to determine how best to further the kind of cooperative work which has hitherto been done through the other Divisions of the BCC.

2. Through the British Council of Churches the agenda has been kept broad and that has enabled the churches to pursue their own particular concerns while at the same time being able to depend on the BCC Divisions for wide-ranging and continuing work from which all could benefit. This pattern of long-term cooperative work with space for particular initiatives by different denominations will only be able to continue if the Churches are prepared to support Departments with adequate resources. Even now the Churches have had to develop other forms of cooperation to grapple with issues which require specialist research and deeper commitment than are possible using the resources of the BCC and the Churches combined. There are proposals, for example, contained within a consultative document, *Working Together on Social Responsibility*, which could lead to the development of national and regional cooperation on church and society issues in a more coherent and structured way.

3. **Church Action on Poverty** is an example of how a specialised agency is able to develop a valuable resource of analysis, action and comment which is useful not only for the churches but which commands support and commitment from other organisations and many individuals. In particular Church Action on Poverty has been successful in providing a meeting ground for many different groups concerned about poverty in Britain including significant numbers of poor people. For over a year these groups, including the Department, worked on a declaration on poverty which was launched in December 1989 with considerable media coverage. The Department was pleased to endorse that Declaration, *Hearing the Cry of the Poor*, and commends it to the churches for their endorsement and as a guide to action.

4. **Hearing the Cry of the Poor**

What has happened to our common life?

We acknowledge that many people are enjoying new opportunities and living more comfortably. **However**, it must be asked how far their financial security requires others to be deprived, how far their freedom of choice curtails what is available to others.

It cannot be right

- that some have to survive on less than £60 per week while others receive pay rises of £3,000 per week.
- that benefit levels are so low that loans are needed for essential items.
- that more people are begging in the street.
- that young people are living in cardboard boxes.
- that over one third of a million are homeless and the number of homeless households has nearly doubled in the last ten years.

- that hospital wards are being closed but waiting lists grow.
- that the mentally ill are discharged from hospital without adequate support.
- that children are sent home from school because they have no teachers.
- that people are demoralised by long term unemployment and short term job schemes.
- that for black people disadvantage is compounded by racism.

It cannot be right

- to cut taxes as an incentive to the rich but reduce incomes to spur on the poor.
- that economic growth is paid for by those excluded from its benefits.
- that public services are so seriously underfunded and the commitment of their staff so undermined.
- that local government is being weakened and public accountability becoming more remote.
- to pass community assets and essential services into private control.
- to impose restrictions in spheres such as education, broadcasting and trades union organisation that curtail democratic freedoms.

It cannot be right

- to deny our interdependence;
- to dismiss the possibility of social justice;
- to measure individual value in terms of economic success and use value for money as the yardstick for all spheres of human activity;
- to foster a self-serving individualism centred on getting, owning and consuming;
- that whole communities can be disrupted by decisions taken in distant offices or multi-national boardrooms;
- to learn from experience that market forces favour the rich and dispossess the poor **and yet** do nothing about it.

We believe ...

We believe that God, in whom we live and move and have our being, has chosen to reveal the meaning of our human story. God so loved this world as to send us his Son Jesus Christ and in him the true story - the Kingdom that he preached - is both revealed and made possible. It was in proclaiming this Kingdom, to which we are all invited and in which the poor have a special place that Jesus was rejected. But through his death and resurrection - story's climax - the Kingdom is made present and we are invited to celebrate and live this new reality.

We believe that when we pray "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth", we commit ourselves to be part of this story-in-the-making and we bind ourselves to work for a social order which mirrors, realises, and incarnates the realities of the Kingdom.

Our human tragedy is to set our hearts on mirages or look-alikes of the real Kingdom. We turn God's gifts into idols which promise life but cannot deliver it. When we enthrone money, power, privilege and pleasure, God's gifts become God-substitutes.

We believe that God's Spirit speaks through the cries of the poor and the vulnerable to expose our illusions and break their power over us; calling us to our proper task of working for the emerging Kingdom, restoring us to the human story's authentic theme.

From Faith to Action

The true end of any social order, therefore, is to embody the Kingdom of God in human affairs. Signs of the Kingdom will be:

- when the basic needs of every child, woman and man are given priority.
- when the experience of the poor can contribute to the transformation of society and therefore its salvation.
- when full citizenship is not dependent on wealth, race, gender, status or educational privilege.
- when all are open and hopeful and joyful about the future and move towards it sharing the costs and benefits of social and economic change.

Two stories have been told here. One describes what **is**, the other what **might be**. It is because of the contrast between them that we believe that a new social order is needed in Britain. Christians have a contribution to make. We seek a social vision:

- which is rooted in experience and especially in the hopes and struggles of those hurt by our society, who have been ignored and who have no voice.
- which is grounded in our faith - the Good News that new life is possible - which calls the Churches to be a sign and a foretaste of a new order which invites and enables us all to live in accordance with God's story.
- which is informed by the practical wisdom of those individuals and groups who try to base their lives on principles of mutual responsibility, respect and justice.
- which can generate feasible policies for the renewal of our wider society.

Church Action on Poverty invites individuals and groups

- to endorse this statement.
- to use it in worship, in reflection, in preparation for action.
- to work with people of other faiths - and none - to bring about a new social order.

5. **Housing** The omens that homelessness would continue to increase following the 1988 Housing Act have proved to be true. Extreme signs are the establishment of cardboard cities and record levels of mortgage foreclosures. Several regulations in the social security system place homeless young people at a serious disadvantage even though it is known that a very high proportion have no family home base where they are accepted. Rapidly escalating interest rates have caused untold misery for those who have entered the home ownership market as the pass to security, budgetary control and independence.

6. *Living Faith in the City*, a progress report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Advisory Group on Urban Priority Areas, devotes a substantial section to housing issues, as will the forthcoming report from the Archbishop's Commission on Rural Areas. The churches are urged to keep housing high on their agenda. In acknowledging their traditional involvement in practical schemes of many kinds the importance of monitoring and maintaining pressure as a matter of urgent Christian concern is stressed.

7. **Southern Africa Coalition** Following on from the British Council of Churches conference on Southern Africa in February 1989 the Department has been involved in the Southern Africa Coalition formed in September 1989 to press for fundamental change in British government policy towards South Africa. Many church members took part in the postcard campaign prior to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in October 1989 and the Lobby of Parliament in February 1990 calling on the Government to increase its pressure on South Africa through economic and political measures designed to hasten the ending of

apartheid. The Lobby became all the more necessary because the Government announced earlier in February that it was lifting its ban on new investment in South Africa without waiting for any significant sign from South Africa that apartheid was being dismantled.

8. **South Africa** The Department welcomes the changes that have been introduced in South Africa, particularly the unbanning of such organisations as the African National Congress, and the release of many political prisoners including Nelson Mandela, but recognises the need to maintain pressure to end apartheid. The churches in South Africa remain implacably opposed to apartheid and they urge us to continue to support their stand for the truth about the kind of society for that country which would more clearly reflect our Christian conviction that all people are made in God's image. They remind us that encouraging words from white politicians and even highly publicised gestures such as releases from prison and unbannings are no substitute for real political changes which remove the apartheid legislation which still keeps the majority population of black people in South Africa in a permanently inferior position.

9. **Central America** The decade of the 1980s began with the assassination of Archbishop Romero in El Salvador. It ended with the murder in that same country, on 16th November 1989, of six Jesuit priests and two women domestic workers, a mother and her sixteen-year-old daughter. Throughout the decade El Salvador has been in a state of civil war which has left thousands of people dead or wounded and homeless. During that period the Salvadorean churches worked courageously to promote reconciliation with justice and to provide emergency help for all who have suffered in the war.

10. In Central America there were high hopes that the Bush administration in the United States would change American policies to advance a process of peacemaking in that region, but these hopes have not been realised. El Salvador continues to receive considerable military assistance from the US Government and criticism of the human rights and military record of the Salvadorean Government has not been forthrightly expressed. The British Council of Churches in November 1989, affirming its support for the Salvadorean churches in their work for peace with justice, called upon the US Government to cease the delivery of all military-related assistance to El Salvador and to use its influence to promote negotiations between the Salvadorean Government and the rebel forces of the FMLN. It called on the British Government to urge the United States to use its influence for peace.

11. Similar hopes in Nicaragua of a change of American policy with the election of a new President were disappointed as President Bush renewed the trade embargo on Nicaragua first announced by President Reagan in 1985. In response to President Ortega's offer to advance Nicaragua's elections to February 1990 the American Government helped to fund and form an opposition coalition while publicly questioning the ruling Sandinistas' commitment to democratic elections. Meanwhile the United States continued to support the Contra rebels thereby undermining attempts to disband them through the Central American peace process. As this report was being written the election results in Nicaragua signalled an end of the Sandinista government consistently vilified and undermined by American hostility. It remains to be seen whether the successful coalition will be able to contribute to the peace process which is so urgently needed in the whole region.

12. The continuing suffering of the people of Central America highlights how important it is for Christians who proclaim God's will of justice and peace for all people to maintain pressure on the governments which have opportunity to promote policies which lead in that direction. Because so few Christians in Britain have any direct knowledge of Central America and only rarely recognise how much suffering there is there among the people, the Department continues to hope that churches will support the annual observance of Central America Week in March to help to

raise awareness and to inform prayer and action. The Department commends Church Action for Central America and Christian Aid as sources of information about the countries of the region.

13. **Eastern Europe** The past year has seen remarkable changes in many countries in Eastern Europe. In elections in Poland Solidarity won many of the seats, just ten years after its first open confrontations with the Communist government. The pace of change in some other countries during the latter part of 1989 and into 1990 was even more rapid and dramatic. Street demonstrations in East Germany and Czechoslovakia changed the political scene in those countries while similar developments in Romania, at first opposed with ruthless force, swiftly overthrew the regime headed for so long by President Ceausescu. In many of these changes the churches played an important part. That was particularly true in Poland and in East Germany. The URC was represented in two British Council of Churches delegations to Poland and East Germany to discuss the direction of change and the role of the churches in those changes into the future.

14. **Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation** Representatives of the URC were at the European Ecumenical Assembly on Peace with Justice in Basel, Switzerland in May 1989. Since their return they have shared with many Provinces, Districts and local churches the themes that are emphasised in the final document from Basel. They organised the input to the URC Forum at Swanwick in August which was attended by about 350 people and have continued to work ecumenically in stimulating local involvement in the urgent themes concerned with the survival of life on earth. The Department was pleased to be able to publish *Threads of Creation*, a resource book for worship and personal reflection on environmental responsibility, as a contribution to the JPIC process.

15. **World Convocation** The Department, through its Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group, studied and responded to the preliminary document for the World Convocation on JPIC which took place in March 1990. In particular the Department stressed the need for some of the underlying problems of the crises facing the world to be properly addressed. There was a danger of focusing attention and action on the most dramatic problems such as the debt crisis, the arms trade and the greenhouse effect, while neglecting longer-standing, but no less important, issues like population growth. There was not much evidence in the preparatory paper for the World Convocation that the remarkable ecumenical consensus that developed in Basel was adequately reflected, but the responses of the European Churches to that paper helped to shape a revised version of the Draft Document which formed the basis of the work in Seoul. The Departmental Secretary represented the URC at the World Convocation and was also invited to attend the Justice Forum a few days beforehand and the meeting immediately afterwards to help prepare the Convocation report for the WCC Central Committee. An ecumenical group in the British Council of Churches has met throughout the year to coordinate the follow-up to the Basel Assembly and the preparation for the Seoul Convocation.

16. **A Just Peace Church** The Department sees the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation process as a unifying factor in all its work. Through that process hitherto unrelated issues are shown to be part of a coherent approach to world problems. As a specific contribution to the search for adequate Christian responses to the threats to survival the Department has continued to explore what it would mean for the URC to declare itself to be a Just Peace Church. All churches are invited to make time during the second half of 1990 to consider such a development. Representatives from each Province met in Windermere in February to study this idea and the Department has prepared leaflets and background papers to stimulate the process of study, decision and action.

17. **World Development** The 1% Appeal for World Development has provided many churches with an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to a more just economic order. Through the Appeal the work of Christian Aid in seeking to strengthen the poor has been affirmed and supported; the work of the World Development Movement in campaigning for economic policies which help the poorest people in their struggle for justice has received continuing endorsement and many educational programmes like One World Week have been able to continue to raise the awareness of the British people of their potential power in support of economic systems and policies which demonstrate that people matter. In 1988/89 £315,495 was raised through the Appeal and those churches which present the Appeal to their members have already exceeded that sum in their response in 1989/90.

18. **Urgent Action Calendar** The Department has cooperated with representatives of the Methodist Church and the Baptist Union in the production of an Urgent Action Calendar. With the considerable help of *Reform*, churches and individuals are given information each month which enable them to pray for crisis situations around the world and to take action, by sending a postcard, expressing support for people in their struggle for human dignity. At the end of January over 300 postcards were received by the Pacific Council supporting its campaign for a nuclear free Pacific. It saw these postcards as a sign of Christian solidarity - a kind of visible prayer for the people of the Pacific in their desire for a more healthy and life-giving environment. It is planned to invite other Churches to cooperate in the production and use of the Calendar in future years.

19. **National Health Service** The Department was grateful for the work done by the Free Church Federal Council in response to the White Paper, *Working for Patients*, which preceded the NHS and Community Care Bill. The FCFC document was available through the Bookshop and helped several churches to engage in correspondence with their Members of Parliament expressing concern about the proposals for change in the National Health Service. The Department has consulted the Health and Healing Committee in the Faith and Life Department to consider how to begin to respond to the resolution at last year's General Assembly on the place of private medicine in relation to the National Health Service and the implications for church members. It is clear that the balance between private and public provision is changing and the Department believes that work on the changing emphasis and its implication for individual Christians should wait until the Bill has passed through Parliament and has begun to be implemented.

20. **Community Care** The Department was instrumental in publishing on behalf of a wide range of other denominations a popular leaflet on *Christians and Community Care* produced by an ecumenical working group in which the Assistant Secretary took a leading role and in organising a British Council of Churches Consultation for church agencies and funders working in the field of community care. The leaflet challenges the churches to consider their role in the community and offers suggestions about the nature and implications of effective care in the community. It was published just before the Government issued its White Paper, *Caring for People* and, only a week later, the NHS and Community Care Bill.

21. The Free Church Federal Council NHS Monitoring Group met early in 1990 to consider the community care aspects of the Bill. It judged that while the White Paper had some content that was to be welcomed, particularly the responsibility to be laid on local authorities to assess individuals in need of care and to provide suitable services within the voluntary, private and public sectors, there were many aspects of the proposals about which it had reservations and would hope to see amended. It considered that if community care is to work in practice then substantial additional financial resources will be required. It also registered a plea for the continuance of some local authority provision for mainstream services as well as developing a role as a planner and enabler. It believed that the consequence of the

Bill's proposals would be the loss of local authority homes and a lack of provision of key services to some of the most needy people with a resulting burden on carers.

22. In all the proposed changes there is considerable possibility of widely differing standards of assessment for access to provision of care, serious conflicts of interest between health and local authorities, lack of long-stay hospital units for mentally ill people needing refuge from the rigours of trying to live in society and inequalities in the standards of services available in different parts of the country. It is disturbing that the Government took eighteen months to respond to the Griffiths Report and then published its Bill without waiting for any public debate or response to the White Paper. The result is a Bill which is in need of considerable amendment if it is to serve the interests of the users of community care services.

23. **Community Work** The Assistant Secretary has played a central role in progressing the two-year consultation process in Britain and Ireland which has culminated in a proposal for the Churches Community Work Alliance. The Alliance will be a working partnership between denominations, Christian community work training agencies and large voluntary societies, and church community workers. The Department supports the Proposal, and commends the request for funding from Trusts and the denominations with the aim of establishing the Alliance by September 1990.

24. **AIDS** During the past year the National AIDS Adviser has continued to help the churches to understand the nature and implications of HIV infection and AIDS, working in Provinces, Ministers' schools, the colleges and on working parties set up by church bodies such as the Industrial Mission Association. He has also been invited, through the World Health Organisation, to share his knowledge in international meetings in Vienna and Montreal and with people working in this field in Czechoslovakia and Belgium. The Department welcomes the extension of this special ministry for a further two years and expresses the hope that churches will observe World AIDS Day, 1st December. This would enable Christians not only to pray for people with AIDS, their friends and families, but also to consider the many social, medical, political and pastoral issues raised by it. The Department is considering preparation of some material in connection with World AIDS Day.

25. **Continuing Work** The Department, together with similar Departments in other denominations, is considering the appropriate way to work on the issues of alcohol and drug use and abuse. The Department no longer feels that it is useful to belong to the Churches Council on Alcohol and Drugs because that body is inadequately resourced, has a limited life span before it and no longer carries the support of many of the main denominations.

26. A Working Party on Homosexuality has prepared a report which the Department is now inviting some churches and Districts to consider with a view to reporting back both on its content and the form of its presentation for wider use.

27. The Department will include in its work the political developments in Europe and the implications of the Single European Act as 1992 draws nearer. Both the URC Forum and the annual conference sponsored by the Department for members of the German Palatinate Church and the URC in August this year will explore some of the implications of growing integration within the European Community and the wider issues of what President Gorbachev calls "Our Common European Home".

28. Preparation for the World Council of Churches Assembly in Canberra in February 1991 and all that will flow from it, together with the new ways of working

together through the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, will help to shape the Department's work in the coming year.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report of the Church and Society Department for debate.
2. The Assembly welcomes the Declaration by Church Action on Poverty, *Hearing the Cry of the Poor*, and commends it to the churches for study, endorsement and use as a preparation for action.
3. The Assembly calls upon Her Majesty's Government to work with other nations to secure peace with justice throughout Central America and, in particular, to press the United States Government to use its influence for peace in that region.
4. The Assembly encourages the churches to pray for the people of Central America in their continuing suffering and to help their members to understand the problems and issues of that region by engaging annually in Central America Week.
5. The Assembly encourages the churches to observe World AIDS Day on 1st December 1990.

FORWARD POLICY GROUP

Chairman: Professor Robert W Steel
Secretary: Mrs Connie Winter

The Forward Policy Group has met four times since the Assembly at York and its next meeting will be the twenty-ninth since it was established by the Assembly in 1984. This year, three members of the Group - all "founder members" - retire, including the Chairman, so that the one survivor since the beginning is its former Secretary, Mrs Sheila Tull, who became a member of the Group following on her retirement from her post in Church House in 1987. With so many changes it may be appropriate if this report not only covers the past year but is also slightly retrospective in summary form.

Our hope is that we have justified our existence as a small group instituted by the General Assembly in the autumn of 1983 "to stimulate, support and comment on the forward planning of the Church at all levels." We have sought to examine, as best we can, "the trends of Church policy", noting (according to our terms of reference) "inconsistencies and significant omissions" and relating "forward planning at all levels to realistic and hopeful assessment of the work God calls us to do in the future.

During the past year the Group has, at the request of the Executive Committee, continued work "on the formation of priorities for the central life of the Church" and has discussed some of the issues that will face the Church during the last decade of the twentieth century. Much of our work focuses on the possibilities for changes in Central Church Organization that are being considered by many different groups as a consequence of the General Secretary's stimulating discussion paper, "Directions Towards Growth", issued in September 1988.

The Group has studied this paper in depth, together with other papers that have been produced. We have followed with interest and some concern the deliberations of the Executive Committee and comments received from Provinces and individuals, and we are grateful that the Group is represented in the small working committee charged to bring recommendations to the Executive Committee before the matter goes to Assembly. The Group is strongly of the opinion that it would be a pity if criticisms of the suggested organizational structures, in many cases relating to matters of detail, were to eclipse some important positive proposals. Among these the Group welcomed, in particular, suggestions for a Mission Council where all central church functions would be looked at together so that the Church might be clear as to priorities and purposes. They also saw the proposals as economical, both with people's time and the Church's money.

Last year, we noted with satisfaction the institution of a residential Assembly, and we record (in common with other committees and, we believe, all who attended the York Assembly) our opinion that it was, from nearly every point of view, an outstanding success. We are, therefore, gratified to know that a decision has been taken for another residential Assembly, once again in the University of York, to be held from 4 to 7 July 1992. If financial and other considerations permit, the Group would wish such an Assembly to be if not an annual at least a biennial event. We believe that the value to the Church, in terms of fellowship and its work, witness and outreach, would be very considerable.

The Group has, from the beginning, stressed the vital importance of communication, and has always been concerned for the free flow of information and understanding between the local church and its members, and those who are working full-time in committees in London at Church House. As members of the Group have learned more of the devoted work done by officers of the URC through closer contact with them, so we have recognized the value of individual churches and members gaining, albeit in other ways, similar insight into what is being done for us, and in our name.

Thus we welcomed the support given by the Assembly to our suggestion that there should be a popular report on the work of each Assembly for wide and swift circulation. *Assembly Hotline*, produced so soon after the York Assembly, gave us great satisfaction, and those responsible for its preparation and production deserve the thanks and congratulations of us all. We are glad that it was both brief and free. If there are untouched piles of single sheet reports in some churches - as we have been told - we feel that this is more a reflection on the parochial outlook of those churches than on the generally felt need for a publication of this nature. The Group also commends the imaginative and comprehensive reporting of many facets of the Assembly in the pages of *Reform*.

During the year the Group produced a questionnaire aimed at discovering the future plans of the Departments at Church House for the next three, five and ten years. Replies were received from most Departments and from the Doctrine and Worship Committee. Each reply set out the principles behind the committees' thinking, and established the need to plan for the future, although we recognized that, in terms of projecting future needs, this was easier for some Departments than others. We felt that each reply showed a realistic approach to their aspirations. Inevitably, every Department would welcome more money; their plans were conditioned by the limited resources at their disposal. One Department indeed detailed several projects which could not be started, or had had to be abandoned, for lack of funds. There was some sharing of resources ecumenically in the work of most Departments, and Church and Society said that the first question they asked was invariably, "Which other Churches or ecumenical bodies will share with us in this matter?" The Group is indebted to all at Church House who gave time and thought to inform us about their work, and continues to value receipt of the minutes of Departmental meetings, whereby we are able to monitor the work of the Church from an overall perspective.

The response of Departments and Committees to this enquiry was generous and typical of the reaction that the Group has had from many groups and individuals throughout its existence. As the Group's first chairman, I have been very fortunate in my colleagues and in those who have serviced the Group. Those of us now leaving the Group after several years' experience of it hope that our successors will find the same satisfaction in their work and receive the same encouragement and assistance from Departments and individuals that we have enjoyed and appreciated. Our terms of reference ask us to report to the councils of the URC, as and when the need arises, and this is what the Group will continue to do in future years.

RESOLUTION

1. The Assembly receives the Report of the Forward Policy Group for debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Convener: The Moderator of Assembly

Secretary: The General Secretary

1. Owing to the later date of the General Assembly in 1989 there have been only two meetings of the Committee between Assemblies, on 5 October 1989 and 8 February 1990, the attendance of members being 60 and 47.

2. **Strategic Issues.** Following discussion in 1988 on major issues before the URC, matters were taken forward as follows:-

2.1 Local Church leadership. This discussion is being undertaken within the East Midlands Province and a report is expected next year.

2.2 Church Membership and its relation to the whole church community. This discussion is being developed in the Eastern Province and a report is expected later this year.

2.3 Central Church Organisation. Following discussion in the Executive and in Provincial Executive Committees, it was agreed to convene a group to look at the proposals already tabled and comments received. The group consists of Mr. Raymond Clarke, Professor Robert Steel, the Revd. Christine Craven, the Revd. John Sutcliffe and the Revd. Bernard Thorogood. The group expects to report to the Executive in July 1990 so that, if the Executive agrees, proposals may be processed for the 1991 Assembly.

2.4 Intermediate Levels. One of the topics aired in 1988 was the possibility of reducing the District Council and Provincial synods to be one level of oversight. The matter was referred to the North Western Province which reported to the Executive in February 1990. The report indicated that there is insufficient cause to make any radical change at present and based this case on the need for oversight both at an intimate level where there is local knowledge and at a point where objectivity is possible. It referred to the variety of experience around the country and the uncertainty of the ecumenical development at county level. It also cast doubts on the argument that one level of oversight would save money. After discussion the Executive passed the following resolutions:

1. The Executive has considered, with the advice of a North West Province Working party, the District/Synod system, and accepts that, although this is not the time to attempt a radical change, the URC is open to change in the light of our ecumenical commitment and of our life as a Christian community.
2. The Executive asks Synods to report by 31 December 1990 on how their relations with District Councils and the central church bodies are developing, how the ecumenical bodies are indicating future change and how best our human resources may be used.

3. **Methodist Church.** The Executive was not able to take further the discussion of central office location with the Methodist Church since it was still in process of deciding whether or not to remain in its present offices. The wider discussion on relationships was left to the World Church and Mission Department.

4. **Assembly Correspondence.** The Executive received replies to letters to the Government. Letters had been received from the Foreign Office on Development Aid and on Hong Kong policy. These had been passed on to the Church & Society Department.
5. **Reformed Quarterly.** The Executive noted this publication, edited by Dr. Clyde Binfield, and available by subscription.
6. **Petitions and Appeals.** The Committee discussed the appropriate procedure for these matters and agreed that no further Standing Orders are required at present. It was considered that any request for secession should come to the Assembly with a Synod recommendation as a matter of Synod business rather than as Executive Committee business. The Business Committee has taken up the detail of this.
7. **Moderator Review Group.** The Committee received the report of the Thames North Moderator Review Group and its nomination to Assembly that the Reverend Janet Sowerbutts be appointed for a term of seven years. **(Resolution)**
8. **Presbyterian Church Archives.** The 1959 PCE Assembly committed to the care of the History Society the archive material collected at Church House from local churches and Presbyteries. In recent years there has been a growing demand from County Record Offices to hold the pertinent records, particularly of 19th Century churches. The registers of Marriages and Baptisms have been so distributed when requested, but the History Society has not considered itself at liberty to distribute other records. However, the space at Church House is limited and the conditions in the basement are not as good as modern archive collections require. It is therefore recommended that microfilm or microfiche be used to enable the Church to keep a record of all material but to permit County Archives to hold originals. **(Resolution)**
9. **Integrated Training.** The Executive received a report of a working party set up by the Faith and Life and Ministries Departments to consider whether the great variety of training offered within the URC, with its diverse objectives and methods, could with benefit be viewed as a whole. This would not be an attempt at achieving a single stream but to discover if there are common convictions and increasing effectiveness in this area of our life. The Executive agreed that:

The Faith and Life and Ministries Departments are encouraged to prepare a draft policy statement on training in the URC for presentation at the 1991 Assembly and thereafter for wider debate.
10. **Themes for Assemblies.** The Executive referred to the Forward Policy Group a suggestion that URC might be helped towards a sense of common purpose if, from time to time, there are overarching themes at the Assembly.
11. **Church and Society Secretary.** The Committee congratulated the Revd. John Reardon on his appointment as General Secretary of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland. There had been discussion between the Executive Committee officers and the Convener and members of the Church and Society Department about the style of service needed in the next period. The recommendation was that a new secretary be sought to continue the work of the Department, with openness to any new patterns of work that may become possible through the Inter-Church Process. The Executive authorised the recruitment process for this post.
12. **Nominations Committee.** At each meeting the Executive received and approved nominations to Assembly Committees that needed to be filled between meetings of the Assembly.

13. **Youth Leadership Training Officers.** In late 1989 the Youth Committee had presented a request for a review of YLTO salaries to the Salaries Sub-Committee. (That Sub-Committee is appointed by and is responsible to the Treasurership Committee). As a result of that discussion it had been agreed to increase YLTO salaries so that they could approach professional rates for the local authority youth services. Such an increase could not be undertaken in one step but a first increase had been implemented at 1 January 1990. The Faith and Life Departmental Committee had considered the position, bearing in mind the relationship of YLTO's with ministers and others employed by the URC. The Departmental Convener therefore sought the support of the Executive in a postponement of any further increase in YLTO salaries. The Executive discussed both the procedure and the content of this request, and approved the following resolution:

Executive recognises the step already taken by the Salaries Sub-Committee to lift YLTO salaries and has noted this but advises the Sub-Committee that, taking into account the care of the URC for all those who serve it, no further step should be taken towards matching YLTO salaries with the Soulbury scale, pending consultation between the Salaries Sub-Committee, the Provincial Officers and the MoM officers about the relation of lay and ordained terms of service.

The Executive hoped that such consultation would not be seen as an infringement of the responsibility given to the Sub Committee but as an opportunity to set its work within the broader view of URC service.

14. **Representation of Other Churches at Assembly.** The World Church and Mission Department requested that, in addition to the eight churches which had sent representatives with full voting rights to the last two Assemblies, an invitation should be extended to the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and the Congregational Federation. This was agreed.

15. **National AIDS Adviser.** The Ministries Department, as responsible for the review of Special Ministry posts, requested a two year extension for the service of the Revd. Martin Hazell, which the General Assembly had set at three years. The Executive agreed to the extension for this period.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report for debate.
2. The Assembly appoints the Revd. Janet Sowerbutts as Moderator of the Thames North Province Synod for a term of seven years from 1st September 1990.
3. The Assembly agrees that the History Society may negotiate with the Association of County Councils or with individual County Councils which desire to hold the records of PCE local churches or Presbyteries, provide that any such agreements ensure that the URC has a gratis copy on microfilm or microfiche of such records and the necessary reading equipment.

THE ADVOCACY GROUP

Convener: The Revd M J Davies

Secretary: The Revd W Wright

THE TASK:

1. The Group has been charged with explaining the need for, and the use of, the Unified Appeal and Maintenance of the Ministry Fund; and with helping local churches capture a sense of vision. By sharing the vision of the Church our aim is to encourage local churches to offer greater support to the two Central Funds, thus enabling the Church to engage more fully and effectively in the mission and ministry God is calling it to exercise.

THE PLAN:

2. Currently the Group is engaged in the first part of a two-phase plan. A slide/audio presentation of the mission and ministry which is made possible by the Unified Appeal and the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund is being shown to District Councils. Provincial Advocates are following this up by making the presentation available to local churches and by seeking invitations to address Church Meetings.

3. It has become plain, because of the lack of shared vision, that the operation of the central funds has been mainly of maintaining the status quo rather than shifting emphasis as the world has changed.

4. The Central Funding and Advocacy Group identified the heart of the problem as a lack of realistic and generous giving by many individual members, which has restricted the life of the church both locally and nationally. In the second phase of our work, which will begin in the autumn, we will introduce a programme which will be designed to help local church leaders plan the life of their church and challenge their members to respond generously. We are convinced of the need to share a vision of the URC as a *Church on the move*. To this end, Ministers, Preachers and Elders must be informed and enthused about the mission of the Church and encouraged to communicate this to church members.

OBSERVATIONS:

5. In the central life of the Church great care and expertise is brought to bear in planning and budgeting both for the Unified Appeal and the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund. This is not reflected in the life of the local church, and our experience leads us to believe that churches which plan and budget and challenge their members are in a minority.

6. In recent years there has been little attempt made to explain the needs of the two Central Funds. Rather there has been an assumption that churches would contribute simply because they were asked to. We hope that advocacy will remedy that and be seen as an attempt to acknowledge that those responsible for the expenditure of Central Funds are accountable to the local churches.

7. In all financial matters, Treasurers have a key role to play. Their prime task is to ensure that the finances of the Church at various levels are properly administered and in this they give valiant service. We find that too often they are placed in the role of communicators but without the necessary support. This year we will prepare an information sheet to help Treasurers at all levels communicate the needs of the two Central Funds.

8. There has been a tendency for local churches to accept the minimum which they think they can get away with rather than to offer the maximum they can raise. The advent of the Unified Appeal means that gone are the days when the support of exciting missionary enterprises at home and abroad could capture the imagination and fire the generosity of members in the pew. We must reverse this trend.

9. Lack of understanding of the structure of the United Reformed Church is the cause of some misunderstanding. We would want to make it clear that the committees which make decisions in the central life of the Church are composed of representatives of each Province. The decisions which those committees make should, therefore, represent the thinking within the Provinces.

10. We have been surprised to hear the word *assessment* used in so many Provinces in relation to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund. The whole basis of the *Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration* is one of consultation between Province, District and local church to agree a contribution. Methods of determining contributions vary from Province to Province, and in some areas we found that local churches were simply told how much was required of them. This led to a concept of assessment or taxation which did not promote generosity or vision. As with the Unified Appeal, we intend to produce an information sheet which we hope will help local church treasurers in their understanding of the fund and its need.

11. Where we have found a concern for Christian Stewardship it has been accompanied by a desire for Stewardship material. We commend *Mission Pursuit* as a first-class resource for long term planning, and we will introduce material for specific Stewardship Campaigns in the seminars to be held in the autumn.

12. Concern has been expressed about *a diminishing membership bearing the ever increasing cost of the central activities of the Church*; and the question has been asked, *Shouldn't a falling membership present some opportunity to reduce back-up services and administrative costs?* Both comment and question are valid. We feel that only when our members have been shown the opportunities and challenged to respond, can these questions be addressed. We are confident that as the mission of the Church is made known it will receive the support it needs. It is a fact that where we see the Church growing, we also see people offering generous financial support.

13. The question has been raised both in the Group and the Provinces, *What are the medium and long term plans for the United Reformed Church?* We would like the Central Departments to look more than one year ahead and to produce, at least, a five-year plan. To provide the necessary vision, we all need long term goals.

CONCLUSION:

In this first year of the Group's existence we have tried to paint a picture of the mission and ministry of the Church and, at the same time, help people understand how the two central funds work. The stage is now set to make the challenge. **IT IS A CHALLENGE WHICH MUST BE ADDRESSED BY THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH. WHAT SHOULD OUR RESPONSE BE TO GOD'S LOVE IN CHRIST?**

Finally, as we say farewell to our Convener, Michael Davies, we join with others in the Church in expressing our gratitude to him. It was Michael's initiative which raised the need for Advocacy, and we have been fortunate indeed to have had his leadership and enthusiasm in this first year. We wish him God's blessing in his new sphere of work.

RESOLUTION

1 the assembly receives the report of the advocacy group for debate

WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs Mary Marsden
Secretary: The Revd Tony Coates

1. The Central Committee of the Department has met twice since the last General Assembly. As well as considering reports of the work of the four departmental committees and endorsing or amending decisions which affect the working of the Department, the committee has been exploring ways in which it can learn together: from exchange of experience within the various provinces and from studying set themes. It has been encouraging to discover how structures have been changed within a number of provinces to enable mission to become the central purpose of the life of the province in all its activities and planning. By looking back over various documents produced by the URC in the last ten years in its attempts to discover priorities, and bringing insights from outside - ecumenical, World Council of Churches (WCC), Council for World Mission (CWM), and other overseas contacts - the committee is attempting to discern the next steps to be taken in our pilgrimage.

2. The committee reports which follow tell of some of the new ventures being undertaken as well as of the careful work which continually maintains our wide and varied relationships ecumenically and internationally.

3. The Department is grateful to all who have completed their term of service in the various committees of the Department for the contribution they have made. We are particularly grateful to the Revd John Slow, Convener of the Missionary and Ecumenical Work At Home Committee for the past six years, for his leadership of that committee and his contribution to the Department generally.

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK AT HOME COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd John Slow
Secretary: The Revd Bernard Thorogood

4. Unity in Mission and Evangelism: Priorities for the 1990s

4.1 As the churches prepare to move into a new decade, several significant ecumenical initiatives come together to shape an exciting agenda with implications for 2000 and beyond.

4.2 The creation of the new ecumenical bodies which come into being in September 1990, will involve a wide spectrum of traditions and churchmanship. Our new companions on the way may be at times a disturbing presence as together we face questions crucial to the life of the Church and the world.

4.3 Then there is the growing concern for evangelism. The Church of England Decade of Evangelism and the Roman Catholic Decade of Evangelisation will be launched at the start of 1991 and are already involving other denominations in ecumenical preparation at local, diocesan and national levels. The URC has a valuable contribution of experience and resource material to make, not least because emphasis on evangelism (in its widest sense) has been a vital element of our church's life in recent years. (**Resolution 2**).

4.4 The issues of deprivation and justice are reflected in the report of the Urban Rural Mission Group which will be making a major presentation to the Assembly. There are signs of churches turning in a new missionary direction.

4.5 All these opportunities for the 1990s cry out for the churches to commit themselves to unity in mission and evangelism.

5. **The Inter-Church Process**

5.1 The ecumenical pilgrimage of the past few years, which has welcomed a wider participation of the denominations in Britain than ever before, now takes us forward with a new sense of purpose. The positive vote by an overwhelming majority of denominations to accept the proposals, *Churches Together in Pilgrimage*, submitted to them in 1989, has enabled the Inter-Church Meeting to approve the inauguration of the new ecumenical bodies in September 1990. Churches Together in England (CTE) will mark its arrival at a celebration hosted by the churches in north Lambeth; Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) comes into being in Dunblane; and CYTUN, Churches Together in Wales, in Aberystwyth: all on Saturday 1 September. A week later, on 8 September, the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland will be inaugurated in Liverpool. As we respond to the challenge of the new opportunities of unity in mission and evangelism, we give thanks for the work of the British Council of Churches for almost half a century. (**Resolution 3**)

5.2 Changes have also been taking place at local and intermediate level. There has been a growth in the number of appointments of full-time and part-time ecumenical officers. Experience shows that such appointments have enabled new ecumenical things to happen.

6. **Methodist-URC relationships**

6.1 **Methodist-URC Liaison Committee.** The Methodist Conference of 1989 referred to its Ecumenical Committee and the Liaison Committee, a Memorial from a Methodist Circuit that the Conference "declare its willingness to move toward visible union with the United Reformed Church." The initiative was warmly received by the MEW At Home Committee, the Departmental Committee and the Assembly Executive Committee. The Liaison Committee at two subsequent meetings has carefully considered the issue and at its meeting on 31 January 1990 adopted the following statement for presentation both to the URC Assembly and the Methodist Conference in 1990:

NATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TWO CHURCHES

6.1.1 The Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church commits it to an on-going quest for visible union with other Christian traditions. This finds local expression in the 200 or so joint churches established with the Methodist Church throughout England and Wales, the existence of Areas (united Circuits) and the fact that 83 United Reformed Church ministers are currently Recognised and Regarded or Authorised by the Methodist Church and 108 Methodist ministers are serving United Reformed congregations. This groundswell of local ecumenism has resulted in similar Memorials being sent by Methodist Circuits to the last two Methodist Conferences asking that the Conference "declare its willingness to move toward visible union with" the United Reformed Church. The Conference of 1989 referred this to the Methodist Ecumenical Committee and the Liaison Committee for report in 1990 or 1991. As far back as 1977 the matter has been raised in the United Reformed Church General Assembly.

6.1.2 We believe that within the context of the new relationships developing in the current Inter-Church Process the movement toward Methodist/URC union is now going on, is to be welcomed, is a significant part of the whole ecumenical scene today and constitutes a challenge to all the people of both denominations.

6.1.3 We rejoice that this movement is taking place at local church level where it is integral to local mission and ministry. This local action demands active support from all the councils of both denominations and calls for increasing unity in our regional and national organisation, programmes and agencies.

6.1.4 We are pilgrims together within the Inter-Church Process and need to be open to all our partners, to seek their insight and to discover whether there are others who feel called to seek more complete union at this time. In any bilateral process we would seek the active participation of the wider fellowship.

6.1.5. We believe that the considerable commitment of energy, time and money needed for bilateral negotiation can only be justified in obedience to the call of God to serve his mission as one body of believers, treasuring their traditions but trusting that grace and truth are not exhausted by those traditions. We must be open to the renewing power of the Holy Spirit in our quest for genuinely creative patterns of church life for the twenty-first century.

6.1.6. We ask the United Reformed Church Assembly to consult with Synods and District Councils and the Methodist Conference to consult with District Synods and Circuit Meetings to discover whether our sense of God's leading at this time is shared across the Churches, that preparation for the visible union of the two Churches is now the will of God. We ask that the consultative process be completed by 1 October 1991 so that a full report and recommendations can be brought to the General Assembly and the Conference in 1992. (**Resolution 4**).

6.2 **URC-Methodist United Areas.** The West Essex United Area came into being at the end of 1989. Similar conversations have been initiated in Pembrokeshire, Enfield and Milton Keynes.

6.3 **Letter of Advice.** A further edition of the Letter of Advice is in course of preparation and will be published later this year.

7. **Local Ecumenism.** The Adviser for Local Ecumenism, the Revd Peter Poulter, has been gathering ecumenical resource material - e.g. Local Covenants, Church Leaders' Covenants, Sponsoring Body Constitutions - which will be helpful to those seeking to develop ecumenical relationships and structures at local levels. Appreciation has been expressed of his response to specific questions raised by Districts, churches and individuals.

8. **Ecumenical Representation at the General Assembly**

8.1 The present eight churches sending voting members of Assembly have been asked by Assembly Executive to repeat this for a further period of two years. We have valued their presence at and participation in our Assembly and hope this sharing may be developed even further within our churches.

8.2 The Assembly Executive has also agreed to invite the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and the Congregational Federation to send voting members to Assembly.

9. **Rural Mission and Ministry**

9.1 **Rural Consultant.** The Revd Michael Cruchley has been appointed to serve as Rural Consultant for a period of five years in the first instance. The suggestion that the post should be linked with the pastoral oversight of three small rural churches in Northamptonshire proved to be impracticable. The linking is now with two rural congregations in Warwickshire, one of them URC-Methodist. Michael, as well as having earlier been minister of a rural pastorate in Shropshire, has also

served on the ecumenical Rural Ministry Group. His induction took place on 27 January 1990.

9.1.1 As a member of the Arthur Rank Centre staff, the Rural Consultant: - is responsible for training courses for ministers and lay people as they prepare for rural church ministry and mission;

- is involved in studying issues arising in rural Britain which are significant for Christian theology, morality and pastoral care;
- and will visit local churches and Councils of Churches at their invitation to encourage rural church life and witness and to encourage and support ecumenical developments in rural areas.

9.1.2 Michael, as Rural Consultant to both the URC and Methodist Church, is available to help Synods, District Councils and local churches. He can be contacted at the Arthur Rank Centre, National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ.

9.2 **The Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas (ACORA).** The Commission's Report is expected to be published in the autumn of 1990 and will have an obvious ecumenical relevance. The Committee is grateful to the Revd John Clarke and Mrs Clare Laflin for having made a valuable contribution to the work of the Commission. In some Districts, URC representatives were able to meet its members as they visited various parts of the country.

The General Secretary, on behalf of the committee, submitted a paper to ACORA emphasising the ecumenical needs and opportunities of rural areas with particular reference to young people; liturgy; ministry - lay and ordained; church buildings and finance.

10. **New Enterprise in Mission**

10.1.1 During 1989 sixteen projects received grants totalling £24,600. One imaginative project helped by the fund is the Witham Community Bus, a double-decker equipped as a community resource and staffed by one full-time worker, assisted by volunteers. It is designed for mothers and toddlers in the mornings, elderly and unemployed in the afternoons and young people in the evenings. The bus will be taken to a specific location on each day of the week.

Another grant helps to provide a community room on a post-war housing estate so that the LEP (Anglican-URC) can develop a Neighbourhood Centre.

10.1.2 Two further applications for grants have been approved recently. A Christian community, whose Warden is a URC minister, offers long-term shelter and rehabilitation for homeless, damaged and isolated men. There is need to equip work schemes and to develop a small former hospital as a place of quiet and privacy for those needing this support and for those so damaged as to be slowly dying.

In north London, five United Reformed churches are seeking to establish from September 1990, a three-year project to employ a qualified teacher to lead a Christian education project for children and young people. Teaching will be based on four centres each weekday evening and on Saturday mornings to reach children within and without the churches.

10.2 **Mission Expenses Support in UK.** Several years of making pump-priming grants to new mission projects has revealed that some of them are able to become self-financing. Others are in need of continuing help. With this in mind, the

committee supports the Department's initiative in seeking to establish a separate budget heading "Mission Expenses Support in the UK", which will be able to evaluate and, if approved, make grants to the local costs of persons engaged in ministry on a longer-term basis where it is unrealistic to expect that the required funding can be provided from local sources.

10.3 The Committee is aware, above all, of a growing commitment to preparing a mission strategy at different levels of the URC. This calls for resources of people, expertise and money to be made available by the wider Church.

11. SCOTLAND

11.1 **Congregational Union of Scotland (CUS) and United Reformed Church Liaison Group.** The hope expressed in last year's Report to Assembly that a small group should be set up to encourage and enable the closest possible co-operation between our two churches has come to fruition. The URC group is convened by the Revd David Jenkins, Moderator of the Northern Province.

The Departmental Committee has also been pleased to welcome to its meetings the Revd Rosalind Lyle, the World Mission Secretary of the CUS.

11.2 **Church of Scotland/United Reformed Church.** In the light of last year's General Assembly decision on St Andrew's, Bournemouth, conversations have continued with the Presbytery of England of the Church of Scotland. It was agreed that as sister churches of the Reformed family in England, we should give evidence of our close relationship, particularly in the principal areas concerned, London and Corby. The Thames North and East Midlands Provinces have been asked to take the URC initiative.

12. IRELAND

12.1 The committee has welcomed the Revd David Nesbitt from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland so that channels of communication may be kept open between us. The URC recognises the value of local church links with Northern Ireland and rejoices in all the work of reconciliation undertaken by our church colleagues there.

13. GROWTH FOR THEIR SAKE

The theme *Growth for Their Sake* has been developed in many ways at all levels of the URC and the Department is grateful for much encouraging response as churches and Synods pray and work for new outreach. The Department has asked the Evangelism and Mission Education Group to monitor work on this area of our witness, noting that the Decade of Evangelism will be within its agenda.

EVANGELISM AND MISSION EDUCATION GROUP

Convener: The Revd Chris Baker

Secretary: Mrs Muriel Garrow

14. National

14.1 The Group has had a certain responsibility for the *Growth for Their Sake* process which was initiated by the Evangelism Working Party. We now recognise that departments and provinces have been involved in the process of determining aims and priorities and, having done so, will be responsible for following through what has been started.

14.2 The Group is concerned that many churches do not seem to get involved in the **agendas of the World Church**. International conferences take place but seem to touch us very slightly. It is to be hoped that the insights and inspirations of, for example, *Mission in Christ's Way*, will be taken up by local churches as information cascades through the Church structures.

15. Provincial

15.1 **Province Evangelism Teams**. The style of working differs from province to province. In some provinces the Teams are still working well but elsewhere the work of Mission Education is being developed in different ways. This means that the Team structure, as originally envisaged, has not worked out, but we rejoice in the fact that as provinces plan their future work, mission is clearly an important part of the debate.

16. Local

16.1 The Group is delighted to know that *Mission Pursuit* is continuing to be used by a number of churches as they seek to discover their mission purpose.

16.2 The first in a series of **Children's Leaflets** has been produced. It is entitled *Take off to Jamaica*. This is a joint production with CWM and the Methodist Church. The leaflets are intended for the 7-12 age group. We congratulate Geoffrey Duncan on this work. It is hoped to publish the next two leaflets in the series - on Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands - in April/May.

16.3A **Resource Box** containing maps, recipes, stories, general information and prayers will be prepared to accompany each leaflet. The boxes have a £2 handling charge covering the first month with £1 per subsequent week.

17. The Group gladly supports Muriel Garrow as she works to develop mission education in the Church and encourages churches and Districts to invite Muriel to share in their work.

URBAN RURAL MISSION GROUP

Convener: The Revd Charles Brock

Secretary: The Revd Donald Elliott

18. Origins and Aim

18.1 The Urban Rural Mission Group (URMG) first met in 1987 following the Ilkley consultation (1986) in response to a perceived need 'for a Steering Group to follow up the cross-departmental activity required.' It was constituted as a sub-group of the Missionary and Ecumenical Work At Home Committee but with deliberately cross-departmental membership. URMG defined its broad aim as follows: **'To promote the liberation of poor people in urban and rural Britain through and within the life of the URC'**. This is in the context of a broad definition of the church's mission recently suggested by Raymond Fung of the WCC Evangelism desk:

- a) Participation with the world for Justice and Peace.
- b) Invitation to worship.
- c) Invitation to discipleship.

18.2 These themes have been echoed world-wide during 1989 at the San Antonio conference on mission and evangelism and at the Lausanne II evangelisation congress in Manila. Indeed the *Manila Manifesto* specifically emphasises that the

Gospel is good news for the poor. And it has been Roman Catholic theologians who coined the phrase 'God's preferential option for the poor'.

18.3 The Ilkley consultation was part of an ongoing process of analysis and reflection on what it means to be a church committed to bringing 'Good News to the Poor'. The process had its specific starting-point in 1980 when General Assembly received the 'Priorities & Resources Group' report and asked that the World Church and Mission Department set out priorities for mission. This concern of the URC during the '80s for the worsening conditions in both urban and rural settings needs to be seen in the context of a wider church concern, e.g. CWM's report, *Ministry with the Urban Poor* (1980), the Methodist initiative, *Mission Alongside the Poor in Rural Areas* (1984), the Anglican *Faith in the City* report (1985), and the developing work of the Urban Rural Mission desk at WCC. Among so many important recent initiatives, *Hearing the Cry of the Poor* (Church Action on Poverty, 1989) should be noted. The Report of the **Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas** is awaited.

19. **Bias to the Poor.** The conviction that God has a 'preferential option for the poor' has run through all the consultations referred to above and is the basis of URMG's own reflection and practice. To some it may seem scandalous to think of God as biased in any way, but the God revealed to us in the Old Testament and the ministry and mission of Jesus should leave no doubt. The grand motif for the mission of Jesus was given during his first public appearance recorded by Luke:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has appointed me to
reach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release
to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are
oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of
the Lord.

(Luke 4: 18-19 RSV, cf Isaiah 61)

'The rest of the Gospel is simply the working out of the programme.'

(G.B. Caird)

20. **Objective.** If the initial brief from the 1980 Assembly was to seek out priorities for mission, then the subsequent meetings at Mill Hill, Ilkley and St Katharine's indicated a need for such a forum where church people particularly involved in ministry to areas of urban and rural deprivation could meet to express their frustrations, affirm their successes, and formulate strategies to challenge the wider church in its mission with the poor. From this experience the URMG would now express its objectives in the following terms:

**to help the people of the URC engage in mission
which addresses poverty and division and their causes.**

21. **Areas of concern**

21.1 The Ilkley consultation heard accounts from people on the ground in places of deprivation, including Salford, Tottenham and rural Lancashire. From these, and others, several widely-held areas of concern became apparent. These were grouped under the following heads: Gospel Rootage, Diverse Ministry, Contextual Training, Ecumenical Collaboration, and the Church and Public Policy. Three years later at St Katharine's, Limehouse, similar themes were voiced. Now Ilkley's concern for 'Gospel Rootage' was spelled out as the need for the church to engage in considering the radical nature of discipleship, theology of liberation, and Biblical seriousness in

politics. The issues regarding the recognition of, and equipping for, diversity of ministry re-emerged. There was also concern for new forms of local church life. Moreover, it was clearly seen that any future strategy must take further the willingness of the URC as a whole to move its gifts and resources to the frontiers of mission engagement.

21.2 All these concerns point to a programme which seeks to implement a truly incarnational Gospel and to analyse and tackle racism, classism, and sexism. If accepted by the URC at all levels, and in ecumenical liaison, it will have far-reaching implications for us all.

22. **URMG: the Ongoing Task**

22.1 All these areas of concern form the substance of the URMG's agenda as it seeks to share them with the wider church. As the objectives stated above (para 20) make clear. The group sees its task as twofold; firstly providing a listening post for the concerns of people about poverty and deprivation, and secondly as a pressure group that works for the achievement of the objective. The group does not see its role as confrontational, but as complementary to the work of the Departments, providing a horizontal component to their largely vertical structure and direct access to thinking and doing at local level.

22.2 Current examples of how the group is working are as follows:

- 22.2.1 **Integrated training.** Working with the Faith and Life Department on how mission beginning with the poor can inform the equipping for Membership and Eldership.
- 22.2.2 Working with Church and Society Department on the idea of a '**Just Peace Church**'.
- 22.2.3 *Mission Pursuit.* Seeking to provide complementary materials, chiefly by way of relevant accounts of local URC work which begins with the poor.
- 22.2.4 Assisting the Ministries Department in its quest to provide opportunities for ordinands to experience work in deprived areas and to receive education in social and economic analysis, community organising skills, and racial awareness.
- 22.2.5 In the coming '**Decade of Evangelism**', we want to place special emphasis on "being with" rather than "doing for". We want to share with and learn from the poor as far as possible and let the Gospel be heard through them. (**Resolution 5**).

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK ABROAD COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Derek Wales
Secretary: The Revd Tony Coates

23. Through a year which brought changes beyond all expectation, we have shared with the whole of the United Reformed Church a deep sense of gratitude to God for our close relations with so many churches in Europe, some of which have been the focus of prayerful debate and challenge to the existing order. It has been a privilege to share with them, by personal contact and in prayer, in the joys and the sorrows, the hopes and the fears of these exciting days.

24. We noted the part played by the Romanian Reformed Pastor Lazslo Tokes at the beginning of the changes in that country and the secondment by the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren of Dr Josef Hromadka to serve in the Government as Deputy Prime Minister. The Moderator of the General Assembly was able to make a visit to East Berlin just after the opening of the Berlin Wall to express the solidarity of the URC with the Churches in the GDR. We were glad to hear that our General Secretary was to share in a consultation of European Church Leaders organised by the Conference of European Churches on its role in the new openness of Europe, and also was to be part of a British Council of Churches delegation to Hong Kong.

25. We have established a small East/West Links Working Party to give particular thought to the development of relations between churches in East and West Europe and to advise as to how we can be more actively involved in sharing resources with European partners. It is hoped that this group will be able to meet with Dr Milan Opocensky - also of the Czech Brethren - the new General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, to seek his guidance about the possibility of links and the direction they should take. (**Resolution 6**).

26. A return visit was made to the URC by six members of Churches of the Reformed tradition in the Netherlands, who spent a week in the East Midlands and Eastern Provinces with a visit also to the Windermere Centre. Their report spoke of the URC as 'a young Church with flexible structures .. with a strong social conscience but weak in the areas of faith and spirituality'. It noted a growing evangelical movement within the Church and spoke with approval of the system of provincial moderators and of the Church's ecumenical involvement. It is planned to make this perceptive and challenging report more widely available within the Church.

27. The URC has been represented at two major meetings during the year -the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism Conference in San Antonio, Texas, and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches General Council in Seoul. A message from the former spoke of the two most significant trends of the Conference as 'the spirit of universality (catholicity) of the gatherings and its concern for the fulness of the gospel'. The WARC Council re-appointed Dr Allan Boesak as its President, and encouraged its member churches to put the question of women's rights high on their agendas. Mr John Gilbey, of our Yorkshire Province, completed a term of twelve years as Moderator of the Finance Committee of the WARC and was warmly thanked for his service. The Department was also able to support the Revd David Cave in his attendance at the Lausanne II International Congress on World Evangelisation in Manila. The URC was also represented at the second meeting of the Southern African Alliance of Reformed Churches in Malawi.

28. Miss Sheila Rudofsky drew to our attention a presentation made at CWM Swanwick on the subject of monitoring of personnel for cancer after exposure to radiation during nuclear tests in the Pacific. While British service and diplomatic personnel have been so monitored no such arrangement exists for the Kiribati population who were on the island as indentured labourers at the time of the tests. It was decided to take up the matter with the CWM Secretariat.

29. We heard with joy of the success of the second part of the URC-Jamaica Youth Exchange and noted gladly that a URC representative had been found to take part in the forthcoming BCC China Youth Exchange.

30. The out-going Ghanaian Chaplain, Revd Anthony Beeko, was warmly thanked for his work over the last few years which has been much appreciated by all who have been touched by it, and a welcome was extended to his successor, the Revd Derrick Sena Dzandu-Hedidor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana.

31. **CWM Swanwick, August 1989.** The Revd M. Azariah, General Secretary of the Church of South India, led the conference in a lively and thought-provoking way on the theme 'Come Alive! Renewed Communities in Mission'. Worship led by the Revd Edmund Banyard, considerable CWM input and, in particular, the presence of members of the Jamaica/UK Youth Exchange enriched the fellowship shared by members from the churches of the European Region of CWM.

The main theme leader at the 1990 conference will be Dr C.M. Kao, former General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

32. **Listing of church links.** The first listing of results from the survey made of congregations' links with churches overseas is now with the Department. The assistance of Provincial and District representatives is sought in getting and keeping this up-to-date.

33. **COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION**

Acting General Secretary: Mr Barrie Scopes

33.1 Nearly eighty people, including Council members, staff and guests, took part in the CWM Council meeting in St Andrews, Scotland, 20-30 June 1989. The Council's theme was "Empowering for Mission", and this was explored through two theme addresses, four Bible Studies and in group discussions. Reports were received from a Review Group, a Youth Consultation and a pre-Council Women's Consultation. Among the many decisions taken on these reports was the endorsement of the Declaration from the Women's Consultation calling for greater opportunities to be given to women in the CWM member Churches in a variety of ways. The Charity Commissioners have now approved an extension to CWM's Charity Scheme allowing three extra women's representatives and three young people to be voting members of Council.

33.2 The Revd Andrews Prasad, a presbyter of the Church of North India, has joined CWM staff as Secretary for Personnel Resources to succeed the Revd Yvette Rabemila who has returned to Madagascar, where she is now teaching in Ivato Theological College. The Revd Dr Christopher Duraisingh has become the Director of WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in Geneva. The search for a new General Secretary is continuing.

33.3 Both the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and the Presbyterian Church of Korea have been accepted as Constituent bodies of CWM, making the number of Constituent bodies in the CWM partnership up to 30. Much work needs to be done to help these Churches understand what is involved in belonging to CWM, and the work done so far makes us realise the need for similar educational programmes in other Constituent bodies. CWM faces questions as to how big and in what ways it should grow in future. We are seeing the need to explore other ways of sharing CWM's experience with churches and mission organisations through fellowship relationships.

33.4 Among the decisions taken by the CWM Council were these: to share information about the World Debt Crisis, and to allocate up to 5% of CWM's annual income to international ecumenical organisations, in the spirit of the WCC's Guide-lines for Ecumenical Sharing of Resources. The Council identified a number of matters which need to be given greater emphasis in the future, including

greater sharing of people in mission through exchanges and short-term appointments as well as long-term appointments;

- helping financially dependent member Churches to become more self-sufficient;
- assisting with leadership development;
- continued work with the Education in Mission thrust 'Equipping Local Congregations in Mission'; and
- challenging member Churches to take mission as the integrating principle for their theological training.

MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd John Sutcliffe

Secretary: The Revd John Parry

34. The membership of the Committee has changed considerably during the year. This has led to the appointment of new consultants and a reassessment of our future work.

35. The Consultants are:

The Revd Gillian Boorne
 The Revd Dr David Bowen
 The Revd Ron Lewis
 Mrs Joyce Killick
 Ms Janet Orchard
 The Revd John Parry
 The Revd John Proctor
 Dr Jack Thompson

Hinduism
 Islam
 Judaism
 Buddhism
 Religious Education
 Sikhism
 Theological Education
 New Religious Movements

They are willing to correspond with or visit local churches.

36.1 The future work of the Committee will be in keeping with its definition as found in the revised Handbook for United Reformed Churches:

The Committee's concern is to encourage members of our churches to be aware of and make contact with people of other faiths and ideologies, with a view to establishing mutual understanding and respect and seeking ways of clearly witnessing to our Christian faith.

In considering its work under a new Convener the Committee has outlined a number of priority areas amongst which are:

36.2 **Theological Education and Integrated Training.** In the light of the review of training in the URC the Committee would wish to stress that the various elements in theological education should be informed by the fact that we minister in a multi-faith society.

36.3 **Interfaith marriages.** Whilst guide-lines for the pastoral care of couples are available, a gap remains with regard to the pastoral care of the relatives of those involved in interfaith marriages.

36.4 **A theological basis for dialogue and practical guide-lines for churches.** The Committee proposes to involve a number of local churches in further exploration of these themes.

36.5 **Network.** There are many people who are involved in dialogue in their local communities and at work who have neither the understanding nor the theological

support of their local congregations. The Committee proposes the development of a network for the exchange of ideas and the dissemination of material.

36.6 Actual dialogue. During 1990 the Committee is planning two consultations. The first, with the Jews, explores the delicate and explosive issue of *The Land of Israel* and the varying claims made by Palestinians and Jews. The second consultation, with the Sikhs, deals with *Creation and Human Responsibility* and highlights the fact that concern for the world in which we live is not confined to Christians alone.

37.1 However, formal consultations are not the only forms of dialogue. In their daily lives many Christians have entertained the idea of extending friendship, fellowship and a supportive interest to people of other faiths in their locality. There has hardly been a time when such support, concern or openness would be more deeply appreciated. This is particularly so with regard to the critical situation which has emerged for Muslims during 1989.

37.2 The kind of supportive, friendly approach which is needed in this situation is exactly that kind of personal interest and concern for the well-being of a minority community under pressure, which Christian individuals and congregations should extend at all times.

37.3 There is a ministry in 'standing alongside' those who are bewildered because they feel themselves to have been abused and betrayed publicly by one who appears to have degraded and shamed the name, reputation and honour of their scripture and their prophet. In addition, there are Muslims who strive to maintain their faith, but who wish to relate it constructively and helpfully to many of the influential currents of modern life, without abandoning either their heritage or their modernity: these also have the right to expect Christian concern, interest and support.

38.1 In this ministry of 'standing alongside' it is reasonable to ask, 'Who ministers to whom?' The ministries rendered by Muslims and by members of other faiths to Christians are, of course, too numerous to list exhaustively but their variety includes:

- countless acts of personal kindness, individual generosity and love;
- deep friendships between peers, eg amongst neighbours at work, in school;
- labour: skilled and unskilled, professional and routine: maintaining the fabric of industrial life where decline had set in, developing commercial services and contributing business acumen, maintaining public facilities, eg essential public transport, corner shops, support work in the health service;
- a revitalising of many decayed areas of inner-cities, reclaiming them for a vibrant community life;
- the diversifying of many public services and facilities, eg a proliferation of restaurants, shops and cultural events offering new experiences to the community at large;
- opportunities for religious dialogue - the sharpening of faith by faith, mutual enrichment and challenge of major civilizations;
- opportunities to broaden educational curricula to include perspectives of experiences beyond those of the indigenous community; - opportunities to recognise and acknowledge the variety and wealth of languages and cultures.

38.2 In line with the purpose of our committee, we note the immediate and major opportunity offered to Christians not only to witness to their faith but also to become personally and immediately acquainted with the heritages of other faiths which are in some ways comparable and in other ways contrasting. The opportunity for

personal engagement and enrichment is impressive and its sharp relevance for the development of true community, devoid of prejudice and racism, is readily apparent but left untouched could undermine peace, justice and the stability of society.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Raymond Adams
Secretary: Miss Sheila Rudofsky

39. The Committee continues to encourage and facilitate the exchange of personnel between the URC and member Churches of CWM; and to promote bilateral exchange with other Churches with which the URC has a special relationship.

40. The appointment, training and support of URC missionaries serving through CWM is a major part of the committee's work. Yet increasingly its role is to promote other models of exchange which involve local churches, young people and others in short-term experiences, so that the whole Church can be 'empowered for mission' in its own particular setting.

41. The guide-lines for resource-sharing, which came out of the WCC Consultation at El Escorial, challenge us to 'represent to one another our needs and problems in relationships where there are no absolute donors, or absolute recipients. All have needs to be met and gifts to give'. The marriage of gifts and needs is a delicate one but the committee is encouraged by the increasing number of models for cross-cultural exchange which are emerging from local church, District and Provincial initiatives.

42. The following **eight models for sharing people in mission** are some of those in which the Committee has played an enabling role in the past year:

42.1 SERVICE THROUGH CWM:

In August 1989, Mr Mike and Mrs Ann Schofield went with their family from Redditch to do agricultural development work with the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM).

In September, the Revd and Mrs A Samraj Jayakaran and family came from the Church of South India to begin a URC Special Ministry in Ilford town centre, based at Vine URC.

In December, the Revd Chris and Mrs Carol Baillie and family went from Northallerton to pastoral ministry in the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman.

Miss Gillian Whiting has spent two terms at St Andrew's Hall preparing for service overseas. She is expected to leave for the Solomon Islands in the summer, to take up a teaching post at Goldie College, serving the United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

We look forward to the arrival later this year of the Revd Samuel Silungwe from the United Church of Zambia, who has been appointed to a new URC Special Ministry shared between the World Church and Mission Department and the Faith and Life Department. In a two year appointment he will spend some time in local church placements in three Provinces, working alongside ministerial colleagues.

The intention is that Mr Silungwe should help widen the horizons of local congregations, and help them experience the richness of cross-cultural exchange. This appointment is in line with CWM's philosophy that people in

mission share themselves and their cultural background as well as sharing a particular skill. It is in exposure to different views and insights that attitudes are challenged and barriers can be broken down. What a person brings from his/her experience, culture and lifestyle is offered in a new situation for the enrichment of all.

Mr Silungwe will also belong to the World Affairs Sub-Committee, and will be closely involved with national and regional youth events.

42.2 SHORT-TERM EXPERIENCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:

The main opportunities for short-term experience for young people are provided by the Reformed Church in Hungary. Volunteers have helped in a home for mentally and physically handicapped children in Orbottyan; others have helped High School students with conversational English in Debrecen. And for the first time this year there is the opportunity to work in the kitchens of an old people's home also in Debrecen.

We have continued to send teachers of English for one or two years experience, to be employed by Tunghai University in Taiwan, and linked with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan through CWM. There is also a new opportunity for a volunteer to take part in local church work and participate in its own English teaching programme.

42.3 CWM's TRAINING IN MISSION PROGRAMME:

In the summer of 1989 Miss Bethan Galliers completed her Training in Mission experience where, every year, a group of ten young people from member Churches of CWM live and work together for a year divided between Selly Oak and Jamaica. This is a tremendous opportunity for young adults, but the URC has not responded to this opportunity as readily as it might have done. For the right person it is an invaluable experience for learning about others and about oneself. Bethan Galliers said in her report that 'at the final service there was a moment of feeling that we had made it through the year; but knowing also that the biggest challenge had just begun, back in our own contexts as changed people; people serious and enthusiastic about mission.'

42.4 MAIDSTONE URC/ZIMBABWE LINK CREATES NEW OPPORTUNITY:

The Revd Imon Ndlovu from the Zimbabwe Synod of the UCCSA is spending two terms studying at Selly Oak and one term working in the pastorate at Maidstone URC. The Church has had links with Zimbabwe for many years, and the initiative for approaching CWM was taken jointly by the local church and the UCCSA.

42.5 CHESHIRE DISTRICT INVITES REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA:

The women of Cheshire District raised a sum of money to enable one representative from the UCCSA to share his experience of Southern Africa. The Revd Templeton Mahlinza spent two months in the District speaking to many groups and audiences. A grant was made from CWM's Experience Enlargement Fund to allow Mrs Mahlinza to accompany him. At the request of the Personnel Committee Mr Mahlinza wrote a report of his visit, in which he strongly recommended the continuity of exchange visits between ministers and lay people of the URC with oppressed blacks in Southern Africa so as to 'learn the experience of living under the threshold of discrimination'. Some

reflections by the World Church and Mission Committee of Cheshire District on the visit have been formulated by the Committee into Guide-lines for Districts wishing to arrange a similar type of visit.

42.6 LOCAL CHURCHES HOST URC SCHOLARSHIP HOLDERS:

The current URC scholarship holders studying at Selly Oak spent a short time during the Easter vacation as guests of local churches in Berwick-on-Tweed, Durham and Nottingham in order to learn about the URC.

42.7 EXCHANGE VISITS:

In July and August last year a visit from a group of fifteen young people from the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman completed an exchange programme. It provided an opportunity for sharing in the life of local congregations, participating in the World Mission Conference at Swanwick and contributing in a practical way to a local project. A lasting impression of the visit is the strengthening of links between our two Churches and the development of a further exchange programme.

During May 1990, ten ministers from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan will spend a month in the URC, following the URC group visit to Taiwan in 1988. The visitors will be shared among six Provinces, participating in local church life. They have expressed special interest in the areas of mission and evangelism, ecumenism, church in community programmes and environmental issues.

42.8 ECUMENICAL SHARING OF RESOURCES:

The sponsoring bodies of the BCC continue to send teachers of English to China through the Amity Foundation but the response from qualified and experienced teachers is very poor. The request from Amity invites us to increase the number of teachers and to encourage them to stay for longer than two years.

43. **ST ANDREW'S HALL.** Staff changes include the arrival of Mrs Allison Harper as Secretary and Mr Donald Fripp as Bursar. Ms Sheila Rudofsky was appointed as Convener to the College Council in November 1989. Apart from the continuation of the numbers of mission partners and bursary students in training we have seen an encouraging presence of a number of ministers on sabbatical. In addition we now have four CRCW students in training.

44. **PEOPLE APPOINTED TO SERVE OVERSEAS:**

44.1 **Through CWM:**

Miss Gillian Whiting of Palmers Green URC, London, to Goldie College, Munda, Solomon Islands.

44.2 **Short-term experience overseas:**

Miss Sally Jones - 1 year at Debrecen with the Reformed Church in Hungary.
Miss Samantha Wensley - 1 year at Tunghai University, Taiwan, linked with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

45. **MISSIONARIES WHO HAVE COMPLETED THEIR SERVICE** with Churches overseas:

The Revd Elizabeth Brown - Taiwan (through CWM).

Miss Marie Auld - Nepal (joint URC/MCOD appointment).
Mr Michael Hall - Papua New Guinea (through CWM).
Miss Sylvia Coombs - Solomon Islands (through CWM).

46. **MINISTERS SERVING THE URC**, recruited through the World Church and Mission Department from overseas Churches:

The Revd Chong Kah Geh and Mrs Shirley Chong: Presbyterian Church in Malaysia - pastoral ministry at Hounslow.

The Revd Hakim B Singh Rahi and Mrs Annie Rahi: Church of North India - ecumenical ministry at Winson Green, Birmingham.

The Revd Froukien Smit: Reformed Churches in the Netherlands - pastoral ministry with the King's Hall Interfaith Project, Southall.

The Revd A Samraj Jayakaran and Mrs Vasanthi Alexander: Church of South India - pastoral ministry at Vine URC, Ilford.

47. **PEOPLE FROM OVERSEAS RECEIVING SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT** from the URC:

The Revd Gabriel Korbla Akorli: Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana.

The Revd Baek Do Ki: Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.

Mr Peter Kok Hoe Lee: Anglican Church in Malaysia.

Mr Jacinto Agostinho Jonasse Muth: Christian Council of Mozambique.

Ms Yoon Young Ae: General Secretary of Korea Church Women United (shared scholarship with Christian Aid).

All at St Andrew's Hall Selly Oak.

Mr Jan Roskovec: Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren (shared scholarship with Westminster College, Cambridge).

48. A list of missionaries appears in the Year Book. (See also *Reform*, February 1990, p.18).

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the Report of the World Church and Mission Department for debate.
2. (See Report, 4.3)
Aware of the plans for a Decade of Evangelism and believing that the permanent character of the church as a witnessing community should be emphasised, the Assembly encourages local churches, District Councils and Synods to seek participation in all the preparation for and development of the Decade.
3. (See Report, 5.1)
At this point of change in the ecumenical movement in Britain and Ireland:
 - 3.1 The Assembly gives thanks to God for the great variety of important work done by the British Council of Churches in the search for unity and effective witness. This work has both served and stimulated URC and its predecessors, has enabled many international links to be maintained and has engaged the URC in the broadest struggles for justice and peace. The Assembly is grateful to all who have given their service in this enterprise, and whose readiness for change enables the new phase to begin; and
 - 3.2 The Assembly sends a message of goodwill to the new bodies to be inaugurated in September and pledges full co-operation and support; and

- 3.3 The Assembly asks all Assembly Committees to ensure that, before planning any new project or programme, there is an opportunity to discuss whether it can be done ecumenically; and
- 3.4 The Assembly asks the Assembly Departments to consider how best to share with the wider fellowship those particular emphases and skills which have been developed in the URC; and
- 3.5 The Assembly encourages the Provincial Synods and District Councils to continue in the development of intermediate levels of ecumenical co-operation; and encourages local churches to press ahead with the wide variety of inter-church witness and service; and
- 3.6 The Assembly affirms that URC will be a 'sponsoring church' of Christian Aid.
4. (See Report, 6.1)
The Assembly receives the Statement of the Methodist/URC Liaison Committee and authorises the World Church and Mission Department to undertake the consultation described, in parallel with the process in the Methodist Church.
5. (see Report, 18-22)
Noting the work done by the Urban Rural Mission Group:
- 5.1 The Assembly recognises the need for continued work on the nature and implications of the missionary calling in our society, and requests the World Church and Mission Department to present further recommendations on this theme from time to time.
- 5.2 The Assembly instructs the World Church and Mission Department to plan adequate resourcing of the Urban Rural Mission Group for a period of three years from this Assembly.
6. (See Report, 23-25)
- 6.1 The Assembly acknowledges that through years of oppression a costly contribution to the maintenance and renewal of the life of their nations has been made by Churches and individual Christians in Eastern Europe through faithful prayer and witness to Christ.
- 6.2 The Assembly rejoices with sister Churches there in the growing opportunities open to the whole people for freedom of worship and expression, for participation in the political process and for economic development.
- 6.3 The Assembly reaffirms the continuing support of the United Reformed Church through worship, prayer and personal contact for the Churches and the whole community as they seek to promote the well-being of nations and to protect the rights of conscience and belief.
- 6.4 The Assembly looks forward to increased opportunities for contact and fellowship and to learning from the experience of our sister churches in Eastern Europe.

FAITH AND LIFE DEPARTMENT

Convener: The Revd Dr Philip Morgan

Secretary: The Revd Terry Oakley

1. A Faith and Life Department is a contradiction in terms for there is nothing departmental about either faith or life. We acknowledge the faith we have inherited and the faith lived by the United Reformed Church in its many manifestations. We rejoice in the life given us in creation and in recreation in Christ. As a Department of the URC we attempt to discern contemporary opportunities and challenges and to focus on these for the benefit of the whole Church as it seeks to be faithful to its mission in Christ.

2. We are grateful for the human resources made available to us in the members of our committees, national and provincial, our Conveners and Secretaries and our staff at Church House and the YLTO Team. In particular we have welcomed Rosalind Goodfellow as the Convener of the Windermere Policy and Planning Committee and we are grateful to Alasdair Pratt for his six years period of service as Convener of the Health and Healing Committee. We are thankful for the service given by Caroline Ritchie in the office and whilst regretting her resignation rejoice in the reason - the impending birth of her first child. We are thankful for the recovery of Bill Mahood from illness and his return as Convener of Christian Education and Stewardship Committee with apparently enhanced energy!

3. It is most unlikely that anything connected with either faith or life will be without controversy. The Church of Christ is not a placid monochrome uniformity but a company of pilgrims urgently and excitedly discovering the riches both of our human potential and of God's gift of life in its fullness. Our young people continue to challenge us in the work of YLTOS and in the FURY Project. The work of healing is acknowledged as central to our Lord's ministry and to our own but it is disturbing. Our interpretations of order and opportunity in the sacraments of baptism and communion cause tension amongst us. The place of children and the complementary relation of male and female in life and language, the fascinating diversity of activity at Windermere, the demand for training, the fresh insights of stewardship, these and much else all suggest that God has yet more light and truth to break forth from his Word.

4. We present an account of our discernment in our stewardship to Assembly and in partnership here as with the Church at large seek comment, criticism, affirmation and encouragement as appropriate to assist us assist the Church more fully tomorrow than yesterday.

WINDERMERE POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow

Director and Secretary: The Revd Graham Cook

5. The Windermere Centre is pleased that the Director, the Revd Graham Cook, has been elected Moderator of General Assembly 1990-91. It is recognition of his ministries in Blackburn and Leeds but also of the work which has led to the unique contribution that the Centre is making to the development of our Church.

6. The increasing use made of the Centre by our churches, districts, provinces, committees and their people is further evidence of its growing importance to our life. This year there have been 4562 bed nights; this is equivalent to a 70% occupancy of

rooms and exceeds the original targets. These occupancy figures compare very favourably with other conference centres.

7. The Conference Room has been extended and a new room built to provide better facilities for worship and for study. It will be known as the Garden Room. The costs of the building work have been completely covered by the church at Central, Sheffield. The costs of furnishing have been met by a gift from the Clarke family, a grant from a trust fund and gifts from 'Friends of the Centre'.

8. The Hannah Fund, now registered as a charity, enables costs of travel to and accommodation at the Centre to be subsidised, has grown significantly during the year. At the end of the year it had a balance of over £17,000. During 1989 the Fund helped 29 people to attend courses. Applications are welcome and should be made to the Director.

9. 89 different courses were run during the year. They ranged from Liturgical Dance to Liberation Theology; from training Retreat Leaders to singing 'Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat'; from Celtic Spirituality to Partners in Learning; from Flower Arranging to Urban Ministry; from Rural Ministry to Writing Public Prayers; from Pre-Retirement Courses for Ministers and Spouses to Clowning the Gospel. Twenty different churches from six different Provinces have used the Centre and its resources as a way of stimulating their life and mission.

10. The Committee welcomes the re-appointment of Graham Cook as Director of the Centre for a further five years and records its thanks for his creative and inspiring leadership in the development of training within the URC.

CHILDREN'S WORK COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee

Secretary: The Revd Stephen Thornton

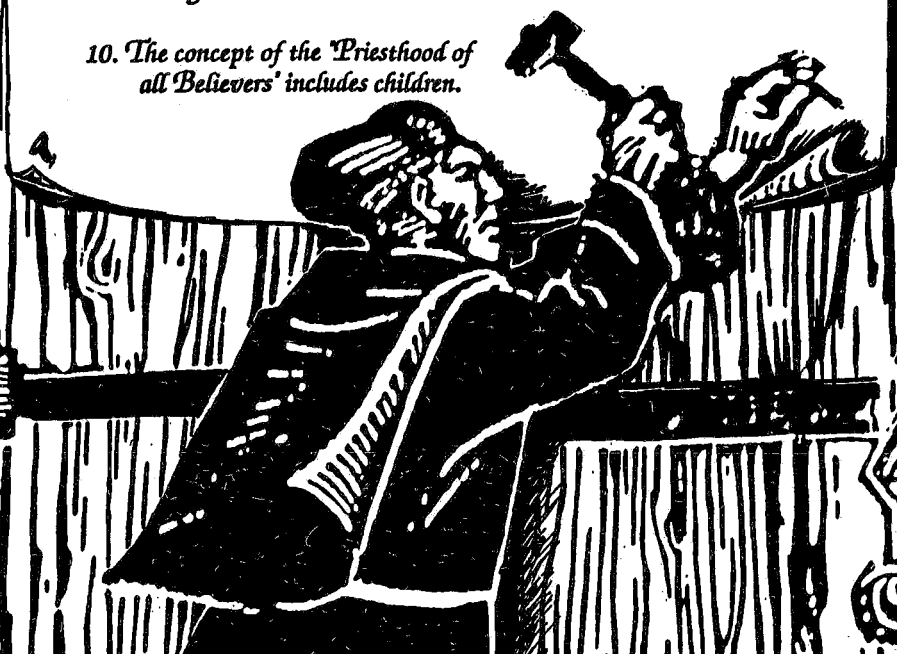
11. The Committee wishes to express its warmest appreciation to two of its members who retire at this Assembly. The Revd John Robinson has supported the Committee over many years and made a valuable contribution as Master Pilot. We also wish to thank Mrs Sheila Flett, who in the last three years has been an inspiration to us, especially in the development of tutors' training for children's work leaders. We appreciate the hard work put in by all the members of this small Committee, on behalf of the seventy-six thousand children in our churches, just as we are very grateful for the unstinting, and often unsung, work done by Children's Workers, District and Province Children's Work Secretaries in local situations.

Charter for Children

12.1 It has long been a concern of this Committee that the children, who make up approximately 38% of the total number of people in our churches, are often ignored or given low status when church decisions are being made. Yet we believe that they have an important contribution to make to the Church in their own right, let alone their contribution in the future. For this reason, we have produced the following discussion starters which we hope will enable churches to work out what they believe to be their *Charter for Children in the Church*

Towards a
**Charter for Children
 in the Church**

1. *Children are equal partners with adults in the life of the church.*
2. *The full diet of Christian worship is for children as well as adults.*
3. *Learning is for the whole church, adults and children.*
4. *Fellowship is for all - each belonging meaningfully to the rest.*
5. *Service is for children to give, as well as adults.*
6. *The call to evangelism comes to all God's people of whatever age.*
7. *The Holy Spirit speaks powerfully through children as well as adults.*
8. *The discovery and development of gifts in children and adults is a key function of the church.*
9. *As a church community we must learn to do only those things in separate age groups which we cannot in all conscience do together.*
10. *The concept of the 'Priesthood of all Believers' includes children.*



Copies of this starter charter are available in the Bookshop. We urge churches to discuss the issues enshrined in this Charter.

Under Fives

13.1 As can be seen from the Charter, this Committee believes that all children are an integral part of the life of the Church, and this, we believe, is also true of children under five years of age. We recommend that 0-5's should be:

- (a) on Elders' lists like everyone else
- (b) able to feel more and more part of the whole Church
- (c) able to meet more and more people of all ages, and
- (d) able to experience and gradually share more and more in worship.

13.2 We have published a booklet, *Under Fives in the Church*, which we warmly commend to churches for discussion. Newly designed birthday cards and rolls of those baptised and welcomed into the church will shortly be available.

14. Many churches have been expressing concern that they have no children in their churches. In some cases, it may be inappropriate for those churches to have children, if there are few in the area. We would like to suggest to churches who have no children:

- (a) to ask yourself, 'Why do we want children?'
- (b) to look at the profile of your area. Are there potential children for the church?
- (c) Do what you can, and not what you can't.

In order to help churches do what they can, we have produced a booklet with some suggestions.

15. A working party has been set up under the chairmanship of the Revd Duncan Wilson, and supported by Paul Franklin, to consider the special needs of the 11-14 year olds. Its members include those from both the Children's Work and Youth Committees. A network called *Inter-View* has been set up, and a newsheet is being published on a regular basis to provide news and ideas for people working with this age group. Over 170 people are included in this network. In addition, a catalogue of resources will be available shortly. It is hoped that there might be a named person who would be responsible for 11-14's in each Province.

16. A further mailing, called *Children Matter* is being produced three times a year at a cost of £2, giving resources and sharing ideas for all those working with children in the Church. Please let Terry Oakley at 86 Tavistock Place know if you would like a copy.

Training

17.1 A major priority of the Committee over the last year has been in training. We should like to offer our congratulations to Ann Anderson and Patricia Boyes (Yorkshire Province) and Marjorie Woodland (Wessex Province), who completed the first, demanding Tutors' Training course in 1989. We hope to hold another Tutors' Training course in July 1990 and winter 1990/1991. The Committee is very grateful indeed to Roger Tolman and the YLTO team for their invaluable help in setting up and running these courses. We have been greatly helped by their expertise. The Children's Work Committee looks forward with pleasure to working more fully with the YLTO's in the future. The Committee has been fully involved in, and fully supports the proposals made for Youth and Children's work Trainers. (See paragraphs on page).

17.2 In addition to these courses, the URC/Baptist written course for Children's Workers: *Equipped to Teach* parts A and B have been extensively revised and

relaunched. We are delighted that more and more workers with children have been taking this course.

17.3 For the future, however, we are hopeful that it may be possible for an ecumenical programme for people working with children (like the youth workers' *Spectrum*), to be produced over the next three years. If so, we expect that the United Reformed Church will be represented at a major level.

18. The Committee intends that the place of children will be a major issue in our Church in the coming years and offers its present publications as a major resource to this glorious explosion.

PILOTS PANEL (Master Pilot: The Revd Chris Baker)

Developments

19.1 During 1989 we saw continued development of Pilots. As we move into the 1990's we thank God for the growth we have seen in the past twelve months and seek his continued guidance as we chart our way forward. Last year our reported number of Companies was inaccurate. The actual number of Companies was 185. During 1989 we have seen real growth of 12% in the number of Companies. Approximately one fifth of all Companies have been formed within the last two years.

19.2 One of the growth points within Companies has been the introduction of *Deckhands* (for 5 and 6 year olds). The new *Compass for Officers working with Deckhands* is selling well and we have sold over 600 badges. The experimental work with 15-17's is due for a mid-term review in the spring. We were very glad to be invited to send a Pilot representative to the 1990 FURY Assembly.

19.3 We are currently looking at the material and structure of Pilots in order to modernise it and improve the quality throughout as we go forward to the 90s.

19.4 Pilots is sponsored by the United Reformed Church and the Congregational Federation and we rejoice in its increasing ecumenical appeal. We have Companies in eight different denominations plus some ecumenical situations. We are inviting a member of another Church to join the Pilot Panel.

19.5 Our expenditure during 1989 has been heavier than expected due mainly to new initiatives being taken. We have taken measures to improve our financial situation and believe that these steps will provide a much better income for the future.

Activities

20. The 1989/90 *Voyage of Discovery* is entitled *A Taste of Taiwan*. It was written for us by Geoffrey Duncan and we are grateful for his work. The pack costs £2.50 and is available for groups other than Pilots. Once again there have been camps in various parts of the country, not only during the summer but at Easter and Christmas as well. Camps have catered for some 550+Pilots and officers.

Thanks

21. In conclusion we would like to record our thanks to our sponsoring denominations for the support they give. We would also give grateful thanks to the hundreds of officers without whose dedication and service Pilots would not be the stimulating and enjoyable organisation it is.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd William Mahood
Secretary: Mr Michael Harrison

Value Training

22.1 We have been encouraged by the renewed emphasis on training within the church. There is a greater awareness that if we are to be more effective in any aspect of our Christian witness and discipleship we need to be better equipped for the task. It is through training that we become better equipped.

22.2 We are aware of the many opportunities that already exist for training. We would draw attention to what is being done by YLTO's, by tutors for the courses *Exploring the Faith* and *Equipped to Teach*, by Provincial Training Officers and the staff at the Windermere Training Centre.

22.3 We are also greatly encouraged when we hear news of churches being more concerned about and giving greater priority and resources to the training of church members, elders, teachers, leaders of worship, etc. The stories that we hear from these churches tell of increased enthusiasm and excitement about the faith and great opportunities for witness.

22.4 We want to affirm that training brings results. Work is done more effectively and people have a greater sense of satisfaction about their faith and the work the church has called them to do. Training costs money and resources. We would ask the church, at every level, to make these available for the enrichment of all.

Value Stewardship

23.1 We are preparing new stewardship material. Recently we have been commending *Mission Pursuit* and the material available for the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation programme. Much of this has been very relevant to stewardship concerns. Now we feel it is important to make available to our churches material that is more directly related to the URC.

23.2 In this we are working very closely with the Advocacy Secretary, Revd Bill Wright. Clearly there is a close identity between the concerns of advocacy and those of stewardship. God calls us to give to the work of the Church.

Value Education

24.1 The leaflet for Education Sunday, with the title *Value Education*, was prepared by members of our committee. We would want to remind everyone that the need to support and value those involved in education continues. At the time when for many teachers morale is low, stress is causing distress, demands are increasing and there is uncertainty and fear for their future, we must find ways to affirm and celebrate the work of teachers in our society.

24.2 Westhill College, Selly Oak, Birmingham, is well known and highly regarded for its training of teachers and community workers (some CRCW's amongst them), as well as being a valuable resource centre for children's and adult education. Perhaps less well known is its connection with the Free Churches. From its foundation till today, Trustees and Governors have had a significant Christian presence. Changes brought about by the Education Reform Act have affected the articles of government of the college and may mean less URC representation. Members of local churches are asked to remember in their prayers the work of the college, its students, staff,

governors, and Trustees, and encourage those becoming students to consider Westhill for their training.

Sharing People in Network (SPIN)

25.1 The Department has established a network for the Community of Women and Men in the Church. The majority of Provinces have appointed Provincial consultants and some Districts have appointed correspondents to work with them.

25.2 A small steering group has arranged three weekend meetings and one day meeting. All were well supported. The newsletter *SPIN OFF* has been distributed three times to over 300 people and SPIN (Sharing people in Network) is growing.

25.3 Links have been established with WICC (Women's Inter-Church Consultative Committee) and the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women. The annual Womens' World Day of Prayer has been prepared by women of Czechoslovakia and was on the theme *A better tomorrow, Justice for All*. Scotland has led the way by making it a day of prayer for men and women. They also reported that they produce a children's service for use in schools. As a result of their events £15,000 was given to Feed the Minds, and £11,000 to the Bible Society of Scotland.

HEALTH & HEALING COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd D Alasdair Pratt

Secretary: The Revd Michael Playdon

26. God is at the heart of the ministry of healing. Any discussion, any question or debate about healing in the Church must recognise that fundamental questions about the power and activity of God are raised.

27. During the last year the committee has given particular attention to theological issues. We realise that for some people the healing ministry remains a puzzling area, while for others it is one of the most powerful demonstrations of the Kingdom. Recognising the necessity, for the health and wholeness of the Church, of valuing the integrity of differing approaches, we have been helped by an introduction to the 'signs and wonders' approach.

28. From a different theological stand-point we have received a timely report produced by the Christian Medical Commission of the WCC based on several world-wide consultations. Much too long to summarise in detail, this report underlines the fact that health is not so much a medical issue as a spiritual and social one. The report states that 'the churches are called to recognise that the causes of disease in the world are socio-economic and spiritual as well as bio-medical.' 'An important reality is the fact that the number one cause of disease in the world is poverty, the end result of oppression, exploitation and war.' 'Most important to health is the spiritual dimension. Even in the midst of poverty some people stay well, while among the world's affluent many are chronically ill'. The WCC theme of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation is particularly relevant. The Church as a healing community has an essential role.

29. These diverse approaches simply remind us that there are very different responses to the challenge faced by all Christians; namely, how the Church is to respond to sickness and disease. As a committee we believe the implications of these differences have to be faced, and our discussion is continuing.

30. The challenge that is posed to the whole Church is whether the ministry of healing should focus on the area of individual pain and suffering, and seek cure

miraculous or otherwise; or else to accept that there are corporate and social questions as well. These issues underlie many of the matters that have been before us this year.

National Health Service

31.1 It is only stating the obvious to acknowledge the widespread public concern over the problems faced by the NHS in recent years. Preliminary conversations between our committee and the Church and Society Department have taken place, and we wish strongly to commend the work done by the FCFC in their response to the Government White Paper, *Working for Patients*.

31.2 This recognises the causes of the present crisis as being in the areas of DEMAND, UNDER-FUNDING and ORGANISATION. It sets out principles for responding to these problems, and in particular acknowledges difficulties in the area of community care. It recognises that some of the changes should lead to greater effectiveness, but it fears that others will create a two-tier system of health care, and prepare the way for increased privatisation.

31.3 The committee recognises that while there is need for improvement in the use of hospital resources, there is deep concern over the proposals for contracts for GP's.

31.4 The committee also notes the omission of any reference to the continuance of hospital chaplaincies as part of the therapeutic team in hospitals. We hope this omission does not reflect any change in attitude by the Government to the importance of the contribution made by chaplains to the spiritual and pastoral needs of patients, and co-operation with, and support of staff.

31.5 We note, further, that there is lack of discussion on Community Health and Health Education issues.

Community Care

32.1 A second Government White Paper *Caring for People* has also been published, but with inadequate time for consultation before the Bill was drafted. Again the Free Church Federal Council NHS monitoring group has produced a comprehensive response which we encourage all churches to study.

32.2 Local authorities will be required to publicise their proposals for care within the community. Churches will be able to monitor these programmes, and themselves be eligible for funds for particular schemes they create.

32.3 Community care particularly lies at the heart of ministry to the mentally ill and handicapped.

32.4 In 1985 Assembly approved a resolution calling on churches to be aware of the policy of relocating in the community, people who had been living in institutions. It recognised the need to respond to deeply felt fears, and called on churches to urge authorities to provide adequate resources.

32.5 We wish to re-affirm our belief that in principle this policy is good, and that in some parts of the country provision is extremely good. In others, however, the situation has deteriorated in the past five years, and an increasing number of people who need appropriate support are not receiving it and are falling through the net of care and support.

32.6 Church and Society, on behalf of the BCC, produced a leaflet *Christians and Community Care* that describes the reasons for the crisis, and suggests ways in which the Churches can help to respond creatively.

32.7 In different parts of the country churches have become involved through the provision of 'Drop-in Centres' and other facilities. It is sometimes at a cost. As long as the problem is at arms length it is easy to be sympathetic. When it involves the Church becoming a force for change in the community; applying pressure for adequate housing, and support for carers, the Church can be susceptible to prejudice and attitudes of rejection. We need to face the fact that attitudes of fear towards people who appear to be 'different' have to be challenged. Chaplains can be a useful resource in helping local churches to understand these issues, and to discover ways of integrating these people into the life of the local church. Members may also need to see that there is a difference between mental illness and mental handicap.

32.8 We have become aware of the Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill which seeks to provide support for all affected by mental illness.

32.9 We bring this matter back to the attention of Assembly believing that the fundamental issues need to be re-affirmed.

Anointing

33. Many churches are rediscovering the place of anointing in their life and worship. The committee has considered a detailed paper on the use of the rite in the historic Church, and also now within the URC. We welcome evidence from those who have experience of receiving or practising this ministry, and will report at a later date.

Churches' Council for Health and Healing

34.1 Due to severe financial problems CCHH has been through an anxious period. The creation of a new Trust that serves CCHH and The Acorn Christian Healing Trust means that a more secure future seems likely.

34.2 CCHH also has done work on the NHS, on Whole person Medicine (in conjunction with the Royal College of General Practitioners), and published papers on *The Modern Hospice*, and *Healing Prayer and Prayer Groups*. An ecumenical commission on the Theology of Healing has begun work.

Publications

35.1 *When a baby dies*. In 1986 the Church of Scotland produced a booklet of Pastoral Guide-lines and a Funeral Service for children stillborn or dying in early infancy. With appreciation and permission, we have made some modifications to the original and hope that it will provide helpful guidance for those called to minister in such situations.

35.2 *Study Pack*. Since 1977 the Health & Healing Pack has been recognised both within and beyond the URC as providing a comprehensive programme for those seeking deeper understanding. With a reprinting necessary, we have taken the opportunity to revise the pack, retaining the greater part of the excellent original material, but simplifying the suggested method of use. We believe it can continue to be a very helpful resource.

35.3 *Starter Pack*. Our occasional papers have covered many aspects of the healing ministry over the years. We have brought some of them together in a way that may give an enquirer an introduction to the central issues. Alternatively, it provides discussion material in compact form. All leaflets remain available as individual publications.

National Conference 1991

36. There will be another national conference at Swanwick, June 21st-23rd, 1991. The theme *Health? God's gift, our search* will be led by the Revd Jim Cotter, an Anglican priest, writer and counsellor.

Training

37. There are many ways in which training issues for church members, ordinands and ministers are being conducted or considered. We particularly commend the practice of the Southern Province in which elders, newly inducted or re-elected, are introduced to issues of health and healing.

Silence and Retreats

38.1 The aim of the network is to stimulate interest in and increase the use of silence and retreats in the life of the United Reformed Church. Many more quiet days and retreats are being arranged for members, elders and ministers within the URC, as well as ecumenically. The network is served by a small steering group who have launched the broadsheet *Windows* edited by Kate Compston, arranged retreat leaders courses - the last was fully booked with a waiting list! A joint Baptist and URC retreat is to be held at the Windermere Centre over the weekend of 5th-7th October later this year.

38.2 Members of the URC network are linked to the new ecumenical National Retreat Association, launched on 1st October 1989. Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and URC networks are all founding members. The annual magazine *Vision* gives details of hundreds of retreats ranging from those for beginners to 30 day Ignatian retreats. One question in the minds of the URC group is whether there is a distinctive 'Reformed' contribution to this developing stream of spirituality.

DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Prof Colin E Gunton
Secretary: The Revd John H Taylor

The Service Book

39. Now that the book is published, the Committee wishes to thank all who have helped in its production, not simply the contributors but everyone who took the trouble to send us comments and suggestions. Off-prints of many services are available. Copies of services for stonelaying, opening a church building and dedicating church property are available when needed from Synod Offices or Church House. Work on other services has by no means ended.

Baptism

40. The Committee keeps reviewing the situation. It is at present preparing guide-lines on infant baptism, which seems to be an area of need. New Baptism/Membership Certificates have been recommended for publication; we hope this overcomes the criticisms the old ones encountered.

Modern Music in Church

41. A steady stream of replies to our questionnaire on this subject has been reaching us. That there is a great deal of interest and room for development is apparent. As a next step, we plan to hold a week-end at the Windermere Centre,

1st-3rd March 1991, to assess problems and possibilities in 'promoting and improving modern music in church.

Theology and Ecclesiology

42.1 We draw Assembly's attention to the BCC's *British and Irish Churches' Responses to BEM*. It is encouraging to see how close we are in our understanding of the eucharist, but sad to see how far apart we are over ministry, whilst baptism reveals a more confused picture.

42.2 The BCC has also published recently *The Forgotten Trinity* (The Report of the BCC Study Commission on Trinitarian Doctrine Today, £3.95). 'Despite lip-service,' it says, 'the doctrine of the Trinity is in many parts of the Church a dead-letter in life and worship.' It goes on to show how a true appreciation of the Trinity is spiritually revitalising, liberating us from a hierarchical picture of the deity and deepening our grasp of the love in which God holds the world. The Committee has not yet had time to study this report. It will be doing so and going on to consider how best it might be used at congregational level, for the accompanying study guide provided by the BCC is in our view inadequate.

42.3 We discern two gaps in Reformed Theology which we aim to fill, one concerns marriage and the other the ministry. Work has just begun on the former whilst the latter is closer to being published. By the next Assembly we hope to have published Dr Christoph Schwoebel's *The Ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the United Reformed Church*.

Overseas Links

43. It is surely of importance in today's world that the URC keeps abreast of theological thinking world-wide and moreover, plays its part in it. One member is involved in the preparations for the next World Council of Churches meeting in Canberra, 1991; another is becoming much involved in doctrinal discussions with churches under the Leuenberg Agreement. Members of the Committee will be among the ten representatives of the URC at the Pfalz Consultation in September. (Leuenberg concerns the Reformed and Lutheran Churches; Pfalz the Church of the Palatinate in Germany).

At Your Service

44. Letters come to us from elders, ministers and moderators: some are critical, others are seeking advice or help. All are welcome; all enable us to try to serve. Now and again a member of the Committee has gone in person to a District or Provincial Committee to discuss a matter. The Committee is glad of such contacts. We learn a lot from them and we hope the Church benefits.

Presidency at the Sacraments

45.1 Twelve Districts have assisted us in re-examining the present practices for authorising people other than ordained ministers to preside at the Sacraments. In general it seems the system works, but here and there, there are problems. For example, Districts can appoint certain lay persons to preside 'where pastoral necessity so requires' but there are different interpretations of this phrase. Our opinion is that it means 'where no ordained minister of Word and Sacraments is available.' In the light of correspondence and the information supplied by the twelve Districts, we place before the Assembly a revised set of Guide-lines for the Districts for its approval. It is also our intention to send a letter to every church explaining the URC position on presidency at the Sacraments and appending a copy of the new Guide-lines.

Guidelines for Presidency at the Sacraments

- 45.2
1. The Basis of Union requires the URC to take steps to ensure that so far as possible ordained ministers of the Word and Sacraments are readily available to every local church, so that through the representative role of the minister, the worship of the local church can be clearly seen to be an expression of the worship of the whole people of God in the world-wide Church.
 2. The District Council is responsible for authorising anyone other than an ordained minister to preside at the Sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism.
 3. The District Council is responsible, therefore, for identifying where pastoral necessity exists amongst the churches within the District; for identifying, in consultation with the local churches, appropriate people who can be recognised; for preparing those whom it so recognises, and for determining the date for review of the arrangements.
 4. The Basis of Union provides that other members of the Church, normally deaconesses, elders or accredited lay preachers may preside. (This guide-line permits students for the ministry to be recognised, on the same basis as others.)
 5. These guide-lines do not cover emergencies, but assume that in such circumstances those in the congregation with responsibility for worship, that is the elders, will ensure that proper arrangements are made for the conduct of the Sacraments.
 6. Authorisation to preside may cover both Sacraments, but it need not do so in every case.

HYMNBOOK EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Convener: Dr David Thompson

Joint Secretaries: The Revd David Gardner, Mr Alan Haywood

46. The work of the Committee will be completed with the launch of *Rejoice and Sing* at the General Assembly in Torbay in 1991. The publishers, Oxford University Press, are now hard at work on the production of the book. When any outstanding copyright problems are resolved, it is hoped that a complete list of contents may be published. A publicity leaflet, including a sample page, will be available at Assembly, and a 24 page promotional booklet, containing a representative selection of hymns, will be produced for use at the Synod meetings in autumn 1990 and spring 1991, and other gatherings in major centres of population. Invitations have been sought from Provinces and there has been a good response. It is hoped that prices will be known by October: a discount of 25% will be offered on first orders over 30 copies, and a 15% discount will be available for subsequent orders of that size.

PRAYER HANDBOOK

Secretary: The Revd Terry Oakley

Editor: The Revd Graham Cook

47.1 *Say One for Me* the 1990 book is the first edited by the Revd Graham Cook. He has worked in partnership with the Revd Tony Burnham to produce a

wonderfully varied, stimulating and helpful resource for prayer and worship. Prayers, meditations and the occasional 'sermon' all arise from the bible readings taken from the ecumenical lectionary. This was the last book to benefit from the design and art-work skills of Maureen Sporle, and the Editing Group would like to pay tribute to her quiet yet inspirational contribution over many years.

47.2 Jean Mortimer and Janet Orchard are the writers for the 1991 book, provisionally entitled *Exceeding our Limits*.

FORUM

Co-ordinator: The Revd Terry Oakley

Forum 1989 "Earth shall be fair..."

48. Earth was fairer during the week of Forum in August 1989, not just because of the weather, but because of the excellent and exciting worship led by members of the Wild Goose Worship Group of the Iona Community, and the helpful and stimulating theme presentations by John Reardon. There were more people participating in the exploration of the themes of justice, peace and the integrity of creation than in the previous few years, and their evaluation was highly positive.

Forum 1990 "Strangers in the House?"

49.1 Responding to current issues, the next Forum will be concerned about: the search for a common European home, in which east and west can live in partnership; the new ways of working together ecumenically in the British household of faith, and the relationships within the home and the threats to 'family values'.

49.2 The General Secretary, Bernard Thorogood, will open up the issue in a general way and through biblical studies. The Revd Betsy King will help to express the theme in worship. Others from Eastern Europe, other denominations and Christian Agencies will also enable Forum to be a serious conference as well as a relaxing holiday.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING OFFICERS - A REVIEW OF POLICY

Background

50.1 Since 1984, every Province has benefited from the services of a Youth Leadership Training Officer on a half time basis. Each officer has concentrated their efforts on the training and support of Youth Leaders, and encouraging District and Provincial youth work. Ecumenical links have developed and the preparation of good training material has been undertaken by team members, in consultation with the National Youth Training Officer (a post which has been in existence for three years and is totally funded by grants from the Department of Education and Science).

50.2 In 1988 General Assembly passed overwhelmingly the following resolution which had been proposed on behalf of the West Midlands Province Synod:-

" The Assembly, recognises the value of the work of Youth Leadership Training Officers, and acknowledging that their services are spread too thinly through the church to be fully effective, therefore affirms the ideal of the appointment of one full time YLTO in each Province who may be involved in

other training work; and resolves to move forward to make full-time appointments as General Assembly's financial resources, and the situation as it affects all other Provinces, will permit."

Progress since the Assembly resolution

51.1 In July 1988 a meeting was convened by the General Secretary, which brought together representatives of each Province, to discuss the way forward in the light of the Assembly's resolution and the new system of funding to be introduced by the Department of Education and Science from April 1989. Each Province was asked to review its own situation and indicate if it wished to appoint a full time YLTO, what additional responsibilities the YLTO might carry and to confirm the Provinces willingness to allow the YLTO to devote 25% of his/her time to centrally co-ordinated DES funded programmes. All Provinces, having completed their own reviews, indicated a desire to have a full time person, with the exception of the Eastern and North Western Provinces.

51.2 During 1989, the following Provinces appointed full time officers:- West Midlands, Thames North and South Western. In Wales, a joint full time appointment has been made with the South Wales District of the Methodist Church. Southern and Wessex Provinces have decided to proceed each to their own YLTO. Mersey, East Midlands and Northern Provinces indicated a desire to have the services of a full time officer, but do not have sufficient funds available to make appointments possible. The Yorkshire Province wished to appoint a full time officer and was prepared to meet additional costs, but did not proceed as this would have had an adverse effect on the Northern Province with which it is in partnership. So, at present, three YLTO's serve Mersey and North Western Provinces, East Midlands and Eastern Provinces, Northern and Yorkshire Provinces.

Financial Situation

52. In considering the future of the YLTO scheme the financial implications have been monitored very carefully. Because Provinces have agreed to meet 50% of the costs of full time appointments, there has been no substantial increase in the 1990 Unified Appeal Budget. An overspend of approximately £11,000 has been agreed by the Treasurer, in order to support the Thames North Province full time appointment which hitherto has been paid as a half time post (in full) by the Thames North Province. Additional salary increases are unlikely to increase the expenditure agreed in 1990, because there are unfilled vacancies in the Southern and Wessex Provinces.

YLTO Conditions of Employment

53.1 All YLTO's are qualified Youth and Community Trained Workers (or equivalent qualifications) and have a great deal of experience in the training field.

53.2 All YLTO's work from home, as do ministers - however they are not provided with accommodation free of rent, rates, heat, light and maintenance. Therefore their salary has to meet all the normal costs plus the additional costs incurred by having an office at home. The church is not making additional payments to meet poll tax demands, and whilst YLTO's contracts state that each officer should work 35 hours per week they all work considerably longer hours, invariably having to travel late at night and spend most weekends away from home.

YLTO Salaries

54.1 Because YLTO salaries had fallen so far behind the statutory rates for Senior Youth Workers, it proved very difficult to fill vacancies in 1989. The Training Sub Committee decided not to proceed with the appointments in Southern and Wessex

Provinces, because advertising would cost over £3000 and was unlikely to produce satisfactory applications.

54.2 In December 1989, the Training Sub Committee asked the Salaries Review Committee to bring YLTO's pay in line with the scale for workers in the statutory sector (ie Soulbury Main Range). The Salaries Review Committee, having already substantially increased Church House Lay Staff salaries over the past two years in order to bring scales of pay in line with the public sector, agreed to implement a £2000 per annum increase from the 1st January 1990. Thus making YLTO salaries £14,800 per annum. It had been the intention of the Salaries Review Committee to increase the pay levels again in January 1991 to bring YLTO's in line with the bottom scale of the Soulbury Main Range, which is currently £16,260 per annum.

54.3 However, after discussion, the Faith and Life Department Central Committee has asked the Salaries Review Committee, through the Executive Committee, not to implement the second phase of the pay increase (proposed for January 1991) until the overall debate about levels of ministerial stipend and lay staff salaries has taken place within the life of the church.

DES Funding

55.1 In trying to respond to the 1988 Assembly resolution the Youth Committee has also had to deal with the DES changes in funding which, put simply, have changed from funding YLTO's to funding the work YLTO's undertake through agreed programmes. The URC has adapted well to the new system and in 1989 we received an increase of over 17% in the level of funding in 1988. Most denominations either received the same level of grant or, in some cases, were reduced by as much as 10-15% on 1988 levels.

55.2 Our application for funding in 1990/1 has been based on three programmes:-

- 1) a programme to develop the work of the World Affairs Sub Committee
- 2) a programme to develop youth work in rural churches
- 3) a programme developing the participation of young people within the life of the URC.

55.3 All three programmes will involve the YLTO's of the six Provinces who, in October 1989, indicated that they wished to appoint a full time officer as soon as possible and had funds available for such an appointment to be made. The costs of National Youth Training Officer are met from the increased DES grant and the post is not a cost to the Unified Appeal.

Summary

56. All of this is evidence of considerable work and careful thought by the Department in order to provide the best service and value for money from the Youth Leadership Training Programme - a programme which Provinces have valued and wish to extend.

A New Proposal

57.1 Building on the experience of the past decade and wanting to widen the availability of the training programme to include training of children's workers, the Department proposes a change in the pattern of work of YLTO's, which involves a change of title, general job description and accountability.

57.2 YLTO's serving one Province only would become YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK TRAINERS (YCWT's), other YLTO's would remain as at present. An outline job description has been prepared, which arises from requests from Provinces, and from

whom reactions have been sought. Provinces will be able to determine within general limits the proportion of work spent on youth and children's work areas by the YCWT's. They will do this through their own Strategy Groups.

57.3 The Department proposes to establish a Training Committee (Youth and Children) which will have responsibility for this work and help co-ordination between the Youth and Children's Work Committees.

57.4 This positive proposal makes the most of a valuable but limited resource, opens up new possibilities for children's work, and recognises the importance of the role of Provinces within the training programme. The Department is convinced this is the right way forward and asks the whole church to support this programme enthusiastically, recognising that financial resources will come from the Unified Appeal, supplemented from the Department of Education & Science and Provincial funds.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs Ruth Clarke
Secretary: The Revd Paul Quilter

58. Understandably much of the Youth Committee's energy has been spent in considering the future of youth work in the United Reformed Church. We are conscious of the need to broaden horizons. In the months to come we shall give attention to some of the current moral, political and social issues that affect young people.

Connect 89

59. We are delighted to report that Connect 89 took place at Bristol last autumn and was an outstanding success. Over 1500 young people and youth leaders spent a weekend exploring the Challenge For Change theme through pantomime, workshops and worship. Plans are already in hand for a Connect 91, which will be held at Sheffield from 25th to 27th October 1991.

Publications

60. Since the last General Assembly we have published some new resource material including a set of *Practical Papers* for youth leaders. We have co-operated with the Eastern Province Youth Committee in the preparation of a handbook called *Youthwork Info*. The quality and circulation of the URC youth magazine *FURY National* continues to improve.

Ginger Group

61. The Ginger Group Project continues to be a source of great encouragement. The feedback we receive from churches and districts is very positive. In its present form the project has one more year to run, but donations have declined over the past twelve months and there is some apprehension about the financial viability of running a sixth, and final, group. At the present time we are approximately £15,000 short of the required amount.

The Time For God Scheme

62. This is an important year in the life of the Time For God scheme because it is celebrating its Silver Jubilee. The highlight of the 1990 programme will be a

Thanksgiving Service at Coventry Cathedral on Saturday, 13th October 1990. The preacher will be Paul Boateng, MP.

Youth Activities

63. The Youth Committee wishes to draw the General Assemblies attention to the various youth activities which are organised throughout the year. They continue to be popular and most worthwhile. Full details can be found in the 1990 Activities Pack, which is available from the Youth Committee stall. Summer 1989 saw the conclusion of a two year exchange programme with the United Church of Jamaica and we were very pleased to welcome 16 young Jamaicans to Britain for four weeks. The World Affairs Sub Committee is anxious to continue this programme in 1990.

Joint URC/Methodist Churches and Districts

64. Approximately 10% of United Reformed Churches have some kind of partnership with a Methodist Church. In addition to the increasing number of local church links there is, in some areas, co-operation at District level. The Youth Committee and the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs are involved in discussions which we hope will lead to our working more closely together, especially in our support of joint URC/Methodist Churches and Districts.

Spectrum Training

65. Last year saw the launch of a new ecumenical basic training course for youth leaders called *Spectrum*. The URC has been very involved with its production and publication. The course has met with an exciting and positive response all over Britain and by the autumn over 100 ecumenical courses will have taken place. Without doubt, *Spectrum* is playing a crucial part in the ecumenical pilgrimage of which the URC is part and the potential for even greater co-operation increases by the week. An ecumenical tutors course and an introductory youth work course is being prepared.

Personalia

66. Mr Colin Capewell has been appointed as the first joint URC/Methodist YLTO. He will serve the Province of Wales and the South Wales District of the Methodist Church. Mr Ivan Andrews has transferred to the South Western Province as their full time YLTO. After six months Miss Janet Turner has returned to the URC to serve the Northern and Yorkshire Provinces as YLTO. This appointment brings Janet nearer her native Scotland. The West Midlands Province has welcomed Mr Wallie Warmington as their full time YLTO and Mrs Sandra Ackroyd is now a full time YLTO, continuing to serve Thames North Province. Finally, in the autumn, we welcomed Miss Jenny Gorton to the Youth Office as Personal Assistant.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report of the Faith and Life Department for debate.
2. Assembly receives the discussion document *Towards a Charter for Children in the Church* and commends it to Provinces, Districts and churches for discussion.
3. This Assembly gives thanks to God for the 12% growth in the number of Pilot Companies during 1989, supports the modernisation of the movement and encourages churches to consider Pilots as the midweek activity for their children and young people.
4. Assembly recognising the increasing problems faced by people suffering from mental illness, and those with mental handicap, as they are discharged into the community
 - a) renews its call to all churches to consider, as a matter of urgency, ways of overcoming negative attitudes and of promoting positive care;
 - b) commends the leaflet *Christians and Community Care* published by the Church and Society Department for the BCC, and
 - c) encourages churches to use the experience and resources of Chaplains involved in health care.
5. The Assembly approves the revised Guide-lines for Presidency at the Sacraments, and requests the Doctrine and Worship Committee to help Districts and local churches to implement them.
6. General Assembly, recognising the value of sharing resources across youth and children's work, and welcoming the direction of developments outlined in the Faith and Life Department report, agrees in principle to the change from YLTO's to YCWT's, where they are employed full time by one Province, and asks the Department to implement these changes as soon as possible, in consultation with the Provinces involved.

THE

NEW

FURY

PROJECT

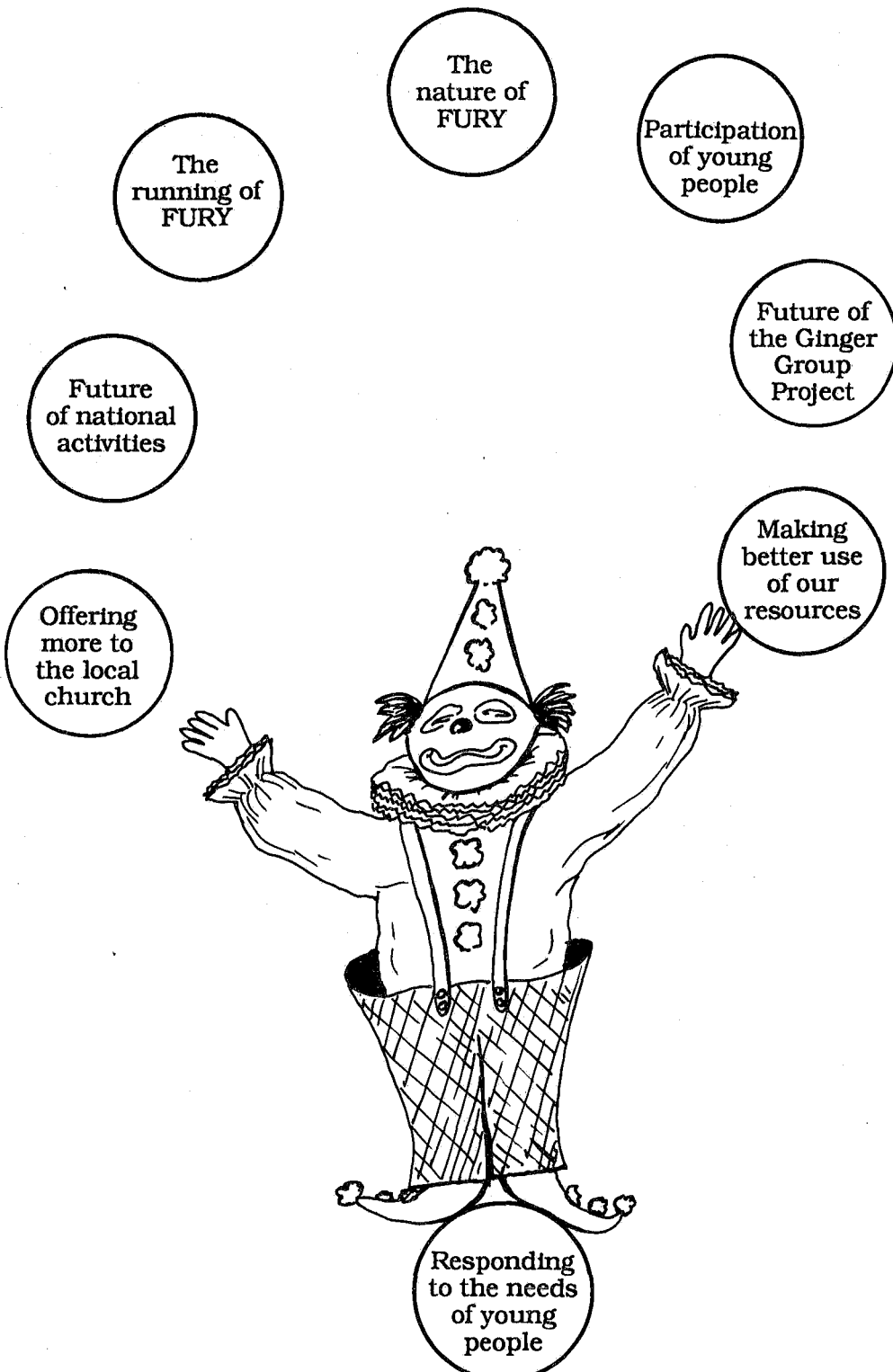
INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW FURY PROJECT

1.1 The New FURY Project is offered to the General Assembly in the belief that it has the potential to transform youth work in the United Reformed Church.

1.2 **THE NEW FURY** will make more effective the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth. It is designed to offer a much more *POSITIVE CHALLENGE* to the young people who are part of the URC. It will offer much *MORE SUPPORT* to our young people as they journey on their pilgrimage of discovery within the life of the Church.

1.3 The Project involves the provision of a modern residential resource centre which promises to give far more support and encouragement to the New FURY than can ever be provided by the youth staff in an office at Church House in London or by any number of Youth Committees. The building is at present a church with a very small membership, and the manse attached currently the home of the Ginger Group.

1.4 From the outset it is important to remember that the New FURY Project is so much more than a building. It should affect every United Reformed Church where there are any young people. Young people and their churches will benefit from the New FURY Project, even if they never visit the Yardley Hastings Centre in Northamptonshire.

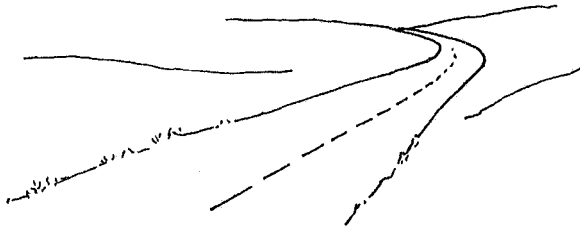


1.5

THE NEW FURY PROJECT

is trying to respond to all of these major issues TOGETHER.

THE NEW FURY'S JOURNEY TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Recommendations were made in July 1988, but a request for more thinking was made. The basic principles of the New FURY Project were adopted in November 1988 when a steering group was set up. The Faith & Life Department Central Committee has been involved in the process from the beginning. There has been wide consultation and advice sought both within and outside of the denomination. The New FURY Project was presented to the General Assembly in July 1989 but a decision was not made following the movement of a procedural motion.

SINCE LAST YEAR'S ASSEMBLY

2.2 A great deal of thinking and talking about the New FURY Project has taken place throughout the whole denomination. The Youth Committee wishes to place on record its deep appreciation to the many people who have given so much valuable time to this debate in all sorts of ways and places.

2.3 The questionnaire sent to approximately 10% of last year's General Assembly members and each District Council Secretary met with a magnificent response, with over 100 finding their way back to the steering group. A very interesting picture was revealed. Several people couldn't remember why or how they voted as they did. One person was tired and wanted to go to bed. A significant number voted for the procedural motion because they were in favour of the Project and wanted to ensure that it would not be lost. Only one person could find nothing good to say about the New FURY Project, most people liked parts of it and some liked all of it. However the basic message was quite clear - the questionnaire revealed a great deal of misunderstanding. Many people's criticisms or questions were based on false interpretations. There was a great deal of disappointment, pain and anguish not only for the young people at last year's Assembly. Nevertheless, some of our fundamental beliefs were tested and most certainly affirmed. God does speak to us through individuals and the democratic process. If we are willing we can grow through pain and anguish and we believe God's will is done.

2.4 Given the results of the questionnaire the Youth Committee felt that the basic details should be presented in a simple and, hopefully attractive way. In late September the Fact File was published and appears to have been well received. The feed-back by way of response has also been excellent.

2.5 The Youth Committee has found it difficult to convey adequately the vision of the New FURY Project to the wider Church. It has been difficult to present a complex series of inter-linked issues in such a way as to help people grapple with them and produce a response taking all those issues into account. Not everyone has a detailed knowledge of FURY as it is now, and it has not therefore been easy to consider what it might become. From afar the effects of the Ginger Group may seem insignificant or the idea of running mini Ginger Groups may seem straightforward. If a local church has no young people or if they have but none of them have experienced a national activity it is inevitably going to be difficult to understand why the Youth Committee is so anxious to develop and increase the opportunities for young people, so both

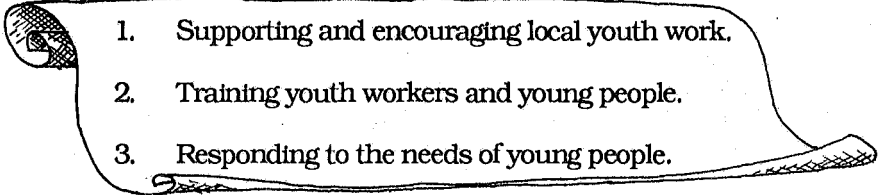
2.1 Some of the issues, like the nature of FURY, which the New FURY Project tries to address have existed for a long time, but have never been satisfactorily resolved. These, together with more recent issues like the future of the Ginger Group Project and national activities were brought together in a paper presented to the Youth Committee in November 1987. A working party struggled with the issues, meeting over six weekends.

they and the local church benefit from them. It has been an uphill struggle to help people see beyond a residential centre but the New FURY Project is so much more and is about the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth in the local church. Many want to see the New FURY achieve its many goals and aspirations but without its source of energy which is the resource centre. In doing so seem not to recognise that this energy has to come from somewhere and that the alternatives are considerably more expensive in the long term and probably only half as effective. The Windermere Centre and the Yardley Hastings Resource Centre are compatible, but nevertheless quite different. The one cannot function as the other and cannot provide the same service in quite the same way.

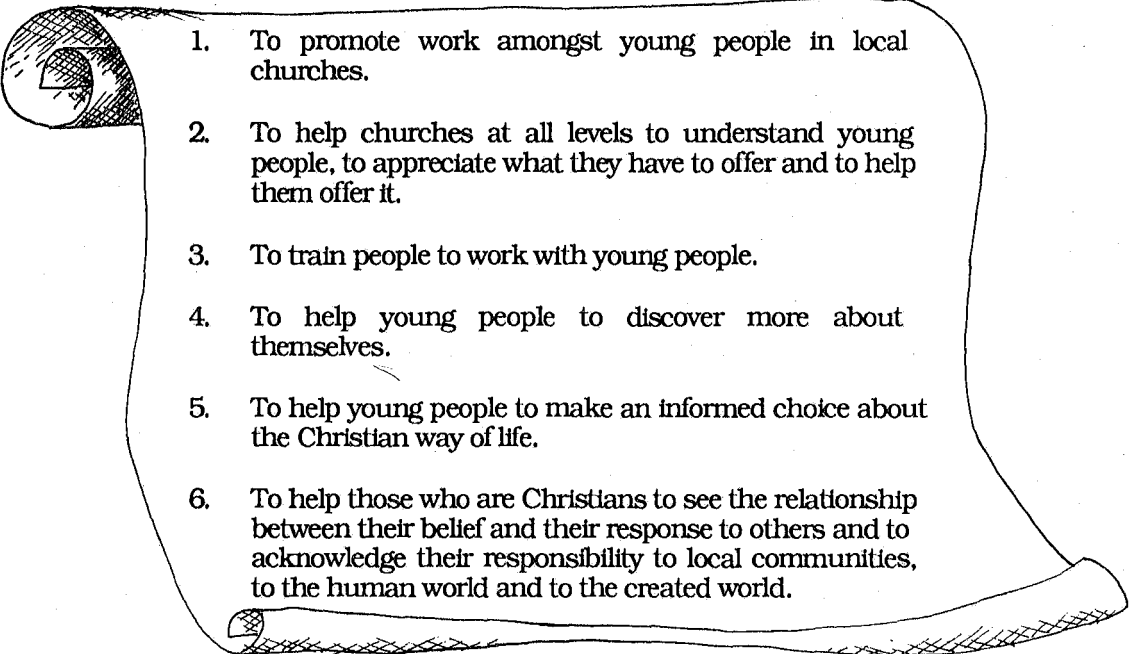
2.6 In making these comments the Youth Committee is not critical of anyone except its own shortcomings. In struggling with the New FURY Project the reasons for it in our view have been affirmed.

NEW FURY PROJECT AFFIRMS AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF YOUTH WORK IN THE URC

3.1 Youth Work in the United Reformed Church is carried out within the Faith & Life Department (of which the Youth Committee is part), which aims to serve the URC by discovering and releasing resources particularly for use in local churches so that people of all ages may worship God, engage in God's mission in the world and grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. The National Youth Committee has three aims that relate this:

- 
1. Supporting and encouraging local youth work.
 2. Training youth workers and young people.
 3. Responding to the needs of young people.

These, in turn, give rise to six objectives:

- 
1. To promote work amongst young people in local churches.
 2. To help churches at all levels to understand young people, to appreciate what they have to offer and to help them offer it.
 3. To train people to work with young people.
 4. To help young people to discover more about themselves.
 5. To help young people to make an informed choice about the Christian way of life.
 6. To help those who are Christians to see the relationship between their belief and their response to others and to acknowledge their responsibility to local communities, to the human world and to the created world.

3.2 The Assembly is asked to affirm these aims and objectives in the belief that they are as appropriate for youth work in the URC today as they were in 1972. The New FURY does not change the policy for youth work, but responds to it in a far more direct and dynamic way. The Youth Committee believes it will help the Church at all levels fulfil the aims and objectives of youth work more effectively.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF UNITED REFORMED YOUTH



being part of FURY, young people will, in due course, become church members. The Fellowship has an annual Assembly but no independent mechanism at a national level to process any decisions, the idea being that young people should operate within the structures of the Church. Responsibility for FURY's programmes, projects and national activities rests with the National Youth Committee.

4.2 In presenting proposals for a New FURY the Youth Committee affirms the basic concept that young people are "the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth". However, experience has shown us that for many churches and young people the concept is not enough. It tends to work well in those churches with sizeable numbers of young people, but we often find that the experience of these young people is limited to the local scene. In the majority of churches, especially those with few young people, FURY means very little. Often young people feel isolated and simply do not feel that they are part of "a fellowship of young people" within the life of the Church at local, district or national levels. Very few young people who are part of a uniformed organisation are aware that they are part of FURY. All too frequently we discover ministers, elders, church members and sadly numerous young people who do not even know of FURY's existence. Many young people benefit immensely from vibrant District and Province youth activities on a regular basis. Some young people are fortunate to be challenged in all sorts of ways through their involvement of national activities.

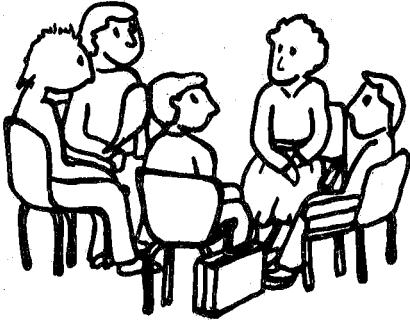
WHY A NEW FURY?

5.1 Because we believe we need to build on the present one, not do away with it. We considered other options which ranged from leaving things as they are, to the setting up of a highly organised structure with membership rolls and varying degrees of independence. Many options caused us alarm, because they were potentially divisive, setting young people apart from each other and the wider church. We believe there must be only one membership which is the same for all, regardless of age and that must be expressed through Church Membership.

5.2 Nevertheless, we do want to respond to young people's need to feel part of the denomination's youth scene as well as being part of the whole Church. We want to offer more to the many isolated young people and small groups. We want to respond to young peoples' need to be challenged and to have demands made upon them. We want to respond to young peoples' desire to give more to the wider community, the Church and to each other. We do not believe these aspirations can be best achieved by dispensing with the present FURY, because to do so would mean losing its

strength and qualities. We believe that the way forward is to be found by adapting and modifying FURY as it is today. Through building upon present foundations we are confident that a more effective, vibrant and positive New FURY will emerge.

PARTICIPATION



exceptions, for example, at some church and elders' meetings and in our General Assembly, we are growing used to young peoples' participation. Young peoples' contribution must mean more than reporting on those matters which are of specific interest to themselves. Our goal is to incorporate young people fully into the mission of the Church including all of its decision-making councils.

6.2 The Youth Committee believes our goal will be more effectively achieved through the New FURY. We are confident that it will encourage greater and more effective participation in the life of the Church now, we are sure it will lead to better leadership in the days to come. We do not accept that the goal is threatened or the unity broken if young people sometimes do things separately. The purpose of the New FURY is to help young people find their place within the family of the Church. Young people need to practice, they need to acquire knowledge and skills within their peer group in order to gain confidence so that they can play their part on the bigger and what sometimes can appear to be a rather awe-inspiring stage, hence the proposal to allow FURY to create its own forum or council and to take much greater responsibility for the running of the Fellowship.

THE GINGER GROUP PROJECT



time. The response to each Group's work and to the project has been remarkable. We have learned a great deal.

7.2 The Youth Committee is very anxious to develop the potential to involve young people "in ministry". Through the energy of the New FURY we believe it is important to continue a form of "national team" with its distinctive role in the life of the Church and FURY. We feel it is essential to set before young people and the

6.1 Young people being fully integrated into the life of the Church at all levels is not just an idea, it must be a reality. We have not yet grown accustomed to seeing young people sharing as equals in all the councils of the Church. Young people speaking on all manner of subjects at District Councils, Synod and at the Executive Committee and not being noticed because they are young is still the norm. Of course there are

7.1 Each year for the past five years, young people have offered themselves for selection and have come together to form a team, to share in a training programme and to be commissioned as the Ginger Group. From their home in Yardley Hastings they have travelled to churches, District and Provincial youth events and other situations in order to work with people of all ages on many different and exciting projects for up to two weeks at a

whole Church a model which will encourage and inspire, without it the memory will soon fade, especially for young people. We want to develop the idea and encourage mini "part-time" Ginger Groups and explore other ways of involving young people in ministry through participation in mission. However, we must not underestimate the amount of time, energy, cost, adequate preparation, support and training that is essential to assure the success of the Project.

7.3 The Project is now costing around £20,000 per annum. We have considered various options for raising this sum each year, for example, adding the cost to the Unified Appeal, seeking approval for an annual "GG gift day", organising an on-going appeal or Provincial sponsorship. We remain confident in our belief that the best way forward is through the ideas contained within the New FURY Project and not only because it does not demand an annual fund-raising campaign.

THE NEW FURY OFFERS...

8.1 All young people aged between 14 and 25 years who are associated with a United Reformed Church (or an ecumenical partnership involving the URC) will continue to be part of

THE FELLOWSHIP OF UNITED REFORMED YOUTH.

8.2 ● Young people who feel committed to the specific aims and aspirations of FURY and who want to be actively (rather than passively) involved can register their commitment with, but not to, the Fellowship Resource Centre. We hope that the young peoples' commitment will be acknowledged within their local church.

8.3 ● Young people who have thus committed themselves will receive personal mailings, either direct or if there is a group to one address. These will include prayer and personal bible study material, resource material for personal use, details of activities and opportunities at all levels of church life, small projects and programmes to encourage and help individuals contribute to the life of their local church.

8.4 ● Opportunities to participate in: training and special interest weekends which are presently not on offer, youth leadership and other training, participation in part time mini Ginger Groups and other mission teams, the continuing (and we intend, improved) District and Provincial scene, full time national Ginger Group, Time for God, and other opportunities created by CWM, WCM Department, and the new ecumenical bodies.

8.5 ● Opportunities to develop specific skills, talents and interests at the Resource Centre or in programmes, projects and events coordinated by Resource Centre personnel, to use in the local church, District and Province.

8.6 ● Participation in a New FURY Forum or Council (which will be accountable to the wider church through the Youth Committee). Young people can then take more responsibility for the running of FURY. Issues, ideas and concerns raised at the FURY Assembly, District and Provincial Youth Committees or local fellowship groups can be handled by the Forum or Council and can draw upon or liaise with the various committees and departments within the URC in conjunction with the Youth Committee.

PLEASE NOTE

9.1 There is *NO* membership of FURY. *ALL* young people are part of it because they are young. However, we believe that the New FURY will offer a much more **positive challenge** to young people, not least to take the claims of Jesus Christ seriously. Through the New FURY we want to offer far **more support** to those who are on their pilgrimage of discovery and to those who have found faith.

9.2 We believe that the New FURY will be far more effective in -
helping all young people to make an informed choice about the Christian way of life.

helping all young people to see the relationship between their beliefs and their response to others and to acknowledge their responsibility to the local communities to the human world and the created world.

9.3 There is no commitment made to the Fellowship itself, only to those things it stands for which can be best summed up in the aims and objectives of youth work in the URC and in the emphasis that will be placed upon the exploration of the five words - WORSHIP, PRAYER, GIVING, INVOLVEMENT and LEARNING.

9.4 Registration of their commitment is a promise to begin or to continue the pilgrimage as part of the Fellowship. Through registration the Fellowship can offer personal specific support and encouragement to each young person and, of course, their local church. Registration will not give any status within FURY.

9.5 All churches will continue to receive details about FURY and its programme through the Information Service.

9.6 All young people, both registered and unregistered will be encouraged to participate fully in all that FURY has to offer at all levels of church life.

9.7 If the General Assembly approves the New FURY Project further detailed consideration will be given to the structure of FURY, ie primarily the Council or Forum and its relationship with the Youth Committee. Further work will also be undertaken on registration, its implications and acknowledgement at local level. Proposals will be brought to the next General Assembly which will have the support of FURY Assembly, the Youth Committee and having been thoroughly examined by the Faith & Life Department.

10.

HOW THE NEW FURY WILL BENEFIT THE LOCAL CHURCH

More resource and programme material for youth leaders.

Resource, prayer and bible study material for young people.

Don't forget your YLTO and leaders' training.

Use of mini Ginger Groups and the national Ginger Group.

A New FURY which will create a greater sense of belonging, purpose and mission within the local church.

A fellowship which is more direct in its challenge to young people to respond to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Improved communication.





Small projects which will encourage young people to be involved in local church mission.

A FURY which helps local churches to prepare its young people for membership and full participation in the life of the Church.

Greater sense of purpose and direction for local youth work through FURY.

Easier access to a wider variety of activities for young people beyond the local church.

A Fellowship of United Reformed Youth of which young people can feel part.

Will benefit those churches with few or isolated young people who do not feel part of FURY at the present.

THE OVERALL EFFECT OF THE NEW FURY WILL BE...

11.1 *To create a coordinated and much stronger fellowship of young people with a sense of being "a community of young people" within the life of the URC.

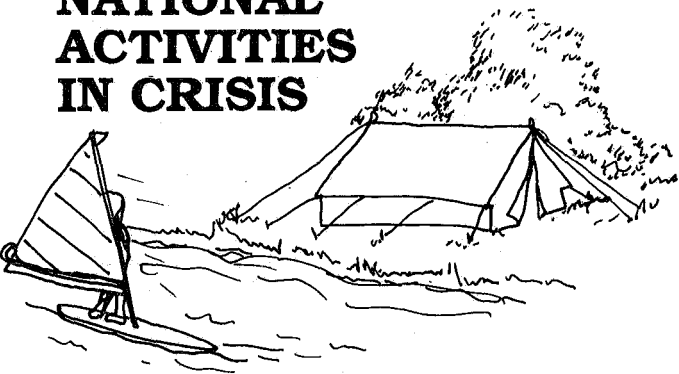
11.2 *The New FURY's ethos will offer a more direct challenge to young people and the nature of FURY will be based on a concept of "servanthood". Commitment to FURY's aims will be expressed within and through the local church, and it will take young people out into the world.

11.3 A commitment to the constant exploration in many different ways of the five words:



will underpin the whole life of the new FURY, and help young people to understand the meaning of discipleship through belonging to FURY over a period of years. It will prepare young people for membership and participation in the life of the Church and in our society.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN CRISIS



12.1 Every year the Youth Committee is responsible for a programme of activities varying from a weekend to two weeks. Some are under canvas, others are based in residential centres, some happen in Britain others have an international perspective.

12.2 The effect that all of these events has on each participant can and often is quite dramatic. Time and time again young people return to their local church having had

experiences which change them for life. Faith is challenged and renewed. Lasting friendships are formed. The Church and Christianity are seen in a completely new light. Such statements are not exaggerated. Quite often we learn that it is through such events as Seniors, Inters, the Jamaica Exchange, Camp Project Wales, Spectrum and Breakout that young people acquire all manner of skills, including those of leadership, many begin to discover the joys of youth leadership, most grow in confidence and maturity, many fall in love and out of it, often many deal with major difficulties in their lives. They are often able to find themselves and God. Without doubt it is because of such events that we frequently discover that young people have found it possible to remain part of their local church long enough to work things out and then go on to make a greater Christian commitment.

12.3 Sadly our programme of activities is in a precarious position. Some activities are bankrupt and not through mis-management. Others find it more and more difficult to find the appropriate type of residential centre when we want them and at a price that we can afford. The demand on residential centres is increasing year by year. Our camping and outward bound equipment is under used, our canvas events are seriously threatened mainly because the cost of replacement, maintenance and transportation has to be borne by activities which in total can only produce revenue over four weeks of the year. We cannot use the equipment properly, regularly or with any degree of flexibility, simply because it is stored in an appalling manner. The store we do have is only temporary and it is not in an accessible place. Hiring or borrowing is neither practical or financially viable especially when you consider that to replace what we own would cost over £75,000 and can provide accommodation for up to 200 people.

12.4 In short we have a serious problem. Christmas Conference has decided after many years that it cannot continue at the Hayes Conference Centre. Spectrum and Breakout will, in all probability, run for the last time this year and only then because of the youth activities contingency fund. If Spectrum and Breakout finish, so must Camp Project Wales.

12.5 The Youth Committee would be happy to terminate its programme of youth activities if we believed them to be unpopular, of poor quality or because they have outlived their usefulness, but this is not the case. We are in this situation because the basic infra-structure to support this work simply does not exist. Not only is it possible to provide a good programme of events, we are convinced that it is possible to develop, adapt, modify and create a whole new range of activities which will attract a significantly larger number of URC young people, their friends from other denominations and of no denomination. If we have the right infra-structure we can provide a wide range of activities at the right price, for the right reasons, at the right times for young people who are part of the URC today. We want to do this because we profoundly believe that it is what we need to do to play our part in ensuring that those same young people are also part of the URC tomorrow!

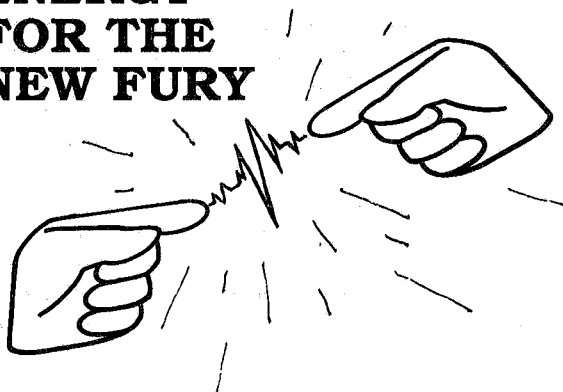
MAKING BETTER USE OF OUR RESOURCES



youth activities, although the correct environment is indeed important. The real success lies in people who are prepared to use their God given skills and talents for the purpose of God's mission in the world. We are blessed with people in the URC who have an immeasurable wealth of talent which we believe is vastly under-used.

13.3 The New FURY hopes to make better use of people with outward bound skills such as sailors, canoeists and people who can use canvas properly. We also have people who can lead dance and drama workshops, poets, artists, musicians, singers. There are people who are practical, but who perhaps do not often get called upon for their skills in order to help our youth work, eg, cooks, gardeners, administrators, mini-bus drivers and even mechanics, plumbers and painters. We want to make use of people who can lead discussion and offer a knowledge on all manner of subjects, people with bible study and worship skills. All of this can happen because part of the role of the Resource Centre will be to coordinate, plan and to organise opportunities both at the centre and throughout the country, for young people, using the skills of our church members and, of course, those of our young people too.

ENERGY FOR THE NEW FURY



we haven't been ambitious enough. What is clear is that in order for any of our hopes to be realised there has to be a source of energy, things will not happen simply because we have said we want them to. This being the case the question that we must now answer is, from where does the energy come?

14.3 The Youth Committee does not believe that the energy can come from the Youth Office in Church House. This is primarily an administrative base and not the appropriate environment to be creative. After 1992 when the half-time Assistant Youth Secretary post ceases to exist we only have the the services of a full-time personal assistant and the Youth Secretary. The present staff team are working to their limit and additional staff will cost a lot more. We believe the New FURY requires a different kind of support.

13.1 Within the URC we have a tremendous wealth of resources. The New FURY will endeavour to make far better use of them for the benefit of young people and their local churches.

13.2 As already described, our camping and outward bound equipment is a resource we most definitely want to put to better use. However, it is not buildings and equipment alone that make good

14.1 THIS VISION WILL REQUIRE

**energy
enthusiasm
drive
commitment
and much more...**

14.2 Without doubt the New FURY is setting out to achieve a great deal. It will take time and in setting such high targets it is bound to fall short in some things, in others perhaps

A RESIDENTIAL RESOURCE CENTRE



15.1 Each year, over 25,000 young people make their way to the village of Yardley Hastings in Northamptonshire for Britain's largest Christian youth arts festival - Greenbelt. Each week the URC's Ginger Group travel from Yardley Hastings to churches throughout the denomination. It is a beautiful village set in the heart of superb surroundings, just a five minute walk from the Castle Ashby estate. Northampton is fifteen minutes away - a town which is almost half way between Plymouth and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

15.2 The New FURY Project includes the transforming of the Yardley Hastings United Reformed Church manse and halls which will provide:

- Accommodation in twin-bedded rooms for up to 50 people.
- Accommodation for a permanent team of volunteers (Ginger Group).
- Excellent facilities with chapel, plenary halls, 6/7 meeting rooms, offices, dining room and shop.
- Large gardens for outdoor games, relaxation and barbeques, store for camping and outward bound equipment.
- A small campsite adjacent to the centre plus a car park and space for mini-bus, trailers etc.
- A base for developing ministry of the Yardley Hastings URC congregation, which will remain and hopefully grow.

16. THE CREATION OF OUR OWN RESOURCE CENTRE WILL PROVIDE...



and sports centre are available in Northampton and Wellingborough, with its URC multi-faith, multi-cultural centre.

- A superb environment for visitors to learn, play, relax, worship and grow.
- Good access to the motorway and rail network both within 15 minutes of Yardley Hastings. Transport to/from the centre can be provided.
- Access to rivers and lakes, within 10 minutes, for sailing, canoeing and fishing. As well as three country parks and countryside for provision of walking, cycling, horse-riding. Swimming, shopping

- Provision is to be made for a permanent camp site on the Castle Ashby Estate.

- A base for five or six full-time volunteers (Ginger Group), a full-time ministry, housekeeper and administrative secretary, plus opportunities for part-time volunteers.
- A wide range of reasonably priced activities for children, young people and youth leaders throughout the year.
- A training centre for youth leaders, workers with children, Pilots, uniformed organisations, part-time mission teams and Ginger Groups.
- A centre which can be used by other denominations and will enable the URC to host ecumenical event, eg, conferences, training and support of local ecumenical initiatives.
- An attractive, well-equipped centre which will generate mid-week revenue earning conferences, seminars, workshops, for groups outside of the URC.

17.1

WHAT WILL THE RESOURCE CENTRE OFFER

Training and support for mini Ginger Groups and other mission teams.

Training and support for youth workers and children's workers.

Base for YLTO team meetings, Youth Committee, sub committees and FURY Forum/Council.

Midweek the Centre will offer conference facilities for groups, organisations, education, staff training, committees, from outside of the URC.

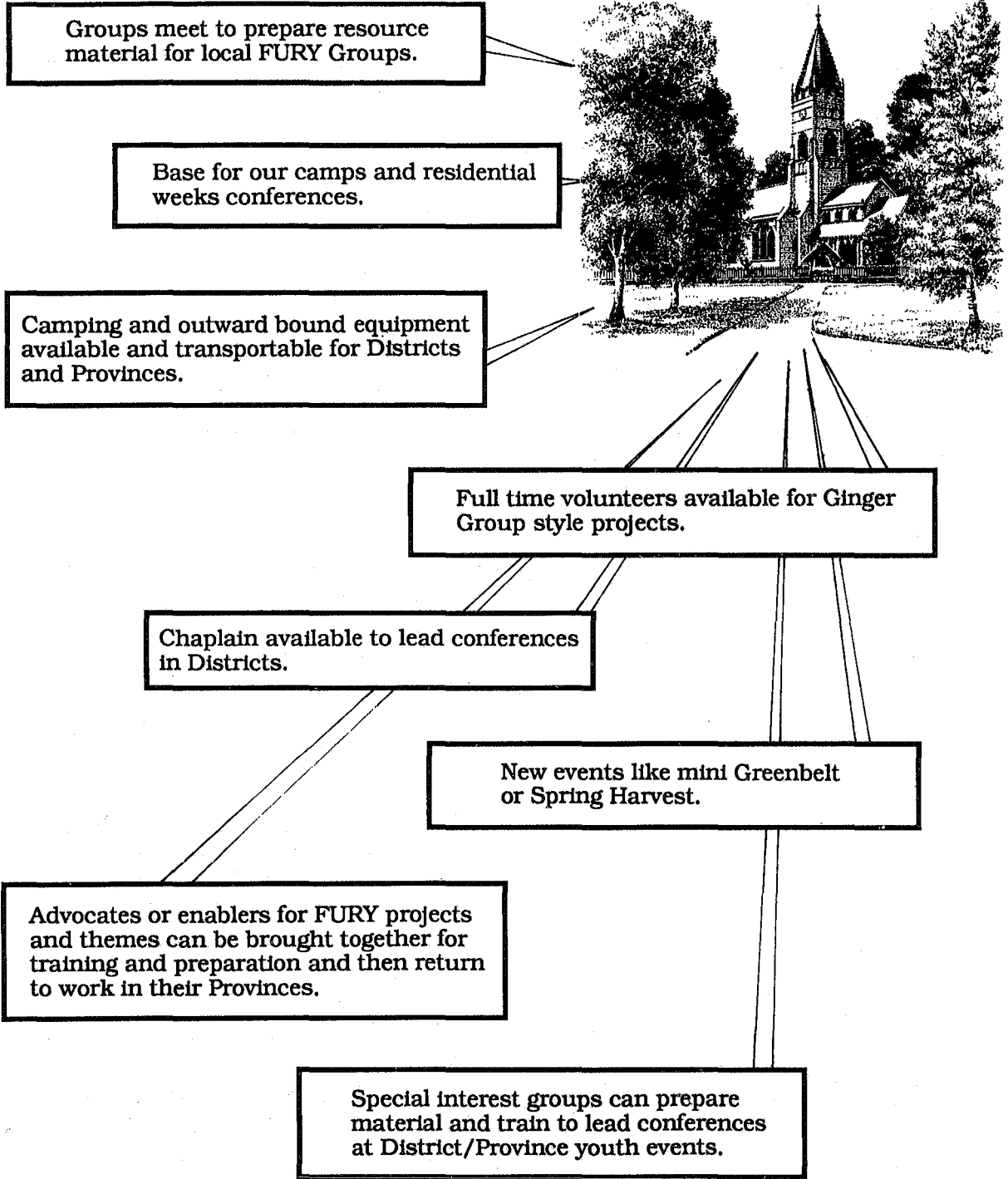
Youth mailings prepared and dispatched.

Bible study, prayer list and material for personal use prepared here.

At weekends and school holidays available for URC and other young people either for centre organised or their own programmes.

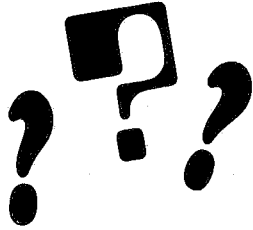
Centre can be used by uniformed organisations perhaps working on FURY/URC programmes.





17.2 It is of paramount importance to recognise that the centre in Yardley Hastings is much more than a conference and training centre. It is also a base where resource material can be prepared and distributed for use of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth at all levels of church life. It is also a church with unique potential to develop a ministry in the centre and in the village community. It is a home for the full-time volunteers and it is an office which will service FURY, its programmes and activities.

A NEW FURY WITHOUT THE RESIDENTIAL CENTRE?



18.1 Yes it is possible to have a New FURY without the Resource Centre. The original Youth Committee working party considered the options over three weekends. However, we have not been able to find an alternative scheme which meets ALL of the needs identified. The stumbling block is always the same. In order for things to happen somehow there has to be a source of energy and the cost of worthwhile options adds significant sums of money to the Unified Appeal budget each year.

18.2 For example, would the Assembly approve the appointment of a full-time "Fellowship Secretary" in addition to the Youth Secretary? The additional annual cost, including office and secretarial expenses when added together exceeds £35,000.

18.3 For example, if we want a national Ginger Group can we find £20,000 per annum?

18.4 Should we sell our camping equipment and organise a limited number of activities for those who can afford to pay? The alternative would require a minimum annual grant of £5,000.

18.5 We considered adopting an Anglican system and focusing the energies at Synod levels, but the costs would be prohibitive and we would hardly have a Fellowship of United Reformed Youth.

18.6 We explored the possibility of creating a different kind of FURY with a membership role and subscription scheme in addition too, or as part of, the Unified Appeal.

18.7 The ONLY way that we can avoid asking the General Assembly for additional funds is by making peripheral changes to FURY, discontinuing the Ginger Group Project and disposing of the camping and outward bound equipment.

18.8 A New FURY could be implemented with some differences to that which is being proposed, *if* a significant sum of money is added to the Unified Appeal budget or each year. Certainly we would not receive any additional funding from outside of the United Reformed Church.

18.9 Having considered many options the Youth Committee firmly believes that the best way forward can be achieved by the adoption of the New FURY Project which does require an appeal in order to create the residential centre, but does not require significant additional on-going funding.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW FURY PROJECT



19.1 The implementation of the New FURY Project has staffing implications for the Faith & Life Department.

1. RESIDENTIAL RESOURCE CENTRE

19.2 The Centre at Yardley Hastings will be run as a "community house"

for much of its programme. This means that residents share in some of the domestic chores, eg, cleaning, mowing of lawns, basic food preparation. The need for paid staff is therefore low compared to that of a conference centre.

It is proposed that there should be three full time staff and a team of full-time volunteers (at times, especially at weekends and during school holidays, there may also be part-time volunteers in residence).

19.3 **House Keeper** - will manage the domestic affairs of the centre, including catering. Will act as cook for more "up-market business". The post is fully funded through the Centre's income.

19.4 **Administrative Secretary** - will manage the Centre's administrative affairs, including the supervision of bookings and liaison with prospective Centre users. The post is fully funded through the Centre's income.

19.5 **The Chaplain** - this would be a new appointment within the Faith & Life Department. The Chaplain would be a staff member, responsible to the Department Secretary through the Youth Secretary. It is proposed that the stipend be a charge on the maintenance of the ministry fund, the supplement would be a cost to the Faith & Life Department budget. All expenses would be met from the Centre's income. Some financial support would be received from the Yardley Hastings congregation who would also pay Maintenance of the Ministry and Unified Appeal contributions.

19.6 The role of the Chaplain can be described as follows:

- i) Minister of Yardley Hastings URC.
- ii) Management responsibility for the Centre.
- iii) The Chaplain who should have experience in Youth Work, will have a pastoral role to all the Centre users especially young people who stay at/or are in contact with the Centre, the full-time and part-time volunteers and staff.
- iv) The Chaplain will have a significant contribution to make to the coordination and preparation of Fellowship resource material, conferences and youth events and with worship at the Centre.
- v) The Chaplain will have a pastoral and advisory role within the FURY Council/Forum, but will not have any administrative or secretarial function.
- vi) The precise terms of reference for the Chaplain's post will be agreed if the New FURY Project is adopted by the General Assembly. A proposal for the timing of the appointment will be brought to the Assembly following further consultation.

2. THE NATIONAL TRAINING OFFICER

19.7 Within the next few months we shall be seeking a successor to Mr Roger Tolman who has decided not to seek reappointment beyond 1990. Proposals about the YLTO scheme are to be presented to the General Assembly. If the recommendations to adopt Youth and Children's Work Trainers is approved, discussions will begin to create the post of National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer. We are actively exploring the possibility that the NYCWTO will be based at the Yardley Hastings Resource Centre, but will not be one of its staff members.

3. THE YOUTH SECRETARY

19.8 The present Youth Secretary completes his term of office on 31st July 1991. He will not be seeking reappointment. If the Assembly agrees to the appointment of a Chaplain the Faith & Life Department will actively consider a change in the Youth Secretary's job description so that it may incorporate some responsibility for children's work. However the person appointed will continue to be based at Church House.

19.9 NB The administrative work of the Youth Office will be transferred to the new Resource Centre. There may be some savings as it is unlikely that the Youth Secretary (or Youth and Children's Work Secretary) will require a full-time personal assistant.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW FURY PROJECT



RESOURCE CENTRE CAPITAL COSTS

20.1 The figures given have been prepared by David Richbell Quantity Surveyors. They assume all work will be done professionally. The manse, church and halls are joined together. As the building work will be phased, the figures are broken down to indicate the cost of each phase, showing costs if the work is undertaken in 1990 or 1991.

Projected July 1990

	£
Manse	175,535
Church	168,734
Hall	99,674
External work	19,334
Contingencies	30,000
Fees (ex VAT)	50,890
	<hr/> 544,167
VAT	76,000
Furnishing/ Fittings	25,000
TOTAL	<hr/> 645,167

Projected July 1991

	£
Manse	193,088
Church	185,607
Hall	109,641
External work	21,267
Contingencies	30,000
Fees (ex VAT)	55,979
	<hr/> 598,582
VAT	84,000
Furnishing/ Fittings	27,000
TOTAL	<hr/> 709,582

20.2 NOTES

1. Costings are deliberately pessimistic, the contingency figure is twice the normal amount.
2. It is possible that VAT can be reclaimed, in which case costs can be reduced by at least £70,000.
3. If there is a good response to a self-help scheme, savings could amount to around £50,000 on the church and hall.

HOW WILL THE MONEY BE FOUND?

21.1 The Assembly will be asked to approve the launch of a major appeal. The appeal will focus on a "FURY Gift Day" when on February 17th 1991 we hope that the major service of the day in each church will be conducted by young people. Every church member and young person will be encouraged to donate an average of "a fiver for FURY's future". The appeal campaign will begin in September 1990.

21.2 Negotiations with the Department of Education and Science indicate that we are likely to receive a grant of between £100,000 - £150,000. The offer of a grant cannot be confirmed until architects plans have been approved by the Department.

21.3 The balance of funds will be found from outside of the URC through grants, trusts and sponsorships. The Youth Committee have accepted the voluntary services of Mr Michael Downing of Sevenoaks, who is a Special Projects Manager for Barclays Bank to head up the external appeal.

The appeal budget is as follows:

£350,000 from URC appeal

£100,000 from DES

£250,000 from other sources

£700,000

21.4 The manse for the Chaplain. A new manse will need to be provided for the Chaplain. This will cost between £100,000 -£150,000. The URC Church Buildings Committee has indicated that it has funds available for special projects and is prepared to purchase the manse on behalf of the Faith & Life Department. Long term plans would include the repayment of the grant, thus saving rental costs which have been set at 2%of capital costs which have been included in the Centre's running cost budget. Land to build the manse can be made available adjacent to the present church grounds at a reduced cost through the generosity of the Marquis of Northampton's estate management.

21.5 Once completed the Resource Centre becomes an asset, which if sold, would realise over £¾m.

RESOURCE CENTRE BUDGET

22.1 The Youth Committee is fully aware of the need to ensure long term viability of the Centre as "a going concern".

22.2 The Youth Committee is aware that an important budget is the one that sets down the Centre's running costs. Detailed work has been undertaken on the likely programme and expected income. The Youth Committee is grateful for the advice given by the Finance & Administration Department and also the Revd Graham Cook, Director of the Windermere Centre. Even our most pessimistic figures indicate that the Centre is viable on a 1/3 occupancy rate.

22.3 The Youth Committee firmly believes that whilst the initial cost of setting up the project is expensive, at least the Church has a very worthwhile asset and the ongoing costs are considerably less than any other option we have considered.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

23.1 In presenting the New FURY Project to the General Assembly, the Youth Committee fully realises that it is asking the Church to invest a great deal of money in its youth work. The Committee is profoundly aware of the trust that the Church has placed in it and therefore seeks the Church's approval for the New FURY Project, having giving the matter very detailed and prayerful consideration over nearly three years.

23.2 We ask the Assembly to approve the New FURY Project because we firmly believe that it represents the best way forward for youth work in the United Reformed Church as it prepares for mission in the 21st Century. We believe the Church will want to support the New FURY Project because it will help to ensure that the young people that are part of the Church today will be the leaders of the Church tomorrow.

RESOLUTIONS

1. The General Assembly reaffirms the aims and objectives of youth work in the URC as set out in the Book of Reports.
- 2a. The General Assembly agrees to adopt in principle the New FURY Project, believing it to be the way forward for youth work in the URC and recognising that this will incorporate the redevelopment of the Yardley Hastings church, manse and hall.
- 2b. The Assembly gives approval for the launch of a national appeal in support of the New FURY Project and agrees that the 17th February 1991 should be designated as FURY Sunday.
- 2c. The Assembly approves the appointment of a full-time stipendiary minister to be based at Yardley Hastings as Chaplain. The appointment to be made after further consultation and at the approval of the Executive Committee for an initial period of 5 years.

ASSEMBLY PASTORAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Cyril Franks
Secretary: Revd Bernard Thorogood

Last year's full report to Assembly outlined the nature and importance of the work allotted to this committee. We have been much concerned in this year with a continuing need for this ministry. The number of cases which we have been asked to deal with does not decrease. These come to us primarily through reference by the District Councils and Provincial Moderators, although there are certain actions which we can take on our own initiative.

It gives us satisfaction when it has been possible, sometimes after a long interval, to achieve the resettlement of a minister. We have to acknowledge that there are some situations where this has not proved possible.

We would wish to pay tribute to those who exercise a healing and reconciling ministry among us, much of which makes heavy demands on time and energy. It is often carried through with a considerable burden upon pastoral responsibilities and the exercise of loving skill. In many cases we are faced with marriage problems, which unhappily come to us at a stage when little can be done to effect recovery. The most that we can do is to try to lessen the anguish which is felt by all involved and to assist, when asked, in discovering a way forward for individuals and congregations.

We wish, again, to acknowledge the very considerable contribution to our work by Bernard Thorogood, who gives himself devotedly to the many implications and complications of the Committee's responsibilities.

This year two members of the committee, Paul Rogers and Jessie Clare, have completed their term of office. Their faithfulness, diligence and love have always been totally at our disposal and we wish to put on record our indebtedness to them both.

RESOLUTION:

1. The Assembly receives the report for debate.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

Convener: Mr Angus M Grimmond
Secretary: Mr Clem Frank

Contributions to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and the Unified Appeal 1989

1. The Budgets for 1989 approved by Assembly 1988 provided for expenditure which was to be financed by contributions of £7,009,000 to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and £1,566,000 to the Unified Appeal. In the event the amount received for the Unified Appeal exceeded the target, but the contributions to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund were slightly down. (Appendix 1).

2. Once again the loyal support of the Churches and the hard work of Provincial and District Officers provided the money to pay the basic stipends, salaries and expenses that are essential to the work of the Church at all levels. We offer our sincere thanks to all those involved in this process and to the Churches which are the source of almost all our funds.

Stipends of Ministers Holding Assembly Appointments

3. Information about the stipends and the conditions of service of ministers holding Assembly appointments is given in Appendix 2.

Amalgamation of the Unified Appeal and Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and Departmental Re-organisation.

4. The Department is grateful to those who considered the Interim Report published in last year's Report to Assembly. Ten Provinces who responded were, in general, happy with the principles set out, but a number of points require minor modification. The final Report of the Department, much on the same line as that presented to last year's Assembly has taken account of some of the comments made to the Department. In particular:-

1. It is emphasised that the requirement of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund takes a prior claim on all monies received.
2. The proposal that all contributions should be collected by Direct Debit has been amended to a non-mandatory request. However, the saving in cost to the Church, at all levels, and the more regular receipt of income causes the Department to urge all Churches to pay a substantial part of their central contribution by Direct Debit.

We see that many churches are happy to pay their Unified Appeal contribution in this way. Over the Church as a whole, 40% of the Unified Appeal in 1989 was collected by Direct Debit.

A change has been made in the Scheme with regard to the Funding of Province and District costs.

3. For the time being, no change in the status or membership of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee is suggested.

4. Although one or two Provinces commented adversely on the timetable in the proposals, the Committee feel that 1st January 1992 is not too early to start collecting the new monies, using 1991 as a transitional year, where hopefully, more churches will start paying their Unified Appeal contributions along with their Maintenance of the Ministry contributions by Direct Debit.

5. The Report is now commended to the Assembly, and Resolution 3 to implement the changes will be moved under the Finance & Administration Department business in Assembly.

MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd John Waller

Secretary: Mr Alan A Taylor

Performance of the Fund in 1989.

6. During 1989 local churches' contributions to the Fund totalled about £15,000 less than the budget, but the increased income from dividends and donations more than made up for the shortfall. The Committee is once again grateful for the continuing generosity of churches at a time of financial pressure.

7. Expenditure on the Fund was more or less in line with the budget, but was significantly below estimates made in January 1989 - about £130,000. Over half of this was due to the fact that we had fewer ministers to pay than was expected. The other major factor was a saving in Resettlement Grants, due to a smaller number of ministers moving during the year.

8. It was the lower expenditure in particular which led the Fund to show a working surplus of about £11,000 on the year, when a considerable deficit had been expected.

9. A transfer of £20,000 has been made to keep the Stipend Payment Reserve at the level of one month's stipend plus associated payments.

Stipend 1990

10. The budget approved by Assembly 1989 allowed for an increase at 1st July 1990 of 6%. The latest examination of various factors made the Committee realise that this was not adequate. It has therefore been decided to make an 8% increase, to £7,704 per annum. Present calculations suggest that, because the number of ministers is smaller than in the budget, this increase can be paid without putting the fund in serious deficit.

Budget 1991.

11. The Committee has been aware that there is a general feeling in the church that ministerial stipends should be increased in real terms. It has also been aware that local churches' resources have been stretched by the increases in contributions needed in 1990. It has therefore produced a budget (Resolution 4) which allows an increase of 8% in the basic stipend as at 1st July 1991, which will require an average increase in church contributions of 9% over 1990.

Ministers' Remuneration Sub-Committee.

12. The Committee's report last year indicated that it proposed to have a radical look at future stipend policy. A sub-committee was set up with Mr Michael Harrison as Convener. The Committee hopes to issue a consultation paper later in 1990.

Pensions.

13. As agreed by Assembly 1989, the rate of pension payable to ministers with service subsequent to April 1978 was increased. The Committee is heartened by the response that has been received from many of the recipients of these increased pensions.

Pastors Superannuation Fund and Pastors Widows Fund.

14. On August 1st 1989, the Charity Commissioners sealed an Order bringing about the amalgamation of the Pastors Superannuation Fund and the Pastors Widows Fund, to make a new Fund called "The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers and Ministers Widows and Widowers Fund". At the same time, the Commissioners ordered that 9% of the assets of the two Funds be paid to the trustees of Congregational Churches who did not join the United Reformed Church. Also, the responsibility of paying grants to ministers and the widows of ministers associated with Non-Uniting Churches was relinquished to the authorities of those Churches.

15. The Commissioners granted wide discretion to the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to order the affairs of the new Fund, and the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee has made the following decisions:-

1. That the new Fund shall be known, for day-to-day working, by the short title of "The Retired Ministers Fund".
2. That we should discontinue the practice of 'means testing' beneficiaries.
3. That in future, grants should be related to the pensions which would have been payable to ministers had they been members of the Pension Fund of the former Presbyterian Church. Initially the fund will be insufficient to reach full parity.
4. Grants should be paid monthly in future and not quarterly. Service to the former Churches of Christ should count as if it were service to the former Congregational Church.

16. Following the Order of the Charity Commissioners, the Inland Revenue decided that their ruling, made in 1942, that grants from the Pastors Superannuation Fund and the Pastors Widows Fund should be exempt of tax in the hands of the recipient, should be rescinded. Therefore, all grants are subject to taxation under PAYE with effect from the 6th April 1990. Whilst the Committee was not happy that this decision was made, it sees no grounds to appeal against it.

17. Following the issue of the Order, and the decisions of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee with regard to the future use of the Retired Ministers Fund, investigation took place in the office into the pensions and grants paid to all ministers and ministers' widows.

18. A number of widows, whose income precluded receipt of a grant from the Pastors Widows Fund were approached and grants were commenced in February 1990, based on the new regulations agreed by the Committee.

H.N. Clarke Will Trust.

19. Under the Will of the late Mr H.N. Clarke, who died in 1948, the Retired Ministers Fund received a part of the residue of this Estate, following the death of the last life tenant. This legacy, which is divisible with the Non-Uniting Churches, is likely to yield a sum in excess of £1,000,000 to the Retired Ministers Fund.

20. The Committee records its thanks for this very substantial addition to the funds available for the payment of grants to former ministers and the widows of former ministers.

Retirement.

21. Assembly 1989 saw the retirement of Mr Herbert Fisher as Convener of the Pensions Sub-Committee. Mr Fisher, who became Convener in 1978, brought to this major task the wealth of experience that he had gathered as Chief Actuary of the Liverpool Victoria Friendly Society, and was unstinting in the time that he gave to the Committee. His knowledge of Pensions Law and Practice and, particularly, the Regulations of the two former Funds which today make up the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund, is unsurpassed.

22. The Committee wishes Herbert and Hilda a long and happy retirement from the worries of the day-to-day supervision of the Pensions matters, and records its profound thanks to Herbert for his distinguished service.

23. The Committee appointed Mr Victor Hughff as the Convener of the Pensions Sub-Committee, following Herbert Fisher's retirement. Mr Hughff, who has recently retired as Chief General Manager of the Norwich Union Insurance Society, brings to the Pensions Committee a wide experience of pensions matters, and the Committee is grateful to him for accepting this additional responsibility.

Amendments to the Plan for Partnership

24. It was drawn to the Committee's attention that there are inadequacies in Appendix C to the Plan, which relates to housing allowances. The Committee believes that the Assembly should re-state its resolution of 1979 in amended words (Resolution 5).

25. There will be a revision of paragraph 6, which will then begin:

Exceptional circumstances

"Where a District Council agrees that a settlement has been possible only by the willingness of the minister to provide his/her own accommodation, it should agree with the pastorate and the minister to the payment of a higher level of allowance than would otherwise be the case. In particular....."

The second sentence of paragraph 9 will be deleted. The full stop after "knowledge" will be replaced by a comma and continue: "and to this end advises that all Housing Allowances should be reviewed annually by the local pastorate and a report given to the District Council on the findings of the review."

26. To make this possible, Resolution 6 will be brought to Assembly to change the wording of paragraph 6.3.1 of the Plan.

27. It also came to the Committee's notice that auxiliary ministers transferring to the stipendiary list did not qualify for an ordination loan, although they might face expenditure similar to that of a person being ordained as a stipendiary minister. A resolution is brought (Resolution 7) to amend paragraph 8.2 of the Plan so that a loan can be made available in such cases.

Insurance in high risk areas.

28. Insurance costs for ministers in these areas can be very high, and it is rarely the case that churches in such situations can help ministers with higher premiums. The Committee is pleased that it has proved possible for the Treasurership Committee to make an arrangement with the URC Insurance Company whereby ministers in high-risk areas will be charged the same premium for basic insurance on personal effects as those in low cost areas.

CHURCH BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Julian Macro
Secretary: Mr Tegid Peregrine

Guidelines

29. The guidelines for giving financial assistance from the Church Buildings Fund are as follows:-

- 1) Assistance will be given to those projects recommended by Provinces which the Committee deems appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 2) To encourage Churches to employ professional consultants to advise on property matters, loans will be made of 50% of professional fees, subject to a maximum loan of £15,000. Such loans will be interest-free for the first two years. Thereafter the loan will be repayable by quarterly instalments of not less than 4% of the sum advanced and the balance outstanding will bear interest of 7%.
- 3) Applications for loans for building works will be considered only if the total cost of the project will not be less than £30,000. Loans will be limited to not more than 50% of the total cost of the project and no loan will exceed £50,000. Repayment will normally be by quarterly instalments of not less than 4% of the sum advanced and the balance outstanding will bear interest at 7%.
- 4) Grants of up to 50% (subject to a maximum grant of £2,000) will be made available to churches who wish to employ consultants for the preparation of a feasibility study of the present and future use of their sites and premises provided it can be demonstrated that no other source of finance is available.

Loans.

30. During the year, loan applications from 7 churches were considered by the Officers of the Committee acting under delegated powers. 6 were approved and one

refused on the grounds that the church concerned had access to alternative sources of funding. Of those approved, 1 was a building loan, 2 were professional fees loans and 3 were combined applications. The total amounts involved were £179,215 for Building Loans and £55,343 for professional fees loans.

31. The sum available for loans in 1990 is likely to be in the order of £300,000.

Trinity Court, Exeter.

32. The sale of Trinity Court has yielded a sum of £400,000 to the Committee. In recognition of the high priority the URC gives to the housing of retired ministers the Committee has, therefore, decided to lend £300,000 from the proceeds of the sale of Trinity Court to the Retired Ministers Housing Committee.

RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd. David Hannen

Secretary: Mr. Bob Carruthers

33. In 1989 housing was provided for 12 retired ministers and one minister's widow. Two retired ministers and two widows of ministers were re-housed in properties more suitable to their needs. No qualifying applicant was refused assistance and there were no delays in the provision of capital for property purchases.

34.	Number of properties as at 1 January 1989	226
	Number of properties purchased in 1989	17
	Number of properties received as legacies	6
		249
	Less number of properties sold in 1989	11
		238

Number of properties as at 31 December 1989

Occupied by sitting tenants	5
For sale	8
Occupied by retired ministers	149
Occupied by minister's widows	76
	238

35. All the properties which were sold and those offered for sale were in areas in which no current applicant wished to reside.

36. At the year end three properties were in the process of purchase and three applicants were seeking suitable properties. It is anticipated that during 1990 a further 12 applicants will require assistance.

37. The differential purchase ceilings set for 1989 proved to be adequate except in one area of North Wales and in North Western Province. The necessary upward adjustments were made and the four applicants involved were housed.

38. The new purchase ceilings, based on the movement in property prices in each of the Provinces, as reported by a national Building Society, which are applicable from February 1990 are

Province	Society/TrustJoint Ceilings	Purchase Ceilings
Wessex, Thames North Southern	£62,000	£93,000
Eastern South Western	£56,000	£84,000
East Midlands West Midlands North Western Mersey	£51,000	£76,500
Northern, Yorkshire Wales	£48,000	£72,000

39. The "purchase cost" of a property must be within the ceiling quoted for the Province in which the property is situated: "purchase cost" is the purchase price plus the cost of repair, improvements and/or extension identified as necessary at the time of survey of the property prior to purchase.

40. The Society is prepared to join with an applicant in purchasing a property for which the purchase cost is greater than the joint purchase ceiling quoted in paragraph 38: in such cases there is a reduction in the Society's contribution.

41. In this and in all joint purchases the applicant must establish that the capital can be provided and the necessary contributions made towards maintenance and repair in addition to paying the rent.

42. During 1989 there was an appreciable increase in contractors charges for maintenance and repair. A consequence of this has been an increase in the standard rent from £9.25 per week to £10.17 per week (£44.07 per calendar month).

43. During the 12 months to 31 December 1989 £31,000 was received in donations and £373,000 in legacies. The Committee is grateful for the generosity of friends who give or bequeath property or sums of money for the housing of retired ministers. The need for donations from Churches and individuals continues and the Committee continues to look to Provincial Synods and District Councils to encourage regular giving.

44. The work of those individuals who give so generously of their time and expertise to the oversight of retirement properties is greatly appreciated by the retired ministers and widows: their co-operation with the Principal Officers of the Society is a significant feature in the care provided. During the year the Principal Officers of the Committee made visits to 4 applicants, 59 tenants and 17 properties untenanted.

45. The 'Guide Lines' have been updated and issued to Ministers and District Councils: copies are available at Church House.

WELFARE & EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr R.A.Heritage
Secretary: Mrs Judy Stockings

46. It is through the right use of our resources that the work of the Church is conducted, and in many ways the fellowship of the Church conveyed. This is certainly true of the work of the Welfare & Emergencies Committee, for through its work we are able to help a number of ministers and ministers widows over difficult times and thus express the love and care of the Church.

47. Over the past year we have made approximately 60 grants, and applications for most of these have come on recommendation from Provincial Moderators upon whom we greatly rely and to whom we are extremely grateful. The grants which we make are sometimes supplemented by Provinces. In addition there were 690 Christmas gifts made to retired ministers and ministers widows.

48. There is a great diversity of need, for although we have made strides as a Church in the levels of stipend paid, there still occur from time to time the emergency or crisis ranging from a grant paid to a minister towards additional cost following a family bereavement to a grant paid to a retired minister towards the cost of a new cooker. We also still have retired ministers whose pensions are small. The resources available are not great but the expressions of gratitude reveal how useful this help is and how much it is appreciated.

49. The confidential nature of the work of this Committee makes reporting difficult, for it does not allow us to give detail of grants made, but the Assembly can be assured that the requests received are carefully and sympathetically considered.

APPENDIX 1

Contributions to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and Unified Appeal 1989

Membership 1.1.89	Province	Maintenance of the Ministry		Unified Appeal	
		£ per	£ per	£ member	£ member
10,503	Northern	520,000	50	116,966	11
13,395	North Western	633,133	47	155,528	12
8,530	Mersey	472,000	55	109,319	13
8,437	Yorkshire	482,605	57	105,059	2
7,593	East Midlands	419,000	55	97,650	13
10,330	West Midlands	559,000	54	119,125	11
9,280	Eastern	586,000	63	128,744	14
7,848	South Western	453,000	58	108,451	14
11,580	Wessex	680,000	59	155,534	13
11,738	Thames North	845,000	72	193,000	16
17,339	Southern	1,030,000	59	237,493	14
6,578	Wales	314,148	48	46,185	7
	Total from Provinces	£6,993,886	57	£1,573,054	13
	Other receipts			1,759	
	1988 Arrears -Northern Province			8,563	
				1,583,376	
	Amount required by Budget	£7,009,000		£1,565,600	
	(Deficit)/Surplus	<u>(£15,114)</u>		<u>£17,776</u>	

APPENDIX 2

Ministers holding Assembly Appointments Stipends and Conditions of Service from July 1989

1. The stipend of Provincial Moderators is £9,408 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 housing allowance in lieu. Travelling expenses, telephone costs etc., in connection with Church business are refunded. A car is provided, maintenance and running cost being met by the Church subject to an adjustment for private use. Alternatively, a mileage allowance is payable if a privately owned car is used.

Ministers at Central Office (86 Tavistock Place)

2. Stipends range from £9,408 per annum for Assistant Secretaries to £13,752 for the General Secretary (plus any children's allowances). The other arrangements are similar to those for Provincial Moderators. Fares between home and the Central Office are not reimbursed.

Preaching Fees and Travelling Expenses

3. 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.

Academic Staff at Westminster College

4. Stipends range from £9,408 to £10,320 per annum (plus any children's allowances). The housing provisions are the same as those for Provincial Moderators.

APPENDIX 3

The Amalgamation of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund with the Unified Appeal and reorganisation of the Central Finance and Administration Department

1. Assembly 1988 resolved as follows:-

"Assembly requests the Central Finance and Administration Committee to consider the establishment of one central fund to replace the present MoM Fund and Unified Appeal and to report their findings together with a recommendation within three years." [Record of Assembly 1988 p17.]

2. We suggest that the fund be called the Ministry and Mission Fund.

3. We envisage the funding of the following expenses from the Ministry and Mission Fund:-

Maintenance of the Ministry*
(including Ministers Pension Fund)
Day to day functioning of the Church, Youth Work,
Moderators, Church House Staff etc., etc.

Council for World Mission etc. support
Welfare Fund*
Ministerial Training Fund*
Retired Ministers Housing*, if necessary.

Items marked with an asterisk are currently managed by separate Committees.

The Financial Resources Committee

4. The present Budget Committee, which deals solely with the Unified Appeal will be concluded. Within the Finance Department there will be a Financial Resources Committee which will undertake the task of examining and proposing a budget to Assembly for the Ministry and Mission Fund. In order that this examination may be undertaken with the fullest possible support, the Financial Resources Committee will have provincial representation. In order that the spending departments and committees may state their case, the Convener and Secretary of departments and committees may attend, speak, but not vote.

Setting Targets

5. The Financial Resources Committee would meet to consider subordinate budgets prepared by or on behalf of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, the Ministerial Training Finance Committee, the Welfare Committee, departments, and any other committee that requires to raise funds from the Church as a whole. The resources available to this committee would be all the regularly recurring income of the Church, including dividends on invested funds, short term interest, Memorial Hall Trust monies, etc., etc., and the pledged contributions of provinces to the 'Ministry and Mission Fund'. It is at the Financial Resources Committee that the Provincial commitments to the Ministry and Mission Fund will be offered.

Collecting the commitments

6. Each Autumn schedules of local Church commitments will be sent to the finance department, who will collect from local Churches monthly, preferably by direct debit, as presently done for MoM contributions.

Provincial and District expenses

7. When a Province makes its commitment to the Financial Resources Committee, a Province surcharge may be declared and included. The Central Office will reimburse the Province with the proportional part of the annual sum committed by the Province, to be debited against its commitment. Any sums received in excess of the provincial commitment at the end of the year will be carried forward to the Province's credit against the succeeding year. Provinces, having made a commitment will be expected to honour that commitment by the end of each year.

Overspends

8. In these proposals there is no room for significant overspends. It is not possible to envisage that the proceeds for the Ministry and Mission Fund will be more than the commitments made, without the agreement of the provinces.

9. In any year the Church receives legacies which are credited directly to reserve. They vary from year to year but it is not thought prudent to rely on these legacies for routine expenditure. However, they do offset, to some extent, minor overspends on current account, and inflation.

10. The authority to approve overspends is held by the Treasurer of the Church, who may take such advice as he requires to make a decision concerning this approval.

Committee structure

11. In the light of these proposals, we propose the following committee structure within the Department:-

12. The Finance and Administration Department will be renamed the 'Finance Department'.

13. The Financial Resources Committee will consist of:-

- a) The Convener, appointed by Assembly.
3 Representatives appointed by Assembly.
A Representative of each Province, appointed by Province.
A Provincial Moderator.
The Treasurer.
The General Secretary.
- b) The Secretary who shall be the Chief Accountant.
The Convener of the Financial Management Committee.
The Convener of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee.
The Convener of the Advocacy Committee.
- c) The Convener and/or Secretary of each spending Department or Committee, (eg. Welfare, Ministerial Training Fund, etc., etc.) the Office and Personnel Manager and the Advocacy Secretary.

Only the members in list a) above will be able to vote, save that in the event of an equality on voting, the Convener will have a casting vote.

Members in list b) above will be non-voting members of the Committee.
Persons in list c) above may attend meetings if they wish, speak but not vote.

14. The Financial Management Committee to consist of:-

- The Convener.
- The Secretary who will be the Chief Accountant.
- The Treasurer.
- A Secretary of United Reformed Church Trust.
- The Secretary for Church Buildings.
- 8 members (one of whom may be an Accountant, and one a Solicitor).

15. The duties of this committee will be those currently undertaken by the Treasurership Committee (including the management of the reserves of the Church), and the Church Buildings Committee.

16. Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to consist of:-

- The Convener
- The Secretary
- The Treasurer
- The Chief Accountant
- The Convener of the Pensions Sub-Committee (appointed by the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee.)

1 Provincial Moderator

3 members one of whom may be a minister in pastoral charge and one a minister's spouse.

1 Representative appointed by each Province.

1 Representative appointed by the Ministries Department.
The Advocacy Secretary.

17. The duties of this committee will be to continue the work done by the current MoM Committee, and will include the preparation of a budget for consideration by the Financial Resources Committee for the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund.

18. The Retired Ministers Housing Committee and the Welfare Committee as currently constituted.

19. The Assembly appointed members of the Financial Management and Financial Resources Committee will be appointed by the Assembly Executive in July 1990 and the new Committees will operate from October 1st 1990, upon which date the Central, Treasurership, Church Buildings, and Budget Committees will be disbanded.

Function of the Central Committee

20. The Central Committee, which has spent much of its time in past years in receiving reports from Committees within the department and in dealing with matters which will now be handled by the Financial Resources Committee, feels that it has served its purpose, and may now be disbanded. The co-ordinating role will be exercised by the Convener, and the Secretary. Each Province will be represented on the Financial Resources Committee, and this is the place where Provinces may, in future, participate in forming policy regarding the central finances of the Church.

Function of the Church Buildings Committee.

21. The central functions currently carried out by the Church Buildings Committee, will in future, be carried out by the Financial Management Committee, guided by the Secretary for Church Buildings. Two of these functions are to manage the Church Buildings Fund, and to provide general advice to the Church on building matters. The establishment of Provincial Buildings Committees has largely taken over the role of adviser on building matters. The management of the Church Buildings Fund has become very much a matter for Officer's decision, and these will be reported and confirmed by the Finance Management Committee in future. The Secretary for the Church Buildings will also act as "Depository" for information about property matters, and will circulate to Provincial Buildings Committees matters which are thought appropriate for further circulation. Any items of major interest might well be the subject of a meeting of Provincial Buildings Representatives, which might be called from time to time by the Secretary for Church Buildings.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Assembly receives the report of the Finance and Administration Department for debate.
2. Assembly adopts the accounts for 1989.
3. The Assembly approves the proposals for the reorganisation of the Finance Department and its Committees, as contained in Appendix 3 to the report.

4. The Assembly approves the Budget of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund for 1991 noting that it allows for an increase of 8% in the basic stipend from 1st July 1991.
5. Assembly agrees to revise its Resolution of 1979 (Record pages 11 & 12) as follows (new words in heavy type):-
 - 1).The Assembly resolves that the provision of a dwelling for the minister shall continue to be part of the normal conditions of service.
 - 2).**The Assembly calls upon pastorates whose minister lives in a church-owned manse, to ensure that a separate room (in church or manse) is available for use solely as a study.**
 - 3).The Assembly requests District Councils (**taking advice from Province where required**) to take note of the condition and facilities of the manse, **or if alternative housing arrangements are to be made, to approve the details of the arrangements**, before concurring in calls and when making visitations.
 - 4).The Assembly acknowledges
 - a) the wish of some ministers to be owner-occupiers and
 - b) the problem such a course can create for the stewards of the Church's material resources;
 - c) the desirability of reviewing housing allowances annually.
6. Assembly amends the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration by the amendment of paragraph 6.3.1 as follows:-

6.3.1 House, free of rent, rates (**where payable**) etc: for the purposes of the Plan a house or manse means a home for the minister and his immediate family provided and maintained in good repair and decoration, free of rent, ground rent, all rates (**where payable**) and property insurance; and payment of costs of removal into such accommodation. If the manse is not owned **or leased** by the church, a housing allowance **approved by the pastorate and the minister**, shall be payable to the minister. For the avoidance of any doubt, Community Charge, which is a personal local tax, is not regarded as rates. Guide-lines for calculating such allowances shall be issued by the central M of M Committee (see Appendix C).
7. Assembly amends the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration as follows:-

re-number paragraph 8.2 as 8.2.1.

Paragraph 8.2.2

A similar loan is available to auxiliary ministers who have qualified for the whole-time stipendiary ministry, payable at the time that they take up the whole-time stipendiary ministry.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Alasdair J G Walker

Secretary: Mr. Clem Frank

1. For the second year running, we are pleased to report a 100% response to the Unified Appeal. Two Provinces did not quite reach their targets, but several others exceeded theirs. After taking account of arrears paid in respect of 1988, there was a surplus of £38,000 on the General Fund, instead of the anticipated deficit of £9,000. Dividend and interest payments were notably in excess, both of actual receipts in 1988 and of the amounts anticipated in the budget, and so boosted income. At the same time, expenditure by the Youth Committee and the World Church and Mission Department was significantly below expectation. The result for 1989 was very satisfactory, and once again the Church is grateful for all the effort put in to raising the money to meet the target.

2. Last year's experience gives the Committee confidence in placing before the General Assembly a budget for 1991 which has not been matched by offers from the Provinces. There are two items in the proposed expenditure which show significant increases:

- (a) The General Assembly 1989 decided to raise through the Unified Appeal the increased sums for Ministerial Training, and instructed this Committee to make provision for this in the budget. After consultation with the Ministries Department, it has been agreed that the additional figure required for 1991 is £150,000; this has to be added to the figure already anticipated, which would have been £46,000.
- (b) Major changes in the funding by the Department of Education & Science of youth training programmes, together with a decision to raise the salaries paid to our Youth Leadership Training Officers, have led to a significant rise in the expenditure budgeted for the Youth Committee, and this shows a net rise of more than £60,000.

3. After escalating existing programmed expenditure by 8-8.5% for salaries, and 7% for other costs, the Committee has arrived at a proposed expenditure budget for 1991 of £2,300,000. Dividends, interest, etc., will account for almost 10% of that figure, leaving £2,073,000 to be raised by the Unified Appeal. The Committee considers that this sum is required in order to maintain the work of the Church at its existing level, and in order to take account of the two items mentioned in the previous section.

4. Last autumn, Provincial Treasurers indicated through the Finance and Administration Central Committee that the Provinces could expect to promise £1,916,000, a shortfall in the order of £150,000. Provincial targets accepted by Provinces in March 1990 total £1,992,000 and we express thanks to Provinces for accepting these increased targets. The Budget Committee nevertheless recommends the General Assembly to authorise expenditure in 1991 of £2,300,000, in the confidence that when the needs of the Church are explained to all the members through the Advocacy process they will respond as a measure of their continuing commitment to the work of mission which Christ has laid upon us all.

RESOLUTIONS:

1. Assembly receives the report for debate.
2. Assembly approves the Budget for 1991 which provides for an expenditure of £2,300,000.

SCHOOLS LINKED WITH THE URC

In 1989 the Heads and Governors of the Five Schools met for their Annual Conference which was held at Caterham in the autumn. Speakers included the Moderator of the General Assembly (the Rt Revd C K Forecast) and one of his predecessors (the Revd C C Franks), together with Miss L Walker (Head of the Professional Centre, West Sussex Education Authority), Mr R A Wake (formerly Staff Inspector for Secondary Education), Mr C Pack (Director for School Effectiveness, Westminster College, Oxford), and the Revd S Taylor (Director of the Bloxham Project). In 1990 the five schools became six because Taunton School has joined them. This extends the geographical coverage of the schools. It also reminds us of that group of Independent Schools founded by Free Churchmen, with Congregationalists usually at the forefront, to provide for the education of children other than those of their ministers and missionaries.

In acknowledging grants made by the United Reformed Church from its share of the Memorial Hall Trust and by the Milton House Foundation, the schools continue to acknowledge their responsibility to that wide Free Church community. These grants contribute particularly to the education of the children of serving ministers and missionaries, as well as those of women and men preparing for ordination.

In acknowledging the relationship with the United Reformed Church, the schools would stress the range of bursaries and allowances which it is often possible for each of them to make to members of the Church. Enquiries are always welcomed, for each school still seeks to share the continuing opportunity for Christian education with those churches which provided its founders.

Caterham School To cater for the heavy demand for places in the Preparatory School, two extra classes in each of 1989 and 1990 are being provided for by a new classroom block, bringing the total in the whole school (8-18) to over 700 pupils, with a sixth form of 190.

The summer drama production at Caterham was unique, having been both written and directed by a sixth-former, Christopher Chambers. His musical, *Gunpowder, Treason and Plot*, was an outstanding success. He is among a dozen pupils going up to Oxford or Cambridge in the autumn 1990, following last year's successful A level results with a 95% pass rate.

A bronze bust of our founder, the Revd John Townsend, was unveiled by his great-great-grandson, Mr Herbert Townsend, on Founders' Day. John Townsend, founder of the Congregational school in 1811, also founded the Royal School for the Deaf and Dumb, now in Margate, and was a founder member of the LMS and the Bible Society.

Among a number of guest preachers at our Sunday services we have been delighted to welcome our Moderator, the Revd David Helyar; Dr Ted Paterson, with the LMS/CWM for nearly 40 years in Hong Kong, and the Revd Roger Royle of BBC TV and Radio broadcasting fame. It was a happy step forward that, for the first time, an ecumenical service of Confirmation was held in the school for URC and Anglican pupils. The service was conducted jointly by our Chaplain, the Revd Derek Lindfield and the former Bishop of Lincoln, the Rt Revd Simon Phipps.

We now have an "ecumenical" organ in our new hall, with console from Streatham Parish Church and pipes kindly given to us by Bromley URC at the time of the demolition of their old building. Our Boarders' Choir sang our thanks there on

Education Sunday and the Headmaster presented a lectern made by an old boy of the school.

The number of ministers' children at present in school is twenty two, comprising one Anglican, four Baptists, one Congregationalist, two Methodists and fourteen URC.

Eltham College The year under review has been one of steady progress in the life of the school. Public examination results were again excellent. The school secured a 90% pass rate at GCSE and an exceedingly good 96% pass rate at A level.

In the Arts, the new Performing Arts Centre has been put to good use with performances in all three terms, culminating in an excellent production of *The Merchant of Venice* in the autumn term, in 1930s costume.

The school choirs have sung at the annual Christmas Carol services and the Easter service. The speaker at the Easter service was the Revd Michael Walling of New Eltham Methodist Church. The parents were addressed at their service by the Revd David Doonan, minister of Eltham Park Baptist Church. The Eltham College Community Orchestra (ECCO) gave a very fine concert in Southwark Cathedral in April, as well as other concerts during the year.

On the sports field our teams fared very well, on the whole, and our Rugby XV carried off the Kent Sevens Trophy for an unprecedented third time. Our Swimming Team reached the finals of the National Inter-School Competition for the first time, which was a magnificent achievement.

Mr Malcolm Green, Headmaster of Warminster School, has been appointed by the Board to succeed Dr C Waller as Headmaster from September 1990.

The number of ministers' or missionaries' children at present in school is fifteen, comprising one Anglican, ten Baptists, two Methodists and two URC.

Silcoates School The number of pupils in the sixth form has now reached 134, which includes 28 girls, out of a total of 550 pupils. GCSE and A level results were well up to the recent high standard.

Progress on the new 25 acre playing field continues and this should be ready for use in the summer of 1990.

The Governors are actively planning the largest building development for 80 years. The new block will contain 7 science laboratories, 2 computer laboratories, a Design and Technology centre, a library and study centre, a cricket pavillion and several classrooms.

The school choir was one of four schools in the Ridings Group who joined together for a performance of the Messiah. New standards in professionalism in drama were set by a production of Woody Allen's play, *Don't Drink the Water*. Six boys achieved the Gold Award of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

School rugby sustains a high level of achievement; four boys represented Yorkshire schools during the Christmas holidays. The 1st Cricket XI enjoyed an unbeaten season.

The Headmaster represented the school at a Memorial Service for Lord Wade, a member of the Board of Governors from 1944 to 1979, at West Park URC.

The number of ministers' children at present in school is twenty one, comprising four Anglicans, one Baptist, one Chinese Lutheran, one Congregational Federation, one Salvation Army, one United Congregational Church of South Africa and twelve URC.

Walthamstow Hall The excitement of our 150th Anniversary the previous year continued throughout 1989, as we saw the successful Appeal bearing fruit in the building of our new music and drama centre and theatre. It was named *The Ship*, from our school emblem which symbolises our missionary foundation and our international links.

Revd Dr R O Latham preached the inaugural sermon during the week-long festival in October, which marked the opening of the new building. He took as his theme "ships of faith", from Noah's Ark to the missionary ships which carried the gospel round the world. The opening ceremony was delightfully performed by Sir Geraint Evans whose operatic career seemed to link appropriately the two main functions of the building. In the following days, all sections of the school community provided entertainment: Juniors, Staff, Friends and Parents' Association and, of course, the girls themselves with a concert of ship-inspired music and scenes from *The Tempest*. Visiting artists included: Frank Barrie, The New London Consort and Barry Griffiths, leader of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, with his family of talented musicians who included three Old Girl daughters.

Academic work (with excellent examination results), sport, voluntary service and charity efforts, and a host of extra-curricular activities have filled the rest of the year to capacity, giving us all a real sense of achievement.

The number of clergy or missionary daughters at present in school is ten, comprising two Anglicans, four Baptists, one Congregationalist and three URC.

Wentworth Milton Mount We have been pleased to welcome to the Board of Governors the Revd Nelson Bainbridge MA, Moderator of the Wessex Province. Miss S D Coe BA, FRGS, Deputy Head of the Royal Naval School, Haslemere, has been appointed by the Board to succeed Miss M Vokins as Headmistress, in January 1991.

The Visitor of the Day at Speech Day was Dr Gordon Higginson, Vice-Chancellor of Southampton University, who urged the girls to consider Higher Education courses in the sciences and his own discipline - engineering. As nearly half of our sixth formers are studying science/mathematics at A level, and mechanical and aero-nautical engineering feature among our Leavers' choices, his lively speech was addressed to an already receptive audience.

After careful thought, we decided to admit a limited number of weekly boarders from September 1989. We remain committed to the complete care of our full boarders but there is a growing interest in weekly boarding, which we believe we can satisfactorily meet as well.

We continue to value our links with local churches of different denominations and welcome opportunities for active participation in their worship. We are also particularly grateful to the members of Richmond Hill URC, who now staff Junior Church classes on Sundays for all our younger boarders.

Our annual Open Day is well-established, with visitors, current and prospective parents, being invited to sample lessons in progress during the day and also to see wide-ranging activities in the evening.

Academically, 1989 was very successful, with even better pass rates at GCSE and A level than in previous years and outstanding results from our most able Upper Sixth girls.

The number of ministers' daughters at present in school is ten: one Anglican and nine URC.

As we grapple with each new phase of educational reform, we go forward with the assurance that the faith on which our schools are founded is an everlasting support.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

Chairman: The Revd Alwyn Knight

Director: Richard Foot

1989 - the Association's sixtieth year of work - saw many changes.

Denis Jones, the Association's first full-time employee retired at the end of October, after nearly ten years as General Manager. During those years Denis travelled widely, following up every likely scheme. He met with local churches, with professional consultants, with regional officers of the Housing Corporation, and did much to establish URCHA as a small but significant provider of homes for those in need. We are very grateful to him.

Richard Foot, our new Director, began work in the new year. He is a member of a Baptist Church, lives in Chelmsford, and brings with him experience of work in Social Service as well as the Housing Association movement. We look forward to his leadership in the years ahead.

The office has moved - again. We are now back in the East End of London, in historic Stepney Green, and not far from our oldest properties in Poplar. This is likely to be our resting place for some time. Our new address is:

United Reformed Church Housing Association Ltd
Wickham House
10 Cleveland Way
LONDON E1 4TR Telephone: 01-790 2424

Do write, or phone, if you are considering the redevelopment of a site. We will be pleased to help in any way we can.

Sadly, we have had to say "goodbye" as an Association to the Welsh churches. Housing Corporation rules now mean that only Housing Associations registered in Wales can operate there. However we hope than an ecumenically based Association will be formed which will take over the schemes formerly registered with URCHA. And the future?

the next year will almost certainly see our first foray into the exciting world of "mixed funding", with all the risks that entails; a new computer will, we hope, make lighter work of the increasingly complex financial side of the Association's business; a Housing Officer will be added to our small office team to support Local Management Committees in their vital work, and we will continue, as far as we can, to make our contribution to the growing task of meeting housing need.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society held its 1989 annual meeting and lecture in York on 1st July when members heard an excellent lecture by Professor Claire Cross on *Metamorphosis of Ministry: Former Monks and Friars in the Sixteenth Century Protestant Church*. The lecture was subsequently published in the Journal for October. A further study day was held in Oxford on October 14th. A study weekend is planned for 19-21 October 1990, to be held at the Windermere Centre.

The Council continues to review the holding of records and artefacts at Tavistock Place. A major activity this year has been the recording of photographs and portraits of former moderators of the Presbyterian Church of England before dispersal. We are glad that some have found homes in churches who are associated with the subjects. What is often known as the "rogues gallery" of former ministers which is kept by many churches in a vestry is an important historical record. If in local churches it is determined that the vestry should be put to other uses, then arrangements should be made for the careful storage of pictures until they are needed for research, or when fashions change again.

The Annual Meeting for 1990 will once again be held at the same time as the URC General Assembly, on Tuesday, 15th May at 12.30 pm. We were glad to welcome the Revd Roger Scopes to the Council last year on election by the members, and Mrs Carol Rogers on nomination by the URC.

We continue to receive a large and varied correspondence at the Library, mostly seeking information for family history purposes, but an encouraging number of enquiries from people writing histories of local congregations. We have also been glad to add copies of published histories to the collection in the Library. The latter is collected in boxes by Province and District for ease of reference. Both newly written histories and old ones which turn up in church cupboards are welcome. Duplicates find homes in other libraries or with researchers.

URC MUSICIAN'S GUILD REPORT 1990

Throughout the year that has passed, the eight Guild branches have been active in promoting the quality and rich variety of music in worship. Training and encouraging those less skilled in playing and singing has had high priority. Listening to choirs and organists of high calibre, encouragement to members to "have a go" on the organs of churches visited during meetings, the opportunity to discuss problems and listen to lectures on many aspects of church music - all have contributed to an interesting and full programme.

1990 is National-Learn-The-Organ Year. We hope all churches will encourage all who have some skill on a piano to try the organ in their church. Certainly, it would be encouraging to find more young people to have organ tuition. The severe shortage of organists is not disputed in all denominations of the church.

We eagerly await the publication of the new hymn book and wish to acknowledge the dedication and industry of all those concerned with its preparation, some of whom are Guild members.

Membership of the Guild is increasing, but 550 members is far from representing all the churches in the URC. Individual membership of those participating in church music is, of course, essential, but we have introduced corporate membership at £10.00 per year, so that local churches can participate in activities and support the work of the Guild.

We believe profoundly that God speaks to congregations of His people through music in worship - hymns, anthems, the quiet voluntary and Christian songs. Those who give of their time in training and practice, whether voices or instruments, contribute much to the enjoyment and spiritual refreshment of worship. Please encourage your "Minister of Music" to join the Guild and seriously consider corporate membership.

The General Secretary of the Guild (address in the URC Year Book) will be glad to hear from you.

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.

2e. Proposals for amendments to the Basis and Structure of the URC, which may be made by the Executive Committee or a Department or Committee of the General Assembly or a Provincial Synod, shall be in the hands of the General Secretary not later than 12 weeks before the opening of the Assembly.

The General Secretary, in addition to the normal advice to members of the Assembly, shall, as quickly as possible, inform all Synod Clerks of the proposed amendment.

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 the 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 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 its 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 /her 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 Convener 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. During the course of a debate on a motion any member may move 'That decision on this motion be deferred to the next Assembly meeting.' The motion requires a seconder. The motion then takes precedence over other business, the mover explains the reasons for its introduction and, unless the Moderator considers that the motion is an unfair use of the rules or would have the effect of annulling the motion, the vote upon it shall be taken and a two thirds majority of those present and voting shall be required for its approval. At the discretion of the Moderator, the General Secretary may be instructed to refer the matter for consideration by other councils of the Church. The General Secretary shall provide for the deferred motion to be re-presented at the next meeting of the General Assembly.

5d. 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 of 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 Convener 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 regards any business at such a meeting, provided that three-fourths of the members of the 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.

