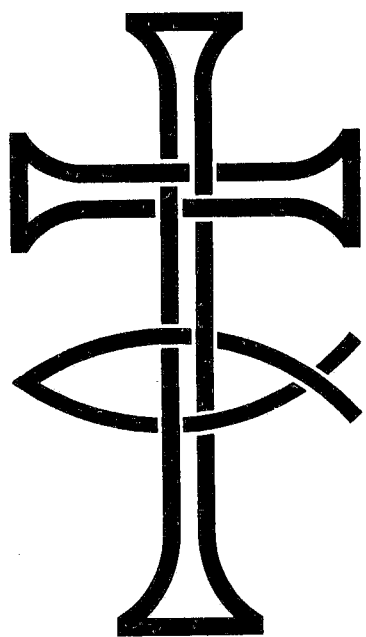

The United Reformed Church
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

1991

April 29th - May 3rd
TORQUAY

REPORTS

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd A J Wells

Secretary: Mr H L Gunn

The committee has continued to meet regularly, with a high average attendance, and has more than usual business to bring to this year's Assembly.

1. The amendment to Standing Order 6b adopted by Assembly last year is incorporated in Standing Orders which appear at the back of this book of Assembly Reports.

2. Available at this year's Assembly will be a re-issue of 'A Starter Pack on Standing Orders' which we hope new members especially will find helpful. After Assembly there will be another issue of 'Assembly Hotline' to disseminate news and information.

3. To complete last year's business, the Assembly will be asked to ratify the votes it took then about inclusive language and about the membership of CRCW's in District Councils. No objections have been received from Provincial Synods on either matter.

Resolutions 1 and 2

To facilitate this the revisions are contained in a separate publication with this Book of Reports. The publication is identical to last year's and the amendments concern inclusive language only. Also circulated is last year's note of published errors to which have been added the resolutions approved at General Assembly 1990.

4. We need to begin a similar two-year process to put into effect last year's decision to discontinue the designation 'auxiliary minister', and this is covered in Resolution 3.

Resolution 3

5. In order to assist us as the dates of Assemblies change, we bring before you suggested changes in the Rules of Procedure. These delete any reference at all to calendar dates.

Resolution 4

6. Following our first residential Assembly and last year's decision to hold a second in 1992, the committee has considered the pattern of future Assemblies, feeling that the time is right to move from ad hoc decisions to the formulation of a policy. The resolutions we bring will, if passed, give a regular length of Moderatorial year and enable us to accommodate different points of view over the residential/non-residential question.

Resolutions 5a - 5e

RESOLUTIONS

1. Assembly ratifies its decision made in May 1990 to revise the Manual in inclusive language and therefore confirms all the amendments shown in italics in the draft presented to Assembly in 1990, plus the amendments printed on the additional sheet presented to the Assembly, but excluding any change to paragraph 17 of the Basis.

2. Assembly ratifies its decision made in May 1990 to include CRCWs in membership of District Councils by amending 3a (Manual p.15) to read:

All ministers (other than auxiliary ministers), deaconesses, registered local pastors and church-related community workers engaged directly in the service of the United Reformed Church within that District.

3 Assembly agrees the following amendments to the Manual in order to delete the term 'auxiliary minister':

| <i>Page</i> | <i>Paragraph</i> | |
|-------------|------------------|--|
| 6 | 21 | Delete last sentence and insert: Their service may be stipendiary or non- stipendiary, and in the latter case their service is given within the area of a District Council and in a context it has approved. |
| 14 | (x) | Delete phrase in brackets. |
| 15 | (ix) | Delete phrase in brackets. |
| 15 | 3 (a) | Delete phrase in brackets. |
| 15 | 3 (b) | Delete phrase in brackets. |
| 15 | 3 (c) | Delete whole paragraph. |
| 16 | after (ii) | Re-number following paragraphs: Insert new paragraph (iii): to appoint, or to concur in the appointment of non-stipendiary ministers to their particular service and review their service at stated intervals. |
| 16 | present (iii) | Re-number following paragraphs: Delete - An auxiliary minister. |
| 16 | present (v) | Delete phrase in brackets. |
| 18 | 4 (a) | Delete phrase in brackets. |
| 19 | 4 (vi) | Delete phrase in brackets. |
| 20 | 4 (xiv) | Delete phrase in brackets. |

4 Assembly agrees the following amendments to the Rules of Procedure:

| <i>Page</i> | <i>Paragraph</i> | |
|-------------|------------------|---|
| 70 | 1 (1) | The Assembly shall meet at least once in every year. The scheduled meeting in each year, the place and dates of which shall be determined by a preceding Assembly, shall be the Annual Meeting of the Assembly. Any meeting of the Assembly other than the Annual Meeting shall be a special meeting. |
| 70 | 4) |so as to reach the Clerk not later than 10 weeks before the meeting of the Assembly. not later than 4 weeks before the meeting of the Assembly, at which time the roll shall be held to be complete. |
| 70 | 2 (1) | Change 9 (5) to 2 (5). |
| 71 | 3 (3) | Delete 31 March and insert: not later than 6 weeks before the meeting of the Assembly. |
| 72 | 5 (1) | Delete England and Wales. Insert United Kingdom. |

5 Assembly agrees that (each resolution being taken separately):

- a) General Assemblies remain on an annual basis;
- b) there be a strictly alternating pattern of residential/ non-residential Assemblies for the foreseeable future;
- c) future Assemblies should be moved to the beginning of July;
- d) there be a varied pattern of weekend/midweek dates according to the wishes of the host province;
- e) the same amount of time be allowed for Assembly business whether it be midweek or weekend.

6 General Assembly 1992 will be held residentially from Saturday 4th until Tuesday 7th July, at the University of York (Yorkshire Province).

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Convener: The Moderator of Assembly

Secretary: The General Secretary

1. Since the last Assembly the Committee has met three times, the attendance being 64, 60 and 67. The minutes are available for inspection and this report is a summary of the major items dealt with in the Committee.

2. The Committee received responses to letters sent by the General Assembly from the Home Office on behalf of HM the Queen, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with regard to the defence and arms industries and the Department of the Environment with regard to homelessness. The latter were referred to the Church and Society Department.

3. **General Secretary Nominating Process.** The Moderator reported on steps to establish the nominating committee in accordance with the Rules of Procedure contained in the Manual. In November the draft Job Description was received, discussed and approved. The group was asked to work on a Job Description for a separate Clerk of Assembly and for the Deputy General Secretary. At the January meeting the nominating committee informed Executive of its conclusions. These are given in Appendix 2.

4. **Deputy General Secretary.** The Committee appointed the Revd Michael Dunford in place of the Revd John Reardon, and because of the current discussion on organisation the appointment was made for one year in the first instance.

5. **Dating of Moderatorial Year.** In view of the date of Assembly in 1992 it was agreed to recommend to Assembly that the Moderator's year should conclude on 10 May 1992 with an appropriate hand over service, while the formal induction of the incoming Moderator would take place at York in July. The Business Committee was asked to deal with amendments to the Rules of Procedure accordingly.

6. **Church Membership.** The Committee received from the Eastern Province a paper on Church Membership, which it had asked the Province to discuss. It was agreed to circulate the paper in the Information Service.

7. **Day of Prayer.** The Committee noted that 27 April 1991 was proposed by the Business Committee as a day of prayer for the URC and its General Assembly.

8. **Moderator Review, East Midlands Province.** The Committee received the report of the Moderator Review Group and recommends to Assembly that the Revd Malcolm Hanson be appointed Moderator of the East Midlands Provincial Synod.

9. **FURY Project.** The Committee gave detailed consideration to the implications of the Project approved by the Assembly.

9.1 Approval was given to the forming of a Management Committee to be accountable to the Faith and Life Central Committee and consisting of:

The Departmental Convener in the chair
Secretary: The Project Co-ordinator
Faith and Life Department (2)
Youth Committee (2)
East Midlands Province (1)

| | |
|---|----------|
| District Council | (1) |
| Yardley Hastings URC | (1) |
| Finance Department | (1 or 2) |
| Others (to include an architect, the Office & Personnel Manager and at least one other person under 25) | (3) |
| Conveners of sub-committees | (3) |
| Convener of the Liaison Committee | (1) |
| Departmental Secretary | (1) |

9.2 Approval was given to the post of Project Co-ordinator for the period until 31.8.1991 and the Revd Paul Quilter was appointed. Consequently approval was given for the Nominations Committee to seek a new Youth Secretary.

9.3 It was agreed that when the project is seen to be viable a Chaplain be sought for the new centre to serve as a staff member of the Faith and Life Department and as minister of Yardley Hastings URC.

9.4 The Treasurer was asked to authorise necessary expenditure from general funds which would be recovered later from the appeal:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Committee costs | £1,000 in 1990 |
| | £2,250 in 1991 |
| Professional fees | £56,000 |
| House purchase for Chaplain's Manse | £165,000 |

9.5 It was agreed that work on the Yardley Hastings buildings would await the decision of the 1991 Assembly to go ahead, unless £600,000 had been received earlier, in which case the Executive gave authority to proceed.

10. **Youth and Children's Work.** The Committee received a report from the Faith and Life Department requesting that the terms of reference of the Training Committee be extended to become the Youth and Children's Work Training Committee which relates to the new designation of Youth and Children's Work Trainers. Approval was given for the Nominations Committee to start the process to appoint a National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer (NYCTO).

11. **Transfer of Local Churches.** The Committee approved the transfer of Bedford (St. Luke's), Cardington, and Bunyan meeting (observer status) from the East Midlands Province to the Thames North Province as from 1st January 1991.

12. **Salaries Committee.** In view of changes in the Committees of the Finance Department it was necessary to review the place of the sub committee which deals with central office staff and Assembly appointees. It was agreed that in future all ministers would come under the care of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee while a new Salaries Committee would deal with lay staff and would report budgetary consequences to the Financial Resources Committee, and would report salary bands for graded posts to the Executive Committee.

13. **Requests for funding ecumenical agencies.** Following the inauguration of the new ecumenical councils in September a number of requests for funding were received from bodies which had formerly been linked to the British Council of Churches. Rather than deal with them separately or in Departments, the Executive considered the whole list. It placed major items in a priority order, but advised the Financial Resources Committee that smaller items also were commended for

inclusion in the budget. The major items were: The Community of Women and Men post in CCBI, Church Action on Poverty and the Evangelism post related to Churches Together in England.

14. **Requests for Staff posts.** The Committee considered the situation of Departmental requests for increased expenditure on staff and advised the Financial Resources Committee that the first priority should be the position of Deputy Director at Windermere (the present voluntary Deputy Director having given notice that she will end her service in the summer of 1991); and the second priority should be additional help for the Church and Society Department so that more expertise could be provided not only to URC but to the ecumenical fellowship.

15. **Election of Assembly Moderator.** The Committee noted suggestions from the Business Committee about the procedure to adopt if unusual circumstances arise and there is only one nominee or no nominee before the Assembly.

16. **The Gulf Crisis.** At its November meeting the Committee received a paper on the Gulf crisis from the Church and Society Department and supported the ecumenical approach to public statements on the issue. At its January meeting the Committee welcomed a further paper from the Church and Society Department and adopted it as a statement to be circulated in the name of the United Reformed Church.

17. **Central Church Organisation.** At each of its meetings the Committee gave considerable time to this matter, which was first reported to Assembly in 1989.

17.1 In the autumn of 1989, at the request of the Executive, a group, under the chairmanship of Mr Raymond Clarke, undertook a review of the papers so far prepared. The group reported to the Executive in July 1990, with a fresh statement of both principles to be followed and practical detail for implementation.

17.2 The Executive decided that wider consultation was needed. It therefore circulated the Clarke paper and the earlier Business Committee report on Representation, to District Councils and Synods. Comments were received at the November meeting. There was considerable difference of view about the character of the proposed Mission Council, in particular its size and frequency of meeting. The matter was referred to the Assembly Moderator's Advisory Committee so that further consideration might be given to it.

17.3 At its January meeting the Executive unanimously accepted the proposals set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

18. **Synods and District Councils.** In February 1990 the Executive requested each Province to report on the relationship between the Synod and the District Councils. These reports have now been received. They have been referred to Mr Alan Hart with the request that he examine the papers and inform the Executive whether there are any overall trends which should be noted for the guidance of future policy.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 Assembly agrees that the period of service of the 1991/92 Assembly Moderator will end at 10th May 1992 and that the incoming Moderator, who will serve from that date, will be inducted at the July General Assembly.
- 3 The Assembly appoints the Reverend Malcolm Gerald Hanson BA, to be Moderator of the East Midlands Provincial Synod from 1st June 1992 to 31st August 1999.
- 4 Assembly requests the Reverend Alasdair Walker to give half time service to the East Midlands Province from 1st September 1991 to 31st May 1992, with an appropriate financial contribution to St Andrew's with Newland Church, Lincoln; and the District Council be requested to concur.
- 5 Assembly requests the East Midlands Synod Executive to make arrangements for the distribution of work during the interim period, and to advise the Assembly Executive on provisions made so that burdens do not fall too heavily on any one person.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE : APPENDIX 1

CENTRAL CHURCH ORGANISATION

1. Over a long period of discussion the Executive has reached a large measure of agreement about several major items.

1.1 The principles on which any reform of central organisation should be based:

- The missionary engagement of the Church, which means the whole witness of the Church in relation to the world, finds its most pressing personal and constant expression in our local church life.
- The URC nationally has responsibility in two directions; towards the local churches that they may be supported and serviced and enabled to act as a united body when circumstances demand; and that the URC can act towards the nation and towards other churches representing the gifts and insights of our fellowship.
- Within the URC, at all levels, we have to determine priorities because we have limited human and material resources.
- There is a place for personal leadership at all levels of our church life provided that it is set within the context of our conciliar pattern of government.
- The way we conduct the business of the church expresses our belief, for it reveals the priority of commitment.
- In the church we listen to one another and the channels for mutual consultation need to be simple, direct and easy to use.
- The life of the church develops as we respond to the world and to the Word of God and this implies readiness to change in the forms of church life and the agenda of the councils of the church.

Reform of our structure will take these principles as guidance and will set the missionary engagement of the church as the primary calling of God to which we respond in all the worship, activity, witness and service of all our people. Central structure and organisation will need to make this evident.

1.2 The Executive Committee has also, through a long process of discussion, reached the view that the present pattern of organisation is not now as fruitful as we believe it ought to be. A major weakness is that the Departmental structure, with each Department directly responsible to the Assembly, inhibits any overall consideration of priorities and tends towards competition for resources. A second weakness is that the Executive Committee has a very secondary role in relation to the Departments, has brief meetings, and is badly placed to give proper consideration to major issues. There is general agreement that the Central Committees of Departments could and should be deleted from the structure.

1.3 There is agreement that very radical and complex changes are hard to explain and hard to win acceptance and may cause considerable tension in implementation. There are benefits in making the changes in as simple steps as possible.

1.4 There is agreement that whatever the future may hold with regard to Methodist/URC relations, there should be reform as soon as possible.

1.5 There has been very general agreement about the functions of a central body (as set out below in paragraph 3.2).

The area of debate

2.1 The Executive recognised that in all the proposals which had been considered there were two reforms being urged side-by-side. One was to change the mode of operation of the church centrally so that there would be an overall consideration of programmes by one group of people. The other was to change the nature of representation on the central group. It was the latter area of debate which was found most difficult. It is also an area which it is hardly possible to deal with on its own without considering the shape of representation in the General Assembly. It therefore seemed a reasonable way forward to suggest that we deal with the former matter now but leave the latter on the table. What follows is a sketch of the new style of operation, but one which leaves representation untouched, to be looked at again in the light of experience. It may then be possible to indicate how the new central agenda is worked out, how the Assembly and its central committees are reacting to each other, and thus whether a larger or smaller body is desirable.

The Proposal

3.1 Discontinue Departmental Central Committees and establish a Mission Council. The Mission Council will have the same number of members, appointed in the same way, as the present Executive.

The Mission Council to meet three times a year, twice being residential meetings for at least two full days.

3.2 The function of the Mission Council to be:-

3.2.1 To uphold the principles which are basic to the URC and see them translated into practice, with a missionary intention; to allow time for theological reflection on the direction we are taking as a church.

3.2.2 To distribute, co-ordinate and monitor the work which needs to be done centrally.

3.2.3 To report annually to the Assembly on work undertaken centrally.

3.2.4 To undertake such items of Assembly business as need to be done between Assembly meetings.

3.2.5 To establish budgetary priorities and receive budget proposals from the Financial Committees for presentation to the Assembly.

3.2.6 To ensure that nominations of URC representatives to outside bodies are produced for Assembly approval.

3.2.7 To promote effective and regular communication through all appropriate channels.

3.3 The Conveners and Secretaries of the Departments will provide, through meetings of the conveners and secretaries of committees and working parties, a regular method for keeping the work of the Departments under review. Departments

will make arrangements for consultation with Provincial committees and representatives.

3.4 The agenda of the Mission Council will be formed from:

- matters referred by General Assembly
- reports from Departments
- reports from the standing committees (Advocacy, Business, Forward Policy Group, Nominations)
- matters introduced by Synods, which may refer to the Council issues raised by District Councils as well as Synod matters. This in no way alters the right of Synods to bring matters directly to the General Assembly.

3.5 The Mission Council will present to the General Assembly the Book of Reports and may include its own report indicating the main line of its discussions and resolutions arising therefrom. It may, in its concern for the co-ordination of policy, ask a Department to reconsider a proposal or a resolution or to accept an amendment, so that Conveners of Departments can present material to the Assembly with the support of the Mission Council.

3.6 The General Secretary will act as secretary to the Mission Council and will be responsible for ensuring that Departmental material is provided at times and in a form requested by the Mission Council. The General Secretary will enable the central executive staff to meet regularly for the proper co-ordination of their work.

3.7 Minutes of the Mission Council meetings will be circulated to the secretaries of all District Councils for information.

3.8 The cost of residential meetings of the Mission Council will be a new expenditure but will be balanced by the deletion of the present Central Departmental Committee costs.

RESOLUTIONS

6 The Assembly receives the report for debate.

7 The Assembly approves the outline of central re-organisation in Appendix 1 of the Executive Committee report, and instructs the Executive to provide for transition to the new system at Assembly 1992.

8 The Assembly instructs the Departments to review their committees and working parties in the light of the Mission Council proposal and to submit proposals for any changes to the Executive Committee by November 1991, along with suggestions for their future liaison with Provincial committees and representatives.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE : APPENDIX 2

GENERAL SECRETARY NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Graham Cook
Secretary: Mr Hilary Gunn

1. At the General Assembly of 1990 the Revd Bernard Thorogood gave notice of his intention to retire as General Secretary and Clerk to Assembly in July 1992. That Assembly instructed the Executive Committee to act in accordance with the Rules of Procedure (Manual page 73) and to bring a nomination to the Assembly of 1991.
2. The Committee, with authority to make a nomination to Assembly, was set up according to the Rules of Procedure. Its membership consisted of two representatives appointed by each Provincial Synod, the Moderator of General Assembly, the Convener of the Central Committee of each of the Departments, the Convener of the Nominations Committee and four people selected by the Executive Committee (a total of 35 people).
3. The Executive requested the Committee, in addition to bringing a nomination to the 1991 Assembly, also to make recommendations concerning the possible separation of the roles of Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary, and the roles of Deputy Clerk of Assembly and Deputy General Secretary.

The General Secretary

4. The Committee drew up a job description which was amended in the light of discussions with the Executive Committee. We also drew up a Personal Profile of the qualities we should be seeking in a General Secretary for the next period of our life.
5. While the Rules of Procedure entitled the Committee to make a nomination on its own, it nevertheless decided to consult with each District Council and with each Department of the Church in the search for possible names. The whole Committee reduced these names to a short list and appointed an interviewing group. This group interviewed the short list and brought one name to the whole Committee. That candidate was met and questioned by the whole Committee. Their decision was unanimous.
6. As a result of our prayerful and careful consideration we bring to Assembly the name of the Revd Anthony G Burnham, presently Moderator of the North Western Province, as General Secretary as from July 1992.

The Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Deputy General Secretary

7. It is the recommendation of the Committee that the office of the Clerk of Assembly should be separated from that of the General Secretary, the clerkship to be an unremunerated office, on the analogy of committee convenerships.
8. **Background.** When the URC was formed, it was agreed that the roles of Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary, separate in the Presbyterian Church of England, should be combined. In a somewhat different way the Minister Secretary of the Congregational Church in England and Wales and the General Secretary of the Churches of Christ had held together such functions.

9. The General Secretary post in the PC of E emerged to fulfil an administrative rather than a pastoral function. It was a post of secretary to a number of committees and in that sense (initially only in that sense) 'general'. The Clerk of Assembly was a minister in pastoral charge with suitable knowledge of constitution and procedure, who advised the Assembly (and particularly its Moderator) on such matters, without having any final say on them.

10. Four other roles, both in the URC and its predecessor churches, need to be considered. The most important is that of the Convener of the Assembly's Business Committee. There are also assisting roles - the Assistant Clerk, the Deputy General Secretary and the Office and Personnel Manager at Church House.

11. **Roles in the actual Assembly Meeting.** The main functions of the Clerk, the Business Committee Convener and the Assistant Clerk arise from the direct needs of the actual Assembly meeting.

12. For any piece of Assembly business three kinds of question arise:

- a) Is it proper business for the Assembly? How shall it be dealt with according to the constitution? How shall it be recorded and communicated?
- b) When and for how long shall it be considered within the Assembly timetable? How long a time shall each committee have for presenting its business? How much time shall each speaker on an item be allowed?
- c) Is the matter one on which the Assembly should make a decision, now or ever? What is the Assembly substantively to decide about it?

Group (c) is the most important, but groups (a) and (b) must be satisfactorily answered in a way that permits a proper dealing with (c).

13. The Moderator of Assembly presides over the answering of all three kinds of questions and has a right and duty to determine the answer to some of them. The Clerk advises the Assembly and the Moderator on (a), the Convener of the Business Committee advises on (b). During an Assembly meeting, the watching out for emerging questions of either of the two kinds and being ready to advise on them is a demanding occupation. In many instances the two jobs could be very difficult to combine to the satisfaction of the Assembly, in that e.g. the constitutional rights of members can conflict with the wish for a speedy dealing with the agenda.

14. The role of Assistant Clerk has developed into that of a Minute Secretary. It should be defined as such and its holder need not be a member of Assembly.

15. **Church House.** Another kind of issue arises between Assemblies, particularly in the conduct of business done in Church House. Whatever the detailed organisation of this, the General Secretary has a leading role in it of a very varied kind. He or she also has to travel widely in the service of the URC. There is therefore a need to know to whom reference is to be made for guidance in the absence of the General Secretary. This has led to the appointment of a senior member of the Church House staff, with other primary duties, to be Deputy General Secretary, ready to guide matters in the absence of the General Secretary and in emergency act for the General Secretary.

16. It could be argued now that the post of Deputy General Secretary could be combined with that of Clerk. Against this stands a tradition which sees the clerkship as an independent advisory role of a judicious (rather than a strictly judicial) and

constitutional kind which should be clearly above pressures which could affect it from day to day relationships in the work of Church House. (Note at this point that titles do not fix roles - the questions at Synod level about the roles of Moderator and Clerk are considerably different).

17. Important administrative duties are assigned to the Office and Personnel Manager. With this post in existence in a supportive role, the Deputy General Secretary should continue as at present but with clearer definition of its roles, i.e. that in the absence of the General Secretary, the deputy will have a particular responsibility (a) to consult relevant Departmental Officers before acting in matters which concern departments, (b) to consult the Moderator of Assembly before responding to any request or need for a statement on URC policy.

18. **The Moderator of Assembly.** Do any of the above considerations look very different if the role of Assembly Moderator were changed (as has been suggested by some) to a longer term of office of leadership? The answer seems to be 'No'. Clerk and Business Committee Convener roles at Assembly would be unaffected. The General Secretaryship would become more centred on Church House and more administrative but that would render a Deputy Secretaryship superfluous and so not available to combine with the clerkship.

19. **A Model for the Clerkship.** The clerkship is a part-time duty focussed by the needs of the Assembly set out in Para 12 (a).

20. Its holder needs to be thoroughly familiar (or become so) with the constitution and procedures of the URC - to be able in an impartial way to advise the Moderator and Assembly upon them - and to leave strictly to others pastoral and pragmatic arguments for departing from them (though rebutting such arguments may sometimes be a clerky duty).

21. While the Clerk preserves his or her rights as a member of Assembly and may on occasion leave the Clerk's table to speak personally on an issue, that should be done sparingly.

22. This all points to a senior member, lay or ministerial, of the URC, with wide experience and recognisable impartiality.

23. Between Assemblies such a person will be mainly occupied with another and full-time service of the church or the work he or she does in the world. The Clerk will appropriately be a member of certain Assembly committees and should have access to all of them.

24. The Clerk will work closely with the General Secretary and the Convener of the Business Committee in preparations for the Assembly and in the business consequent upon it, having direct responsibility for the accurate recording and communicating of Assembly decisions.

25. The Clerk and the General Secretary will both be ex-officio members of the General Assembly and of the Executive Committee or any successor body such as a Mission Council. The separation of roles will make it clear that the Clerk has a constitutional, advisory and recording function and the General Secretary a more creative and agenda-developing one. At the Assembly these roles could be visibly identified by having the Clerk seated at the Moderator's table as adviser, with the Convener of Business Committee and the General Secretary seated together at a separate table. The General Secretary's contributions to debate would be made from the floor microphone rather than from the platform, indicating a certain freedom of

role, within the constraints of executive responsibility, while the officers of the Assembly guide and enable its work from the platform.

26. The job description of the Clerk can be simple: 'The Clerk advises the Assembly and the Executive Committee on procedure, keeps the roll of Assembly members, and takes the minutes of the Assembly and the Executive Committee or Mission Council. The Clerk delivers the records and papers of the Assembly to the General Secretary who gives attested extracts from or copies of them to those entitled to them. The Clerk will be assisted by a Minute Secretary, who need not be a member of the Assembly'.

27. The Clerk will be appointed by the Assembly on nomination by the Nominations Committee, who shall inform the Executive Committee of their deliberations. The appointment shall be for five years in the first instance, and be renewable for a maximum additional period of five years, but ensuring an overlap with a period of service of the General Secretary. The Nominations Committee shall also bring to the Assembly a nomination for Minute Secretary.

RESOLUTIONS

- 9 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 10 The Assembly appoints the Revd Anthony G Burnham as the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church for a period of seven years from a date in July 1992 to be determined.
- 11 In appointing a successor to the Revd Bernard Thorogood as General Secretary, the Assembly separates from the office of General Secretary that of Clerk of the Assembly, acting under its powers to elect such 'officers as it shall from time to time think desirable' (Manual, page 21) and to 'alter... rules for the conduct of its own proceedings'. (Manual, page 22, Function (xii)). Both the General Secretary and the Clerk shall be members of Assembly by virtue of their office (under provision 5 (b), Manual page 20).
- 12 Under the same powers, the Assembly terminates the office of Assistant Clerk as from the close of Assembly 1992, with gratitude to its present and past holders, and calls for the nomination to the 1992 Assembly of a Minute Secretary to assist the Clerk. The Minute Secretary need not be a member of the Assembly.
- 13 The Clerk shall be appointed and shall function as is described in paras 26 and 27 of the above report, a nomination for the first appointment being brought to the Assembly of 1992.
- 14 The Assembly discharges the General Secretary Nominating Committee, its work having been completed.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Brian Nuttall

Secretary: Mr David Butler

1. This report must begin with an expression of very warm thanks to the Revd Michael Davies and subsequently the Revd Nelson Bainbridge for taking the chair at Committee meetings during the year-long illness and recuperation of the Convener, and to the Secretary for the extra work he has so cheerfully undertaken. The work is detailed and complicated, with a great deal to do between Committee meetings. The Convener was encouraged to find that it could all proceed so well without him!

Appointment of Staff Secretaries, etc.

2. Appointment Groups have been required for a particularly large number of staff secretaries this year and we are grateful to all who have been willing to serve on these. As a result of their work, nominations were brought to and accepted by the Executive Committee for:

2.1 New FURY Project Co-ordinator: The Revd Paul Quilter, from 1 August 1990 to Assembly 1991.

2.2 Youth Secretary: Mr Paul Franklin, for five years from 1 December 1990.

2.3 Assistant Secretary, Faith and Life Department: Miss Jenny Gorton, for two years from 1 March 1991.

2.4 National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer: Mrs Eileen Sanderson, for five years from 1 January 1991.

2.5 Youth Leadership Training Officer for Merseyside and North Western Provinces: The Revd Jayne Elisabeth Scott, for five years from 19 November 1990.

2.6 The result of the Appointment Group reviewing the service of the Revd Michael Diffey as Executive Secretary, Ministries Department, can be seen in Resolution 2 below.

2.7 The Executive Committee extended the original three-year appointment of the Revd Bill Wright as Advocacy Secretary to the full term of five years approved by Assembly in 1989.

2.8 Further Appointment Groups have been appointed for the posts of Departmental Secretary, Ministries Department, Editor of 'REFORM', and Personnel Secretary and Secretary for Mission Education, World Church and Mission Department, whose present terms are due to end on 31 July or 31 August 1992.

Other Appointments made since last Assembly

3.1 Following the appointment of the Revd Peter Brain as Departmental Secretary, Church and Society Department, the Committee nominated the Revd Dr David Cornick to succeed him as Convener of the Support Committee, Ministries Department.

3.2 The Committee nominated the national sections of three Provincial Moderator Review Groups for Moderators whose present terms end in 1992, i.e. a Convener and nine members in each case, to meet with ten from the Province concerned. The Conveners are Dr Mary Ede for the Wessex Province, Mrs Mary Marsden for the West

Midlands Province, and the Revd Dr Philip Morgan for the Eastern Province. The Committee also nominated a Commission to induct the new Moderator of the Thames North Province.

3.3 The Committee nominated new Standing Committees within the Finance and Administration Department, namely a Financial Resources Committee (Convener: The Revd Alasdair Walker) and a Financial Management Committee (Convener: The Honorary Treasurer). It approved the structure of the new Youth and Children's Work Training Committee and nominated members for it, with the Revd John Oldershaw as Convener. (For further details, see the Appendix to this report).

3.4 The Committee nominated Tellers for the Election of Moderator of General Assembly (The Revd Greta Morgan, Convener; Mr Bill Black; The Revd Ann Jackson), nominated representatives to other Church Assemblies in 1991, and proposed names to fill some twenty-five mid-term vacancies on standing committees and other bodies.

3.5 The Executive Committee approved all the above nominations.

4. In addition, in response to questions raised at a previous Assembly, discussions have taken place with the Ministries Department with a view to a radical revision of the membership of the Panel for Assessment Conferences.

Committee Officers for appointment at this Assembly

5. In order to provide continuity in a time of change, the Assembly is requested to extend the terms of a number of Assembly and Committee Officers by one year, as follows:

5.1 Assistant Clerk of Assembly: Mrs Olive Darke (to 1992)

5.2 Convener, Business Committee: The Revd Adrian Wells (to 1992)

5.3 Convener, Nominations Committee: The Revd Brian Nuttall (to 1992)

5.4 Convener, Church and Society Department: Dr Mary Ede (to 1992)

Other (new) Nominations are as follows:

5.5 Convener, Vocations Committee: The Revd Derek Gill (to 1997)

5.6 Convener, Doctrine and Worship Committee: Dr David Thompson (to 1997)

5.7 Convener, Missionary and Ecumenical Work Abroad Committee:
The Revd Clabon Allen (to 1997)

RESOLUTIONS

1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.

2 The Assembly re-appoints the Revd Michael Diffey to serve as Executive Secretary, Ministries Department, for a further term of five years from 1 September 1991.

3 The Assembly appoints Assembly and Committee Officers, as set out in paragraph 5 of the report.

4 The Assembly appoints Committees and representatives of the Church, as set out in the Appendix to the report.

APPENDIX

COMMITTEES AND REPRESENTATIVES

1. The Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator and the General Secretary are members ex officio of every Standing Committee.
2. The Departmental Conveners and Secretaries are members ex officio of each Committee within their respective Departments. The Secretary of the Finance and Administration Department is a member ex officio of every committee which has funds.
3. Officers and Members appointed since Assembly 1990 are denoted by an asterisk. Those denoted by two asterisks are to be appointed by Assembly for the first time.

MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT

Convener: The Revd C K Forecast - 1996

Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Provincial representatives

| | | | |
|-----|----------------------|------|---------------------|
| I | Revd Stuart Brock* | VII | Mr B Wakefield* |
| II | Revd A A Tomlinson | VIII | Revd Dr D G Cornick |
| III | Revd P H Welsh | IX | Mr R J Smith |
| IV | Revd S O Jones | X | Revd D Batchelor |
| V | Mrs V Stonehouse | XI | Mr C E Davis |
| VI | Revd J Lovett-Hargis | XII | Revd Kevin Watson |

together with the Conveners of the committees within the Department, Revd Dr L N Sundeen**, Mrs G W Swain*, Miss M Roberts, Revd J E Sowerbutts and a representative of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee.

VOCATIONS

Convener: The Revd G D Gill - 1997**

Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Revd E S Allen
Mr S Hazlehurst*
Mr E Bryson**

Revd D E Tapley**
Mrs S Rawnsley**
(1 vacancy)

Revd J D Waller*
Revd J Forster*

TRAINING

Convener: Mrs Elizabeth Jupp - 1993

Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Dr J C G Binfield
Revd Dr D R Peel**
Revd D Grainger
Revd C F Warner**

Revd Nina Mead
Revd J Proctor**
Revd J M Williams**
Revd Cannon

Dr S F Parsons**
Dr Ann Stevenson
Mrs S Thompson
Dr S S Goodridge*

together with one stipendiary ministry student (Mr Adrian Skelton)

Panel for Assessment Conferences

Miss R Archer, Revd B Baker, C J Baker, Mr J S Benbow, Revd Elizabeth Caswell, T C Cheesbrough, Mrs R Clarke, Mr R T Clarke, Revd G J Cook, A S Dunstone, Mary Evans, Mrs B Fisher, Revd J Francis, A Frost, Dr Anne Galer, Mrs R Goodfellow, Revd A G Green, Dr L C Green, Mrs Gwen Hall, Mr M Hammond, Revd M G Hanson, Mr M Harrison, Mr A Hart, Revd H G Hayes, Mrs M Herbert, R W H Jones, Mrs E Jupp, Revd R O Latham, R H Lewis, W W Mahood, Mrs J W Macdonald, Revd W R Marchbank, Mr R Norris, Revd F R Nunn, Mrs B Onions, Revd Dr S C Orchard, D A Pitkeathly, Professor R Schwarzenberger, Mr A Senior, Mrs E M Steel, Dr Ann Stevenson, Mr B Stonehouse, Mrs G Swain, Revd I L Thomas, Mr A W Thompson, Revd B D Treharne, Miss L Tucker, Revd A J G Walker, R J Way, Elizabeth Welch, Miss J Welford, Revd C Wilton, together with the General Secretary, the Provincial Moderators and the staffs of the recognised Colleges, members of the Auxiliary Ministry Board of Studies and the Convener and Secretary of the Training Committee.

Panel for Assessment Conferences - CRCW Sub-Section

Mrs S Ackroyd, Mrs D Beale, Revd P Loveitt, Kate McIlhagga, A T Newman, Mrs A Sutcliffe, Miss J L Turner, Revd C F Warner, M W Williams, R V Jones.

Members of the above Panels are appointed to 30 September 1991.

Nominations to Teaching Staff (Westminster College)

Convener: Mrs Elisabeth Jupp - 1993
Secretary: The Secretary of the Training Committee

Principal, Westminster College, Dr J C G Binfield,
Miss Ann Phillips, Professor G N Stanton, Revd R J Way

SUPPORT

Convener: The Revd Dr D G Cornick - 1996*
Secretary: Executive Secretary, Ministries Department

Revd Hazel M M Addy
Mrs F Woods
Mrs D Dean

Mrs B Brettell
Mrs D Courtney**
Revd D L Helyar

Mrs E M Tait
Revd A C White**

FAITH AND LIFE DEPARTMENT

Convener: The Revd Dr P Morgan - 1995
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Provincial Representatives

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------|------|---------------------|
| I | Revd R Forster | VII | Revd Richard Church |
| II | Mr Monty Helm | VIII | Revd R G Diffey |
| III | Miss Fiona Gow | IX | Revd Mark Westerman |
| IV | Revd A D Wright | X | Revd David Turner |
| V | Mr John Culley | XI | Revd Ceri Lewis |
| VI | Mrs R Tomlinson | XII | Revd J Thomas |

together with the conveners of the Committees within the Department,
Mrs M Smith**, Revd P C Snell**, Revd C Craven, Mrs R Francis.
Members under 25: Miss P Harvey*, Mr D Leon*.

DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP

Convener: Dr D M Thompson - 1997**

Secretary: Revd J H Taylor - 1993

Revd E J Brown
Revd Betsy King
Dr C Schwoebel
Mr B Worrall
(1 vacancy)

Revd A T Newman*
Revd D H Rominger
Ms J Orchard
Professor G N Stanton*

Revd Mary Frost
Revd Susan Durber
Revd M G P Nuttall
Dr P Cemlyn-Jones**

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP

Convener: The Revd W W Mahood - 1993

Secretary: Mr M Harrison - 1992

Revd T J Arthur
Revd P E McIntosh
Revd G H Sharp
Revd M Schwobel**

Mrs J Chesney
Mrs A Morgan
Revd F A Noden

Revd J Forster
Revd G M Morgan
Miss R Norton

YOUTH

Convener: Mrs R Clarke - 1995

Secretary: The Youth Secretary

Ms Rachel Burnham
Revd M Henninger
Revd I H Ring
Miss D Thomson**

Mrs A Coates
Mr G G Maskery
Mrs B J Robinson
(1 vacancy)

Revd H J Collinson
Mr N Raggett
Mr D Shapland*

Members under 25:
Miss D Allen
Mr D Leon
Miss R Cronin
Miss E Priest

Miss P Harvey
Mr A Jackson
Mr P McGraa
Miss M Smith

Mr D Downing*
Mr R Marsden*
Mr P Ashworth
Mr D Walters*

CHILDREN'S WORK

Convener: The Revd Dr Lesley Hesselbee - 1992

Secretary: The Revd S M Thornton - 1995.

Mrs G Turner
Mrs R Johnston
Revd D Williams**

Mrs P Shapland
Revd J E Grindrod**

Revd D Wilson
Mrs P Hubbard*

together with the Master Pilot.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK TRAINING

Convener: Revd J H Oldershaw - 1996**

Secretary: National Youth & Children's Work Training Officer.

Mrs K Breeze**

Revd I H Ring**

(2 vacancies)

together with the Conveners of the Youth Committee and Children's Work Committee and FURY Chair.

HEALTH AND HEALING

Convener: The Revd R R Hine - 1996
Secretary: The Revd M C Playdon - 1992

Mrs C Bunker
Revd P Jeanne Christie
Mrs M R Page

Dr E Gorrod
Miss Sarah Clark
Revd J B Jenkinson

Revd E Graham
Miss A MacFarlane
(2 vacancies)

WINDERMERE POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs R Goodfellow - 1995
Secretary: The Director

Representatives of the Ministries, World Church and Mission, Church and Society and Finance and Administration Departments, Revd Ruth Mealand, Revd Dr S C Orchard, with the Assistant Director, the Convener and the Treasurer of the Management Committee, the Convener, Faith and Life Department and a representative of Carver URC, Windermere, National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer.

HYMN BOOK EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Convener: Dr D M Thompson
Secretaries: The Revd D C M Gardner, Mr W A Haywood

Revd Margaraet T Taylor
Revd D McIlhagga
Mr A Satchell
Revd Dr C P Thompson

Revd Barbara Gates
Revd David Jenkins
Revd C Micklem
Revd Brenda Stephenson

Revd A Gaunt
Revd Dr F Kaan
Mrs M Raggett
Mrs C Brock

WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT

Convener: Mrs M Marsden - 1995
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Provincial representatives

I Revd Dr G A Hood
II Miss J Robins
III Revd J Martin*
IV Revd J B Jenkinson*
V Mrs F Caldwell
VI Revd K M Johnson*

VII Revd R J Mortimer
VIII Revd P Killick
IX Revd J H Cohen
X Revd I S Duncan
XI Revd D J Morgan
XII Revd K Graham

together with the Convener of Committees within the Department and the Revd M A Kyte**, Mrs Anthea Coates, Revd J Hall**, Revd E A Welch** and Mr N Thorogood.

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK AT HOME

Convener: The Revd M Mackenzie - 1996
Secretary: The General Secretary

Revd R J Bade
Revd D Fox

Mr D R Curry**
Revd Dorothy C Spence

Revd A J Addy
Mrs M Hambly

Revd A M Gudgeon
Revd P Wardle

Miss C E Robertson

Revd R Whitehead

together with the Adviser for Local Ecumenism.

URC/Methodist Liaison Committee

Revd G E Beck
Revd B G Thorogood

Revd P I Poulter
Revd M F Hubbard

Revd N L Shepherd
Mr D McNair

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK ABROAD

Convener: The Revd C J Allen - 1997**

Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Revd Susan K Armitage
Revd P R Floe
Miss F Harris
Ms A Harvey**

Miss J M Barclay
Revd R V Jones
Mr P Cruchley
(1 vacancy)

Revd Froukien E Smit
Mrs L Wilson
Revd L Bhagwandin**

MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS

Convener: The Revd J M Sutcliffe - 1995

Secretary: The Revd J M Parry - 1992

Miss C Evans
Revd M G Hanson
Revd Dr D G Bowen

Revd Gillian Boorne
Revd J Proctor
Dr J Thompson

Mrs J Killick
Miss J M Robins

Consultant:- Revd R H Lewis

The Revd Dr C Bennett, Ms J Orchard and Dr G Watson are co-opted Members.

PERSONNEL

Convener: Revd W R P Adams - 1994

Secretary: The Personnel Secretary

Revd N W Bainbridge
Mrs H Horsfield
Mr A Senior
(2 vacancies)

Ms B S Galliers*
Revd H B Singh Rahi
Principal of
St Andrew's Hall

Mrs B Martin
Mr K Maxey
Revd Joan Johansen-Berg

CHURCH AND SOCIETY DEPARTMENT

Convener: Dr Mary Ede - 1992

Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Provincial representatives

I Revd D A Herbert
II Revd G Eatock
III Revd M F Camroux
IV Mrs V Morrison*
V Revd N A Whitaker
VI Dr M Felderhof

VII Mrs J Armour
VIII Revd H P Barkham*
IX Revd Susan Nuttall
X Revd P Loveitt
XI Mrs E Thackray*
XII Revd G Sweeney

together with Revds D F Dunster, R C Rominger, Mrs S Fielding,
Dr M Claire Shephard, Mrs G S Ntiamoah, Mr P Chandler** and Mrs J Turner**.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Convener: Mr A M Grimmond - 1994
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Convener: Revd A J G Walker - 1993*
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Provincial Representatives

| | | | |
|-----|----------------|------|-----------------|
| I | Dr P Clarke | VII | Mr P A Wade |
| II | Mr G R Stelfox | VIII | Mr G Lunt |
| III | Mr R D Holden | IX | Mr J Richardson |
| IV | Mr D Lethem | X | Mr R S Martin |
| V | Mr M Harrison | XI | Mr B M Edwards |
| VI | Mr H Kempton | XII | Mr A Gilmour |

together with the Conveners of the other four Departments, the Conveners of the Financial Management, Maintenance of the Ministry and Advocacy Committees, the Convener and/or Secretary of the Welfare, Communication and Supplies and Retired Ministers Housing Committees, the Convener and/or Secretary of the Ministerial Training Fund, the Office and Personnel Manager and the Advocacy Secretary, Dr J Brown*, Mr E Chilton* and Mrs J Tomlin*. The Revd M F Hubbard* represents the Provincial Moderators.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Convener: The Departmental Convener
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

| | | |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Mr R Cockcroft* | Mr R M Hardie* | Revd P M Bedford* |
| Miss H E Marson* | Mr W M McVey* | Mr E Morgan* |
| Mrs I Steele* | Mr R Turner* | |

together with the Secretary for Church Buildings (Mr T T W Peregrine - 1994*) and a Secretary of the United Reformed Church Trust.

MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY

Convener: Mr A Black - 1996
Secretary: Mr A A Taylor - 1995

Provincial Representatives

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------|------|-----------------|
| I | Dr P Clarke | VII | Mr P A Wade |
| II | Mr G R Stelfox | VIII | Mr A M Johnston |
| III | Revd P W Pells | IX | Dr D R Page |
| IV | Miss M E Atkinson | X | Mr D Mills* |
| V | Mr M A B Harrison | XI | Mr D Buckland |
| VI | Mr R Webb | XII | Mr S Harvey |

together with the Convener of the Pensions Sub-Committee (Mr V Hugff), the Revd P Grimshaw and R E Cornish** and Mrs J S Ogilvie**, a representative of the Ministries Department and the Advocacy Secretary. Revd W K Gathercole represents the Provincial Moderators.

WELFARE AND EMERGENCIES

Convener: Mr R A Heritage - 1995
Secretary: Mrs Judy Stockings - 1992

Revd T C Stiff
Mrs Joyce Sutcliffe

Revd B E Bridge
Revd J W P Williamson**

Revd May Segain

RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING

Convener: The Revd D R Hannen
Secretary: Mr R S Carruthers

Mr J E M Gilbey
Revd M F Hubbard
Mr M J Ballard
Mr B Vaughan

Revd F L Hill
Mr G H Parkinson
Mr G E Winter

Mr G S Anderson
Mrs J Parkinson
Mrs B Williams

Note: This Committee shall consist of all the members of the Committee of Management of the URC Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited with the ex officio officers of the Department.

OTHER COMMITTEES

EXECUTIVE

Convener: The Moderator of the General Assembly
Secretary: The General Secretary

Four representatives of each Synod, including the Moderators, together with ex officio members as follows:

The Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator, the Deputy General Secretary, the Assistant Clerk, the Legal Adviser, the Conveners and Secretaries of the five Departments, the Conveners of the Business, Nominations, Budget and Communication and Supplies Committees, the Secretaries of the Nominations and Business Committees.

Budget Priorities Panel

The immediate past Moderator (Convener - ex officio), Mrs J Boulind and the Revd R A H Bocking.

BUSINESS

Convener: The Revd A J Wells - 1992
Secretary: The Office and Personnel Manager

Provincial Representatives

| | | | |
|-----|---------------------|------|-------------------|
| I | Revd Dr A R Ritchie | VII | Mr William McVey* |
| II | Revd B A Baker | VIII | Revd J H Taylor* |
| III | Revd A Duncan | IX | Revd G H Thomas |
| IV | Mr D Thacker | X | Revd G W Satchell |
| V | Revd A C White | XI | Mrs C Meekison* |
| VI | Mr A McCulloch | XII | Mrs E McIlveen |

together with the Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator, the Clerk and General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Assistant Clerk and the Conveners of the five Departments.

NOMINATIONS

Convener:The Revd C B Nuttall - 1992

Secretary:Mr D Butler - 1993

Provincial Representatives

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------|------|---------------------|
| I | | VII | Mr William McVey* |
| II | Revd B A Baker | VIII | Revd J H Taylor* |
| III | Revd A W Duncan | IX | Revd G H Thomas |
| IV | Mr D Thacker | X | Revd Greta M Morgan |
| V | Mrs M Weedon | XI | Mrs C Meekison* |
| VI | Mr A McCulloch | XII | Miss D Newns |

together with the Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator, the General Secretary, the Conveners of the five Departments and the Provincial Moderators.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPLIES

Convener: Mr C P W Wright - 1996

Secretary: Secretary of Communication and Supplies

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Mr D Brain | Revd R A Irving | Mrs K Millard |
| Revd C E C Richards | Mr A J Webster | Revd E Rea |
| Mr A Rogers | Revd E A Kemp* | Mr A Pinnell** |
| Mrs S Brooks** | (1 vacancy) | |

EDITORIAL AND MANAGEMENT BOARD OF REFORM

Convener: The Revd B A Baker - 1993

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Revd G J Cook | Revd D Lawrence | Mr J Rawnsley |
| Miss Kristian Ofstad | Mrs J Silvan Evans | Mrs H Young |

Youth Representative: Miss Sarah Houlton

ASSEMBLY PASTORAL REFERENCE

Convener: The Revd C C Franks - 1995

Secretary: The General Secretary

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Revd N W Bainbridge | Revd D Hull | The Honorary Treasurer |
| Mrs S M Pratt | Miss R Archer** | |

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST

Convener: Mr J A Cumming

Joint Secretaries: Mr A L Lodde and Mr I G Neilson

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Mr D Davies | Mr R S Carruthers | Revd J D Clague |
| Mr R Thomson | Mr C M Frank | Mrs J Gilbert |
| Mr R M Hardie | Revd G Hearne | Mr A M Grimmond |
| Mr H Kempton | Revd V N J Lewis | Mr R T Masser |
| Mr W M McVey | Mr R S Martin | Revd R J Wiggins |
| Revd B G Thorogood | | |

FORWARD POLICY GROUP

Convener: Mr R Clarke - 1996

Mrs A Hart
Revd R Royston-Bishop

Mrs L Nevard
Miss P Prestage

Mrs S Tull
Revd D C Morgan**

ADVOCACY GROUP

Convener: The Revd J J Macro - 1996

Secretary: The Revd W Wright - 1994*

Provincial Representatives

I Revd Dr E K Massey
II Revd Dr Lois M Sundeen
III Mrs B Martin
IV Mr G Wood
V Mr M Harrison
VI Revd J A Stanyon

VII Revd V G Ridgewell
VIII Mr A M Johnston
IX Dr M Claire Shephard
X Revd R Maitland
XI Mr A Hamilton
XII Dr A Jones*

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ON OTHER BODIES

1. OTHER ASSEMBLIES

Church of Scotland

The Moderator (Revd M Hanson)*
The Moderator's Chaplain*
Mrs Wilma Frew*

Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The Moderator (Revd M Hanson)*
Revd P Brain*

Congregational Union of Scotland

Revd D Jenkins*

Congregational Federation

Revd J Waller*

Union of Welsh Independents

Revd T Glanville Jones*

Presbyterian Church of Wales

Revd A Seager*

Methodist Conference

Revd P Poulter*

Evangelical Church of the Palatinate

The Moderator*

Reformed Church of France

Revd Donald Schofield*

Evangelical Church of the Union
(GDR section)

Revd Raymond Vincent*

2. CHURCH BODIES

Churches Together in England - Forum

Revd D L Helyar

Mrs S C Brain

Revd R Hewitt

Ms R Burnham

Revd J Johansen-Berg

Mr D Butler

Revd R J Mortimer

Mrs F Kissack

Revd P I Poulter

Mrs C Rogers

Mr R Townsend

Revd E Welch

Churches Together in England - Steering Group

Revd P I Poulter

Council of Churches for Britain & Ireland - Assembly

Revd M H Cressey

Ms R Burnham

Revd J Humphreys

Revd G M Morgan

Mr D Butler

Revd M Mackenzie

Revd P I Poulter

Dr M Ede

Revd Dr P Arthur

Mrs M Marsden

Revd B G Thorogood

Revd E Welch

4. COLLEGE AND SCHOOL GOVERNORS AND COUNCILS

| | |
|---|--|
| Aberystwyth (Memorial College): | Revd Dr G Harris, T Leslie Jones |
| Bala-Bangor: | Mr J Rhys |
| Bishops Stortford College: | Revd C G Evans |
| Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges: | Convener and Secretary, Training Committee |
| Caterham School, Board of Governors: | Revd D L Helyar, T Perry |
| Cheshunt Foundation: | Dr D Davies, Revd M G Dunford |
| Northern College: | Revd Dr D Cornick, M G Dunford, D Jenkins, Mr R Smith |
| Eltham College/Walthamstow Hall: | Miss M Moyce |
| Homerton College Trustees: | Mrs J Boulind, Mr J Chaplin, Revd Principal M H Cressey, W K Gathercole, Mr J Hall, Miss A Phillips, Dr D M Thompson |
| Mansfield College, Oxford: | Revd M G Dunford, P C Jupp, Mr P J Spicer, Revd A D Tucker |
| Milton Mount Foundation, Governors: | Miss Margaret Canning, Mrs Ruth Clarke, Mrs Gwen Hall, Revd P Grimshaw, Revd A D Lewis |
| Queen's College, Birmingham: | Revd M G Dunford |
| St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak: | Revd W R R Adams, Miss S Rudofsky, Miss B Vickerton, Revd M Diffey |
| Silcoates School, Governor: | Dr C Binfield |
| Spring Hill College Endowment (Mansfield College): | Sir Kenneth Corley, Mr R A Heritage, Revd M F Hubbard, R W H Jones, J J Macro |
| Taunton School: | Revd M F Hubbard |
| Tettenhall College, Governors: | Dr W Blakeley, Mr R McKenzie, Mr R J Whild, Mrs D Margetts* |
| Wentworth Milton Mount, Governor: | Revd E Lord |
| Westhill College Foundation Governor: | Dr R D Jurd |
| Westhill College Foundation Trustees: | Mr J E Payne, Professor R W Steel and Revd E Lord. |

5. COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Mrs Marlene Hunter | Revd A J Coates* |
| Revd M A Kyte** | Revd C J Allen |

6. CONGREGATIONAL MEMORIAL HALL TRUST

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Mr F H Brooman | Mr J A Cumming | Dr P Morgan* |
| Revd M J Husselbee | Mr F A W Lodde | Mr R M Hardie |
| Revd G W Satchell | Revd D R Hannen* | Mr Arthur Smith |
| Revd J H Taylor | Revd P Grimshaw | Mr N H Oldham |

7. NEW COLLEGE LONDON FOUNDATION TRUSTEES

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Mr J C Smethers | Revd Dr R O Latham | Revd J A Pugh |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|

REPRESENTATIVES APPOINTED BY DEPARTMENTS

MULTI-LATERAL CONVERSATIONS IN SCOTLAND:

Revd R J Bade,
Revd J A Breslin
Revd J Paul

METHODIST COMMITTEE FOR LOCAL ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENT:

Revd Peter Poulter

OTHER COMMITTEES AND NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Association for Christian Communication:
BBC Central Religious Advisory Committee:
Bible Reading Fellowship:
Church Hymnary Trust:

Mrs Carol Rogers
Revd A G Burnham

Churches' Commission on Overseas Students:
Churches' Consortium on Industrial Mission:

Mr G R Barr
Revd Joan T Peters
Revd K Swaine
Revd Kenneth Harris
Revd Michael Diffey
Revd David Dale
Revd D A Pratt
Revd M Playdon
Mrs C Rogers
Revd T Oakley

Churches' Council for Health & Healing:

Churches' Advisory Council for Local Broadcasting:
Churches' Advisory Panel of the Boys' Brigade:
Committee for Relations with People
of Other Faiths:
Council of URC Boys' Brigade Companies:

Revd J M Parry
Revd J M Rees
Mr P Franklin
Revd J C Neary
Revd P Jupp
Revd G Bobbett
Revd T Oakley
Revd Prof W Houston
Mrs C Rogers
Mr P Franklin
Mr D Marshall-Jones

Funerals, Cremations & Crematoria:

Guides' Religious Advisory Panel:
International Bible Reading Association:
Joint Committee on New English Bible:
(alternate: Revd R K Scopes) Media Awareness Project:
Scout & Guide Fellowship (URC):
Scouts' Religious Advisory Group:

FAITH & LIFE DEPARTMENT

Convener: The Revd Dr Philip Morgan

Secretary: The Revd Terry Oakley

1. If increased work is a sign of success the Faith and Life Department has had a most successful year! In every section, from increased use of Windermere, through expanding needs in children's and youth work, to a continuing demand for training of all kind, new materials in the field of health and healing and renewed questioning of doctrinal issues, staff and committee members have been kept busy - not to mention the exceptional activity of our young people and Paul Quilter in carrying forward the new FURY project and its challenge to the church.

2. Our especial thanks are due to Ruth Clarke who ceases to be Assistant Director of the Windermere Centre from the end of May, and to Roger Tolman, who has retired as National Youth Training Officer. Only those intimately involved with Ruth at Windermere know how valuable her service has been. Equally only those closest to Roger appreciate the measure of respect and admiration felt for his work, first as a YLTO, and then, in a formative period, as National Youth Training Officer. Both have served the church creatively in helping pioneer new forms of service to us all. We welcome as new colleagues (and some old colleagues in new positions) Paul Franklin (National Youth Secretary), Jenny Gorton (Assistant Secretary), Robin Hine (Convener of Health and Healing), John Oldershaw (Convener of Youth and Children's Work Training Committee), Eileen Sanderson from the Methodist Church (National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer - NYCTO) and Jayne Scott, a Baptist Minister, (Mersey and North Western Provinces YLTO).

3. New central structures proposed to Assembly, if accepted, will remove departmental Central Committees. This is one place where the Faith and Life Department links with provincial work. This proposal reminds us that most of our work is done by a vast company of volunteer workers in local churches, districts and provinces, serviced by very limited human and material resources from the department. The church needs to keep a constant watch to ensure that adequate servicing is available for these critically important areas of faith and life, demanding equally of people, time and finance. The very broad agenda of the department rarely is highlighted by international crises but it provides essential groundwork for a growing church - growing in understanding and service as well as numbers.

HEALTH & HEALING COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Robin Hine

Secretary: The Revd Michael Playdon

4. *"The Churches are called to recognise that the causes of disease in the world are social, economic and spiritual, as well as bio-medical. Health is often an issue of justice, of peace, of integrity of creation, and of spirituality."* (Healing and Wholeness WCC)

5. What is Health? What is Healing? Where do we find them? The committee has come back to basics this year. We have been challenged and helped by the Christian Medical Commission's report *Healing and Wholeness - The Churches' Role in Health*. This was referred to in last year's report and is now readily available, published by the World Council of Churches. The challenge comes in the contrast we find between our western churches and the church in many other places.

6. Here the church is today on the fringe of health education and health care, though it has been a pioneer in the past. In many other places the church is centrally involved in the provision of health care. Have we withdrawn too far?

7. *'The destructive secular values of individualism and self-centredness must be transformed into life-giving sharing in community.'* Traditional cultures have seen health in relation to community and personal relationships. Our society and our churches usually stress the individual who is ill, and individual treatment, without much attention to family and environment. The 1989 WCC Central Committee commended the report to member churches and recommended:

that the member churches be challenged to make policy statements on their involvement in health care and healing, reaffirming the healing ministry of the church and stating their commitment to community building and wholeness, and to justice in health.

8. The churches were challenged to:

- * carry out their healing ministry in a holistic way;
- * play their role in bringing about change both locally and abroad in health policies and programmes;
- * study the role of spiritual healing
- * emphasize community and individual participation in health
- * view medical technological advances in their proper perspective;
- * give meaningful participation and attention to the disabled and aging.

Ecumenical Co-operation

9. Health and Healing clearly embraces a wide agenda. We are seeking ways of co-operation and consultation before preparing new publications. We are in touch with the Churches Council for Health and Healing about future directions.

National Conference

10. The title of our coming conference is *Health - God's Gift, Our Search*. Jim Cotter, an Anglican priest and writer will help us see how national health, personal health and spiritual health fit together. He will help us explore God's place in our wholeness, and our responsibility for ourselves and others. The conference is at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, from June 21st - 23rd.

Community Care

11. Community Care was a major topic of our report last year. Although the process towards community care has been slowed down, the government plans are still on course. Each local council has to be publishing its plans for community care. This gives opportunities for the church to express concern for what is to be carried on in our midst; raises the question of how the church cares for people who live in the community; from our pulpits, and in our groups there are chances to promote positive health care. In our midst there is prejudice, ignorance and fear, plus a tendency to say we're too busy already. Congregations that get involved find they can give and receive. Below are some resources to help churches engage with this.

Community Care Video

12. In Kent a project brought together churches, health and social services in forms of community care. They have produced a video useful to local churches wanting to get involved. The title is *Commitment to Community?*. It can now be hired through Communications and Supplies.

Carers

13. Another aspect of Community Care provision is the large number of people caring for a relative or neighbour. The Jubilee Centre in Cambridge has produced a video for churches, *Out of sight, out of mind*. It touches on experiences of many people within our churches, and offers suggestions of how churches may support carers more. The video mentions other organisations. Before starting anything new, churches should be aware there are many local groups for carers in existence.

Mental Health

14. Chaplains in Mental Health are working in the areas of mental illness and mental handicap. We note that there is need to break down prejudice in this area of community care. Chaplains can be a resource as people move into the community from hospitals. We do not forget that many people have remained in the community all the time and they too need our understanding and friendship.

An Ageing Population

15. What is health in old age? The committee has been interested in what healing and wholeness means in the context of ageing. There are and will be an increasing proportion of elderly people in the population. This has implications for community and health. It also challenges us to re-examine our attitudes and expectations - what do we expect, what does God intend - is old age a calling, a blessing, a burden? There is a rapidly increasing literature on caring for elderly people. There is a danger of being ageist - looking only at loss and failing to see what later years have to offer as part of the journey of life. There is another risk that as the church we talk glibly about spiritual needs and fail to clarify what we mean.

16. *Ageing* is the title of a Board of Social Responsibility report to the Church of England General Synod, published in 1990. This informs us of the facts, examines the implications, and raises issues for the church. We are reminded ageing is a process that goes on all through life. The study outline *Happy Birthday Anyway* may help local churches pick up the issues.

National Health Issues

17. The committee continues to give time to considering the changing National Health Service and listening to different experiences and perspectives. We recognise the stress on professionals in the Health Service. Local churches could be supportive by genuinely listening to people in the health field talking about their working lives.

Provincial Consultants

18. The committee has links to the provinces through consultants. They report a variety of local conferences, and they indicate some districts are quite active, and elsewhere interest in health and healing is patchy. Interest centres on the ministry of healing, and there is some input into pastoral training.

Training

19. We are concerned that health and healing should be at the centre of church life and not a fringe interest. Therefore we continue to look for ways in which it is introduced in training of elders or ordinands, ministers or members. We plan to give some input at Westminster College in June.

Publications

20. a) *Starter Pack* This contains seven of our occasional leaflets in a folder, offered as a brief introduction to central issues.

- b) *The Practice of Anointing* This is an occasional leaflet introducing anointing of the sick.
- c) *Facing Serious Illness* A new leaflet to help those with a serious and/or life threatening illness or those close to them.
- d) *Healing Service* An off-print of the service in the new URC *Service Book*.
- e) To assist Communication and Supplies we have agreed that single copies of occasional leaflets will be free to those who write and ask. (SAE please!) Quantities are still charged.

New directions in Chaplaincy

21.1 The committee notes that Stafford now has three full time hospital chaplains, Anglican, Roman Catholic and Free Church - a first of its kind in the country.

21.2 The Committee welcomes the planned movement towards a College of Chaplains, which will combine two existing associations.

21.3 The committee says farewell to Revd David Murray Main who has represented the Free Church Federal Council on the committee. Over the years he has contributed to many of the publications of the committee. His successor to the FCFC post will be Revd A Ward-Jones, currently a free church chaplain in Swindon.

Disaster Planning

22. Major disasters create pastoral needs not just for those involved as victims, but also for those who are on the scene as front line helpers - police, ambulance, hospital staff, etc. Recent major disasters have shown up needs for immediate and longer term support. As each county draws up its plans the churches should monitor them. The authorities need to have details of halls that could be used in emergency. The clergy should be networked, so that they can be called on if required. There are some training provisions for disasters.

23. Hospital preparations for casualties from the Gulf War have involved chaplains in setting up channels for calling on additional help. It may be that local ministers will be asked to do routine work freeing chaplains for emergency support.

Interdisciplinary meetings

24. In our central committee we have people whose work is medical and para-medical meeting with chaplains, church members and others. The conversation is a meeting of disciplines and perspectives. We believe such listening and sharing is worth repeating locally, drawing together doctors, nurses and other health professionals with church members.

Theology of Healing

25. It is clear there are varying theological approaches to health and healing. Within the committee we recognise that. It mirrors different emphases across the church.

26. We have encouraged the Windermere Centre to run a course looking at the *Theology of Healing* in September 1991 (16th - 19th). We hope this will assist the committee in their on-going consideration of the subject.

HYMNBOOK EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Convener: Dr David Thompson

Joint Secretaries: Revd David Gardner and Mr Alan Haywood

27. *Rejoice and Sing* will be formally presented to the Church at this General Assembly, and with that the Committee's work is complete. The promotional booklet has been widely used in Provinces, Districts and local congregations since last October, and a complete list of contents was published in the January issue of *Reform*. The Committee have been encouraged by the way in which their work has been received so far, and we are confident that the book will be seen as a significant one in the history of hymnody. Various national events have been arranged to publicise the book more widely. Members of the committee remain ready to introduce the new book in the Church locally and to assist in running workshops on using it. Oxford University Press has produced a handsome book for us, and we are grateful to all those whose hard work has made the production possible. It is hoped to announce the prices of the Full Music and Melody editions at Assembly. A discount of 25% is available on first orders over 30 copies, and a 15% discount on subsequent orders of a minimum of 30 (which may include both editions). The Committee hope that the appropriate authorities will authorise the publication of a Companion to *Rejoice and Sing* as soon as possible.

Resolutions 2 and 3

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Bill Mahood

Secretary: Mr Michael Harrison

28. During the past year we have seen a strengthening of our committee and an increase in its activities. Both new and longer serving members represent a considerable degree of expertise and broad experience in the life of our denomination. We have developed new ways of working together, with much detail work being done by small groups between meetings of the full committee. The results of this work will be published in the coming months, to assist the educational and stewardship work of our churches.

Eldership

29. Recognising the importance of the Eldership, we believe that every Elder or potential Elder must be able to explore the implications of being called to this office and to develop skills which enable them to serve effectively and to find fulfilment in serving. This year we have published *Exploring Eldership* and *Called to be an Elder*. We hope that these will be found helpful at all levels of church life.

Membership

30. We believe there is need for new material to help with membership or confirmation training. We have been working on this and a proposed course is being tested for us at present in a number of churches. Their reports on it will be carefully noted and, after any necessary alterations are made, it is hoped that the new course will be published in the autumn of 1991.

Advocacy and Stewardship

31. We have been pleased to continue a close co-operation with the Revd Bill Wright and the Advocacy Group. A sub-committee, made up of members of both groups, has been set up to produce as soon as possible new material which will reflect both the particular concerns of the Advocacy Groups and the wider concerns of Stewardship in all aspects of life and faith.

People's Ministry

32. In all our work we are conscious that our purpose is to help all members of our Church to explore and develop their faith and to be more confident about it. Often much of church life is geared to providing opportunities for Christians to be involved together in activities on church premises. It is easy to forget that for most Christians the primary areas for their Christian witness are where they live and work. We have been very impressed by the report produced by the Methodist Church, entitled, *The Ministry of the People of God in the World*. This report draws attention to the need for great affirmation and support to be given to such witness. We are pleased that we are able to make this report available for our denomination and we encourage our churches to give it very serious consideration. We hope it will also encourage many members to share what they are doing to live out their faith and to say what the church can and should be doing to support them. (See Appendix 1)

Resolution 4

Sharing People in Network (SPIN)

33. SPIN has been actively concerned during the last year with the issue of inclusive language. The network noted with disappointment the superficial debate on the matter at last years Assembly and has sought to challenge people to consider it at a more fundamental level.

34. SPIN-OFF has continued to be published with a positive response. Provincial Consultants and District Representatives enable contacts that give support to people concerned with similar issues and for challenge to other bodies within the church, such as nominations and publication groups. Only one Province remains without a Provincial Consultant for SPIN.

35. Ecumenical and international contacts have been developed over the last year, with representation at the International Christian Women's Fellowship Quadrennial Assembly in America, and at the European Forum of Christian Women. SPIN continues to offer a forum for the promotion of the WCC Decade of solidarity with women (1989-99).

FORUM

Co-ordinator: The Revd Terry Oakley

36. *Strangers in the House* was both a challenging and difficult theme, but for those who were involved in FORUM in 1990 it was an enjoyable and stimulating event. It was particularly fortunate to have two East Germans present during the momentous changes in their country. The sub-theme of *Our Common European Home* certainly was made a reality for us. It was sad, however, that there were fewer people present last year, and a large financial loss was incurred.

37. The theme this year *Thrills and Skills* tackles the need for each of us to develop our gifts and skills in our Christian discipleship and ministry. With a circus flavour, there will also be many 'thrills' to go with the 'skills'! There will be participatory Bible study for all aged seven upwards and the worship will be for all ages. The opportunities in the worship will range from clowning and magic to in-service training for elders. So it will be a three ringed circus of holiday, conference and opportunity for in-service training. Please encourage young, old, singles, families, ministers, elders and members to come to FORUM this year. Brave the lions' den. Walk the tight rope. Explore the joys and challenges of following Christ!

PRAYER HANDBOOK

Editor: The Revd Graham Cook
Secretary: The Revd Terry Oakley.

38. The 1991 book *Exceeding our Limits* written by the Revd Jean Mortimer and Mrs Janet Orchard and edited by the Revd Graham Cook has been well received. Approximately 20,000 copies have been sold or distributed. A small but significant number of local churches now order in multiples of 50 for congregational use. The cassette tapes produced mainly for the partially sighted or blind meet the needs of a hundred or so people.

39. The 1992 book *Read Mark and Pray* breaks new ground, in that it is the first to be written by a group of writers, some dozen altogether, and that it uses the whole of the Gospel of Mark. The editor's pages will reflect stories, events and insights arising from Graham Cook's year as Moderator of the General Assembly, as well as complementing the writer's pages.

40. Another development has been the clarifying of the partnership between the URC and the English speaking European Churches of CWM. There had been some confusion and misunderstanding about the URC's role in producing the book in co-operation with the other churches. It is now clearly understood and readily accepted that the Prayer Handbook is a URC production and that the URC has invited the other churches to co-operate with it. However, it has been agreed that this partnership would be better expressed by one representative from each partner church rather one person representing them all. This has already been put into practice.

41. The 1993 Book will be edited by the Revd Kate Compston and written by the Revd Kate McIlhagga.

DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Professor Colin Gunton
Secretary: The Revd John H Taylor

Baptism

42. The committee continues to monitor the situation regarding baptismal practice both in the URC and further afield. The General Secretary called a meeting between representatives of GEAR and the committee, together with two Provincial Moderators, to discuss problems. At this stage we have no alterations to suggest to the policy statement adopted by the Assembly at York in 1989, but this must not be taken to mean that URC policy is necessarily fixed for all time. To encourage a sound approach to infant baptism we are pleased to be publishing a short paper called *Infant Baptism* by one of our members, the Revd Dale Rominger.

The Forgotten Trinity

43. The report with this title by a BCC working party (£3.95) we commend to everyone interested in theology and especially to all preachers. The excitement of it is the way it rescues the doctrine of the Trinity from obscurity and shows its relevance to our life. We have asked the Revd Dr Lesslie Newbigin to write an open letter to our preachers about it and from 23-26 September we are holding a reading party on it at Windermere, led by the Revd Professor Colin Gunton and the Revd Thomas Smail.

Music

44. 1991 is a musical year for us. There is, of course, the publication of *Rejoice and Sing*. We also have a consultation early in March on *Contemporary Music in Church*. In the summer, however, we have to decide what body, group or network to set up to further music in worship. This will take the place of the Hymnody Group. At this juncture it is proposed to explore ways and means of linking the Musicians' Guild and the committee.

Services

45. We are pleased to say that the Revd Edmund Banyard is to be the Editor of a book of festival and celebration services in 6 sections to be published next year. This loose-leaf resource will include new worship methods and further services will be added each year. We are sure that a great number of services are produced by churches and if you would like to send us a copy, please contact the committee for guidelines. Your ideas are wanted although we may not be able to use entire services.

Schedule C

46. This schedule, which contains the questions we use at ordinations and inductions, needs modifying when the minister is taking up work which is not of the usual pastoral kind. In order that questions relate to the particularly work to which the minister is being called (eg training, chaplaincy) we are suggesting that the authority conducting the service shall be allowed to make modifications. With the co-operation of the Ministries Department we have asked for this amendment to be made to the *Manual*.

A Four Year Lectionary

47. The present two year lectionary, which is to be found in the *Service Book*, was published by the Joint Liturgical Group in 1967. Many have found its use of scripture too limited. JLG has produced *A Four Year Lectionary* (The Canterbury Press, £1.50) which is timed to begin on the ninth Sunday before Christmas 1992. This is not an expanded version of the 1967 lectionary but something new, a fuller and richer diet of scripture. For example, there are more passages about women. An attempt is made to provide one narrative reading each week. The most distinctive feature, however, is that each of the four years is devoted to one of the gospels. Ministers who do not regularly use a lectionary would still find this one useful because of the wide selection of passages given for those Sundays when they like to observe the Christian Year. We hope that many ministers and churches will use the new lectionary and look forward to hearing how they find it in practice.

Christian Initiation and Church Membership

48. There has been a small number of responses to this report, mainly from Provincial Synods. The general reaction has been positive, agreeing with the call for maximum flexibility and commending the report's effort to come to grips with the difficult problems of the relation of rite to reality. Although doubts were expressed about some of the details, the general direction of the report was accepted by all who replied. The difficulties of the present situation had been accurately diagnosed.

49. A number of respondents wished to see more stress laid upon the primacy of local initiatives. Unity in Britain is developing at the local level; local developments should be the preferred way of advance. Successes there should encourage greater flexibility at National level. In many places it is clearly felt that national churchly bodies present the chief problems. The fact is that rules imposed upon local ecumenical initiatives often cause offence, for example when they refuse to accept the confirmation rites of covenanted bodies.

50. The URC accepts the rites of confirmation of her sister churches and the report appears to present no difficulty for us. We welcome the view it expresses that rather than attempt theological solutions it should suggest signposts for consideration. Of most interest we find the notion of confirmation as one 'moment' within the process of total initiation. In view of the fact that the Basis of Union states that initiation includes faith, this would appear to be consistent with developments taking place in the URC as a result of its experience of life as a church containing two different theologies and practices of baptism.

Resolution 5

The Report of the Eastern Province Church Membership

51. Churches have not yet had sufficient time to study this report. However, from those who have replied we can see that there is a great need for the subject to be thoroughly examined. We shall be taking up the matter in the coming year and hope to receive many more responses from the churches.

PRESIDENCY AT THE SACRAMENTS

Introduction

52. At the last Assembly the Doctrine and Worship Committee was asked to think further and more deeply about lay presidency and indeed, presidency itself. There were three reasons. (i) The guidelines and explanation provided for the Assembly were found to be unclear and inadequate by a number of speakers. (ii) The basis of presidency and its relation to ordination needed exploring. (iii) A promise was made to the West Midlands Province to consider the resolution they had brought which would have allowed students on internships to preside at the Sacraments. In this paper no distinction is made between stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministers.

The Basis of Union

53. Readers may find it helpful to have before them the parts of the *Basis* which are relevant:-

21. *Some are called to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. After approved preparation and training, they may be called to be ministers of local churches or missionaries overseas, or to some special and approved ministry, and are then ordained and inducted to their office. They are commissioned to conduct public worship, to preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, and to give leadership to the Church in its mission to the world. Others serve as non-stipendiary ministers, continuing in other occupations and earning their livelihood within them.*
25. *The worship of the local church is an expression of the worship of the whole people of God. In order that this may be clearly seen, the United Reformed Church shall (a) take steps to ensure that as far as possible ordained ministers of the Word and Sacraments are readily available to every local church; (b) provide for the training of suitable men and women of the United Reformed Church, to be accredited by District Councils as lay preachers; (c) make provision through District Councils, in full consultation with the local churches concerned, for the recognition of certain members of the United Reformed Church, normally deaconesses, elders or accredited lay preachers, who may be invited by local churches to preside at baptismal and communion services where pastoral necessity so requires. The pastoral needs of each situation shall be reviewed periodically by the District Council in consultation with the local church. Apart from ordained ministers of the United Reformed Church and of other Churches, only such recognised persons may be invited.*

Traditions brought together

54.1 The Presbyterians normally had a minister for each church who presided at the Sacraments. Communion services were usually quarterly, so that even if a minister's charge was more than one congregation it was not difficult to preside in every case. During vacancies the interim moderator would preside. There were some places where elders were authorised to function.

54.2 In Congregational Churches there were monthly or twice monthly communion services. Again, where a minister looked after a single church it was not difficult for him or her to preside. Where the minister had a group of churches or where the church was too small to have its own minister, it was agreed that lay persons, especially lay preachers, would preside. Officially church meetings were responsible for authorising lay people to preside but this largely went by default. It was not unknown for the preacher to arrive at the church and discover there was communion or even a baptism in store.

54.3 In 1981 the United Reformed Church united with a large part of the Churches of Christ and their tradition, though of less antiquity, was different again. In early times local leaders, elders, would preside. There were also peripatetic evangelists. In time, most churches ordained elders to preside, while the full-time ordained ministers concentrated on preaching and teaching.

54.4 Those who drafted the Basis of Union endeavoured to make a suitable compromise which would continue to allow sufficient flexibility to ensure congregations enjoyed the Sacraments while maintaining control in the hands of the Districts. Considering our diverse backgrounds, what they devised has not worked out badly for getting on for twenty years. But the West Midlands resolution and remarks made at the Assembly, not to mention elsewhere, show that re-examination is necessary again.

Three views

55.1 There are three views one hears expressed.

- (i) The position held by the greater part of the Church Universal is that ordination places the care of the Sacraments firmly in the hands of the minister, who is therefore the proper person to preside and administer them. It is a most ancient view. It recognises that it is the responsibility of the wider church, not the local one, to supervise both ministry and Sacraments. Those who hold this view, nevertheless, have to be pragmatic and so provision has to be made for lay people to preside where ordained people are not available.
- (ii) Another view frequently heard is that the preaching of the Word and the conduct of the Sacraments are so closely related that those recognised as lay preachers should also have authority to preside at the Sacraments.
- (iii) A third view has been growing of late. There are a number of places with collegiate ministries and others where there is a need for local lay leaders and these could well be authorised. It is felt that it is more important to have someone presiding who is recognised as a leader in the local church than someone who is not of the family.

55.2 Which way are we to go? Or do we go off in different directions?

Looking Back

56.1 We were asked to explore the past, so we turned to John Calvin, who did not give us as much help as we hoped. It seems that no one in his day questioned the rightful place of the ordained minister at the Lord's Table. If anyone imagines the Reformers had an easy time they should know that Calvin faced considerable opposition from lay people who refused to accept the elements from elders. The idea of a layman presiding would have caused rebellion! In principle any believers might preach or preside, but in practice there had to be order. Thus Calvin in his Genevan Catechism of 1545 says:-

Does the administration both of baptism and of the Lord's Supper belong indiscriminately to all? By no means; but these duties you speak of are the peculiar functions of those to whom the public office of teaching has been committed.

56.2 That this view was widespread among the Reformed Churches is substantiated by instances of congregations going without the Lord's Supper for long periods because they had no pastor. Perhaps the best known is that of the Pilgrim Fathers.

56.3 It should be noticed that the emphasis in those times was disciplinary. The pastor was both the teacher and head of the household, responsible with the elders for the witness and good behaviour of the flock. The troops were expected to be on parade on sacramental days especially, as part of the church militant. No doubt, some will rightly ask why the Reformers believed the teacher/pastor should preside at the Sacraments? They appear to have accepted the practice of Christians all down the centuries, going back to the early church and to our Lord himself at the Last Supper. It is Richard Baxter who expresses what many of us would recognize and for which we would be thankful:

Look upon the minister as the agent or officer of Christ who is commissioned by Him to seal and deliver to you the covenant and its benefits; and take the bread and wine, as if you heard Christ himself saying to you, 'Take my body and blood.'

Moreover, Jesus was carrying on the old Jewish Passover custom when he, as head of the band of disciples, a 'household,' presided.

56.4 It was inevitable that, cast into a pagan environment, sacrificial, priestly notes became dominant. That was what Gentiles understood and wanted. So there arose a divide between those with power to absolve sin and the mass of people. The Reformation brought us back to the old and paramount role of the minister, that of teacher in the local church, just as Jesus was rabbi among his followers. Not, of course, like a modern school teacher, but as the shepherd who leads and feeds the flock.

56.5 Presbyterian and Independent/Congregational churches appear to have maintained the Reformed tradition until the early part of the last century. Then the impact of the Evangelical Revival became noticeable; many small churches were planted which had no ordained minister readily to hand. By the mid-fifties the old discipline, with the minister and elders/deacons guarding the table, was rapidly crumbling away. Furthermore, in reaction against the Oxford Movement, respect for symbols and Sacraments withered away. By the twentieth century the Sacraments did not seem vitally important to many people. Attendances were often poor and many people were never baptised. Communion rolls were less often kept and the use of tokens often fell into disuse. In such a climate the question of presidency was of little consequence.

In our time

57.1 Great changes have come about. Today the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is no longer an appendage of the main preaching service, nor is baptism a family affair on Sunday afternoon. Communion is regarded as the most significant act of the church family. The biggest congregations gather for it at the festivals. More and more churches want children involved in it.

57.2 The notion of the priesthood of all believers and the ministry of the whole people of God is beginning to take hold of both ministers' and lay people's thinking. When baptism is celebrated the whole congregation is involved and the renewal of baptismal promises may be taken by everyone. When the Lord's Supper is celebrated everyone is a celebrant, though one has to preside and speak for all present.

57.3 An unwelcome change is the smaller congregations of our day and the proliferation of groups of churches, served mostly by one stipendiary minister. In places people seem to go to extraordinary lengths to have the Sacraments administered by the minister, no matter that it binds that person to a tight schedule and entails driving miles on busy roads between services. The minister is thus always with an eye on the clock rather than the congregation, and constantly saying, 'I must fly!' It is a shame when pastoral work is reduced to this state when there are probably good lay people in the congregations who would make good presidents.

Concluding remarks

Lay Presidency and Ordination

58.1 The objection is raised that if lay presidency became common, it would diminish the significance of ordination and ministry. If we held a sacerdotal doctrine of the ministry this might be so, but as we do not, there is no cause for concern. Ordination or commissioning (as for lay preachers) is for the good order of the church. Ministers, elders and lay preachers each have their different calls to different responsibilities for the building up and the mission of the Church. An elder who has authority from the District to preside over a specific congregation for a specified time is in a different position from a minister ordained to the Word and Sacraments. In any case questions about the status or rights of various officers are hard to sustain in the light of the gospels.

The Linkage of the Word and the Sacraments

58.2 The insistence that the two be joined was, for the Reformers, the guarantee that the medieval practice of holding mass without preaching the faith would not happen in their churches, and thus superstitious ideas would be eradicated. We all know that the Reformers placed great emphasis on people having an intelligent faith. The earliest Congregationalists tried to resurrect the New Testament prophets as distinct from pastors and teachers. In puritan times lots of towns had lecturers, preachers in fact; they had no pastoral duties. There has always been room for the preacher who was not tied to a congregation. Lay preachers with a roving commission came to the fore in the wake of the Evangelical Revival. Just a few of them felt called to become local pastors. What we are saying is that in our tradition holding either Sacrament without attending to God's word is open to abuse; but not all preachers are necessarily the proper people to preside at what is a pastoral celebration.

Lay Presidents

58.3 The good character and standing of those chosen by a church must be the first consideration of the District in seeking lay presidents. It is also of cardinal importance that they know what they are doing. It is obvious that for anyone to be authorised to preside at baptism, that person must be competent to undertake the

necessary pastoral work with the candidate or the parents, in some cases both, should the believer be of tender years. Moreover the elder must be fully aware of the policy of the United Reformed Church on baptism and be able to discuss it. There seems to be no reason why a District should not authorise someone to preside at the Lord's Supper but not at baptism, if it saw fit to do so. It is perhaps less obvious that to preside at the Lord's Supper it is not good enough simply to say the words and go through the motions like an actor. The president should have a sound understanding of what is happening and believe in it to command respect. He or she should be able to talk with anyone about membership of the body of Christ. People who come to the Sacrament again and again, who are not on the church roll, need to be approached sensitively and spiritually about their stage in the Christian pilgrimage. Districts should see that all those it appoints to preside have a spiritual awareness of the importance of the role and a good grasp of its responsibilities. They may also need someone to consult if there are problems. One hesitates about laying down formal training because circumstances vary so much. If a scheme of formal training were to be set out, while it would be excellent for some elders in larger congregations, it might well result in elders in small congregations of ten or fifteen people, refusing to accept the responsibility.

Students

58.4 It has been suggested that all students on internships should be authorised by the Assembly. It should be regarded as part of their training. We question whether it is necessary. There are many ministers serving today who did not preside until they had been ordained; they do not say that they found this a disability. We think that authorising all the students for their internships would be to get things the wrong way round, ie. putting the students' needs before the congregation's. There may well be cases, of course, where there is pastoral need for the student to preside; this will be for the District to decide.

Order and Variety

58.5 Many Districts have used the 1980 guidelines without much trouble. A number of districts seem not to have known of them. There have been Districts which took a strict line, expecting to authorise individual services, and others which went to the opposite extreme and authorised every lay preacher. Those who drew up the guidelines desired to keep Districts away from such diverse interpretations of the Basis of Union. The objective has to be to work out adequate cover for the churches, which takes into account the variety of needs and styles of ministry different churches may have today. The 1980 guidelines anticipated such developments and spoke of new patterns of ministry. Districts have to be prepared for this.

- a) There are churches developing a collegiate style of ministry, resembling somewhat that which the Churches of Christ brought to the URC.
- b) There are groups with a pool of authorised persons and other groups where it may be desirable for each church to have one or two elders who can preside.
- c) There are churches with a minister which may want a presiding elder to help during a sabbatical or holidays.
- d) One or two presiding elders will be valuable during an interregnum.
- e) Some churches may like one or two to preside at communion services in rest homes for the elderly and for sick and housebound people. But in all our dealing we must all endeavour to keep away from the city of legality while not falling into the morass of disorder.

The Moderators

58.6 One way of acting with hope of greater constituency is to implement the instruction to be found in the *Manual*, under the functions of District Councils (3.vi) where the District is to consult not only with the local churches about authorising appropriate persons to preside at the Sacraments, but also with the Moderator of the Synod. We do not suppose it would be a good use of Moderators' time for them to become involved in each individual case but if they have an opportunity to see what a District plans and offer advice this would help to iron out gross differences of practice between Districts. Moderators should also be brought into the picture when the regular review comes round. In our relationships with other churches, in which the Moderators play a major role, it is important we can affirm what our policy is over presidency and be able to defend it.

In Proportion

58.7 Presidency is something that matters, of importance to us. Yet, when seen in the light of history or over against the great issues facing the Church and the world, it is an issue upon which it would be wrong to spend too much time and energy.

Resolution 6

Personnel

59. This year our Convener, the Revd Professor Colin Gunton, whose leadership has been not only business-like but refreshingly positive, completes his term of service. We also lose the Revd Kim Fabricius whose liturgical advice and work have been of great assistance. We are most grateful to them.

WINDERMERE POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow

Director and Secretary: The Revd Graham Cook

Good News.

60. For the second year in succession the accounts of the Centre show a profit and the number of bed-nights has again increased. This is good news and greatly to the credit of all the staff who have helped to run the Centre during the Director's Moderatorial year.

Courses

61.1 The Centre ran 85 courses during 1990. Twenty three churches from six Provinces used the Centre and its resources to consider their own life and mission. Local churches were also helped as their people came to courses as varied as the use of their buildings to all age worship. Women and men danced to the Lord, developed their understanding of prayer, began to preach and were introduced to the new hymn book. They wrote public prayers, learned how to counsel the bereaved and to be more skilled as officers of the churches. People working in rural churches and urban areas, in small churches and in collaborative ministries, in training the people of God were brought together to share their insights and develop their strategies.

62. Ministers came to be refreshed at Summer schools, Winter school, theological reading parties and refresher courses. They also came to prepare themselves and their spouses for retirement. Committees met, elders conferred, social workers were trained. The Council for World Mission held its executive meeting, representatives of Provinces discussed the implications of the call to become a Just Peace Church, there was an opportunity to learn from the church in China. People with a concern for the future of Christian broadcasting had the chance to meet each other and those

who carry the responsibility for it in the BBC and ITA. People painted and walked on the peaks, made music, and shared poetry. They came on retreat and they came on holiday.

Hannah fund.

63. The first annual report of the Hannah fund established in the memory of Hannah Clarke to help people to come to the Centre was presented to the committee. In 1989, 29 received grants and in 1990, 42 people. The recipients came for training courses and were ordinands or worked in inner-city churches, or unemployed, carers of sick people and they were representative of all age groups. The fund is able to help more people to come to Windermere for all types of course or a well-deserved holiday if their income is low. If you know someone who would benefit, please write to Ruth Clarke, at the Centre.

64. The extension at the Centre was opened after last year's report to Assembly and is proving a great resource. Once again the committee thanks Central Church, Sheffield for its generosity and all the other friends who provided the furnishings.

65. A year's *Certificate in Mission Course* is being planned by Churches Together in Cumbria for church members in the county. Some of the courses at the Windermere Centre are to be validated as options in the course.

66. The work of all the staff members is particularly appreciated this year. It has been an onerous year for them and without their help "beyond the call of duty" it would have been difficult to run the Centre and an additional concern for the moderator and his wife whilst away from the Centre.

67. The committee wishes to record its thanks to the Assistant Director, Ruth Clarke who has given her talents and service to the Centre for four years and who will be relinquishing that voluntary post in June 1991; to Raymond Clarke who has given much time to the Centre during this last year; to the Revd Geoffrey and Muriel Hayes who have run the Centre on many week-ends; to Christine Leckie, the retiring Chair of the local Management Committee and to Peter Fisher who is retiring from the Management Committee. The Revd Dr David Whiting will be the Convener of the local Management Committee.

68. A story to end with! A group of Elders and their Minister came to the Centre for a training week-end. It would appear that as it was their first visit for all of them their expectations were of a sparsely furnished cold house with uninteresting food. Their delight in the warmth, the comfortable beds, the excellent meals and the friendly atmosphere was apparent - they even said the Minister led the course well too! Why don't you or your church come to one of the courses?

CHILDREN'S WORK COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee

Secretary: The Revd Stephen Thornton

Workers with Children

69. The Committee wishes to express its warmest appreciation for the hard, unstinting work which is put in, often unsung, by the hundreds of people who work each week with children in local churches, both on Sundays and in week-night groups. They play a vital part in the Church's mission, even although others in the church do not recognise this fact. We are also very grateful indeed for the volunteers who support this work: the District and Provincial Children's Work Secretaries and

trainers, which now are supplemented by Youth and Children's Work Trainers, and the Youth Leadership Training Officers. Much hard work is contributed by members of this small committee. We would like to express, particularly our thanks to Mrs Pat Evans and Mr Brian Russell who retire from the Children's Work Committee at this Assembly. We congratulate Paul Franklin on his appointment as Youth Secretary, and thank him for his support to us as Assistant Secretary in the Faith and Life Department. We thank him, especially, for his work relating to the needs of the 11-14 age group. We welcome the appointment of Miss Jenny Gorton to complete the remaining two year term of the Assistant Secretary post.

70. The vast majority of our work with children is done by committed volunteers. We believe that it is vital for them to be adequately supported and encouraged. They can often feel isolated, and motivation can be difficult to maintain. Where it has been possible for someone to visit them, resource and support them, there have been excellent results.

71. We would like to pay tribute to the work of the Revd Chris Baker, the Master Pilot, who has been able to modernise and revitalise the work of pilots over the last two and a half years. He has spent time planning, meeting companies, writing resource materials and training materials, and advertising Pilots. Without his work, the modernisation and development of resources would not have been possible. We have seen, as a result of these efforts, a very encouraging increase in the numbers of pilots and companies.

Resolution 7

72. We are convinced that similar encouragement of other work with children would have the same kind of results. So it is with concern that we note that the Master Pilot's current half-time post is due to finish in September, 1991, and even if this is extended for another year, there is no undertaking that this post will extend beyond 1992. We are also concerned that the post of Assistant Secretary in the Faith and Life Department ends its five year term in January, 1992, without plans for renewal. This will leave only a very small proportion of the time of the Faith and Life Secretary and the YCWT's and YLTO's for children's work. Although we are very grateful indeed for their work, we believe that there is need for at least one person who would be able to give their full attention and vision to children's work in our churches.

The need for a Children's Advocate

73. The committee would like to see many more resources being put into children's work in our churches and we plead for the appointment of a full-time Children's Advocate post to provide an impetus for development. Such a Children's Advocate would:

- (i) Encourage, support and resource Province and District workers with children.
- (ii) Encourage the development of communication and networking between those working with children, within the URC and with its ecumenical partners.
- (iii) Represent the URC on ecumenical groups dealing with children's work.
- (iv) Share in the training of Children's Workers and training the trainers.
- (v) Develop specialist knowledge and skills to enable the URC be aware of current concerns and act for the nurture and well-being of children.
- (vi) Have time for thinking and creating visions for the future of work with children.

How would a central appointment help children in the local church?

74. Ideally we would like to have regional support workers on a full-time basis. Much work needs to be done to provide resources and to support people working with children in local churches. It is our experience that the fact that the Master Pilot has had three days a week to concentrate on Pilots that this has enabled a great surge of growth and enthusiasm in this area of work. We are convinced that a full-time post of Children's Advocate would achieve similar encouragement and growth at the local church level of work with children.

75. We hear from Districts and Provinces that children come at the top, or near the top, of their list of priorities, but we find that budgeting for them comes at the bottom of the list at local church, District, Provincial and National levels. This, in itself, is a major cause for concern. For as little as 1p per child per week, we could fund a Children's Advocate. We ask Assembly's encouragement to consider ways in which greater priority and resources could be put into our work with children.

Charter for Children

76. The response to the Children's Charter has been very good indeed. Many URC churches have used the 'starter charter' as a basis for discussion, and it has also had a good reception beyond the URC. The Ecumenical Press Service, the Bible Society, the Church of Scotland and many others have made use of it, and it has been picked up by the Christian press.

Under Fives

77. Work has been progressing to provide resources for the pastoral care of the under fives and their families. We are exploring ways of co-operating with the Methodist Church and making use of their 'First Steps' material. This includes cards which can be used for Infant Baptism and for services of Thanksgiving and Dedication. One card can be signed by the whole congregation welcoming a new child; another can be used to acknowledge parents and others who have promised to nurture the child. There is also a wall chart available which can take the place of the Cradle Roll, or those who wish to display names of those received into the church.

78. The Methodist Church is also publishing, in the spring of this year, a series of six leaflets, exploring the role of parents in Baptism and the nurture of children. Five of these may well be of use to URC churches. This committee hopes to work on a leaflet for parents exploring the choices in Infant and Believer' Baptism, and is exploring follow-up material for parents of Baptised children.

79. We encourage churches to consider ways in which they might recognise and pastorally care for the under fives as part of the whole church family. Churches might, for example, display photographs of everybody in the church, including the children, or publish a directory including the names of children.

11/14'S WORKING PARTY

Convener: The Revd Duncan Wilson

Secretary: Mr Paul Franklin

80. This policy statement is the conclusion of two years work by the 11/14's Working Party. The Working Party was set up by the National Youth Committee and the Children's Work Committee, serviced by Mr Paul Franklin (former Assistant Secretary in the Faith and Life Department).

Why 11/14's?

81.1 The Christian church through its daily involvement with and exposure to the whole human community declares Good News to young and old. It offers to involve them in all the giving and receiving which is the ministry of the church. It is unconditionally committed to them. Surrounded by tangible expressions of God's Good News and goodwill, they are to be challenged to the adventure of faith, and encouraged to grow up "into Christ" and into mature discipleship. They are to be learners from and teachers to each other.

81.2 So it could be said that those who just happen to be passing through the ages of 11/14 are of no greater significance in the life of the church (although no lesser) than any other age group or category. The church may find that there are fewer of them among its numbers than those aged 7/10, but it may also find that there are proportionally more than those aged 15/25. So, our concern is not to focus on 11/14 year olds in isolation although it is our concern to take account of the fact that they all have distinct characteristics and needs as well as the appropriate contribution to make.

81.3 But why the specific boundaries of 11/14? It is not an inflexible one but approximates to the age range during which young people turn in physical, emotional and spiritual terms away from childhood and into adulthood. It is transitional and for that reason alone, perhaps, crucial. It is crucial for, among other things, their association with the church and their relationships with parents and peer group. Some churches have good stories to share about their enthusiasm, dynamism and participation in both church and community activities, whilst others grieve a steady decline in numbers and wonder how and where they have failed in not "attracting" or "keeping" them.

81.4 It is a fascinating and stimulating age group to be with and work with and the Working Party hopes to stimulate the wider church to a more sensitive, creative, inclusive and constructive response to them.

What makes the average 11/14 year old "tick"?

82.1 They are growing up quickly, discovering greater independence, choosing and bonding their own relationships, creating their own culture, entering into their groups or "gangs" and experimenting with developing powers, thoughts and abilities. They are shaking loose from imposed expectations and finding the confidence to challenge and question parental guidance. It is very largely about discovering identity in which the role of the group is all important. They will want a "place of their own" and freedom to impose their own mark on it.

82.2 They need:-

- a) Their own territory.
- b) A structure to "work" in and with.
- c) Older folk with whom they can communicate and in whom they can trust.
- d) "Safe areas" in which they can grow in personal awareness and confidence.
- e) Opportunity to explore their developing sexuality.
- f) Groups that affirm their personality and individuality.

What about the local church?

83.1 "Why does the church want to do things with this age group anyway?" might well be asked. Such young people can be seen as threatening because of their noisiness, media image, energy and unpredictability. "How do you control them?" many ask. "They are only interested in themselves" say others.

83.2 The Working Party encounters this and understands that local churches will have many misgivings which often translate into claims of unsuitable buildings, too few leaders, lack of facilities and so on. We would not recommend any church to initiate activities or groups for the age range without the confidence of clear aims, good consultation with the young people themselves, appropriate leadership, planning and preparation.

83.3 Some local churches will have a "ready-made" group of young people with whom it is familiar due to their growth through the life of the church itself. Some churches may want to respond to a need more apparent in the local community involving young people with little or no church contact. The Working Party urges local churches to consider both as mission and service. The Working Party will seek, as it has sought, to offer appropriate resources, training and support for a wide range of possible forms of response to 11/14's.

The present URC position on 11/14's

84.1 Within the URC 11/14's have been considered the responsibility of the Children's Work Committee, but in many churches they are considered "young people" and are very much part of the "youth scene". Children's work has more comfortably catered for 0/10's and, very largely, those with an established church connection. The tendency has been for no committee to "own" the 11/14 age range. In Provinces and Districts the Youth Committee or Children's Work Committee separately (but sometimes together or as one committee) take the responsibility but all too often the tendency is for it to be mislaid.

84.2 However, response to the *INTER-VIEW* network has shown that, in the local church, many groups for that age range are hungry for ideas, support, representation and, of course, training. In one Province, at least, we have learned that the great majority of training through the Youth Leadership Training Officer programme is with those under fifteen years.

84.3 Our perception, therefore, has been of unilateral failure at national level (until recently) to recognize this constituency and to make an imaginative and committed response.

Ownership

85.1 Whilst initially recommending that the Children's Work Committee should be charged with taking responsibility for the age group, the Working Party has concluded that so often is the age range looked upon as "youth" that it fits ill with the local structures and other structures of the URC to call it children's work. On the other hand the Youth Committee regularly affirms that its remit is to the 14/25 age range and there has been reluctance to further extend this. There are other factors also which simply underline the fact that, at least nationally, 11/14's have not and will not have proper representation and service while the separation of the Youth Committee and Children's Work Committee continues.

85.2 This has led us to consider proposals that could bring together the closer integration of Children's Work and Youth Work. This is a logical step so that work across the 0/25 age group could be looked at together, but there would still be specialist working groups looking at the special needs, perhaps 0/10's, 11/14's and 15 plus. We have considered the creation of an on-going 11/14's "committee" somehow lodged between the Children's Work Committee and the Youth Committee, but this appeared to have nothing to commend it. It would simply emphasize the fragmentation of the URC's policy and service for children and young people.

Advocacy

86. We have noted that 11/14's are at a crucial age of development. We have also discovered that many who work with them have a deep sense of commitment, purpose and reward. We would want every church to take part in this and the URC to highlight the opportunities. There are some ways to assist this.

- a) Taking account of different structures and committees we would recommend each Province appoints a Key Person to communicate with the national committee on 11-14s issues and to be a resource and support person for local churches.
- b) The *INTER-VIEW* network should be developed so that local 11/14's workers learn to resource each other effectively and contribute more to the publication itself.
- c) The New FURY Project Resource Centre is a ready possibility for preparation, planning and training programmes and material to be assembled.
- d) National youth events (such as Inters and Spectrum already in existence) can be extended. Provincial events for the age group are already numerous.
- e) Whilst uniformed organisations and Pilots include the 11/14's age range and have well developed resources and central support, there must be support and encouragement for a third style of locally described group and organisation.
- f) URC congregations should not need reminding of the special place of the Pilots programme and its commendation to local churches, but we draw attention to it again and its development of policy and practice in regard to the older age group.
- g) District and Provincial Children's Work Committee and Youth Committee (or their equivalents) must play a leading role in supporting and developing more local opportunities and strengthening and connecting the 11/14's network locally.

Mission

87. It should not sound pretentious to use the word 'mission' in regard to work with 11/14's. The Good News is for them as it is for all others. The church's response to them is not optional any more than it is to the elderly, to families, to those with disabilities and so on. We offer to local churches a few simple questions which may have been asked already.

- a) What do we know about the 11/14's in our church?
- b) What may be the needs of 11/14's in our neighbourhood?
- c) Who else in the community may be interested in or concerned with 11/14's?
- d) Why is the Good News particularly good news for the 11/14's?
- e) Who is there in the life of the local church who may be called to work alongside 11/14's?
- f) Have we thought of making contact with the parents of 11/14's already in touch with the church? Encouraging 11/14's to tell us how they see the church? Making 11/14's the focus of prayer? Devising publicity to signal our interest to other people? How far are 11/14's invited to take part in church life, work and worship? How we convey Christian love to 11/14's?

Training

88. General Assembly 1990 resolved to appoint Youth and Children's Work Trainers (YCWT's) where previously a Youth Leadership Training Officer served one

Province only. Since eventually it is hoped to have once such person for each Province, all aspects of training for those working with 0/25's should be covered by a YCWT. Training for those working with 11/14's will be offered through the 11/14's network and by Provincial/District initiatives.

Linkage with the New FURY Project

89. It is important that the New FURY Project touches 11/14's and those who work with them. The Yardley Hastings Centre offers a place for events, conferences and training. Elements of belonging to FURY which form a major emphasis of the New FURY Project should relate appropriately to the younger 11/14 age group.

Identity

90. The Working Party has struggled with the issue of a separate identity for the 11/14's, perhaps even in the form of a Junior Fury. We would strongly recommend that 11/14's be recognized as part of FURY. In most local churches they would be called young people and indeed, they already have access to many FURY events at all levels of the URC. Fish badges have been added as badges for uniformed organisations with an age range beginning below eleven, and the Working Party has observed that at the local level those young people under the age of 15 seem greatly to outnumber those above. (This should not invite the Youth Committee to lower its age reference but draw attention to the importance of strengthening its effectiveness among the 15-plus age group.)

Recommendations

91. a) Although the 11/14 age range have particular characteristics and needs, they are not a separate group in the life of the church. They relate naturally to children's/youth work programmes and to the whole church. In many cases, local churches regard their work with 11/14 year olds as youth work or FURY. This being so, a separate identity is inappropriate, but the recognition of their particular needs is essential.
- b) The policy of the URC should be to work towards close integration of the Children's Work Committee and the Youth Committee. Some of the following reasons are given to justify working towards this policy -
 - i) The need to have an overview of on-going human and Christian development of young people aged 0/25.
 - ii) This takes into account and integrates relationships with all uniformed organisations and Pilots.
 - iii) Since young people are nominated at FURY Assembly, they will have a special right of representation to the committee. This will give them a wider perspective of the whole church and participation in it.
 - iv) This integration will mirror more effectively the work at local, district and provincial levels, where the age ranges are often flexible.
 - v) This policy will lead to a better presentation of the churches understanding of community.
 - vi) Obtaining a wider selection of experience and practice within one committee. We have a lot to learn from each other and each other's understanding.
 - vii) This is in keeping with our new training policies and the appointment of Youth and Children's Work Trainers (YCWT's).
- c) The New FURY project and programme should reflect the needs of this age group and the people working with them.

- d) Provinces should be encouraged to appoint a Provincial Key Person for this age range. That person should serve on the Faith and Life Committee and help with the *INTER-VIEW* network, training, resources, the sharing of ideas etc.
- e) Churches should be encouraged to explore the whole range of possibilities for work with this age range including clubs, fellowships, Pilots, uniformed organisations, Christian Education etc.
- f) *INTER-VIEW* "The Network for Workers with 11-14 Year Olds" should continue to provide resource material and advice. This is a two-way process that includes a regular mailing, training days, the sharing of ideas, Province/District days etc.
- g) The particular place of Pilots within the framework of youth and children's work should be encouraged.
- h) Publications to support the work of 11-14s like The Directory of Resources for Workers with Young People and The Resource Pack should be produced and updated as required.
- i) The advancement of work with this age range will be enhanced by the appointment of Youth and Children's Work Trainers (YCWT's) in each Province.
- j) Training for workers with this age range should be encouraged with specific reference to Spectrum (the ecumenical training course).
- k) As churches work out their model for local mission, they should take into account the special needs of this age range.
- l) The Working Party has completed its task and should be dismissed with thanks for its work. It is suggested that a small working group comprising of the National Youth Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Duncan Wilson (Convener of 11/14's Working Party) and one member from Children's Work Committee and the Youth Committee be set up. It will support the network, *INTER-VIEW*, the Assistant Secretary who has responsibilities for this work and monitor discussions before a final proposal is brought to the Faith and Life Department for their discussion about the future integration.

Resolution 8

Training

92.1 Work has continued throughout the year in the revision of the URC/ Baptist course, *Equipped to Teach* which is available at the cost of £5 for each unit). As yet, the take up of this course has been relatively small, so we ask District Councils to encourage all those working with children to make use of this course. It would be helpful if District Councils could set up groups to use the material. Applications should be made to the Faith and Life Department, 86 Tavistock Place.

92.2 Work has begun on Inter-Church training material for children's workers. We are very encouraged by the fact that 18 Christian denominations and organisations are taking part in this project, working together to prepare new training material for people working within the church with children, both on Sundays and during the week. (It will be rather like the youth workers' course, 'Spectrum'). The URC is fully involved in the production of this material which we hope will be available in two to three years time.

92.3 Its three main aims are:

to provide workers with children with the opportunity to explore and express their own experience of faith and Christian life;

to help them develop an understanding of children and the skills to nurture children in their journey of faith;

to help them capture and share a vision of a Christian community in which the child's faith is expressed and valued.

92.4 We commend the following ecumenical training resources for use:

- (i) *Working with Children in the Church* a basic textbook for workers with children published by NCEC.
- (ii) *Called to Lead* a training course using two videos (£19.95 each) and three training books produced by the College of St Mark and St John and NCEC.
- (iii) *Leading Children in Faith* a video produced by NCEC and The Church of Scotland, including some examples from URC Churches.

Sharing Ideas

93.1 Each year we hold a Consultation for District and Provincial Children's Work secretaries. This provides a good opportunity to share ideas, and to provide some training. We are considering extending this by inviting all workers with children to a week-end conference.

93.2 We also encourage other workers with children to keep in touch with each other and to share ideas. We are very excited with our new production 'URCHIN' which contains many ideas. It is available for a yearly subscription of only £2. Please encourage any people you think might be interested to enquire through the Faith and Life Department at 86 Tavistock Place. Our thanks to Mrs Rosemary Johnston, who has been editing this newsletter.

Ecumenical work

94. At present, we are involved in the following ecumenical projects:

- (i) Inter-Church Training
- (ii) Parenting
- (iii) Children and Evangelism
- (iv) The theology of the Child in the Church
- (v) 'Taking Care' - our responsibilities to children

The Place of the Child

95. We believe that God values each child as much as each adult. So we encourage churches to reflect this in their concern for children, and in encouraging people to take part in this important ministry. We also encourage churches to consider their responsibilities to the child in society, to abused children, to un-churched children, and to Christian parenting. Materials, produced by the National Children's Home, will be available in the autumn on child abuse. Similarly, materials are being produced about Christian Parenting. The family Caring Trust, based in Northern Ireland, has produced kit for self-help groups which can be used by church leaders and parents both within and outside church communities. The Committee encourages churches to take seriously issues concerning all children. It is the responsibility of each one of us.

PILOTS PANEL

Master Pilot: The Revd Chris Baker

96.1 As an organisation PILOTS is buzzing with life and ideas. The number of Companies stands at 216. The rate of growth has slowed as churches await the introduction of new programmes in September.

96.2 A complete revision of the structure and materials for PILOTS has been undertaken. With the name PILOTS as an umbrella title,

| | | | | | |
|-------------|----|-----|----|----------------|--------------------|
| Pilots aged | 5 | and | 6 | are called | Deckhands |
| | 7 | to | 10 | will be called | Adventurers |
| | 11 | to | 14 | will be called | Voyagers |
| | 15 | + | | will be called | Navigators |

The 'rank' structure within the Sections will be discontinued and replaced with a yearly programme with 'Year' badges. The individual crests which the Pilots work for have been completely revised and many of them rewritten. There will be special meetings throughout the country to enable officers to learn about the new materials.

96.3 PILOTS is sponsored by the United Reformed Church and the Congregational Federation, but if we have something good here, why not share it? We have had happy and useful talks with the Methodist JMA (Junior Mission Association) and have agreed areas of co-operation. It is hoped to bring the JMA Promise and the Pilot Promise together. Sharing the production of resources will be especially helpful where there are Methodist/URC Churches.

96.4 Many people have been involved in all the work to enable PILOTS to be prepared to go forward with new vision and vitality. We want to thank all those who have contributed ideas and helped with writing new material. We hope that the new approach will be found helpful and exciting.

96.5 One of the innovations has been the PILOT MEDAL. This can be awarded for a variety of reasons. One category is for people who have given a remarkable example of faith and courage, which may be an inspiration to Pilots. It was therefore our pleasure and pride to present the first two medals to Dr C M Kao and Mrs Ruth Kao when they were at Swanwick.

96.6 A new *Foundation Course for Pilot Officers* has been published. This gives practical training and all new officers are strongly encouraged to take this course.

96.7 A National Rally for Pilots will be held at Union Chapel, Islington on Saturday 22nd June, 1991. We look forward to an exciting day.

96.8 Alma Kendall has been Convener of the Pilot Panel since 1984 and is now stepping down. We would like to express our appreciation for the leadership, support and encouragement which she has given to the movement through those years.

96.9 In Conclusion we would like to thank all the officers and helpers who give unstintingly of their time and energy. PILOTS could not function without them but we are confident that through their continued support children and young people are helped towards faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and grow in the family of his Church.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK TRAINING COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd John Oldershaw
Secretary: Mrs Eileen Sanderson

The Committee

97. This is a new committee established by the Department to deal with matters related to Youth Leadership Training Officers (YLTOs) and Youth and Children's Work Trainers (YCWTs) It began its formal life on January 1st, 1991, and so most of the work reported here was carried out by the Committee's predecessor, the Training Sub-Committee of the Youth Committee.

New Appointments

98.1 We welcome Eileen Sanderson who has been appointed the National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer from January 1st, 1991. Eileen, who will be working from her home in Barnsley, was previously employed as a Community Education Tutor, and has a background of involvement in the Methodist Church at all levels. She succeeds Roger Tolman as National Officer. We are grateful for all that Roger has done for youth work in the URC first as YLTO in the East and West Midland Provinces, then as Team Leader, and for the last three and a half years as National Youth Training Officer. We wish him much happiness in a busy retirement.

98.2 The Revd Jayne Scott, who trained as a Baptist Minister and lives in Flixton, Manchester, is a new appointment, serving the Mersey and North West Provinces building on the work of John Kendall who left to train for the Methodist Ministry. Ivan Andrews said farewell to the Wessex and Southern Provinces, moving to the South West Province.

98.3 The 1990 General Assembly accepted the principle of appointing YCWTs where the appointment of one trainer working in one Province is possible. Consequently we have advertised for YCWTs in both the Southern and Wessex Provinces. We expect to be able to inform the Assembly of the outcome of the selection and interview process.

Continuing Work

99. The YLTOs have continued to carry out a wide variety of work at local and national level. There has been an emphasis on the development of district youth work and involvement in the life of the church of young people as well as encouragement to look further afield to provincial and national involvement. Training has also included involvement in the training of elders and of ministers as well as ecumenical youth training through the Spectrum scheme. Work with children's workers has also taken place and is a developing area of training interest. Department of Education and Science projects are also part of the work of the team, looking at multi-racial, multi-faith work in the inner city and in the world beyond this country through youth exchange programmes, participation of young people in the structures of the Church and preparing resources to help others to explore these issues. Preparing resources for the training of those people who work with children and young people is an important function of the team and this continues alongside the many and varied areas of work they are involved in throughout the country.

Staff Development Policy

100. A major task reaching fruition this year has been the writing of a Staff Development Policy. We were able to obtain advice through the Central Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work and have introduced the

policy for an initial period of 3 years. The policy seeks to set out a procedure which enables trainers to be appointed, inducted, receive support and in-service training whilst in post, and then when appropriate leave the employ of the URC for other work.

101. Present team members:

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Mrs Eileen Sanderson | NYCTO |
| Mrs Sandra Ackroyd | Thames North |
| Mr Ivan Andrews | South Western |
| Mr Colin Capewell | Wales |
| Mr John Quilter | Eastern & East Midlands |
| Miss Janet Turner | Northern and Yorkshire |
| Mr Wallie Warmington | West Midlands |
| Revd Jayne Scott | Mersey and North West |
| vacancy | Southern |
| vacancy | Wessex |

NATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

Convener : Mrs Ruth Clarke

Secretary : Mr Paul Franklin

National Youth Activities

102. The programme in 1991 is similar to the successful one held in 1990. Leaders of all national activities met with representatives from the National Youth Committee in September. It was agreed to plan all activities after 1991 within the New FURY Project.

Connect 91

103. Plans have been made for this weekend event, involving one thousand five hundred/two thousand young people to be held in Sheffield from 25th/27th October. The theme is "Into The Melting Pot" and we know the young people will enjoy themselves and be challenged as they have been in the past.

World Affairs

104. The World Affairs Sub Committee has produced a *Challenge for Change Resource Paper*, selected a group of eleven young people to be part of the Jamaica Exchange in 1991 and has made links with URC young people working abroad, as well as publicizing opportunities for others. This area of work is now covered by the New FURY Project Programme Committee.

Training

105. The Department has established a Training Committee (Youth and Children) which has replaced the Training Sub Committee of the National Youth Committee. Revd John Oldershaw is the Convener and reports separately.

Ginger Group

106. An occasion planned for summer 1991 will celebrate the achievements of the Ginger Group Project which comes to an end, in its present form, this year. Not only have the lives of the young volunteers over six years been changed, but there are many churches and individuals who have reason to give thanks for what the Ginger Group has done for them. We express gratitude to the Management and Support Group and to all the people who have given money so that this project could be

sustained. The New FURY Project will include a group of volunteers, based at Yardley Hastings, which has been the home for all the groups. This will continue the policy of developing Youth Ministry.

Department of Education and Science funding

107. In 1991 the Department of Education and Science (DES) awarded the URC a grant of just over £50,000. Much of this money is used to help pay the salaries of Youth Leadership Training Officers/Youth and Childrens Work Trainers. Those officers serving one Province allocate approximately 25% of their time to support the programmes for which we receive funding. The work of the World Affairs Sub Committee has been supported by two officers. Some aspects of the New FURY Project have also benefited through the programme to enhance the participation of young people within the life and work of the URC. We have submitted an application for funding which will cover both 1991/2 and 1992/3. In addition to the present programmes which continue, we are seeking support for a third programme to develop youth work in rural areas.

FURY Assembly 1991

108. Fifty four Districts were represented in January 1991 at Swanwick, Derbyshire. The aim is to have all Districts represented, as at General Assembly, and the National Youth Committee would urge all Districts to ensure that this is so. Among the topics discussed were war in the Gulf, alcohol abuse, voluntary work at home and overseas, animal rights and the effects of the New Age Movement. Representatives affirmed that "this is where the church listens to us" and acknowledged that they found this stimulating and inspiring.

The New FURY Project

109.1 The National Youth Committee has been working towards the New FURY Project (NFP) which was adopted in principle by General Assembly last year. General Assembly 1990 stated that it believed the New FURY Project to be the way forward for youth work in the URC and recognized that this will incorporate the redevelopment of the Yardley Hastings church, manse and hall. The 17th February 1991 was designated FURY Sunday, the focal point of an appeal for funds in support of the project. At General Assembly this year, an up to date report will be made about this funding.

109.2 Our Sub Committee structure has been changed to deal with the development of the NFP -

The NFP Programme Committee has replaced the Activities Sub Committee and the World Affairs Sub Committee. We must acknowledge the work initiated and carried out by these two Sub Committees in the past and thank all concerned, some of whom will be serving on the new Programme Committee. The responsibility of this committee is the whole programme of youth activities at national, provincial, district and local level. The Convener is Revd Graham Maskery. The NFP Chaplain, when appointed, will work with this committee to ensure a full programme is made available not only at Yardley Hastings but throughout the whole country.

109.3 The NFP Development Group has continued to work, planning a new structure and new ways of working for FURY. A FURY Council is to be set up where young people can make decisions about FURY and take responsibility for carrying out those decisions. FURY Council will be accountable to General Assembly through the National Youth Committee and it should be able to deal with some of the issues currently dealt with by the whole National Youth Committee. It is hoped that FURY Council will have access to all departments in the URC in order to find support for its work and also that it might contribute to some of the concerns of the departments.

Work has also continued planning the registration of young people's commitment with the National Youth Resources Centre. More thought will be given to the five words on which this commitment will be based - worship, learning, prayer, giving and involvement.

109.4 In July 1990, the Executive Committee set up the Yardley Hastings Centre Management Committee. This group, which is convened by Revd Dr Philip Morgan, is responsible for the creation of the residential resource centre. Architects, Walton and Stimpson of Northampton, and Quantity Surveyor, David Richbell, have been engaged. During the autumn detailed consultations about the design and costings were undertaken. Special attention has been given to the particular needs of disabled people. During the period of mid November to mid January, the detailed architectural work was completed. It is hoped that the Quantity Surveyor will be able to prepare the necessary work and obtain tenders in time for General Assembly. A house opposite the church in the centre of the village was purchased in the late summer for the prospective chaplain.

109.5 The Project Co-ordinator has concentrated on the advocacy and support for FURY Sunday during the autumn and winter. The FURY Sunday Resource Pack was well received, most of the fifteen hundred produced were distributed. Unfortunately, many churches left their preparation for FURY Sunday until rather late and, so, further use of the pack was encouraged well beyond FURY Sunday.

109.6 *A detailed report will be given to General Assembly, when we hope to be able to indicate that there has been a generous response to the appeal. If the response has reached the figure agreed by the Executive Committee of £600,000 then the residential resource centre element of the project will have been authorised to proceed. Otherwise a resolution will be brought to Assembly for a decision regarding this element of the Project. If authorisation is given for the project to proceed then the process for appointing a chaplain will be able to begin.*

Publications

110.1 New publications have included "The Directory of Resources for Workers with Young People". We have carried out as far as possible the policy of FURY to print everything on recycled paper and not to print too many copies for our requirements.

110.2 The National Youth Committee thanks Mr David Ritchie who, with an editorial board of young people, has edited the national URC youth magazine (FURY National) for three years. In that time, the circulation has increased and the format has become more lively. The National Youth Committee were pleased to appoint Mr Andrew Jackson as the new editor.

Ecumenical

Methodist/URC

111. As a result of continuing talks, a National Youth Committee member now sits on the Connexional Youth and Community Committee and a Methodist Association of Youth Clubs member sits on the National Youth Committee. There are joint youth mailings to URC/Methodist churches and news about each other's events in the general mailing. Discussions are under way about a possible joint national event in 1994 similar to Connect and a smaller event in 1992 for 18/30 year olds.

Time For God

112. This ecumenical volunteer agency celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1990. Mr Paul Franklin has now finished his term as President for this organisation.

Youth Leadership Training

113. Much training continues to be done ecumenically with the inter denominational training scheme Spectrum which was introduced to General Assembly 1990.

New Appointments

114.1 Revd Paul Quilter ceased to be National Youth Secretary on 31st July and is working the remainder of his term of appointment until 31st August 1991 as New FURY Project Co-ordinator. Mr Paul Franklin, who has been the Assistant Secretary for three years, was appointed National Youth Secretary from 1st December 1990. Miss Jenny Gorton, who was the Youth Office Personal Assistant, was appointed Faith and Life Department Assistant Secretary from 1st March 1991.

114.2 The National Youth Committee expresses its thanks to Revd Paul Quilter who has been a great source of energy for ten years as National Youth Secretary and, through his commitment and vision, has developed youth work in the URC to keep up with the needs of 14/25 year olds. The National Youth Committee is also grateful to Mr Roger Tolman for developing the professional approach to training that we now have in the church. Both men have made sure that the contribution to Christian youth work by the United Reformed Church is highly regarded, both by the Department of Education and Science and by other churches with which they have worked effectively.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 The Assembly welcomes *Rejoice and Sing* as the new hymn book for the United Reformed Church, and commends it to all congregations for their use.
- 3 The Assembly discharges the Hymn Book Editorial Committee and expresses its thanks to them, the members of the Words and Music sub Committees, and all those whose work has made the production of *Rejoice and Sing* possible.
- 4 Assembly commends the report produced by the Methodist Church *The Ministry of the People of God in the World* to local churches for discussion and action.
- 5 The Assembly accepts the report entitled *Christian Initiation and Church Membership* as an important interim treatment of a question which, in the nature of things, can be resolved only as the churches grow together over the coming years.
- 6 The Assembly receives the statement on Presidency at the Sacraments and commends it to Districts and Elders Meetings.
- 7 Assembly supports the further appointment of a Master Pilot for five years from 1.9.92 on a half-time basis and asks the Congregational Federation, the Faith and Life Department, and, in the first instance, the East Midland Province, to continue their support of this appointment.
- 8 Assembly affirms and encourages work with 11-14's and thanks the working party for its service. Assembly agrees that the policy of the URC should be the closer integration of children's and youth work and asks the Faith and Life department to develop appropriate ways in which to support this work.

APPENDIX I

THE MINISTRY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE WORLD

A report to the Methodist Conference of 1990

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PREFACE

Since 1969 various groups of people, appointed by the Methodist Conference, have looked at the question of the Ministry of the People of God. In 1988 yet another Commission was established, and it was asked to discover, more fully, the role of the non-ecclesial ministry. We decided we were not discussing, or investigating, a "Non" anything. We were looking into the calling of God's people as they share in God's transformation of the world, bearing their Christian witness, and affirming Christian values.

The commission was fully ecumenical and we were grateful for the rich insights we received from other traditions.

As we attempted our search, the more complicated and exciting it became. The style and content of this report are a result of that time together. It is not given as a gimmick, or as an easy option. One reason for presenting our report in the form of an exchange of letters is that we wanted it to be readable and comprehensible to everyone. But more significantly, this format expresses the way that theology is done by most Christian people. It is therefore not merely anecdotal but a deeply important sign of the way we explored the issues. Through it we seek to stimulate people to look afresh at their lives in the light of Christ. F D Maurice, in the nineteenth century, wrote "You must dig deep to discover theology". We are asking you to read this report thoughtfully, and to dig deep to discover its riches.

We discovered, as we interviewed and reflected together, that theology is spoken in various languages and styles. As the New Testament has a variety of styles and theologies, and indeed as has the whole Christian tradition, so we found that no one group has a complete understanding. We affirm the validity of people's witness, and their attempts to hammer out a theology to enable them to discover the holy in their daily lives, to be true to Christ wherever they are, and to experience the presence of Christ in all the confusion of the world as it is.

This report is but a step on the road of discovery. Our attempt to find a spirituality that is worldly and rooted where people are, revealed to us that to be in the messiness of the world is to be where Christ is. Wherever we go, wherever we are, we are the Church. We need a theology of compromise and failure, as well as a theology for success and joy.

In Conference we were challenged about our theology, and the report was received and not adopted by the Conference. We assure people that our theology is based on Christ and his revelation of God. Christ's ministry is the model for all ministry. For us all God is central, God is throughout all. The God at the heart is the God of the boundaries.

The Church needs not only to service and maintain itself, but it must also nurture the disciple in the work and witness in the world. We all need in the church to listen to each other more and to affirm and support each other. Again and again the desire for relevant, meaningful worship was shared with us by the people we met. In the church our hearts and minds need to be engaged, and the wholeness of our lives supported. We are all called to the priesthood of all believers. If we equate this priesthood with the clerical only it becomes pale and incomplete.

We ask you to read the report, and use the appendices as you seek to discover your way. We commend it for its stimulating content, and we hope it will give new perspective on old ideas. In this report we seek to bring hope and encouragement.

Anne Knighton
Chairperson of the Commission on the People of God in the World
August 1990

THE COMMISSION ON THE MINISTRY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE WORLD
A letter to Conference from Members of the Commission

Dear Members of Conference,

You appointed this Commission because you were not completely satisfied with the Reports of the two previous Commissions set up to examine The Ministry of the People of God. You considered both reports to be too concerned with the ordained ministry, and whilst lay ministry received more attention in the second report, that ministry was seen very much as a means of servicing the structures of the institutional church. That is to say, it was ecclesial in emphasis.

The Members of this Commission have been very aware of the background and have tried to fulfil your expectations that we should produce a report which concentrates on the Ministry of the People of God in the World.

First of all, we would like to share with you our convictions and conclusions. We want to assert that the Ministry of the People of God in the World is both the primary and normative ministry of the church. By primary, we mean it comes first.

By normative we mean that it is the basic model of discipleship. Therefore instead of trying to define ministry in terms of the ordained, we should be starting from the opposite end. That is to say, we should define the priesthood of the ordained in terms of the priesthood of **all** the faithful, within which the priesthood of the ordained is a specialization. Perhaps Methodism has always believed this and that is why our definition of ordained ministry is found to be unsatisfactory to those in more Catholic traditions.

But what perhaps even Methodism has been less able to resist is a corruption of the word 'lay' - a term which should refer to the **whole** people of God in their common priesthood and ministry, but which instead has taken on the connotation of being inexpert, unskilled and unqualified - in short, "non-ordained"! Again and again, in our own deliberations and in the evidence which we heard, we encountered the effects of this depreciation of lay. We regard this to be one of the most important obstacles to recognising and celebrating the Ministry of the People of God in the World.

Bound up with the corruption of the word 'lay' is our constant preoccupation with the nature and function of ordained ministry - and the consequent clericalisation of the laity. Thus when we talk about lay ministry it is usually in ecclesial terms, ie. local preachers, junior church teachers, workers with children, class leaders, stewards, etc. Our concern, and we believe your concern, is with the witness of the People of God in the World. We are concerned with witness and discipleship - how to be Christlike in an un-Christlike but never Christless world. This is our understanding of the nature of the Ministry of the People of God. We have not spent long hours trying to agree on precise definitions - we leave all that to the Faith and Order Committee.

On the other hand we have been very conscious of the need to get our theology right. Our conclusions are based upon our understanding of the Ministry of Christ and upon the meaning of Baptism. The former offers the model for all ministry and the latter is the way in which individuals are incorporated into the body of Christ and into the priesthood of all believers. One becomes a priest at baptism, and a small minority will become ordained ministers later.

This sense of the priority of the ministry of all - within which the ministry of the ordained can rediscover its due importance - dominates our report. We have worked with a picture of the church and of ministry, within which the focal point and the centre of the **church** is placed within the Ministry of the People of God in the World. For us, the church is as much itself in 'the world' as it is 'in church'. We call for a recognition of this insight not just in theory, but in practice. We acknowledge that it is easier to say this than to know how to do it, and it is easier to know how to do it than to do it.

We are therefore calling for a radical renewal of priorities and perspectives, for a hard and difficult learning process - in short for a change of heart. No one supposes, least of all ourselves, that this can be achieved by the passing of a few resolutions at Conference, however much we value those which we offer.

We are also concerned that theology should be seen as the work of all God's people and not something confined to the pages of an academic textbook. Theological understanding happens primarily when Christians exercise their faith in the world. It stems from experience in the practice of discipleship rather than from intellectual speculation. Although the latter is equally necessary, it is not primary and should not be elevated above the other. Thus we also believe there is a wealth of theological wisdom locked away within the experience of countless Christians who themselves do not recognise the treasures they possess, because they have been led to understand that theology is something for 'experts' only.

We believe that there is a lot of theology and 'kingdom things' going on outside the life of the institutional church. These too need to be recognised and evaluated. We have tried to give expression to this conviction in the form of our report, which is unusual but in our view appropriate. The sequence of letters which form the body of the report reflects something of the hopes, the fears, the confusions and the deep Christian commitment of many people. They contain the stories, in many cases partial anecdotes, of ordinary lay people and they are our starting point. But they are also our point of return. They are in a sense, theologically and pastorally normative for us. Our church must respond to these anecdotes, for the church has a task of making the story of Christ out of the anecdotes of its members. That is for the church to do theology. That is how the church becomes the **laos** of God.

This is a process in which the writing and presentation of this report can only be a beginning. The danger we anticipated in writing our report was that it would seem rather as the end of something. We are far from offering this report as in any way conclusive. Thus we offer the church something immediate, open ended, problematic and we hope, challenging. Our unconventional style of reporting is meant to reflect a truly lay manner of doing **theology**.

This is not to say that we have not drawn some conclusions of our own and later on we enclose some recommendations which we trust you will enthusiastically endorse.

Nor have we neglected our responsibility to offer what we can be way of practical guidance to the churches as to how they might set about challenging themselves with that shift of perspective towards ministry in the world, that 'change of heart' towards the presence of Christ in the world, which it is our chief purpose to foster and encourage. This material will be found in the appendices which follow the recommendations at the end of our report.

We have rejoiced in being an ecumenical group. We quickly realised that we were not just looking at a problem peculiar to Methodism, but one which was common to the whole Church of Christ. We have been most grateful for the insights and contributions of our ecumenical colleagues. It is agreed that any new resource material to help people exercise their ministry in the world should be produced ecumenically wherever possible.

Thank you for calling us into being - we hope we have been able to share some of our own excitement in the pages that follow.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Knighton (Chairperson)

Hilary Armstrong MP

Kenneth Bennett (Baptist Union)

Harold S. Clarke

Ronald Crewes

Donald Eadie

Peter Farmer

Anne Gibson

Anne Hitchiner

Keith Lamdin (Church of England)

Ian MacDonald

Susan Matthews

Terry Oakley (United Reformed Church)

Dorothy Simmonds

Denys Turner (Roman Catholic Church)

Roger Walton

John Clarke (Convener)

To the Church Steward from the Commission

Dear Mrs. Thomas,

For the past two years a Commission, set up by Conference in 1988, has been meeting to explore the ministry of the people of God in the world. The commission is not only Methodist but includes members of other denominations. We have discussed matters among ourselves and have also invited various people to meet us to share their Christian discipleship with all its joys and anxieties. Now we are writing to a number of senior church stewards to enlist their help. You are one of the chosen few!

Historically, Methodism has in its roots the belief in the priesthood of all believers. We have a tradition of lay leadership and action within the church, and of lay witness beyond the chapel walls. We are seeking to affirm that tradition. There is a suspicion however, that we have got things rather out of kilter. We would be grateful for your response to a number of questions, such as the following :-

Are we too dependent these days on leadership from ordained ministers?

Is lay leadership seen to be about taking more responsibility in the church because of a shortage of ordained ministers?

Are we spending so much time on maintenance and organisation of the institutional church that we forget, ignore or have no energy left for our vocation in the world as servants of the Kingdom of God?

Everyone would agree that a Christian's commitment is not to the church alone, but to serving God at all times and in all places. But how does this work out in practice?

How widely is this activity recognised as Christian Ministry?

How does the worship and fellowship of the church relate to the workaday world from Monday to Friday?

Does it help at all?

Should it be helping more?

We are really asking what the church is for, how it should function, and what part each Christian plays.

We are asking you, as church steward, to help us by calling together a group of lay people from your church to discuss these matters. We hope the group will be varied in age, occupation and interests; that it will include those who are housebound or unemployed, enthusiasts and those on the fringes of your fellowship. By sharing your personal stories we hope you will explore together the issues, and then let us have your reflections and the conclusions you have reached.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Knighton
(Chairperson)

John Clarke
(Convener)

To the Commission from the Church Steward

Dear Commission,

We found your invitation to consider the question of the Ministry of the People of God in the World challenging initially, even disturbing.

As you will see from the letters I am enclosing, many people within the church responded to my invitation to discuss the matter. Some of them I approached have tenuous links with the church while others are deeply committed; some are working in industry, others in professional jobs or looking after children at home or retired. All of them approached the problem from a different standpoint.

From this, a small group emerged which spent quite some time working at producing a reply. They put together a paper which they presented to the Church Council. I am enclosing a copy of that, too.

Initially, most of us felt we had little to contribute. However, as we shared our experience we were heartened to find how many ideas emerged. More than anything, taking part has made us all more aware that the church is where we are. How effectively it witnesses depends upon our individual contribution. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is not something dry and theoretical. In order to respond to your question, we have had to work through what it means for each of us and to question the quality of our discipleship.

Thank you for presenting us with the challenges.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Thomas

Letter from Steward to Church Members

Dear Ian,

Recently I received a letter from a Commission set up by the Methodist Church looking into the role lay people play in the life of the church, and in the world. I believe other churches have also been asked to share in this. I am writing to ask if you will come to a meeting in my house with other people from church to discuss the issues raised by this letter and to share our thinking.

I realise how busy you are and I know of the pressure you are under. However, this group will have a limited life and I hope that together we can make available a contribution to the thinking of the church.

We will need to look at our daily lives, the tensions and the joys and to discover together how our Christian faith enables us to make sense of it all. How do we witness to the Gospel, and reflect the love of God in our daily lives? Why do we come to church? What does the worship and fellowship mean to us?

Could you please let me know if you are able to come? I do hope you will feel able to share in this interesting and worthwhile project.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Thomas

PS. I am sending a similar letter to others who may be interested.

Letters from Church Members to Church Steward

(Ian to Church Steward)

Dear Ruth,

It was magic to have your letter. There's such a lot I want to share with you all, and it will be great to do it. Yes, I'll come to the group, but by the way, you'll have to fit in with my shifts.

As you know life at the foundry is pretty tough, and it's different from most of the rest of your lives. It's a hard place to work, and you really come up against things there. My mates are a great bunch to work with, they don't pussy foot around and they say what they really mean. At times I worry about the amount of drinking that goes on, and the language is a bit hair-raising. Some of them have real problems at home to cope with, and we all worry about shut downs. Yet I find at the plant a real solidarity.

My gang rib me about going to church, but I try to let them know where I stand. What I believe must be part of the way I live or it's no use. It's no good saying one thing and doing another. Jesus is my guide and they know it.

In church, I have found a lot of help on my way. I really enjoy coming on a Sunday, listening to the minister and being part of it all. The chaplain at work is a great guy. He's the same with us all in the plant, he listens, he cares about us and lives out the gospel. I know, from what the other lads say, that he's noticed and he's one of us.

I've come up against things at work and at home, it's not been all beer and skittles, but my faith in the Lord Jesus takes me through. If coming to your group can help me share that with other people I'm all for it.

Cheers.

Ian

Dear Mrs. Thomas,

Thank you for your letter. The meeting looks an interesting one. The church of which we were members until last year did a lot of work helping people to relate their everyday lives to the fellowship and worship of the church. As you know, I still miss my old church quite a lot and perhaps I am a bit inclined to remember it as slightly better than it actually is. Nevertheless, I think we could learn from its way of doing things.

For a time we were without an ordained minister, so we had to find ways of sharing the ministry among the congregation and in our community. Through it we discovered what a variety of gifts and experience there was in 'ordinary' lay people. Participation in worship and activities relating specifically to the members of the church and congregation were obvious, but it was our life and contacts outside the immediate church circle which enlarged our understanding of our ministry as the people of God in the world.

As people who lived in a poor community our congregation, which itself reflected a real mixture of races, was always conscious of and responsive to the needs of others and very generous in the help they gave to people in our own community and across the world. This was not just in giving money but also in regular prayer, correspondence and political action to assist others in their struggle against

oppression. Around the church were many posters and other visible signs of our local and worldwide concerns to remind us of our calling.

In our own immediate vicinity we had members serving as visitors to the local police station, helping to improve relations between the police and the community. We successfully campaigned against the deportation of some of our members and offered shelter to some Kurdish refugees. All this and much more emphasised our identification with the community and every aspect of what was happening became part of our prayer and worship. In a fresh and exciting way I learnt from that experience that the church's role is not to take us out of this world but rather to send us into it better equipped for ministry as the 'People of God'.

I know that comparing one church with another in a different area is not always possible or fair. It could well be, however, that their example could help and encourage us to deepen our relationship between worship and everyday life. I look forward to the meeting, when I should be happy to share some more of my experience if it was felt to be helpful.

Best wishes.

Alberta Gonegivela

Dear Ruth,

Thanks for your letter. I am afraid that I can't be at your meeting - I shall be in Saudi Arabia.

I am often accused of having bees in my bonnet, but I thought it might be helpful if I set down my thoughts in writing. It will help me anyway!

I write as someone who has spent over thirty years in industry as a scientist and manager with a commitment to discipleship in the world of business. My prime task has been to apply my scientific and managerial training to the conversion of God-given resources for the benefit of mankind and to help those I manage to achieve personal fulfilment, dignity and recognition. I acknowledge the imperfections of the world but believe that I am called, in God's name, to serve in rather than to retreat from it, to identify with it and to strive for beneficial change.

With regret I have to say that I feel angry, betrayed and disappointed by a Church which separates the world of work from the world of worship, which lacks understanding of, and often is indifferent to, the pressures, tensions and conflicts experienced daily by those witnessing in the 'real' world. False perceptions, an incomplete or lack of knowledge of the world of work and an unwillingness to listen to those who do, has led to a bias in theological thinking and inadequate recognition of those in the lay ministry. Some common perceptions frequently quoted from the pulpit and in official church publications, overtly or tacitly challenge the faith, integrity and witness of those working in industry and business. The following examples from my own experience illustrate some of these points:-

the scientist believes that he is called to make best use of natural resources through the responsible application of science and technology - a popular perception in the Church is that he is misusing God's gifts of creation;

the manager, who believes his mission is to help his staff to achieve fulfilment and satisfaction, and hopefully to provide them with a sense of purpose, is charged with being an exploiter of people for corporate gain, failing to understand human needs and aspirations;

Christians employed in the chemical industry believe they are acting responsibly to achieve a balance between providing for man's everyday and growing needs, conserving resources and reducing the adverse effects of their activities on the environment, are often seen by the Church as polluters, defiling the environment for profit and pandering to materialistic greed;

Trading with the third world is often attacked as 'taking unfair advantage' rather than as equipping the local communities to improve their living standards, their potential for self-sufficiency and making better use of their resources;

business involvement with South Africa is regarded as supportive of apartheid rather than improving the living standards, training and development of the local people, whilst seeking to bring about the downfall of the system from the inside.

Other Christians trying to witness in other walks of life will have perceptions which are different in detail but similar in principle to these. The tensions created by the Church's failure to recognise the difficulties these differences in perception create, should be self-evident to those involved in sensitive pastoral ministry.

The problems, however, do not only lie with the ordained ministers. While there are ministers who regard pleas for greater lay recognition and involvement as a threat to their role and some enjoy the dominant and imperious role, they are often encouraged by a complacent and sometimes unthinking laity, happy to take the soft option and be directed.

The fulfilment of the will of God will only be achieved by a strong partnership between ecclesial and lay ministers based on the recognition and rediscovery of the potential of the laity - who represent over 99 per cent of those ministering in Christ's name - and actively acknowledging and encouraging their role. It requires:-

the development and articulation of a theology of stewardship and success which provides meaning and coherence to the Christian faithful in the working, domestic and retired environment;

the recognition of and support for the spiritual needs of the laity;

a reappraisal of the role, selection and training of the ordained ministry whose present witness is, in many cases, limited by lack of awareness, limited vision, outdated terms of reference and too much administration;

a system for structured dialogue, at connexional level, between key ministerial and laymen aimed at improving understanding of their respective realms.

My plea is for us all to rediscover the meaning for **today** of the priesthood of all believers.

Yours,

Andrew Maxwell

Letter from a lay person to the Church Steward

Dear Ruth,

Thank you for your invitation to join a group to talk about our vocation and discipleship in daily life. I'm afraid I do not have the time nor the will any more. You

may have noticed that I haven't been at Church recently - it just became too much of an effort. It was too draining on my spiritual reserves, which I desperately needed to cope with the demands of my job in social work.

I'm sorry to be so blunt, but the worship left me cold, no, not even that, it made me frustrated and angry and despairing. I so needed something and there was nothing for me.

I know that Jesus of Nazareth is central to my life and work. He is my inspiration, my source of strength and renewal. From him I get the grace to be gracious with my colleagues and my clients, my family and my friends. But Chapel worship on Sunday seemed irrelevant. The poor battered and abused children I see so often seemed to have no place in the Church's attention. Jesus' attitude of "Let the children come to me" seems so far away from the local church's attitude.

I'm sorry I sound hard and rejecting. I don't want to hurt, even though there is part of me that feels hurt and I now I feel able to say that. I've given up on Church. I find my refreshment, my guidance, my strength elsewhere.

I would prefer you to keep this to yourself, but if you think it might help to change things, then you may show it to others.

Yours, with regret,

Brenda

Dear Mrs. Thomas,

I was a little surprised to receive your letter. Since I started my own business two years ago I haven't had as much time to get along to church. I do what I can to help the church but time seems to be in short supply.

The subject of the meeting looks interesting. All the time I worked for Digital I thought that being a Christian should make a difference to what I did. Mostly, I don't feel I was very good at it. The time I had to make 20 people redundant made me feel very guilty and uncomfortable in church. I didn't want anyone there to know, especially in view of those sermons we had had on the evils of the profit-motive society. I felt I had made the best decision I could but, even so, that I had let God and my values down.

Now I am running my own firm it seems to be worse. I am concerned about the people we employ and clients we serve but it consumes more time than ever. I am sorry I had to say 'no' when the minister asked me to be a Property Steward - I'm sure he wanted to get me involved in things - I don't feel I have very much to offer.

Perhaps by attending the meeting I can at least share something of my experience to help your project. Maybe there will be clues as to how to become a better Christian business man.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Webster.

Dear Ruth,

Thank you for the invitation to take part in the discussions on the ministry of lay people in the world and to tell you something of my own witness as a manager in a large multinational company.

The world in which I work is generally civilised and humane and contributes much to wealth creation in the developed and under-developed world and to individual fulfilment. Nonetheless the challenges to faithful ministry are frequent and numerous and stem from the imperfections of people, from conflicts between the needs of the company and the needs of individuals, from the conflicts between individuals with differing values and standards and from differences between managers and the people they manage about their respective roles, contributions and competencies. I feel called to provide, in this setting, a Christian presence and voice to ensure that individuals are able and encouraged to achieve personal fulfilment, that the weak are protected and that behaviour and relationships are characterised, as far as I can influence them, by reconciliation, mutual honesty and trust and caring. It isn't always easy to persuade colleagues to adopt policies which:

may be costly to the company in the short term; balance the needs of the company with those of employees and their families;

lead to the handling of ethical issues in a way which may appear to be prejudicial to some parts of the business;

provide all individuals with opportunities for growth and fulfilment;

allow difficulties e.g. dismissals, redundancies, inadequacies in performance etc. to be handled sympathetically even if costly to the Company in the short term.

Frustrations and disappointments are common but consistency of word and action, continuing requests for advice and support, prayerful thought and a caring and supportive fellowship give me reason to be confident and hopeful that the Spirit of God is alive in the world of work.

I would be delighted to join your discussions.

Yours sincerely,

Barry

Dear Ruth,

Thank you for your letter asking me what I think about the Commission's enquiry into lay ministries in our Church. Though one half of me says "too little, too late" and another bit of me is a bit cynical about a typical Methodist tactic - see a problem and throw a Commission at it. In my experience, Commissions bury things under paper. Sometimes I wonder what's wrong with the Holy Spirit.

Why is this all a bit too late? Your commission wants to know how the Church should be supporting lay people in their ministries in the world. There was a time when I too felt that need. As you know, I am a teacher. I have been married for twenty years and I have three children. We have attended this Church for almost as long. And I like it. It is a welcoming, friendly, concerned little community, and though there are too few of us ever to make our Church seem full, I actually prefer our

smallness. I like the scale. The world is too big, too fast, too anonymous. And my wife and children won't mind me saying that our family by itself is too small to give everything we need by way of warmth and fellowship. But our Church community seems just right. It's bigger than we are, but not so big that it dwarfs us.

But for the last five years I have begun to feel uneasy and to wonder if this warm and comforting church life isn't a bit, shall we say, **cosy**...smug, even. You see, my work life is anything but cosy, you know what it is like these days teaching in a big, urban comprehensive. It's not teaching any more. It's more like damage control and half the damage seems to have been caused by us in the first place, if our critics are to be believed. I don't know if "teachers" are demoralised, but I certainly am. And as I say, for five years or so I have been feeling uneasy about our little Church community - or rather about me and our little Church community - because I have been wondering whether I like it as a real Christian challenge or whether I like it because it **doesn't** offer a challenge. Is it in fact simply a refuge from my unhappy experience at work?

That, though, isn't the real reason why I decided to reply to your letter. There is something else on my mind which the Church has never before given me the opportunity to say and now that it has I am not at all sure that I know how to say it, for I am confused.

Let me try to explain. Three years ago I gave my third-formers a project to do on Archbishop Romero. Of course I knew a little about him myself, but not much and so I began to read some of his sermons and one or two books about him, written by friends of his in El Salvador.

The effect on me was very disturbing. What I read shocked me, particularly his last interview given a few weeks before his assassination. He talked about his own death, which he saw coming. He talked about the poor in a way which showed that he really loved them, knew them, had listened to them - because he had lived alongside them. What he said was very simple, very spiritual, very pastoral, very courageous and...very, very political. I have to admit that I went about for a week in a state of shock and seriously thought of changing the class project to some safer topic - safer, that is, for me, because the children, as it turned out, treated this topic just like any other. No problem for them.

I was relieved when Sunday came round again. The good old familiar routine of our Sunday worship and fellowship was reassuring and the unreassuring regime of my school day was enough to keep my mind off the subject of El Salvador - almost, though not quite entirely. It kept nagging. And to cut a long story short I eventually found myself working on a voluntary basis for two nights a week with the local branch of the Central American Solidarity Campaign - which incidentally explains why I have been missing from our Bible Study evenings for the past six months. I am sorry that when you asked me so tactfully why I had stopped going I gave such an evasive answer. I just felt I couldn't explain properly.

You see why I am confused. It's because I am no longer very sure where I belong. The problem is that there are four communities I belong to but they do not fit with one another very well. I love my family and I love my Church community and they still fit well enough together. They do recognise and affirm one another.

I can't say I love my teaching any more, I shall take early retirement as soon as I can afford it and I do not want my Church to affirm my work. In fact I squirm with embarrassment when I hear teachers being 'preached up' in our prayers and sermons, because though I would like to be able to I do not believe in teaching any more. If I told my fellow Methodists what I really feel about my work, I think they would be scandalised and hurt. And anyway, I am ashamed of my feelings.

But then there is that new love I have for my work for El Salvador. Do you want to know the full truth about why I don't come to the Bible Group any more? The truth is that though most of the volunteers who work in our branch are not Christians, a few of us are and one is an Anglican deacon. On Thursday nights when you are at Bible study I am with my 'other', even smaller community, celebrating our own worship privately. No, not 'privately', for I somehow feel that we long with those Christians in El Salvador, poor, illiterate, suffering daily under brutalising conditions, but never brutalised, in love with Christ, hopelessly optimistic and cheerful. I love them. I am with them in a very real way. And they are my 'fourth' community.

I belong to all four communities. But they do not belong to one another. So I am in pieces which don't belong together. I don't think I expect my cosy, warm little Methodist community to provide me with the solution to my problem. Don't get me wrong. My Methodist community is still where I start and where, as a Christian, my 'home' is. But if I don't expect my Church to solve my problem I do wonder sometimes if it couldn't occasionally show a few signs that it shares the problem. I wonder if it couldn't put me, and others like me, on its **agenda** at least.

I am not even sure that I know how it could do that. But one thing I am sure about is that I will come to the meeting you have called. For you have at least given me the courage to give it a try. And for that I am genuinely grateful.

Yours sincerely,

Jim

Dear Mrs. Thomas,

Thanks for your letter asking me to join your group. As you know I work in Thompsons and we make gear boxes. The market that we work in is very competitive and the economic climate makes no place for Christian values at all. The only way my company survives and goes on employing people is by being fiercely competitive. Turning the other cheek would lose me my job and if the company practised it it would soon go to the wall and there would be over a thousand people made redundant.

I don't really see how discussing this can help. I come to church to worship God and don't much want to be reminded of my working world. In fact by the time Friday night comes I am glad to put it behind me. However, I will come but don't expect much from me.

Yours sincerely,

John

Dear Mrs. Thomas,

Thank you for your letter asking me to join your group. I think this is very important and I don't think enough emphasis is placed on our taking Christ into our work places. It is very important, of course, that we are scrupulously honest in everything we do (like not using office equipment or time for our private use) but I think we need to be encouraged more to be prepared to lead others to Christ. We have a good Christian fellowship in our office and I find that very helpful. We are constantly reminded, through our Bible Study and prayer together, that there are many people here longing to find peace in their hearts and we know that Christ is the only way.

What I think we need in our church is more preaching about our call to make disciples in all the world, or opportunity for Bible teaching and training in evangelism so that we can be much more confident in showing our faith at work.

I hope you find this helpful and I shall look forward to meeting with you in the group.

Yours in Christ,

Gilbert Hayes

Dear Ruth,

I am glad to think that at last we are beginning to think about this problem. From many of the conversations we have had over the years you know how concerned I have been that we are too involved with what is happening within the chapel and forget about all the people living round about. I have lived here all my life. Forty years ago it was easier to make the links between the chapel and the community because the town was smaller and people did not move so often. We knew everyone whether they came to chapel or not. If they were in trouble, we knew about it and could offer to help. And as for the chapel folk, well, we had all grown up together and we knew everything about each other. There weren't any gulfs between work and chapel; everything got mixed up together.

Now there are so many strangers moving in that we don't know anybody. We have gained several new members and some of them are working very hard for the chapel. But most of them just don't seem to want to know. I can't understand it. Jim and I often used to talk about this. It seems difficult for people like us to imagine not belonging to the chapel. All our lives we have been involved. We have had such fun at times. When our children were young there were several large families in the chapel and we used to have some grand times.

But so many people don't think the chapel has any relevance in their lives. Is this the way to show that we care? Perhaps this would encourage more people to come to chapel, particularly the younger ones. They seem to think that they don't need the chapel. They are so busy working and looking after their new homes. If we could show them that we are interested in the problems they face and that we are trying to understand perhaps they would come.

I will make sure I am at the Meeting next week for I agree with you we must find time to talk this over properly. Can we make sure Bert doesn't start worrying about the playgroup leaving crumbs on the school room floor? You know what he is like once he gets going. It will be half past nine before you can say knife and no-one will want to start discussing extra items like this at that time of night.

Yours sincerely,

Mary

Dear Ruth,

It was good to have your letter. For some time I've been trying to equate what I do at church with what I am trying to do as a politician.

The actual conditions of my constituents, and the weight of the responsibilities here cause me great concern. I seem to live with tension the whole time, and where does

my faith help or enable me in all this? As Christians we speak of the uniqueness of each individual, but policies are worked out with the masses in mind. Can idealism exist in the midst of political realities? There are times when I long to share those problems with other people, but there is little time and I fear little understanding.

I look to the church, the body of Christ to encourage, support, affirm and enable me in my Christian discipleship. Yet, realistically, how can it? Where do all the pieces fit together with integrity?

I need the prayerful and loving concern of my brothers and sisters in Christ, and they need to appreciate the sometimes lonely and hard path I tread. Perhaps the meeting you call will be a step along the path, and in that hope I will come. I will make it a priority in my diary.

Let's hope the Council doesn't call a special meeting on that evening.

Yours etc.

Robert

A Selection of letters written by lay people to other lay people.

Dear Margaret,

It was lovely to hear from you, thank you for returning my pattern. I'm sorry I haven't been in touch lately but the children have had filthy colds, and David is away, yet again. His firm are putting in a new system in the Newcastle branch, and he's up there for a few days.

There are times that I wish I could run away, escape, and not have to bother. Wiping noses, mouths, and bottoms is so boring, and I'm fed up to the back teeth with it all. Did I really once have a job, read books, go out to meals, have time to have my hair done. David just swans off and here I am alone with the kids.

Sorry! what a moan, I suppose it's not all bad.

Ruth Thomas called last week. Do you remember her? She's a church steward now and wants me to come to a meeting in her house to meet some other people from church to talk about the church and our place in it. There's some committee somewhere and it's asked for our views. I was amazed to be asked, why me? I had to tell her that I don't think very much about anything just now. What time do I have to think? Who in the church would want to hear what I think, or would understand where I am now? It's really hard to get the children fed, dressed and off to church each week, and when we get there I wonder why I bothered. I'm not too happy with the girls who run the creche and the services don't turn me on. It all seems to be in another time warp and honestly sometimes it's just plain boring and I don't fit in.

It's good to get out of the house, and I enjoy a good sing and it's bliss to have a child-free hour. I suppose it does me good and I am meeting people but I can't say my chaotic life is helped or changed very much by it all.

However, I promised Ruth I'll get a sitter if David is still away, and I'll go to the meeting. It will be interesting to see who else turns up and to hear how they feel. Honestly if I hadn't promised mum I'd try to keep going to church I don't think I'd

bother much. David's not too happy about it, but it's all right for him, he's got lots of other interests and just doesn't understand.

If I get there I'll let you know how it all went.

Love to you, Peter and your gang.

From your sister

Jane

Lay to Lay (2nd letter)

Dear Margaret,

I went to that meeting with Ruth.

We had an interesting evening and we talk long, and hard, and late. I was amazed to see who turned up and to hear about that they did. I've sat with them in church for ages but I didn't really know them. We all talked ten to the dozen and I found it really useful, anyway it set me thinking.

Each one of us seemed to be very hard pressed and some spoke openly about how fed up they were with the church. They couldn't see how what they did on Sundays had anything to do with the rest of the week. I know just what they meant. I said quite a lot, I really don't know when to shut up, but they listened and seemed interested to know about me, stuck at home with a young family.

Others were more positive and they seemed to have their lives fitted together. I was really impressed and it made me think. They seemed to have found something very important that helped them. They had a purpose and strength in their lives. I began to realise that I had been invited there not to moan, or to talk only about the church, but to share with the others about our whole life and how we witness all the time, wherever we are.

Does that sound "holy"? If so I'm sorry because it wasn't like that at all. We began to talk and share about all our lives and to see where Jesus fitted in, or rather was with us.

We're going to meet again and I'm really pleased. We're going to look at our church and see what we need to do there as well as in our lives. How does everything fit together? Are the services relevant? Are some of us spending too much time running the church and not enough time living our lives and sharing with people everywhere what we receive at church.

It really was quite exciting and it's got me going and thinking - and that's an achievement.

Lots of love to you all,

Jane

Dear Barry,

It was lovely to hear from you and get all your news. I was particularly interested to hear about your group meetings at church looking at the relationship between what you do at church and the rest of your lives. We've been doing something of the same at St. Mary's.

As you know I used to go to church when we were teenagers together. But when I got married to Jean and we moved away to get work we didn't seem to get to church very often and to tell the truth it didn't seem to make much difference. Well after John was born we had moved again and went to get him baptised. The vicar at St. Mary's seemed pretty nice so we started going fairly often. It's a pretty active church with lots going on and Jean made some good friends, as you know, and got involved in the playgroup there.

Last year the diocese started a programme of faith and work groups and the vicar asked me if I'd like to lead one. The diocese did some training for group leaders so I agreed. The training was fascinating. To start off with we each had to make a diagram or draw a picture on flipchart paper setting out the story of our working lives over the last 10 years or so. Then we had to do the same for the story of our faith. After that we shared these stories in small groups of six. It was interesting to see how some stories were really separate while for others the two stories overlapped time and time again. For me going back to church had more to do with getting John baptised and Jean needing to make new friends when we moved, than anything to do with my work.

We set up a group at St. Mary's. Several of the people I asked to join the group didn't want to but we got a group of eight of us. We are a mixed group - four of us are in business, one is a teacher, two of us are mums at home looking after children (they call that 'work' and I think they're right!) and one of us is recently retired.

Again the stories we told were absolutely fascinating. We got to know each other really well and we discovered that there was one issue we all wanted to work on.

So we have started on what is called by the diocese 'action/reflection'. The idea is that we each think of some way we can do something related to the issue and then use the group to think about and support each other in that action. The issue for us has been 'how can God be present in my work?' The vicar has been preaching recently a lot about God being in all of life. So what I have been doing is to try to see how God might be present at work. Sometimes I think I can get a clue and then at others God seems as far away as it is possible to be. Well in the group we talk about our experience between meetings.

About a month ago we had a parish conference on a Saturday about faith and work. We called the conference 'God on Monday'. One of the things we had realised is that on Sunday it is very easy for us to think that the church is only concerned with mid-week meetings, buildings, money and sometimes world issues like peace and South Africa. I don't think many people know what I do, or even where I work, and it seems to have little place in talk about the bells, or the youth club. Now all those things are important, but what we were doing at the conference was seeing if there were ways we could value and support people in their working lives.

We did a lot of talking about the Sunday service. We asked for some sermons on the kind of issues we have to face at work - and the vicar asked us if we would be willing to talk a bit about those issues instead of a sermon, from time to time. We agreed that we should all be willing to help with the prayers of intercession and be willing to write prayers which were quite specific about issues at work. We have wondered

about writing some offertory prayers which acknowledge that with our money we offer our working lives - and not only the good things!

On the Sunday after the conference, the vicar asked us to take a couple of minutes silence to reflect about all the things we had been involved in over the last week - the things that had gone well and the disasters, the joys and the sorrows. I know that we all ought to do this in the silence before the service starts but it's easy to forget and it made all the difference to me. Somehow the worship came alive for me in a way that it seldom does. It wasn't that the service itself was any different, and I can't really explain it.

I've gone on a lot, so you can see how important all this has been to me over the last year. It is never easy to see how my faith, what little I've got, relates to work and sometimes it would be much more comfortable to keep the two quite separated. On the other hand I do know that if my faith is to mean anything it has to mean something for everything I get involved in. Going to church on Sunday has become much more important than I ever dreamed it could be. Somehow I'm bringing the whole of my life to God to be...I'm not at all sure how to put it - I expect the vicar would use religious words like redeemed, healed or transformed - but I'm not holy like that...I think the only word I can use is 'held'.

Well enough of all that. It will be lovely to see you again as soon as you can get to stay for the weekend. It will be good to chat about this some more. Since you last came Jean and I have found a lovely walk along the river and we know you'll love it.

Jean and John send their love.

Yours sincerely,

Tony

The lay group responds to the Church Council

Dear Mr. Hall,

Following the invitation from Ruth Thomas to think about our vocation and discipleship in our daily work, some of us got together to share our thoughts and explore our reactions. We agreed to send you (as Church Secretary) an outline of our discussion, which I was asked to write.

First, the agenda of councils and circuits seem to be dominated by institutional concerns - everything that's needed to "keep the show on the road". Some people appear to revel in all the activities that take place on Church premises and the organisation that goes with that. For them it's a rewarding role to play.

Others find the concern for the neighbourhood, which is very laudable, a sufficient expression of the Church's mission. We find that there is no room left for our ministry, to which we have a strong sense of calling, and which is to be exercised in our place of work, or in our involvement in wider social and political action. We feel ignored, or worse, accused of being less than committed Christians, because we aren't supporting the coffee mornings and find it difficult to take up office as stewards etc. The support and encouragement we would like to receive is hard to find and any insights we could offer are not asked for.

Secondly, the leadership of our local church and circuit give our ministry such a low profile it might as well not exist. The minister seems not even to remember what work

we do and after a polite enquiry about how things are going and a few seconds of listening, the eyes glaze over and the attention drifts to something or someone else. Buildings, drama societies, studying Ephesians, meeting with the local URC's all come higher up the list than working out what our local factory or shopping centre are doing as part of the Kingdom.

Thirdly, the worship both on Sundays and at other times, excludes us. It fails to connect with the concerns that bother us. Sermons don't get applied to our daily life or our work. Hymns and prayers are almost a foreign language. Our experience is untouched and untapped. We pray for the elderly, sick and for international peace, but not for us and our ministry through daily work.

Fourthly, we need to help to work out how to connect our faith and our work, leisure, family life and our whole life style. We catch glimpses, glimmers of possibilities, but they last no longer than a spark, quickly extinguished. Our isolation throws us onto our own resources, which often are not strong enough.

The one meeting we had brought us alive again with hope. It was good listening to each other's stories, feeling supported and able to talk things through. But all the questions we raised begged for more time and further opportunities to explore them further. Some areas that were mentioned were: prayer, sustaining our witness in hostile environments, finding God's presence and action where we are, coping with compromises, how to find common ground with those of other faiths, including secular humanists and so on.

Finally, our treatment by the church seems to be summed up in the attitude - we are expected to be willing, voluntary assistants to help someone else to do their ministry. We are asked to be jolly amateurs, instead of being the committed disciples we are in our own fields of competence.

Sometimes we are very good at what we do, and it is our ministry offered in Christ's name, in God's world, by the power of the Spirit working in us! Sometimes we make mistakes and we carry the responsibility, guilt and remorse. We need forgiveness, grace and help to find ways of making amends. So we are sinners in need of reconciliation. But we need to stay where we are and work it out, not retreat into a holy ghetto. We are called to be the Body of Christ, like leaven in the lump, salt in the meal, people of God scattered in the world.

Pardon our passion. But hear us, please!

Your dispersed colleagues in the world,

Yours sincerely,

Barry Brown, Ruth Thomas, Ian Goodman, Alberta Gonegivela, Andrew Maxwell, Brenda Hayward, Ben Webster, Jim Morley, John Bridges, Mary Foster, Robert Hargreaves, Jane Owen, Gilbert Hayes.

Exchange of letters between two Methodist Ministers

Dear Harry,

We had a very significant Church Council last night and I'm still in a state of considerable shock. The council had received the replies from our members to the letter our senior church steward had circulated about the commission MPGW and there were **lots** of replies - some from very surprising quarters.

What was said last night - and agreed by the Church Council - was that our church agendas are dominated by institutional and at best neighbourhood concerns, and that there seems to be no recognition that most people spend most of their lives **NOT** on church premises (with some notable exceptions!) but in the **real** world Ministers apparently do not "profile" this very highly unless it's to do with some of the "halo" professions. (That's the charge - I'm not sure I'm really guilty here).

Furthermore, lay people are thought of as helpers and volunteers to help the ministers keep the ship afloat. Direction or even movement are not important! Also worship doesn't relate to that real world and our traditional spirituality is pretty irrelevant too.

Have you had a Church Council about this yet? How did you get on? I am thrilled at one level by the concern raised and want to respond positively. I am however a little uncertain how to do so and where it will all lead. I **am sure** that it will take me out of the pattern of ministry I've operated for the past 20 years. I see this as a real challenge which will demand a lot of courage. I think I would find the courage as long as I'm convinced this is the way we ought to go. Of course, whether the church itself could withstand such a sea-change - both in attitude and in practice - is a different matter.

Let's meet and talk.

Yours,

Fred

Dear Fred,

It was good to hear from you and do hope that we can meet to discuss the matters you raised in your letter. In the meantime I will make this immediate response.

We would all love to have a church membership which would respond positively to the issues raised by the Commission. When I read in your letter about the sort of things your members have been talking about, and the attitude of the Church Council to what had been suggested to them, my heart rejoiced. I could almost smell liberation! It was as though the fine filters which are usually found on conversations in the church had been removed and people were really able to talk freely about matters which were significant both in the life of the church and in the areas where they lived and worked. I am sure that we ministers must make ourselves available to be involved in this sort of dialogue. I know that all too easily we are so busy in the things of the church that we have little time for sharing with our members the deeper things.

I think it is true that the demands made upon us to maintain the church as an institution mean that the issues uppermost in the minds of most people in their daily lives, have a very low priority in our church agendas. Even to attempt to raise them can be seen as an attempt to overthrow the well structured and successful survival strategies of the church. Just analyse the agendas of the last four Church Councils you have presided over and see what proportion of our time has been taken up with the issues which are obviously of importance to the people who reported to your Church Council.

The whole relationship of ordained and lay must change as the thrust of the church changes from that of survival (and minimizing risk) to that of Ministry to the World with the very real threat of dying and rising. If we have the courage to tread this path

we must expect pain. Like you, I feel the thrill and the excitement of all this but having raised expectations we must somehow fulfil them. Otherwise the whole initiative will become a damp squib and this will further inoculate people against change.

Our Church Council has met to talk about this. It doesn't seem to have been as lively or as imaginative as yours, but it has generated a number of ideas concerning "ministry towards each other". I am both delighted and relieved about this because if we are to take seriously the needs of each individual Christian as they exercise their ministry in the world, one person cannot possibly resource the variety of interests and concerns, professions and jobs represented in any one congregation. What I think I know is that somehow ordained ministry is about creating atmospheres and conditions in which the work and witness of each member can be nourished.

One thing which is absolutely clear is, as you say, the need for courage among the congregation, the ordained ministry and among those who at present maintain and operate our structures.

The Gospel is about good news and hope. The good news is that people are beginning to share what is vital and precious to them.

The hope is that in sharing we shall see signs of the Kingdom emerging in the hitherto most unlikely places.

We must talk more, meanwhile "be strong and of a good courage".

We will keep in touch.

Yours,

Harry

Dear Harry,

Thanks for your reply to my letter and for your initial response. I look forward to another 'chapter'.

Actually, lots of things have happened here since I wrote to you. For one thing many people have opened up to me about how they see their faith relating to their daily life experiences. They have come from all walks of life and seem glad to talk. This new openness has encouraged us as a church to press on with some definite plans.

First of all, we are going to arrange a number of supper parties in various homes where people will simply come together and tell their stories. Secondly, we are going to have a look at our worship patterns and try to devise ways in which we can bring together Monday to Saturday with Sunday. This will involve more people participating in the preparation and leading of worship and this fits in well with the Worship Commission Report and with the new enthusiasm (in some places!) for all-age worship.

Thirdly, we want to establish some regular nurturing or training -or equipping programmes (call them what you will). These would do several things. First they will help all members of the congregation to relate their faith to their daily lives whether they are in industry, the professions, at home, unemployed and so on. At this point we also need to explore how the church supports those who are involved in some industries regarded as suspect ethically by some people. We also want to consider

more carefully our attitude to those people we all know who practise Christian virtues without any acknowledged Christian faith and who are doubtless doing "Kingdom Things".

Furthermore as people are helped to exercise their witnessing role we want to explore the evangelistic potential in this. After all evangelism can only take place when faith meets unbelief. We have thousands of Christians doing this every day - we need to learn how to do it effectively.

What we need now is more theological reflection. It is a time honoured Methodist tradition that theology is formulated and articulated after having been experienced. It is out of the raw experience of Christian people in the world that our contemporary theology will emerge.

We will keep up this correspondence.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Fred

Church Council to Commission

Dear Members of the Commission,

Thank you for the initiative you took in contacting the church following the discussion at your Commission. It has proved a most valuable, though disturbing exercise for us all. The senior Steward called together a very mixed group of lay people from the church, and they met to discuss and share with each other their understanding of their role as Christians in the world.

For some it was a completely new experience, and it provoked a new way of thinking about themselves, the church and society. After their meetings they came to the Church Council to share their findings. We believe despite some areas of uncertainty and concern, that this exercise will be of great benefit. As a church we want to explore further, and work together to increase our understanding of our witness as the People of God in the World.

However we feel we will need help if we are to grow and develop through this experience. Along with a new awareness of the issues is an awareness that there is much more thinking to do. Are there any guides available to us in worship and discussion groups? How best can we share with each other, minister and people, in this exciting way ahead?

Yours sincerely,

Raymond Hall

Church Secretary.

RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Conference adopted as Resolution 1 -

Conference welcomes and receives the Report of the Commission on the Ministry of the People of God in the World and recommends that it be widely studied throughout the Methodist Church.

2. The Conference adopted as Resolution 2a -

Conference affirms Lay Ministry in the world as an essential form of the ministry of the Church and recognises that in the past it has undervalued lay ministry in the world. It rejoices in the commitment of Christian people in the world recognising that some situations are brutalising and others fulfilling.

The Conference adopted as Resolution 2b -

Conference authorises the production (with ecumenical partnership wherever possible) of materials which would encourage that celebration of lay ministry in local churches, circuits and districts.

3. The Conference adopted as Resolutions 3a and 3b -

3a Conference invites the Divisions to identify ways in which they are directly enabling lay people to exercise their ministry in the world considering the following questions and reporting their replies to the commission.

- a. What proportion of training provided by the Division is concerned with the Ministry of the People of God in the World?
- b. How does the Division encourage and validate Lay Ministry in the world?
- c. How does the Division listen to the experience of those exercising such a ministry?

3b Conference invites the churches, circuits and districts to consider ways in which they enable lay people to exercise their ministry in the world and communicate their considerations to the commission.

Districts are asked to consider -

- a. How does the district encourage, facilitate and validate the concept of Ministry of the People of God in the World?
- b. Does the District Training programme need any adjustment to meet this need?
- c. What resources and opportunities can the District provide to support lay people in the exercise of this Ministry in the World?
- d. The Synod agenda should allow for a regular discussion of the problems and opportunities faced by lay people in their daily worldly ministry.

Circuits and local churches are asked to consider -

- a. How widely known and understood is the ministry already being exercised by people in their daily lives?
- b. How much is this ministry recognised formally and informally and what support is given to it?
- c. How serious is the conflict between ecclesial and ministry-in-the-world in terms of time and energy - and how is the conflict generally resolved?
- d. Does the circuit and church appreciate the evangelical nature of ministry in the world?
- e. The use of audit techniques [see Appendix] by ordained ministers, deaconesses/deacons and lay people is warmly commended.

4. The Conference adopted as Resolution 4 -

To facilitate the implementation of the above recommendations, the Conference extends the life of the present commission for a further 12 months, in order for it to circulate this report, receive responses from the divisions, districts, circuits and local churches, pursue production of materials, and to promote the vision of the Ministry of the People of God in the World amongst ordained ministers, deaconesses/deacons, and lay people.

APPENDICES

How to use this section

What follows are some exercises and ideas for a local church to explore and celebrate, and seek to sustain the Ministry of the People of God in the World. It is not envisaged that any church would use all the exercises or ideas suggested here but rather that churches should choose what would be most appropriate for their local situation.

APPENDIX 1: MISSION AND MINISTRY CHART

This is a simple chart for exploring the variety of activities that the group is engaged in. It can be used to stimulate discussion and may lead to some actions for the Church to take. It is designed for small to medium sized groups (6-20 people). People will need time to fill in the form either before you meet, or at the meeting. If it is in the session, make sure you allow a reasonable time for each person to fill it in (10-15 minutes).

Before asking people to fill in the chart explain carefully the purpose of the exercise. It is important that the aim of the exercise is made clear to the group.

The purpose of the chart and the questions and activities that follow is to highlight the variety of activities that members are involved in in the course of their everyday lives.

IT IS NOT: * a check up on whether people are attending prayer meetings often enough! If that idea is conveyed it will create guilt, and may distort people's answers.

- * a survey to be sent to anybody.
- * designed to get more help with any particular church organisation.

- IT IS:
- * a chance for each person to think about where God has placed them each day.
 - * an opportunity for the group to see the variety of involvement that is represented by this group of Christians.

It may also help the church to develop its prayer, worship and support activities to help people be Christian in every place they find themselves.

HOW MY TIME IS SPENT IN A WEEK

| ACTIVITY | No. of hours per week |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Paid employment | _____ |
| 2. Worship | _____ |
| 3. Church committees/meetings | _____ |
| 4. Prayer, Bible study or housegroups | _____ |
| 5. Duties of church office - e.g. property steward, Sunday School teacher | _____ |
| 6. Family and home | _____ |
| 7. Visiting or caring for others linked to the church | _____ |
| 8. Helping with a local church activity e.g. lunch club, youth club | _____ |
| 9. Involvement with political activities | _____ |
| 10. Community voluntary groups - e.g. WRVS, Citizen's Advice, playgroups. | _____ |
| 11. Leisure activities - e.g. sport or TV | _____ |
| 12. Travelling | _____ |
| 13. Other | _____ |
| 14. Spare time! | _____ |

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS

1. On which of these 14 areas do you spend the most time?
2. Total together numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8. This could be called the time you spend on the life of the Gathered Church - the local Church organising itself for worship, witness and service. Is this more or less than any other number on its own?
3. Total together 1, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. This could be described as the time you spend in the Dispersed Church - when you are still a Christian, still a

member of the Church, but in activities of the world as a whole. How does this compare with the total for 2?

4. In which form of the church, Gathered or Dispersed do you spend most of your time?

QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP

1. How many different occupations are there in the group under number 1?
2. How many different voluntary activities are people in the group involved in?
3. Does the following figure much on Church Council agendas or worship:
 - the paid employment of members
 - the voluntary work that people do
 - home and family life.

FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the dilemmas you face each week?
2. Are these shared or addressed in any way in the Gathered Church's activities, e.g. is it a focus of prayer in worship, or discussion in a small group?
3. In what ways does the Gathered Church help to equip you and support you for your Christian life in the Dispersed Church?
4. What practical things could be done?

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

1. Make a chart of all the voluntary activities of members of the whole Church and display it somewhere prominent in the Church. (With a little imagination this could be a colourful collage).
2. Make a list of the work done by church members (and all regular worshippers) in Industry, Education, Health, Commerce and Politics. Think how these areas of work (and individual people) could be remembered in the weekly prayers of intercession.
3. If you consider that there are practical ways of supporting those whose Christian life and service is more focused in their paid employment, or home or voluntary work, send your suggestion to the Church Council or circuit meeting for consideration.

APPENDIX 2: AN APPRAISAL FOR MISSION

This exercise is for a Church Council or Church Consultation to look at the implications of the report for the local church.

The idea is a sort of DIY appraisal or audit of your local Church's structure in relation to its mission. The mission of the local Church, theologically speaking, will be to share in God's mission of love to the world, in its own situation through witness and action. This mission will take place wherever Christians are seeking to respond to the world around them in caring, evangelism and the struggle for justice.

BACKGROUND

Fundamental to this approach is the idea that the Church exists in two forms: the Gathered Church, and the Dispersed Church. Some aspects of that mission will flow from the Gathered Church in an organised way to the community of neighbourhood immediately around it - projects such as a youth club, or bereavement visiting scheme. The Gathered Church will sponsor or develop such a piece of work as part of its mission. Other aspects of mission will be located in the everyday lives of the Christians of the Church as they engage in the everyday business of work, family and community - a manager running a business, a mother running a home, a retired person giving a number of hours to the Samaritans. This is the mission of the Dispersed Church.

The Gathered Church is a key place for nurturing and sustaining the mission whichever form it takes. Hence the purpose of the appraisal is to examine the mission of the local Church in both its forms and reflect on the worship, nurturing and supporting activities of the Gathered Church to sustain its missionaries.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- * Overhead projector, flip chart or large piece of paper
 - * A collection of recent church magazines, newsletters, Church Council agendas and circuit plans.
 - * A room and seating which will enable discussion and sharing.
-

THE SESSION

Welcome people and ensure that people know each other.

Present the approach by plotting the three inter-connecting circles as in the accompanying diagram. Explain each of the circles as they appear:

The Three Circles

1. The Gathered Church is the local church in its activities for prayer, study, organisation and worship.
2. This is the organised mission of the church in the local community. This includes events, clubs and projects aimed at the community. It may be evangelistic, social or community development. Even if you do this 'on your own' (see dispersed) you will be known as doing it on behalf of the local church (eg. if you run the church lunch club on your own you will be known

as the church doing it). But if you help at the local Citizens Advice Bureau that will be dispersed as you don't have to be known as a church-goer.

3. This is the Dispersed Church. The life and work of individual Christians when they are not 'gathered' or working in 'organised' mission. It may be in the local community or outside it: in paid or voluntary work, and leisure time. The emphasis here is 'on your own' and you don't have to be known as a church-goer.

NB The Gathered Church will bring together these different parts of mission when it meets for worship.

The Overlaps

4. This represents work done by the local Gathered Church to plan for and prepare for and sustain local mission activities. (Church family and neighbourhood committees, Church Councils and support and planning meetings for helpers and/or leaders).
5. This is the place individuals are involved in mission in the local community but not sponsored or organised by the local Church. That is they will be individually offering service through voluntary activity or local paid employment.
6. Training and support given by the Gathered Church to those whose calling is to exercise ministry in the world as the Dispersed Church. This might include eg support groups or reflection days for teachers or chemical workers.

The Centre

7. The Centre represents the meeting point of the Church for worshipping God. This should be the point at which all the Church life, witness and ministry meet and find focus.

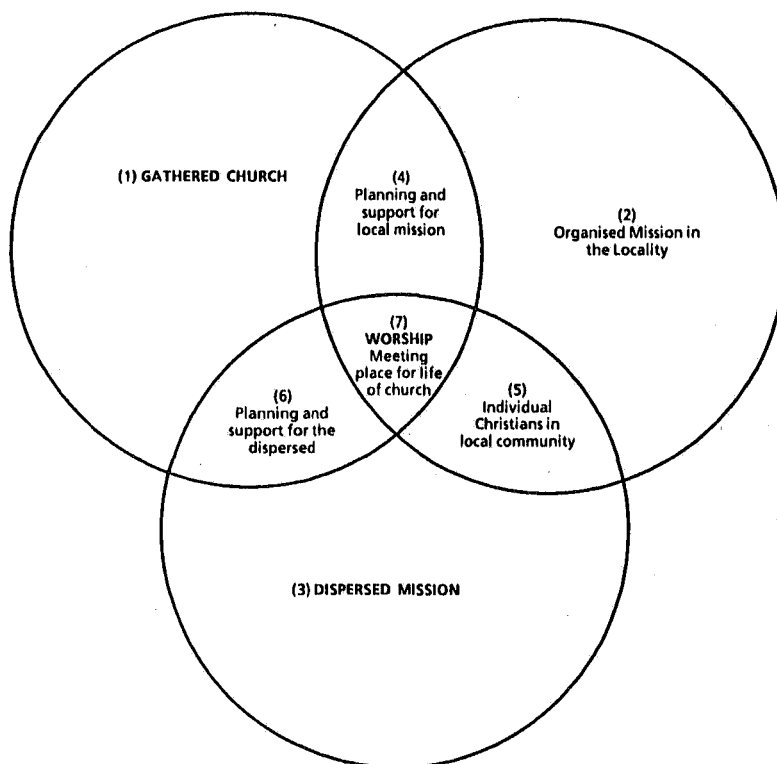
EXERCISE AND DISCUSSION

After introducing the diagram ask people to look at a programme of the Church's week and fill in whereabouts different elements fit on the diagram. Eg. Wednesday night's Cub-Scout group, if sponsored by Church or on Church premises, is perhaps under (2). Other good sources of information are Church magazines or news sheets, and circuit plans.

Ensure that people also add their own voluntary activities and paid employment at the appropriate place. (If you have done the exercise in Appendix 1 you can fill in some of the information to help build up the picture).

When you have filled in as much as you think you can, discuss together where the gaps or weak points are. Ask whether worship is a genuine meeting of all mission concerns. Where are more hours spent in mission - in (2) or (3)? Does the support, overlaps (4) and (6), reflect this? Suggest ways of developing the life of the local church to strengthen mission both to the community and through the Dispersed Church.

MISSION APPRAISAL



APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AT CHURCH COUNCIL

1. How do we help people to bring their daily lives into the worship of the Church?
2. How do we help other members of the congregation to fulfil their Christian role in the world?
3. How can we become more aware of the concerns that members of the congregations have in their lives, particularly their working lives?
4. How much of the Church Council agendas, Church magazines, and Church programme as a whole, addresses the activities of Church members in the world?
5. As a community, how can the Church increase its nurture of its members for their daily lives and problems?

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MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT

Convener: The Revd C Keith Forecast
Secretary: The Revd Michael G Dunford

VARIETIES OF MINISTRY

1. **"The Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry in and through the Church, the whole people of God . . . For the equipment of his people for this total ministry, he gives particular gifts for particular ministries . . . Some are called to the ministry of Word and Sacraments"** - and that was as far as the Basis of Union of 1972 went, except for reference to the ministry of Elders and the continuing ministry of Presbyterian Deaconesses. The Basis did, however, go on to say that **"The United Reformed Church shall determine from time to time what other ministries may be required and which of them should be recognised as ministries in the whole Church"**, thus paving the way for the increasing variety of ministries we witness among us today. It is the whole range of these 'particular ministries' except for that of Elder (which is the responsibility of the Faith and Life Department) that is the concern of the Ministries Department.

2. During recent years the variety has increased. The non-stipendiary ministry has become established and is itself changing and developing in style and scope. Different kinds of stipendiary ministry have also emerged. The ecumenical pattern has developed with many new opportunities opening up. The old-style 'general practice' ministry has been challenged, together with the need to deploy our stipendiary ministers to the greatest advantage. Team ministry has been explored, together with the challenge of pastorates where there seems little possibility of providing adequate ordained ministry in the traditional sense. Then, too, new opportunities and understanding of church-related community work have presented themselves and we have begun to provide a diaconal ministry in this area.

3. For all these ministries, for the research and planning which must undergird them, for the theological consideration which must accompany them, for the selection and training of candidates and for the support of those who are carrying out the work, this Department is responsible.

4. The detailed work entailed is reflected in the reports of the Department's constituent committees. We have also heard from the group we set up to examine 'Patterns of Ministry' and commend their report. It seems important to us, however, to hold all this growing variety together in unity, and we are particularly grateful to the Provincial ministry officers who together constitute our Departmental Central Committee for the careful work they do in each locality. In partnership we seek to help the Church to discover the ministry it needs to enable it, in turn, to share in Christ's ministry in the world.

VOCATIONS COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Michael B Stolton

Secretary: Revd Michael G Dunford

INTRODUCTION

5. A major part of our work is to do with admissions to our Roll of Ministers and is therefore time-consuming and confidential. We seek to deal sensitively with individuals and with other denominations both at home and overseas, and whilst we catalogue below a list of names, there is far more to it than merely keeping records. We are most grateful to all those who assist us in our task.

ROLL OF MINISTERS

(as at 28th February 1991)

6. **Admission to the Roll of Ministers** (from 1st March 1990 to 28th February 1991).
7. (a) **By ordination** - stipendiary:
Lillian Dean, Paul Bedford, John Mitchell, Paul Holmes, Edmund Boon, Enid Slater, Kenneth Ellis, Maxwell Shepherd, Paul Barratt, Alison Upham, Christopher Searle, Keith Hagon, Tom Bayliss, Ray Sowersby, Frank Cochrane, Philip Webb, Ruth Crofton, William Nicol, Graham Maskery, James Pettitt, Sandra Dears, Derek Jones, Andrew Mills, John Wilkinson, Margaret Herbert, Angela Wood, Philip Smith, David Pickering, Samantha Caton, Janet Loveitt, Simon Thomas, Brenda Denvir.
8. (b) **By ordination** - auxiliary
David Aplin, Doris Knee, Malcolm Childs, Julie Martin, Peter Norcross, Robert Green, Thea Jones, Norman Croft, Rodger Charlton, Peter Brown, William Connell, Kathleen Watts, Marie Thistle, Karen Street, Marina Kennard
9. (c) **By transfer from other churches**
Revd Brian Phillips (Uniting Church in Australia)
Revd Stephen Taylor (Church of Christ, USA)
Revd Dr Marc Dummer (The Baptist Church, Wales)
Revd Neville Jarrett (Congregational Federation)
Revd Stuart Hynd (Church of Scotland)
10. (d) **By reinstatement:**
Revd Ivor Cassam
11. (e) **Transfer within the Roll of Ministers**
Auxiliary to Stipendiary: Revd James L McCormack, Revd David Robertson, Revd James Forster, Revd Andrew Lonsdale, Revd Martin Truscott.
12. **Ministers of other churches serving the URC**
Revd Michael Grunwald (Presbyterian Church of USA)
Revd Allen Ross Morton (The Baptist Union)
Revd Ben Tettey (Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana)
Revd Ian Hayter (Baptist Union)
Revd William Johnston (Presbyterian Church of Canada)
Revd Joan Grindrod (United Church of Christ, USA)
Revd Walter Alan Savill (Presbyterian Church of New Zealand)

Revd Roger Heimer (Disciples of Christ, USA)
Revd Kenneth Strachan (Baptist)

13. **Deletions from the Roll of Ministers** (from 1st March 1990 to 28th February 1991)
14. **(a) By resignation:**
Revd Eric Cowan
Revd Michael Armstrong
Revd John Vickers
Revd Dr Fred Kaan
15. **(b) By transfer to other churches:**
Revd John H. Fraser to the Church of Scotland
Revd David Murphy to Presbyterian Church, USA.
Revd Emyr Huw Jones to Union of Welsh Independents
Revd Eric Freeman to the Fellowship of Churches of Christ.
16. **(c) By committee decision**
Revd David Beattie
17. **Certificates of Eligibility** to serve the URC have been granted to 13 ministers in the past year.
18. **Roll of Accredited CRCWs**
Miss Marie Trubic, Miss Marilyn Allen.
19. We note with sadness that 42 ministers have died during the past year and tribute is paid to them during the Assembly.

REGULATIONS REGARDING ELIGIBILITY

20. It has been necessary to update the regulations promulgated in 1979 and this revised wording is set out in **Appendix I**.

Resolution 2

MINISTERS OF OTHER CHURCHES

21. We continue to be served by a significant number of ministers of other churches, usually in an ecumenical situation. We also give permission to District Councils to concur in a call to those who are to serve a URC pastorate for a limited period, normally not exceeding three years, and to be paid by the MoM Fund. We wish to stress that the rules of the Fund allow this arrangement in special short term situations, and our relationship with our sister denominations prohibits an abuse of the provision.

RECRUITMENT OF MINISTERS

22. We note a continuing need to seek more candidates for both stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministry, and particularly for Church-related Community Workers and lay preaching. As a consequence we have continued to sponsor the annual Ministry Experience Week and Vocational Conferences and have been much helped by Provinces, many of whom have also taken their own initiatives.

23. The Overseas Recruitment Scheme (which encourages a controlled entry into our ministry for a limited period from Germany, the United States, and for the first

time this year, Canada) is being monitored, and guidelines for its operation have been updated. A conference for American ministers serving us at the present time was well attended and its content appreciated, and lessons learnt will be duly shared.

VOCATIONS SUNDAY

24. It has been our practice to remember vocations to ministry in its various forms on a special Sunday every other year. At the request of the Methodist Church and in tune with our own thinking we are exploring the possibility of a joint arrangement. We hope to be able to work with them in producing worship material and have it in mind to plan for our first Vocations Sunday together towards the end of 1991 or early in 1992.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

25. Much committee time has been spent in analysing and revising our arrangements for handling ministerial candidature as a national church. The process is an ongoing one and there is no system which could be considered entirely satisfactory and fixed. Times and ideas continue to change and we are alert to new possibilities and can adapt constantly.

26. We bring two important and significant matters to the attention of the Assembly:

(A) National Assessment Panel

27.1. As part of the regular review of the National Assessment Panel, the Vocations Committee has taken very seriously a suggestion from the Nominations Committee that "instead of the large pool of assessors, each of whom is used but infrequently, we might have a very much smaller group of people, each of whom would commit themselves to attending almost every assessment conference for a period of say, 3 years. We would probably have to make some arrangements to ensure continuity but that could be done by staggered retirement. This smaller group of people could be trained for the task and would, because of their frequent use, become more skilled than most of the present members of the panel could hope to be."

27.2. Our view in the Department, which is shared by the Executive Committee, is that this is a realistic and worthwhile objective.

27.3. We are therefore seeking to set up, with the help of the Nominations Committee, a new **National Assessment Board**.

27.3. (a) We have to cover 4 main conferences each year (using 8- 12 assessors on each occasion) and 3 reassessments each year (using 4 assessors on each occasion). This leads us to recommend a Board of 16 assessors, plus secretarial staff, and those responsible for Personal Development, and for training recommendations, with an independent Convener. This number would allow for holidays, sickness, work commitments etc. and mean that each assessor would be expected to attend at least 3 main conferences each year and have a regular share in reassessments.

27.3. (b) There has been established already a need for regular training, and so the Board would meet twice a year to set programmes and prepare for its work.

27.3. (c) We will need separate arrangements for Church-related Community Worker candidates, who require specialised attention.

- 27.3. (d) Any Board would need to be representative of experience, a geographical spread, of age, gender and theological perception, and of those who are lay and ordained. The Board will need to have the trust of the whole Church and also feel itself part of a total assessment process which begins with the local church and is taken through the councils of the wider church.
- 27.3. (e) Members of the National Assessment Board would be invited to serve for a maximum of 4 years and would retire in rotation.

(B) Decision-making process

28. In 1990 the Assembly debated a significant resolution concerned with our assessment process in relation to candidates for the ministry but deferred a decision until 1991. Some significant points were made in the discussion about the length of the procedure, the functions of the various councils of the Church and the need for a careful consultative and appeals process. All these have been taken into account during continuing discussions within the Department and the Provinces and form the basis of the revised proposals which now follow:

The Decision-making Process

29. The present assessment procedure has been in operation since the inception of the URC. A number of improvements have been made in the light of experience, notably in relation to the guidance given to all those involved in the process, in the pattern of assessment conferences and in our whole approach to the work. However, we remain dissatisfied and are convinced of the rightness of a major revision.

30. We have heard it strongly argued that the final decision on a particular candidate should be made by the whole Church through its Assembly National Assessment Panel, rather than by the particular Province involved. There is a logic and an equity in an order which moves from local church, through District and Province to a national body. The Assessment Conference, normally taking place over a period of three days can draw on wider expertise, and can reach a more objective understanding of the application before them. It has been argued, again strongly, that the Provincial Ministry Committee will be closer, but not too close, to the individual applicant, but we are not convinced. Anyway we are conscious that these important decisions, a burden to those who have to make them, result in the whole Church assuming financial and pastoral responsibility for those it admits upon training into its ministry. We therefore formally propose changes to the regulations promulgated in 1973 (Reports p.31, Record p.19)

Resolution 3. Recommendation (a)

A Consultative Process

31. There is a need to bring together the knowledge and perceptions of both the local and the wider church, throughout the assessment process.

32. In agreed circumstances of reasonable doubt or difficulty, it is possible for a particular candidacy to proceed from one stage to the next without the normal recommendation. In such cases, the councils involved, whether local church and District, District and Province, or Province and Assessment Conference, must consult one another and come to a common mind about the appropriate way to proceed.

33. Taking account of our experience in working together with Provinces, and noting comments made in correspondence and Assembly debate, we are quite clear that final decisions should only be reached after careful consultation in situations of disagreement. These are actually few in number but they cause the most difficulty

and distress and we want to safeguard the interests both of the individual and the church by taking great care in the process. Proposals for an appropriate consultative procedure will be brought to a later Assembly for approval.

Recommendation (b)

Guidance to candidates

34. The 1990 Assembly agreed to amend the wording of our report to include the words 'All candidates should receive written guidance on assessment and appeals procedures' and we were glad to support this. We see the wisdom of ensuring that all candidates are comfortable with the process and know what is expected of them, and that they have an opportunity to appeal against decisions which affect their future. In the case of candidates who are not recommended by their Province, and where a local appeal against the decision is not upheld, they can appeal directly to the appropriate standing committee of the Assembly, and if their appeal is upheld by that body, they can attend a national assessment conference, though it will be recognised that they then come without Provincial support.

Recommendation (c)

Guidance to the Councils of the Church

35. We also see wisdom in giving clear guidance to local churches and District Councils so that they know what is expected of them, just as much as the Provinces, and are able properly to come to their own judgement about candidates for the ministry. We have abandoned our idea of recommending an earlier District interview before a Church Meeting resolution but we hope that churches will be able to turn in that direction as to our Department for advice, particularly in potentially difficult local situations.

Recommendation (d)

Continuing Oversight of ministerial candidates

36. We note that, whilst candidates become students in training either through a Course or a College, they still remain under the care of the sending Province. We wish to retain that responsibility, with a continuing and developing consultative process between the two bodies, which at the end of training will result in the final decision on eligibility for a Call determined by the Province. We note that there is no generally accepted practice in regard to this Synod responsibility and are recommending that an appropriate Certificate of Eligibility be provided by the Department.

Recommendation (e)

The Basis of Union

37. In the light of these proposals there will be necessary changes in the Basis of Union concerned with the functions of Assembly and the Provincial Synod and we have given formal notice in the usual way. Changes in the Assessment procedures cannot therefore come into practical effect until September 1992.

Recommendation (f)

AUXILIARY MINISTRY

38. With a clear policy now established as a result of debate in the 1990 Assembly we note that the Business Committee is bringing appropriate amendments to the Basis of Union to enable us to alter the title of 'Auxiliary' to 'Non-stipendiary' wherever this proves necessary. We now continue to explore with the Department ways in which this vital and still new ministry can be developed and candidates recruited. We have agreed, for example, to allow for the possibility of a team of

potential ministers to candidate together for local pastoral leadership, whilst continuing also to regard each as an individual.

PUBLICATIONS

39. This year we have produced a booklet 'More about the CRCW ministry' for enquirers and general interest, and for the committees of the Church a leaflet entitled 'What happens at a National Assessment Conference?' We have now embarked on a process of revising our general literature to take account of various changes in style and approach.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

40. We have bade farewell to a number of members who have served faithfully over a full period of 6 years, since the inception of the committee, and express our thanks to them. Not least do we record the completion of an extended period of service by Michael Stolton as our Convener, and prior to that with the former Applications Committee, and pay our tribute to his sympathetic and careful handling of so many complicated and confidential matters at times during periods of personal hardship and distress. We are all in his debt.

TRAINING COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs Elisabeth Jupp
Secretary: Revd Michael G Dunford

INTRODUCTION

41. In any discussion about ministerial training it is now customary to refer to 'colleges and courses'. We continue to value the full-time stipendiary training in the four colleges recognised by the Assembly (whose reports we set out in the **Appendix II (a)**) and the range of courses around the country equally recognised by the URC and used for non-residential training. There are 101 students in training for stipendiary ministry and 78 for non-stipendiary. The annual report of our Board of Studies is appended (**Appendix II (b)**).

42. There are two further significant developments. We are aware of the resources increasingly available locally and take every opportunity to draw upon them for both training programmes. Secondly, for a growing number of students, we are able to provide both part-time and full-time components. We have provided Guidelines for the Alternative Programme based on our experience (**Appendix II (c)**).

43. To this we add training programmes for both Lay Preachers and Church-related Community Workers. These are under careful review against the background of inter-departmental considerations of an integrated approach throughout the whole church.

LAY PREACHING SUB-COMMITTEE **Committee membership**

44. The past year has seen a number of changes in the Lay Preaching Committee. In May Mrs Sylvia Owen completed her term as convener of the sub-committee. We

are grateful to Sylvia for her devoted years of service, 11 years in all, and for the capable way she led us during a major transition.

45. The new convener is Mr John G Ellis, an accredited lay preacher, the chairman of Medway District Council and lay pastor in a joint Anglican/URC at Five Oak Green. We welcome John to the sub-committee.

46. The full sub-committee is: Mr John G Ellis, (Convener), Revd Michael Dunford (Secretary), Dr Marion Schofield (Southampton District), Dr Pat Cemlyn-Jones (Bristol District), Mr David Griffiths (Shropshire District), Mr Bill Young (Coventry District), Dr A (Berta) Doodson (Liverpool District).

Revision of 'Exploring the Faith'

47. The working party on the New Course has met three times. It has clarified its terms of reference and is now turning its attention to presenting a course primarily for **Worship Leaders**. The term is preferred to Lay Preaching Course because it reflects an equal emphasis on the other elements of worship as well as the sermon and the participation of others, in addition to preachers, in leading worship. It is recognised that such a course might contain modules which will be of use to others in the Church and the working party is keen to explore the possibility of co-operation in this connection. The material prepared by other denominations is being studied, but at this stage it seems likely that the New Course will be produced by the URC and primarily for the URC. Although the course will be produced and administered nationally it will be "tutored" locally. Discussions have taken place about whether it is sufficient to revise the existing material and it has been decided that a completely new course is required. We are also bearing in mind discussions concerned with the possibility of some kind of integration of training programmes.

MINISTERIAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION

48. There is often an apparent gap between perceptions of the ministry we need, and the training programmes we provide through the courses and the colleges. Concerned by this and seeing a need to review progress since the last Review almost ten years ago in the light of changing circumstances, the Department set up a wide-ranging Consultation in March 1990 with representation from all the Provinces.

49. A large number of issues have been raised, including pastorate and community-based training, collaborative forms of ministry, training in evangelism and church planting, the possibilities of stipendiary and non-stipendiary training together, preparation for specialist ministries, inner city and rural situations.

50. A small Task Force has reviewed progress since the 1982 report of the Review Group and canvassed views from those trained within the URC and who are now ordained. A number of new issues have been added to a growing list of items which have already been referred to the Training Committee for action and report.

51. During the year we have received strong recommendations also from the Roding District Council of the Thames North Province regarding the present methods of ministerial training in our colleges. Representatives of the committee met with members of the District and explored the tensions between the different perceptions of what should be encompassed in basic ministerial training, and between content and skills. The committee always welcomes the views of the churches.

52. We have already begun to consider ways in which we must adapt and develop our own training programme to take account of a call to evangelism and the needs of our inner cities.

THE COLLEGES

53. **Mansfield College** has considered the Visitors' Report, commenced implementation of certain recommendations and asked for clarification on other points. The college is now actively considering the training of stipendiary and non-stipendiary students together.

54. Consequent on the setting up of a new Constitution for Mansfield College, it has been necessary to amend the original Trust relating to the 1885 and 1899 Charity Schemes which preceded the move of the college from Spring Hill, Birmingham to Oxford and which continues to provide endowment income of approximately £30,000 p.a. The Charity Commissioners have approved a new and separate Scheme for the **Spring Hill College Endowment** administered by the new Trustees of Mansfield College, but which preserves the original Trust and takes account of its original objects. This was duly sealed on 1st August 1990. The URC Trustees on the Mansfield Board have been fully involved in the discussions, have given their approval to these new and practical arrangements, and consider that the investments are in safe hands.

55. **Northern College** has embarked upon a thorough review of training needs and procedures, on which the committee is represented. We wish the college well in this demanding task.

56. Following the ecumenical inspection carried out two years ago, **The Queen's College** produced a revised curriculum which recognises the variety within the Christian denominations and discussion continues as to how to build the best course combining the needs and insights of these strands.

57. At **Westminster College** it is hoped that the Faculty of Theology of the University of Cambridge will give accreditation to a Certificate of Theology for Ministry, of the Cambridge Federation, possibly by the 1991-1992 session. The committee is most grateful to the staff and to Dr David Thompson for their work in connection with this.

58. Dr Stephen Mayor, Director of the Cheshunt Foundation and Director of Studies in Church History at the college, has announced his retirement on 31st August 1992. Discussions are now taking place between the representatives of both the Assembly and the Cheshunt Governors prior to the advertisement of the post. It is hoped to offer a candidate for approval by Assembly in 1992.

59. An ecumenical inspection of the Cambridge Federation will be carried out this year.

INTERNSHIP TRAINING

60. Following the review chaired by Revd Dr Leslie Green, each college has reviewed its procedure for internship. The scheme remains under constant scrutiny as it is agreed that internship is both valued and valuable. We are currently considering financial questions and the support and training that should be offered to those helping us in the placements.

STUDENT CONCERNS

61. We appreciate the attendance at all our meetings of the student representative and across the years many concerns have been shared with us. A wide variety of circumstances produce situations needing particular care and sensitivity and we do

our best to give helpful advice, and where necessary take appropriate action. Student support, insurance in 'high risk' areas, grant problems, family difficulties, student retreats have all been considered over the past twelve months.

ECUMENICAL PROVISION OF STAFF TRAINING

62. The Church of England has suggested that there should be ecumenical provision of staff training. Each of the Federations in which our individual colleges are involved already has this on its agenda and some training already takes place. This needs to be extended to those involved with Courses, and funding has been made available.

MINISTERIAL TRAINING FUND

National Appeal

63. The committee was very encouraged by and grateful for the churches' response to the National Appeal, for which the total raised was in excess of £465,000. This indicates the importance which members of local churches attach to the standard of training, and the care of our students.

Student Loans

64. The colleges are not recognised institutions for the operation of the Loan Scheme and in common with other denominations, no arrangements have been made to apply for recognition. The committee has agreed to pay all students funded (whether LEA or URC) an additional grant equal to the student loan figure or 10% of the individual's maintenance grant, whichever is the higher.

Funding of Future Scholars

65. We have been alerted to the need for the URC to identify and encourage those who will be the theologians and teachers in the future, and continue to respond positively to requests for the funding of post-graduate research, either in-service or by an extension of the foundation period of training. We are currently assisting a number of students in this way, though we have no guarantee that they will ultimately serve the Church through this particular ministry. Part of our budget is available for In-Service Training of various kinds, and much serious study is going on, often assisted by the growing Sabbatical programme.

SUITABILITY FOR MINISTRY

66. When a Moderator introduces a final year student to a pastorate, the pastorate assumes that the student is already recognised by the whole Church as suitable for ministry. It may be true that the call of a particular pastorate is the final step in the Church's approval of a candidate for our ministry but that fact is not uppermost in the mind of our churches when they are introduced to a student who might become their minister. They do not treat the task of meeting and calling a student as in any way different from a minister already on our Roll.

67. For the vast majority of students this raises no problems. There are, however, problems in a minority of instances where some doubt lingers about the student's appropriateness as a minister of the United Reformed Church. Currently, the procedures whereby we decide whether a student can proceed to ordination are unclear. Technically, the decision may belong to the sending Province but the logistics of organising such a decision at the end of the final year are fraught with difficulties not least so far as timing is concerned. Students are issued with a Leaving Certificate but the function of the Certificate within the processes of a Call is limited. The colleges however, will have the most relevant knowledge about whether a student is suitable for ministry.

68. In further consultation with the colleges, both staff and students and with Provincial Synods, we have agreed to give consideration to the following procedure:

68.1. At the end of every academic year the College Principal (or other appropriate person) gives written affirmation, after consultation with other college staff, that the student is progressing satisfactorily towards ministry in the URC. This affirmation would form part of the usual college report and would thus be seen and acknowledged by the student. The affirmation at the end of the penultimate year would obviously be of particular significance for the Moderators' task of introducing a student to a pastorate.

'Satisfactory' would at least imply that the student has a good measure of self-awareness, has a sense of God's presence, is achieving good personal relationships with staff and peers, holds a positive and creative attitude to the URC, could work within a pastorate of more than one congregation, would work collaboratively with others (ministers, elders etc), and is able to communicate effectively.

Where the college is unable to give such an affirmation a meeting should be planned between representatives of the sending Province, representatives of the college staff, and the student.

68.2. If between annual reports the college encounters major problems with a student the Provincial committee is asked to interview the student.

68.3. Since internship is an important part of the training, and a significant indicator of suitability for ministry then, where the internship year is the final year of the student's training, a further report from the college, taking account of comments by the internship supervisor, is made at the end of the first term of the final year. In this case the Moderators take no action in introducing a student to a pastorate until at least January when the report will have been received by the sending Province.

CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS

69. Consequent upon decisions taken last year by Assembly, we have now enrolled our first student on the training programme arranged by the Salford Urban Mission, which will be part work-based and part-time study in Salford. We look to expansion in this area, particularly against the background of ecumenical opportunities, and continue at our other base in Selly Oak, Birmingham.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

70. This year, Principals Jack McKelvey and Martin Cressey, the Revd Charles Brock, Revd Donald Hilton and Revd David Jenkins all complete their terms of service on the committee and we extend to them our grateful thanks.

71. We are glad to welcome the Revd Dr Sehon Goodridge, Director of the Simon of Cyrene Theological Institute and look forward to working closely with him in the new ecumenical enterprise.

PERSONALIA

72. During the year, the committee has received with sadness news of the deaths of Revd Dr John Huxtable, Revd Professor Hubert Cunliffe-Jones and Revd Yvonne Workman. We give thanks to Almighty God for their lasting contributions to the work of our ministry.

SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Dr David Cornick

Secretary: Revd Michael C Diffey

CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORK

73. In 1987 Assembly acknowledged **that in Church-Related Community Workers (CRCWs), properly trained and properly employed, the Lord Jesus Christ is giving particular gifts for a particular ministry and is calling such individuals to exercise them in an office which is duly recognised within His Church.** Assembly also agreed that from 1989 the salaries of a limited number of URC accredited Church-Related Community Workers, working in approved posts, could be paid centrally from the Maintenance of the Ministry fund.

74. At the beginning of 1991 there were fourteen accredited CRCWs. Of these, seven are working in approved posts, three are training or have been accepted for training for the ordained ministry, three are variously employed outside the URC, and one is without a post. There are four students in training - three at St Andrews/Westhill and one at Salford Urban Mission.

75. The Ministries in the Community Sub-Committee began a major review of the CRCW programme in 1989. It involved wide-ranging consultations with workers and former workers, management groups, and others interested or involved in this work. Mrs Jean Sames, a URC Elder and staff member of the Youth and Community Work Department at Westhill College, undertook the field work. The two residential consultations were assisted by Mr Paul Henderson of the Community Projects Foundation.

76. The Ministries Department in welcoming the proposals of this review, affirms its confidence in, and support for, Church-Related Community Work. It commends again to Assembly this ministry as an important development in the life of the Church and the mission of God.

77. Church-Related Community Work involves the Church in a process of re-examining itself, enriching its relationships and re-ordering its life to reflect the values of the Kingdom of God, enabling it to relate as a community with and within the community in ways which enhance human dignity. This involves the Church in a learning process about itself, its internal relationships and its relationships with the community. In so doing it becomes aware of those things which prevent people living creatively and responsibly in community; it struggles with those involved in the search for justice and peace in creation; and it identifies with those who are marginalized in recognizing their needs and becoming equipped to challenge and confront those forces in society which deny them the opportunity of a creative and responsible involvement in life. Inevitably this is a difficult process which demands much from those who engage in it. It often brings them into conflict with influential and powerful forces and even with those with whom they work. Through this process the church is not only open to the possibility of hearing good news from those with whom it works in the community but is itself changed by that good news.

78. The Department has noted with gratitude the stories of effective community work exercised by the small number of CRCWs widely spread over the country and mostly in extremely difficult circumstances.

79. The review has revealed very clearly that if this ministry is to survive there is an urgent need to address the ways in which CRCWs are managed and supported

especially because they work in areas of multi-deprivation in which the churches' already scarce resources are often strained to breaking point.

80. Some of the churches with which they work are themselves struggling to survive. This struggle sometimes leads to tension and internal power conflicts which absorb the members' energy and make it hard for them to hold on to the original vision they had when the CRCW came.

81. Some of the churches are numerically small and with all they have to do the additional responsibilities of a CRCW can overwhelm them. Nevertheless, many do give most effective support.

82. In order to help everyone in this situation the review proposed a new **management structure** which seeks a partnership, based on a covenant, between the project, the worker and the Ministries in the Community Sub-Committee. Maggie Hindley, one of our accredited CRCWs is, through consultations with those involved in the CRCW Programme, translating the proposals into a form which clearly spells out the tasks expected of the partners, including a contract of employment and the covenant. Discussions are also taking place with existing projects to explain the new structure and reach agreement.

83. The proposals for this new management structure include a post for a **Development Worker** whose job description will include the promotion of community work within the URC, the monitoring of projects and applications and the support of CRCWs in training and in post.

84. This post is regarded as an essential part of the new management structure to ensure a viable programme and establish a firm base from which this ministry can develop in order to make an effective contribution to mission. The Department itself is persuaded of the need and committed to these proposals and had intended to ask Assembly to meet the local costs of this post from central funds. However, in view of increasingly heavy demands on these funds we are persuaded that rather than put Assembly in the invidious position of deciding between worthwhile causes, it would be better to try to raise them from other sources. Consequently the Department is discussing with others, including the World Church and Mission Department, alternative possibilities of funding the costs of this post.

Resolution 4.

'SPECIAL CATEGORY' MINISTRIES

85. The Committee continues to administer the 30 posts in new or priority areas of outreach, chaplaincies in industrial mission or educational institutions and innovative ministry in unique situations. 30 posts are approved and the 25 occupied are distributed among 11 of the 12 provinces.

MINISTRIES IN ECUMENICAL SITUATIONS

86. The Plan for Partnership (13.3) allows for the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to make grants towards the cost of ministry in ecumenical situations. As reported to Assembly in 1989 the Support Committee now handles these grants. The budget for 1991 is set at £85,499. This allows for an anticipated increase in applications towards 'ecumenically appointed' ecumenical officers as suggested by Churches Together in Pilgrimage (p.32). The Committee signalled to provinces in 1989 the intention to ensure that grants, at a flat rate, of £1000 pa, for a full-time post, are payable. A revised budget now permits us to index link these payments.

INDUSTRIAL EVANGELISM FUND

87. A former trust of the Presbyterian Church of England and Wales permitted grants to be made within the Presbyteries of London North and London South. It has been agreed that this fund should be handled by the Support Committee. The income is approximately £6000 pa and in 1990 five payments were made totalling £5200.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE REPORT

88. The Committee has produced and distributed to Districts and Provinces copies of the notes on Declaring a Vacancy, Filling a Vacancy, Declaration of Equal Opportunities Policy, a Grievance Procedure and forms for the Pastorate Profile, Ministerial Terms of Settlement and Curriculum Vitae for stipendiary ministers. Additional copies are available from the Bookshop at 20p per set.

89. The Department is considering the implications of the 1990 Assembly Resolution on Equal Opportunities.

90. A small Working Party has been set up to begin the process of reviewing the system of Provincial In-Service Training Officers (recommendation 19).

91. The Committee will issue in due course guidelines for applying the principles of the report to part-time stipendiary ministers and to non-stipendiary ministers

INDUSTRIAL MISSION

92. Over the past year the appointment and review of Industrial Chaplaincy posts has had a high profile on the Agenda of the Support Committee, with applications from new projects plus renewal applications from existing posts. At various times concern has been expressed at committee level regarding some Provincial and District commitment to posts within their particular areas and it is hoped that in the coming year this element of responsibility can be strengthened. During 1990 meetings took place between representatives of the URC Industrial Mission Network with committee personnel of Ministries Department with a view to URC IM seeking greater support from the Ministries Department. Finance and accountability are both areas which require on-going consideration.

UNITED BOARD

93. There are 17 United Board Chaplains serving the 3 services, 6 of whom are URC ministers. There are vacancies in both the Navy and the RAF and those interested should contact the Secretary of the United Board, the Revd Philip Schofield.

94. The Committee is aware, at the time of writing, of 3 United Board Chaplains in the Gulf but the consequences of the war make particular demands on all Chaplains and our thoughts and prayers are very much with them in the difficult job they are called to do.

MINISTRIES IN HIGHER & FURTHER EDUCATION

95. A Working Party set up by the Free Church Federal Council has produced a report on free church Chaplaincies in Higher Education. The Committee is grateful to this Working Party for a valuable contribution to this important area of ministry.

96. Before this Working Party, the Support Committee floated the idea that the Churches' Higher Education Liaison Group (CHELG) might consider the possibility of being formally constituted as an official body and acting on behalf of all the churches to provide oversight and development of chaplaincies in Higher and Further Education. There was some fear in the Committee that the FCFC process could, by calling for action by the Free Churches, inhibit the possibility of action on a wider ecumenical front. The Committee is pleased to note that the final proposals of the FCFC Working Party include, as a priority, consultation with the Churches Together in England.

PATTERNS OF MINISTRY

97. Since the United Reformed Church was formed, much discussion and consultation has taken place about the character, calling, support, numbers and variety of ministers in the URC. We in the Department have welcomed this, indeed have prompted much of it, and as a result a great deal of material has been assembled. In the summer of 1990 we asked that all this be examined by a small group to see if a comprehensive picture might emerge to guide us for the future. The result is a Discussion Document entitled '**Patterns of Ministry in the United Reformed Church**' which we commend to the councils and departments of the Church. (**Appendix III**)

98. The group undertaking this work consisted of Mrs Marion Weedon, the Revd Tony Spring, Revd Michael Dunford and was led by the Revd Bernard Thorogood. Dr Christoph Schwoebel attended one meeting and has assisted by correspondence. The Revd John Taylor acted as the Consultant for the Methodist Church.

99. The group has had the benefit not only of the gathered material, but advice and comment from the Faith and Life Department. In particular we see future discussions taking place usefully alongside the debate they are promoting concerned with the Ministry of the whole people of God. We have also been helped by some initial personal responses from members of the Doctrine and Worship committee. Contact with the Methodist Church has also been carefully maintained. If the Assembly should initiate a process of negotiation with that Church then several of the suggestions in our paper would need to be considered as part of the further debate.

100. We wish to emphasise that the recommendations in the paper are by no means definitive or prescriptive and are merely intended to provoke a major debate at the Assembly in 1992. An unhurried timetable is therefore envisaged and a broadening out of the discussion to include all the councils and departments of the church. We intend to present the material in a format helpful to those who have to read and study it, and to provide questions for wider discussion.

Resolution 5

INTEGRATED TRAINING

101. We have shared fully in the inter-departmental working party on Integrated Training, which has surveyed the training programmes and resources currently available in the URC and considered the rationale and philosophy which lie behind them. We are glad to share with the Faith and Life Department in bringing a report to Assembly reflecting a first stage in the development of this important aspect of our church life.

DEPLOYMENT

102. Discussions continue about the best way to define and use our ministerial resources. We also have to face up realistically to the demands made upon our

ministry and to discover the best way of deploying it fairly and with attention to new developments in mission. We therefore see it as necessary and desirable to continue some form of deployment policy in the future and are in process of working this out with the Provincial Synods.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 The Assembly adopts the regulations regarding the eligibility of ministers of other churches for entry into the ministry of the United Reformed Church, set out in Appendix 1 (Reports to Assembly p 102) in place of those laid down in 1979, and authorises the appropriate committee within the Ministries Department to act in accordance with them.
- 3 The Assembly adopts the following procedures for candidature for the Ministry:
 - (a) Candidates must first be supported by their local church meeting, proceed to their District Council, and on the recommendation of their Province attend a National Assessment conference where a final decision will be made on their acceptance, and a recommendation on the course of training to be followed.
 - (b) All the councils of the Church are called upon to share in the consultative process which then enables the church to arrive at a decision on a particular candidate.
 - (c) All candidates shall receive written guidance on assessment and appeals procedures.
 - (d) All the councils involved in the assessment procedure shall receive guidance and support from the appropriate Standing Committee of the Assembly.
 - (e) Provinces, as part of their continuing responsibility for oversight of a candidate, shall liaise with the training body concerned throughout, to enable them finally to determine fitness for ministry and to issue a certificate of eligibility accordingly.
 - (f) The clauses in the Basis of Union be amended accordingly
Functions of Synod (v) (p.19 Manual) "to make recommendations to the Assembly or its Standing Committee regarding a candidate for the ministry, after receiving reports from a local church and District Council";
Functions of General Assembly XIX (p.23 Manual) "to receive and decide upon applications for recognition as candidates for the ministry, which have been previously considered and transmitted by Provincial Synods, and to determine on appropriate training".

(N.B.): This is an additional function of Assembly, and would therefore involve subsequent renumbering.

4 Assembly acknowledges the work undertaken by the Ministries Department to implement the proposals which arose from the review of the CRCW Programme. It accepts the need for a Development Worker to deepen perceptions of and advocate ministry-with-the-community by the URC, to support the existing programme and ensure a sound base for its development. It authorises the Ministries Department to allocate one of its Maintenance of the Ministry funded CRCW/'Special Category' Ministry posts for the Worker and to seek appropriate ways to fund the local expenses.

5 The Assembly receives the discussion document produced by the Ministries Department entitled '**Patterns of Ministry in the United Reformed Church**' and refers it to the councils and departments of the church in preparation for a major debate in 1992.

APPENDIX I

Regulations regarding the eligibility of Ministers from Other Churches to enter our Roll of Ministers.

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

- (a) the minister is a minister in good standing of the URC,
- (b) the minister is on the roll of URC personnel serving overseas, or
- (c) the minister holds a current certificate of eligibility issued by the Ministries Department of the URC.

2. The Ministries Department is empowered to issue a certificate of eligibility for a call, on behalf of the Assembly, in the case of ministers from member churches of the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland, or churches overseas which are member churches of the Council for World Mission or the World Alliance of Reformed Churches

provided that:

- (a) they will subscribe to the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church,
- (b) they are in good standing with their own denomination;
- (c) their course of training for the ministry was at least equivalent to that required of students for the ministry of the URC and/or that they have special gifts or qualifications which would make them of service in the ministry of the URC, and
- (d) they have understood and accepted the URC responsibility towards pension provision and retirement housing.

3. The Ministries Department shall have the right to require further training for our ministry before issuing a certificate of eligibility. Where such training is required there may be a charge on the Ministerial Training Fund.

4. In the cases of ministers from churches other than those covered in paragraph 2, the Ministries Department will present any proposal to issue a certificate of eligibility to the Assembly, or the Executive Committee, for approval.

APPENDIX II (a)

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

1. This year's report is set out in a way which will remind members of the General Assembly of the manner in which the United Reformed Church exercises its oversight of Westminster College, an important part of the mission equipment of the church.

2. **Nominations to teaching staff.** The college teaching staff are appointed by the Assembly on the direct nomination of a special sub-committee of the Ministries Department Training Committee. By that route the college has welcomed the Revd Bill Mahood as Director of Pastoral Studies, on a five year appointment, extendable up to seven years. He and his family are well settled into the house at 38 Victoria Park, newly purchased for them within easy walking distance of the college, and Bill is bringing his broad experience and energetic approach to bear upon the work, particularly of the internship year.

3. **Board of Studies.** The course is directed by a Board of Studies consisting of eight members appointed by the Training Committee and the five teaching staff. The new Convener, in succession to Miss Ann Phillips, is the Revd Dr Stephen Orchard. The Board is now preparing for the visitation of the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges by the three sponsoring churches (Anglican, Methodist, URC) and is seeking to identify issues on which the comment of the visitors will be particularly sought. These will certainly include the mission emphasis in training for ministry, collaborative methods of developing collaborative ministry, and the integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes for future ministers of Word and Sacraments. The Principal's involvement in the working party on the possibilities for integrated training in the URC has helped to focus these concerns.

4. **Management Committee.** Considerable resources of buildings, library and equipment are entrusted to the care of the Management Committee, also appointed by the Ministries Department Training Committee. Last year's report looked forward to the shaping of a plan for updating the buildings. This has gone ahead, but under considerable restraints and frustrations from the economic climate and the planning problems of a city such as Cambridge. The development aspects of the committee's thinking are still waiting upon planning permissions, but the sale of 11 Clarkson Road and its replacement with 38 Victoria Park have freed some resources for refurbishment of the college residential block in a way that will make it both more pleasant for the resident students and more useful for URC and other conferences.

5. **House Committee.** The Management Committee uses a smaller, local, group as its House Committee for day to day matters. The number of students on the college register continued high with 41 URC and 3 overseas students (from Czechoslovakia, Germany and Lebanon).

6. **Student Councils.** The Theological Students Council and the Residents' Association (which includes University lodgers, many of them overseas post-graduate students) have a vital role in maintaining community life. Year by year Senior Students, Secretaries and Treasurers of Students' Council, Chairpersons of the Residents Association and other officers give effective service and deserve the church's gratitude for this unheralded work.

MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

7. **Students and staff.** There are 24 people in training for ministry including one Congregational Federation student, one Quaker, and another 15 in theology out of a total of 203 students in the college. We welcomed the Revd Dr John Muddiman to our staff as Fellow in New Testament and we are sharing the new Lutheran Fellow, the Revd Dr Scott Ickert, with Ripon College, Cuddesdon. The death of the Revd Yvonne Workman in January is a profound loss. Her radiance and intelligence graced the college community and her part-time work at Wheatley URC is sorely missed as well.

8. Revd Charles Brock served again as Chair of the twelve Oxford Theological Colleges and he continues to teach at Ripon College, Cuddesdon. He carries on as Convener of the URC Urban and Rural Mission Group. The Revd Justine Wyatt had a term's sabbatical at Mansfield Settlement in London's East End and continues her ministry in the Longworth Group. The Revd Tony Tucker expands his many college and denominational activities. The staff had a Retreat together with other theological tutors led by the Chairman of the Mansfield Ministerial Training Committee, the Revd Bernard G. Thorogood. Work was done on our new **Aims and Objectives** paper. Students and staff have a joint retreat in May which has proved valuable. We welcomed former student Revd Dr Colin Thompson as Fellow of St. Catherine's College.

9. An Action-Reflection course developed by the students was successfully launched and three groups were formed to do theological reflection on some of the sections of Oxford (rich, city centre, poor) where people lived or worked. The Revd Dr Robin Pagan, who has experience in industrial, urban, and rural mission, joined in and will be helping to organise a future course based on East Oxford. We also used the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies for a new course.

10. College preachers included 'Christian Weaver (Nottingham Wesleyan Holiness Church), Peter Hinchliffe (Balliol), Margaret Yee (Nuffield), Maurice Wiles (Regius Professor of Divinity), Graham Cook (Moderator of General Assembly), Margaret Hebblethwaite (Author and Broadcaster), Dick France (Principal, Wycliffe), Harry Wardlaw (Melbourne), Michael Cruchley (Rural Consultant, URC), and college staff.

11. We are always grateful to the university faculties for organising so many rich and varied lectures and seminars that relate to the work of the church and society and we deem it a privilege to be able to contribute to these as well.

12. The College Development Officer is exploring a number of future options that would fit in well with the purposes of the college - a major environmental ethics centre; a Fellowship in Islamic Studies; an American Studies programme (cementing the close links across the pond the college has had for over a century); and a Comparative Management Fellowship (churches, industry, overseas, etc). All these projects involve Church and world and would deepen our understandings of their inter-relationships.

13. We record with gratitude the lives of URC college members who died this year, Revd Dr John Huxtable, Revd Prof Hubert Cunliffe-Jones and Revd Yvonne Workman. Memorial services at the college were held for John Huxtable with Revd Graham Cook presiding and for Yvonne Workman with the Bishop of Oxford preaching.

14. We are grateful for past, present and future contributions to the Mansfield Appeal and/or the Ordination Training Fund.

NORTHERN COLLEGE, MANCHESTER

15. A new venture was the college Open Day which was held in the spring of last session. Representatives were present from most of the URC districts near Manchester and all but two URC Provinces were represented. There was a good contingent from the Congregational Federation, and representatives of the Moravian Church were present. This meant that we had a cross-section of the churches for whom we train students. Proceedings began with a trip down memory lane to our former home at Whalley Range. Displays and presentations of various kinds at Luther King House introduced visitors to the many aspects of college life and work today. The comments we received indicate that it was a much appreciated event. We are indebted to David Peel, the members of the Advocacy Committee and the students, for the hard work they put into the arrangements.

16. The college lunch held at the Assembly at Wolverhampton was attended by 35 alumni. The speaker was the Revd Tony Coates of the URC World Church and Mission Department.

17. Throughout the session students worked at their studies, undertook placements and other forms of training, and served the local churches by means of internships, pastorates, college visits and conducting Sunday worship. Once again they acquitted themselves well in the university examinations. Bob Day and Stephen Sutcliffe won university prizes and Andrew Dawson returned from Chicago with his Master's Degree (distinction). We congratulate Andrew on winning a Major State Studentship from the British Academy to undertake research at the University of Oxford which will, we hope, eventually lead to a doctorate. While at Oxford Andrew has been seconded to Mansfield College.

18. No less than 20 students were farewelled at the Valedictory Service on the 15th June when the preacher was the Revd Malcolm Hanson. It was gratifying that all the leaving students had received calls to churches by Valedictory Day.

19. This session, with rather less students enrolling than those who were valedicted, the number of students at the college has dropped. However, we are impressed by the motivation of the new students. Included among these is Walter Silva from the Presbyterian Church of Sri Lanka.

20. Our contacts with the world church are also being maintained through students doing training overseas. Recently one student visited Israel, and another South Africa and another Guyana. Two others are hoping to go to India this summer.

21. An important step taken by the Governors towards the end of last session was the setting up of a Review Group. A lot of water has passed down the Mersey since the last review. A recent study of Internship Training identified issues which were seen to have ramifications for all our courses, and the difficulties we continue to experience in trying to integrate work done at the college and in placements with work done at the University point to the need to look again at this problem. There is also our place in the Federation and the question how we can utilize our resources and opportunities to the full. We are grateful to those who have agreed to serve on the review and have every confidence that they will perform their task with thoroughness and freshness of vision. The URC is represented by the Revds Wendy Baskett, Alan Dunstone, and Mrs. Elisabeth Jupp. The views of a wide section of individuals and churches representing the Congregational Federation and the URC, representatives of specialist ministries and others have been sought and the group is now in the process of studying these.

22. This spring the Easter Mission will be held in Edgeley Road URC in Stockport.

23. Co-operation within the Northern Federation for Training in Ministry continues. Plans are well in advance for the Manchester Hospital Course in the summer vacation. Plans are also in hand for courses in rural ministry and mission and racism awareness.

24. The college recently lost the services of its treasurer, Mr Fred Sharp. Fred served the college for twenty years and those who worked with him during this period remember his invaluable contribution, his good humour, and his unfailing interest in people. We wish Fred good health and a good retirement. His place has been filled by Mr John Jenkinson. As the son-in-law of the sister of a former Principal of the College, the late Dr W Gordon Robinson, John knows a good deal of the history and atmosphere of the college, while his experience as Manager in the NATWEST bank gives him the kind of expertise the college needs. We wish John well in his ministry in the college.

25. Our thanks are also due to those Trusts and Funds which help the college and, therefore, help the denomination by lightening the cost of training, viz. John Insell Trust, Charter Piggott Memorial Fund, Trustees of Samuel Cross, Dudley Trust (Gatley URC), Bertha and Will Duncan Bequest Fund, Norman Goodall Thanksgiving Fund, Frederick James Trust, the Lady Hewley Trust Fund, the Matthew Peach Bequest, the Ravensdale Trust, the Reyner Trustees, the Royton Manse Fund, Tubby Clayton Fund and Western College Trust. We also acknowledge with thanks those who have made contributions towards tuition and other costs, viz the Congregational Federation and the Lancashire Congregational Union (Inc.). We also acknowledge with grateful thanks a number of legacies received during the session.

THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM

26. This year has seen a substantial increase in numbers to 89, including 3 overseas students. The denominational breakdown is 45 Methodist, 34 Anglican and 8 URC students, plus one Lutheran and one post-denomination Church of China student. One significant feature among these changes is a doubling in the number of URC students, with three 'ordinary' first year students, one doing a final year on the Alternative Programme, and one spending two terms with us as he transfers from the non-stipendiary ministry. Another feature is the rise in the number of Methodists training for diaconal ministry from two to six. The average age of the student body has dropped to 33. The proportion of women students has risen to 36%. Just over half of the students are studying for the college Diploma or other college courses, while 5 are studying for the BA in Theology at the University of Birmingham, 22 for the post-graduate University Diploma in Theology and 15 are working for various higher degrees.

27. There are no changes of staff to announce, although we are in the process of looking for an additional half-time member of staff. We are glad to report that the Revd David Parker received the degree of DTheol. from the University of Leiden for his forthcoming book on Codex Bezae. The Revd John Wilkinson has spent the autumn term on sabbatical in the Caribbean, Latin America and the USA; and two more staff members are to take their sabbaticals in this year.

28. This year has seen the inauguration of the new curriculum, which appears at this stage to be meeting its aim of providing a core curriculum in the first year, with significant opportunity to pursue chosen options at depth in the second and third years. The situation will be reviewed initially at the end of the year.

29. Negotiations have been successfully concluded with the University and the Selly Oak Colleges to institute a BTheol. degree to replace the existing Certificate course. Students will be able to begin this course from September 1991.

APPENDIX II (b)

BOARD OF STUDIES FOR THE AUXILIARY MINISTRY

STUDENT NUMBERS

1. We have seen a perceptible rise in the number of students in training and this year we have 78 (34 men and 44 women) and this is most encouraging for the whole church. We need more ministers, and the opportunity to deploy a variety of gifts and the non-stipendiary ministry is clearly part of the future pattern.

ADMINISTRATION

2. From an oversight point of view we see ourselves as the equivalent of a college education committee, only ours is a college in dispersion and that bit harder to manage. However, we are fortunate in our Provincial Directors of Training and all those who serve us as tutors or members of supporting committees. There is much organisation and paper work, particularly in relation to liaison over training courses and financial support and we are grateful to report that Mr Barry Wakefield of the Eastern Province has now come in to assist us as Administrative Officer on a voluntary basis. He works from home, but is around in the office once a fortnight. We are grateful to him.

FITNESS FOR MINISTRY

3. The whole point of the exercise is to prepare candidates for ministerial leadership and service. It is not just a question of steering someone through a course of study but of enabling and encouraging them to grow in their faith and personal skills so they can, in fact, be fit to fulfil the role which the District Council has identified for them. We are particularly concerned to take account of the need for our ministers to be effective in their place of work and to prepare them for that role, whether formally arranged or informally exercised. This is where we rely on our Provincial Directors to keep close to each one, and to declare formally at the end of training that they are indeed eligible for a Call.

COURSES

4. We continue to develop our relationship with ecumenical and diocesan courses all round the country and we are finding this to be a very challenging and fruitful exercise. Currently 48 of our students are training by this method. The Church of England is well on with its plans to rationalise and regionalise its training resources and we have a proper share in that programme, alongside the Methodists. Our own URC Course 'Preparing for Ministry' which in 1988 underwent a modest revision, has stood up well against the test of time and experience. It still needs a more radical revision which we have just begun. This will take cognizance of personal needs expressed by students, of modern training techniques, and of resources available all round the country. We encourage every effort to relate training to the contexts of practical ministry, and ministry in the context of the community, and support a regular pattern of In-Service Training.

STUDENT SUPPORT

5. Susan Flynn serves the Board of Studies as a representative student, and on her initiative we have started a Newsletter which will keep everyone in touch with

what is going on both in the office and around the country. The support needed by students is very apparent, particularly when the going gets tough and we seek to be alert to this and make careful provision locally. In this regard the annual summer schools, run on a national basis, are also important and much appreciated. Considerable effort is expected by the staff of each school and we wish to record our thanks to all those who have responded to the call to assist the programme.

APPENDIX II (c)

THE OPERATION OF THE ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMME OF TRAINING FOR THE STIPENDIARY MINISTRY

Within the range of courses for stipendiary ministry, the General Assembly has agreed the following option:

Alternative Programme

"For those over 30 and where circumstances make the residential Basic Programme impracticable, it is possible to arrange an Alternative Programme. This is still college-based and lasts 4 years, including an internship element, with one or two years spent full-time at college. The other years would be spent in college-directed training. The colleges may use one of the local ecumenical training courses for this part of the training. The extra-mural part of the training may be shortened to allow for the candidate's experience or age."

(Book of Reports 1987).

GUIDELINES

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1. In accordance with Assembly policy, the appointed college will have overall **responsibility** for determining and then supervising the Alternative Programme for the individual student. This implies the usual interview before entrance, involvement in the life of the college community as is desirable, appropriate elements of the college course and annual reports to the sending Province.
 2. The Programme is open to those candidates for whom it is considered to be a suitable course in certain circumstances agreed between the Province and the college. It can be described as the **Home-based programme**, alongside the **College-based** and **Congregation/Community-based** programmes.
 3. Students may only be admitted to the Programme if they satisfy certain criteria: they are over the age of 30; have shown a capacity to study at home, and are well supported by their family if they have one, and by their local church and District Council. A suitable non-residential course, approved by the General Assembly through its Training Committee, should be within reasonable travelling distance.

4. Normally the course will last for 4 years, in order to take advantage of a part-time course of non-residential training, followed by at least one year of full-time college-based training. In certain circumstances, taking account of age and qualifications, the extra mural element may be shortened. Current experience leads us to use an ecumenical course in preference to any specially constructed private study programme. The build up of the final period of study will take account of personal needs and would not necessarily be part of the Internship Programme.
5. To avoid discontinuity between the two sections, and in order to build up a worthwhile 4 year training programme, there needs to be full **co-operation and co-ordination** between the trainers from the College and the Course involved.
6. Care must be taken to provide adequate **pastoral support** for the student and this will be the responsibility of the sending Province, taking account of pastoral provision on the course in the first period, and at the college for the full time period.
7. The **finances** of the course shall be the responsibility of the college in co-operation with the Province and the Ministerial Training Fund. During the part-time period, requests for fees for the ecumenical course, and for student expenses (travel and books), shall come through the college, in order that there may be clarity and fairness.
8. Students on local courses shall attend the required **summer schools**, but will not be invited to those arranged by the URC for non-stipendiary candidates (with the exception of students on the Manchester Christian Leadership Course). Wherever possible we will wish to avoid a confusion of loyalties.
9. Any **special arrangements** under the Programme can be undertaken only with the consent of the Training Committee.

APPENDIX II (d)

STUDENTS IN TRAINING 1990/91

NORTHERN PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Timothy London (Northern/NEOC), Peter Grey (Northern), James MacAulay (Westminster).

Auxiliary

Neville Husband (NEOC), Steven Orange (URC/NEOC).

NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Elizabeth Byrne (Westminster), Alison Chart (Northern), Margaret Tait (Northern), Peter Colwell (Mansfield), Pauline Elliott (Northern), Duncan Goldie (Westminster), Philip Nevard (Mansfield), Lythan Nevard (Mansfield), Robert Warwicker (Mansfield),

Norman Riley (Northern), Stephen Sutcliffe (Northern), Eric Massey (Northern), Hamish Temple (Northern).

Auxiliary

Audrey Boon (MCI), Shirley Farrier (MCI), Howard Farson (MCI), Muriel Jeffrey (MCI), Vivien Langfield (MCI), Michael Storr (MCI), Paul Brewerton (URC).

MERSEY

Stipendiary

Andrew Dawson (Northern and Mansfield), John Downing (Northern), Keith Hulse (Northern), Heather MacLeod (Northern), Heather Gabbott (Northern), Graham Knights (Northern).

Auxiliary

Linda Elliott (MCI), Susan Flynn (MCI), Bill Fraser (URC/MCI), Alison Hall (Northern), Trevor Legg (MCI), Iain Prentice (MCI), Ronald Reid (MCI).

YORKSHIRE

Stipendiary

John Campbell (Westminster), Elaine Dunn (Mansfield), Derek Redfern (Northern), David Fraser (Westminster), Rowena Francis (Northern), David Haslam (Northern), James Kissack (Mansfield), Fran Kissack (Mansfield).

Auxiliary

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

EAST MIDLANDS

Stipendiary

Robert Jones (Westminster), Revd Malcolm Deacon (Westminster), Findy Gorton (Queen's), Martyn Coe (Northern), Ruth Haward (Northern), Keith Brown (Westminster), Ian Smith (Westminster), Revd Reginald Moore (Westminster).

Auxiliary

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

WEST MIDLANDS PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Jane Stranz (Mansfield), Timothy Huc (Westminster), Kristin Ofstad (Westminster), Paul Stokes (Westminster), Peter Cruchley-Jones (Mansfield), Simon Walkling (Mansfield), Bill Frame (Queen's), Timothy Key (Northern), Jeffrey Hancocks (WMMTC / Queen's), Pat Nimmo (Queen's), Kevin Jones (Mansfield), Kenneth Newborough (WMMTC / Queen's)

Auxiliary

John Bassett (MCI), Mary Buchanan (WMMTC), Jennifer Marsh (URC), Aileen Walker (WMMTC).

EASTERN PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Roy Cole (Westminster), Margaret McKay (Westminster), Allan Smith (Mansfield), Geoffrey Clarke (Northern), Fleur Houston (Westminster), Neil Messer (Westminster), Ruth Maxey (Mansfield), Rosemary Tusting (Westminster).

Auxiliary

Angela Cotton (URC), Irene Hinde (URC), Mary Irish (URC), Jacqueline Knight (URC), Michael Lithgow (URC), Owen North (SADMTS), Jeremy Priest (URC).

SOUTH WESTERN

Stipendiary

Sandra Pickard (Mansfield), Harold Bignell (Westminster), Peter Crocker (Westminster), Graham Hoslett (Northern), Peter Phillips (Northern).

Auxiliary

Myra Dillistone (SWMTC), Pat Ford (SWMTC), Dick Gray (SDMTS), Gwyneth Jones (SWMTC), Susan MacBeth (SWMTC), Heather Pencavel (URC), Valerie Price (SWMTC), Dinah Whittall (SDMTS).

WESSEX

Stipendiary

Douglas Burnett (Westminster), Susan Cox (Westminster), Brian Clarke (Northern), Andrew McLuskey (Mansfield), Richard Turnbull (Northern).

Auxiliary

Ann Collins (URC), Robert Damer (SDMTS), Christopher Dean (SDMTS), Keith Green (URC), Birgitta Johnson (SDMTS), Peter Norris (SDMTS), Maureen Ponsford (SDMTS), Margaret Tilley (SDMTS).

THAMES NORTH

Stipendiary

Anne Wilson (Westminster), Gerald Moule (Queen's), Barrie Scopes (Mansfield), Andrew Sellwood (Westminster), Norman Vivian (Westminster), Richard Goldring (Queen's), Brian Harley (Westminster), Brian Shenk (Westminster), Stephen Newell (Mansfield), Martin Kitchener (Westminster), Janet Lees (Mansfield), Heather Gleeson (Westminster), James Brown (Westminster), Richard Bittlestone (SADMTS/Westminster).

Auxiliary

Pat Crawshaw (URC), Hugh Graham (SOC), Jonathan Hyde (Oak Hill), Martin Legg (Oak Hill), David McNair (URC), Ann McNair (SOC), David Skipp (URC), Ann Stokes (URC/SOC), Christine Willis (URC).

SOUTHERN

Stipendiary

Peter Henderson (Mansfield), Seth Brown (Westminster), Carole Ellefsen (Westminster), David Harkison (Westminster), 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

Alex Aldridge (URC), Peter Burt (URC), Meriel Chippindale (URC), Jose Finlayson (SDMTS), Rosalind Harrison (CSM), Marina Jeffrey (URC), Susan Marsh (Canterbury School of Ministry), Daphne Topple (SOC).

PROVINCE OF WALES**Stipendiary**

Keri Eynon (Westminster), Sally Thomas (Northern), Ruth Ball (Mansfield), Alison Davis (Northern).

Auxiliary

Albert Barraah (URC).

COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION**Stipendiary**

Gwen Collins (Westminster)

CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS

Helen Madden (Northern), Bethan Galliers (Southern), David Twine (South Western), Janine Maddison (East Midlands)

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 | South West Ministerial Training Course |
| EAMTC | East Anglian Ministerial Training Course |
| WMMTC | West Midlands Ministerial Training Course |
| URC | Auxiliary Ministry Training Programme |

APPENDIX II (e)

Training statistics

| | Students in training February 1990 | Students in training February 1991 | Anticipated entry into URC service | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|------|------|-------|
| | | | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994+ |
| Stipendiary | | | | | | |
| Westminster | 41 | 41 | 14 | 17 | 4 | 6 |
| Mansfield | 25 | 22 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 4 |
| Northern | 42 | 30 | 11 | 7 | 8 | 4 |
| Queen's | 5 | 8 | 4 | - | 3 | 1 |
| | 113 | 101 | 36 | 32 | 18 | 15 |
| Non-stipendiary | | | | | | |
| Courses | 71 | 78 | 28 | 21 | 20 | 9 |
| Church-related Community Workers | | | | | | |
| Selly Oak | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | - | - |
| Salford | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - |
| | 189 | 183 | 65 | 55 | 39 | 24 |

APPENDIX III

PATTERNS OF MINISTRY in the United Reformed Church

The contexts of this discussion

1.1 The theological base for our consideration is provided in the URC Manual page 5 paragraph 19: "The Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry in and through the church, the whole people of God called and committed to his service and equipped by him for it." The whole church has a whole ministry to the whole of human society. Just as the Holy Spirit enables people to respond to the Word and to live in the bond of fellowship, so it is the Spirit, working in the whole community of the church, who enables the body to witness to its head who is Jesus Christ. Everyone who has faith as a response to Jesus Christ has gifts to share in this offering of the gospel and the celebration of the cross. It is from within this broad understanding of ministry that we see special forms of service arising. In the New Testament we note in Acts 6: 1-6 how, in response to a particular need, the church chose seven men for a ministry of administration, and in Acts 13:3 in response to a missionary opportunity the church set aside Barnabas and Saul. In that early, dynamic period of Christian life we note a wide variety of particular ministries, for example in 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, Philipppians 1.1 and 1 Timothy. The variety is such that we cannot regard any one form or pattern of ministry as obligatory. All of them arise within the fellowship of the church and are recognised by the church. The major errors regarding the ministry can usually be traced to the separation of ministry from the church and by giving to it the normative role.

1.2 Another context for ministry today is the missionary calling in our nation where Christianity has become a minority faith. Ministry is concerned both with building up the community of faith so that every member is better able to live in Christ and share Christ with others, and with witness to the community of village, town, district or nation. It is both within and without the circle of faith. So varied ministries are essential if we are to witness in the many social contexts - urban and rural, sophisticated and simple, wealthy and poor, sympathetic and hostile, black and white, young and old. A trained ministry is needed if we are to meet people who have absorbed a secular education and yet know very little of the life of the spirit. Increasingly we need a ministry well versed in the traditions of the church, which is familiar with and involved in the many areas of social life where power is exercised. But above all the missionary context requires committed and faithful people who respect others and who care deeply that others may know the liberating gospel, standing with them in times of darkness and despair.

1.3 The ecumenical context is also important. The most recent major discussion of ministry ecumenically is the WCC Baptism Eucharist and Ministry Document. This attempts to describe the central traditions of Christian ministry, with the three-fold ministry as very significant. In the URC response there was questioning about the status of that tradition as the church meets the call to serve people today, but we recognise that for most Christians it remains one of the chief building blocks of church life. We believe that we have to relate that tradition to what was stated in 1.1, that all particular ministries are personal expressions of the ministry of the whole. We can say this specifically about the three-fold ministry. There are diakonal ministries of the whole church, gifts of service to the church and community in Christ's name, which are personalised as the Spirit calls and the church authorises. There are presbyteral ministries of the whole as we interpret the bible, share the good news of Christ, teach and care for one another. This too is focussed in individuals.

There are episcopal ministries of the whole as we exercise oversight of a district through a District Council, a Province through its Synod or the national church through a General Assembly. This oversight may also be focussed in individuals. Our hesitation about the use of the word 'bishop' is more emotional than theological. Whatever the name that is used, the individuals with an oversight ministry in our tradition receive their authorisation from and are responsible to the council which has oversight. It is not an illusion to claim that we know those expressions of ministry referred to in the three-fold tradition. What we do not know is a ladder of orders in which personal authority proceeds from the top down. We believe that to be incompatible with the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in which all are given insight into the way of Christ.

1.4 The ecumenical context is also a very present and local reality. We are thankful that so much has been achieved in the sharing of gifts between the churches of the United Kingdom, and that the URC has made a contribution. At this date it is not possible to see any pattern of national unions ahead but we must recognise the large number of local unions. For many of our people the denominational barriers are down and there is living experience of other traditions. In this context we need to be aware that any changes we make can have an effect on our relationships. This does not mean that we are prevented from action if we are convinced it is the way God is leading us, but that careful consultation with others is required so that we may see things from other points of view. We seek to grow together, not to grow apart.

1.5 The other immediate context is the present life of the URC. Our local churches receive ministry in many ways, but particularly through stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministers and lay preachers. The pattern of local church life does not easily fit our pattern of stipendiary ministry. We have 1800 local churches, over 500 of them with less than 50 members and about 740 full-time stipendiary ministers. We also have 200 non-stipendiary ministers in service, unevenly spread around the country and 1000 recognised lay preachers. In financial support we provide inadequately for stipendiary ministers. In our conciliar pattern of life, which has high regard in our tradition, we place considerable demands on ministers and elders to share in councils beyond the local church. There are places where this is a very real strain. At present the supply of stipendiary ministers does not meet the requests for them, so long vacancies result and this brings further burdens on Interim Moderators. We also note the report of the Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee about the number of breakdowns in ministry which cause much sorrow. It is only fair to add that the majority of ministers and the majority of local churches continue in faithfulness whatever the stresses may be, and make a vital witness to the living Lord. The problems, however, need to be faced as we suggest patterns of ministry. So far the URC has responded through the non-stipendiary ministry and the grouping of local churches in an ad hoc way. We now seek more systematic ways of meeting the need for pastoral leadership.

Our approach to particular ministries

2.1 One of the common inheritances of the church is the distinction ministerial / lay. We preserve this distinction in the URC Structure (Manual p.20 para 5a) but it has no persuasive basis in our theological understanding of ministry. The Laos means the people of God, all of whom are, in a real sense, ministers of Christ. The fact that certain people have particular gifts and authorisation does not remove them from the Laos. So in this sense we are all lay people. But in the URC the distinction also breaks down when we normally classify elders as lay, although they are ordained for a special service or ministry. We therefore consider that this distinction has little value and should be less and less used.

2.2 Neither do we find much benefit in the concept of orders or ranks of ministers. This ancient understanding derives not so much from the apostolic experience of the risen Christ as from the character of the Roman empire. It carries too frequently the suggestion that ordination creates a new order or kind of being. The ARCIC Report expressed the distinctiveness of the priesthood like this: "Nevertheless their ministry is not an extension of the common Christian priesthood, but belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit." (ARCIC Final Report p.36) We do not recognise another realm. The priestly character of the whole church fellowship is a most valuable emphasis of the Reformation and is attested in all the traditions which come together in the URC.

2.3 But we approach the reality of spiritual leadership and service in the church with humility, for it is surely one of the gifts of God to his people. In all ages and cultures God has provided those who will embody the ministry of Christ. In such individuals the calling of Christ to his church is focussed. Our recognition of a particular ministry depends on a need which the church acknowledges, on gifts of faith and character, on preparation and skills and on the acceptance by the church of the individuals. All those who enter particular ministries remain members of the church. They respond to a sense of call, which is a conviction that service in this way is not just what we humanly wish - sometimes it is what we run away from - but what God wishes. Always that conviction is tested by the will of the fellowship and no particular ministry among us is exercised in any formal sense unless the fellowship supports and receives it.

2.4 While the form of particular ministries varies according to the need of God's mission, the spirit in which all ministry is exercised is plain in the gospel. It is to be a sharer in the vulnerability of Jesus (Mark 10:38/39) and carrying the weight of a cross (Luke 9:23). It is a search for the hearts of men and women as fishers (Mark 1:17) or harvesters (Luke 10:2) or teachers (Matthew 28:19/20). It is to express spiritual authority (John 20:23) combined with a life of humble service (John 13:14-17). At its heart is a relationship with Jesus and with people who need his grace (John 20:15-19). Such a spirit and such gifts for ministry were shown from apostolic times by both women and men, as the reference to Aquila and Priscilla in Acts 18:26 indicates. It is with joy that we re-affirm the statement in the URC Basis (26) that "all ministries shall be open to both men and women."

Ministers of the Word and Sacraments and Elders

3.1 The URC has accepted from its birth these two ways of particular service, marked by ordination, for the work of the gospel, the care of the fellowship and leadership in the church's mission in society. We wish to emphasise the common elements in these callings and consider that both may properly be included within the presbyteral ministries. The great value of these two forms is that it brings together that which represents the whole church, which might be called general ministry, and that which arises within the fellowship, or local ministry. The first is important because it represents the wholeness of the church and its tradition to the local fellowship, it is a focus of unity and is able to bring a word of challenge, of objective critique, which is unlikely to arise from within the local fellowship. The second is important because it is formed out of intimate knowledge and the trust of the local membership. This bringing together of the general and the local within the ministry in all parts of the URC is a significant experience to bring to the ecumenical table.

3.2 Within this area which is called presbyteral ministry, we recognise certain major emphases. We list them as they apply to local church service, noting that there will be variations when ministry is offered in the specialised context of a chaplaincy or a teaching post.

- To be alert to the Word of God speaking to us, and to share that Word with faithfulness and conviction.
- To care for people in all the dimensions of human need, but particularly as they seek hope, meaning and forgiveness.
- To lead the worship of the people of God and engage the talents of all to enrich that worship.
- To help bind the local fellowship into the Church universal and interpret the wider Christian experience to the locality.
- To provide a sense of unity in the local church so that it may be more effective in public witness to Christ.

These dimensions of ministry are common throughout the history of the church. The special quality in our generation is to emphasise the corporate nature of local church ministry and make plain the reality of the world-wide church.

3.3 ".... shall appoint them to their particular ministry and give them authority to exercise it within the church, setting them apart with prayers that they shall be given all needful gifts and graces for its fulfilment, which solemn setting apart shall in the case of ministers and elders be termed ordination." In this careful way the URC Basis (paragraph 20) attempts to indicate a distinction between the ministry of ministers of Word and Sacraments and Elders and all other special service offered in and through the church. It is not an easy distinction to maintain. Its foundation is the tradition we have received from our predecessor bodies which can be traced back to the Genevan Reformation. This sets us apart from the Methodist and Baptist traditions where ministers are ordained but those fulfilling eldership-type functions are not.

3.4 There are arguments for dropping the term 'ordination'. It may be seen to imply a doctrine of 'orders' which does not sit easily with our theology. The Reformed Church of France has been persuaded by this to delete the word and it now speaks of 'recognition' of fourteen varieties of particular ministry. These include the officers of a District Council, theological teachers and Communication officers. We are not so persuaded and think the term should be retained as a distinctive way of marking the commitment of both the individual and the church to exercise and receive these particular gifts of God. Logic may press us the French way but other considerations apply as well when we deal with so long a tradition and so honoured an event.

3.5 The major elements which we recognise in ordination are:

Recognition of the gifts of God in people whom he has called,
 Acceptance by the church that these people are fitted for the particular office,
 Promises by the individuals to commit themselves to the way of Christ in this service, and to honour the faith and order of the church in which they will serve,
 Promises by the people of the church to give support to those ordained,
 Prayer that God the Holy Spirit may empower them for ministry,
 Authorisation to act in this office.

The distinctiveness of ordination is not in the creation of a different kind of being but rather is entry into a particular quality of life and service, a way of self-offering, contrasted with a commissioning or induction which have to do with a particular post or office, usually for a specific period. The intention of every ordination is that this is entry to life-long service. The phrase used in the URC Basis is, "those who enter on such ministries commit themselves to them for so long as God wills" and we realise there are occasions when people who have been ordained take a different path. The intention, however, is clear. We believe there will continue to be room for debate about the distinctiveness between ordained ministers and others who enter a specific form of service. What we can affirm is the value of the gift we have received in the leadership and care of elders and ministers who together form a corporate sign of the ministry of Christ.

3.6 We recommend the following developments in our practice of ordination:

3.6.1 The basic material of an ordination service should be the same for Ministers of the Word, Sacraments (and Pastoral Care) and for Elders. To the common material would be added specific questions regarding the kind of service to be offered.

3.6.2 We would urge the practice that a representative of the District Council is always present at a service of ordination of Elders, as a sign that this service is of more than local concern.

3.6.3 We consider that it would be helpful if the present URC provisions for Ordinations and for Inductions could be made more distinct so that the affirmations required at Induction are not a repeat of those at Ordination, but are more directly related to the service to be given.

3.7 There is no doubt that the service given by those ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacraments (and Pastoral Care) has been and remains a key element in the life of the church world-wide. We are thankful for a tradition of a "learned ministry" by which we understand that those so ordained have been so prepared that they can sustain a consistent and thoughtful witness to Christ over a long period. We do not believe the church can dispense with this kind of service. We need both to maintain a high standard of selection and training (for quality is always more important than quantity) and to ensure that ordinands are prepared for the collaborative style of service, encouraging the full use of the many gifts of the church members. In-service training is of vital importance for we cannot assume that the preparation before ordination can possibly provide for the rapid changes in society and church through a life-time of service.

3.8 We are concerned that our stipendiary ministers can find that all their energy is used within the regular life of the church fellowship. It may be argued that this is what they are for - to lead worship, to lead bible study, to care for those members who are in trouble, to minister to the sick and to conduct marriages and funerals, plus in many places to organise the clearing of the church garden and arrange for the jumble sale. Because of this burden some withdraw from the wider councils of the church. The other great dimension of ministry is to be a witness for Christ in the life of the community, on the hospital board, in the Social Security office, among the homeless, in the school assembly, among the immigrants, with the politicians, in the broadcasting studio. It is only as we develop the ministry of the whole church and so release our stipendiary ministers from some of the internal work that they will give sufficient time, prayer and devotion to the missionary engagement with our communities. This is a matter which the Elders' Meeting should keep under review.

3.9 Non-Stipendiary Ministers. We are grateful for the new resources of ministry which have been available in this way. Although we have heard arguments that the non-stipendiary ministry is not needed if elders are used more fully, we remain convinced that this form of service is adding greatly to the whole ministry of the URC. The *raison d'être* is our awareness of a calling of God to those who will be fully trained but whose lives cannot be given to whole-time "professional" ministry anywhere in the URC. The patterns of ministry we are suggesting in this paper should remove some of the pressure on District Councils to place non-stipendiary ministers chiefly according to the need for sacramental ministry. Our hope is that increasingly their place in the ministerial team will be seen on the frontiers of church life, in the missionary engagement with our secularised society, in places where professional skills may provide a doorway into new relationships, and human sympathy and understanding may touch the defeated people who face the blank wall of a careless world. We are thankful that this resource is available to District Councils who can see a great diversity of service as the gift of non-stipendiary ministers.

3.10 We believe that for the reasons set out below it is now appropriate for the URC to take a new step with regard to the local ministry of elders. It is that each local church, of whatever size, should be invited to nominate from among its eldership those elders whom the District Council might consider and recognise as Presiding Elders, for a stated period of years, with authority to preside at all services of worship and meetings of that local church as need arises. This provision would then replace the clause in paragraph 25 of the Basis under which District Councils may give special authorisation to certain persons to preside at the Sacraments.

3.11 The reasons for this change are:

3.11.1 Our District Councils interpret the existing clause in very different ways, despite Assembly guidance. In some a list of names is rapidly approved once a year, while in others each specific place and date becomes a subject for detailed enquiry. To have a stated discipline but to have no common exercise of it is probably the worst position to be in as far as our integrity and our relations with other churches are concerned.

3.11.2 We find it impossible to believe that God wills that a company of his faithful people who come to him in praise and prayer should be deprived of the sacraments solely because an ordained minister of the Word and Sacraments is not available. If Jesus Christ is in the midst where two or three are gathered in his name, may he not be present sacramentally?

3.11.3 The sacraments have no magical element but have everything to do with the grace of God and the faith of the church. We ought not therefore to become too focussed on the person or status of the president. But we value highly the good order of the church and know there can be nothing casual about our sacramental life. We do not believe that the local church is the sole authority in this matter and that is why we recommend a pattern in which the District Council provides the authorisation.

3.12 Beyond this question of presidency there is also the importance of developing local leadership. We have still much to learn from our Churches of Christ heritage on the value of placing continuous responsibility within each local fellowship. This is also a requirement of effective missionary presence in many communities so that what is local may be honoured and the sense of the community life being offered to God is developed. The non-stipendiary ministry has an important role in this context.

3.13 Elders' Training. We are encouraged by the interest in and further development of the various forms of training for elders which are being stimulated by Provinces and the Faith and Life Department. We have considered what might be required for Presiding Elders as described in 3.8 above. It is clear that they will not be in the same position as Non-Stipendiary Ministers but will be appointed for limited periods and for such service as may be necessary in one local church. We recommend that they be invited to undertake certain units of study as suggested by the Faith and Life and Ministries Departments and be assisted where possible by a person appointed by the District Council. We see such training as an enhancement of what is already the elder's experience.

3.14 Ecumenical involvement. The involvement of ministers in ecumenical life, witness, prayer and activity is large and constantly developing. We receive a great deal. At present we list 219 ministers of other churches who have pastoral responsibility in URC, and this is a very considerable part of our total ministry. It demonstrates how many barriers have already been removed and puts us in debt to many church traditions. Many of these ministers share in the councils of the URC. Such sharing does not signify that there is agreement about all aspects of worship

and church order, but that the unifying factors are so great we can serve one another while continuing in debate over the matters which divide. We urge that all our training courses for ministers, both residential and non-residential, should include work on the ecumenical movement with its practical, pastoral implications. We believe that the next major step in the broad inter-church process will be to develop the mutual recognition of churches as churches, so that a fuller mutual acceptance of ministers might follow as a consequence. This would carry forward the principle outlined in paragraph 1.1.

3.15 L.E.Ps. Where there is a joint ministry and a joint congregational life there can be no expectation that the entire understanding and practice of each participating church can be put into effect. We listen to others, learn from them and reach a pattern which all find acceptable and which is approved by the Sponsoring Body and, in URC, by the District Council. Since all the co-operating churches are likely to have a ministry of Word and Sacraments, there will be much agreement on the service so given, but there is little agreement regarding eldership. In many cases this means that the office is missing in an LEP constitution. Our chief concern is not to preserve the name. Frequently 'Church Councillor' is preferred. But it is important that our particular gift be not lost, the gift of corporate pastoral leadership within which the minister of Word and Sacraments works. In any negotiation locally, Provincially or nationally, we would expect to see this sustained.

3.16 In summary we see that ministers of Word and Sacraments (stipendiary and non-stipendiary) and elders will continue to form the group called to the regular spiritual leadership of our local churches. We regard this whole group as within the presbyteral ministry, ordained to their service with a lifetime intention. The mixture of what is the resource of the whole church and what arises from local church life is true to the nature of the church in the New Testament. Our proposal that Presiding Elders be appointed follows our conviction that every local church should have regular sacramental worship with presidency properly authorised.

The development and use of these resources

4.1 Reviews of ministerial service. Since we are becoming more careful in the arrangements for stipendiary ministry (as the Employment Practice paper shows) and as more professional financial support of ministers is being urged, it is now appropriate to institute a regular review of each stipendiary minister's service. This is already done for non-stipendiary ministers, for Provincial Moderators and all ministers in the central staff. We recommend:

4.1.1 Reviews for ministers in pastoral charge should take place between the fifth and sixth anniversary of induction and, if that ministry continues, at four-yearly intervals thereafter.

4.1.2 The review is the responsibility of the Province Pastoral Committee and the District Council Pastoral Committee acting together and normally two or three people will be asked to undertake the review.

4.1.3 The review will involve discussion with the minister, the minister's spouse, the elders and any other officers of the local church.

4.1.4 The matters discussed will include:

- The physical and financial conditions of the minister
- In-service training
- The use of time

Relationships with Elders' and Church Meetings, with the District Council and with sister churches and their ministers.
The devotional life and study programme
Involvement in community affairs
Priorities for the next period of service

4.1.5 The Review Panel will write a report to be seen by, discussed with and signed by the minister. This will be a confidential document to be retained only by the minister and the Provincial Moderator, to assist in the further development of the minister's work.

4.1.6 If desired a different kind of report may be prepared for the local church and the District Council indicating possible changes in priorities or in the arrangements for ministry.

4.2 The location of stipendiary ministerial service. Up to now we have attempted to sustain the pastoral ministry in every local church largely through the grouping of local churches and the scoping or sharing out of the minister's time. This is not satisfactory. It usually places strain on the minister who has to respond to congregations which may have wholly distinct theological styles. The scoping is an artificial figure, for pastoral ministry cannot be calculated in such a precise way. The process of call becomes extremely complex if each unit acts separately. We also tend to separate the exercise of pastoral ministry from the human community. There are instances where the present grouping method has worked well, without undue strain and with missionary effectiveness. We believe they are rare, but wherever they exist there is no reason to change them. We therefore consider that as District Councils look to the future they should concentrate on the following patterns of service -

4.2.1 There are those places where a single church pastorate is the most effective place of service.

4.2.2 The call may be to a pastorate where there is one Elders' Meeting and one Church Meeting though worship and community life are in more than one place. This will apply where the places of worship are within easy reach of each other. The Manual (pages 12/13) sets this as the pattern for shared ministry but we have often failed to apply it.

4.2.3 The call may be to one local church with oversight of such other local churches as the District Council may decide; the full responsibility of pastoral charge being only to the one local church; the responsibility to the others being as colleague to the elders and occasional leader of worship on a planned basis. A variation of this may be a call to one local church together with responsibilities for the District or the Province so that specialised skills may be used more widely.

4.2.4 In LEP's the call is likely to have significant differences. It will often be to serve in a team of ministers which has responsibility for more than one congregation and to serve for a fixed period. Clarity regarding both the responsibility and the duration is needed before the District Council gives concurrence.

4.3 National patterns. Since 1972 the URC has had a fair measure of success in what we have called 'deployment', in two aspects:

4.3.1 We have been able to resist the social and economic pressures which draw people to the south east. There has been a reasonably fair sharing of ministry in all parts of the country. The unfortunate side of this has been that the policy has been usually regarded as negative, a steady reduction of the number of ministers per Province. That has been the local implication. But we need to reflect on those parts of

the URC which have actually gained in their proportion of our total ministerial resources because the process revealed their shortage. We therefore consider that a form of deployment policy is advisable providing there is sufficient weight in the formula to allow for increased numbers of ministers where new population centres are developing.

4.3.2 The URC has been able, through the creation of thirty special posts, to contribute to new initiatives in a remarkable way. It is an exercise in the strategic use of scarce resources. A careful continuation of this process, with monitoring of each post and District Council and Synod support, is very desirable. The number may be questioned. At present the thirty plus the five places for overseas people invited through the World Church and Mission Department represent 5% of the full-time stipendiary ministry. This figure seems reasonable and worth retaining as a future guide.

4.4.1 Numbers. Questions are being asked about the number of stipendiary ministers needed by the URC. Those responsible for filling vacancies will tell us that we now have too few. Those responsible for the payment of ministers will tell us that we now have too many. We want more ministers, but do we need more? There is a chicken and egg argument here - we need more members to sustain more ministers but we need more ministers to lead churches into growth. We would stress that it is not the presence of a stipendiary minister alone which is the signal for growth, as the last twenty years amply shows. The key factors are to do with the whole mood and mind-set of the membership, the community setting of the local church, catching the breeze of a major enterprise, awareness of the Spirit's leading, open-ness, welcome and warmth. We do not doubt the importance of stipendiary ministry in all of this, but many other factors are at work. We rejoice in the gardeners 'but God makes the plants grow'.

4.4.2 The number of stipendiary ministers in full time service has fallen as follows:

1981 : 800
1983 : 788
1985 : 776
1987 : 752
1989 : 740

In 1981 the ratio of full-time ministers to members was 1:186 and in 1989 1:162.

In 1981 the ratio of full-time ministers to local churches was 1:2.4 and in 1989 1:2.45.

Numbers of ordinations to full-time stipendiary ministry have been:

1986/7 : 27
1987/8 : 18
1988/9 : 21
1989/9 : 29

Retirements, based solely on date of birth, of stipendiary ministers are expected as follows:

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1991 : 23 | 1992 : 22 |
| 1993 : 34 | 1994 : 32 |
| 1995 : 45 | 1996 : 28 |
| 1997 : 31 | 1998 : 45 |
| 1999 : 23 | 2000 : 33 |

These figures indicate (i) that the number of local churches has reduced at almost the same rate as stipendiary ministers, but (ii) the reduction in the number of members has gone a good deal faster than the reduction in the number of ministers, and (iii) recent ordinations have not lifted the total number in service, while (iv) there are signs of a bulge in retirements which is likely to mean a drop in the number in service.

4.4.3 These considerations lead us to recommend that we should pray and work for candidates for ordination at approximately current numbers; i.e. between 25 and 30 stipendiary ordinands to complete training each year and about 15 non-stipendiary. If this is realised there is likely to be a reduction of numbers of stipendiary ministers during this decade. Such a reduction is a logical consequence of the membership figures, for we do not believe that fewer members can properly sustain a larger ministry. The pressure for increased numbers of ministers arises partly because we have had a restricted expectation of leadership and local resources. Numbers would not appear so critical if the patterns of service described in this paper are developed. We would repeat that while we need to be alert in hearing God's call to ministry, the quality of our offering is more crucial than the numbers. But we would regard 25 ordinations to stipendiary ministry each year as the minimum aim. Should we see significant signs of growth that figure would need to be reviewed.

4.5 Overseas Recruitment. The URC has been blessed to receive ministers from sister churches in many parts of the world but chiefly from the United States and Germany. We hope the flow will continue. This is not just a matter of filling gaps. It is far more than that. We value very highly the reality of the international church and the variety of insight, expertise and experience that comes to enliven our church life. Since the international transfer of a minister and family is complex and costly, we should not expect that many such transfers will occur in any year. We support the arrangement by which our sister churches overseas screen all applicants before a name is brought to our Vocations Committee and the Provincial Moderators. We encourage the Ministries and Finance Departments to plan to receive up to four ministers a year, each serving a first term of four years. This scale of overseas recruitment will not affect the overall pattern of numbers referred to in 4.4.3 above, and is additional to what may be arranged through the World Church and Mission Department with CWM member churches.

Other recognised Ministries.

5.1 Our Basis states that the URC "shall determine from time to time what other ministries may be required and which of them should be recognised as ministries of the whole church." (Basis 24) We welcome this flexibility, particularly as a way of meeting the challenge of mission and the specialisation that is often needed today. There is already a variety of local forms of service in our Churches, for example that of pastoral assistant. But there are others more widely recognised. We would stress that whatever the context for service may be there should always be a very clear relationship of the individual with a local church and a District Council so that spiritual nurture and pastoral care are not neglected.

5.1.1 Lay Preachers. We are served by many who have undertaken training and have been nationally accredited; it is a service needed by the churches and supplied by those who are gifted and qualified. The content of the work has already shifted from those whose only responsibility is to preach to leadership of worship with all the preparation that entails. Many lay preachers are also elders and we anticipate that among these some will become Presiding Elders (3.10 above). Because of the convictions expressed in 2.1 we hesitate to retain the word 'Lay' as a title and would prefer 'Local Preacher', or 'Worship Leader'.

5.1.2 Church Related Community Workers. The URC has greatly valued what has been offered through this new variety of service and a recent survey shows that many District Councils would wish to have a CRCW in post. It is a form of service which is developing and needs to develop, for so far it has been experimental in style, with consequent strain on individuals. We anticipate a growth in numbers and a more regular method of personal support and engagement. On the basis that this is a specialised form of service requiring Christian commitment, skills, training and authorisation it is clearly a ministry of the URC and was so recognised by the 1987 General Assembly. We have much to learn about how this form of ministry may enable the whole church to witness in the life of hard-pressed communities.

5.1.3 Youth Leadership Training Officers/Youth and Children's Work Trainers. This is another form of specialised service which has a national dimension and a Provincial location. It requires considerable professional skills as well as the confidence of the church and the gift of faith. We would regard this as one of the recognised forms of ministry in the life of the church.

5.1.4 We anticipate that other ministries may come to be recognised nationally. For example, the role of Christian Education Leader in our churches is frequently the field in which there is great personal commitment, major influence and a high level of skill. Other possibilities are in the areas of church music, church administration, evangelism and perhaps the specialised care of the elderly - a form of service we have not recognised sufficiently hitherto despite the great need in the community.

5.2 It is not necessary but it may be useful to regard all these forms of service as within the diaconal ministries of the church. The diaconate has been a problem page in all discussions of ministry, for in history it has varied from servers at the eucharist to finance officers to apprentice priests to social workers. We do not feel called at this point to adopt the word but we recognise, with other churches in the Reformed family, that diaconal ministries enable the church to act more fully as the body of Christ in the world.

5.3 We recommend that a service of commissioning is appropriate to begin all such service. As in 3.5.1 above we would seek a common form in which all such persons confess their faith and then different words in which they make commitments for the specific tasks ahead. In many cases the commitment will be for a specific period. There will be many different appointing bodies which arrange the commissioning service but in each service there should be a commitment of support by those representing the church base from which the service is given.

Oversight Ministries

6.1 We noted in 1.3 that the URC has recognised oversight ministries as persons who represent the oversight councils of the church. Their accountability is to the appointing body. There are many points in our life when one person necessarily represents the whole. At the same time we are all aware of the risks of personal power while we value the gifts of personal leadership. This is one reason why all our oversight ministries are termed appointments and none carries any suggestion of permanent status. What the church gives to a person by way of an office of oversight is little compared to what God gives to a person as spiritual insight and faithfulness and human understanding. It is as we recognise the latter that the church designates the former. Our oversight ministries arise by particular appointment from among the elders and ministers. We note that among them are -

- The presiding officers of District Councils.
- The Moderator and other pastoral oversight officers of Provincial Synods
- The Moderator of the General Assembly
- The General Secretary and other central staff appointed by the Assembly.

6.2 The customary form for the introduction of such a ministry is termed induction. We would welcome a service outline which would indicate the responsibility to be carried, the individual's confession of faith and promises and the commitment of the appointing body. There should be many common features in such services.

6.3 We noted in 1.3 that we have hesitations about the use of the word 'bishop' in the URC. This is chiefly because it is hard to use a title which has one set of associations, formed in this country through centuries of Christian history, within a Reformed church and with a different set of associations. For the URC the office of any oversight ministry is to be shaped by the relationship of the person to the whole body of the church and particularly to its councils. We do not believe that we are called at present to adopt the title of bishop though we cannot rule this out should there be a context which would make a fresh understanding possible.

Reflections

7.1 In indicating the many different forms which ministry takes we acknowledge that there are particular forms, described in part 3 of this paper, which are central to our style of churchmanship, but we are convinced that this is not a matter of status. Nor do we suggest that there are fixed walls between different forms of ministry. An elder may enter a period of service as Youth Leader; a minister of Word and Sacraments may be appointed a church administrator or, when not in pastoral charge, serve as an elder. We are looking for permeable membranes, not sealed boxes. This is because we do not regard entry into a particular ministry as entry to a new order of discipleship, but an acknowledgement of calling, gifts and commitment which the church believes are right for a particular purpose.

7.2 Although we are well accustomed to a special service at the beginning of a particular ministry, we might do well to consider a special service for its ending. It is all too easy for a person to end a very important piece of service with a casual goodbye and a sense that the moment has no spiritual significance. We suggest a special service for the release from an appointment or the termination of a pastoral tie, in which we thank God for what has been accomplished, accept the point of change and seek God's guidance for the future. The way in which we end an appointment or a pastoral tie may be as important in God's sight as how we begin it.

7.3 The method of "call" has been accepted as the way in which minister and pastorate are joined together. We ought not to romanticise this. Many very human considerations enter into the equation. The knowledge that the Church Meeting has of the minister may be slight. The minister may be judged by very superficial criteria. There is a good deal of stress in the leadership of worship when that is regarded as a testing process. The Church Meeting may be under pressure because of a long vacancy or through a theological pressure group. But there are no perfect systems and we have not heard of a better one. The Holy Spirit works through our imperfect systems if love of God leads our hearts and minds. We note that for non-stipendiary ministers we have come closer to a system of District Council appointment. We ask whether an appointment for ordinands might relieve them of stress in their final year of training. It is a matter for discussion.

7.4 All the particular ministries of the church face stresses through the minority position of the church in our secularised society and through the stereotype expectations of many people. Heavy demands are made on time, talent, patience and confidence. This is particularly true of stipendiary ministers. It is only possible to sustain effective ministry over a lifetime if we have a steady discipline of study and prayer. Our human diversity makes it unlikely that all ministers would find the same discipline to be helpful. But we strongly recommend that the staff of the Ministries

Department and the staffs of the colleges should consider and prepare common material (perhaps based on the Prayer Handbook) which will enable all ordinands and ministers to share a regular pattern of devotion. There is no guarantee that we shall all recognise the guidance of the Lord and obey it, but there is a guarantee that whoever truly seeks will find and that if we keep knocking the door will be opened. Iona and Taize have shown what strength may come through a disciplined devotional life.

7.5 Our final note is one of thankfulness that God has poured out gifts for ministry. The range, and the depth of ministerial gifts in our company is impressive. To recognise these individual gifts and support one another in the exercise of them is a necessary characteristic of churchmanship. It has been all too easy for ministry in the church universal to be surrounded and buttressed by church law so that it becomes the prisoner of human constructions. In the URC we need our constitutions and our orderliness for that is the way we preserve mutual respect between all the parts of the church. But the rules are only means by which we receive God's constant grace, forgiving us for our erring discipleship and calling us to explore fresh ways of service in his name. The one who said 'Feed my sheep' also said 'Follow me.' It is in that double obedience that the Holy Spirit forms us to be ministers. It is also that double obedience which enables the whole church to be a minister of grace, testifying to the treasure within the clay pot of church life.

WORLD CHURCH & MISSION DEPARTMENT

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs Mary Marsden
Secretary: The Revd Tony Coates

1. The Central Committee has met three times to discuss the work of the Department Committees and share news and concerns from Provincial Representatives. It also took time to spend a day at Hanta Yo House, the home of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland's Ecumenical Project on Spirituality, for a day of reflection led by Miss Gwen Cashmore and Sister Joan Puls.

2. There Committee members shared some of the experiences which had been formative in shaping their own lives of faith and commitment, and had brought them to particular stances and actions. Analysis of the experiences shared revealed certain common threads:

2.1 **People first** - their joy, faithfulness, questions, love or word in season changed the direction of lives.

2.2 **Suffering** - being alongside those who suffer challenged to deep thought about the purpose of God; the hopefulness of loving; the need to go beyond charity to justice.

2.3 **Listening** - mission and evangelism seem to be two-way processes; the voice of God often comes to us from one to whom we are trying to minister.

2.4 **Waiting** - for many there was a time lag between a particular experience and the change in direction or lifestyle. The waiting could be painful, but also enriching.

2.5 **Surprise** - despite our 'reasonable' lives, containing search for growth in spirituality and social concern, many were surprised by God's dealing with them, and wanted to remain open to further surprises.

2.6 **Diversity** - there was such variety of experience and response, a richness from which our own experiences can be challenged and we can learn and grow.

3. From this base an exploration of the nature of mission and evangelism was started and continues within the Department.

4. The Department wishes to thank all those who have completed their term of service on committees for all they have contributed to its work. In particular the Department is grateful to the Revd Derek Wales for his six years as Convener of the Missionary and Ecumenical Work Abroad Committee. The agenda of this committee is as wide as the world and the Department is grateful to Derek for enabling the committee to take particular decisions and maintain meaningful links with a variety of churches and ecumenical bodies.

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK AT HOME COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Murdoch MacKenzie

Secretary: The Revd Tony Coates

5. **Secretary.** The Committee expresses gratitude to the Revd Bernard Thorogood for all his work as its secretary and welcomes the Revd Tony Coates in his place.

Decade of Evangelism and Mission Education Group

6.1 The Evangelism and Mission Education Group has been renamed the Decade of Evangelism and Mission Education Group as the established work of *Mission Pursuit, Growth for Their Sake*, and of the Mission Enablers moves into a new phase in the context of the Decade of Evangelism/Evangelisation. The work of the Mission Enablers is being reviewed.

6.1.1 The Group expresses gratitude to the Revd Chris Baker whose place as convener has been taken by the Revd Peter McIntosh. The Group includes representatives from various Departments and from the Council for World Mission. It has three main functions:

- a) To stimulate study and understanding of mission and evangelism issues throughout the URC.
- b) To liaise ecumenically with other denominations in the Decade of Evangelism/Evangelisation.
- c) To relate to the Decade person in each Province and through them to Districts.

6.2 Further reference to the Decade is made in the Mission and Other Faiths Committee Report (see para.41).

6.3 The Revd Bill Wright, Advocacy Secretary, has been able to attend some meetings of the Group and useful links have been established.

6.4 Mrs Muriel Garrow, Secretary for Mission Education, represented CWM at a World Council of Churches School of Evangelism in Australia in July 1990, and is available to share her experiences.

Urban Rural Mission Group

7.1 The Group continues to work out its stated objectives in its Assembly Report 1990. It is also looking at a membership Preparation Course, ecumenical sharing of resources, the Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas (ACORA), and Integrated Training. There is still the booklet on URM stories/accounts from the URC that the convener hopes to write up on his May sabbatical. A three-year plan is to be formulated and new materials for *Mission Pursuit* might be suggested. Close relations with all Departments of the URC are being kept and valued.

The Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas (ACORA)

8.1 The Report brings together information on the major social dimensions of rural life and how the church serves rural communities. Although specifically related to the Church of England, the questions are general - worship with small numbers, local leadership, shared clergy. It is affirmed that "normal and normative ministry" is

that of the whole people of God in the world. It acknowledges that in the agricultural community there are many lives of "quiet desperation". It takes note of implicit religion. There is encouragement for ecumenical planning and sharing using the Ecumenical Canons.

8.2 The Report is well worth reading and is available at £12.50. A shorter version at £2.50 is available from the Arthur Rank Centre, National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ.

The Inter-Church Process

9.1 The life of the British Council of Churches came to an end in August 1990 and September saw the inauguration of four new bodies: the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CCBI), Churches Together in England (CTE), ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland), and CYTUN (Churches Together in Wales). These inaugural events were colourful, dramatic and inspiring, and helped many to enter the new phase of ecumenism with conviction. It is already evident that the style of operation is new and, while we are still in an exploratory stage, the initial meetings give confidence that the member churches will strive to fulfil the commitments made. The staff members of the four bodies are experienced and expert in their areas of work.

Methodist/URC Relations

10.1 A questionnaire is presently being studied and completed in both denominations. Responses are to be returned by 1st October 1991. The collating of the responses will be done by the joint Methodist/URC Liaison Committee, which will indicate to the appropriate committees of both churches where the weight of opinion falls. On this basis these committees will then agree on resolutions to put to the Methodist Conference and the URC Assembly in 1992 for decision.

10.2 A new 6th edition of the booklet *Patterns of Sharing and Commitment between Methodist and United Reformed Churches* is now available.

11. **New Enterprise in Mission Grants.** These grants have been extremely important in many situations and several warm letters of gratitude have been received. Twenty projects had received assistance with a total expenditure of £26,000 in 1990 which will rise to £30,000 in 1991.

12. **Mission Expenses Support in the UK.** This new fund is now in operation. It applies to CRCWs and ministers. The object is to assist in the placing of people to serve the mission of the church in places where local expenses cannot be found. A sum of £30,000 is available in 1991 and grants are for a maximum period of five years.

13. **Scotland.** The CUS/URC Liaison Committee continues to meet to explore areas of possible cooperation. The multilateral conversations are continuing and have published a discussion booklet, *Deacons for Scotland*, which addresses questions on the diaconate to the churches. Further working parties are dealing with the eldership and church structure.

14. **Wales.** The Commission of the Covenanted Churches, ENFYs (which means 'rainbow' in Welsh), has appointed the Revd Gethin Abraham-Williams as General Secretary. He is also serving half-time as Ecumenical Officer of the Church in Wales. ENFYs has produced a new baptismal liturgy for both paedobaptism and believer baptisms for use in union churches, and also a commentary on the liturgy.

14.1 Bilateral conversations between the URC and the Presbyterian Church of Wales are continuing and a scheme for the election and an order of service for the ordination of elders has been produced. The URC Province is supporting an initiative of the PCW to establish Welsh community ministries, i.e. one minister serving several denominations in one area. The Welsh Province is in process of appointing a half-time Ecumenical Officer.

15. **Ireland.** Links continue to be maintained through the Revd David Nesbitt and have become even more important in view of the withdrawal of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland from the new ecumenical bodies.

16. **Free Church Federal Council.** The Committee is monitoring the discussion about the way in which FCFC will relate to the new ecumenical bodies and expects to make its own contribution to the debate. A full report is planned for the next meeting of the General Assembly.

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK ABROAD COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Derek Wales

Secretary: The Revd Tony Coates

17. This Committee is not unlike navigation equipment on a vessel. It listens to many signals and in their light suggests changes of course to keep the vessel on line for its objective. The vessel is the United Reformed Church, the objective is its proper place and function in the world-wide family of churches, the signals are the myriad voices from people meeting in various ways around the globe.

18. The signals come from a changing scene. The Committee makes many small decisions - whom to send on our behalf to this or that, or which plea for financial support to recommend for acceptance - but the guidelines for such decisions are constantly moving. We listen, and we try to make a coherent response.

19. We listened this year to Pfarrer Wolfgang Steckel, a minister from Dessau in the old 'East' Germany, speaking of the struggle of his people to find a 'reformed socialism' rather than a simple acceptance of Western capitalism and of the struggle of his church to support people in a time of mixed relief and fear, release and foreboding. We considered what kind of group we needed to help us understand and relate to the new Europe; the East-West Links Group needed reshaping to respond to a new unity and the growing involvement of the URC in this area. The shape remains uncertain but we were among the first churches to subscribe to the new ecumenical group, the Churches' East West European Relations Network (CEWERN). At the time of German reunification we sent greetings to the Evangelical Church of the Union, itself divided between East and West, and soon to be reunited.

20. We listened to the signals from South Africa and heard the courageous voice of repentance and change from the churches meeting at Rustenburg in November. The spoke together of their failure to live in love and of their resolve to move away from discrimination and recrimination. Representatives of 97 Christian denominations and organisations spoke of themselves as 'surprised by the emergence of a broad consensus among ourselves concerning the unequivocal rejection of apartheid as sin, confession of complicity with the system, mutual forgiveness...' We were glad that we had helped finance that conference at Rustenburg

Resolution 2.

21. We listened to the request from a new member of CWM, the Presbyterian Church in Korea, for one of its ministers, working with a Korean congregation in London, to be linked with the URC. The proposal, we noted, did not fit into any standard pattern, but we welcomed exploration of the idea as a fresh venture from which a new model of relationships might arise.

22. We listened to CWM as it sought to decide how it should spend the money to be allocated to special projects. CWM's question to us and our own long-standing need to check our course made us ask 'What are **our** priorities?' We saw one as the conversion of the Church to awareness of its role in community development and the support of the disadvantaged, enabling people to discover their own resources. We saw another as the opening of our own people, especially leaders, to the theological insights of the world church. Was it possible, we asked, for some part of leadership training more commonly to be undertaken abroad, or could sabbaticals be arranged to enable leaders to work alongside colleagues in situations of conflict and struggle?

23. We listened for signals from the World Council of Churches Assembly in Canberra, whose theme was 'Come Holy Spirit - Renew the Whole Creation'. We hoped that this meeting might be as fruitful for the Church as had been the Assembly at Vancouver in 1983 and looked for ways in which its results might be fed into the life of our church.

24. We listened to the sad signals from the Middle East and as the Gulf crisis deepened we sent a message of sympathy and solidarity to the Middle East Council of Churches, assuring them of our prayers for the whole region and for peace.

25. We listened to reports from the young people continuing their exchange with Christians in Jamaica, from the Taiwanese group who visited the URC, from the European Region of CWM on its plans to hold in 1992 a work camp in a deprived area in Penrhys in Wales.

26. We listened to a report from the Revd John Parry, who had attended a European ecumenical consultation on the damaging effect of much tourism on the life of so-called 'Third World countries' and in particular the development of child prostitution. (Conservative estimates suggest that there are 30,000 such children in Thailand alone.) We decided to send a donation to the organisation 'End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism'.

27. We listened to comments arising out of the visit to China by a party of young people, one of them from the URC, on the first leg of the Conference for World Mission's China Youth Exchange - of their lively interaction with young Chinese Christians and with others who 'asked with great seriousness how we could believe in the existence of God'.

28. We listened, and tried to let our listening shape our thinking as we decided

- where to spend the money at our disposal
- what visits and ventures to support
- what criteria to apply when deciding which church assemblies to send representatives to and which to invite representatives from.

29. We listened and tried to support the staff of the Department in their day-to-day decisions on our behalf.

30. We are only one aerial through which signals reach our church. But we trust that our sensitivity helps others to interpret their signals so that together we find the right course as we move from familiar to uncharted waters in mission and fellowship in Europe and across the world.

COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

Acting General Secretary: Mr Aubrey Curry

31. The year 1990 was a year of development and a number of changes:

31.1 There was an expanded programme of inter-visitation between churches, in which no less than seventy people, including women and youth, were involved. The purposes of these visits included industrial mission, music workshops, youth camps, dialogue with other faiths, bible translation, ecumenical studies, etc.

31.2 An excellent example of South-South cooperation was the offer of three instructors from South India on a short-term appointment to train local people in Kiribati in production of handicrafts, carpentry, car maintenance, etc. This will assist the Kiribati Protestant Church to become financially more self-reliant.

31.3 CWM supported its first twelve ecumenical projects in different regions in accordance with the El Escorial Guidelines for Resource Sharing. We also published a booklet on *The Debt Crisis and the Church's Response*, which has generated widespread discussion of this issue.

31.4 There was a record response of over £25,000 to the Solidarity Appeal for Namibia, where young people also held a successful work camp. A further appeal is being launched in 1991 for Sri Lanka.

31.5 An evaluation of our scholarship programme is being commissioned to ensure that this more effectively meets our member churches' future leadership development needs.

31.6 Greater emphasis is being given to the contribution of women with the appointment of a Women's Advisory Group and the forthcoming publication on the ministry of ordained women.

31.7 During the year a number of churches took positive steps to advance the process of renewal in their mission and ministry.

31.7.1 The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa launched its mission education programme called Pastoral Plan for Transformation.

31.7.2 The United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman, in response to an examination of the content and quality of their ministerial formation, launched a new congregational based ministerial training programme.

31.7.3 The Guyana Congregational Union has also launched its DARE programme - Decade for Advance, Renewal and Evangelism.

32. On the more domestic front, the Council has now been enlarged by fifteen to ensure that every member church has at least two delegates. At the end of his contract, we gave thanks to Barrie Scopes for twenty-eight years of outstanding service. We welcomed Carol Dodds (URC) as Director of Administration and Francis Brienen (Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) as Assistant for Education in Mission. By the time you read this report, we hope to advise you of the appointment of a new General Secretary.

33. We have commissioned our first video on *Getting to know CWM*, which will be available during the year. We have also commissioned the writing of the LMS/CWM

history from 1945-1985 under the general editorship of the Revd Bernard Thorogood, to be published by 1995 (our bicentenary). We have also been able to improve the pensions of some of our older retired missionaries.

34. We are following with interest the discussions the URC is having about talks with the Methodists, and hope that the experience some of our member churches have had with similar unions may be shared with the URC.

35. We look forward to holding our next Council Meeting in Seoul, South Korea, in June.

MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd John Sutcliffe

Secretary: The Revd John Parry

36. **'There is an elephant in Llanpumpsaint!'** Experience of people of other faiths is no longer confined to inner city areas. People of other faiths can now be encountered in almost any urban or rural community. Nor are the issues raised by other faiths limited only to those who have a specialist interest. The Committee has tried to reflect the concerns of many people in the churches about Israel and the Palestinians, militancy among some Muslims, and freedom of speech and action. We urge churches to be supportive of their people who engage in dialogue and to recognise this as authentic, and very often demanding, service in the name of Christ.

37. **Continued links.** One of the ways in which the Committee has promoted continuing dialogue is through holding its meetings in local churches and we are grateful for the hospitality we have received. For instance, a meeting held at Rhiwbina URC has borne the fruit of a continuing link with one of the Sikh communities in Cardiff.

38. **Sikhs and Christians.** A Sikh-Christian Consultation was held in November 1990 on the theme of 'God's creation and human responsibility'. One of the aims of dialogue must be the facing of practical issues; in this instance we were reminded that Christians do not hold monopoly interest in caring for the natural world. Two Sikh members of the consultation have pressed for a continuation of dialogue in the Bradford-Leeds area. Other Sikhs were keen that it should be continued in other parts of the country.

39. **Pilgrimage.** While we do not intend to hold a formal consultation with Jews in 1991, plans are in hand for a conference for Christian pilgrimage leaders to encourage them not only to visit sites of antiquity, but also to meet people of faith - Jews, Christians and Muslims.

40. **Guarding against prejudice.** The Committee is concerned at the increase of anti-semitism in Britain and other parts of Europe. We face the dilemma of often being in sympathy with Jews who disagree with some of the Israeli Government's responses to the Intifada, yet recognise Israel's own dilemma of how to deal with a hostile situation. We want to affirm the importance of continuing dialogue with Jews of all shades of opinion. Similarly, we are concerned that Christian-Muslim relations are maintained, and that the stances adopted and mis-representation promulgated by a minority of Muslims and Christians are not allowed to become a barrier to mutual understanding.

41. **The Decade of Evangelism.** The Decade arouses fear on the part of many people of other faiths. They feel themselves to be the target of Christians who want to proselytise. While being sensitive to the feelings of others, we affirm our obligation to witness. This must involve trying to understand those elements of another faith which will enable the Christian faith to be presented in ways that can be clearly understood. As well as being in this instance a servant of evangelism, dialogue must also be allowed to stand in its own right as an exploration into human community and God's being amongst 'his peoples' *(NRSV Revelation 21.3)*.

42. **Consultants.** The Committee cannot overlook the differing failures of both Marxism and capitalism; because of the need to understand the implications of these failures we are pleased to welcome Dr Graham Watson as the new consultant on Marxist-Christian relations. Many Committee members and consultants are willing to respond to invitations to address meetings in local churches and can be contacted through the Department.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Raymond Adams

Secretary: Miss Sheila Rudofsky

43. The Personnel Committee continues its work of recruiting, training and caring for people in mission through CWM, from the time of their appointment until completion of service. This means care both for URC members serving overseas, and for people from churches in the CWM family who are involved in special ministries within the URC. The Committee is also concerned with the many bilateral relationships between the URC and other sister churches, fostered through short-term periods of service, exchanges, and scholarships for study at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak.

44. As last year's report to the Assembly indicated, we are in a period of change: the number of models for sharing people in mission is increasing, and there are encouraging signs of more churches within the URC wanting to deepen relationships with link churches overseas. A paper giving guidelines for those planning individual short-term visits from partner churches overseas to the URC has been prepared by the Committee and is available from the Personnel Secretary.

45. The 1989 CWM Council commended to partner churches the biblical model of 'empowering through human encounter':

- i The bible testimony shows God's love, power and purpose have been mediated through human encounters.
- ii Jesus, 'the one sent by God' challenged and gave power to the disciples and others to share in his mission.
- iii The Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to go out, and it was through encountering others that they were challenged, enthused and sent out in mission.
- iv The Church in each place as a community of believers is built up by the Holy Spirit through encountering others, and the exchange of people between churches becomes a sign of a God-intended community which transcends culture, national and racial barriers.

46. At the same time, the number of long-term (over two years) offers of service has decreased as the variety of short-term experiences has increased. One reason may be a lack of clarity as to what the Church's expectations are. Some recent guidelines agreed by the CWM family of churches say a person in mission should: - be a visible expression of God's calling to every Christian to be sent out as a witness to the risen Christ.

- seek ways, together with others, to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all people.
- be a living link within the fellowship of all the CWM member churches in general, and in particular between two specific member churches.
- share what s/he is as well as what s/he has, in the spirit of partnership.
- identify, and be in solidarity, with those with whom s/he lives and works.
- assist in bringing about a challenge for change.
- help the Church in training others.

47. The challenge of this to the URC is two-fold:

a) as a sending church: to recognise and affirm the vocation of people to serve Christ overseas as people in mission. Though there is a right emphasis now on the home base as the place where mission is done, and more opportunities for short-term experiences overseas exist, there is still a need to challenge those who are called to missionary service to consider long-term work. There is a quality and a cost in long-term service, in terms of time, and the deep identification with people of another culture, which is an important testimony to Christian discipleship, and which must not be overlooked as new models for mission are discovered. CWM's list of people needed in different situations has a number of requests which remain unfilled. These requests are for people who are prepared to share themselves and their skills in CWM partner churches - in the spirit of the guidelines printed above.

b) as a receiving church: the Committee has considered how the URC can benefit more from the experience of overseas church partners working and living in the United Kingdom. The CWM guidelines state: 'Missionaries need help to acquire a sense of belonging to their Receiving Church. (The Church) should find appropriate ways of welcoming missionaries and helping them to adjust to life in their country and to settle into their work and the fellowship of the Church'. With this in mind, we recommend that District Councils and Provinces should be aware of mission partners (ordained and lay) from CWM member churches serving in the UK, particularly those who are in posts, not specifically URC, (e.g. members of staff of CWM at Livingstone House, and CWM appointed staff at St Andrew's Hall). Our partners might welcome an invitation to participate in URC councils and synods. Their ability to help us reflect theologically would be greatly valued

Resolution 3.

48. In the light of the changes which have taken place in Eastern Europe the Committee has attempted to explore ways of sharing personnel with partner churches. It has been agreed that Eastern Europe be an area of priority for the Committee when awarding URC scholarships. For the past five years the Committee has made short-term appointments to the Reformed Church in Hungary, providing teachers of conversational English at Debrecen, help in a home for physically and mentally handicapped children at Orbottyán, and, more recently, help at an old people's home in Debrecen. The Department has also made a contribution from time to time to scholarships for Czech theological students to study at Westminster College, Cambridge. Following the Moderator's visit to Czechoslovakia in April 1990, a request was received from the Slovak Presbyterian Church for a teacher of English. As needs are being identified, and while the infrastructure of these churches is struggling to cope with processing requests for scholarships and personnel, it was decided that the Personnel Secretary should visit Hungary and Czechoslovakia to

explore how such programmes might be set up. The Committee is conscious of the need for wider consultation with churches in the UK, so that requests from Eastern Europe may be shared.

49. British churches and missionary societies have continued to recruit annually an ecumenical team of teachers of English to work with the Amity Foundation in China. Teachers with a degree, a TEFL qualification, some overseas experience and a willingness to learn Chinese have been sought for a two-year period of service which can be extended to three years. In the last few years no one from the URC has applied, though in 1990/1991 the URC is responsible for the administration of appointments. There is need for wider advocacy of this opportunity through Provinces, Districts and local churches.

ST ANDREW'S HALL

Principal: The Revd David Grainger

50. Donald Fripp joined us as Bursar in January. Jim Grenfell commenced a year's study leave in July, prior to retirement in 1991. John Burgess began his work as Tutor in September and Phyllis Thompson commenced as Secretary/PA to the Principal in July. A group of Visitors presented their Report during the year and the College Council is working through its implications.

51. We continue to receive a wide range of URC sponsored participants from Britain and other countries. The experience of encouraging bursary holders to undertake short placements during the Easter vacation has continued with many positive results for all involved.

52. The Department of Mission at Selly Oak Colleges has recently received new staff - the Revd Andrew Kirk as Dean, Dr Werner Ustorf as Professor of Mission and Dr Aasulv Lande as Lutheran Lecturer. The increase in the numbers of full-time staff in the Department, which now has four lecturers, has eased the burden on college based lecturers. St Andrew's tutorial staff continue to make a substantial contribution in the Department but are increasingly able to concentrate on work here and on the challenge of broadening our educational role for our respective sponsors, including the URC.

53. During the year several conferences and one Summer School were held at the College and we continued to be a regular venue for URC committees and groups.

54. PEOPLE APPOINTED TO SERVE OVERSEAS:

54.1 Through CWM:

Mr Jonathon Sturtridge of Bognor Regis URC to Tainan Theological College, Taiwan (two year appointment).

54.2 Short-term experience:

Mr Hugh Morgans - one year at Debrecen with the Reformed Church in Hungary.

55. **MISSIONARIES WHO HAVE COMPLETED THEIR SERVICE** with churches overseas through CWM:

The Revd John and Mrs Mary Burgess - Zambia.
The Revd Bernard and Mrs Gwen Collins - Papua New Guinea.
The Revd Joseph Pratt - South India.
Miss Jean Stolton - North India.

56. **MINISTERS SERVING THE URC** recruited through the World Church and Mission Department from overseas churches:

The Revd Hakim B Singh Rahi and Mrs Annie Rahi: Church of North India - ecumenical ministry at Winson Green, Birmingham.
The Revd Froukjen 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.
The Revd Samuel Musonda Silungwe: United Church of Zambia - special ministry shared between World Church and Mission Department and Faith and Life Department.

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

The Revd Professor Kim Sung-Jae: Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.
The Revd Herbert Anim Opong: Presbyterian Church of Ghana.
Both at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak.
Mr Ruben Kuzel: Moravian Church, Czechoslovakia (shared scholarship with the World Council of Churches and Westminster College, Cambridge).

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the Report for debate.
- 2 The Assembly, hearing the courageous voice of the Rustenburg declaration, expresses to the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, the Southern Africa Alliance of Reformed Churches and the South African Council of Churches its renewed support and prayer for the people and churches in South Africa as they seek the ending of apartheid and a just and peaceful order in that land.
- 3 The Assembly encourages District Councils and Synods to invite to their meetings members of CWM partner churches who are in this country serving in URC-related colleges or in CWM staff posts.

THE ADVOCACY GROUP

Convener: Revd J J Macro

Secretary: Revd W Wright

Introduction:

1. In this, the second year of the Group's work, we have continued to share with Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches a picture of the work which is funded by the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and the Unified Appeal; and we have begun to explain the future needs of the funds. The programme 'Our Response' which the Group created to help local churches plan their lives and challenge their members has been introduced through a series of Seminars in each Province.

We are greatly encouraged that contributions from local churches to the two Central Funds in 1990 have exceeded the amounts promised.

Advocacy Sharing:

2. We have appreciated the co-operation from District Councils in the way they have enabled the Advocacy Secretary to share in their meetings. The purpose of these visits has been to encourage those who are leaders in the local church to use the Advocacy Material to help their members see and understand the work which they support by their contribution to the Central Funds. To assist in this the Members of the Advocacy Group, as Provincial Advocates, have made themselves and the material available to local churches. Those churches which have responded have been encouraged and helped and we expect that many others will make use of their Provincial Advocate.

Aims and Objectives:

3. The Aims of the Group can be summed up in this way:-

1. To help members of the URC understand giving, and in particular the giving of money as a response to God's love in Jesus Christ.
2. To inform members of the way the URC raises and uses money.
3. To seek to ensure that giving as part of wider Stewardship is seen by members of the URC as a matter of great importance and that it occupies an appropriate place in the work of ministers and other leaders in the business of the Councils of the Church.

Objectives:

1. To provide informative material for Church members and for the various councils of the URC.
2. To speak at and make presentations to Church Meetings, District Councils, Provincial Synods and General Assembly and the committees of these bodies.
3. To enable and encourage ministers and other leaders, as spiritual motivators, to give stewardship, in particular that of money, a regular and significant place in their ministry.

Introducing 'Our Response'. Seminars:

4. To date 34 Seminars have been held in 11 Provinces and have been attended by 53% of local churches and 50% of Ministers in pastoral charge. We are grateful to those local churches and individuals who contributed to the programme and those who have shared in leading the Seminars. The real measure of success is in the implementation of the programme in the life of the local church. For those churches not represented at the first round, further Seminars are being planned for later this year.

Partners:

5. The Advocacy Group was established with the hope and expectation that the level of financial giving from Church Members would increase, but we are not fund raisers. Increasing the level of giving so that there is greater support for the ministry and mission of the church which is funded centrally is a partnership between the Assembly Financial Resources Committee, Provincial Finance Committees and leaders of local churches. The role of the Advocacy Group is that of a catalyst and enabler. We encourage the Financial Resources Committee and Provincial Finance Committees to accept commitments which will challenge churches; and we want to enable ministers and others charged with leadership in the local church to challenge their fellow members to respond. At every level in the church we hear the cry: 'we can't afford to do that'; and neither will we until every member is prepared to take seriously the challenge Robert Latham made to the General Assembly over ten years ago to give 5% of their take home pay to the Church.

We know from experience that where people are helped to see and understand the need, and are challenged to respond to God's love in Christ by giving as God had given to them, they respond generously and even sacrificially.

RESOLUTION

- 1 Assembly receives the report for debate.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Convener: Mr Angus M Grimmond

Secretary: Mr Clem Frank

Contributions to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and the Unified Appeal 1990.

1. The Budgets for 1990 approved by Assembly 1989 provided for expenditure which was to be financed by contributions of £8,045,000 to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and £1,711,000 to the Unified Appeal. In the event the amounts received for both Funds slightly exceeded the target (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. We request Assembly to offer sincere thanks to all those involved in this process.

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.

THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Angus M Grimmond

Secretary: Mr Clem Frank

4. This Committee, set up by Assembly in 1990, assumed responsibilities formerly undertaken by the Treasurership Committee and the Church Buildings Committee.

5. Much of the business of the Committee is routine, and it is envisaged that this Committee will make a report to the Assembly when there is particular business of note.

Dissolution of the Common Investment Fund

6. With the splitting of the Pastors Superannuation Fund and the Pastors Widows Fund between the URC Retired Ministers Fund and the Funds of Non-Uniting Churches, as agreed by the Charity Commission in August 1989, there was no advantage in maintaining two Investment Funds with similar objectives.

7. In March 1990, the Common Investment Fund was wound up and sums due to Central Funds were re-invested in the Investment Pool.

Church Buildings Fund

8. The Church Buildings Committee, and latterly the Financial Management Committee, have continued to make loans available to churches for purchase or major renovation of church buildings, and for the purchase of manses. The Committee agreed to purchase a manse for the use of the Chaplain of the Yardley Hastings Centre, and this purchase was completed during 1990.

9. The Guide-Lines for giving financial assistance from the Church Buildings Fund are shown in the Reports to Assembly 1990 (page 146, paragraph 29). It is proposed that these should be published in the Report to Assembly from time to time, particularly where there has been a change in the Guide-Line during the year.

MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Alistair Black

Secretary: Mr Alan Taylor

Personalia

10. Assembly 1990 saw the end of the long and distinguished service of Revd John Waller, as Convener of the Committee. The Committee is grateful to Mr Waller, who continued his service to the Committee following his appointment as Moderator of the West Midlands Province, and were glad that Resolutions were passed in the Assembly thanking him and others for their service. Mr Waller was succeeded in the office of Convener by Mr Alistair Black.

Performance of the Fund in 1990

11. The Committee was grateful that Church contributions exceeded budget by nearly £15,000, which together with an excess of dividends and donations over budget, meant that the income was some £57,000 more than budgeted, and this, when taken with underspends in costs, helped to reduce the budgeted shortfall for the year to approximately £9,000. The only significant area of overspend was on Community Charge supplements where there was insufficient information to budget with any degree of accuracy.

Stipend 1991

12. The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee is providing for a 10% increase in ministerial stipend to £8,484 per annum from 1st July 1991. This increased stipend cannot be met from the promised contributions of the churches to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund in 1991, and the Committee is thankful that the reserves of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund are adequate to meet the expected shortfall of £222,000.

Ministers Remuneration

13. The Sub-Committee, under the Convenership of Mr Michael Harrison, which had been giving consideration to ministerial remuneration, reported in May 1990. The report constituted a far-reaching review of ministerial remuneration and led to the discussion document "Ministerial Financial Support in the 1990s" being circulated to District Councils in October 1990. The discussion document is included for reference purposes as Appendix 3.

14. The Committee is grateful for the many responses to this paper that were received. They appreciate that it was not possible for all the issues to be properly debated by the year end but the replies, nonetheless, served the prime purpose of providing initial reactions which were helpful in shaping the budget for 1992 and this Report to Assembly.

15. These initial reactions generally supported the view that ministerial stipends are currently inadequate and needed to be increased substantially. Clearly, a difficulty arose over the suggested timescale and a special concern was also expressed over the Phase II proposals relating to housing. In the circumstances, the Committee's revised proposals incorporate a more gradual increase in stipends. In the light of the responses, the Committee has decided to defer all discussion about changes in provision of Manses and suggests that debate in Assembly of this matter also be deferred.

16. Moreover, in view of the continuing uncertainty over the future method of funding Local Authorities costs, it is not intended at present, to plan for the consolidation of the Community Charge into the stipend.

Revised Proposals

17. a) The stipend to be raised on the 1st July 1992 to £11,500 per annum with ministers meeting their own heat and light costs from that date. Although there continues to be a residual tax and national insurance advantage in not consolidating heat and light, the Committee feels the advantage of consolidation in terms of pension entitlement and discretion over personal expenditure outweighs the disadvantage. At this stage it is envisaged that children's allowances would cease in the few cases where they are currently being paid.
- b) The stipend to be increased on 1 July 1993 by a further element above the annual rise in inflation providing adequate funding is forthcoming from local churches. The target from this date is approximately £13,200 per annum.
- c) The stipend to be increased on 1 July 1994 by the annual rise in inflation of say 5% to £13,860 per annum.

Comparative Cost

18. A table illustrating the estimated level of additional funding required from local churches if the foregoing increases are implemented, as compared with the continuation of the present system, is given below:-

| | Present System | | Revised Proposals | |
|------|--|---|--|---|
| | Stipend 1st half/ 2nd half £ p.a. | Percentage increase in funding over preceding year | Stipend 1st half/ 2nd half £ p.a. | Percentage increase in funding over preceding year |
| 1991 | 7704/8484 | 9% | 7704/8484 | 9% |
| 1992 | 8484/9000 | 10% | 8484/11500 | 25%* |
| 1993 | 9000/9450 | 6% | 11500/13200 | 22%* |
| 1994 | 9450/9950 | 6% | 13200/13860 | 10%* |

* These percentage increases do not take into account either the saving in heat and light costs which will accrue to local churches or any additional pension funding costs which may be necessary.

19. It is recognised that the acceptance of the revised proposals will result in a significant increase in the level of funding required from the churches, even though the costs will be spread over the three years 1992, 1993, and 1994. However, the Committee believes the churches will accept this challenge so as to ensure that the inadequacy in stipend levels is properly addressed as soon as possible.

Pensions

20. At the time of writing this report, the Actuaries are carrying out the triennial valuation of the Pension Fund and their report is awaited. Although the "Ministerial Financial Support in the 1990's" paper proposed certain pension improvements, the Committee is unable to contemplate progressing any of these changes until the results of the actuarial review are known and a decision is made over stipend levels, which will, in turn, affect the liabilities in respect of existing pensioners without introducing any improvements in the scheme.

Retired Ministers Fund

21. The implementation of the proposals reported to Assembly in 1990 were carried out. Grants are being paid to retired ex-Congregational ministers and ministers' widows which, when added to the pensions paid from the URCMPF in respect of pre-1972 service, currently gives the pensioner an income from the church equivalent to at least 90% of the pension that would have been paid for that service had the recipient been a member of the former Presbyterian Pension Fund. The process of identifying all recipients entitled to grants from the Retired Ministers Fund continues.

THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Alasdair Walker

Secretary: Mr Clem Frank

22. The Committee was set up on 1st October, 1990, as part of the reorganisation of the Finance Department agreed by the 1990 Assembly. It has the task of presenting to the General Assembly a unified budget for the new Ministry and Mission Fund, to be formed on 1st January 1992 by the amalgamation of the appeals for the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and for the General Fund (the former Unified Appeal).

Resources 1990

23. The Committee reviewed the General Fund Accounts for 1990 and noted that although income exceeded expenditure by £133,000, this was largely due to the high level of interest received, which was partially offset by higher than budgeted costs. However, the Committee are encouraged by the result of the Unified Appeal, where every Province met or exceeded its target and the increased amount received under the Deed of Covenant from the URC Insurance Company.

Resources 1991

24. This report is written when we are only eight weeks into 1991, and it is difficult to foresee how well churches are responding to the challenges set at the last Assembly.

25. However, we remind the whole Church that the 1991 expenditure budget for the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund is £9,003,000, and that for the General Fund £2,300,000. The 1990 Assembly accepted those budgets in the knowledge that, even after allowing for other income, the Provincial offers towards the Unified Appeal amounting to £1,992,000 would leave a projected deficit on the General Fund of £81,000. This is in addition to the currently expected deficit of £222,000 in the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund.

26. In presenting the budget figure for expenditure in 1991 on the General Fund, the former Budget Committee expressed its conviction that that sum was required in order to maintain the work of the Church at its existing level.

Budget 1992

27. The responsibility of the Financial Resources Committee begins with the preparation and presentation of a combined budget for 1992.

28. As in the past, the Committee is faced with having to make a judgement on the level of inflation to be anticipated not less than 15 months forward from the time it begins its work. In this case, the Committee has assumed that costs in 1992 (other than salary costs) will be 7.5% above those budgeted for 1991.

29. The salaries of lay staff are set by the Salaries Committee, and the proposed budget takes into account the decisions of that Committee so far as they can be forecast.

30. Stipends paid to ministers, deaconess and CRCWs are determined by the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee within a budget approved by the General Assembly. This year, for the first time, that budget is presented as part of the expenditure budget for the Ministry and Mission Fund.

Expenditure 1992

31. The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee has this year proposed the beginning of a process to make changes in the structure and scale of remuneration of those for whom it is responsible.

32. The Departments and other budget holders have submitted their projections for 1992, and these have been scrutinised carefully by this Committee.

33. The requirements as presented to the Committee included several new items which the Executive Committee asked us to consider in a stated order of priority. These affect arrangements for the continuance of existing work both within the URC and also in the ecumenical bodies to which the Church committed itself at the termination of the British Council of Churches. They affect matters of staffing, and in the case of the ecumenical posts they affect posts which have already come into being.

Resources 1992

34. At a meeting of this Committee in February, Provincial representatives were able to offer their Provincial contributions for the Ministry and Mission Fund for 1992 a total of £13,012,000.

35. The Committee is aware that some of the Provinces had made their offers on the explicit understanding that the basic ministerial stipend from 1st July 1992 would be at the rate of £11,500 p.a.

36. We acknowledge the very considerable commitment already involved for the Provinces in making offers in response to the challenge of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee's new proposals. However, the commitments received at that stage would leave less for the other work of the Church than that budgeted for 1991, or would leave an unacceptable deficit of £306,000.

37. The Committee asked the Provincial representatives to return for further consultation within their Provinces, and asked particularly that this matter might be placed as an urgent item on the agendas of Spring Provincial Synods.

38. In the light of further reports from Provinces by early April, the Committee will bring a proposed resolution to the General Assembly in the form set out in proposed Resolution 6 below. In the meantime, the proposed budget is set out in the accompanying Book of Accounts, in the form in which it has been considered by the Committee.

RETIREED MINISTERS HOUSING COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd. David Hannen

Secretary: Mr. Bob Carruthers

39. In the year to 31 December 1990 housing was provided for 17 retiring ministers. All qualifying applicants were granted assistance and there were no delays in the provision of capital for property purchase.

| | |
|---|------------|
| Number of properties as at 1 January 1990 | 238 |
| Number of properties purchased in 1990 | 17 |
| Number of properties received as legacies | 1 |
| | 256 |
| Less number of properties sold in 1990 | 8 |
| | <hr/> |
| | <u>248</u> |

Number of properties as at 31 December 1990

| | |
|--|------------|
| Occupied by sitting tenants or other Non-URC tenants | 6 |
| For sale | 2 |
| Occupied by retired ministers | 161 |
| Occupied by minister's widows | 78 |
| Not occupied - under repair | 1 |
| | <hr/> |
| | <u>248</u> |

Note: Thirty Five per cent of the properties are wholly owned by the Society or URC Trust, the remainder being jointly owned in various ways with the Society or Trust holding the major share in all but two of the properties.

40. The properties which were sold and those offered for sale at the year end were in areas in which no applicant wished to reside at the time of sale.

41. At the year end three properties were in the process of purchase and three applicants were seeking suitable properties. During 1991 it is anticipated that a further eleven applicants will require assistance.

42. The differential purchase ceilings set for 1990 were sufficient to meet the needs of all applicants housed during the year. One applicant decided upon a property costing more than the joint purchase ceiling; in consequence the Society's contribution to the purchase price was reduced by the amount by which the purchase price exceeded the joint ceiling.

43. The new purchase ceilings, based on the annual movement in property prices in each of the Provinces, as reported by a national Building Society, which are applicable from February 1991 are

| Province | Society/Trust Ceilings | Joint Purchase Ceilings |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Wessex, Thames North Southern | £ 65,000 | £ 97,500 |
| South Western | £ 59,000 | £ 88,500 |
| Eastern | £ 56,000 | £ 84,000 |
| West Midlands North Western Mersey | £ 54,000 | £ 81,000 |
| Northern, Yorkshire East Midlands, Wales | £ 51,000 | £ 76,500 |

- NOTE: 1) 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.
- 2) Applicants joining with the Society or Trust in the purchase of a property who are able to provide capital for the purchase of a property in excess of the joint ceiling should consult the Secretary of the Society about the special terms and conditions which apply.
- 3) In all joint purchase cases the applicant must establish that the capital can be provided and the necessary contributions towards on-going maintenance and repair costs can be met in addition to the monthly rent for the property.

44. The level of rent (£44.07 per calendar month) was sufficient to meet the cost of administration, insurance, maintenance and repair in 1990. As the trend of increased contractors charges has continued the standard rent was increased to £47.00 per calendar month from 1 January 1991.

45. During the 12 months to 31 December 1990 £45,051 was received in donations and £279,247 in legacies. The Committee is grateful for the generosity of those persons who give or bequeath property or sums of money for the housing of retired ministers. There is however a continuing need for Churches to recognise the high cost involved in the provision of retirement houses and the Committee looks to Provincial Synods and District Councils to encourage a higher level of regular giving to the Society by Churches and their members.

46. The oversight of the retirement properties is a significant feature of the Retirement Housing Scheme. In the year 1990 those individuals, who generously give their time to this work, were responsible for the carrying out of maintenance and repair costing £69,964. This work is greatly appreciated by those who reside in the retirement properties and their co-operation with the Principal Officers of the Committee has ensured that the properties have been maintained to a high standard. During the year the Principal Officers made visits to 4 applicants, 56 tenants and 11 properties untenanted.

WELFARE AND EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Ray Heritage
Secretary: Mrs Judy Stockings

47. There are still a number of our Ministers whose back-up resources are not sufficient, so that when a financial emergency arises perhaps through illness or indeed for other reasons, there is not sufficient available cash to meet the need, this is when the Welfare & Emergencies Committee is able to be of assistance and we are happy to do so.

48. We also are able to help, and indeed do help, in the realms of Children's Education by providing assistance where there is need, for School Uniforms and in other ways.

49. The help that we are able to give and the needs that we are asked to meet are many and varied, from helping with travelling expenses to enable a visit to a distant hospital of Minister or spouse, to assisting with the purchase of a musical instrument to enable the child of a Minister to follow a course in which that child excels. The variety of help given is considerable.

50. We have until last year given Christmas gifts to many retired Ministers and Ministers' widows. Last year, however, since most Ministers' pensions had been uplifted, it was agreed that the practice of Christmas gifts for Ministers, should cease, thus enabling the possibility of greater help for Ministers' widows. By the response that we received it would seem that most Retired Ministers felt that this action was fair.

51. Reporting to Assembly is not easy because all that we do is confidential, it can be seen, however, from the general examples given, that through this Committee the Church is able to express in practical terms the love and respect which it has for its ministry, and by the comments that we receive this care is appreciated.

APPENDIX 1

Contributions to the Maintenance of the Ministry and Unified Appeal 1990

| Membership | Province | Maintenance of the Ministry | | Unified Appeal | 1.1.90 |
|----------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | | £ | £ per member | £ | £ per member |
| 10,196 | Northern | 606,000 | 59.44 | 125,724 | 12.33 |
| 12,948 | North Western | 695,000 | 53.68 | 168,005 | 12.98 |
| 8,293 | Mersey | 519,000 | 62.58 | 116,619 | 14.06 |
| 7,998 | Yorkshire | 515,000 | 64.39 | 123,360 | 15.42 |
| 7,481 | East Midlands | 502,000 | 67.10 | 110,207 | 14.73 |
| 10,203 | West Midlands | 628,000 | 61.55 | 127,523 | 12.50 |
| 9,075 | Eastern | 661,000 | 72.84 | 140,850 | 15.52 |
| 7,612 | South Western | 510,000 | 67.00 | 117,432 | 15.43 |
| 11,439 | Wessex | 899,575 | 78.64 | 170,181 | 14.88 |
| 11,487 | Thames North | 970,000 | 84.44 | 214,581 | 18.68 |
| 16,754 | Southern | 1,207,000 | 72.04 | 270,139 | 16.12 |
| <u>6,383</u> | Wales | <u>347,000</u> | 54.36 | <u>52,033</u> | 8.15 |
| <u>119,869</u> | Total from Provinces | <u>£8,059,575</u> | 67.24 | £1,736,654 | 14.49 |
| | Other receipts Non Prov. | | | 2,023 | |
| | 1989 Arrears -Yorkshire Province | | | <u>7,857</u> | |
| | | | | <u>£1,746,534</u> | |

APPENDIX 2

Ministers holding Assembly Appointments Stipends and Conditions of Service from July 1990

1. The stipend of Provincial Moderators is £10,536 per annum (plus any children's allowances). They are provided either with a house free of maintenance costs, 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 in Departmental Appointments

2. Stipends range from £10,536 per annum for Assistant Secretaries to £15,204 for the General Secretary (plus any children's allowances). The other arrangements are similar to those for Provincial Moderators. Fares between home and 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 £10,536 to £11,664 per annum (plus any children's allowances). The housing provisions are the same as those for Provincial Moderators.

APPENDIX 3

MINISTERIAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN THE 1990s

BACKGROUND

1. This paper takes the form of a draft of the Report to Assembly 1991 of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee as it might be written now. Its purpose is to disclose to members of the Church the thinking of the Committee on the remuneration of ministers, to encourage a full and frank discussion on the contents throughout the local churches, and to seek initial feedback prior to December 31st 1990. Any comments received by the Finance Department will be taken into account in the Committee's proposals to Assembly in 1991. It is hoped that this process will enable a debate to take place within the Church prior to Assembly 1991, in order that members of Assembly might be in a position to have a full and informed debate.

2. It has been a common conclusion of all who have been involved in studying the remuneration of stipendiary ministers in the URC that the current level of stipend is far from adequate and the system itself is in need of modification if it is to meet the reasonable expectations of the ministers, and if the Church is to face up to its responsibilities properly to care for those who commit themselves to its service.

3. In particular it was considered that the payment of a low basic stipend coupled with reimbursement of heating and lighting costs, plus the payment of community charge supplement, together with the provision of a manse incorporated certain demeaning overtones of charitable patronage, and limited the freedom of choice in some areas of routine household expenditure. Inevitably it also provided

opportunity for local churches to be selective in the quality of support provided to ministers with a variance in standards of care occurring.

4. The current system of relating pensions to a low basic stipend results in retired ministers losing allowances and supplements which represent an essential contribution to the maintenance of modest living standards.

5. It is also anticipated that ministers are likely to reflect society's increasing desire to own their own houses and this will result in their wishing to purchase a house during their working lives, so as to provide for their retirement and achieve a greater measure of independence and security. To cater for such a trend stipends would need to be increased substantially with the responsibility for housing costs simultaneously transferring to ministers.

6. It has been noted from past debate in Assembly that current procedure which allows churches to pay a stipend supplement has led to criticism. One of the deficiencies in this system is evidenced by the fact that currently many of the churches who pay their ministers a supplement do not meet the 'true cost of ministry'. In the circumstances it is hoped that the introduction of a realistic stipend for all ministers will remove the necessity for locally determined supplements.

CONCLUSION

7. In reviewing the situation set out in the foregoing paragraphs the MoM Committee reached the view that the level of URC Ministers stipends should be determined by the following principles:-

- a) A stipend level which will enable a prudent minister and spouse with children to maintain a reasonable but modest standard of living,
- b) which will provide an opportunity for the minister to exercise discretionary choice over household expenditure,
- c) which will remove the need for additional support through centrally administered supplements,
- d) which will leave the local church with the responsibility for reimbursing each minister's operating expenses, i.e. car and telephone,
- e) which will provide an opportunity for ministers to acquire their own houses or pay a rent for a house/manse.

COMPARISONS

8. In seeking to determine an appropriate stipend to meet the foregoing principles it is inevitable that some comparison with general salary levels in the UK needs to be made as it provides an indication as to the remuneration required to meet average household expenditure, although its validity for other reasons may be questioned.

9. Published Government statistics of average earnings of non-manual workers indicate a figure of £18,000 p.a. at May 1990 adjusted by inflation, and this base figure is taken for our purposes. The value of housing within this figure is difficult to assess and will vary depending on several factors. However, it is felt that £5,500 is a fair average assessment. This leads the Committee to conclude that if housing were excluded, £12,500 in May 1990 would be an appropriate remuneration level if heating and lighting and the community charge were to be paid by ministers.

10. The Methodist Church intends to raise its basic stipend to £10,000 p.a. on 1st September 1991 with a further rise on 1st September 1992 to match the increase in inflation since 1st January 1990, which we predict will entail an increase of over 20% to approximately £12,000 p.a. Within these stipends Methodist ministers are responsible for paying heating and lighting costs.

11. Although other denominations apply widely varying stipends and a variety of arrangements over heating and lighting and community charge, it is clear that once the Methodist Church introduces the foregoing improvement the URC will lag well behind the other Churches in the UK unless prompt remedial measures are taken.

PROPOSALS

12. The MoM Committee were conscious of the fact that it would be impractical to attempt to introduce all the changes that they advocate either simultaneously, or at an early date, if all aspects are to be debated fully, and the consequences properly understood. Moreover, it was recognised that the inevitable rise in funding requirements from the churches to meet the higher financial commitments which would arise, if all the proposals were implemented at the same time, would be too onerous to contemplate. On the other hand it was equally as clear to the MoM Committee that there was a pressing need to improve significantly URC stipend levels and introduce some other modifications if we were to act responsibly and meet our moral obligations to URC ministers and their families.

13. In the circumstances it is proposed that the changes to stipend levels are introduced in two parts, as follows:-

Phase I An early and substantial increase in stipend with ministers simultaneously assuming responsibility for heating and lighting and the community charge.

Phase II A subsequent substantial increase in stipend with ministers simultaneously assuming responsibility for housing.

These proposals are set out hereunder in greater detail.

Phase I

1st APRIL 1992

14. As the Provinces have already committed themselves to the funding requirements for 1991 it is clearly impractical to seek significantly higher funds before 1992. In selecting the date for implementation of 1st April rather than the customary review date of 1st July the MoM Committee have been influenced by the desirability of conforming with the annual commencement date for the setting of the community charge. It also coincides with the start of the tax year.

15. It is proposed to raise the stipend to £14,364 p.a which should provide an increase in the order of £3000 p.a. after meeting heating and lighting costs and community charge. It would also mean that those ministers receiving stipend supplement from their local church would generally not suffer if the supplement was to be withdrawn at that time. The figure of £14,364 is based on the £12,500 (see) adjusted for inflation.

1st JULY 1993

16. It is proposed in 1993 to revert to the customary anniversary date of 1st July for the review of stipends and on 1st July 1993 the customary inflationary increase would apply which is likely to result in a stipend of approximately £15,000.

PENSIONS

17. The Committee considered that, at the same time as stipends are improved, pensions should be raised. The proposal is that from April 1992, retired ministers should receive a pension of 66% of stipend, after 40 years of service. From the

pension would be deducted the amount of pension from the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme. Ministers' contributions would be increased to 5% of stipend, against 3.25% currently paid. It is estimated that the Church will have to pay a contribution of possibly 12% in place of the current 9.1%.

18. This estimated level of funding will only provide for future service benefits although an increase in the basic stipend upon which pensions are currently assessed will lead to substantial additional costs to meet past service liabilities. No estimate will be available of this cost until the Actuarial assessment has been made as at the end of the year.

Phase II

19. No date has been set for Phase II but it is important to ensure that a scheme which addresses ministers' expectations over housing is not deferred indefinitely and appropriate arrangements are fully discussed by the church and implemented as soon as practicable.

20. It is suggested that some of the issues which will need to be fully ventilated are: -

1. The essentiality of ensuring that the mobility of ministers in accepting a change in pastoral charge is not prejudiced.
2. How will the rent be determined if a minister chooses to occupy the manse? Will it be based solely on local market forces or will a maximum rental charge apply?
3. Will local churches accept the decisions of a minister to either occupy the manse or not and will they accept responsibility for letting the accommodation where it is not required?
4. Where the minister provides accommodation will it be necessary to ensure that the residence is within the locality of the church?
5. Will it be necessary for the URC to meet the full costs selling and buying property including the cost of bridging loans when this arises out of a change in pastorate? How will difference nationally in house values be handled?
6. Will the proposals have long term implications over the ownership of manses? Could it lead to the unlocking of significant funds to meet other priorities?

21. It is open for discussion as to whether ministers should refund to the URC centrally all fees and part-time earnings except those arising from special hobbies and interests during their leisure hours. Such an arrangement would defray some of the extra costs of the higher stipends and achieve greater equality as well as conforming to the system which applies widely in the secular world. Alternatively, although it would only partially assist in offsetting the higher funding costs, part-time earnings could be refunded to the URC with fees pooled between ministers in each district. Ministers in the Church of England currently return their fees whereas as a result of the recent Methodist Conference decision, their ministers are being encouraged to equalise their fees between circuits or districts.

COSTS

22. The introduction of the community charge in 1990 created difficulty in estimating the level of cost to the URC. Estimates now show that the cost in 1991 under this head is likely to exceed the budget by some £100,000. In addition the Committee feel that the stipend increase budgeted of 8% from July 1st 1991 is now inadequate, and are considering an increase of 10%, at an additional cost of about £60,000. If these costs are fully met by the churches, an additional £250,000 3% over

the already agreed contributions by provinces, would be required. The Committee are grateful that the reserves of the MoM fund are adequate to meet these additional costs in 1991, without asking the churches for more.

23. The estimated cost of Phase I of the programme in 1992 is 53% over the revised costs for 1991, but as the 1991 programme is underfunded, the requirement from the Church for Maintenance of the Ministry is 59% over the agreed contributions for 1991. Most local churches will save the cost of heat and light in the manse after April 1st 1992 and savings in supplement payments are potentially available where these have been paid. If the current method of payment is continued the estimated cost in 1992 is 7% over the revised cost in 1991.

24. The estimated costs in 1993 indicate a requirement of 15% over the requirement from the churches in 1992.

25. The sums of money required are not small, but the Committee believe that there is no reason for the Church to pay its ministry less than is considered to be appropriate. It is, therefore, a matter that the Church must find the money to pay its ministers adequate stipends. This is the challenge that the Committee lays before the Church.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 Assembly gratefully acknowledges the giving of the churches in 1990 to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and to the Unified Appeal.
- 3 Assembly adopts the Accounts for 1990.
- 4 Assembly receives the report of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, and endorses the programme set out.
- 5 Assembly instructs the Executive to amend the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration to take account of the proposals set out in the report of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee.
- 6 Assembly approves the budget for the Ministry and Mission Fund for 1992 which provides for an expenditure of £13.557 million.

PROVINCIAL MODERATORS' REPORT 1991

Retired Ministers and the Widowed

1 Our report this year focuses on retired ministers and their spouses and on ministers' widows and widowers. Provincial Moderators share with other individuals, committees and councils of the church, pastoral responsibility for these servants of the people of God.

2 In the front line of care is the local congregation, its minister and elders. Some District Councils and Synods make special arrangements for oversight. We also work with those who administer the Pension Fund, the officers of the Welfare Committee and the officers and local helpers of the Retired Ministers' Housing Society. Each moderator takes such opportunities as he or she can to visit retired ministers, particularly on special occasions or when help is needed.

3 In many cases the description 'retired' is inaccurate. We have noted that there are some over the age of 65 still active in full or part-time stipendiary ministry. (See Table 1) Many more continue to serve as interim moderators, as pastoral advisers to the newly ordained and as members or officers of District Councils. Moreover, there are very few ministers who hang up their preaching gowns for the last time on the day they receive their first pension payment.

How many?

4 From our own records we estimate that there were 1659 men and women in these categories at the beginning of this year. (Table 2) These figures are only approximate. It is sometimes difficult to keep track of widows, while ministers retiring into parts of rural England, Wales or Scotland, where the URC is weak or non-existent, are often beyond our reach and sometimes our knowledge.

Patterns of Pastoral Care

5 The prime responsibility for the pastoral care of retired ministers and the widowed rests with the local church to which they belong as members. Though they do not expect any privileges over the pastoral needs of other members, we are glad that often other members, elders and serving ministers, through their affection and care, do try to express the gratitude of the whole church for service given in earlier more active days.

6 Where a minister is not in membership of one of our local churches, then there has to be a different caring relationship which cannot be quite as effective. Usually the reason for not being in membership is because there is no local United Reformed Church.

7 District Councils are responsible for the oversight of ministers and some interpret this to include the pastoral care of the retired and widowed. Out of a total of 74 Districts, 28 have taken this a stage further and people have been appointed to visit, to make sure the local church plays its part and to keep the provincial moderator informed of any change in circumstances. In some cases the person is appointed as a Pastoral Aide to the moderator. The effectiveness of these ministries

does vary depending on the person appointed. A few Districts arrange annual get-togethers for the retired and widowed and in a couple of cases this is also done at provincial level by the moderator. Other Districts involve them in Christmas parties and other social functions. With regard to ministers' meetings, which some still call Fraternal, the pattern is very uneven. Some deliberately exclude the retired. A few are dominated by them. Most are open but find that a majority of retired ministers no longer wish to attend.

8 The financial support from Synods varies from province to province. Some have benevolent funds from which Christmas gifts are made and particular needs are met, often through the Moderator. Some have funds which are used in support of retirement housing. This may even include the provision of a house or by sharing in joint ownership. In this way some of the Synods are able to assist the Retired Ministers' Housing Society by the provision of additional resources and by coping with some of those cases which fall outside the national guidelines.

Assembly Care

9 There are three Assembly committees which have a particular interest in caring for the needs of the retired. **The MoM's Pensions Sub Committee** is responsible for the management of the Ministers' Pension Fund (URCMPF) and continually strives to better the pensions of all ministers and their spouses.

10 At present nearly all ministers on the payroll are full members of the Pension Fund. A deduction of 3.25% of basic stipend is paid to the URCMPF and the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund contributes a further sum, equivalent to 9.1% of the total basic stipend, to provide pensions as they fall due. In addition other amounts are being paid in by the Church to provide improved benefits.

11 The entitlement to a pension is an individual calculation in respect of each minister, based on the number of contributory years of service. Pensions are calculated as a proportion of the current basic stipend, (except for ex-Congregational ministers with pre-1970 service) and, under the present rules, that proportion is maintained throughout retirement with increases in line with any increase in the basic stipend. Widows and widowers of pensioners are usually paid 50% of their spouses pension.

12 The Retired Ministers' Fund came from Congregational sources and is presently being used to supplement the pensions of those retired ministers who had service with the Congregational Church, taking them toward the level of other ministers.

13 **The Welfare Committee** meets exceptional needs and is also able to send over 580 ministers' widows a Christmas gift of £50 each. However it is not exclusively concerned with the retired and widowed.

14 The 1979 General Assembly accepted a moral obligation to provide housing for retired ministers and ministers' widows or widowers, who could not otherwise be adequately housed. The responsibility for this was given to the Finance Department and has been exercised by the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society. Many of our ministers have been able to meet their retirement housing needs from their own financial resources or by assistance from other agencies. For others the assistance provided by the Church, largely through the agency of the Society, has taken a burden of anxiety from ministers in their middle years and has given dignity to them and their spouses in the years of retirement. This has ensured that it is no longer necessary for a minister at retirement age to take a pastorate because he has

nowhere to live. The committee is presently responsible for about 260 properties, though many are in shared ownership.

- 33% are wholly owned by the URC Housing Society or the URC Trust.
- 38% are in shared ownership between the Society or Trust and a retired minister and spouse or widow.
- 29% are in shared ownership between the Society or Trust and a Synod, or also with a retired minister and spouse or widow.

In the last two years there has been an increase in the number of properties in which Synods have had a share. Out of 34 properties purchased, Synods had a share in 18. In addition, the Memorial Hall Trust owns 31 properties which are occupied by retired ministers and their spouses and ministers' widows of the United Reformed Church.

15 All these committees co-operate in a Pre-Retirement Course arranged by the Ministries Department, following a suggestion in one of our previous reports. Normally one course is held each year. It is residential and lasts two days. Ministers are invited to attend about two years before retirement. An invitation is also given to the spouses of married ministers. So far four conferences have been held with an average attendance of over 20. Apart from officers involved with pensions and housing, usually there are present two of three couples who have already retired and others who can talk about different aspects of retirement. Apart from group sessions there is also an opportunity for individuals to talk over their own position in private consultations. Many of those who have attended these courses have said how valuable has been the help they have received.

16 The Moderators wish to place on record the devoted service given to the Church and our ministers by Mrs Judy Stockings, who not only manages the payroll but acts as Pensions Officer and is secretary of the Welfare Committee, by Mr R S Carruthers, the honorary secretary and Mr F H Elders, the honorary assistant secretary of the Retired Ministers Housing Committee. In doing this, we speak not only for ourselves but on behalf of the many retired ministers and widows who mention their names to us with gratitude for their ministry.

The Provincial Moderator

17 We have been entrusted with the pastoral care of all our ministers and we naturally find ourselves concentrating on the needs of those, both stipendiary and non-stipendiary, who are presently serving the church. Nevertheless, we endeavour to visit our retired in times of crisis and celebration, supporting their local minister by co-ordinating responses to particular needs which might involve Synod and Assembly resources. Sometimes it is possible to call in on other occasions and we are glad to exchange news and reminisce about churches and other ministers of their generation. Their long experience and wisdom makes such conversations a joy for us. However old or infirm, in these ways and by their prayers, they continue in ministry and give us a great deal of support.

Some Concerns

18 Our report so far might give the impression that all is well in the exercise of the Church's responsibility for retired ministers and their spouses. However, while there have been significant improvements in a variety of ways, there is more that could be done under the headings of pastoral care, pensions and housing. There are also some serious issues that need to be faced by all ministers and their spouses in preparation for, as well as in retirement.

Retiring Gracefully

19 Retirement for ministers brings problems and opportunities that are the same for all people at this point in their lives. But some things are different. For many ministers their work is their hobby and their hobby their work. It has been said that the church has always been grateful for the continued ministry exercised by some who have retired. Their own ministers find them a delight to have around. On the other hand there are some in retirement who are a nuisance. Few lay people on retirement continue to be part of the old firm but this is almost always true for ministers. This means that extra sensitivity needs to be shown in a variety of ways. We have been disappointed that so many serving ministers have told us of the problems that are being caused by a former minister of the pastorate who has not retired gracefully. Even when ministers move to different congregations in retirement, sometimes they have not learned how to receive and insist on continuing to give, to the harm of the congregation's life and the present minister's peace of mind. Sometimes the problems are not caused by the minister but by the spouse. They too must learn to disengage themselves from their previous role and find a new one. These are hard words which refer only to a minority of the retired. Nevertheless all ministers and their spouses should resist the temptation to interfere where they should keep out and to speak when they should be silent. All must practise for the time of retirement and be ready to make way for the next generation of ministers.

Housing

20 Housing provision for the retired and widowed has improved dramatically in recent years and no minister applying for housing, who met the guidelines has been refused. It is nevertheless only about six months before retirement that ministers are told that a house will be provided. This can be a cause of anxiety as retirement approaches. Unlike most people, ministers have to move out of the manse at the point of retirement. Yet until ministers are 64½ years old, there is no guarantee that there will be a home in which to live out the rest of their days. We believe that as long as ministers are dependent on a manse system then, subject to the rules regarding length of service, ministers and their spouses ought to have a right to assistance at retirement to obtain adequate housing. (Cf Employment Practice in the URC, Reports to General Assembly 1990 p.39 para 4.8.7.)

21 There are some ministers who wish to continue serving after the age of 65. We are aware that there are a number of part-time pastorates which could be served in this way. Where a retired minister continues in part-time service and lives in one of the Society's properties, a more realistic rent is charged. However, where such a minister continues to live in a manse, then the Society will not guarantee in advance to provide housing at the eventual date of retirement. In these circumstances the prudent minister accepts the housing offered at the age of 65. We believe that this policy discourages some ministers from offering to continue in ministry after 65. We therefore ask the Society to reconsider this and be prepared, at the age of 65, to make a commitment to those few who continue in paid ministry and live in a manse.

Pensions

22 The MoM Committee, led by its Pensions Sub-Committee, has striven in recent years to end inequalities between retired ministers and has also tried to lift the general level. There is more still to be done. Even after a working life spent wholly in ministry, conditions change dramatically on retirement. Payments in cash and kind which are outside the basic stipend and yet are part of the 'stipendiary package' cease. The provision of a house is not guaranteed, heat and light bills now have to be met out of the pension. The Community Charge (as formerly the Rates) and internal decoration, have to be paid from the same source. After the death of the minister, the spouse will receive only half of the pension, yet many of the outgoings, continue at the same level or are not reduced in the same proportions. We therefore welcome the Mom's proposals that would end payments to serving ministers for heat and light and the Community Charge. These changes, when accompanied by a compensatory increase in the basic stipend, would improve pensions and the circumstances of our retired and widowed instantly. The next stage would be to consider moving towards the possibility of a lump sum option to purchase retirement housing. This might seem to be a pipe-dream but we must not lose sight of the fact that there comes a time for some of our ministers and widows when they cannot manage alone. There is an increasing expectation on the part of the Government that State provision at this point will be supplemented by the use of capital resources invested in housing. One way or another, the church will have to face the responsibility for this additional burden.

23 It is not uncommon now for ministers in their late 50s or early 60s to be the only persons of that age in paid employment in the congregation. A more flexible retirement age is now more usual, though not for ministers. We have observed a change in pace demanded from ministers, as in other jobs, over the last thirty years. The church ought to consider whether to explore the possibility of offering retirement, not only at a fixed age, but also after an appropriate length of service. Some of our ministers who were ordained in their mid-twenties are feeling very tired by their early sixties. The obligations of working full-time until their 65th birthday are not always fair to them or to their pastorates.

Pastoral Care

24 We have committed ourselves to check with each District Council on the care they give to the retired minister, their spouses and to the widowed in their area. We will particularly ask about the needs of the widowed. We will also draw their attention to the needs of the retired non-stipendiary minister.

25 For ourselves, we will continue to exercise our pastoral office and responsibility to the retired, their spouses and the widowed as God gives us strength.

RESOLUTION

- 1 The Assembly receives the Report for debate.

TABLE 1

STIPENDIARY MINISTERS OVER THE AGE OF 65

| <i>PROVINCE PASTORATES</i> | <i>IN FULL TIME PASTORATES PAID BY MOM</i> | <i>IN PART-TIME MINISTRY PAID BY MOM</i> |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| NORTHERN | 3 | 0 |
| NORTH WESTERN | 0 | 1 |
| MERSEY | 1 | 3 |
| YORKSHIRE | 1 | 1 |
| EAST MIDLANDS | 1 | 4 |
| WEST MIDLANDS | 1 | 6 |
| EASTERN | 0 | 6 |
| SOUTH WESTERN | 0 | 9 |
| WESSEX | 1 | 4 |
| THAMES NORTH | 2 | 8 |
| SOUTHERN | 3 | 6 |
| WALES | 0 | 3 |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | 13 | 47 |

As at 1.1.91

TABLE 2

| <i>PROVINCE</i> | <i>RETIRED COUPLES</i> | <i>SINGLE & WIDOWED RETIRED MINISTERS</i> | <i>MINISTERS' TOTAL WIDOWS & WIDOWERS</i> | <i>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</i> |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|
| NORTHERN | 44 | 12 | 52 | 108 |
| NORTH WESTERN | 31 | 9 | 46 | 86 |
| MERSEY | 21 | 6 | 32 | 59 |
| YORKSHIRE | 27 | 8 | 40 | 75 |
| EAST MIDLANDS | 38 | 5 | 29 | 72 |
| WEST MIDLANDS | 40 | 13 | 43 | 96 |
| EASTERN | 48 | 20 | 58 | 126 |
| SOUTH WESTERN | 58 | 18 | 55 | 131 |
| WESSEX | 44 | 5 | 60 | 109 |
| THAMES NORTH | 28 | 5 | 34 | 67 |
| SOUTHERN | 59 | 19 | 61 | 139 |
| WALES | 42 | 6 | 63 | 111 |
| <i>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</i> | 480 | 126 | 573 | 1,179 |
| AS AT 1.1.91 | | | | |

FORWARD POLICY GROUP

Convener: Mr. Raymond Clarke

Secretary: Mrs Connie Winter

1. The Forward Policy Group's brief is 'to stimulate, support and comment on the forward planning of the Church at all levels'. This report refers to (i) the broad context in which the URC undertakes its responsibilities, (ii) some issues in the life of the church either referred to us or raised by us, and (iii) the valuable reports received from Departments. We are especially grateful to the Revd Keith Forecast, past Moderator of the General Assembly, Mr Angus Grimmond, Convener of the Finance Department and the Revd Bill Wright, Advocacy Secretary, for meeting the Group. The regular participation in the Group's work by the General Secretary has enabled it to gain a sense of the many positive developments which have taken place throughout the URC during the course of the year.

I DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING URC POLICY

2. The following are among important developments which create the context of the URC's work. Each has distinctive implications for the formulation and implementation of our policies and how we put them into practice.

Creation of the new Ecumenical Instruments

3. The URC's consistent and creative contributions to the life and work of the British Council of Churches over many decades has often been remarked upon by others with appreciation. Within the framework of the new, wider and firmer ecumenical relationships it will now be essential for the URC to review many aspects of its own policy-making affecting some of the areas of Christian service at present within the remit of its present Departmental structure.

Methodist / URC Relationships

4. A major feature of the 1970's and 1980's has been the growing together and uniting of Methodist and URC churches. The reasons for this have been many but the experience of co-operation at local level has brought benefit to Christians in their church life and in serving the community. The future of Methodist/URC relations may lead to unity at national level within the 1990's. Whether this happens or not it is likely that there will be a continuing movement towards unity at local level.

Political and Economic Change

5. Through dramatic changes in many of the world's regions, and not least in Europe, the URC has been reminded of its responsibilities as members of the World Church. The URC has strong commitments to the World Council of Churches, to international Christian agencies, to the world family of the Reformed tradition and, most closely, through its partnership within the Council for World Mission. In these ways the Church is increasingly involved in one or other aspect of world mission and in contact with world-wide religious, social, political and environmental issues.

Ministry throughout Life

6. Within the URC we seek to recognise the ministry of believers of all ages, with a growing awareness of the respective needs and contributions of people at any stage of life. Over the past year the URC has been considering different patterns of ministry, Christian vocation and the place of worship in our lives. We are challenged to be a truly Christian community of women and men in which all are called to serve and in which we strive to achieve equality of opportunity.

7. Taken together these developments illustrate many challenges and opportunities. It is within a variety of settings at different levels that we entrust to each other decisions about the policies for our part of the Christian Church. These decisions define our responsibilities for the service which we offer and the mission in which we engage.

II MATTERS REFERRED TO OR RAISED BY THE GROUP

Central Church Organisation

8. The Group has continued to take part in the consultations on Central Church Organisation, which high-lighted the desirability of achieving greater cohesion in policy-making and in planning for the future. It believes that the Mission principles that have been identified and the suggested functions of a Mission Council will strengthen the URC in its response 'to the world and to the word of God'. The Group warmly supports the proposals that are before the Assembly and expresses its willingness to be associated with their implementation, if adopted.

Advocacy

9. In its discussions the Group has been helped to understand the particular ways in which mission and ministry are being promoted by the Advocacy Group. That group has asked 'What are the medium and long term plans for the URC?', and has suggested that Departments should seek to plan further ahead than has been customary. The Forward Policy Group endorses that hope. The successful advocacy of the past year has been to the benefit of the URC's two central funds. If this progress is able to be integrated within the work of a new Mission Council there will be even better cohesion in forward planning throughout the life of the Church.

Communications

10. A range of functions is covered under the title 'Communications and Supplies' and practical problems arise in sustaining diverse activities while ensuring their financial viability. There are policy implications, here, that affect the whole of the Church. The Group trusts that the decision to develop the bookshop into a Resource Centre will succeed. It is important that local churches should be able to gain access to material not otherwise available; and that there should be the means of publishing new writings by 'URC related' authors.

A Theme for General Assembly

11. The Executive Committee referred to the group the suggestion that the URC might be helped toward a greater sense of common purpose if there was able to be an over-arching theme at a General Assembly. The group made certain suggestions, in the belief that the adoption of a theme could give a special focus to an Assembly's deliberations and to a Moderator's ensuing year of service. This matter is now being further considered through the Business Committee's deliberations on the timing and character of future Assemblies.

Large Churches

12. The Group has discussed the role and influence within the URC of numerically large churches. Discussion has focused on the location and particular tradition of a church; the nature of the ministry, both lay and ordained; age-groupings; the range of individual gifts within the membership; and the extent to which size is a factor in outreach and 'twinning'. A short paper has been prepared, outlining some of these matters, and is available on request.

III MATTERS ARISING FROM DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

The Group is privileged to receive Minutes of all central Departmental Committees and thereby to be aware of the enormous responsibilities borne by each of them.

The following brief references illustrate how, within each Department, there are matters which affect the mission of the whole Church.

Ministries

13. The Group recognises the vital work being undertaken by the Department in relation to vocation, the assessment of candidates and in considering future patterns of ministry, both ordained and lay. The Group believes that the URC should gradually implement a regular review of all ministers in pastoral charge, in a similar manner to that in which special ministries are reviewed. It also shares the hope of the Department that it will be possible to increase the number of CRCW's, for their distinctive ministry is an important element within the work of the Church as a whole.

Faith and Life

14. The Department's reports demonstrate that a high priority is being given by the URC to work with children and young people, both within the churches and in the wider community. This is evidenced in the roles of YLTO's and YCWT's, in the new Fury Project and in the Department's study of the resourcing and advocacy of work among children. The URC's commitment is all the more important at a time when the purposes and future funding of statutory and voluntary youth work, and of the social welfare of children, are under review by government and by other national agencies.

World Church and Mission

15. The Group recognises the essential aspect of this Department's work in sustaining a complex series of organisational and personal relationships, thus actively representing the URC at home and abroad. Specific matters noted by the Group, because of their policy implications and their relevance to other activities, include: links with informal churches at local level; rural needs; and promotion of the Decade of Evangelism. We find most helpful the emphasis in the Department's call for ecumenical vision and its assertion of the need for clarity about 'how and when each determinative decision is taken' within the councils of the Church.

Church and Society

16. Public policy issues, expressed by the 1990 Assembly, have led the Department to make formal representations to the Government on, for example, Central America, Housing and Homelessness, the Community Charge and the Arms Industry. Much effort has gone into new approaches to support community work, to combat alcoholism and drug abuse and to encourage development education. In reviewing its strategy the Department looks to even greater ecumenical trust and co-operation; desires a heightened sense of partnership between all levels of the URC; and seeks reappraisal of work with specialist, Church-linked agencies. The Group endorses this aim.

Finance and Administration

17. Because all of the URC's work is dependent on the scale of resources available, forward financial planning remains an integral part of the Department's responsibility. At a time when, generally, the costs of financial administration and

property management are high, it is encouraging to note the progress that has been made through computerisation and a review of management. Within its strategy, and its major, continuing commitments, it has also exercised a caring role in responses to specific health, welfare and housing needs of Minister, especially in retirement.

IV A PRIORITY FOR ALL

18. The local church is our primary base for mission. The activities undertaken by the Church at all levels should directly support the local church in its ministry of nurturing, sustaining and challenging us all in our Christian life. We believe that the source of our faith is to be found in the person-to-God and the person-to-person relationships which are expressed in family life, in Christian community and in worship. It is essential that, through its national structures, the Church responds faithfully to such personal experiences and concerns. We note that local churches do not always realise, and relate to, what is being done in their name at district, provincial, national and international level. The whole Church has the opportunity to listen and give voice to the beliefs and needs of its members, derived from its strong links with local churches. The proposed Mission Council should facilitate this process, provided that its composition reflects this priority.

RESOLUTION

- 1 The Assembly receives the Report for debate.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Convener: Dr Mary Ede
Secretary: The Revd Peter Brain

Preamble

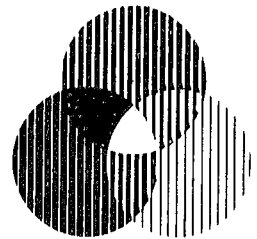
1.1 In June 1990 John Reardon completed 18 years as Departmental Secretary and we are grateful indeed for his outstanding service to the United Reformed Church and far beyond in the wider church; we wish him well as General Secretary of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland. Ann Sutcliffe, Assistant Departmental Secretary for 10 years, resigned in December 1990 to move into housing management; we are most grateful for her valued service, particularly in the spheres of housing and community work.

1.2 Peter Brain took up the Church and Society reins in September 1990. However, instead of appointing an Assistant Secretary we are using our staffing resource in a more flexible way, by buying in expertise for particular tasks on relatively short-term contracts. This will enable the Department to respond more easily to changing needs, to contribute to the evolving pattern of ecumenical cooperation, and to encourage development of work nationwide.

Mary Ede

Managing the agenda

2.1 The list of topics which this Department might address is almost endless! During a year in which one new staff member replaced two long-experienced ones and proposals for changing the central organisation of Departments threw everything into the melting pot (under which the fire still burns), the Department has had to consider how it might make some sense of its task.



2.2 One element in any strategy is self-evident. Though the specific question of the Just Peace Church is dealt with separately in this report, the fundamental insight offered through the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) programme, originated within the World Council of Churches, gives us a strategic framework for almost all we are called to do. On the one hand it obliges us to explore the theological basis of our work, the affirmation of God as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of life. On the other, we are prevented from addressing issues of peace, world development, poverty or the environment apart from their inter-relatedness with one another; the wholeness is crucial.

2.3 As to the complexity and number of the issues facing the church and this Department, one step is already clear - and was foreshadowed in reports through the 1980s; increasingly we need to recognise and 'own' what is done in ways other than by our own Departmental staff or working groups. Three come to mind.

2.4 Firstly, we are hoping to 'cash some ecumenical cheques', turning into actual work the promises of co-operation we all made last year when the new instruments were established. This will increasingly mean trusting the other denominations, with (or even without) our direct involvement, to tackle a subject and reach a Christian mind on what needs to be done.

2.5 Secondly, we are beginning to appreciate how people around the country can take responsibility for certain issues. The role of Provincial committees or correspondents goes beyond that of communicating 'up' or 'down'. Departments may be based at Church House and caricatured as 'head office', but all serve the church nationwide and in Church and Society matters this is crucial. There are within the United Reformed Church many committed and experienced people who, while they would not wish to serve on permanent committees, will surely give their time and talent for a while.

2.6 Thirdly, we rely on Christian bodies other than the churches alone to build the Kingdom. The activities of Christian Aid and the World Development Movement, of Church Action on Poverty and the Churches Community Work Alliance are established and invaluable. This is **our** work, done for us by them; they receive substantial funding from the United Reformed Church on that basis. To reinforce the point, this year we include as an Appendix a report from Christian Aid and shall include similar direct reports in future years.

The Gulf

3.1 Since August 2, 1990, when Iraqi forces invaded and annexed Kuwait, all eyes have been on the Gulf, first hoping to avert and then to moderate the military conflict which has come to an end on the day this report goes to print.

3.2 Assembly Executive at meetings in November and January received reports on how the churches were responding to the developing situation. Many statements have been issued by denominational and ecumenical bodies and individual church leaders. A background briefing was prepared for the United Reformed Church by the Department following a colloquy organised by CCBI in November. When hostilities were renewed on January 16, the Department issued a brief statement.

3.3 On January 31, Assembly Executive adopted a fuller statement prepared by the Department which was widely circulated; the following extracts contain the main emphases. As the battle ends, we pray for all, the powerful and the 'little people', who must play their part in building a just and lasting peace; the points of this earlier statement will still frame our continuing prayers and concern for the whole region.

"1. We share in the prayers for all engaged in, and those hurt by, the actual fighting, and for the leaders of the nations.

2. We affirm our abhorrence of any suggestion that this conflict is between representatives of the religions of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. We call on Christians in this country, through contact with congregations of other faiths, to resist any trend towards racial hatred or violence at this time.

3. We call on those who in time of peace prepared for war to plan even more determinedly for the peace which must follow this war. We echo the calls now being made by church leaders and statesmen for a just peace which goes beyond a simple cease-fire.

There must be acknowledgement and genuine enhancement of the status of the United Nations, under whose indirect auspices the war is being fought, and without whose authorisation no future military action should ever be justified.

Any settlement should spare the common people of Iraq more humiliation and abuse - they have suffered enough.

The powerful nations, again within the UN forum, must commit themselves to address the several long-standing disputes in the Middle East, not just between Kuwait and Iraq but in Lebanon, Cyprus and the 'occupied territories' disputed by Israel and the Palestinians.

A determined effort will be required by the international community to ensure redress for the increased economic hardship suffered by third world countries as a result of the conflict.

A similar effort will be required to care for and to restore the natural environment of the Gulf region.

The arms manufacturing and supply industries must be brought under some international monitoring and control.

4. In addition to our expectations of others, we commit ourselves also to the greater demands made at this time on Christians, lay and ordained, to care for the hurt and to work for true peace.

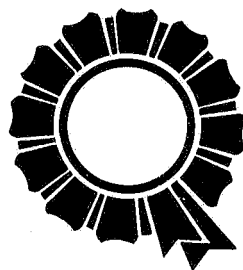
In these comments and commitments we would join with fellow-Christians of other traditions and in every land.

The just peace for which we all pray and strive has to be built out of the horror of this war, not without repentance and humility for actions in earlier times, but with that larger hope in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the promised Prince of Peace."

3.4 The Department will bring further report and a resolution on the Middle East situation drafted in the week prior to Assembly.

General Election

4.1 Assuming the Prime Minister does not call a 'snap' election, it is virtually certain that there will be a General Election between the 1991 and 1992 meetings of the General Assembly. Most of the matters considered by the Department feature in the party political manifestos now being prepared. Sometimes the stance of the Department and the church aligns with one or more party platforms, sometimes with none; certainly members and adherents of the United Reformed Church vote for every party. On the matter of the political process, however, we are united. All should vote and candidates must explain themselves and their proposed policies to their local electorate.

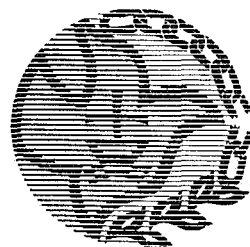


4.2 In association with the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CCBI) a working party serviced by the Department has been planning a nationwide programme of pre-election meetings in as many mainland constituencies as possible. This is a development of the tradition established by the British Council of Churches. These are not campaigning meetings but opportunities for the candidates of every main party to enter into public debate and persuasion. Councils of churches or equivalent bodies should even now be putting in hand advance planning, choosing dates and venues, ordering material, etc. URC congregations and Districts should be encouraging this planning. When the election is called the text of the briefing paper with suggested issues to be raised at the meetings will be finalised and circulated.

Resolution 2

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

5.1 The seven years between the Vancouver and Canberra Assemblies of the World Council of Churches were hardly long enough for a theme as large as JPIC to take root in the churches. The Department, ahead of other UK denominations, set up a JPIC working party in 1986; David Batchelor and Molly Kenyon have served as its conveners.



5.2 Since then, the JPIC process has gained momentum, spurred by the awakening concern for environmental issues and recognition of the ways in which they interlock with issues of justice and peace. The spirit of the international JPIC gatherings in Basel (1989) and Seoul (1990), matching national ones at Rothwell ('Seeds of Hope') and Portsmouth ('Kosmos') lifted participants to a conviction that faith might pray: "come Holy Spirit, renew the whole creation". The JPIC process is a long-term challenge to Christian discipleship, not a short-term programme. It seeks to point out what conversion to God means in the 1990s.

5.3 In that spirit, in 1989 General Assembly voted to encourage the Church and Society Department to develop the proposal for the United Reformed Church to declare itself a Just Peace Church. It was intended that through careful discussion local congregations would reach a deeper understanding of our responsibilities as Christians for peacemaking, for justice in the world, and for the care of the environment.

5.4 It is clear that in many of our churches this has indeed happened, not least as they recognised that in what they already do - and fail to do - the general principles of JPIC are given concrete expression. Congregations have come to see deeper significance in their support of local or international issues of justice and peace, and in their modest efforts to care for their local environment. We could all do more, and better understanding will help us.

5.5 But there has been considerable misunderstanding and opposition to the specific proposal for a Just Peace Church declaration. At least six grounds for opposing the making of the declaration were mentioned in correspondence and comment. The Department will not, in the foreseeable future, bring that particular resolution before Assembly.

5.6 Some of the misunderstanding was due to serious delay in producing the necessary background material, due before the 1990 Assembly at which there was a rather abortive debate. The Department's JPIC working party accepts responsibility for this lack of material and commends the papers compiled and published last autumn and now updated.

5.7 The proposal for the declaration, itself a catalyst for the debate that might otherwise not have happened, was meant to focus our thoughts on peacemaking, on pursuing justice and on caring for creation as vital expressions of witness in God's world. It remains a matter for deep concern that these essential aspects of Christian faith are not fully integrated into the life of all our churches. This must be a priority task, made more not less urgent by the declaration of a Decade of Evangelism.

5.8 The Department continues to encourage local churches to perceive JPIC as central to their work and witness. The working party will remain in existence to respond to the WCC Canberra Assembly decisions on JPIC and related issues.

Resolution 3

Homosexuality

6.1 Early last year the working party on homosexuality, with Ruth Clarke as convener, produced a paper which was circulated to a cross-section of Districts and local congregations for comment. This was an interim report which sought to outline the Biblical and medical evidence, to affirm minority rights, to discuss the sexual mores of our times, to challenge the churches' pastoral care and to confront the reluctance of churchpeople even to talk about it; quite a lot to attempt in four sides!

Words like 'horror' and 'excellent' appear in the 36 responses which the working party received in January. This is a most divisive issue, not least because it is not always clear which aspect of the matter is actually causing the division at any one point in the discussion.

The working party, wishing to spell out more thoroughly and, they hope, cogently what they believe, are rewriting the paper which will be submitted to the central committee of the Department later in the year with a view to publication. Even then, this will not be a statement of policy on behalf of the Department, still less from the United Reformed Church, but rather a contribution to the continuing debate. We are not persuaded that a resolution which pressed Assembly to lay down rules or regulations on any aspect of this complex matter would be helpful.

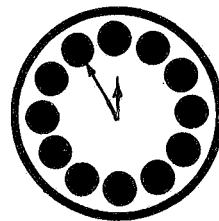
6.2 For those who wish for an extended overview of all the arguments and views currently held by Christians, the Department commends the recent Methodist report on 'human sexuality' published by their Division of Social Responsibility. This report and the accompanying study guide are available from Church House.

6.3 Concern is currently being expressed by homosexuals over possible discrimination against them as a result of Clause 25 in the Criminal Justice Bill. Much depends on how the proposals are amended in Parliament and on how the eventual Act is interpreted by the courts; the Department will monitor the situation as part of its larger concern for human rights.

6.4 The matter causes embarrassment as well as division: in one sense this is a proper disinclination to treat at all publicly the topic of human intimacy; in another sense it can be prudishness based on a denial that God gave us sex at all, and certainly not for enjoyment! The working party has expressed the wish that churches might experience the open discussion helped by correspondence and consultation without which it could not have reached its conclusions without prejudice. And, even though opinions will differ, the central committee hopes the discussion will continue on that basis.

South Africa

7.1 What, then, constitutes an answer to prayer? The Department's report to the 1990 Assembly rightly warned: "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."



7.2 Those who have drawn parallels with the captivity of Israel in Babylon must ponder, as did the prophet, whether President de Klerk is another Cyrus, God's servant fulfilling His liberating purpose. (Isaiah 44,28). Others remind us that intention is not enough and from the victims' point of view little has changed as yet. Far from 'rewarding' President de Klerk by lifting sanctions, we should maintain the pressure which alone has persuaded the powerful minority to talk about change and which must stay in force until democracy is achieved. Money, oil and arms should not flow in to strengthen white economic and political oppression. Reconciliation achieved at the expense of justice is not peace.

7.3 The Southern Africa Coalition (SAC), of which the United Reformed Church is a member, organised a major gathering in London in February. This was addressed by the Revd Frank Chikane, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, who spoke of the mixture of hope and doubt that sets the current mood: while there is now a chance to get rid of apartheid, the 'peace process' is delicate and

the dangers of it going wrong are real. A brief SAC statement, adopted at the meeting, sets out what now needs to be done and what the British Government should do; this has been circulated by the Department. Norman Willis, TUC General Secretary and vice-chairman of the SAC, quoted St Francis: "preach the gospel; use words if necessary". 1991 is a truly critical year for South Africa, when actions must fulfil fine promises.

Continuing Work

8.1 **AIDS:** The Revd Martin Hazell, national AIDS adviser, is approaching his fifth and final year in this ministry. The work, divided between administrative and pastoral responsibilities, continues to grow, as does the HIV/AIDS epidemic. We congratulate Martin on the respect he has won in secular bodies active in this field, such as the Terrence Higgins Trust and the World Health Organisation.

Several churches observed World Aids Day over the weekend December 1/2 1990 and it is hoped that more will do so this year; the Department will again produce special worship material to incorporate into Advent Sunday services on December 1.

The Department has established a working party, including some members of the AIDS Adviser's support committee, to bring recommendations as to how this concern can be sustained and the momentum maintained beyond Martin's time in post.

8.2 **1% Appeal:** Since last Assembly contributions totalling £320,572.00 have been received from 393 local churches, plus a few individuals. According to Assembly resolution in 1979 85% of the total was used by Christian Aid in supporting development work overseas 'to strengthen the poor' in the words of their policy statement, 10% was contributed to the World Development Movement to assist the campaign for justice, and grants were made from the remaining 5% (which was also used to pay for the printing of materials) towards One World Week, the National Association of Development Education Centres and similar work.



The Department plans to bring a major report on this appeal to Assembly in 1992, inviting the church to renew its commitment and restate its priorities in this field.

8.3 **Housing and Homelessness:** This issue, a crucial indicator of poverty in our society, was a particular concern of Ann Sutcliffe. The Department, believing that this must remain a priority and that Departmental work should be less London-based, has appointed Craig Russell to work for the equivalent of 2 days a week until September 1992 on housing issues. His tasks will include helping with the planning and running of conferences which will probably concentrate on 'theology and housing' and involves tenants' groups; he will also be involved in the preparation of briefings and other material for the Department and the whole church. Beyond the United Reformed Church, Craig's responsibilities will include representing us in ecumenical work in the housing field.

As a result, the Department expects to make housing a major feature of its report in 1992.

Resolutions

- 1 Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 Assembly urges local churches to participate fully in the programme of pre-election constituency meetings organised under the auspices of CCBI.
- 3 Assembly affirms the centrality of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation process to Christian witness and church life in the 1990s, and encourages the Department to develop this theme as a stimulus to reflection and action, especially in local churches.

APPENDIX

The work of Christian Aid

9.1 Through its World Development 1% Appeal, the United Reformed Church gives Christian Aid 40 per cent of the total income the charity receives from denominations and dioceses in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Last year, this amounted to £270,000 towards Christian Aid's work, some of which we report on below.

In a world where 500 million people suffer from chronic malnutrition and 2.4 billion have no adequate sanitation, organisations like Christian Aid play a vital role in helping poor communities to overcome their poverty.

9.2 Christian Aid is the third biggest development charity in Britain, with an income of over £31 million in 1989-90. As an official agency of the British and Irish churches, it is one of the largest church relief organisations in Europe. It reports directly to more than 40 sponsoring churches, including the United Reformed Church. At home and overseas it also works with people of other faiths or of none who share its concerns.

9.3 Christian Aid has no staff overseas, preferring to work through local organisations which ensure that money is spent where local people need it most. Christian Aid believes that poor communities working with church partners and others are best placed to devise and run their own programmes and solve their own problems.

Support from Christian Aid helps poor people to build self-reliance and obtain the food, homes, clean water, health care and education that should be theirs by right. With Christian Aid funds, partner organisations may start a credit union for farmers and craft workers, pay the salary of a local agronomist to start a tree planting co-operative, or buy tools for a trade school for abandoned street children.

Partners include groups peacefully challenging injustice in their own countries: a legal aid office in South Africa and a human rights group in Brazil, for example.

9.4 With over 20 million people - the equivalent of a third of Britain's population - facing the threat of starvation because of war and drought in Africa, Christian Aid has a major role to play in getting relief supplies to those most in need.

Tonnes of food are being shipped to Tigray, northern Ethiopia, and Eritrea, and trucks are being provided to carry the food to remote areas. Airlifts of food into southern Sudan and convoys from Zimbabwe to Angola are also funded by the charity.

9.5 Of more importance in the long term, Christian Aid aims to prevent hunger by assisting farm programmes, providing funds to its partners for seed, oxen, tools and conservation work. In Eritrea, for example, after the devastating famine of 1984-85, the farmers in the Rora Habab plateau have seen their crop yields double since they were encouraged to terrace their land and to replace trees cut down for firewood or eaten by goats. This year's drought, caused by an almost total lack of rainfall in some parts, has set them back temporarily. But thanks to the programme, which Christian Aid has funded since 1987, the farmers have the skills and the tools to get back on their feet again.

A persistent cause of hunger in Africa, Asia and Latin America is lack of access to land. Many Christian Aid partners work for land reform, securing land for farmers and ensuring that they have the means to grow their own food.

9.6 For many of Christian Aid's partners, education is vital for their struggle to overcome poverty. In the occupied West Bank, for example, the demand for pre-school education facilities for Palestinians has been growing. More mothers have to seek work outside the home to help support their families and for most people, conditions at home are crowded and stressful. There is no government pre-school provision and it has fallen to church and community groups to teach the young children.

Using some of the money it receives from the URC's 1% Appeal, Christian Aid funds the Early Childhood Resource Centre set up in Jerusalem in 1984. This provides training and education for teachers and is co-ordinating the development of a nationwide service of pre-school education.

Many partners supported by Christian Aid are helping communities to reclaim and build on their rich culture and to turn it into a marketable resource which brings income to their families. In Bangladesh, for example, the Kumudini Handicraft Centre encourages people to adopt new and traditional methods of dye making, using vegetables and herbs. This in turn has promoted work for many rural women, dyeing and printing cloth.

9.7 Christian Aid spends up to ten per cent of its income on education work in the UK, a bigger proportion than any other aid charity. This is because Christian Aid recognises the key role of richer countries in creating conditions that keep people poor. It believes that education and campaigning are needed to help people to understand the root causes of poverty and conflict and encourage action by decision-makers and the public to remove them.

9.8 Currently Christian Aid is campaigning for a reduction in the huge debts which many poor countries owe to high street banks, governments and international lending institutions in the rich North. When countries such as Jamaica have to spend almost half of their foreign exchange earnings on debt repayments, there is little money left for the needs of the poor.

9.9 While Christian Aid may help to relieve the suffering of many it cannot get rid of poverty. But it can call for a fairer distribution of wealth between and within countries, better terms of trade, and for more aid from North to South. In these and other ways it believes it not only works with the churches on the responsibilities of Christian discipleship, but addresses the heart of a gospel which announces good news to the poor.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPLIES COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Christopher Wright
Secretary: Mrs Carol Rogers

PUBLICATIONS

Reform

1. *Reform* is the largest and most frequent of the URC's regular publications and continues to reach at least 40,000 readers eleven times a year. In addition to essential news about the life of the URC, it stimulates thinking about major issues raised by Assembly - in the past year they have included the role of the new inter-Church bodies in Britain and Ireland, the idea of a Just Peace Church, our understanding of our church membership, homelessness, the Churches of eastern Europe, the value of discussing union with the Methodists, the New FURY project, church music and the new URC hymnbook, and our world-wide relationships, through the Council for World Mission and the World Council of Churches as well as our church-to-church links.

2. *Reform* tries to approach every issue questioningly. We need to present 'the facts' clearly but we seek writers who can relate them in a personal way, challenging our need to grow as well as our nonconformity. Readers have regular space to respond, to question and to reject, so that the ultimate view of an issue in our pages is rarely the 'official' view.

3. Even when tackling Assembly issues, *Reform* ranges as well over a wide spectrum of interests and topics and aims always to entertain. We are certain that people should read *Reform* from delight rather than duty: because they don't want to miss the lively discoveries of a lively Church. We are grateful for the many readers who introduce *Reform* to those who have not met it. Subscription is now possible by telephone using a credit card and from any point in the year.

4. We urge a much wider use of this unique meeting-place. A church meeting whose members read *Reform* travels further and faster.

Annual Book

5. The URC continues to publish an annual paperback on a topic which the whole Church can share. Bernard Thorogood's second contribution to this series, *Judging Caesar*, has sold steadily and we are at present exploring manuscripts with an overseas theme and with a very personal and domestic one, and the possibility of a meeting of minds on the first 20 years of the URC, in 1992. It is hoped to publish the 1991 title in the early autumn.

Diary

6. All copies of the 1991 URC diary were sold. The 1992 diary will contain more information which is specific to the URC as well as the usual inclusions.

Year Book

7. The 1990/91 edition was published in October. All work connected with the Year Book is now undertaken within Church House. It is intended that the next edition will be published in October 1991.

DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPLIES

8. This area has been reorganised. The range of books stocked has been reduced to specialise in books for worship, preaching and prayer, titles by authors connected with the URC, resources for those working with children and young people, drama, and a full range of items published by the Iona Community and the National Christian Education Council. Other books can be obtained on request including those titles reviewed in *Reform* which are not included in these categories and every attempt is made to provide a speedy and efficient service. The release of extra space has meant that the person responsible for the distribution of material has been able to be moved from the basement.

9. The distribution of URC material and church requisites is the main task and during the peak time of October - December some 2750 orders were despatched.

10. A new catalogue has been sent to all churches in the January Information Pack. This is intended to be an annual publication and up-date sheets will be issued each spring and autumn.

11. During Assembly a new range of items with the URC logo has been introduced.

12. Supplies of URC material, and selected books, can be made available for Provincial Synods and other special events on a sale or return basis.

PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

13. The Revd Brian Cooper continues to act in an honorary capacity.

14. The Committee recommend all local churches to strengthen their links with the media in their area.

Resolution 2

BROADCASTING

15. The secretary continues to serve as a member of the Churches Advisory Council on Local Broadcasting.

16. The Broadcasting Act 1990 and the publicity it has attracted has led to a heightened awareness for the continuance of good quality programmes being available throughout the whole of broadcasting.

MEDIA AWARENESS PROJECT:

17. The secretary is a member of the project, which has received an extension of funding from the Jerusalem Trust. The project is now in its fourth year and hopes to increase the number of those actively involved through a series of seminars being organised throughout the United Kingdom. The committee commend the work of The Media Awareness Project.

Resolution 3

VIDEO

18. The number of loans from the small library of videos at Church House continues to increase. Among the videos in popular demand are those dealing with the training of elders, and on subjects suitable for use in house or study groups. It is intended to increase the number of tapes available for loan, but potential borrowers are asked to book well in advance and to return the cassettes promptly. A full list of tapes available can be provided on request.

COPYRIGHT

19. Following the resolution of the General Assembly in 1990 many local churches have sought help in clearing permissions for items being included in supplementary hymn books and church magazines and for special services. The secretary continues to offer to help local congregations in this way.

DISPLAY MATERIAL

20. The committee are seeking to produce a new photographic display on the work of the URC which will then be available to local churches. The present set of photographs is still available but somewhat out of date.

IN HOUSE PRINTING AND PRODUCTION

21. The desktop publishing system is now fully operational and has led to a wider variety of work being undertaken in-house. Some items, particularly books and pamphlets requiring a full colour process or particular finishing techniques are designed 'in-house' but printed elsewhere. Following anxieties expressed by several people, environmentally friendly paper as recommended by conservation agencies is being used wherever possible.

INFORMATION SERVICE

22. The Information Service continues to be sent to each church secretary, three times each year. A personal subscription is available for those wishing to keep themselves well informed about happenings both within the URC and in the wider church. The committee is grateful to the volunteers who collate and pack the material.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 The Assembly commends the use of the media, especially video, local radio and newspapers as a tool of the churches, with special regard to the Decade of Evangelism.
- 3 The Assembly commends the work of the Media Awareness Project to all local congregations and urges them to make full use of the resources it provides.

ASSEMBLY PASTORAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Cyril Franks
Secretary: Revd Bernard Thorogood

We wish that we could announce the dissolution of this committee on the grounds that there was no business to be done. Unfortunately this is not so. The need for our continuance appears to be still with us and, under present conditions, is likely to persist.

Marriage breakdown continues to occupy a large proportion of our time. Reconciliation lies principally beyond the orbit of our responsibility. We usually are not aware of the unhappy situation until all possible steps to that end have been taken. It is with the consequences of separation that we are concerned. Often the best we can do is to take some practical steps to assuage the pain which has been suffered.

Not all relationships between ministers and congregations are as they might or should be and, in the end, in spite of all efforts by Districts or Provinces or Moderators, rifts cannot be healed. We then have been called upon to help in dealing with the situation; perhaps by enlisting the help of the Moderators' Meeting to facilitate a settlement where the minister is able to take up a new pastorate, or perhaps a re-examination of the nature of the individual's call. It has in some cases involved trying to find an answer to the question, "Does Christ, at this time, intend you to exercise your gifts and abilities as a minister of the church?"

There have been occasions when we have shared in the circumstances of the loss of faith, or it has been necessary to make the way open for a removal to another denomination which accords more closely to the change of convictions which the minister has undergone.

Happily, in the vast majority of instances, it has been possible to enable the minister to remain within the URC. Only very rarely has it been necessary for us to insist that a ministry be terminated.

It grieves us when we are unable to succeed, after many months and many different ways of solving the present problem. We hope that we are seen as empathetic and with love and forgiveness bringing the spirit of Christ to bear upon the situation. At no time do we hurriedly discuss a seen need or make a thoughtless, or prayerless, judgement. We recognise our shared imperfection and in all of us the need of forgiveness.

While we minister to individuals, we must, and do, recognise that, almost invariably, congregations too need support and encouragement. Frequently they have to live with a sense of shared failure and need to be helped to begin again to learn how to live in peace, and witness effectively.

This year we have had to bid farewell to Benita Kyle, whom we thank for contributing her professional skills and providing the help of the organisation which she has served for many years.

Filling this and other gaps in our membership, we welcome Sheila Pratt, Daphne Hull and Ruth Archer.

RESOLUTION

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.

INTEGRATED TRAINING WORKING PARTY

Convener: Mrs Helen Lidgett

Joint Secretaries: The Revds Terry Oakley and Michael G Diffey

Outline:

1. Introduction
2. The Need for Training
3. The Present Picture
4. The Nature of Training
5. Issues in Training
6. Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

Remit of the Working Party

1.1 The Ministries and Faith and Life Departments agreed, following consultation, to explore possibilities of integrated training, because of the need to re-examine and revise Exploring the Faith and other courses, the developing of a training network, and possible gaps in the provision of training, such as for elders and church members. As a result a working party was formed and met twice in 1989.

The group consisted of representatives of the four main programme departments and training personnel and institutions within the URC. Its remit was:

- a) to explore the possibilities of an Integrated Training Programme for the URC, taking account of earlier discussions, present training materials, courses and policies for Members, Lay Preachers, Elders, CRCWs, Ministers, Mission Enablers, and Youth and Children's Workers.
- b) to identify the process whereby specific proposals can be formulated for consideration by the Departments and Councils of the Church.

The working party submitted to the Executive committee in February 1990 the following resolution, which was agreed:

Faith and Life and Ministries Departments are encouraged to prepare a draft policy statement on training in the URC, for presentation to the 1991 Assembly and thereafter for wider debate.

Aim of the Policy statement

1.2 The purpose of the policy statement is:

- a) to raise awareness of the nature, variety, extent and vital necessity of training within God's mission for the Church.
- b) to identify areas where more effective work could be achieved by co-operation and integration.
- c) to identify serious omissions in the provision of training, which handicap the Church in pursuing God's mission.
- d) to make appropriate recommendations concerning policy and resources.

THE NEED FOR TRAINING

2.1 Training is for:

- a) collective discipleship in mission and witness;
- b) individual discipleship in growth and maturity;
- c) ministry and service in particular vocations.



2.2 Training is needed to:

2.2.1 encourage, enable and equip, **every person and every local congregation** to become and be part of the effective Body of Christ in their local situation and in the world.

How can the individual in the local congregation be equipped? How can the training potential available to the local church be released? Are ministers expected to be trainers, and are they trained for this role?

Much of our training nationally is focused on the individual. How can we increase the use of national resources for corporate learning? More weekend conferences are being arranged by congregations, many of these happen at the Windermere Centre. Much elders' training is also corporate.

2.2.2 help identify and develop the particular knowledge, skills, and attitudes required in **ministering and serving**, in whatever way, within the life of the Church and in mission, locally, in District, Province, or throughout the URC.

The varieties of ministering and serving include: being members, ministers, elders, worship leaders, church related community workers, youth leadership training officers, (and youth and children's work trainers), administrators, church secretaries and treasurers, carers, teachers, trainers, youth and children's workers, evangelists, moderators, healers ...

Many of the elements in training for christian ministry are common, no matter what form the ministry or service takes. There will always be a need for **biblical** knowledge, and the skill to apply it to the particular situation. There will equally be a need to understand the **church's story**, to learn from the lessons of the past, and to be able to play an active part in the Church of the present. An awareness of the expressions of the **Christian faith** and an ability to express one's own faith will often be required, whether this is 'simple' or sophisticated, verbal or non-verbal. Finally, all Christians exercise their discipleship and ministry within the world, and therefore require some knowledge of how human beings and the world behaves, and ability to work out their life style accordingly; this might be termed **social analysis**.

(See recommendation 6.1)

2.2.3 ensure proper recognition, support and resourcing are provided for any who are called and appointed.

At present there are great variations between the treatment of those called to ministry of the Word and Sacraments and those called to other ministries, eg elders, lay preachers, CRCWs, youth leaders, etc. Differences in recognition have led to problems of differentiated status and to a particular allocation of resources. Would this not be avoided if clearer recognition were given to the other ministries already being exercised within the church? And where resources are scarce, should there not be a deliberate policy of allocating resources between the various ministries, rather than an unconscious repeating of traditional patterns? This is particularly the responsibility of the Assembly Departments, colleges and institutions, who should be encouraged to collaborate in developing a coherent policy, properly funded and administered.

(See recommendation 6.2 and 6.8)

2.2.4 provide opportunity for all engaged in ministries to review regularly and evaluate their own experiences, methods, and vocation, so that they may continue to develop and mature in their own discipleship, within the corporate life of the church, and within their participation in God's mission.

Considerable differences exist between the treatment of a call to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and the call of an elder or the call to serve overseas. Is there not a common process that all who are called to serve Christ should go through? For example, should the first stage not be an enquiry to find out to which ministry, if any, one is being called? This happens for some ministries but not for others. Should the church not test this call, either in local church, District or Province, and so select, elect or appoint to whatever ministry is recognised in each particular case? When a call has been recognised, there should be basic preparation for service, before the ministry is exercised. Then a period of induction into the particular setting for the ministry. In-service training should be provided as appropriate and at regular intervals. Finally, there should be a recognition that a calling may be for a limited period, and that further callings may occur during life's pilgrimage. Therefore, there should be a review of any calling, which might also be tested by the church.

(See recommendation 6.3)

2.2.5 to help those who minister and serve to be able to work together for the building up of the church and the fulfilling of God's mission.

Training should help all those who are part of the church to work together, maximising the gifts and skills of all members. However, some are concerned that the pattern of separate training for some ministries and services leads to difficulties, and even rivalries between different people and groups.

It has been recognised that the context in which training is given will affect the training that is received. Part of the context is the people with whom the training is shared. When ministers, elders, youth leaders, lay preachers, etc. are all trained separately then there may be unforeseen consequences when these groups begin to work together. Different assumptions may be made in the training given to each group. Different goals for the work of the church may be taught. Different attitudes towards colleagues may be formed. For example, one group may be encouraged to value highly the individual gifts of leadership, whilst another is encouraged to value team work. In fact the very separation in training may well send messages about the style of work to be followed on the completion of training.

In addition the insights and sharing of experiences which may be possible if training goes on together, will be prevented if the groups are separated, and much benefit will be lost.

Where the same function is the responsibility of two or more groups this is even more relevant, for example in the case of pastoral care, where ministers, elders and others all share the same responsibility, but may be quite differently trained in quite separate courses.

Those responsible for the provision of training should consult about bringing together wherever possible common training for the same skills by different groups, that is colleges, Provincial trainers, and Departments.

(See recommendation 6.4)

THE PRESENT PICTURE

3.1 The current educational scene in the URC is complex and lacks any clear cohesion or direction. There are many gaps in our provision, and probably the most significant is in relation to a rationalised and co-ordinated programme for the members of our churches, who have to try to relate their faith to the world around them and to the joys and sorrows of life. However, opportunities for training are growing, and it may be that there is a detectable rationale in tune with our tradition, though at present hidden. An investigation is timely. We begin with the local congregation and then spread outwards.

The Local Church

3.2 In many local churches it may still be the case that the only opportunity given on a regular basis for training adults in the Christian faith is through worship and learning on Sunday. Often the worship is heavily dependent on one person's leadership, and the adults usually only have the option of the sermon, though there are groups for Christian education for younger ages. In some churches there are further opportunities in the form of house groups, bible study, or at elders' and church meetings. On these latter occasions there might be a focus on a particular theme or a concern referred by General Assembly, using a report or a speaker.

In churches where there are children and young people there are often midweek groups, such as Pilots, uniformed organisations, or teenage groups. A full programme of Christian nurture is possible through resources produced nationally, though the greatest difficulty is often with the lack of leaders.

On a more occasional basis there are often Lent Groups, other study courses, or quiet days. In some instances there are also Church Weekends, travel groups abroad, or special studies on local issues.

Particular groups are given special help. For example the preparation of those to be received into membership either by profession of faith or by transfer from another denomination will often be the responsibility of a minister, though sometimes others are involved. Some material to assist this process is provided by the Faith & Life Department. Again, elders' training is growing rapidly. Some of this takes place within the local church, perhaps through elders' days away from the local situation. A third example is the meeting of Christian education leaders for training purposes, as well as for preparation.

The District Council

3.3 Districts represent a pool of resources and leadership, close enough to the locality and yet wider than the ordinary congregation, which could be developed and used to better advantage.

The seeds of growth are there - for they set up Training Days for particular interest groups, such as Junior Church or Youth Leaders and Elders. Sometimes

considerable expertise is available on stewardship, buildings, finance and outreach. They encourage and help our Lay Preachers. District Council meetings can turn themselves into a training situation at the 'drop of a hat' as a visitor with particular knowledge or skills is introduced, or when a particular issue of strategy needs some kind of in-depth analysis or discussion. Occasional District Days have all the ingredients to teach and inspire large numbers of people who are gathered out of their local churches to do things together.

The Provincial Synod

3.4 It is at Provincial level that much of the expertise finds a focus. Provincial representatives sit on the main Assembly Departmental Committees and have the opportunity to share local experience and insights with others and inform the wider church. They are then bidden to go out and spread the ideas and initiate the programmes of the moment. Provinces are called upon to provide contact people for Childrens' work, or strategy for mission, to initiate discussions and working parties on social matters, leadership deployment, and missionary strategy. A typical meeting of Synod will introduce a range of issues which must be understood through some kind of educational programme prior to any definitive debate, and this should in itself be a significant training experience.

It is at Provincial level that we have seen the most significant emergence of 'trainers', some full-time, some part-time. Provincial Youth Leadership Training Officers and Youth & Children's Work Training officers; officers responsible for Eldership training; Directors' of Training for the Non-stipendiary Ministry, Provincial In-Service Training Officers and Lay Training officers have worked together in a number of different combinations to provide a most significant training resource available to help individuals in their particular role in leadership. There is news of change every day on this front and it is to be welcomed.

Provinces provide Ministers' Schools on a regular basis nowadays, and Provincial Days are becoming more and more imaginative and exciting, catering for the whole range of the membership from the youngest to the oldest. Learning therefore also performs a valuable social function in the church.

The National Church

3.5 Through the work of Departmental groups a wide variety of courses, study packs, booklets and leaflets have been produced. In addition the colleges used for training for the ministry of Word and Sacrament (Westminster, Northern, Mansfield, Queen's) provide a resource not only of courses, but buildings and staff. The Windermere Centre in just four years has proved its worth in enabling thousands of members, elders and ministers to follow a very wide range of training opportunities.

To claim to have a fully comprehensive list may be risky, but the main elements would include:

Courses:

- Setting Out - membership preparation
- Exploring the Faith - for lay preachers and others
- Spectrum - ecumenical youth leaders' course
- Equipped to Teach - for workers with children
- Pilots' Officers Training Course
- Preparing for Ministry - for non-stipendiary ministers
- Ministerial Training - for stipendiary ministers
- Church-related Community Worker Training course
- Exploring Eldership - for new elders

- Events:** Windermere courses; retreats; conferences e.g. FORUM and World Mission Conference; GEAR conferences; theological reading parties; consultations; youth training events, e.g. Breakout and Camp Project Wales, Connect, Time for God.
- Resources:** URC annual books, e.g. Children of the Wilderness; study packs, e.g. Mission Pursuit; Health and Healing; Prayer Handbooks; booklets, leaflets, posters, videos, slide/tape packs and personnel.

It is an exciting, bewildering mix, and it is our view that we should allow and encourage all this to continue, rather than restrain or coordinate it into some kind of uniform and constrictive pattern. It all seems to have its own dynamic, however, and sometimes we note wryly that one result is the issue of a lot of paper!

The Wider Church

3.6 For many years and with increasing momentum, we have seen ourselves in the context of a wider church with more resources to draw on than we can muster by ourselves. It was this that led in the very early days to the production jointly of material for Junior Church and now for the whole worshipping family - 'Partners in Learning'.

The former British Council of Churches facilitated the production of regular programmes of study on such issues as Christians and Community Care, Homelessness, Family Life Education and Community Work. The Council for World Mission and Churches Commission on Mission also sponsor training in mission. In the area of theological education, events such as a 'Bible Study Enablers Conference' or the visit of some Overseas Theological Educators from the Third World, prompted learning experiences. The programme of the World Council of Churches is currently leading us through the theme of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

We can learn a great deal from the Roman Catholic Church and the Black-led Churches that will be an enrichment as we join them in the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland.

The Local Community

3.7 As churches and as individuals we are also in touch with many educational centres in our local communities. To take account of the wider range of WEA and Open University courses, craft groups, or further GCSE study is to broaden the base and increase immeasurably the opportunities for learning about God's world and our place in it. This also reminds us of so many skills and so much experience actually available amongst our members often untapped but, once discovered, extremely valuable.

The Vast Potential

3.8 This round-up of information surely is an indication that there is much education going on in or around the URC at the present time. It has always been so, but it appears to be particularly marked at a time when more and more are calling for training for particular ministries, both lay and ordained, and for learning opportunities just for the sake of it.

It is significant to note that a vast army of people in our churches play a particular 'trainers' role, often without training and support themselves. It is all very unprofessional and ad hoc, however, and yet we are aware of the immense

responsibility resting on the shoulders of Christians today. Merely asking someone to 'fill the pulpit' on a Sunday, or witness to their faith on Monday is just not good enough. The question must be faced whether we need some rationalisation and structural oversight, thus harnessing and directing the enormous potential that is actually available to help members in our churches.

THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Training

4.1 Definitions of training often include reference to 'instruction and practice in a particular skill'. It has already been made clear, however, that in this policy statement a wider understanding is being used. Training includes acquiring **knowledge**, learning **skills** and developing gifts, and forming and changing **attitudes** or values.

Other words are often used in this same area, eg education, teaching, formation, nurturing, discipling or learning. Each is distinctive.

Education

4.1.1 Education suggests a broadly based and open approach to learning. Christian education takes place within the faith community. The tension between openness to whatever direction truth takes and commitment to the faith handed on has been explored in "The Child in the Church", though the same issue applies to adult Christian education. Education includes firstly, formal education, eg in schools, colleges and other institutions; secondly, non-formal education, eg courses and events arranged by voluntary bodies such as WEA or churches; thirdly, informal education which is the learning which can happen by watching television, engaging in conversation, in other words being educated in the process of living.

Learning

4.1.2 The word "learning" puts the emphasis on the learner rather than on the educator. It suggests that learning is active, rather than passive. Viewing matters from this perspective can help focus attention on the best ways in which to help learning, both in terms of methods and in practical arrangements. Learning, however, often needs to be structured, so that scarce resources can be most effectively used, and benefits from corporate learning can be experienced.

Nurture and Formation

4.1.3 Christian nurture and Christian formation stress that growth and development happen within the Christian community. There is more to nurture than the formal aspects of teaching or learning in groups. Relationships which express love and care are part of the process of becoming a Christian. Sharing in worship, experiencing the sense of fellowship both within the local and the wider Church are important aspects of nurture. Without the faith community there would be no scriptures, no tradition, no opportunity for learning about the faith.

Discipleship

4.1.4 Discipleship stresses not only the process of becoming a member, but also the continuing development of faith throughout life. It counteracts the tendency towards an attitude which assumes that once one has become a member all is achieved. It also suggests alternative models of learning, such as apprenticeship, and mentoring. It offers a dynamic pilgrim model. It is, however, perhaps more individualistic than the concept of nurturing or formation.

A Variety of approaches

4.1.5 Whichever word one uses, there will always be a spread of approaches adopted to the aim of helping Christian grow in faith. A variety of philosophies, models, and practices is healthy, for some are more suited than others to particular purposes and situations. Training which takes into account the preferred learning mode of the students, their previous experience, the limited resources available, and the aims of the particular course, will be more effective than that training which slavishly follows a particular theory. Both the trainers and the participants on a course or at an event should be clear about the style and approach being used.

(See recommendation 6.5)

The Theological basis of Training

4.2 Our approach to training will depend on and be affected by our theology: our understanding of the nature of God, the Church and humanity. Within the URC there are a variety of theological stances within a general consensus. The connections between our theology and the training style adopted should be understood, whatever that style may be. Some illustrations may help make the point.

The Nature of God

4.2.1 Our understanding of the nature of God will affect our approach to training. Some speak of God as all-knowing and all-powerful, one who reveals absolute truth. Others emphasise that God is like a companion and friend, calling us to be co-workers in creation. These emphases could lead towards particular models of training being adopted. Some adopt a more directive training style in which the learner is much more a receiver, rather than a contributor. Some have a style which is more like that of a co-learner, with whom there is mutual giving and receiving.

The Nature of Church

4.2.2 Similarly our understanding of the work of the Church may affect our approach to training. Some emphasise building up the fellowship, others the task of evangelising the world, yet others the extension of the kingdom. These could lead towards different training practices. Training might concentrate on developing right understanding of belief, communication skills, and giving testimony; or, on community, relationships, caring, trust; or, on peace making, social analysis for creating justice, political involvement, and deepening prayer life.

Some churches have an understanding of orders and priesthood which could lead to a higher priority for the allocation of resources for training for priesthood. Should a commitment to priesthood of all believers lead to a different set of priorities?

The Nature of Humanity

4.2.3 There are varieties of theologies about the nature of being human, and these too may lead to differences in approaches to training. Some stress the view of humanity as reasoned and rational, some on the other hand appreciate more the intuitive and poetic or mystical aspects of human beings. Some regard people mainly as individuals, others take the view that to be human is to be in relationship and in community. Training might emphasise the mind and intellect or the poetic and artistic, or concentrate on developing individual knowledge, skills and attitudes, or stress group and community learning.

ISSUES IN TRAINING

Appropriate methods of training

5.1 The method of training adopted should depend on the theological assumptions made, the goal of the training course, the previous experience and skills of the learner and those of the trainer. However, sometimes inappropriate methods are used, because of limited resources, lack of knowledge, limitations in the skills of the trainer etc. The method of learning is also part of the training process, for the method is being learnt even if subconsciously. There is a danger that the same method might be repeated in an inappropriate situation, unless this part of the learning is made explicit. This is particularly relevant to the training of ministers, who may be expected to play a training role within the local congregation.

Trainer or Learner Centred

5.2 Some methods may be more trainer-centred, eg the course curriculum, the time of lectures, examinations etc. are all fixed, leaving little to the choice of the learner. Others may be more learner-centred, based on the needs of the learner, at times and locations to suit, and using methods that are appropriate for the learner's own styles and preferences of learning. How are the needs of the learner identified? Should the church provide a range of training courses and opportunities from which members can choose, or should the church select those who are appropriate to benefit from training opportunities, or should there be a combination of these? Where does the control lie? Who decides priorities for the allocation of training resources?

Residential or distance learning

5.3 For some training the building up of community life, with close contact between teachers and students, is considered vital. In other cases, however, it is impossible for teacher and student to meet, so the teaching and learning has to be at a distance, eg through a correspondence course. Even in distance-learning efforts are made to bring students together occasionally in summer schools, tutorials etc. So the benefits of learning from other students and from group learning situations can be used.

As already mentioned the context of training is important. A college community is a quite different context from that of a local congregation, or a congregation from a factory, or one area from another (eg urban, suburban or rural). There are also cultural, class, race and gender factors to be considered.

Accreditation and Validation

5.4 Some training courses lead to accreditation, and thereby recognition, and perhaps status, whereas others do not. Some courses lead to qualifications which are recognised for service within the church, whilst others are not. Some courses are validated if they are recognised as providing qualifications for further training. Which courses does the church accept? Are there other secular or church courses which should be validated by the church? Would it not be helpful to recognise and take into account all previous training, experience, and qualifications for those who offer for service through the church?

(See recommendation 6.4)

Motivation

5.5 What are the factors which encourage people to undertake training, and what presents obstacles? Perhaps finance, time, accessibility are among them. Maybe another is the church's attitude towards qualities of character as opposed to 'paper qualifications'. Or to put it another way, is there an aversion to professionalism in favour of good-heartedness? Should some training for service be compulsory? Should greater encouragement be given through grants etc.

Where service has been offered without formal training it may be appropriate to recognise that learning has been going on and training 'on the job' has resulted in the development of the appropriate and necessary skills. Or without being off-putting or suggesting that service offered previously has been unsatisfactory, nevertheless encouragement could be given for in-service training. This should be the responsibility particularly of local churches. (See recommendation 6.6)

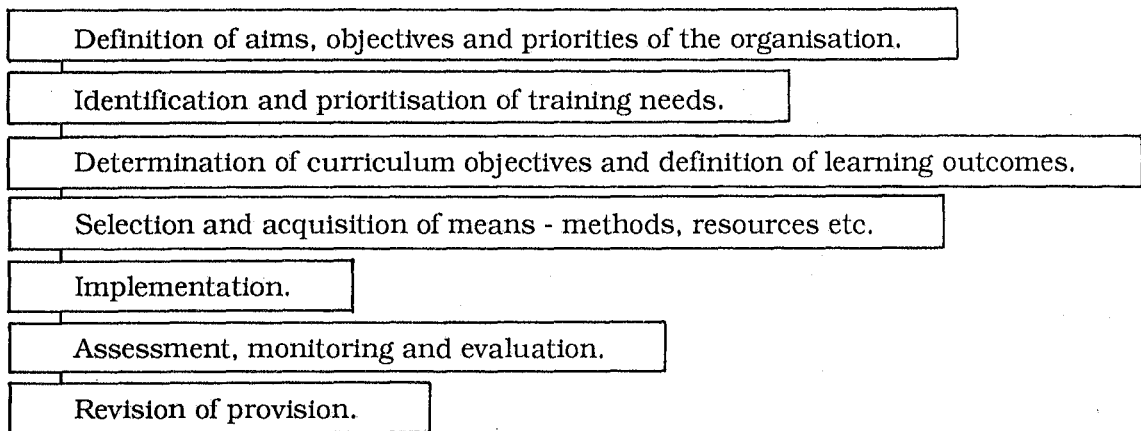
Varieties of Training

5.6 Many different methods, processes or techniques are possible. Are all of them equally valuable? In the spectrum between didactic and experiential approaches, who should decide the method to be used? Should every course have a variety of methods? Perhaps each course should make explicit the methods adopted. Methods presently used include:- lecture, seminar, tutorial, group discussion, case study, problem solving, role play, psychodrama, debate, encounter group, buzz group, brainstorming, film, video or slide/tape presentation, observational visit, project, reading, practical experiments, workshops, apprenticeship, counselling, copying, mirroring, mentoring.

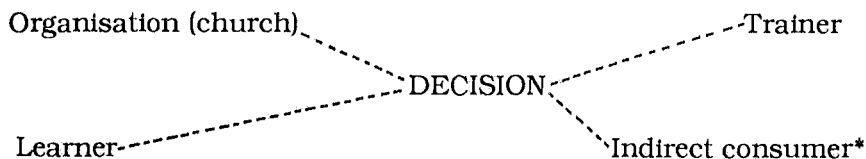
Management and delivery of training

5.7 Training provision is subject to the policy decisions of the church, both the perspectives adopted towards different styles of training and the resources allocated within the church's overall budget.

Most trainers operate a model similar to the one below, which shapes the training provision that they offer.



However, trainers are not the only group who influence policy and therefore provision. A second model illustrates the decision-making process which happens between the partners within the church. These various partners do not have equal influence or power in the making of decisions.



(* Person affected when the learner is trained.)

Provinces and Districts and local churches are active in providing training personnel and opportunities, each should consider establishing a training group, which can decide on training policy, arrange for the provision of training, and allocate resources as appropriate. (See recommendations 6.6, and 6.7)

The importance of trainers

5.8 In all of this report it is clear that a tremendous responsibility rests on our trainers. Much depends on their contribution to the life and witness of the church, and on their effect on the ministries and services members can give at home, work, in worship or wherever.

Certainly trainers should be given encouragement and support. They should be expected to undergo training and in-service training themselves. They should meet to share examples of good practice and form networks for the exchange of information concerning resources. (See recommendation 6.9)

For many people the ministers of Word and Sacraments have a training and educating role. But training is not only exercised by ordained ministers of Word and Sacraments. In all professions and walks of life trainers operate. In the church there are YLTOs, staff in the colleges, Provincial training officers, and many members who have training skills whether recognised or not. Perhaps the time is right for the church to consider, whether it should recognise the specific role and ministry of trainer, as has the United Church of Christ in Canada. (See recommendation 6.10)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to the church to stimulate discussion, to help guide where training courses are being reviewed, to help establish a clear direction for the training provision within the church, and to encourage the working together of all those involved in training within the church.

Integrated curriculum (see 2.2.2)

6.1 Training in Christian nurture, discipleship or ministry should always include **knowledge, skills and attitudes**. Key elements in any training course should be:

| | Knowledge: | Skills: | Attitudes: |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Bible | knowledge | use of | authority |
| Church | story | being part of it today | community |
| Faith | creeds | personal spirituality | orthodoxy |
| Social analysis | human behaviour | relationships | values |

Integrated resources (see 2.2.3)

6.2 A policy of resource allocation should be developed and agreed for the whole range of ministries, and include ecumenical shared resources. Such a policy should cover training for everyone, whether full-time, part-time, paid or unpaid, and cover the whole process of development from enquiry to review of vocation for every ministry.

Integrated development (see 2.2.4)

6.3 Key stages in any calling to Christian service are:

1. enquiry, 2. selection, 3. basic preparation, 4. induction,
5. in-service training, and 6. review of vocation.

Therefore, these should appear in any process of development for any Christian service.

Integrated courses (see 2.2.5 and 5.4)

6.4 Wherever possible elements or modules of courses should be offered, as widely as possible, so that those training for different ministries may share the experience of training. Courses should also be recognised and validated so as to be

taken into account for further training. Where people will work together after training, their training should as far as possible be in common, and certainly should lead to complementary results.

Integrated styles (see 4.1.5)

6.5 There should be a mutual respect for the different styles of training and of trainers. Equally there should be an acceptance that there are appropriate styles for particular purposes and particular people. The style and methods used in any training course or event should be made explicit.

Local churches (see 5.5 and 5.7)

6.6 Local churches should identify those who have training/ teaching/ educational gifts and responsibilities, ensure that they have a call to this ministry, have received basic and induction training, and are commissioned to this service.

District Councils and Provincial Synods (see 5.7)

6.7 District Councils and Provincial Synods should, through training committees develop an integrated training policy and ensure provision of resources for training for ministers, elders, worship leaders, children's and youth workers.

Assembly Departments and Institutions (see 2.2.3)

6.8 Assembly Departments should service and resource the vocational development of all recognised ministries in partnership with Provinces, Districts and local churches. An integrated policy should be developed and adequately resourced for using the buildings and personnel of the training institutions for training for all ministries. A directory of training opportunities, personnel and other resources should be produced.

Integrated trainers (see 5.8)

6.9 All trainers are encouraged to follow a process of development, including basic and in-service training and to form networks for exchange of insights and good practice. In particular those who tutor distance learning courses should be linked into training and support networks.

Ministry of trainer (see 5.8)

6.10 The Church should consider whether it is right to recognise the specific ministry of trainer.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 Assembly commends the Policy Statement for discussion throughout the church, with comments and responses to be made by Easter 1992.
- 3 Assembly asks the Ministries and Faith and Life Departments, in consultation with the Church and Society and World Church Mission Departments, to establish a group to search for and stimulate greater integration of training courses and personnel, and to provide support for the training network.

SCHOOLS LINKED WITH THE URC

1. In 1990 the Heads and Governors of the Six Schools met for their Annual Conference which was held at Wentworth Milton Mount in the Autumn on the theme "Towards 1992". The Headmaster of Taunton School (Mr B Sutton) and the new Headmaster of Eltham College (Mr M Green) were welcomed to their first meeting of the Six Schools which was also the last meeting to be attended by the Headmistress of Wentworth Milton Mount (Miss M Vokins) and the Headmaster of Silcoates (Mr J C Baggaley) in their present capacity.

Speakers at a conference which, for range of subject and effectiveness of arrangement, could not easily be rivalled included the Revd A J Coates ("Reformed Church Links across Europe"), Mr J Towey ("How International?"), Mr B C Arthur ("Education for a Pluralist Society - the European Dimension"). There were invited guests from France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands and the Conference Communion service was conducted by the minister of Richmond Hill United Reformed Church.

2. In acknowledging grants made by the United Reformed Church from its share of the Memorial Hall Trust and by the Milton Mount Foundation the schools continue to acknowledge their responsibility to the wider 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.

3. 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 seeks still to share the continuing opportunity for Christian education with those churches which provided its founders.

4. **Caterham School.** We have farewelled three members of staff who, between them, totalled 105 years. We are grateful to Messrs. Horwood, Bloom and Roughley for their long and dedicated service.

We congratulate Mr Nigel Thorne (Second Master) on his appointment as Head of the Methodist School, Rydal; and Mr. John Hawkins as he becomes Head of Belmont, The Preparatory School of Mill Hill.

The Maggs Library was opened by Mr John Maggs, URC elder and relative of the benefactor, a pupil here in the First War.

The preacher at our Founders' Day Service was the Moderator, the Revd. Graham Cook. Among other notable Services, Mrs Haro Horsfield (formerly CWM) set the scene delightfully for a Papuan evening supporting one of our Old Girls working as a VSO at a Creative Self Help Centre for the disabled at Madang - £1,000 was raised.

The Revd John Parry, a parent, was host and guide to some Preparatory School boys visiting Southall to view the Sikh Gurdwara and Hindu Temple as part of their multi-faith religious studies course.

Among other charities, the school is supporting to the Surrey Branch of the NSPCC in its Centenary Year.

Our Rugby Team, captained by a URC Minister's son, Kwabena Amaning, did us credit by winning the National Schools Sevens Tournament at Rosslyn Park. On the academic side another ministerial, Alex Macro, follows his father's footsteps with a place at Mansfield College, Oxford to read Physics. Robert Wilson was awarded the Royal Geographical Society's Prize for gaining top marks nationally for 'A' level Geography; he is now at Oxford.

This year, both the Head Boy, Tim Bailey, and Deputy Kwame Amaning are members of the URC.

Looking further afield, a group of Preparatory School Boys have visited Zimbabwe while in the Senior School, a group of German exchange students have stayed at Caterham as a result of a link through the Littlehampton URC.

The total number of Ministers and Missionaries' children in the school is nineteen, comprising thirteen URC, three Baptists, two Methodists and one Anglican.

5. **Eltham College.** At the end of the Summer term the school said goodbye to Dr C D Waller, and welcomed Mr D M Green as the new Headmaster. Mr Green was previously Headmaster of Warminster School in Wiltshire.

The year under review has been one of considerable progress. Examination results were again excellent. The GCSE results were the best ever with over 50% of all papers sat gaining A grades. At "A" level 94% passes were recorded, 60% at A and B grades. Nearly all leavers moved into Higher Education with fifteen entering Oxford and Cambridge (and three more deferring until 1991).

Chapel services have been well maintained. The Rt Revd Peter Hall, Bishop of Woolwich, was the guest speaker at the Easter Service, while Dr E H Paterson, an Old Elthamian, spoke of his work at the Christian Hospital in Hong Kong at the Annual Parents' Service.

Mr Bamber Gascoigne was the speaker at the annual Speech Day and Prize Giving. The school has three choirs which regularly contribute to Chapel services: the Chapel, the Chamber and Parents' choirs. The former also frequently performs in Cathedrals and Parish Churches.

The Music Department was as active as ever with three well supported concerts, two ECCO Charity performances and numerous other contributions, as well as providing inspiring music at the Carol Services. Two pupils reached the finals of the BBC Christmas Song Competition, while a member of the Junior School was selected to sing with the English National Opera Company.

The highlight of the school's Drama productions was a magnificent *Henry V* with Andrew Draycott (a missionary son) in the leading role. The Debating and International Societies held regular meetings while the College Society continues to attract speakers of the higher order.

On the sports field a young 1st Rugger XV acquitted themselves bravely, with three boys selected for the Kent U16 squad, and the U14 team winning the Kent cup, while the Cricket XI had a good season. There have been outstanding individual and team achievements in Swimming, Golf, Bridge, Chess and Table Tennis.

Nine sons of missionaries were members of the Eric Liddell Boarding House.

6. **Silcoates School.** The Board of Governors have appointed Mr Paul Spillane, at present the Deputy Headmaster of Trent College, to be Headmaster on the retirement of Mr John Baggaley in September 1991.

The Governors were pleased to welcome Revd Eric Allen, the Moderator of the Mersey Province, as representative of the Province in the place of Mr Alan Scriven. Mr Paul Bryan has been appointed Head of the Junior Department, to succeed Mr Clive Dickinson who has been appointed Head of the Junior School of the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle.

The new 25 acre playing fields were opened by Brigadier Dennis Shuttleworth, President of the English Schools Rugby Football Union on 5th September and are now in full use.

Work began on the construction of the new Science, Technology and Study Centre in July, with the turning of the first turf by the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Lord Ingrow. Completion is planned for July 1991.

The numbers of pupils in September 1990 was 568, the highest in the School's history. International selection during the year has been achieved by Timothy Stimpson at rugby for England at Under 16 level, Mark Ingham at cyclo-cross and Christopher Walker at skiing.

The School was delighted to welcome the Archbishop of York, Dr Habgood, on the occasion of the Joseph Winter Lecture, in June; the subject of the lecture was, "Is Christianity Credible?".

The number of ministers' children at present in school is eighteen, comprising three Anglicans, one Baptist, one Chinese Lutheran, two Salvation Army, one United Congregational Church of South Africa and ten United Reformed.

7. **Taunton School.** There are 580 boys and 457 girls at Taunton School and at the Junior Boys' and Girls' Schools. Of these twenty-eight pupils receive Ministerial Bursaries, sixteen at the Senior School and twelve at the Junior School.

In the past year Lady Waley-Cohen and Mr Wilfred Hollinrake, for eleven years the school's treasurer, have retired from the Council and Mrs Joan Williams, solicitor and Registrar of the High Court, and Dr Anne Grocock, Bursar of St. Anthony's College, Oxford, have joined the Council.

Orchestral, choral, debating and dramatic activities have flourished and attention should be drawn to *Twelfth Night* (Christopher Pollard's forty-first and final production) and *Little Shop of Horrors*.

Rugby, cricket, hockey and netball were honourably represented. There were fifty-five Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

In July 1989 the School had a pass rate of 82% at "A" level.

At their Summer Reunion the Old Tauntonians welcomed former pupils of Kings School Rochester and Eltham College to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the evacuation of the Schools to Taunton during the Second World War. Among the quests was the present Headmaster's old Headmaster, Geoffrey Turberville.

8. **Walthamstow Hall.** The past year has been a busy and successful one. School life has been much enhanced by the first full year of use of the Ship Theatre and music and drama centre. A series of concerts and recitals has begun to raise

money for a grand piano worthy of the new building and the theatre has seen productions of *Oedipus Rex*, Anouilh's *l'Alouette* and the Junior School *Hawatha*.

We have made the theatre available to a number of charities for fund-raising events and are glad to be able to share our facilities in this way. We have held our Sunday evening services there, too, and found it an inspiring setting for worship, culminating in the boarders' Christmas play, a modern nativity by Ted Hughes. Our Carol Service, however, took place at St. John's United Reformed Church in Sevenoaks, and we were pleased to have the participation of the Reverend Richard Tucker once more, before his retirement this Spring.

Public examination results were excellent, with 96% and 95% pass-rates at Advanced Level and GCSE respectively, and a fine record of entries to universities, including Oxford, Cambridge and polytechnics. The curriculum is undergoing intensive review in the light of National Curriculum proposals, though much remains uncertain as yet, and staff and Governors are working together on development plans to take us into the next century.

The number of clergy or missionary daughters at present in the school is ten, including three United Reformed Church and one from the Congregational Federation.

9. **Wentworth Milton Mount.** Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow, J.P. B.A., sometime Moderator of General Assembly, has been elected Chairman of Governors with effect from 1st June 1991.

Miss S D Coe, B.A. F.R.G.S. took up the Headship in January 1991. Mr R Carlyle has joined the School as Deputy Head and Miss J Nussey as Resident Senior Housemistress. Our Head of Physical Education, Miss J Jaggs, has been selected for the England lacrosse team.

The Visitor of the Day at Speech Day was Miss Frances Gumley, journalist and broadcaster. She challenged the girls to think about the meaning of truth.

Public examination results were again good, with some outstanding sets of grades and also most gratifying successes for hard-working less able candidates. Leavers have progressed to a wide range of courses, including Education, Law, Russian and Economics, French and English, Art, Dentistry, Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering.

There continues to be a lively interest in extracurricular activities, many of which contribute towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. We are particularly aware of the need to provide a well balanced programme for our boarders at weekends.

The School has led worship at three local churches in the past year. At Richmond Hill URC the Junior Church programme now extends up to our Fourth Year and we are profoundly grateful for the welcome we receive each week from the minister and members of the church.

In October we were pleased to host the annual conference of Governors, Heads and staff from schools linked to the URC. The theme was "Towards 1992". Six UK schools were represented and we were delighted to welcome also Reformed Church educationalists from France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands.

The number of ministers' daughters at present in the school is eleven. Ten of them are United Reformed Church and one is Church of England.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 1990 - 1991

1. The 1990 Annual Meeting took place during the General Assembly at Wolverhampton and was followed by a lunch after which the President, the Revd Dr Buick Knox gave a scholarly and witty talk on some Irish perspectives on English Presbyterianism.

2. The Council continues to advise the Church on the storage of its archives and to provide a volunteer service of supervision for visitors and replies to the considerable volume of correspondence on historical matters received at 86 Tavistock Place. We have advised the Church to lodge certain registers with local archive offices to assist genealogical searchers.

3. One Province concerned about the proper care of its history has not only appointed a member to correspond with the Society but has asked that each District Secretary should receive a copy of the Journal on subscription in order to keep the matter on the continuing agenda of District meetings.

4. A very successful study weekend was held at the Windermere Centre in October 1990. Visits were made to places of historic significance roundabout and the conference joined the congregation at Ravenstonedale for Sunday morning worship. The combination of historic interest with a concern for the continuing life of congregations has always been a feature of these meetings. An equally fascinating, though shorter event was the study day held in London on Saturday March 16th at Dr Williams's Library, when our concern was with the history of overseas missions.

5. We are meeting on Wednesday May 1st at the General Assembly in Torquay for our Annual Meeting and lunch followed by a talk.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

Chairman: The Revd Alwyn Knight
Director: Richard Foot

This is a time of great change in the housing world, as housing associations have been charged with becoming the main providers of new social housing - housing which is affordable to people on low incomes. How should we change to respond to new needs, demands and challenges? This question has exercised us greatly during the year.

Whilst all of our recent new developments have been designed for elderly people, we are now planning schemes for younger people, homeless families and single people, and for others with special needs. Our development programme includes schemes from the Humber to London, from Ipswich to Salisbury. During the year we have opened new schemes in London, Nottingham and Buckinghamshire. We have also received a commitment of funding to carry out much needed repairs at our two oldest schemes in Poplar and Dulwich. We continue to receive many approaches from churches within, and outside, our current area of operation, who wish us to help them in using their land resources to help those who are in housing need.

But building new dwellings is only part of the task - the good management of them is as important. In this we are indebted to the members of our Local Management Committees, volunteers drawn from local churches, who provide front line management to our tenants and residents, as well as taking care of our properties. During the year we have employed new housing management staff to provide support and professional advice to the Local Management Committees.

What of the future? Many housing associations, some much larger than our own, are merging together to face the new circumstances. All need to continually review their organisation in order to develop efficient procedures, controls and monitoring systems in response to the prevailing call for value for money. Please pray for our work as we seek God's guidance in all the decisions which we face. If you would like to receive regular information, or think that you have a site suitable for one of our developments, please do not hesitate to contact us.

United Reformed Church Housing Association Limited,
Wickham House,
10 Cleveland Way,
London E1 4TR.

Tel. 071 - 790 2424

URC MUSICIAN'S GUILD REPORT 1991

National Learn-The-Organ Year 1990 was given significant support by the United Reformed Church Musicians' Guild and some churches. Its success in recruiting people to take up organ lessons far exceeded the national target. One-day organ schools, evening classes sponsored by Local Authorities, churches allowing young people to 'have a go' all contributed to a successful enterprise. The shortage of organists in some parts of Britain is still serious, but there is hope for the future.

Activities of the Guild Branch meetings have continued to interest, educate, encourage and train people in various aspects of church music i.e. singing, playing and listening. Meetings are never restricted to Guild members and we welcome everyone interested in Church music. This report is not the vehicle to describe these in detail, but we have a limited supply of 'Guild Review' from which we will be glad to send a copy to anyone requesting it.

One event which deserves a special mention was the conference held with the Methodist Church Music Society at Swanwick at the end of October. The major speaker was Robin Sheldon of the Music and Worship Trust and Royal School of Church Music. We explored two new hymnbooks, *Rejoice & Sing* and *the new Baptist book*. The weekend included workshops involved with liturgical dance, instruments and singers, hymn accompaniment, making a musical and worship with the World Church.

Membership of the Guild is still not truly representative of the whole United Reformed Church. Only about 25% of our churches have a member on the roll. The aims and activities of the Guild to maintain and improve the quality of church music are surely worthy of a more representative membership. Annual subscriptions are only £4-00 for an individual and £10-00 for local church membership. Three editions of Guild Review are sent to members each year. Please join us. The address of the General Secretary is in the Year Book and URC Diaries - or write directly to the Membership Secretary : Mr W T Bray, 13 Hewitts Lane, Wymondham, Norfolk, NR18 0JA.

The redundant organ register operated by the Guild is still a reality but is largely one way traffic. Few churches have requested copies as possible customers. A telephone call or letter is all that is required to have a copy and if a church is considering purchasing another organ there may be substantial savings.

Our declared aim is to serve the church. We are able to and do help individual churches with problems concerned with music in worship, organ maintenance, queries concerned with organist's salaries etc., but if our service is to achieve its full potential we would like closer links with the 'Councils' of the church. Consultation and planning of events or training programmes at 'Departmental' level is rare indeed. During this year (1991) we shall be seeking ways of forming a closer liaison with the URC.

A new era in Christian worship begins soon when churches purchase and begin to use the new hymnbook. A great number of people, including many Guild members, have been involved in the preparation of this book. To them we offer our sincere thanks and we pray God may truly speak to his people as we offer back to Him our praise and thanksgiving through '*Rejoice & Sing*'.

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. Other 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.

- 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.