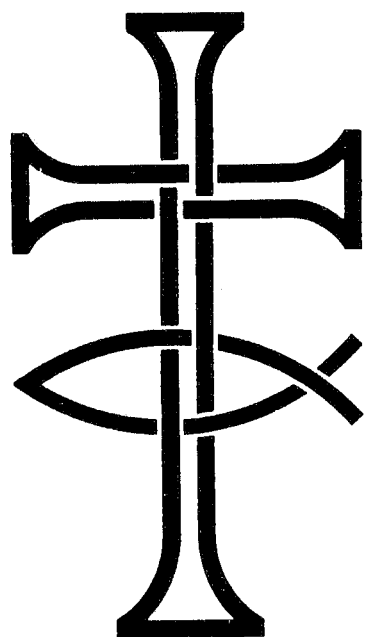

The United Reformed Church
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

1992

July 4th ~ 7th
University of **YORK**

REPORTS

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Introductory Letter from the General Secretary

March 1992

Dear Member of Assembly,

In previous years I have said a few words at the opening of the Assembly about the main topics ahead of us in the agenda. The Business Committee has suggested that this year it would be more useful to reflect on my experience in the last twelve years and I am grateful for the opportunity. In this introduction to the Book of Reports I describe some of the major issues that confront us with challenge and hope, issues that touch us all whatever our place in the life of the church. Later in the Assembly there will be an opportunity to raise questions and have some discussion together. You will see in your programme where this fits in. It is a great opportunity to be together at York, a Church Meeting on a larger scale, in the context of worship, dealing with all the nuts and bolts but with the great song of the gospel always around us.

Independent spirit and conciliar pattern

I start with gratitude to all those who, in the years leading up to our two acts of union, grasped the nature of the church as being about both freedom and order, both local initiative and solidarity with each other. It is never easy to hold to both. But we were attempting to write into our basic structure those two apostolic commands "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ" and "Everyone has his own proper load to carry". We were saying a clear No to total local independency, for experience shows that each local church is not sufficient to itself, but an equally clear No to the imposition of uniformity by a central body. It is never an easy balance to keep. We have been learning, since 1972, how to care for one another and how to share our resources, and I believe we have made progress. It has been my joy to work with those who personify our mutual responsibility, and I think of our Provincial Moderators and the twelve Assembly Moderators I have served. We must keep on working at this. I sometimes see the temptation to return to a local independency because of financial burdens or theological inclination - and that temptation is not solely in former Congregational churches. While we rejoice in a large measure of responsibility resting on the local church meeting we use the word 'oversight' to describe how the councils of the church will advise, challenge, support, serve and build us together as a family of God. All the work we do in the Assembly must be sensitive to this balance for it is a very creative model for our human society.

Committed to unity

I am also indebted to those who wrote our Basis that we are not only a united but a uniting church. We took actions that we saw as God's will not just to create one new institution out of three traditions but to provide the dynamic for further movement. We have seen this intention blossom in several ways, most notably in our very many local ecumenical projects and shared local churches. These now constitute something like 17% of all our local churches, and so the character of the denomination is changing. It is easy to clap our hands and rejoice in this movement by church members to make a common witness to Jesus Christ. But we need to ask whether the calling is not just as pressing at the national level as the local. I am very much aware that some have a view that the way of organic unions is over, that it was a movement of its generation and that now we should seek quite different goals. I do not share that view, but if it is sustained then our local joint churches will be rather like Joshua and Caleb describing the promised land while the rest of the people stay in camp and declare, 'We will not go in.' I suspect that our hesitations about the unity of the church have much to do with a failure of imagination - that we cannot perceive fresh patterns of church life in which the many diverse styles of response to the gospel are held within a single body. There is also the feeling (which I know well in my own heart) that union is a costly business in time and

energy which can lead to an unhealthy introspection. So I would urge those who are most devoted to the work of evangelism and social witness to lead us in thinking about the many different steps which we should take towards further unity of the body of Christ. Unless the URC accepts a leadership position in this area we may well see the gradual loss of the elements which are our particular heritage.

A church for a divided society

I take the unity challenge very seriously because of my perception of the nature of our British society today. At one level we are struggling to find new expressions of the national communities in these islands. The long tragic story of Ireland has taught us that this struggle easily becomes violent, but now it affects Wales and Scotland too. Shall we be open to new ideas about the unitary and the federal state? And in a European community can we rejoice in national traditions, languages and diversity while building new common institutions which bind us together? Those two political processes reflect what we are also called to be as the church, witnesses of the ministry of reconciliation, able to hold together, to act together, to worship together but also to rejoice in the diverse styles of local response to the gospel. There is a third political challenge which is to bind together the broken parts of our community. For a thousand years it was class which divided us. Today it is wealth. The divisions grow deeper as the free market system brings great rewards to some while leaving others unable to find work or housing or hope. It is a hard test for politicians to show us a healing process. But does the church reveal a truly Christian society where we actually share our wealth and our buildings and our talents? We still have rich local churches and poor local churches, rich Provinces and poor Provinces. Is that our model for the nation? So I believe that the work we do on unity and the witness we make in the name of Christ are bound up together.

The calling to share faith

It is as we reflect on the effectiveness of our witness that we meet the tough challenge of this Decade of Evangelism. I know that some of us find the title unhelpful. But I suspect that our reaction is largely determined by our uncertainty and fear as evangelists. In the URC we have excellent records of social service in a hundred different modes and a thousand localities. In every congregation we have those who willingly give their time and energy to the care of others and I rejoice in this record. It is an important dimension of the mission committed to us by our Lord. It is not the whole. We are also called to "make disciples" and there we have been weak. The Decade challenges us at that point. Can we move on from the caring friendship to the conversation about the depths of life and so to the one who enters those depths for our sake? I sense that we need the help of friends to stimulate and free us for that encounter. Ginger Groups - yes, indeed, but permanent as part of the in-service training of every church member. In a world where Christian growth is rapid we may need to ask colleagues from other countries to assist us at this point. It is surely right that we are now studying the life of growing sister churches in Korea and Taiwan.

Within a global fellowship

We are indeed within a world community. I thank God that I have been able to experience it in many ways in many places. My service - in your name - in the WCC Central Committee gave me a glimpse of the world church as it begins to find a common voice of praise and prayer. My service in CWM enabled me to learn the appropriate form for a community of churches at the start of a new era of mission. The URC has shared in all of that and will continue to play its considerable part. May I comment on the fracturing of the missionary calling, for I believe we have not yet responded to a major change which has happened since the Second World War. Up to that point we in the churches were able to view our world mission commitment as a total offering of the gospel in all its breadth and wonder to all people in their deepest needs. Food, medicine, literacy, the liberation of slaves and the emancipation of women were all part of the gospel message. Now we have divided our concerns. In Christian Aid we offer help for the hungry, in Amnesty we express hope for the oppressed, so in CWM we now have a limited agenda which is concentrated on church life and development. World Church and Mission and Church and Society are two departments not only in structure but often in thinking and praying. The theme Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation can be written down as a small group interest; but in truth it is integral to

Christian mission. Can we offer to everyone in our churches a rounded view of the global mission as well as the local mission, and can we do that with such vigour and colour and joy that our hearts burn within us?

The Bible feeds our faith

But of course a rounded view and commitment is only possible if our theology is formed from our biblical study as well as our newspapers. We are engaged, as our late friend Shoki Coe used to say, in a double wrestle, with the text and the context. Am I too critical if I say that our bible study generally is very inadequate for this task. In our church tradition we place our knowledge of the word of God very high in our priorities and claim that we seek our authority there. My impression - and this is a very subjective judgement - is that we now know the Bible less well than our parents and less well than many Roman Catholics, a strange reversal in our Christian education. A result is that our theology is too often formed out of what is temporary or what is our taste or how the latest crisis strikes us. It is also surprising that any of our company should be daunted by historical and literary criticism of the Bible, for that has been with us for a century and enables us to read with mind as well as heart. The faith that grows in us as we read the Bible can have no other focus than the cross and the empty tomb, the costly reaching out of God the creator to suffer and redeem the unbelief of his children. So long as the variations of theology among us are woven around that central theme then I do not fear diversity and see no benefit in closer definition and regulation of personal belief. But it is the biblical grounding and the Holy Spirit, who enables us to read with faith, that hold us together.

Worship to lift our hearts

Which is what happens in our worship at its best. It has been my privilege to be welcomed into worship in many of our churches. Thank you for such hospitality. I rejoice in our tradition of hymn singing and prayer and thoughtful preaching. But I have the clear impression that our worship is too often entering a very flat landscape with very few dales and fells and summits. We can be very dull. Yet worship is also about lifting the heart and delighting the eyes and stirring the conscience and glimpsing the glory at the heart of creation. I suppose that worship in the Russian Orthodox church is about the opposite end of the spectrum from our own, and I do not think I could ever make that my home, but I have been impressed by the way in which worship there is a reflection on earth of the glory of heaven. It is all light and gold and music and mystery and the doorway into the holy place with the saints around us. So in a frozen Russian village you can be at one with the apostles. That is not the way for us. But could we find just a hint of that approach to lighten our wordiness?

Thank you for staying with me as I reflect on those themes. They arise from our present life together as a community of faith, from my own experience and I take them to be foundations for our witness. There is nothing easy or routine about any of them; we are in a process of discovery and discernment. At 20 years old we can no longer plead that our tender age excuses our weakness but nor can we assume that the URC is ready for a tedious conformity. It is the age for action and self-sacrifice and whole-hearted commitment. So the Assembly takes the stage, faces the hard questions, prays for the world, looks to the Lord and celebrates the Spirit. But every local church has a concern for this agenda and perhaps there are points in this letter which may stimulate your thoughts. The whole of this Book of Reports is like a cross section of a tree trunk, showing the healthy periods and the dry periods, the way we grow, the points where branches develop and whether we are hard or soft wood. May this tree flourish beside the water of life and bear leaves for the healing of the nations.

With affection and respect,



THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd A J Wells

Secretary: Mr H L Gunn

1. If this General Assembly agrees to the proposed changes in the central committee structure of our Church, this will be the final report of the Business Committee before its members are discharged at the end of the Assembly. As a committee we have viewed our demise with equanimity, believing that adequate arrangements have been made to continue the work, albeit in a different way. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the Church which our membership of this committee has afforded and hope that by careful attention to 'nuts and bolts' we have contributed to the smoother running of the administrative machinery.

2. We have only one item of new business to present, and that is set out in Resolution 2 below. It arises out of concern over the exact meaning of the word 'infringes' in the present clause SO 3e(iv), and from the feeling that the current wording leaves no room for coping with changed circumstances affecting a recently-passed resolution and its effects. We therefore present a new clause (iv) in the hope that it will continue to guard Assembly from too rapid repetition of debate while at the same time giving room for possible early revision if that is thought desirable.

3. The remaining Resolution simply asks Assembly to confirm the changes agreed last year, changing the title 'auxiliary minister' to 'non-stipendiary minister'.

4. The dates and venues of future Assemblies are:

1993 - Portsmouth Guildhall from Monday 5 to Friday 9 July.

1994 - Lancaster University from Thursday 7 to Monday 11 July.

RESOLUTIONS

1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.

2 Assembly agrees the following amendment to Standing Order 3e:

To delete 3e (iv)

To insert a new (iv) and to amend the final sentence -

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) **amends or reverses** a decision reached by the Assembly within the preceding two years **unless the Moderator, Clerk and General Secretary together decide that changed circumstances or new evidence justify earlier reconsideration of the matter,** or
- (v) is not related to the report of a department or committee and has not been subject of 21 days' notice under 2d.

The decision of the Moderator (in the case of i, ii, iii, v) and of the Moderator with the Clerk and General Secretary (in the case of iv) on the application of this Standing Order shall be final.

3 Assembly ratifies the following amendments regarding Non-Stipendiary Ministers:

Page 7	para 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.
18	(x)	Delete phrase in brackets.
19	(ix)	Delete phrase in brackets.
20	3(a)	Delete phrase in brackets.
20	3(b)	Delete phrase in brackets.
20	3(c)	Delete whole para.
21	to follow 3(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 to review this service at stated intervals.
21	3(iii)	Re-number following paragraphs: Delete 'an auxiliary minister'.
21	3(v)	Delete phrase in brackets.
22	4(a)	Delete phrase in brackets.
24	4(vi)	Delete 'auxiliary' and insert 'non-stipendiary'.
24	4(xiv)	Delete phrase in brackets.

FAITH AND LIFE

Convener: Revd Dr Philip Morgan

Secretary: Revd Terry Oakley

1 Faith grows! Life abounds! These must be our affirmations as we review the period of the Faith and life Department before it is reformed and transformed for the next phase of its work.

2 Children are a more precious part of our life, because of our debate and decisions about children in communion, the *Children's Charter*, as well as our response to the decline in numbers of children in worship on Sundays (but growth in midweek activities like Pilots) and to the legislation in the Children Act 1989.

3 Young people have a new national resource centre at Yardley Hastings, for which we give thanks and shout "Alleluiah!" It is supported by a new team of the Chaplain, Administrator, Cook/housekeeper and the volunteers, who continue the great work of the Ginger Groups. The new FURY will exercise mature responsibility through its own Council and continue to be enabled and encouraged by the expanded team of trainers (YLTOs, YCWTs and NYCTO).

4 Elders are more aware than ever of their responsibilities for mission, leadership, pastoral care and worship as the huge growth in demand for training testifies. Publication of *Exploring Eldership* and *Called to be an Elder* have helped to meet this need. New elders and those more experienced are benefiting from the Windermere Centre and Graham Cook its Director as well as the network of trainers employed by the Provinces.

5 Worshippers have new major resources in the *Service Book* (1989), our hymnbook *Rejoice and Sing*, and the series of Prayer Handbooks. They can celebrate a continued spread of all-age worship, increased participation in worship and a greater variety of music and arts used in worship.

6 The debates about doctrines and practices, particularly about baptism, presidency at the sacraments, ministry, language, trinitarian theology etc., show that the URC is not content to rest on past achievements of unity, but keen to reform continually its faith and life. Consultations on these areas as well as others have meant a busy and lively time for Doctrine and Worship.

7 In the area of healing there has been a healthy flow of resources to help local churches, ranging from the publication of *Stress in the Ministry*, to the revision of the *Study Kit*, the new *Starter Pack* and many leaflets on specific aspects of the healing ministry.

8 Stewardship and Advocacy have worked hand in hand to remind us both of our thankfulness for all that God has given, as well as our response in providing for mission and service, including care of the environment, simple life style, payment of ministers and upkeep of buildings.

9 Networking has become a feature of our age, and of the department's life, in particular the SPIN network helps us respond to the Churches in Solidarity with Women Decade declared by the World Council of Churches in 1988. The Silence and Retreats network is enabling the URC not only to rediscover the wells of silence and the spring of renewal through retreats, but also to make a reformed contribution to the new ecumenical spirituality.

10 The Department wishes to thank all those who have made these achievements possible by their service on committees, working groups etc. In particular we would like to thank the Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee for her strong commitment to Children's Work expressed in her time as Convener of the Children's Work Committee over the last six years. We wish her well in her new work in the Ministries Department and hope that her love for children will find expression in her new field. The Pilots movement has been transformed by the work of the Revd Chris Baker, Master Pilot; we thank him for his vision and hard work that is making it a reality. We are thankful for the contribution the Revd Samuel Silungwe has made to our life in his two years with us and wish him well when he returns to Zambia. We also thank Mr Michael Harrison for his energetic and willing service as secretary of the Christian Education and Stewardship Committee, and especially for his dedication to the work of stewardship. The Revd Michael Playdon also took on the role of voluntary secretary six years ago, and we thank him for his willingness to bear an extra workload in order to serve the Health and Healing Committee.

CHILDREN'S WORK COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee

Secretary: The Revd Stephen Thornton

11 The Committee wishes to express its warmest appreciation for the unstinting work which is carried out by hundreds of people who work each week with children in local churches, both on Sundays and in weekdays. They play a vital part in the Church's mission. We are very grateful indeed for the people who support this work: the District and Provincial Children's Work Secretaries; the Youth and Children's Work Trainers and Youth Leadership Training Officers; Mrs Eileen Sanderson, the National Youth and Children's Training Officer; the Revd Terry Oakley, Secretary of the Faith and Life Department; Mrs Jenny Bunce, as she completes her time in the remaining year of the Assistant Secretary's post, and the staff of the Faith and Life Department. But especially this year, we should like to say thank you for the immense contribution that two people, in particular, have put in to our work with children. The first is the Revd Stephen Thornton, who will be finishing as Secretary of the Children's Work Committee - we wish him well in his future task as its Convener, if his nomination is ratified by this Assembly. The second is the Revd Chris Baker, who completes his term as Master Pilot at the end of September 1992.

Out of Touch

Mission to Children who have not heard the Good News

12 The Committee has become increasingly concerned about children who seem to be out of touch with the Gospel, and even more concerned about the way in which the Church seems to be out of touch with them. How are we to reach them? How do we best equip our churches to share the Good News? How do we get alongside children in society? Some issues are raised by headline news about children. Child abuse is one. Young homelessness is another. There is the effect upon children of the divorce and separation of parents and the concern for the children of one parent families and those raised by grandparents or other members of the family. Below the obvious level of child abuse is the deepening problem of neglect and the worsening of child poverty or deprivation caused by economic recession and unfavourable legislation with respect to child/family related benefits. A different kind of Children's Charter is required.

13 It must say something to us that 38% of young prisoners (under 21) and 23% of adults had been in Local Authority care (Prison Reform Trust). We must also wonder what is happening in the lives of children which gives the statistic of 10,000

calls daily to the Child Helpline. Given that numerous agencies have with skill, compassion and imagination, responded to these observed needs, it may be argued that we need not. But we never use this argument to excuse our involvement in other concerns of society which appear on our Assembly Committee agendas.

14 But this is to see children only in need. The other side of children's lives is full of energy, interest and natural concern for others and their environment. They give us hope. The question here, then, is what we may give and receive in relation to children and their formation as citizens and as people belonging to the church. Critical consideration of education reforms and their underlying philosophies are the proper subject of the churches' interest and response.

15 Perhaps we should enquire about the extent to which, at every level of our Church's life, contact is actually made (and where) between the church and the 'children of the community'. We might also ask what quality of contact there is between churches or our children's work committee and the network of children's agencies. As you can see below, we have increased our contact with such agencies as the National Children's Bureau, but could we go further? We need a church more positively related to the children of this generation.

16 The second concern has to do with children and evangelism, What is the Good News for children? Where do they feature in the Decade of Evangelism? In the post war years the number of children learning about the Christian faith has diminished generation by generation as the 'residue of faith' carried forward by the parents and their surrounding culture has been either diluted or distorted. The place of religious education in schools has been the subject of uncertainty and controversy which has disabled its effectiveness in the great majority of schools and authorities. Recognising its frail hold and influence on the fresh minds of children in society, the Church has generally been glad to think of religious education as some kind of 'second front'. Christians involved in education and teacher training have, at the same time, contributed immensely to the developing understanding of education itself.

17 Nonetheless, where churches are in close touch with their neighbourhoods, and with children, questions are raised about what are the appropriate ways of sharing faith and showing that their promise to the children they baptise is not an empty sham.

18 What new areas of contact with other children have we discovered or responded to in recent times? What are the stories and messages of churches where, starting from the basics, a creative response was 'put together'? Do they suggest the basis of strategies that replace or complement Sunday based learning programmes?

19 'Residue Christianity' is likely to become an ever decreasing part of the enculturation of the present and future generations. Given the importance of the media and television in particular and the transfer of their agenda into receptive minds, the Church needs to examine its investment in new forms of communication that already convey knowledge and value systems a-plenty.

20 This is the beginning of a debate which we believe requires much further thought and action. There are two ways in which you could help us. Firstly, if you think that you could join in this debate, or contribute stories which would help us help other children, please contact the Faith and Life Department. Secondly, we recommend that you read *'All God's Children? - Children's Evangelism in Crisis'*, a report from the Church of England General Synod Board of Education and Mission published by National Society/Church House Publishing, 1991, which has some alarming statistics, and some suggestions which might help.

Children Act

21 The Children Act 1989 took effect from the middle of October, 1991. It is the most significant reform of legislation relating to children in living memory, and has major implications for all those working with children in many different areas, including the churches. It is designed to support and encourage good practice and safety, and, for this reason, this Committee warmly welcomes the Act, and urges churches to do all in their power to comply with it. We strongly believe that all churches have a responsibility to encourage both good practice and safety in their work with children (and adults for that matter).

22 So what are the implications for us?

Local Authorities will be required to register all day care for children under eight years of age of two hours or more in any one day. So this might apply to some Parent and Toddler groups, Pilots or other weeknight groups which meet for more than two hours at a time (even if one age group meets for less than this time but overlaps with another age group). The registration will check:

- persons offering care;
- the suitability and safety of the premises;
- that other people who are employed on the premises where the care is offered are fit to be in the 'proximity' of children.
(This may have implications for churches holding, say, Parent and Toddler, or dancing groups at the same time as, say, a drop-in centre).

23 Activities NOT affected by the Act

- Junior Church
- Sunday morning creche during worship
(as long as they are not provided for more than two hours)
- Weeknight groups which cater for and include the under 8's
(as long as session is under two hours - preparation and clearing up time can be taken in addition)
- After-school clubs (for weeknight groups)
- Toddlers' groups (if under two hours - but a group lasting more than two hours is excluded if all the parents or carers are present with their children)
- Church or District Days, Fun Days, Holiday Clubs etc -
(No registration is necessary as these usually occur less than 6 days a year. If under 8's are involved, however, the social services department of the local authority must be informed in advance.)
- Uniformed Organisations meeting on church premises should obtain advice from their own organisations.

24 Activities which MUST be registered under the Act

- Play-groups
(All playgroups meeting on Church premises which are already registered, will have to re-registered by October 1992.)
- Toddlers' Groups
(Any group which lasts for more than two hours.)
- Shoppers' creches
(If over two hours, even if individual children may be present for shorter periods.)
- Children's holidays
(These do not normally include children as young as eight years, but if younger children are to be included clarification should be sought from the local authority.)

Suitability of workers

25 Local authorities will take the following factors into consideration when deciding whether a person is fit to work with children:

- previous experience of looking after or working with young children;
- ability to provide warm, consistent care;
- knowledge of and attitude to multi-cultural issues;
- commitment to treat all children as individuals and with equal concern;
- physical health, mental stability, integrity and flexibility;
- qualification or training in a relevant field.

Further details can be found: (i) in the leaflet '*The Children Act*' published by MDEY, 2 Chester House, Pages Lane, London N10 1PR, or (ii) by enquiry to your local social services department, or (iii) in the leaflet "Health, Safety and the Law" produced by the Children and Young People's Committee, Quaker Home Service 1991 (90p), available at Assembly.

26 Just because these regulations will apply to only a proportion of our church groups, the Committee believes there is no reason for churches to be complacent. Churches should take seriously their responsibility for the selection and training of workers and be careful to provide a suitable environment for all their work with children.

Taking Care

27 The workpack '*Taking Care*' was published in September 1991 by an ecumenical group working in conjunction with the National Children's Bureau. It is designed to provide material for local church communities to address the difficult issues of child abuse, and in building a sensitive and informed response to children and families involved in the experience of abuse.

28 Church and society are not totally separate. Abuse has existed for many years, but recent media coverage has raised society's awareness of these issues. Our churches are one of the major providers of services for children, through baptism, Junior Church, Youth Clubs, Guides, Scouts, Boys and Girls Brigades, Pilots, Holiday Clubs, Parent and Toddler Groups etc. We cannot say that these issues have nothing to do with us, painful though they may be. We need to consider what is good practice in our work with children. How do we make sure that we have done all that we can to appoint people who are appropriate? How can we improve our pastoral care for children and adults who have been abused, and for the abusers? We might like to think that these matters have nothing to do with us, but the chances are that there are several people in each of our churches who are or have been affected in some way by abuse. The whole issue raises important theological questions, such as how we deal with the weakest people in our community, and how we express a gospel of forgiveness to abusers (or even the abused) who feel that they may never be trusted again?

29 Taking care of children is a very important matter which ideally should be considered by everybody in our churches. However, we should like to issue a word of warning. Discussion of such topics can often arouse very strong feelings indeed, so great care needs to be taken that people leading groups on the subject have the skills to introduce such sensitive topics and to deal with the initial feelings aroused.

30 So, if your church wishes to try working on this pack, first contact your provincial office, who will put you in touch with someone who can discuss this with you and perhaps suggest suitable leaders. It is also strongly recommended that there are at least two leaders in any group, one of whom has experience of working with people affected by abuse. The National Children's Bureau are willing to help, or suggest help.

Ritual abuse

31 A CCBI sponsored group (with which this committee is connected), has recently published a leaflet entitled: 'Ritual Abuse - an Introduction and Guidelines for Church Leaders.' This short paper aims to give some background to the issue of ritual abuse. It outlines some basic guidelines for church leaders who may be asked to comment upon the subject, or who may become involved with children or adults who have been ritually abused. The leaflet is available from the Faith and Life Department.

Parenting

32 One way in which the church can touch the community, including its own members, is to stand by people who want to do better at things close to their hearts. Being a good parent is one such thing, especially for those who 'despair of their teenage sons and daughters'. For this reason, the committee, which has shared this concern, is grateful for the work of David Gamble, one of the Children's Work Secretaries of the Methodist Church, (who is also a member of our Committee), for sharing some research that he has been doing on the subject of 'Working with Parents'. The committee still has much to consider with regard to the unique way in which parents help or fail their children in the formation of their faith. We learn few things which either do not originate in the home or are not challenged by it. It is the workshop and testing ground of life and faith. We need to recognise this and develop our future work upon it with imagination and sensitivity. How many times do we hear it - 'How do we answer the children?' The Children's Committee is the parents' committee too.

33 One of the major resources that David recommended to us is one which an increasing number of churches have found helpful. It is basically Roman Catholic material, but has been used successfully by Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists. The material consists of a leader's pack (£48) which includes a video and notes, and individual parent's packs costing £5 each. Currently there are five courses:

- (i) *What can a Parent Do?* - a basic eight week course
- (ii) *What can a Parent of a Teenager Do?* - a six week course
- (iii) *Parenting and Sex* - a five week course
- (iv) *Married Listening* - a four week course for married people and couples
- (v) *Prayer for Busy People*

These courses are designed to be used by groups of parents who do not need a skilled leader. A group member might be encouraged to set up their own group after the course, and work with others. The Committee would be very grateful to hear from anyone who has tried any of these courses to tell us what they have done. The above courses are available from: Family Caring, 44, Rathfriland Road, Newry, Co. Down, BT34 1LD (Tel: 0693 64174)

First Steps:

Christian Initiation and Pastoral Care for Under 5's

34 For some time now, this committee has been wrestling (with the help of the Doctrine and Worship Committee and Ministries Department) with the issues surrounding Christian initiation and pastoral support for children - especially very young ones. The areas of Infant Baptism and Thanksgiving for the Birth of the Child, have greatly concerned us, especially in giving guidance to Ministers and others who are asked to baptise infants of non-professing and non-practising parents. The Faith and Life Department has provided a very helpful booklet giving some help, which is entitled: '*Infant Baptism*' (for Infants of non-professing and non-practising parents), which we commend for use.

35 Strictly speaking, a certificate is a copy of a record of an event which is registered elsewhere. So, while urging the use of suitable certificates for Baptism, and 'Thanksgiving', we suggest that churches are careful that they record these events. This can be done in imaginative ways. For example, we have been concerned about the use of Cradle Rolls in churches, and suggest that other ways of recording Infant Baptism might be helpful. A Church Book, which lists the key events in the life of the church, ie Baptisms, Confirmations, Thanksgivings/Blessings, Dedications, Marriages and Funerals, or/and a photographic wall frieze showing all the families in the church, including young children, might well be useful.

36 Records, however strictly kept should have a purpose. Pastoral care for everyone - not forgetting very young children - is vital. Cards of welcome to a newly baptised child, signed by the entire congregation (such as those published by MDEY and available from our bookshop), might be one way; the appointment of Church Friends and an Elder for each child would also be helpful, as are birthday or anniversary of Baptism cards taken to the child at appropriate occasions.

37 The Committee continues to work on this subject, and hopes to produce some resources soon to help churches deal with these issues.

11-14's

38 Work with the 11-14 age group continues. A one day gathering is planned, and many churches are finding the resource mailing, 'INTERVIEW' very helpful.

39 Much discussion has taken place over the year about the way in which committee structures might better support all youth and children's work, and work with the 11-14' in particular. The Faith and Life Department has looked at ways in which the Children's Work Committee and Youth Committee might be more closely integrated, and whether they might even be amalgamated. A suggestion has been made that 11-14's be transferred from the Children's Work to the Youth Committee's remit, as this age-group best fits with Youth Work. More work, however, needs to be done on this matter, but in the meantime, closer integration between the two committees has been going ahead.

Training

40 Training Material

The URC/Baptist course, '*Equipped to Teach*' (costing £5 for each unit) has been revised, and has received some encouraging take-up during the year. Special 'taster' days have been held regionally to promote the material, and we encourage churches to make use of this material.

41 Work is progressing well with the development of Inter-Church training material for children's workers, and the URC is making a contribution to this work. We expect that this material, which will be called '*Kaleidoscope*' will be published by the National Christian Education Council in 1993. There will be nine basic units and material for two workshop sessions. The Units will be:

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Unit A *Growth and Development*

Unit B *Learning*

Unit C *Spirituality and Faith Development*

CARE

Unit A *Pastoral Care*

Unit B *Taking Care*

Unit C *Working relationships*

SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION

Unit A *Discovering the Story*

Unit B *Responding to the Story*

Unit C *Communicating the Story*

42 Two of these units have been written by URC teams of writers, and pilot testing has been taking place around the country, some carried out by URC groups. We are hoping to provide training opportunities for tutors of this material in the summer of 1993 when the material has been published.

43 The publication of this course does not mean, however, that we do not value the work done by people on existing courses, and we encourage workers with children to undertake training using such courses as 'Equipped to Teach', which we regard as an excellent course.

Training Policy

44 This committee has long believed that training is vital for **all** workers with children, and we are very concerned about the lack of preparation which some Junior Church leaders bring to their work and the casual way in which many churches recruit workers with children. While we understand the difficulty of finding people who are willing to give their time to work with children week by week, we would like to urge churches to take very seriously indeed the responsibility that they have for the children in their care. The Children Act, while it concentrates largely on the under eights, is in fact for all 'children' under 18 years of age. The Act requires that workers with children be suitably qualified and trained. As a church, we expect our ministers, lay preachers and other leaders to be trained, and yet this committee believes that more damage can be done to the spiritual development of young children in the wrong hands than can be done with the occasional 'bad' sermon preached to a congregation.

45 So, can we urge each local church to encourage all their workers to undertake training, or up-grade their training if they have not already done so? We would like to see all workers with children supported, recognised and valued in this important service in the church.

Resolution 2

Resources/Sharing Ideas

46 Each year we hold a Consultation for District and Provincial Children's Work Secretaries. These meetings provide good opportunities to share ideas and to provide some training.

47 We also encourage other workers with children to keep in touch with each other and share ideas. 'URCHIN', edited by Rosemary Johnston, has been a very successful and helpful way to do just this. It is available for a yearly subscription of £3. Please encourage any people you think might be interested in 'URCHIN' or in 'INTERVIEW' (for people working with 11-14's) to enquire through the Faith and Life Department at 86, Tavistock Place.

The Need for a Children's Advocate

48 The Children's Work Committee strongly believes that there is need for a full-time Children's Advocate to help support and be an initiator of work with children in our churches. This report outlines some of the major areas of work which we see as vital if children are to hear the Good News. We believe that this will be very much more effective with such support. In fact, we think that much of this work will fail to begin without such help. The committee views with concern the fact that the

post of the Assistant Faith and Life Secretary will cease in nine months time, and is very concerned about the workload of the present Departmental Secretary of the Faith and Life Department. So we urge Assembly to consider a senior full-time appointment which will be of vital help to children in our local churches and in the communities around them.

49 We need someone who....

- is solely concerned with Children's Work.
- is available to local churches to listen/suggest/encourage.
- could inform/co-ordinate/exchange ideas between Provinces
- calls and organises meetings to support Provincial and District Children's Work Secretaries. Helps with strategy.
- liaises with the National Youth and Children's Training Officer to support Youth and Children's Work Training Officers and Youth Leadership Training Officers
- Has time to read/sift/recommend the latest literature (at least 30 current periodicals,... plus new books)
- contributes/shares ideas via URCHIN etc.
- links with organisations concerned with children (at least 15)
- links us ecumenically with those working with children (15 more!)
- has, or can be in touch with specialist expertise relating to children
- can visit/encourage/share ideas
- promotes worship ideas, holiday club ideas etc.

Job Description of a Children's Advocate

50 AIMS:

- 1 To promote the work of the URC with children.
- 2 To encourage the development of communication and networking between those working with children within the URC to be aware of current concerns and to act for the nurture and well-being of children.

OBJECTIVES:

- (a) to advocate the rights of children in the Church, to stimulate discussion and action to meet the needs of children and enable children to play their full part in the life of the Church.
- (b) to support the work of the Children's Work Committee and the Provincial and District Children's Work Secretaries, in partnership with YCWTs and NYCTO.
- (c) to encourage children's workers to offer the best quality service to children.
- (d) to help develop a training programme for those working with children and for tutors of trainers, in collaboration with ecumenical partners and colleagues.
- (e) to liaise with children's organisations and agencies both within the statutory and voluntary sectors.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Children's Advocate will be accountable to the Children's Work Committee and to the Secretary of the Faith and Life Department.

51 We do have a choice. Assembly could decide not to appoint a Children's Advocate, but if it does there will be the following implications:

- (i) The current workload of this small committee is very heavy. We are stretched now, and we believe that much essential work would need to be omitted.
- (ii) There would be a loss of morale among local children's workers, who currently feel frustrated that there is nobody there and nobody to listen.
- (iii) A continued loss of children.

Resolution 3

PILOTS PANEL

Convener: Mr Terry Clements

Master Pilot: Revd Chris Baker

52 We have so much to thank God for! We give thanks for the time and effort of so many people without whose enthusiasm PILOTS could not function. We have been glad to welcome Mr Terry Clements as the new Convener of the PILOTS PANEL. We are grateful for all the work done by our Provincial Pilot Officers and are particularly glad that one of the two gaps in these ranks has now been filled and we welcome Mrs Mavis Stanyon as the Provincial Pilot Officer for Eastern Province. Week in and week out Officers are leading Pilots in a whole range of interests and activities and we rejoice in their vital contribution. We would also like to record our thanks to our sponsoring denominations, the United Reformed Church and the Congregational Federation, for their help and support. Our new look, introduced in September 1991, has generally been very well received. A typical letter from a Captain says, "You may be interested to know that our Company has fifty Pilots and a waiting list. We shall find the New Programme has more to offer Pilots..."

53 We continue to produce new material to help people working with children and young people. While this material is written for PILOTS, much of it is also useful to those working outside our structures and we are glad to make such material widely available. For example:

- a) Are you working with 5 and 6 year olds? We have recently published a book with several themes, each of which can be developed over a number of weeks. This is called, '*Small Hands on Deck*'.
- b) Are you working with 7 to 10 year olds? In addition to all the ideas for various activities there is a pack on prayer called, '*Lord, Help us to Pray*'.
- c) Are you working with 11 to 14 year olds? The report of the Children's Work Committee comments on the support for work with this age group. PILOTS has a programme which encourages the young people to develop their interests, enjoy physical activities, engage in Worship, learn about aspects of the World Church and share in Community Care. There are two packs available to develop their approach to Worship, one is called '*The Body Beautiful - a study of the Church*' and the other '*Going for Gold*', drawing ideas from the Olympic Games.

54 Each year PILOTS produces a pack on a different part of the world. These packs are full of information, activities, worship suggestions, etc, and can be used with all ages. Those currently available are '*A Taste of Taiwan*' and '*Caribbean Carnival*'. There will shortly be one on Eastern Europe.

55 During the year approximately 50 Mariners Awards have been earned by Pilots who have been in the organisation for five years or more and we congratulate them.

56 Young people who wish to help with PILOTS may now, after appropriate training, be recognised as Junior Officers and we are glad to welcome and encourage their enthusiasm and commitment. Various Camps have been held during the year. There have been Regional Camps in the North West, Yorkshire, Central, South East and South West. There have also been various camps organised by individual Companies. The numbers attending camps are in the region of 600 Pilots and we are very grateful to so many officers (and spouses) who so enthusiastically give of their time and energy to run these camps. One mark of their continued success is that in 1992 the Central Camp has had to split into two weeks.

57 The PILOTS PANEL remains convinced that there needs to be a considerable expansion of mid-week activities with children and young people in our churches and is supported in this belief by the Report '*All God's Children?*'. We believe that PILOTS offers a balanced programme which has much to commend it and we are glad of the opportunity to serve our Lord Jesus Christ through our work with the children and young people of our various churches and denominations.

NATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs Ruth Clarke

Secretary: Mr Paul Franklin

INTRODUCTION

58 This year has been truly exciting for the National Youth Committee. As last years Assembly gave the all important approval for the National Youth Resource Centre to be built at Yardley Hastings, we have been busy with the building of The Centre and also working at developing FURY at the local level.

DEVELOPMENT OF FURY

59 The New FURY Project Development Committee was set up by the National Youth Committee and comprises of National Youth Committee members and non members. The members of the group were Pamela Harvey (Convener), David Leon (FURY Chair), Paul Ashworth, Cathy Simpson, Denise Norcliffe, Jenny Foster, Fran Kissack, Eileen Sanderson (NYCTO) and Paul Franklin (NYS).

60 The remit of the group was to bring firm proposals to the National Youth Committee and FURY Assembly on the following areas:

- 1 The Aims of FURY
- 2 Structure of FURY
- 3 Commitment to FURY

The proposals carried forward the vision of the New FURY another step. The aims of FURY have evolved out of the original aims of Youth Work in the URC, and express the purpose and ethos of the FURY.

61 Keeping the principal that all young people between the ages of 14 and 25 who are in anyway linked to a United Reformed Church belong to FURY, we introduce the concept of commitment. A commitment to be made by any young person in the URC, who wants to discover what being a Christian means and involves. A commitment made through and in the local Church, with support from the FURY Resource Centre.

62 The new structure of FURY includes the format and make up of a FURY Council which will increase the opportunity for youth participation and decision making in our Church. It will give young people the chance to tackle directly issues that affect and interest them. The council will also be an excellent training ground, equipping young people with the skills to contribute to the work of our Church more fully and effectively at local, provincial and national levels.

63 The success of these new structures is reliant on the local church being actively involved in the lives of its young people. For us as a church to get the most benefit from the experiences, talents and enthusiasm of young people we need to be supportive, enabling and encouraging. FURY is not just for the 14's to 25's it is for the whole church.

AIMS OF FURY

64 Youth work within the URC is being revitalized and inspired with fresh life and vision. Thus, as FURY develops so must the aims and objectives of youth work in the URC. The following aim re-expresses the intention of the original aims and objectives in a way which is more relevant to the present direction of youth work.

65 THE URC AIMS

To work with young people in order that they may discover for themselves their part in God's mission and to enable them to carry this out in the Church and in the world.

BY

Challenging young people to explore their faith and work towards making and continually re-affirming their commitment to Christ.

Challenging young people to explore the relationship between their faith and their involvement in the community in which they live.

Encouraging people of all ages in the local church, to support each other and share in their exploration of the Christian faith.

Encouraging people of all ages in the local church, to increase their awareness of the wider community, other denominations and other cultures and faiths, in order to promote greater co-operation and communication between different groups.

Enabling young people to share and grow in the Christian faith, by providing local, provincial and national forums for discussion, debate and prayer.

Enabling young people to explore world issues and to share their experiences in all areas of their life and witness.

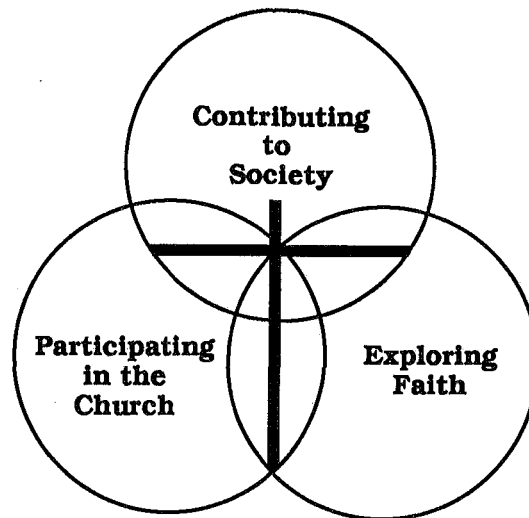
Underpinning these objectives is a recognition of the vital importance of training for all those involved in this work.

66 BELONGING AND COMMITMENT

We are encouraging every young person who is part of FURY to:

- a) Take up the opportunity to begin participating in FURY by receiving FURY mailings.
- b) Make a commitment to contributing through the life of FURY to the whole Church and to society, whether it be at local, district, provincial, national or international level:

- a commitment to exploration of Christian faith through worship, prayer, learning, giving and involvement
- a commitment to participate in the local church, including exploring the meaning of church membership



COMMITMENT AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

67 It is vital that the young people involved receive support in their commitment. It is important that the local church fulfil this need as far as possible. Where the young person's church feels it is not able to help, the district and other local churches should provide the necessary support. There are three main areas of support needed by the young person:

- a) Preparation - going through an introductory pack with the young person.
- b) Acknowledging the young person's commitment
 - i) in the local church
 - ii) signing the young person's commitment form
- c) Follow-up - providing on-going support.

MONEY

68 It costs to make a commitment. Young people have many things to give and giving money is an important part of commitment. They will be challenged (but not required) to make a donation.

- * Different amounts will be suggested for waged and un-waged.
- * It will be stated clearly that money is very much needed to fund the FURY Council, and to pay for mailings.
- * There is a possibility of the local church helping with payment as part of its commitment to help young people who feel that they cannot afford it.
- * The donation will be requested annually.

There is work being done on Community Network mailings, friends of FURY and how to communicate Belonging and Commitment to local churches.

FRIENDS OF FURY

- 69 Friends of FURY will include:
- * Older people (26+) who want to support FURY.
 - * Churches.
 - * Groups within a Church.

They will be sent information about FURY and encouraged to be enablers to young people in their church and to support them in their commitment. If appropriate they can also be used as resource personnel. They will not necessarily be youth leaders. We aim to find friends of FURY in every Church.

70 THE STRUCTURE OF FURY

FURY ASSEMBLY

The membership of FURY Assembly will be made up of two people from each District of the URC, with the option of one observer per District. Preparation in the form of training and briefing should be available to all members of the Assembly. The Assembly will also include representation from other denominations and uniformed/non-uniformed organisations. The members of the National Youth Committee and the FURY Council will also attend FURY Assembly.

FURY Assembly should be:

- a) The body that links the FURY Council to local churches through the district representatives.
- b) The body from which some members of the FURY Council are elected.
- c) A forum for debate on issues relating to young people within the local churches and districts, and to the wider church.
- d) A training ground, encouraging feedback into the wider church.
- e) The body which provides the agenda of the FURY Council by prioritising issues and suggesting action.
- f) An opportunity to review the work of FURY Council undertaken on FURY Assembly's behalf over the previous year.

To facilitate these areas, delegates to FURY Assembly must:

- a) Provide relevant information on any issues that they wish to discuss and
- b) Prepare motions effectively so that FURY Assembly debates issues fully and asks FURY Council for action rather than further debate.

71 FURY COUNCIL

FURY Council will be a PRO-ACTIVE body of young people. FURY Council will be the focus for dealing with issues raised at FURY Assembly by establishing working parties to give detailed consideration to these issues, or by directing them to the appropriate URC group, in order to:

- a) Encourage and enable the growth of youth participation at all meeting points of the United Reformed Church.
- b) Be the voice of young people within the United Reformed Church.

- c) Be a training ground for full participation within FURY and the United Reformed Church.
- d) Work with other committees, councils, groups, on issues and concerns of the wider church and also provide representation to other youth bodies.
- e) Interpret any forward policy planned by the National Youth Committee.

FURY Council will:

- a) Take on the responsibility of the planning of FURY Assembly.
- b) Liaise with the Programme and Management Committees to ensure that the concerns of young people are reflected in the programming of the Centre at Yardley Hastings.
- c) Formulate its own budget.

Accountability

72 The FURY Council will be:

- 1. Accountable to the National Youth Committee and through them, to the Faith and Life Department and the wider church.
- 2. Accountable to FURY Assembly for dealing with the issues raised by young people.

Membership

73 The voting membership of the FURY Council will consist of:

FURY Chair (Chair of Council)
 FURY Chair Elect
 Six representatives elected at FURY Assembly
 Twelve nominated representatives from the Provinces
 British Youth Council delegation leader
 Boys Brigade representative
 Girls Brigade representative
 URC Guide and Scout Fellowship representative
 Plus the following (over 25) non-voting members:

Chaplain - as Chaplain to the Council
 National Youth Secretary
 a YLTO/YCWT - in an advisory capacity

Provinces will be provided with guidance on the process of selection of their representative.

74 Members of the FURY Council will be expected to participate in at least one working party to explore those issues raised by young people, and it is expected that the FURY Council will be represented by some of its members, on the Programme and Management Committees of the Centre at Yardley Hastings.

Terms of Service

75 Minimum elected term of service is two years.
 Maximum elected term of service is four years plus one year Chair Elect and one year Chair of FURY.

Provincial representatives serve for a two year term but can stand for re-election as an ordinary member.

After two years on FURY Council, a member is eligible for election on to the National Youth Committee for a single two year term.

Any member of FURY aged twenty three or under can be nominated as Chair Elect.

The Chair, Chair Elect and two other members of the FURY Council will also serve on the National Youth Committee.

NATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

76 The National Youth Committee will be responsible for:

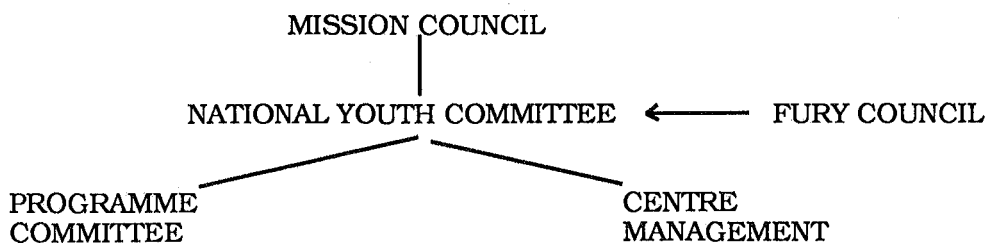
- a) Dealing with Church issues such as
 - i) church policy
 - ii) proposals to and from departments and General Assembly and
 - iii) Faith and Life departmental issues.
- b) Supporting the work of the FURY Council.
- c) Formulating forward policy for youth work in the United Reformed Church.
- d) Applying for and allocating funding for youth work in the United Reformed Church.
- e) Advocating youth work and youth participation within the committees of the United Reformed Church.
- f) Opening up new and maintaining present ecumenical relations at a staff level.
- g) Maintaining present relationships with, and formulating policies on, uniformed and non-uniformed youth organisations at a staff level.

Membership

77 The membership of the National Youth Committee will consist of:

- Convener
- National Youth Secretary as secretary
- Chaplain
- FURY Chair
- FURY Chair Elect
- Two elected members of FURY Council
- Two elected past members from FURY Council (twenty five or under)
- Four members nominated by the Nominations Committee
- Conveners of the Programme and Management Committees

In addition the National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer or the Convener of the Training Committee will attend.



NATIONAL ACTIVITIES 1991

78 After a review of the former National Youth Activity Programme, a full programme of activities was organised for 1991 and we were able to move on to the new pattern of working within the New FURY Project. We wish to thank Executive Leaders and staff for all they have done in shaping and leading these activities through the years and for their positive approach to future programmes.

79 Participants found the first half of the Jamaica/Guyana/United Reformed Church exchange a most valuable experience of partnership and they welcome invitations to share this with groups of any age. A very full report is available from the Youth Office. We all look forward to the second half this summer when the Jamaican and Guyanese young people visit Britain.

80 Connect 91 - held at Sheffield in October 1991 attracted 1400 participants and the theme 'Into the Melting Pot' provided a weekend of fun and learning experiences. In 1993 Connect will be held in London for the first time.

THE NATIONAL YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE

81 The New FURY Project Management Committee has continued to manage the Project under the Convenership of the Revd Dr Philip Morgan, Convener of the Faith and Life Department. This committee has seen through the details of the building work with the help of a Fixtures and Fittings Group. The local representative of the Management Committee, Mr Derek Edwards, has been invaluable in his regular contact with the builders and his liaising with other members of the Committee.

82 Revd Paul Quilter, the New FURY Project Co-ordinator, finished his part of the work in the summer of 1991 and is now Minister at Derby Central URC. During this last year of his service to the youth work of the URC he worked with great energy and helped to generate wider practical support for the Project.

83 The building work started in May 1991, soon after the General Assembly and no major problems have arisen. An informal month's programme throughout June 1992 marks the opening of The Centre. A Celebration Day on Sunday, 7 June, attended by hundreds of people, culminates in a service of thanksgiving recorded by the BBC for BBC1's 'Songs of Praise'.

The Centre offers modern attractive accommodation for up to forty people in cheerful, cosy bedrooms and bunk rooms. All are fitted with wash basins and tea making facilities and a few have en suite facilities. Other accommodation includes a spacious Conference Hall with seating for up to eighty people, six smaller discussion/quiet rooms, the Chapel, dining room, small library, craft room, non-alcoholic bar, shop, open air theatre, chapel, camp fire circle.

84. The involvement of young people in The Centre has been key to the project and there have been self-help weekends and weekly sessions with young people from a nearby school. This work, supervised by Derek Edwards, has been mainly the clearing of the site and creating the outdoor chapel/theatre/camp-fire area.

85 It is important to the National Youth Committee that this Resource Centre will support local churches and the young people within them in all twelve Provinces.

STAFF AT THE CENTRE

86 We hope the Centre will be run by a committed Christian community dedicated to helping people to learn and grow in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. We have borne this in mind as we have appointed the three full-time staff (Chaplain, Administrator and Cook/Domestic Supervisor) and as we recruited the first 'Yardley Hastings Team' - the young volunteers who will work at The Centre and from The Centre.

87 **The Chaplain** - of the National Youth Resource Centre, Revd Martin Nicholls, started work on 2 September 1991, moving into the Manse, Bridge Cottage, with his wife Jan and their children Matthew and Rebecca. Life has been extremely hectic, with many people using the Manse for meetings and planning. Jan Nicholls acted as the Chaplain's secretary for some months and is a great tower of strength. They have welcomed many people, given guided tours around The Centre and continued work on the external appeal, advocating The Centre and FURY and have ensured that The Centre was as ready as possible for its opening.

88 **The Yardley Hastings Team** - is an opportunity for young people to serve voluntarily at The Centre for a period of three to eighteen months. Based at The Centre, they will be involved there in the programme and activities, and will also go out to local churches, District and Provinces, getting involved in youth work in all parts of the URC.

89 **New Committees** - The New FURY Project Management Committee will eventually be replaced by the *Centre Management Committee* which is a sub-committee of the National Youth Committee and already operating. It is convened by the Revd John Slow.

90 The National Youth Committee has formed a *Programme Committee* which has wide representation including representatives from the World Church and Mission, Ministries and Church and Society Departments. The Convener is Ms Rachel Burnham and the responsibility of the Committee is the programme of youth work in the United Reformed Church. It is concerned not only with the programme of the Resource Centre, but also beyond the Centre. The 'Walk of Life' 1992 programme features fifteen events of varying lengths for different age-groups. It is an imaginative programme endeavouring to meet many needs and interests. We hope that local churches and Districts will continue to help young people financially to take part in events. Some money is also available through the Youth Office and further work is being done on creating a Trust/Bursary Fund which will help young people to take part who otherwise could not afford to do so.

Resolution 4

RESPONSE TO THE APPEAL

91 Since General Assembly 1991, the URC's response to the appeal has been very positive, with over two-thirds of the local churches responding. The sum of £100,000 has been received from the Department of Education and Science as Capital Grant towards the building. The response has been extremely encouraging and we are optimistic that our targets will be reached. Up to date figures will be available to the Assembly. Many people have donated petrol coupons and trading stamps and we are continuing to purchase items of furniture and equipment from this source.

92 We have been trying to obtain funding from Trust Funds and companies. This work can be tedious and long term and we are grateful to those who have helped with the work. Due to the economic crisis, companies are not easy to approach and it takes a long time to get money from Trust Funds.

93 On 6 February 1992, a Stone Laying Ceremony was held at The Centre which was hosted by the Marquis of Northampton. This was a joyful occasion attended by local people including members of Yardley Hastings URC, representatives of companies, organisations and charitable trusts. It helped to build good local relationships and some of our guests have already responded with gifts in cash and in kind.

Resolution 5

TRAINING

94 Training now comes under the remit of the Youth and Children's Training Committee and we are grateful for the continuing support and inspiration from the training team.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

95 Programme funding for 1991/2 from the DES was £52,000.00 and the same amount has been projected for 1992/3. This funding is covering two programmes, one to develop youth work in rural areas and the other to enhance the participation of young people in the New FURY Project. Youth and Children's Work Trainers who serve only one Province each allocate approximately 25% of their time to support the programmes for which we receive funding.

FURY ASSEMBLY 1992

96 Fifty-two of the Districts were represented at FURY Assembly. The Assembly approved the New FURY Development proposals. Nine other motions were discussed on issues that affect everybody, not just the young. There was also a special session on young people and homelessness. Next year, when the FURY Council is functioning, decisions made at FURY Assembly will go straight to FURY Council instead of the National Youth Committee, so that appropriate action may be taken. Wording of the motions can be obtained from the Youth stall at Assembly.

ECUMENICAL AND OTHER LINKS

97 **Youth Ministry from Zambia** - We are having to say goodbye to the Revd Samuel Silungwe as he returns to Zambia after two years ministry in Plymouth, Bradford and Witham. We are grateful to him for the insights and experience he has shared with the National Youth Committee and FURY. We thank him especially for his ministry to young people in the churches and committees he has served. We thank our partner church in Zambia for agreeing to let Samuel work with us.

ECUMENICAL LINKS

98 We are an active member of the English Churches Youth Service which meets regularly, sharing news from the denominations and Christian agencies. There are a number of exciting youth work initiatives coming from the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, especially 'Making a Difference', a co-operative venture with the Prince's Trust, providing money for community initiatives by young people.

99 **MAYC/URC** - There is to be a large joint National URC/Methodist Youth event in October 1994 to be held in Liverpool. This will be an exciting event for which plans are already at an advanced stage. We hope that there will be guidelines issued to Districts about how links can be established at local level between FURY and MAYC before coming to the event.

100 **British Youth Council** - This year we have had a full delegation of six led by Deborah Allen. These representatives of FURY have contributed substantially to the work of the British Youth Council and the Churches Group within it.

CLOSER INTEGRATION OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK

101 As a response to the resolution of the 1991 Assembly asking the Faith and Life Department to support closer integration of youth and children's work, the Secretaries and Conveners of the various committees are going to meet regularly to share concerns and discuss issues. This *Children's and Youth Work Cluster* is a positive step forward and it will be reviewed as it progresses.

FURY INFORMATION SERVICE

102 This was launched in May 1992 and is one attempt to communicate to the local church all the news from the Youth Office, including the National Youth Resource Centre. Included in FIS is '*FURY National*', the magazine for young people and by young people for young people and those working with them.

YOUTH OFFICE

103 This continues to provide an excellent service and will continue in Tavistock Place with the National Youth Secretary, the Assistant Secretary in the Faith and Life Department and the Youth Office Personal Assistant. The Youth Office will continue to provide a resource and advice service on Youth Work in the United Reformed Church, obviously working very closely with the National Youth Resource Centre.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK TRAINING COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd John Oldershaw

Secretary: Mrs Eileen Sanderson (NYCTO)

Team news

104 The Youth Leadership Training Officers, the Youth and Children's Work Trainers and the National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer have all had a busy year. We thank them all for their hard work, far beyond the expectations set out in their contracts.

105 An end of contract review of Sandra Ackroyd's (Thames North) work has taken place, and a recommendation will be brought to the Assembly via the Nominations Committee.

106 Janet Turner (Northern & Yorkshire), Ivan Andrews (South West) and Wallie Warmington (West Midlands) have all been involved in In-service Training courses during the last year. Sandra Ackroyd (Thames North) and Wallie Warmington have led the first leg of a Youth Exchange Programme with the Uniting Church of Jamaica and Grand Caymen and the Guyana Congregational Union which will continue this summer. John Quilter (Eastern and East Midlands) has been involved in the development of the programme for the Yardley Hastings Team and Jayne Scott (Mersey and North West) has represented the Youth & Children's Work Training Team on the Programme Committee as it develops new ways of working. All this has been carried out alongside the continuing development of training opportunities for youth and/or children's workers within the provinces where they serve. Wendy Walker (Southern) is now established in her post and developing Children and Youth Work Networks across the Province and Colin Capewell has begun a tutor training programme with the Methodist Church in his work in Wales.

107 We regret that Bill Mawer resigned from the work in Wessex Province after a short time, but are pleased to report that Anne Martin has been appointed as the YCWWT and began work on March 1st.

108 A good relationship is developing with Northern, Mansfield and Westminster Colleges through the introduction of elements of training, adult education, youth and children's work and ministry, into the courses for those training for ordination.

109 As a result of a growing need generally and in preparation for the launch of the new ecumenical training material for children's workers, *Kaleidoscope*, the team are currently involved in developing tutor training both regionally and nationally.

This will be for all tutors who are involved in the training of youth and children's workers. It is hoped that training will be offered ecumenically in the various regions, but in response to the particular needs of certain areas, a national URC tutor course is being planned for later this year.

Staff Development Policy

110 The implementation of the policy is the task of Eileen Sanderson, the NYCTO. The value of the policy in supporting the Trainers is being felt, and we are pleased that it is now being validated by the professional youth worker body. This gives the URC additional credibility as an employer of qualified youth workers and trainers.

New Publications

111 At Assembly "*Climbing the Walls*" will be published. This is designed to help young people and Youth and Children's Workers to understand the way the Church works, and how to present issues for discussion and decision within the councils of the URC. We believe that it will have wider use than just in youth work.

112 A new area of co-operation is being embarked upon in a joint publication with Evangelical Christians for Racial Justice. It will replace "No Longer Strangers" and "Living in Britain", and is designed to explore issues in multi-cultural Britain.

113 Work continues on the ecumenical training course for children's workers. It is called *Kaleidoscope* and is being pilot tested this year with a view to publication in 1993.

Patterns of Ministry

114 We have made a response to the "Patterns of Ministry" paper, commenting in particular upon the suggestion for regular reviews of Minister's work. We support this concept, but recognise that the carrying out of reviews involves specific skills, and so urge the Ministries Department to undertake more consultation before launching a national scheme. We are willing to make the experience of the NYCTO in carrying out reviews and appraisals available to the Department.

115 We also comment upon the recognition of training as a Ministry. Certainly those who act as YLTOs and YCWTs see their work as an expression of their Christian Faith and in that sense is a Ministry, but they cannot be regarded as Ministers of the URC, under authority and discipline of the Church beyond the terms of their contracts.

Training Requirement

116 We have considered the implications of the Children Act for Children's and Youth work in the URC. The Children's Work Committee is giving detailed advice to the churches and along with the Youth Committee and Children's Work Committee we have tested reactions to a strong recommendation that all new workers with children and young people should undertake training before beginning their work. We believe that this is good practice which is the spirit of the legislation and is something which should be encouraged.

We therefore bring a resolution to the Assembly to test its reaction.

Resolution 2

WINDERMERE POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow
Director and Secretary: The Revd Graham Cook

117 1991 was the year in which...

- a) ...Graham Cook was still the Moderator of Assembly until May.
- b) ...Ruth Clarke came to the end of four years as honorary Assistant Director and was elected as Moderator-Elect of Assembly 1992/3.
- c) ...Sue Kendall became the Administrator and Nancy Walton the Secretary/Receptionist.
- d) ...another 4772 bednights were recorded (bringing the total to 24212 since the Centre opened in the Summer of 1986)
- e) ...another 88 courses and events were run.
- f) ...Scripture was explored. A group who came to look at narrative theology in Matthew's Gospel formed the 'St Matthew's Fan Club'. Another group spend a week of their Summer holidays relaxing with Mark's Gospel. It all began when a Church Secretary said to Graham Cook, 'I am frightened of the high-powered Bible Studies you put on. What I need is a Bible Study for idiots!' So we started with the assumption that no-one knew anything. It is amazing what a wide door that made into the Gospel.
- g) ...all sorts of skills were shared and developed. These included liturgical dance, leading school worship, assertiveness, contemporary church music, tapestry, painting (including painting Christmas), Elders' training and preaching skills.
- h) ...spirituality was developed with Retreats in Holy Week, in early Summer and at Advent.
- i) ...Theology was explored. 'What is God like?' asked Margaret Hebblethwaite. 'What is the relationship between Gospel and Culture?' asked Lesslie Newbigin and Dan Beeby. A whole group of theologians helped people to remember the 'Forgotten Trinity'. A number of ministers attended a theological reading party, and a group of retired ministers shared their recent reading with each other.
- j) ...ministers were helped to sustain their ministries. A group of ministers who were trained together met to share their experiences and give each other mutual support. A Province used the Centre for both its Summer and Winter Ministers' Schools. Sixteen ministers came for an In-service Refresher Course and ministers and spouses within a few years of retirement came to begin to prepare for it.
- k) ...people came simply to be refreshed and renewed. There were those who booked in for a few days to do their own thing, read a book, write a lecture, spend some time in contemplation. We ran our own series of holidays during the Summer including attendance at the Lakes Music Festival, painting, exploring poetry, the Lake District as well as Mark's Gospel. In Spring some came to climb the peaks during the day and to consider the world church during the evenings. There were very well attended House Parties at Christmas and New Year with their opportunities of refreshment for both mind, body and spirit.

- l) ...nearly half the week-ends in the year were taken up by church groups coming to look at the life of their congregation. Twenty-four churches from six Provinces came. Two churches, both of them from the Wessex Province, came for a whole week and used the time to holiday as well as to do some work and worship together. We also had a group of friends from the United Church of Christ, New Jersey, USA.
- m) ...the Centre kept up its work of sustaining various Networks and becoming the focus for new ones. SPIN, the Rural Network, the Urban Network, the North Western Lay Preachers and the Training Network all met again. People from Town Centre churches, and those involved in complementary ministries (pastoral assistants, associate ministers, lay pastors, ministerial assistants etc) met for the first time. A group of people also met to share their experience of being single in the church.
- n) ...the various Departments of the United Reformed Church met both to do some of the necessary committee work and also to share their insights with the people of the church.
- o) ...the Centre was used for on-going ecumenical discussions in Cumbria. The BBC's Children in Need North West Committee met to make decisions about the distribution of its resources in the area. Cumbria social Services Department used the Centre for the regular training of its care Workers.

118 In January 1992, preparing for the implementation of the Food Act, all members of the staff, both domestic and administrative, undertook a food handling course. We are delighted to report that all members passed with flying colours, with an average mark of 86%. The course also gave us an ideal opportunity to review all our own systems and procedures and to have an independent examination of our kitchen. Once again the result was highly satisfactory. Congratulations and certificates all round!

119 We are in the process of up-grading the disabled toilet-shower facilities. We are at the drawing board stage at the moment. When the installation is completed there will be more grab rails and also a satisfactory separation between the toilet and the shower facility. We hope that the cost of this will be carried by the Hannah Fund as this was one of the purposes of the Fund when the Clarke family first set it up. Once again, we will be indebted to all who have supported this Fund.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Bill Mahood
Secretary: Mr Michael Harrison

120 During the past year we have been conscious of the changes that are to take place in the administration of the United Reformed Church. Part of our time has been given over to a discussion of their implications for our work. We welcome the formation of the Mission Council and believe that it will help to ensure that the resources of the whole church are directed to equipping us for mission and ministry. Within this overall vision we believe that our committee has a role to play in training, exploration of faith and recognition of the responsibilities that our faith lays upon us.

121 We have continued to have fruitful co-operation with other committees and groups. The Integrated Training Group is developing its plans for training opportunities and we have worked with them on these. We are aware of the many

different opportunities that already exist within various departments of the church. We believe that it is right that when the church asks people to serve the church it should train them so that they have greater confidence and greater satisfaction in doing the job well. But often the training is not taken up because of lack of awareness that it is available.

122 In recent years many Districts and Provinces have drawn up very good courses for the training of Elders. We are aware of the great benefit these have been both to new Elders and to these with some experience. We are discussing with those involved ways in which we can draw on their experiences in the production of a course that would then be available as an extra resource for the whole church.

123 We have welcomed the wide discussion there has been on the *Patterns of Ministry* document. Again we are glad to note the stress on the variety of forms of service to the church and the need for training. We believe that as this is translated into good practice new forms of service and training will emerge.

124 A fruitful co-operation with the Advocacy Group has continued. A sub-committee from both groups drew up and produced 120,000 Stewardship leaflets which have been distributed to Provinces for passing on to local congregations. Discussions have taken place on future work and suggestions will be offered to the Mission Council.

125 In our report to Assembly last year we spoke of the need for new Church Membership material and of our hope that we would be producing it by the end of 1991. This has not been possible but nevertheless we have been testing and revising the planned material in a number of churches. The reactions to it have been favourable. It is now in its final form and will be available by the autumn. We hope that it will be a very useful resources for the Church.

126 We continue to commend the material produced by the Methodist Church, *"The Ministry of the People of God in the World"*. This was printed in last year's Assembly Reports. We know it has been used in many of our churches and hope that it will be taken up by many more. We believe that its emphasis on the places where people live and work as the primary focus of Christian witness deserves our full attention.

127 During the past six years our committee has been served by Michael Harrison as its secretary. This has been a voluntary job but one which Michael has given a great deal of time and energy. He has brought to it his experience as a head teacher and his deep Christian commitment. We are all grateful for all Michael has done to enrich the work of our committee.

DOCTRINE & WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Convener: Dr David M Thompson

Secretary: The Revd John H Taylor

Music and Hymnody

128 The publication of *Rejoice and Sing* has proved very successful. The Full Music edition was being reprinted by the time that the Melody Edition was published at the end of October 1991; the first printing of the Melody Edition was increased before publication to meet the demand, and a reprint has also been necessary. Negotiations have taken place with Oxford University Press about the publication of a large print edition, and discussions are proceeding about a Companion for the new

book. Members of the former Editorial Committee are very willing to give talks in local churches and Districts to ministers, lay preachers and others involved in the leading of worship on ways in which the new book can be used.

129 The Consultation held by the Committee at Windermere on Contemporary Music in the Church in March 1991 was well attended. The Committee proposes to establish a Worship and Music Group (on which the Musicians' Guild will be represented) to keep in touch with developments and act as a resource for the Church as a whole.

Services

130 The first group of *Festival Services* referred to in last year's report will have been published by the time Assembly meets.

A Four Year Lectionary

131 Last year's report referred to the new Joint Liturgical group *Four Year Lectionary* (the Canterbury Press, £1.50) which is due to begin on the ninth Sunday before Christmas 1992 (25 October). The committee will be glad to hear how satisfying in practice it is to draw the gospel lessons almost exclusively from each gospel in turn during the four years. Perhaps at some future time, it will be possible to work towards a revision of the existing three-year Common Lectionary which involves Roman Catholics. Although the Methodist Conference will be advised to introduce the new lectionary from this October, the Committee has agreed that, for the time being, the *Scripture Readings* published each year should contain the existing Lectionary lessons, with the new ones as alternatives.

The Forgotten Trinity

132 A reading party on this important BCC Working Party report took place at Windermere in September 1991, and was appreciated by those attending. Several suggestions were made to increase awareness of the significance of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the life of the Church today, and these are being sent to the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland. One of the recommendations of the report is that consideration be given to excluding the *filioque* clause from the Nicene Creed. The text of this creed, although referred to in the Basis of Union, is not included in the formularies of the United Reformed Church. It is given in both the 1989 *Service Book and Rejoice and Sing*, but the words "and the Son" are placed in brackets. Therefore, the Committee does not think that any formal action is required by the Assembly at this stage, though the matter is obviously part of the on-going ecumenical conversation in the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

Baptism

133 Last year's Assembly asked the General Secretary to continue discussion on baptismal practice, involving the World Church and Mission Department. His report is presented separately to the Assembly, but he has shared it with us and we found it helpful. The Mersey Provincial Synod has also asked the Committee for advice on baptismal discipline in relation to the preparation of parents who bring their children for infant baptism, and the promises made by them and the congregation. Discussion is proceeding on this matter.

134 At the request of last year's Assembly the new Christian Initiation certificates were withdrawn. The Committee has given further consideration to this matter, and has distinguished between those certificates which concern admission to the Church Universal through baptism and confirmation, and those which concern membership of the local congregation. Thus a new certificate has been published which combines certificates for Baptism and Confirmation. (The Committee originally tried to

persuade the British Council of Churches over ten years ago that the time was ripe to take further the agreement reached in the Common Baptismal Certificate, but the Working Party set up to examine the matter was unable to reach a common mind on this matter.) Separate certificates of church membership have also been published for use by local churches for persons admitted on profession of faith, on reaffirmation of faith or on transfer from other churches.

Presidency at the Sacraments

135 Last year's Assembly received the Committee's Statement on Presidency at the Sacraments after the deletion of paragraph 58.4 concerning ministerial students on internships, but asked the Committee to give further attention to the definition of presidency. The Committee's understanding is that according to Reformed sacramental theology the whole church celebrates the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, whilst presidency refers to the one who says the baptismal or thanksgiving prayers and baptises the candidate or breaks the bread and pours the wine for distribution to the people. The combination of prayer and action links the sign with what is signified.

136 Several letters have been received concerning the Statement, but upon examination they turned out to be more concerned with the Ministries' Department discussion document on *Patterns of Ministry*. The Committee has made its own comments on the document to the Department: in particular, it has grave reservations about the suggestion (if it understands it correctly) that all churches should appoint presiding Elders, since it believes that this would create two permanent sacramental ministries instead of one and would also divide the eldership into those who were authorised to preside and those who were not.

Ordination of Elders

137 The Committee has considered and approved a proposal for a service of ordination to the eldership in Wales which can be used jointly by the United Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church in Wales.

Schedule C

138 Last year's Assembly in responding to a resolution from the North Western Province to review Schedule C of the Basis of Union (Affirmations to be made by ministers at ordination and induction) asked the Committee to undertake this review as soon as possible. The Committee wrote to all Districts, the Moderators and to a number of recently ordained ministers inviting comments and a number of responses have been received, including a request from the Moderators, endorsed by the Executive Committee, for the inclusion of a question containing a promise to participate in the councils of the Church. After careful consideration the Committee agreed upon a policy of minimal change in wording and no change in doctrinal substance. Because any changes to Schedule C constitute amendments to the basis of Union and therefore require consideration by two successive Assemblies, the Committee is anxious not to embark on this process unless there is a reasonable chance of carrying it through successfully. (An earlier attempt at change failed some ten years ago.) A revised version of the Schedule (taking account of the Executive Committee's request) will be circulated to District councils asking for their comments by 31 December 1992. In order to meet the suggestion that an affirmative form would be more effective, the Committee is also proposing an alternative in the form of a declaration (as is provided in Schedule A for admission to the full privileges and responsibilities of church membership). In the light of the comments received the Committee will bring recommendations to the 1993 Assembly.

Church Membership

139 The Committee has been involved (with others) in the preparation of new material for those preparing for admission to the full privileges and responsibilities of church membership. This should be available by the end of the year.

140 The Committee has given further consideration to the Eastern Province Report on Church Membership, and would be glad to hear from more churches which have studied it. We believe that the nature of our corporate response to the Gospel touches on many important issues in the life of the church today and intend to take the matter further in the coming year.

HEALTH AND HEALING COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Robin Hine

Secretary: The Revd Michael Playdon

141 The World Council of Churches has set an agenda for local churches through the report of the Christian Medical Commission. CMC identifies three broad areas of involvement:- church based activities; primary health care education; justice and advocacy. Let us see how our year's work relates to these categories. But first a reminder of some of the questions posed by CMC on the way to creating a healing community.

- 142
- Are we and our churches healing communities?
 - Are we really engaging ourselves in God's controversy with those who spread sickness around?
 - Are we enabling our sick people and societies to diagnose their true sickness and find resources for healing?
 - Are we prepared to place ourselves beside the sick, the deprived, the oppressed with the healing power of God?
 - Are we ready to join our Lord in his self-giving struggle with evil even to the cross in order that healing, reconciliation, and wholeness may become manifest in a world which is sick unto death?

(from *Healing and Wholeness*, Christian Medical Commission WCC Geneva 1990 page 35)

Such questions need a community as context for their answering.

Church based activities

143 Our network of Provincial Consultants keeps us aware of a number of district and provincial conferences and training days. One consultant manages to make systematic visits to churches and elders meetings. We have news of churches exploring the theme through bible study and study groups, of groups meeting for prayer, and of regular services for healing in local churches. There are also strong links to the growing interest in silence and retreats.

144 The committee has decided it should put more time into encouraging regional events. We are aware of a great deal of good written material. There is also the need for days of learning and sharing, that help people travel beyond some of the barriers that exist. This involves an atmosphere of trust, and a balance of explanation and experience.

Study Kit - Modular approach

145 The committee in the past has produced a great deal of learning material. The study pack was widely taken up by other churches. We have decided that the future format will be modules of learning, allowing a choice of themes, after a general introduction. This sets a sizable task for the future, and we are ready to share the task with provinces or partner churches.

Ecumenical Co-operation

146 We are committed members of the Churches' Council for Health and Healing, which brings together churches, homes for healing and the colleges of health professionals. As we reported last year, The Churches' Council on Health and Healing was still reeling from the suddenness of the death of John Young, its Director. In the past year the acting director, Revd David Howell has been appointed Director, and we have welcomed him to our meetings. CCHH is beginning to emerge from a difficult time, and sees itself as a co-ordinator, and a source of information. We draw attention to one of their publications at (154) below.

147 In our contact with the Methodist Church, we are sharing a list of their regional representatives and our provincial consultants. They are taking an interest in the early stages of our modular approach to study material. The committee has welcomed Revd Christine Pocock from Free Church Federal Council, successor to Revd David Main, to our meetings.

National Conference

148 The national conference in June 1991 was attended by about seventy people, led by Jim Cotter, and it was an interesting and good humoured conference. Numbers were lower than in previous conferences.

149 However we had the disconcerting experience that our speaker on disability was unable to stay at Swanwick because the facilities were inadequate. We have been challenged to review to what extent the churches' activities are open to all. (We are glad to note The Hayes, Swanwick now has new accommodation for the disabled.)

Primary Health Care Education

150 This is the second area identified by the World Council of Churches. It includes such categories as medical intervention, training healers, cooperating with other healing partners, supporting those in healing ministries, and others. Some of these may seem beyond our scope, but some we touch upon.

Training

151 We continue to be concerned that healing ministry should be included in the basic training courses of the Church. Committee members have spent a morning with ordinands in Westminster College in June 1991, and an afternoon with students of Northern College in February 1992. Students are offered introductory material, and know that the resources are available to them for the future.

Hospital Chaplains

152 The Department of Health has produced Health Service Guideline HFG (92)2, entitled *Treating the Spiritual Needs of Patients and Staff*. This gives a context to the role of chaplaincy within the health service for the future. The document reaffirms the need for spiritual support and that this need should be met within the provisions of the service.

Supporting those in healing ministries

153 We were reminded in our Swanwick Conference that we must not narrow down healing ministry to what happens within the church. Our concern for the health service and those who work within it should include cooperation and support with health professionals and chaplains.

Preparing for Disaster

154 We referred last year to the part churches can play in cases of major disaster. We recommend Occasional Paper 9 from CCHH, entitled the *Church's Role in Major Disaster* as reading for hospital chaplains and local ministers. This is an informed and short introduction by Revd David Stoter, Coordinator of Chaplains in Nottingham. The ground work needs to have been done beforehand if the churches are to support those caught up in a disaster.

Justice and Advocacy

155 The third area of the agenda is Justice and Advocacy. Health is never a purely medical matter. Helping people take responsibility for their own health, seeing the interplay of social issues, studying questions of medical ethics, supporting people and acting as advocates are all part of our remit.

Disability

156 As indicated above (149) we were starkly reminded how disability can exclude our members from taking part in our activities. How much of what happens in your local church building is inaccessible, or inaudible to some members? A paper on disability is one of our priorities. We would be glad of any submissions from others. It would be valuable to hear from any churches who have used the study kit produced by CHAD (Churches Action on Disability) with their comments.

Care in the Community

157 This year has seen local social services and health authorities publishing their plans for community care. Next year sees the implementation of the new system, with a transfer of funding. Churches should be alert to these developments. Concern is expressed about the resources being made available to develop such care. Churches may be involved either as participants in the provision of care, or as advocates of those who find it hard to speak for themselves. Many church members will be involved in this, either through voluntary agencies, or by their paid work, or as relative or friend. Are your churches represented in local forums about community care?

Theology of Health and Healing

158 Binding the whole together the church must have a theological perspective on all these aspects of health and healing, within and beyond church activity. The conference at Windermere planned for September 1991 had to be postponed to March 1992. The conference was led by Revd David Dale and the committee convener. 'Healing is much too important an issue for everyone to agree on' wrote Stephen Pattison. The way we speak of God, read our bibles, approach illness and healing all need continuing study and reflection. This is a process of consultation which has to continue, as we integrate and assess insight and experience.

A need for Discernment

159 Another WCC theme is the Integrity of Creation. The considerable appeal of green issues at present, also lets in an odd fringe of 'healing and diagnostic methods'. Some of these do not have a Christian basis but masquerade as a spiritual

or religious healing. We have heard concerns about various esoteric views. We are taking the advice of CCHH at present, and monitoring developments. Church people should be aware that not all healing is done in the name of Jesus Christ. We need a mixture of common sense and discernment.

Thanks

160 This year our Secretary, Revd Michael Playdon, completes his term of service, and we place on record our thanks for his gentle contribution and hard work.

SILENCE AND RETREAT GROUP

Convener: The Revd Henry Gordon

Secretary: Dr Joan Holliday

161 The Silence and Retreats Core Group is a baby weaned by Terry Oakley who responded to an increasing interest within the URC and the Free Churches generally. The very rich heritage hitherto enjoyed largely by Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox has been spilling over into Non-Conformity with the resultant easing of the paranoia often and unjustly engendered by such hints of 'Popery'.

162 Within the group is a broad spectrum of experience ranging from the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, to less rigorous disciplines of prayer and reflection as per Sadhana or William Johnston, Walks of thanksgiving, Use of the senses and art forms of various persuasions.

163 As yet, the group has met more as an interest group rather than a committee with 'teeth' but it produces a Newsletter (Windows) which has an encouraging circulation and contains articles and reviews from interested and involved members - lay and ordained throughout the URC. We are very happy to report that recently the group was officially recognised by Faith and Life as a group within the Department.

164 We are in the throes of producing an amended list of names of people who are interested in Retreat work and/or Quiet days so that moderators of Provinces can be kept informed of interested parties within their Provinces and hopefully draw upon their skills and encourage participation.

165 The main thrust now is publicity. At the time of writing one of the group has been invited to lead a two-day retreat with students from Mansfield College. This sort of thing we would very much like to promote, seeing the development and growth of prayer life as integral part of our pilgrimage. Other members have also been called upon to lead both residential and one-day Quiet days or Retreats. Spiritual directing we would like to see promoted and accepted - not as a last desperate measure (like only seeing the doctor when you are ill) but a valued friend journeying with you who can help discern the movement of the Holy Spirit. This is very much a long term goal as there is still much hostility and suspicion about this whole area. District Councils and Synods could be platforms for speakers to inform our members of the Silence and Retreat Group and the value of such. We would welcome invitations.

166 There are also exciting opportunities opening up ecumenically. The URC is a member of the National Retreat Association. This body includes Catholics, Anglicans and Baptist, Methodist and URC. Recently the Quakers have also become involved as observers. An annual publication (*Vision*) lists Retreat Houses of many persuasions with their programmes and it is hoped that the URC will be encouraged to tap into these resources e.g. the Catholics run "Open-door" retreats which many dioceses are willing to share. An event which is a "first" must surely be the forthcoming conference in June, "Sharing God", at which we hope we shall be well represented.

167 It would be grossly unfair not to include tributes to the late Yvonne Workman and Stella Beare who were instrumental in forming the group and we owe them a great deal for their vision and faith and we hope simply to build on the foundation that they helped lay.

SHARING PEOPLE IN NETWORK (SPIN)

Joint Co-ordinators: The Revd Rowena Francis
The Revd Dale Rominger

168 SPIN offers support, stimulation, sparks, strength. SPIN is a force that can challenge and change things, that can provide refuge and shelter. Its driving force is women and men working together. It prompts the URC, and the whole church to own the WCC Decade of Solidarity with Women. (1988-1998)

169 How can we celebrate the richness of all our different gifts? How can we live in tolerance and acceptance one with another? How do we discover liberation, freedom in the Spirit to delight in one another, and give full worth to each one whatever their sex? SPIN enables such celebration, acceptance, discovery and delight.

170 Through the network, Provincial Consultants, District Correspondents and members of our Churches can come together, share and rejoice in the richness of their diversity. Through publications like SPIN-OFF, connections can be made between all kinds of things; ideas, groups, books, articles, people. Through links with other groups, ecumenical and secular, different views and perceptions can be experienced and struggled with, leading to various patterns of being together coming to feel good.

171 All this is happening! To be part of it is simple: join SPIN, read SPIN-OFF, come to a meeting. Recognise most are scared, most do not want to take the risk of discovering new liberated ways of being together as one humanity, male and female. Yet for those who take the risk they can become caught up in a spinning dynamic movement.

172 SPIN hopes this year to grow, and take up more people into its spinning, its celebration of life in God's image as male and female. A Windermere weekend, sessions during Assembly, the Annual Gathering on Saturday November 14 in Cheltenham, and possibly more regionally based get togethers are all part and parcel of this.

173 The Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, the South African Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women are the main wider groupings that SPIN will be actively engaged with this year, through representatives. The United Reformed Church also has two representatives on the Women's Inter-Church Council (WICC), a part of the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland.

174 Revd Keran Olm-Stoelting, a Conference Minister of the United Church of Christ (USA) in partnership with two Provinces of the URC and SPIN is doing some research on the impact of the WCC Decade of Solidarity with Women and SPIN, within the URC. We look forward to sharing in her deliberations on the area, in the hope that it will enable us to SPIN more effectively in coming years.

PRAYER HANDBOOK

Editor: Revd Graham Cook

Secretary: Revd Terry Oakley

175 The Prayer handbook is produced by a group representing all the departments and the English speaking European members of CWM.

176 *READ MARK AND PRAY* was the last of three books to be edited by Graham Cook. It includes stories, songs and sermons from his year as Moderator of General Assembly, as well as prayers and meditations written by 20 different people from within the URC and our CWM partners. Based on Mark's Gospel it is hoped that it continues to provide material for personal and corporate worship. Sales approach 20,000 within and beyond the constituency of the URC. The cassette which contains some of the material has again sold out, and clearly meets a need within the church.

177 The 1993 book, *ENCOMPASSING PRESENCE*, will be the first of a series to be edited by the Revd Kate Compston, and will include prayers and meditations by the Revd Kate McIlhagga. There will be a Celtic style to the prayers and the appearance of the book. It will be available from August, and complimentary copies will be sent as usual to every URC congregation.

FORUM

Co-ordinator: Revd Terry Oakley

1991 Thrills and Skills

178 Under the FORUM Big Top 280 people gathered to enjoy the thrills of all age worship lead by Stephen Thornton accompanied by Martin, Jan, Rebecca and Matthew Nicholls the musicians. They also came to develop their skills as disciples of Christ, with the help of centre ring performers such as Peter McIntosh, Pamela Pavitt, Eileen Sanderson, and Michael Diffey. Christine Nixon was the first of many clowns of all ages. Amongst those walking the tightrope was Malcolm Hanson, Moderator of General Assembly, who wondered as he crossed the wire how he and we could keep extremes in balance. Brenda Hanson meanwhile was being sawn in two by visiting magician Monty Helmn! After the Grand Finale people returned to their churches better equipped to use different methods of Bible study, as well as the skills they had developed in their 'side shows'.

1992 Roots and Branches - Our European Heritage and Hope

179 The FORUM contribution to the new Europe debate will focus on the worship and culture we have inherited as part of the Reformed Church tradition. But, having explored our roots, we will also look to future developments as we seek to continue our growth through our branches. Under the FORUM meeting tree will gather: Lesslie Newbiggin to give us a keynote address on Gospel and Culture, Janet Sowerbutts to lead us in Bible Study, Donald Wetherick to lead us in music to accompany our worship, led by Dafydd Jones, which will include Celtic, Reformed and other traditions, Dale and Roberta Rominger our Chaplains, Eastern Europeans to share their stories, from Taize, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, the EKU in Germany, as well as a host of URC members with their artistic talents and lively faith.

180 FORUM meets earlier this year, from 1st to 7th August, but still at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, our meeting place for many years. For those who come this year, however, there will be new facilities and new challenges. Come and be reformed - root and branch!

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 Assembly urges all churches to ensure that those beginning to work with children and young people on behalf of the church receive appropriate and adequate training, and encourages other leaders to keep their training up to date.
- 3 Assembly resolves to create the post of a Children's Advocate and instructs Mission Council to consider how this might be achieved.
- 4(a) Assembly thanks all who have contributed to the New FURY project appeal, the building and the programme and rejoices that the National Youth Resource Centre is now open.
 - (b) Assembly approves the reconstitution of the National Youth Committee and the formation of the FURY Council.
 - (c) Assembly welcomes the proposals of the New FURY Project Development Group and encourages local churches to use the new material and programmes in their continuing support of young people.
- 5 The Assembly congratulates the young people for their enthusiastic and effective advocacy of the New FURY Project, and notes that the Church Building Fund will provide finance for the balance of the building costs, less whatever responses to the appeal are received or promised by 31 December 1992.

MINISTRIES & FAITH AND LIFE

INTEGRATED TRAINING WORKING GROUP

Convener: Revd Terry Oakley
Secretary: Revd Michael Diffey

1. The Working Group will have met three times by the time of Assembly. Its membership consists of four representatives of the Faith and Life and Ministries Departments, and a representative from each of the World Church and Mission and Church and Society Departments. They are each involved in training in some way, either as Provincial Training Officers, writers of training material and courses, or responsible for the provision of training for members, elders, ministers, youth and children's workers and others. They are, in addition to the Convener and secretary who were appointed at the first meeting, Revd Peter McIntosh, Mrs Eileen Sanderson, Revd Graham Cook, Revd David Jenkins, Revd Donald Hilton, Revd Michael Dunford, Mrs Muriel Garrow and Mrs Valerie Morrison (who replaced Revd Peter Brain but has been unable to attend thus far).
2. Responses to the Integrated Training Report presented to last General Assembly were invited by Easter 1992, and suggested guidelines were sent to District Secretaries and Synod Clerks as a reminder. The responses are being considered and a brief report on them will be given to Assembly.

3. Most of the time has been spent in work on a foundation or Basic Training Course. The intention is to provide a course for anyone in the Church to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes (formation) as a disciples of Christ. It will consist of a number of modules, eg Being, Believing, Belonging, Worshipping, Serving, each of which will contain Biblical material and will build on the experience of those following the course. The same course with 'add-on' modules is intended to provide training for various ministries within the Church, eg for worship leaders, group leaders, pastoral carers, evangelists and elders.

4. The opportunities for training are countless, and are provided with the local congregation, in Districts, Provinces and Assembly Departments, in institutions like the Windermere Centre, Yardley Hastings Centre, the theological colleges, and ecumenical courses both residential and non-residential. Examples are myriad, here is a selection from the programme of one of the centres:

Roles:

living and working in the world; working with children; parenting; elders; preachers; complementary ministers; church members; singers; newsletter editors; pastoral assistants; evangelists; church secretaries and treasurers; District Secretaries and Synod Clerks; leaders of women's meetings; flower arrangers; building stewards; marriage and bereavement counsellors; readers; writers; broadcasters; banner makers; worship leaders.

Skills:

preaching; theologising; reflecting; music making; tapestry; healing; managing; dancing; acting; praying; editing; studying scripture; pastoral care; evangelising; painting; leading meetings; working with children; flower arranging; computing; care of buildings; writing; marriage; reading aloud in church; working with young people; publicity; clowning; counselling; broadcasting; asserting; banner making; leading worship.

Issues:

living, working and deciding in the world; sexuality; the world church; housing; racism; evangelism; money; Christian nurture; justice; peace; environment; ageing; ecumenism; other faiths; science and religion; appropriate life styles; broadcasting; being single; death; divorce; baptism.

Qualities:

spirituality; prayerful; race awareness; sensitivity; caring; healing; peaceful; style of life; assertiveness; artistic; musical; graceful; honesty; concern for justice; observant; theological; searching for the Word of God.

5. Some people, however, do not have the same access to these training opportunities as others, either because of location, timing, lack of formal education qualifications, or money. The Working Group is exploring how to make training more accessible, and is considering the proposal of a Lay Training Fund.

6. A full report with proposals based on the responses received from the wider church and further research and reflection we hope will be presented to the General Assembly in 1993.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Brian Nuttall

Secretary: Mr David Butler

Appointment of Staff Secretaries, etc

1. As a result of the work of a series of Appointment Groups, the following nominations were brought to and accepted by the Executive Committee:

1.1 Personnel Secretary, World Church & Mission Department: Miss Sheila Rudofsky, for a further and final term of one year, commencing on 1st September 1992.

1.2 Secretary for Mission Education, World Church & Mission Department: Mrs Muriel Garrow, for a second term of five years, commencing 1st August 1992 and ending on 31st August 1997.

1.3 Editor, Reform: Mr Norman Hart, for a further and final term of three years, commencing 1st September 1992 and ending on 19th September 1995.

1.4 Chaplain, National Youth Resource Centre: The Revd Martin John Nicholls, for a term of five years, commencing on 1st September 1991.

1.5 Youth and Children's Work Trainer, Wessex Province: Miss Ann Martin, for a term of five years, commencing on 1st March 1992.

1.6 Youth and Children's Work Trainer, Thames North Province: Mrs Sandra Ackroyd, for a further term of five years, commencing on 1st September 1992.

2. Departmental Secretary, Ministries Department: Assembly will be invited to appoint the Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee, in succession to the Revd Michael Dunford.

(see **Resolution 2**)

3. Appointment Groups have been appointed for the post of Departmental Secretary, Faith and Life Department, whose present term ends on 31st August 1993, and for the new post of CRCW Development Worker.

Other Appointments made since last Assembly

4.1 Following the resignation of Mr Angus Grimmond as Hon. Treasurer, Mr Fred Brooman was appointed Acting Treasurer until 31st December 1991. Subsequently, Mr Alistair Black was nominated to serve as Hon. Treasurer for a six year term commencing on 1st January 1992 and ending at General Assembly 1998, and as Convener, Financial Management Committee for the time being. Mr Black will continue to serve meanwhile as Convener, Maintenance of Ministry Committee.

4.2 Other nominations included: Mr Monty Helmn, to serve a further term as Convener of Tellers for General Assembly 1992-94; Mr Bill Black, Convener, the Revd Ann Jackson and Mr Malcolm Johnston, to serve as Tellers for the Election of Moderator of General Assembly 1993/94; two Commissions of Assembly to induct new Moderators for the East Midlands and North Western Provinces; sundry representatives to other Church Assemblies in 1992; and some thirty-five women and men, lay and ordained, to fill mid-term vacancies on standing committees and other bodies.

4.3 The Executive Committee accepted all the above nominations.

4.4 A new National Assessment Board having been appointed by Assembly last year, a process of rotation has now been established. Those nominated under this heading in the Appendix to this report, therefore include four who will retire on 30th September 1992 and two who will not take office until 1st October 1993.

Assembly and Committee Officers for appointment at this Assembly

- 5.1 Clerk of General Assembly: The Revd Martin Cressey (to 1997).
- 5.2 Minute Secretary, General Assembly: Mrs Sheila Tull (to 1995).
- 5.3 Secretary, Christian Education and Stewardship Committee: Mr Carew Satchwell (to 1998).
- 5.4 Convener, Children's Work Committee: The Revd Stephen Thornton (to 1998).
- 5.5 Secretary, Children's Work Committee: Mrs Rosemary Johnston (to 1998).
- 5.6 Secretary, Health and Healing Committee: The Revd Jim Hollyman (to 1998).
- 5.7 Secretary, Mission and Other Faiths Committee: The Revd Brenda Willis (to 1998).
- 5.8 Convener, Church and Society Department: Professor Malcolm Johnson (to 1996).
- 5.9 Secretary, Welfare and Emergencies Committee: Mrs Judy Stockings (re-appointment sine die).
- 5.10 Secretary, Nominations Committee: The Revd Arnold Harrison (to 1998).

Our present secretary, Mr David Butler, is retiring from office a year early to facilitate the changeover to new methods of working. We are grateful to him for his conscientiousness and attention to detail.

The committee also expresses its warm appreciation to its retiring convener, the Revd Brian Nuttall, for the sensitive and careful leadership he has given to the committee during his seven-year term of office.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 The Assembly appoints the Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee to serve as Departmental Secretary, Ministries Department, for a term of seven years commencing on 1st September 1992.
- 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 Department is a member ex officio of every committee which has funds.
3. Officers and Members appointed since Assembly 1991 are denoted by an asterisk. Those denoted by two asterisks are to be appointed by Assembly for the first time.

MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT

Convener: Revd Keith Forecast - 1996
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

VOCATIONS

Convener: Revd Derek Gill - 1997
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Revd Eric Allen
 Mr Sidney Hazlehurst
 Mr Edward Bryson

Revd Dean Tapley
 Mrs Shirley Rawnsley
 Revd Hazel Martell*

Revd John Waller
 Revd Jean Forster

TRAINING

Convener: Mrs Elizabeth Jupp - 1993
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Dr Clyde Binfield
 Revd Dr David Peel
 Revd David Grainger
 Revd Chris Warner

Revd Nina Mead
 Revd John Proctor
 Revd Jo Williams
 Revd Canon Dr Sehon Goodridge

Dr Susan Parsons
 Dr Ann Stevenson
 Mrs Audrey Mitchell**

together with one stipendiary ministry student (Mr Mark Ambrose).

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT BOARD

Convener: Mr Raymond Clarke - 1997

Revd Brian Treharne
 Mrs Gwen Hall
 Revd Dr Stephen Orchard
 Revd Dr Leslie Green*
 Dr Ron Lyle
 Revd Graham Long
 Mr Peter Richards*

Revd Alan Dunstone
 Revd Elizabeth Caswell
 Revd John Waller
 Dr Peter Clarke*
 Revd Jean Forster
 Mrs Edith Tolley*
 Mr Alan Thompson**

Mr Michael Harrison
 Revd Alan Frost
 Mr Alan Hart
 Revd Janet Sowerbutts
 Revd Lesley Charlton*
 Revd Christine Craven*
 Revd John Humphreys**

Panel for Assessment Conferences - CRCW Sub-Section

Mrs Daphne Beale, Revd Peter Loveitt, Kate McIlhagga, Vaughan Jones,
 Mrs Ann Sutcliffe.

together with a CRCW (to be appointed).

Nominations to Teaching Staff (Westminster College)

Convener: Mrs Elizabeth Jupp - 1993

Secretary: The Secretary of the Training Committee

Principal, Westminster College
Professor Graham Stanton

Dr Clyde Binfield
Revd Robert Way

Miss Ann Phillips

SUPPORT

Convener: Revd Dr David Cornick - 1996

Secretary: Executive Secretary, Ministries Department

Revd Hazel Addy
Mrs Fiona Woods
Mrs Dorothy Dean

Mrs Barbara Brettell
Mrs Doreen Courtney
Revd John Humphreys**

Mrs Margaret Tait
Revd Chris White

FAITH AND LIFE DEPARTMENT

Convener: Revd Dr Philip Morgan - 1995

Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP

Convener: Dr David Thompson - 1997

Secretary: Revd John Taylor - 1993

Revd Elizabeth Brown
Revd Betsy King
Dr Christof Schwoebel
Mr Bert Worrall
Revd David Fox

Revd Andy Newman
Revd Dale Rominger
Ms Janet Orchard
Professor Graham Stanton

Mr Tony Cheer**
Revd Susan Durber
Revd Margaret Nuttall
Dr Pat Cemlyn-Jones

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP

Convener: Revd Bill Mahood - 1993

Secretary: Mr Carew Satchwell - 1998**

Revd Tom Arthur
Revd Jim Wilkinson**
Miss Ruth Norton

Revd Harry Undy**
Revd Greta Morgan
Revd Marlene Schwoebel

Revd Jean Forster
Revd Fred Noden
(2 vacancies)

YOUTH

Convener: Mrs Ruth Clarke - 1995

Secretary: The Youth Secretary

Ms Rachel Burnham
Revd Martin Henninger
Revd Ian Ring
Miss Dot Thomson

Mrs Anthea Coates
Revd Graham Maskery
Mrs Barbara Robinson
(1 vacancy)

Revd Hilary Collinson
Mr Nick Raggett
Mr David Shapland

Members under 25:

Miss Debbie Allen
Miss Morna Bridgland*
Miss Rachael Cronin
Mr Ian Burroughs*

Miss Pamela Harvey
Mr Andrew Jackson
Mr Phil McGraa
Miss Melanie Smith

Mr David Downing
Mr Robert Marsden
Mr Paul Ashworth
Mr David Walter

CHILDREN'S WORK

Convener: Revd Stephen Thornton - 1998**
Secretary: Mrs Rosemary Johnston - 1998**

Mrs Gloria Turner
Revd Joan Grindrod

Mr Richard Johnson*
Mrs Patricia Hubbard

Revd Duncan Wilson
(2 vacancies)

together with the Master Pilot.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK TRAINING

Convener: Revd John Oldershaw - 1996
Secretary: National Youth & Children's Work Training Officer

Mrs Kate Breeze
Mrs Maureen Thompson*

Revd Ian Ring

Mr Doug Fletcher*

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

HEALTH AND HEALING

Convener: Revd Robin Hine - 1996
Secretary: Revd Jim Hollyman - 1998**

Mrs Connie Bunker
Dr Sarah Clark
Dr Allan Carswell
Revd Kate McIlhagga**

Dr Eileen Gorrod
Miss Ann MacFarlane
Mrs Mary Husk*

Revd Eglan Graham
Revd John Jenkinson
Revd Brian Coward*

WINDERMERE POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow - 1995
Secretary: The Director

Representatives of the Ministries, World Church and Mission, Church and Society and Finance Departments, Revd Wynn Young**, Revd Dr Stephen 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.

WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT

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

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK AT HOME

Convener: Revd Murdoch Mackenzie - 1996
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Revd Raymond Bade
Revd David Fox
Miss Christine Robertson
Revd Rudy Dixon**

Mr Desmond Curry
Revd Dorothy Spence
Revd Roger Whitehead

Mrs Claudette Binns**
Mrs Mary Hambly
Revd Patricia Wardle

together with the Adviser for Local Ecumenism.

MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK ABROAD

Convener: Revd Clabon Allen - 1997
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Revd Susan Armitage
Revd Paul Floe
Miss Felicity Harris
Revd Leonard Bhagwandin

Mrs Marlene Hunter**
Revd Vaughan Jones
Mr Peter Cruchley
Ms Alison Harvey

Revd Froukien Smit
Revd Philip Woods**
Mr Ernest Dale

MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS

Convener: Revd John Sutcliffe - 1995
Secretary: Revd Brenda Willis - 1998**

Miss Catherine Evans
Revd Malcolm Hanson
Revd Dr David Bowen

Revd Gillian Boorne
Revd John Proctor
Dr Jack Thompson

Mrs Joyce Killick
Miss Jose Robins

Consultant:- Revd Ron Lewis

The Revd Dr Clinton Bennett, Ms Janet Orchard are co-opted Members.

PERSONNEL

Convener: Revd Ray Adams - 1994
Secretary: The Personnel Secretary

Revd Nelson Bainbridge
Mrs Haro Horsfield
Miss Judy Rogers
Revd Bernard Collins**

Ms Bethan Galliers
Mr Kees Maxey
Revd Barrie Scopes*
Principal of St Andrew's Hall

Mrs Barbara Martin
Mr Arnold Senior
Revd Mia Kyte**

CHURCH AND SOCIETY DEPARTMENT

Convener: Professor Malcolm Johnson - 1996**
Associate Convener:
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

COMMITTEE

Appointment of members subject to Assembly resolution.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Convener: The Honorary Treasurer
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Convener: Revd Alasdair Walker - 1993
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Provincial Representatives

I Dr Peter Clarke
II Mr Reg Stelfox
III Mr Ray Holden
IV Mr Donald Lethem
V Mr Michael Harrison
VI Mr Harold Kempton

VII Mr Philip Wade
VIII Mr Geoff Lunt
IX Mr Jim Richardson
X Mr Ron Martin
XI Mr Bernard Edwards
XII Mr Alan 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 Jim Brown, Mr Eric Chilton and Mrs Jane Tomlin. The Revd Michael Hubbard represents the Provincial Moderators.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Convener: Mr Alistair Black - 1998*
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Mr Richard Cockcroft	Mr Robert Hardie	Revd Paul Bedford
Miss Helen Marson	Mr Eric Morgan	Mrs Irene Steele
Mr Ron Turner	Mrs Elizabeth Reeve**	

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

MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY

Convener: Mr Alistair Black - 1996
Secretary: Mr Alan Taylor - 1995

Provincial Representatives

I	Dr Peter Clarke	VII	Mr Philip Wade
II	Mr Ian Livingstone	VIII	Mr Malcolm Johnston
III	Revd Paul Pells	IX	Dr David Taylor
IV	Miss Margaret Atkinson	X	Mr David Mills
V	Mr Michael Harrison	XI	Mr David Buckland
VI	Mr Ron Webb	XII	Mr Spencer Harvey

together with the Convener of the Pensions Sub-Committee (Mr Victor Hugff), the Revd Peter Grimshaw and Roger Cornish and Mrs Jean Ogilvie, a representative of the Ministries Department and the Advocacy Secretary. Revd Bill Gathercole represents the Provincial Moderators.

WELFARE AND EMERGENCIES

Convener: Mr Ray Heritage - 1995
Secretary: Mrs Judy Stockings

Revd Tom Stiff	Revd Basil Bridge	Revd May Segain
Mrs Joyce Sutcliffe	Revd John Williamson	

RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING

Convener: Revd David Hannen
Secretary: Mr Bob Carruthers

Mr John Gilbey	Revd Fred Hill	Mr George Anderson
Revd Michael Hubbard	Mr Geoff Parkinson	Mrs Joan Parkinson
Mr Martin Ballard	Mr Bill Winter	Mrs Barbara Williams
Mr Brian Vaughan	Mr Brian Gould	

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

MISSION COUNCIL

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

Provincial Representatives:

The Moderator of each Province and:

- I - Revd Peter Poulter, Miss Janet Turner and Miss Sheila Fairbairn
- II - Revd Joan Grindrod, Revd Brian O'Neill and Mrs Elspeth Smith
- III - Revd Jean Forster, Revd Angus Duncan and Revd David Lawrence
- IV - Revd Elizabeth Caswell, Revd Duncan Wilson and Mrs Angela Hughes
- V - Revd Christopher White, Mrs Muriel Garrow and Mrs Maureen Buxton
- VI - Mrs Wilma Frew, Mrs Jennifer Shaffery and Revd Steve Sawyer
- VII - Revd Richard Church, Revd Sheila Maxey and Mr William McVey
- VIII - Revd Sandra Lloydlangston, Mrs Joan Trippier and Mr Ivan Andrews
- IX - Revd George Thomas, Mrs Christine Hardwick and Mr David Butler
- X - Mr Vernon Lane, Mrs Mary Stacy and Mrs Marlene Hunter
- XI - Mrs Christine Meekison, Revd Raymond Singh and Mrs Daryl Sinclair
- XII - Revd Nanette Head, Revd Henry Gordon and Revd David Morgan

together with the Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator, the Deputy General Secretary, the Clerk, the Legal Adviser, the Conveners of the five Departments, the Conveners of the Advocacy, Assembly Arrangements, Communication and Supplies and Nominations Committees.

NOMINATIONS

Convener:
Secretary: Revd Arnold Harrison - 1998**

Provincial Representatives

Appointment subject to Assembly resolution.
Together with the immediate past Moderator.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPLIES

Convener: Mr Chris Wright - 1996
Secretary: Secretary of Communication and Supplies

Mr David Brain	Mrs Yvonne Thomas*	Mrs Mirella Moxon*
Mr Doug Fletcher**	Revd Jim Gould**	Revd Ernest Rea
Revd Graham Spicer*	Revd Pete Moth**	Mr Alan Pinnell
Mrs Sue Brooks	Revd John Steele*	

EDITORIAL AND MANAGEMENT BOARD OF REFORM

Convener: Revd Brian Baker - 1993

Revd Martin Camroux**	Revd David Lawrence	Mr John Rawnsley
Revd Tom Evans**	Mrs Jean Silvan Evans	Mrs Helen Young

Youth Representative: Miss Sarah Houlton

ASSEMBLY PASTORAL REFERENCE

Convener: Revd Cyril Franks - 1995
Secretary: The General Secretary

Revd Nelson Bainbridge
 Mrs Sheila Pratt

Revd Daphne Hull
 Miss Ruth Archer

The Honorary Treasurer

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST

Convener: Mr Alan Cumming
Joint Secretaries: Mr Tony Lodde and Mr Ian Neilson

Mr Desmond Davies
 Revd Tony Burnham*
 Mr Robert Hardie
 Mr Harold Kempton
 Mr Ron Martin

Mr Bob Carruthers
 Mr Clem Frank
 Revd Gordon Hearne
 Mr Ron Masser
 Revd Richard Wiggins

Revd John Clague
 Mrs Janet Gilbert
 Mr Alistair Black
 Mr William McVey

ADVOCACY GROUP

Convener: Revd Julian Macro - 1996
Secretary: Revd Bill Wright - 1994

Provincial Representatives

I Revd Dr Elliott Massey
 II Revd Dr Lois Sundeen
 III Mrs Barbara Martins
 IV Mr Geoff Wood
 V Mr Michael Harrison
 VI Revd John Stanyon

VII Revd Victor Ridgewell
 VIII Mr Malcolm Johnston
 IX Dr Claire Shephard
 X Revd Robert Maitland
 XI Mr Archie Hamilton
 XII Dr Alun Jones

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ON OTHER BODIES

1. OTHER ASSEMBLIES

Church of Scotland

The Moderator (Mrs Ruth Clarke*)
 The Moderator's Chaplain (Revd Paul Quilter*)
 Mr William McKay*

Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The Moderator (Mrs Ruth Clarke*)
 Revd Martin Manley*

Congregational Union of Scotland

Revd David Jenkins*

Congregational Federation

Revd Tony Burnham*

Union of Welsh Independents

Revd Tom Owen*

Presbyterian Church of Wales

Revd David Fox*

Methodist Conference

Revd Peter Poulter

Moravian Church Provincial Synod

Revd Paul Quilter*

Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana

Mrs Susan Duah*

Presbyterian Church of Korea

Rt Revd Malcolm Hanson*

Presbyterian Church in the
 Republic of Korea

Rt Revd Malcolm Hanson*

Reformed Church of France

Revd Tony Coates*

Waldensian Church

Revd John Bremner*

Evangelical Church of the Union, Germany

Mrs Ruth Clarke*

European Protestant Assembly

Mrs Ruth Clarke*

Conference of European Churches

Revd Tony Burnham*

Mrs Ruth Clarke*

2. CHURCH BODIES

Churches Together in England - Forum

Revd David Helyar	Mrs Sheila Brain	Revd Roderick Hewitt
Ms Rachel Burnham	Revd John Johansen-Berg	Mr David Butler
Revd Richard Mortimer	Mrs Fran Kissack	Revd Peter Poulter
Mrs Carol Rogers	Revd Barbara Gates*	Revd Elizabeth Welch

Churches Together in England - Steering Group

Revd Peter Poulter

Council of Churches for Britain & Ireland - Assembly

Revd Martin Cressey	Ms Rachel Burnham	Revd John Humphreys
Revd Greta Morgan	Mr David Butler	Revd Murdoch Mackenzie
Revd Peter Poulter	Dr Mary Ede	Revd Dr Peter Arthur
Mrs Mary Marsden	Revd Tony Burnham**	Revd Elizabeth Welch

Council of Churches for Britain & Ireland - Church Representatives Meeting

Revd Tony Burnham**	Dr Mary Ede
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Womens' Inter-Church Council: Revd Rowena Francis* and Mrs Ruth Clarke*

Action of Churches Together in Scotland:

Miss Isobel Kidd	Revd Dr Peter Arthur
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CYTUN:	Assembly	The Provincial Moderator, Mrs Kirsty Lehnert, Ecumenical Officer, Miss Mary Jones, Revd Peter Trow
	Council	The Provincial Moderator, Synod Clerk, Revd Michael Gudgeon
	Steering Committee:	The Ecumenical Officer

Free Church Federal Council:	Revd Peter Beaman, Norman Healey and Eric Wollaston and Mrs Elizabeth Terry (2 vacancies)
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Chaplaincy Board:	Revd Peter Beaman, Brian Holroyd and Raymond Royston-Bishop
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Education Committee:	Dr Mary Ede and Mrs Joan Oakley, (Mr Michael Harrison and Revd Aubrey Lewis, Dr Stephen Orchard and John Sutcliffe also serve as co-opted members)
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Joint Education Committee:	Dr Mary Ede
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Women's Council:	Mrs Ruth Clarke
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Methodist/URC Liaison Committee:	Revd Susan Henderson**, Michael Hubbard, Peter Poulter Val Reed**, Mrs Betty Vickerton** and Mr David Butler**
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3. OTHER COMMITTEES AND NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Aged and Infirm Ministers Fund:	Revd Kenneth French, Robert Richards and Geoffrey Satchell and Mr Laurence Macro (Honorary Treasurer)
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Cambridge Federation Examination in Theology Committee of Management:	Revd Michael Dunford
Christian Education Movement Council:	Revd Terry Oakley
Churches Community Work Alliance:	Revd Tony Addy (Trustee), Revd Vaughan Jones (Management Committee)

Churches' Main Committee:	Mr Clem Frank, Mr Hartley Oldham, Mr Bill Nutley
Congregational Fund Board:	Revd Cyril Grant, Dorothy Havergal-Shaw, Douglas Smith, John Taylor and Geoffrey Satchell

Joint Liturgical Group:	Revd Susan Durber, Dr Colin Thompson
Methodist Faith and Order Committee:	Revd Kim Fabricius
National Christian Education Council:	Revd Keith Forecast, Terry Oakley
National Council of Voluntary Organisations:	Revd Peter Brain
National Ecumenical Agency for Further Education:	Revd Michael Diffey, Kevin Swaine
Scottish World Day of Prayer:	Mrs Molly Glen
Society for the Ministry of Women in the Church:	(vacancy)
United Navy, Army and Air Force Board:	Revd Michael Diffey, Dennis Friend, John Paull, Philip Schofield, Tony Burnham
United Reformed Church History Society:	Mrs K Davies, Revd Peter Jupp, Mrs Carol Rogers, Revd Eric Wollaston (Dr David Thompson also serves)
Wharton Trust:	Mrs B Taylor
Widows' Fund of the Three Denominations:	Revd Kenneth French, Robert Richards and Geoffrey Satchell and Mr Laurence Macro
Women's World Day of Prayer:	Mrs Ruth Bowyer

4. COLLEGE AND SCHOOL GOVERNORS AND COUNCILS

Aberystwyth (Memorial College):	Revd Dr Glyndwr Harris Leslie Jones
Bala-Bangor:	Mr John Rhys
Bishops Stortford College:	Mrs Margaret McKay
Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges:	Convener and Secretary, Training Committee
Caterham School, Board of Governors:	Revd David Helyar and David Flynn*
Cheshunt Foundation:	Mr Desmond Davies, Revd Michael Dunford
Northern College:	Revd Dr David Cornick, Michael Dunford, David Jenkins and Mr Roy Smith
Eltham College/Walthamstow Hall:	Miss Marjorie Moyce (to Sept 1992), Mrs Jean Garwood (from Sept 1992**)
Homerton College Trustees:	Mrs Joan Boulind, Mr John Chaplin, Revd Principal Martin Cressey, Bill Gathercole, Mr John Hall
Mansfield College, Trustees:	Miss Ann Phillips, Dr David Thompson Revd Michael Dunford (to 31.8.92), Dr Lesley Husselbee (from 1.9.92**), Peter Jupp and Tony Tucker and Mr Peter Spicer
Milton Mount Foundation, Governors:	Miss Margaret Canning, Mrs Ruth Clarke, Mrs Gwen Hall, Revd Peter Grimshaw, Revd Aubrey Lewis
Queen's College, Birmingham:	Revd Michael Dunford
St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak:	Revd Ray Adams, Miss Sheila Rudofsky, Miss Betty Vickerton, Revd Michael Diffey
Silcoates School, Governor:	Dr Clyde Binfield
Taunton School:	Revd Michael Hubbard
Tettenhall College, Governors:	Dr William Blakeley, Mr Roddy McKenzie, Mr R J Whild, Mrs Doris Margetts
Wentworth Milton Mount, Governor:	Revd Eric Lord
Westhill College Foundation Governor:	Dr Richard Jurd
Westhill College Foundation Trustees:	Mr J E Payne, Professor Robert Steel and Revd Eric Lord

5. COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

Mrs Marlene Hunter	Revd Tony Coates
Revd Mia Kyte	Revd Clabon Allen

6. CONGREGATIONAL MEMORIAL HALL TRUST

Mr Fred Brooman
Revd Maurice Husselbee
Revd Geoffrey Satchell
Revd John Taylor

Mr Alan Cumming
Mr Fred Lodde
Revd David Hannen
Revd Peter Grimshaw

Dr Philip Morgan
Mr Robert Hardie
Mr Arthur Smith
Mr Hartley Oldham

7. NEW COLLEGE LONDON FOUNDATION TRUSTEES

Mr J C Smethers

Revd Dr Robert Latham

Revd John Pugh

REPRESENTATIVES APPOINTED BY DEPARTMENTS

MULTI-LATERAL CHURCH CONVERSATION IN SCOTLAND:

Revd Raymond Bade
Revd James Breslin
Revd John Paull

METHODIST COMMITTEE FOR LOCAL ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENT: The adviser for Local Ecumenism at present:

Revd Peter Poulter

OTHER COMMITTEES AND NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

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

Mrs Carol Rogers
Revd Tony Burnham
Mr G R Barr
Revd Joan Peters
Revd Kevin Swaine
Revd Michael Diffey
Revd Robin Hine
Mrs Connie Bunker
Revd Michael Playdon
Mrs Carol Rogers

Churches' Commission on Overseas Students:
Churches' Consortium on Industrial Mission:
Churches' Council for Health & Healing:

Revd John Parry
Revd Michael Rees
Mr Paul Franklin
Revd Peter Jupp
Revd Gillian Bobbett
Revd Terry Oakley
Mrs Carol Rogers
Mr Paul Franklin
Mr D Marshall-Jones

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

Funerals, Cremations & Crematoria:
Guides' Religious Advisory Panel:
International Bible Reading Association:
Media Awareness Project:
Scout & Guide Fellowship (URC):
Scouts' Religious Advisory Group:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Convener: The Moderator of Assembly

Secretary: The General Secretary

1. The Committee has met three times since the last Assembly, the attendance being 59, 58 and 61. The minutes are available for inspection and this report is a summary of the major items dealt with by the Committee.

2. **Moderator's Year.** It was agreed that the period of office of Mrs Ruth Clarke should begin with a special service at Dulwich on 10 May 1992 and conclude at the General Assembly at Portsmouth in July 1993, thus establishing the new pattern of July to July.

3. **Treasurer.** The Committee received the resignation of Mr Angus Grimmond as Treasurer of the Church and expressed the appreciation of the Church for his services so freely given. As an interim measure Mr Fred Brooman, CB, was asked to serve until a new appointment could be made, and this arrangement proved most acceptable. The nominating process then led to the appointment by the Executive of Mr Alistair Black, who took up office on 1st January 1992. Mr Black comes to the work with long commercial experience, with much involvement in his local church and with a family background in the world mission of the church.

4. **Moderator's Journeys.** The Moderator kept the Executive informed of his journeys and major engagements. He also shared his plans for a musical celebration in London in January and for reflection on the life and witness of the Korean Church.

5. **Limitation regarding appointments.** In relation to the appointment of a Secretary of the Ministries Department the Executive discussed whether applications might be considered from persons outside the URC. It was agreed:

That candidates for this post should, in the first instance, be sought from the membership of the URC.

It was further agreed "that the Nominations Committee should review a range of senior posts to see whether similar restrictions should apply."

6. **Director, Windermere Centre.** The Executive was asked by the Faith and Life Department to clarify the Assembly 1984 resolution, "to proceed to the early appointment of a minister as Director," asking whether this binds the Church to appoint a minister in future. The Executive approved the interpretation that the 1984 resolution applied only to that initial appointment, so that future appointments could be open to lay people as well as to ministers.

7. **Ministers' Pension Fund.** On the advice of the Finance Department the Executive passed the following resolution:

The Assembly Executive, acting on behalf of the Assembly, agrees that with effect from 1st July 1991 the Employer's contribution to the United Reformed Church Pension Fund shall be increased by 1.55% to 10.65% of basic stipend.

8. **Provincial Moderator Review Groups.** The Executive received reports as follows:

Eastern Province Review Group : to re-appoint the Revd W Gathercole for a further term of five years.

Wessex Province Review Group : to re-appoint the Revd Nelson Bainbridge for a further term of five years.

West Midlands Province Review Group : to re-appoint the Revd John Waller for a further period of five years.

North Western Province Review Group : to appoint the Revd Keith Forecast for a period of seven years.

Resolutions 2 to 5

9. **Appeals - Ministries Department.** The Department sought the advice of the Executive in dealing with the appeals of two candidates for stipendiary ministry against decisions reached by their District Councils. It was agreed that a Commission of Assembly, consisting of the Revd Janet Sowerbutts, Mrs Connie Winter and Mr Michael Harrison, act in this matter, to decide whether either candidate should proceed to the national assessment conference without District Council commendation. The Commission duly considered both cases and decided that both be allowed to proceed, without making any judgement on fitness for ministry or on the work done earlier by District Councils and Synods. The Executive also noted that the Department would be considering an alternative procedure for appeals regarding candidating, since the rules for appeals in the Manual have been found inappropriate in these circumstances.

10. **AIDS Adviser.** The Committee approved the proposal of the Church and Society Department that a new appointment in succession to the Revd Martin Hazell be made. Following the nominating process the Executive approved the appointment of the Revd Hazel Addy for a period of five years (non-renewable) from 1st September 1992.

11. **Housing Association.** The Executive approved the following resolution presented by the Church and Society Department:

"Executive Committee notes the report of the URC Housing Association; expresses its warmest appreciation of the work done by the Society since 1972 and by its predecessor; and welcomes the decision to merge with the English Churches Housing Group."

12. **Membership of District Councils and Synods.** Following the 1991 Assembly the Executive was required to discuss possible amendments to the current membership of District Councils as it is set down in 2 (3) (d) of the Structure. The matter was discussed at all three meetings and a letter of enquiry was sent to all District Council Secretaries and Synod Clerks to solicit views on the possible changes. It became apparent that the majority view in the country and in the Executive is to enable a range of membership options to lie with each Synod, since no single scale of representation now meets the needs of every locality. The proposed amendment to the Structure is set down in the Resolution, and the Executive recommends this to the Assembly. A further proposal for amendment is offered regarding Synod membership where the figures for representation at 2 (4) (c) are now unrealistic.

Resolution 6

13. **Plan for Partnership.** The Finance Department presented revisions to the plan. These were mainly concerned with the inclusion of CRCW's and the changes in stipend with regard to heat and light costs. There were also variations in particular allowances which are stated in cash terms instead of percentages of stipend; Resettlement grant, for example, being set at £2,000. The Executive approved these amendments, and the revised Plan is printed as an appendix to the Department Report.

14. **Deputy General Secretary.** The Executive, on the advice of the Assembly Moderator's Advisory Committee, appointed the Revd Terry Oakley as Deputy General Secretary from 1 June 1992 for so long as he serves in his present post.

15. **Certificate of Eligibility.** On the advice of the Ministries Department, a Certificate of Eligibility was issued to the Revd Geoffrey Ward and the Revd S Stewart Heaney.

16. **Chair of Church History, Westminster College.** On the advice of the Ministries Department the Revd Dr David Cornick was appointed to the Chair of Church History at Westminster College for seven years from 1 September 1992 on the understanding that he is also appointed as Director of the Cheshunt Foundation and that the Cheshunt Governors are making this joint post possible through the payment of stipend and expenses.

17. **Ecclesiastical Exemption.** The Executive Committee considered proposed changes in the regulations of the Department of the Environment regarding Ecclesiastical Exemption from Listed Building control. The new regulations provide that those churches which have regulating authorities working in a prescribed manner will continue to have exemption but those that do not will fall under the public authorities for all external alterations.

The Executive decided:

That the URC does not intend as a denomination to create a system for controlling works to historic church buildings, to a standard required by the Department of the Environment, but urges Provincial Synods to apply for registration as regulating authorities and to co-operate with each other as they work on this matter.

18. **Charities Bill.** The Executive considered the Charities Bill, which is before Parliament, with particular concern for the accounting procedures which will be required for all charities. It was agreed:

- that the URC should not set up a central registration for local church accounts,
- that the Financial Management Committee should continue to review the situation, in co-operation with the Churches Main Committee, and report any developments,
- and that information be circulated to all churches only when there is a clear requirement in law which affects them.

19. **Hong Kong.** The Executive heard from the World Church and Mission Department of the church response in Hong Kong to the first democratic elections to the Legislative Assembly. The following resolution was agreed:

Assembly Executive re-affirms the commitment of the United Reformed Church to the welfare of all the citizens of Hong Kong made in the Assembly resolutions of 1989 and in particular urges HMG to move more quickly to promote a genuinely democratic climate in Hong Kong and towards the introduction of a directly elected government in the colony.

This resolution was sent to the leaders of the main political parties, to CWM and to the World Service of the BBC.

20. **Samoa.** The Executive heard from the Revd Richard Hambly of the great destruction caused by a recent hurricane which occurred when he was there, and joined in prayer for the people as they undertake replanting and rebuilding.

21. **Directors of Trusts.** The Committee approved numerous appointments to Provincial Trust Bodies on the recommendation of Synods and approved the appointment of Mr Alistair Black and the Revd A G Burnham as Directors of the URC Trust.

22. **Committee Membership.** The Committee received reports from the Nominations Committee at each of its meetings and approved appointments to fill immediate vacancies.

23. **Mission Council.** In 1991 the Assembly gave approval to the outline scheme to change the central church organisation. This involves both the change from the Executive to the Mission Council and the consequent developments within Departments and other standing committees of Assembly. This has been the major item on the agenda of the Executive at each of its meetings, as preparations have gone forward to implement the proposals at the 1992 Assembly. The following paper provides the scheme as now offered to the Assembly for immediate implementation.

The Assembly's Mission Council and Related Matters

1. The Mission Council - its composition

The Assembly in 1991 accepted the view that the composition should remain that laid down for the present Executive Committee. However, there are some questions which needed further thought.

1.1 The present membership is as follows:

Moderator, Moderator-elect, Immediate past-Moderator	3
General Secretary/Clerk	1
Deputy General Secretary, Legal Adviser	2
Departmental Conveners and Secretaries	10
Conveners of Business, Nominations, Advocacy, Forward Policy Group, Communications	5
Secretaries of Business, Nominations	2
Synod Representatives	48
	<u>71</u>
	==

This listing is subject to amendment as detailed later in this paper.

1.2 We have considered the position of staff members. We propose that Departmental Secretaries should participate fully in meetings of the Mission Council, with freedom to speak on any subject, but should not have a vote. This is because they are the appointed staff of the Assembly and not members of the Assembly. With regard to other executive staff members we propose that they should attend when the appropriate convener and General Secretary consider it right to do so. Staff members will have the costs of their attendance charged to the appropriate Departmental budget.

1.3 As it is important that every Synod is fully represented, alternates may be appointed when a member cannot attend a meeting.

1.4 We have discussed the possible need to co-opt persons with particular skills or representing particular categories. We advise that this be left to the Mission Council itself to decide.

1.5 It is possible that the Mission Council will be helped to have in its membership persons representing other churches, as the Assembly and the Synods have. We suggest that this also be left to the Mission Council to decide. It may be that a representative of an ecumenical council might be co-opted as a member or that a person representing another church be invited for two or three years at a time.

1.6 Synod representatives. It was noted that the Church is seeking people with a deep commitment to do a major piece of work. They will come with wide experience in many fields but will have much common ground in their commitment to the URC and to its calling in the service of the gospel. One Synod has requested examination of the dating of the Mission Council, since people available depend in part on the time of the meeting and the Mission Council will examine whether a move to weekend meetings might be preferable. It is also suggested that a variety of locations be sought for future meetings. (See also 3.1)

1.7 The membership of the Mission Council from September, 1992, taking into account the changes proposed in this paper, will be as follows:

Moderator, Moderator-elect, Immediate past-Moderator	3
General Secretary, Clerk	2
Deputy General Secretary, Legal Adviser	2
Conveners of Finance, Ministries, Faith and Life, World Church and Mission, Church and Society	5
Conveners of Nominations, Communications, Assembly Arrangements, Advocacy	4
Synod Representatives including Provincial Moderators	48
Non-voting members: Secretaries of Finance, Ministries, World Church and Mission, Church and Society, Nominations	5
(Secretary of Faith and Life listed as Deputy General Secretary)	69
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Together with the Minute Secretary and other members of the Assembly staff in attendance.
The names of the Synod Representatives are listed in the Nominations Committee report.

2. The Work of the Mission Council

2.1 The purpose of the Mission Council is to enable the Church, in its General Assembly, to take a more comprehensive view of the activity and the policy of the Church, to decide more carefully about priorities and to encourage the outreach of the Church to the community. Its service is directly towards the Assembly, but its concern is with the whole church and all its members, so it will seek to be aware of the pains and joys, the adventures and hopes of the whole body. As the Assembly is representative of the whole Church, so the Mission Council will listen to and will serve the local churches, to help them in their missionary vocation. It is a Mission Council and so the aim it will have in mind is to ensure that all we undertake centrally and all we are as a denomination is directed towards the mission of God in the world, towards that Kingdom of justice, peace, forgiveness and hope which is true life and which Christ brings in his person. The Council will ask, Is this programme, this appointment, this budget, this grant, this statement designed to further the overall mission, or simply to maintain our human structures of institutional life? It is by such criteria that priorities will have to be assessed, not only when new work is proposed but as the existing work of the Church is reviewed.

2.2 In future all the Departments and Standing Committees will be reporting to the Mission Council and through it to the General Assembly. But the Council will not require the detailed minutes of all committees, for this would be far too great a load of detail. At its first meeting members will need an introduction to the work undertaken by Departments and Standing Committees; thereafter a brief report in headline form should become the standard practice. There will also be briefing papers when a Department or Standing Committee wishes to introduce a new piece of work or report on a critical situation. As the secretary of the Mission Council, the General Secretary will co-ordinate the flow of papers coming before it.

2.3 The Council is not meeting only to conduct formal business. It is also to listen to the word of God, to pray and to provide the opportunity to meet each other as persons with needs and skills. The timetable will therefore provide adequate time for worship and reflection and will include prayers that arise from the work it is doing. AMAC advises that the Council should have in all its meetings one, or preferably two people who can stand aside from the debate and then reflect on the process in the light of the word of God, so providing a more objective theological critique of the discussion. This may well be the opportunity to invite persons from other Christian traditions or other countries to help us.

2.4 We regard it as essential that the Provincial Synods should be enabled to have adequate time to present their concerns to the Mission Council and to the General Assembly. The first duty of the General Assembly is "to oversee the total work of the church" and not only that work which is undertaken nationally. The Mission Council, therefore, will need to be aware of matters which are of great concern to the Synods.

2.5 Members of the URC are very conscious of the ecumenical context in which they live and witness. This will affect every meeting of the Mission Council. Items will come into the agenda from the ecumenical councils and common work will be reported. The Council will seek to implement the principles of good practice commended in the document "Working Together in the new Ecumenical Instruments", so that there is always an investigation of possible joint action before any new programme is instituted. It should also prove possible to invite ecumenical guests from time to time so that common hopes and problems may be shared.

2.6 In its agenda the Mission Council will expect to have the following elements:

- Receiving information, from Departments, Committees, Provinces, and elsewhere, largely through brief preparatory papers and partly through news shared at the meeting.
- Receiving new ideas and visions, both from the members and from people who are invited to share their particular experience.
- Reflection and prayer in the light of the gospel.
- Discussion of major issues for the future of the church.
- Reaching decisions or recommendations for Assembly.

The agenda for each meeting will be shaped according to the circumstances but can be expected to include these elements.

2.7 Voting. We consider it is important that as often as possible the Mission Council reaches its decisions by consensus. There will be occasions when a vote is necessary. If a vote is evenly balanced that is an indication that the Council has not reached a mind and probably should not act, but seek a further discussion after more thought. If it is necessary to move into the General Assembly on a very divided vote then the voting figures should be reported.

2.8 Style of reporting to Assembly. It will often be helpful for the Mission Council to inform the Assembly of the various options, while expressing a preference for one of them. This enables a variety of views to be heard and respected while helping the Assembly towards a decision. Members of the Mission Council will not be bound to support a Council recommendation to the Assembly. The Council may do well to ask one of its members who happens to be in a minority on an issue to speak to the minority view in the Assembly.

2.9 We would encourage members of the Mission Council to take a close interest in one particular facet of the work of the church. For example members might wish to specialise on the ministry of healing or world development or the Decade of Evangelism. Through meeting with those who currently deal with the special concern, through reading and visiting, the individuals would become a valuable aid to both the Council and its staff members.

3. Mission Council and General Assembly

3.1 There will be considerable overlap of membership, with some 30 persons by office on both bodies. Provincial Synods, as they appoint their Mission Council representatives, have kept in mind representation on General Assembly, so that there is some additional overlap. This should enable the Mission Council to be sensitive to the wishes and insights of the Assembly.

3.2 The following timetable is suggested when the Assembly is in early July, and will need to be adapted year to year. For the years '92, '93, and '94 the July date is fixed, but Assembly has not decided the dating beyond that.

Departmental and Committee meetings to prepare reports and recommendations	Up to the 3rd week of February
Provincial Synods	Not later than the 2nd Saturday of March
Mission Council	March
Reports to printer	First week of April
Reports distributed to churches	First week of May
Assembly	Early July
Mission Council	Late September/Early October

This timetable would have two benefits. The work which Provincial Synods wish to bring to the Assembly can be included in the book of Reports. The Reports can be in the hands of the churches two months before the Assembly so as to encourage local participation and involvement and prayerful support. The Mission Council will have a third, one-day, meeting during the year, and this could be either in January or in May. Both dates have advantages. For its first year the Mission Council will meet on the following dates -

6/7/8 October 1992
 Thursday, January 7, 1993 11.30 - 4.30
 2/3/4 March 1993

3.3 Report to Assembly. This will take a new format from 1993. We anticipate that the main sections will be:

1. The main report of the Mission Council itself, dealing with broad themes. Responsibility for presenting it to the Assembly will be with the immediate past Moderator and the General Secretary.

2. Reports on the work of the past year by the Departments and Standing Committees. These would not be spoken to by presenters. They would be open to question and comment from the floor, the Conveners would answer questions.
3. Issues from Provincial Synods, with recommendations.
4. Papers on special issues about which decisions or major discussions are necessary. These would be introduced by the appropriate Convener and resolutions moved.
5. Appendices will include Accounts and Committee lists.

3.4 **Communicating.** It is notoriously difficult to effect good communication with every local church, but that link is essential if the work of the Assembly is both to sustain the local witness and to represent the local community. Through the Communications Section it is proposed to provide appropriate material to every local church after each meeting of the Mission Council, giving in headline form the main work undertaken. The post-Assembly Hotline publication should be continued as a very rapid means of sharing the experience and decisions, but the number of copies sent to each church should be reviewed. Consideration will be given to a pre-Assembly poster which will alert members to the main issues and seek wider involvement and prayerful support.

We anticipate that the Minutes of the Mission Council will be sent to all District Council Secretaries and Synod Clerks, but the bare minutes may not be sufficient; some background to the decisions may be required. The Provinces are asked to consider how best their Mission Council members may bring forward provincial concerns and encourage discussion in District Councils and local churches. Any church member who wishes to see the minutes of the Mission Council should be directed to the secretary of the District Council.

3.5 The Mission Council will plan the main features of each Assembly so that major issues are given adequate time and there are opportunities for speakers from sister churches or ecumenical bodies (See also 6.2).

4. **Mission Council Advisory Group**

4.1 Consideration has been given to the method by which the agenda and the meetings of the Mission Council will be planned. At present the Executive Committee has a small advisory group called the Assembly Moderator's Advisory Committee, which could act as the planning group. But the membership would need to be varied so that there is a broader range of view. At the same time there is no intention to create an executive committee of the Mission Council; care therefore has to be taken of the terms of reference.

4.2 It is therefore proposed that, in place of the present AMAC, there be a Mission Council Advisory Group, with the following membership:-

The Moderator, Immediate Past Moderator, Moderator-elect,
Departmental Conveners,
Four members of the Mission Council, elected by the Mission
Council and serving on a four year rotation.
The General Secretary (A total of 13)

4.3 The remit of this group will be:

The planning of the meetings of the Mission Council, the timetable,
themes and speakers.

The follow-up after meetings to ensure that work is taken forward in
appropriate ways.

To give the Moderator and General Secretary personal support and advice,
particularly as they face new challenges and opportunities.

4.4 The General Secretary will service the group, which is likely to meet two or three times a year.

5. **Mission Council and the Departments**

5.1 We recommend that as far as possible we drop the word 'Departments' which is always a word denoting the separateness of the activity. We recommend that we refer to the Secretary for Faith and Life, the Convener of Church and Society, etc., without the additional word. This may not always be practical but would start us off along the right road.

5.2 Fresh responsibility will rest on Conveners who will be the main spokespersons for the programmes and services to the Mission Council. They will, with the Secretaries, be the focal point for the range of concerns in their area. It is recommended that since Conveners will carry considerable burdens, those appointed from the Assembly of 1992 should be invited to serve for 4 years (in place of the present 6) with a two year extension if requested by the Mission Council. It is also recommended that favourable consideration be given to arrangements by which the load of engagements on the Convener may be shared, probably by appointing an Associate Convener through the normal nomination procedures. The Secretaries will continue to be the budget holders, with responsibility for seeking permission for any expenditure beyond the budget approved by Assembly.

5.3 The ending of the present departmental committees represents a saving in costs. The Mission Council, with two residential meetings, involves an increase in costs. The net increase is estimated at between £3,000 and £4,000 p.a.

5.4 A major element in the new pattern is to discontinue the Central Committees of the Departments, since the reporting by all the specialist committees will now be done to the Mission Council. As a consequence of this, all the present Departments have been examining their way of working. Their proposals have been monitored by the Executive; they seek effectiveness and economy of operation while retaining contact with concerned people throughout the URC. The plans are summarised as follows:

Finance - Committee structure was revised two years ago and continues in its present form.

Ministries - To continue the Vocations, Training and Support Committees, with a regular meeting of their conveners and secretaries and occasional consultations with Provincial groups concerned with ministry matters.

Faith and Life - To continue the present committees for Doctrine and Worship, Christian Education and Stewardship, Youth, Health and Healing, Windermere Policy and Planning, Children's Work and Youth and Children's Work Training. To gather the conveners and secretaries from time to time to co-ordinate the work and to hold consultations on particular aspects with appropriate people in Districts and Provinces.

World Church and Mission - To continue the committees for Missionary and Ecumenical Work Abroad, Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home, Mission and Other Faiths, Personnel. To gather the conveners and secretaries as a co-ordinating group, and to hold wider consultation at intervals.

Church and Society - To form a new Church and Society Committee with the following initial membership: Convener, Associate Convener, Secretary, link-person with FURY, link-person with CCBI, one person from JPIC Monitoring Group, one person from any other working party, the national AIDS adviser, with up to five others appointed through the normal nominating process to provide that within the total there are a member of the former Central Committee, two members of the Mission Council and three people with specialised skills or experience. (Maximum 13). To hold an annual gathering for concerned people from all parts of the church.

Communications and Supplies - To continue the existing committee.

6. Other Committees

6.1 Nominations Committee.

The work of this committee can be viewed as follows:

- A The nomination of persons to serve on the many specialist committees of the national church.
- B The nomination of the Conveners and Secretaries of committees
- C The nomination of URC representatives on other bodies
- D The process towards the appointment of senior staff.

We recommend that these tasks be taken forward in the following ways:

- A. It is proposed that in the formation of the specialist standing Committees of Assembly the District Councils and Synods will be the main source of names. The Nominations Committee Secretary will, at least once each year, list forthcoming vacancies on all standing Committees and will send this to District Council Secretaries, Provincial Moderators and Synod Clerks. The response forms will provide name, address, and relevant experience or skills for each person suggested and will be required by a specified date so that the new appointments to Standing Committees may be made once a year for approval by the Assembly. It will not be necessary to regard this as a matter which the District Council or Synod needs to deal with in plenary session. It is more likely that a small group will prepare the suggestions. Conveners and Secretaries of standing committees will be given the opportunity to comment on names from the point of view of special areas of experience needed. The Nominations Committee will then list proposals which will be made available for the Mission Council which would forward them to the Assembly. It is not intended that the District Council and Synod listings will be the only source of names, for members of the Committee will also bring suggestions.
- B, C continue as at present.
- D needs special consideration. The gap in current procedures is that the church as a whole does not discuss whether a post should be continued but only approves a nominee. We therefore recommend that when an Assembly appointee is retiring, resigning or coming to the end of a fixed term, the first discussion should be about the post and this can be done well in advance of the vacancy. Should the post continue; if so, should there be any variation in

the job description? When the Mission Council has come to a mind about that, the question of the person should be considered. This procedure should be followed with all new appointments but is not to vary existing terms of appointment. It is proposed that the first part of this process, the consideration of the post, be undertaken by three persons not currently officers of standing committees, appointed by the Mission Council, reporting to the Mission Council, serviced by the General Secretary. Once the post is approved the Appointment Group would be set up as now and reporting as at present.

Note: In all the work of nominating persons to serve, the Nominations Committee will continue present policy of seeking to maintain a good balance between lay/ordained, women/men, geographical spread and the range of ages.

Composition: From 1992 we recommend that the Nominations Committee consist of:

A Convener

A Secretary

The Immediate Past Moderator of Assembly.

12 persons appointed by the Provincial Synods

It is stressed that these persons do not need to be officers of the Synod, but people of broad experience who can be in easy contact with the Moderator and Synod Clerk about possible appointments.

This represents a substantial reduction from the present committee.

6.2 Business Committee.

It is evident that with the creation of the Mission Council, with its large responsibility for the presentation of material to the Assembly, the tasks of the Business Committee will be radically changed. We recommend that it is concluded and its work undertaken as follows:

- A. The work of planning and budgeting for future Assemblies to be the task of the Assembly Arrangements Committee which will consist of:

A convener appointed by the Mission Council.

The Moderator-elect

One person from the local planning group or

Province where the next Assembly is to be held

One person from the equivalent group in the Province

where the succeeding Assembly is to be held

One person from the local planning group which dealt with the last Assembly

The General Secretary

The Clerk

The Office and Personnel Manager as Secretary

This group would call on the help of the Finance Office, the Communications Section and such other specialists as they require.

- B. The work of revising Standing Orders, advising on the wording of resolutions and similar matters will be in the hands of the Clerk, who may advise the Assembly, the Mission Council, the Synods or the staff.
- C. The work of planning the timetable for the Assembly immediately ahead will be for the Mission Council. The detailed work on this will be undertaken by the General Secretary, the Moderator-elect and the Office and Personnel Manager, but it will be important for the Mission Council

to decide what will be the main themes and presentations. During the General Assembly meeting the officers of the Assembly will deal with variations of the programme as they become necessary. The Assembly Arrangements Committee will be responsible for ensuring that timekeepers and tellers are available at each business session.

6.3 Advocacy Committee. Since this Committee and its Secretary were appointed for a period of five years (1989-94), we recommend that this runs its course. In the fourth year we request the Convener and the Secretary of Faith and Life to discuss with the Advocacy Committee whether the concern to advocate and expound the responsibility of all our people for the welfare of the whole church may be carried forward by revising the remit of one of their committees.

6.4 Forward Policy Group. As the Mission Council will have the task of looking in a comprehensive way at future policy, we recommend that the FPG cease its work at the 1992 Assembly, with thanks for the stimulus it has provided in this whole process of planning. The Mission Council will be free to commission particular pieces of research as the need arises.

6.5 Advisory Group on Grants and Loans. In order to help local churches to apply for financial help to the appropriate fund, and to ensure that the use of central funds is directed by our mission aims, it is suggested that there be an Advisory Group with the remit:

To advise the Mission Council and the specialised Committees of Assembly on grants and loans from central funds in support of local ministry or projects which are designed to develop the outreach of the Church and which are applied for by a Provincial Synod or by a local church or District Council with Synod approval.

The Group will have within its consideration:

New Enterprise in Mission UK
Mission Expenses in UK
Ministry in Ecumenical Situations
Industrial Evangelism Fund
Church Buildings Fund.

The membership of the Group will be:

One person appointed by each of Finance, World Church and Mission, Ministries, Faith and Life, Church and Society.
The General Secretary as Convener
A Secretary of the Group appointed by the Mission Council.

Guidelines suggested for this work:

- i. AGOGAL will seek to support and encourage witness and service particularly in those areas which the Mission Council decides are the priorities for the Church.
- ii. Initial grants may be spread over a period of not more than five years, with a review process to be completed before an extension is agreed. Loans may be repaid over a longer period.
- iii. Existing budget holders will continue to have responsibility for funds as at present. AGOGAL will advise them on the use of these funds. Its advice will also be available to the Mission Council.
- iv. The distinctive purposes of the five budget heads mentioned will be retained for the time being so that the Assembly may decide if greater emphasis should be given to one or the other.

The Mission Council will need to review these guidelines from time to time to ensure that mission priorities are being supported.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 The Assembly re-appoints the Revd W K Gathercole, MA, BD, as Moderator of the Eastern Province Synod for a period of five years from 1 September 1992.
- 3 The Assembly re-appoints the Revd N W Bainbridge, MA, as Moderator of the Wessex Province Synod for a period of five years from 1 September 1992.
- 4 The Assembly re-appoints the Revd J D Waller, MA, BA, FCA, as Moderator of the West Midlands Province Synod for a period of five years from 1 September 1992.
- 5 The Assembly appoints the Revd C K Forecast, MA, as Moderator of the North Western Province Synod for a period of seven years from 1 September 1992.
- 6 The Assembly gives first approval to the following amendments to the URC Structure.
 - 6.1 2 (3) (d) Representatives of the local churches within the District who shall normally be members of the elders' meeting of a local church and who shall be appointed by the church meeting of such local church, the number of such representatives to be decided by the Provincial Synod according to the needs of each District and in consultation with the District Councils, provided that the range for each local church be from one to three.
 - 6.2 2 (4) (c) Representatives of the local churches within the Province who shall normally be members of the elders' meeting of a local church and who shall be appointed by the church meeting of such local church, the number of such representatives to be, under 200 members 1 representative; over 200 members 2 representatives.
- 7 The Assembly approves the preparations made for the introduction of the Mission Council from the date of the Assembly.
- 8 The Assembly approves the arrangements for Standing Committees of the Assembly detailed in the Report.
- 9 The Assembly approves the organisation proposed for the operation and supervision of the central programmes of the Church.
- 10 The Assembly thanks all who have served in the committees which are now discontinued.
- 11 The Assembly instructs the General Secretary to make this report available to all members of the Mission Council and to committee members generally who may not be members of the General Assembly so that all may be aware of the interlocking nature of their service.
- 12 Assembly gives first approval to the following amendments to the Structure:

page	25	2	(5) (i)	Delete Executive Committee; insert Mission Council
page	26	2	(5)	Delete Executive Committee; insert Mission Council.

APPENDIX I

Baptismal Practice

Note by the General Secretary

The General Assembly in 1991 instructed me to continue consultation regarding our practice of baptism, with particular regard to the difficulties surrounding the baptism of a believer who has been baptised as an infant. I can report that I am not aware of any dispute in any of the councils of the URC that our policy is correct, that is to state that the sacrament "is administered once only to any person" (Basis para 14). This is the understanding of the WCC Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry paper and of all our ecumenical partners with the exception of some Baptist churches.

But there are considerable differences of view among us as to whether there may be exceptions to the general rule. Those who approach this from the direction of evangelism, conversion and the care of new Christians would wish to have a relaxed approach to any anomalies in baptismal practice. Those who come from the direction of doctrinal awareness, church tradition and ecumenical solidarity would reject any possibility of exceptions to the rule. Our concern is to learn from each other and maintain the true fellowship and unity of the URC.

I have taken soundings in the ecumenical area and find that all the major churches face the same difficulties. The Anglicans deal with it on a diocesan basis, so there are variations in discipline. The Methodist and Baptist churches have discussed the question in relation to joint local churches. The policy adopted is that if, in such a church, the Baptist minister and members decide on a "second" baptism then the individual must be put on the Baptist roll of members and not on the Methodist roll. It would seem to be quite frequently the method to overlook incidents rather than make a public dispute out of them.

My own consideration leads me to advise that we need to affirm the basic URC theological position. Since we recognise that there are two modes of Christian initiation, both widely accepted in Christian tradition, both including baptism, a process of learning and public profession of faith, we may not act as though only one mode is valid. It is this element in the URC Basis that requires the assent of all the councils and all the ministers of the URC. We acknowledge that change in the Basis may be made as we learn more of God's will for us but we make such changes through the careful process of the General Assembly and not by local or individual action. I therefore believe that it is not possible for us to ignore or overlook a situation where a local church or a minister has adopted a policy contradictory to the Basis.

But I would also advise against any disciplinary procedure where there are isolated instances of "second" baptism in churches which do uphold the Basis in their life. We cannot know all the personal and local factors which lead minister, elders and members to take such a decision and we would be unwise to label them unfaithful because of it.

This is the position that I commend. This note has been considered by the Doctrine and Worship Committee and the Mission and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee, which, while not in any way committed to this wording, are in general support of this statement.

Bernard Thorogood

The Assembly receives the note on baptismal practice.

PROVINCIAL MODERATORS' REPORT 1992

IT SEEMED GOOD TO THE HOLY SPIRIT AND TO US

The movement of ministers

1 A report was made to the Assembly's Executive Committee in July 1990 on the subject of central church organisation. It was part of a discussion that led to the formation of the Mission Council. Among several points in the report not so far discussed were these sentences:

"It is one of the oddities of URC structures that there is no way in which the process of movement of ministers becomes accountable to the Assembly. This is unfortunate since we cannot assume that our present methods of introduction and call are beyond criticism. We recommend that every second year the Moderators' Report to Assembly should be a factual one, detailing the number of introductions made, the number successful on first introduction, the average period of vacancy, the success or failure of joint pastorates in offering calls, the success or failure of introductions of overseas ministers, changes in the national deployment pattern. There would also be some reflection on the issues arising from this factual information. Such a report would enable the Assembly to express the need for any reform of the system."

2 The authors of the report to the Executive will not be surprised to learn that their words attracted the interest of the Moderators' Meeting. It was agreed that a response could be for the good of the whole Church, although it should not be repeated every second year.

3 Apart from ministers themselves, three parties have a place in the process of movement of ministers. One function of a Church Meeting is "to call a minister". One function of a District Council is "to give or, when deep pastoral concern for the church requires it, to withhold concurrence in calls to ministers.....". A Provincial Moderator shall "suggest names of ministers to vacant pastorates, in consultation with interim moderators of local churches" and "the moderators of the provincial Synods shall meet together at regular intervals for the better discharge of their duties". (All quotes from "The Scheme of Union".)

4 There is no detail of how these functions should be carried out and therefore interpretation is proper for all parties. The process also has to take account of Assembly decisions, such as deployment policy and overseas recruitment.

Some facts

5 A factual record of ministerial movements has been kept for the calendar year 1991. During that year 92 settlements were reported at Moderators' Meetings : 60 involved stipendiary ministers, 32 involved students leaving college in the summer.

6 47 pastorates (50%) were settled with the first candidate they met, 24 (26%) with the second, 9 with the third, 8 with the fourth and 4 with the fifth.

7 Of the ministers settled in this period 43 (71%) were called after one formal introduction, 10 (17%) after two, 4 after three, and 3 after four introductions.

8 In the case of leaving students 18 (55%) were called after one formal introduction, 9 (27%) after their second, 2 after three, 2 after four, and one after five. One student had not been settled by the end of 1991. There were particular reasons why the process had to be slow for this student who at the end of the year was in the middle of a second introduction.

9 It is much harder to establish facts on the length of vacancies. A rough analysis suggests that an average is about 15 months but there is considerable variation. Included in the list of vacancies filled in 1991 were seven where the previous minister left in 1988 and a few where the vacancy had lasted less than six months. There is no clear pattern that helps to explain why there is this variation.

Some reflection

10 It is doubtful whether reflection on the issues arising from this factual information will take us very far. The local experience of two pastorates where the outcome is factually similar may be vastly different. Whilst it is clear that most pastorates and most ministers are settled on their first or second introduction, that is only a satisfactory outcome if experience shows that the settlement was "good". There is also danger in basing too much on one year's statistics - although there is nothing obvious that suggests they were untypical.

11 Given that the role of the Moderators' Meeting is to facilitate the movement of ministers, not to arrange it totally, the figures may suggest that the present system is working reasonably well. The one area of particular concern is that of the length of vacancies : that points to the need for the continual revision of deployment policy by the Ministries Department and its application by Provinces and District Councils. There must be a clear and acceptable connection between the number of pastorates and the number of available stipendiary ministers.

12 Because the Provincial Moderators are so closely involved in much of the detail of ministerial movement this report now goes behind the facts and figures to some matters that seem to need special emphasis. They are: general procedures, employment practice, the vacancy lists, groups and teams, non-stipendiary ministers, and the ecumenical movement.

General procedures

13 The general procedure at a Moderators' Meeting is to spend much of the time considering the needs of pastorates declared vacant by District Councils and the names of ministers known to be seeking or to be open to a move. Whenever possible the name of a prospective candidate is given to Interim Moderators. Pastorates are asked to consider candidates one at a time.

14 This practice is approved of by those who do not like the idea of ministerial competition. It is criticised by those who like the element of choice. However, if choice is allowed to pastorates, it must also be allowed to ministers - with the result that the process will often take considerably longer. It is simply the case that the present practice has proved to be effective over a long period of time, provided introductions are made with care. It has the added advantage that there is not the bias towards the more attractive pastorate that a "free market" would encourage. That does not rule out the possibility that at some future time the practice should be reconsidered and changed.

15 One of the roles of a Provincial Moderator is to be in touch with ministers and therefore to know when they are seeking or are open to a move. In order not to disturb ministers at the wrong time, it is normally only those ministers whose

thoughts are already directed towards moving who are asked to consider vacant pastorates. There are two exceptions to this practice. One occurs when a pastorate has been vacant for a very long time or when it requires very specialised gifts, and no suitable minister is looking for a move. In such circumstances a minister is sometimes challenged to consider the particular situation, by the collective decision of the Moderators' Meeting. Similarly, where a minister has been in a pastorate a long time and there is a vacancy where his/her gifts and experience could well be used, the same challenge may be given. Such challenges are reserved for situations of particular need.

16 The importance of the role of Interim Moderators, both in the case of vacant pastorates and in the movement of ministers, needs emphasis. The faithful work done by Interim Moderators is one of the strengths of our church. One consequence of this is that where for any reason the work is not done well, people are hurt. Problems most often arise when there is not understanding and agreement over who is responsible for what. The Support Committee of the Ministries Department is about to produce a new set of guidelines on the duties of Interim Moderators. It will be helpful if these are considered by all District Councils and then made available to pastorates and Interim Moderators at each vacancy. A fairly uniform national understanding of the role is important because most ministerial movements cross District Council and Provincial boundaries.

17 Continual contact with vacant pastorates gives the Provincial Moderators an opportunity to observe and advise on general procedures in all aspects of vacancy. During 1991 this experience was collated into a single document that was offered to District Councils.

Employment practice

18 Comments from all over the country suggest that the publication of the Employment Practice report by the Ministries' Department in 1990 has been welcomed as a resource document by District Councils, pastorates and ministers - not least in the area of ministerial movement. Where there is clarity of procedures, the possibility of misunderstanding is considerably reduced. District Councils are encouraged to go on working on the issues covered in the report and not simply to assume that pastorates and ministers know all about it, and are following it. Constant changes in personnel require constantly open channels of communication.

19 There is particular value in time being given to the shared preparation of the pastorate profile at each vacancy. The aim is not to produce a glossy brochure that may entice an unsuspecting minister! Rather it is for elders and others to prepare a description of the churches in the pastorate as they are, and then to work out a mission strategy for the immediate future - listing the resources available and the ministry required. The forms that are available from the Ministries Department have proved helpful in preparing pastorate profiles. But they should not simply be filled in mechanically. It may be better to fill in the forms but then to present the same information in a piece of continuous prose that reflects the style of the pastorate and its mission. Each local church is in some senses unique and that uniqueness needs to be clear as common ground is covered. There is a call here for those in the pastorate who have writing gifts! But not before as many people as possible have shared in deciding what the profile should contain.

20 The comments about the need for consultation also apply to the ministerial terms of settlement form, although here precise accuracy is more important than imagination! Pastorates and ministers need to be clear on what basis the ministry is proposed. District Councils need to be sure that what is proposed can be maintained and is within the terms of the Plan for Partnership. It is not always so.

21 What has been said about pastorate profiles can largely also be addressed to ministers preparing their own profiles for showing to prospective pastorates. Some factual information is clearly needed, but it will also help to give some account of the minister's personal and ministerial pilgrimage. In what ways is there a sense that God may be wanting to move me on? Ministerial profiles should not look like job applications.

The vacancy lists

22 For some years a quarterly list of vacant pastorates was sent to all ministers on the central payroll. In theory it enabled the ministers to know where the vacancies were and to express their interest in any particular one. The practice also ensured that the national picture was known to all ministers and not just held within the Moderator's Meeting. The reality was that a quarterly list prepared three weeks or so before it was published was invariably out-of-date in the following two months. Ministers would enquire about a pastorate, only to learn that a minister had already accepted a call or that a candidate was already being considered. The practice was changed during 1991.

23 With the helpful co-operation of the Maintenance of the Ministry Office a monthly list of vacant pastorates is now sent to those on the central payroll. In the first month after it is declared vacant, a pastorate is put on the list automatically. Thereafter it appears on the list each month until a minister is called - except for those months when a candidate is in direct touch with the pastorate. The intention is to make the list of more value to ministers (and thus to pastorates). The new practice is still on trial.

Groups and teams

24 We stand in a very long tradition that asserts the right and responsibility of the members of a local church to call their own minister. That tradition is clearly written into the Scheme of Union where the need for District Council concurrence can only follow the decision of the Church Meeting.

25 In general a Church Meeting should be prepared for its task of considering making a call. Because vacancies occur on average every seven or eight years some members may never have had such a responsibility before. Even for those who can remember "what happened the last time", that may not be a good guide for this time. Church members need to know about the whole candidating process, including what has been done before they were involved. They need to be clear about their own role; have an adequate but informal opportunity to talk to as well as see and hear any candidate; and have time for discussion in Church Meeting. The ultimate question before a member in Church Meeting is not, "Do I like this candidate?" but, "Is this the person God is calling to be the minister of this pastorate?". The two questions may not receive the same answer.

26 This matter becomes considerably complicated when the minister is being called to serve a number of churches (who may have little in common other than a shared minister), or where the minister is going to work in a team where good team relationships have as much significance as good Church Meeting support. Do we have to insist that the Holy Spirit can only operate if each individual Church Meeting meets separately and takes no account of any others affected? Some continue to act as if that was the case. Yet surely the Spirit is equally capable of being discerned in a Group Meeting where the needs and perceptions of the different churches can be shared? Is not the Spirit capable of telling us what weight to put on the views of the present ministerial team when they are expressed to the meeting? The great variety of pastorates suggests that there should be a lot more flexibility about the way in which we come to our decisions. It is not the Holy Spirit who is inflexible.

27 There are pastorates in which a complex series of relationships and networks is woven into an appropriate pattern of candidating. Everybody is consulted. Every possible group meets to form an opinion. But the whole process takes months; the candidate is emotionally exhausted; and the ultimate decision is no easier to take. This suggests that there is a need to look at the general question of how decisions are taken. Is there a limit to the participation of all? How far can and should we accept the judgement of the few? Will we make a better or a worse decision if we take more than a week to consider it? How do we interpret majorities and minorities in the fellowship? Sometimes our different perceptions of how decisions should be taken get in the way of discovering God's call. It may be that a wider discussion of such issues in a District Council would help people to clarify their thinking in the local situation.

Non-stipendiary ministers

28 There is a strong argument for treating all ministers the same, whether or not they receive a stipend. In terms of the exercise of ministerial functions that argument is surely overwhelming. Yet in some of the practical aspects of life there is a significant difference between those who receive a stipend from the church and those who do not. In quite a few cases non-stipendiary ministers suffer as a result of insufficient attention to practical matters.

29 It is possible to identify several problem areas. One concerns the task which a non-stipendiary minister is asked to do. Because it is usually a part-time offering of service, and because it is either extra to previous ministerial provision or in some new area of church life, there is a great need for a job description to be agreed by all involved. This can prevent unrealistic expectations on the part of churches and unnecessary guilt feelings on the part of ministers. Yet it is by no means always done. Similarly, although no stipend is involved, a great deal of frustration and hurt is avoided if the terms of settlement are also clearly stated and agreed. These should include such matters as hours of service, holidays, and the re-imburement of expenses.

30 Normally non-stipendiary ministers are only available to serve in a limited area, often in their own church or group. This sometimes makes the usual process of call followed by concurrence less straightforward. If a person is only able to serve in one town, within very precise time limits, what choice is being offered to a Church Meeting? And what does a negative vote say about an individual's calling in those circumstances? There is a variety of practice within the Church. In some cases it is helpful if the District Council takes a bigger role in the placing of non-stipendiary ministers. It may be in a better position to see the best way of linking offer and opportunity. In other cases a Church Meeting call followed by District Council concurrence is the most appropriate way to act. District Councils and/or Provinces should have a clear and known policy on this matter. In some Provinces the Moderator has a bigger role in the settlement and movement of non-stipendiary ministers.

31 Movement from one area of service to another is possible for some non-stipendiary ministers. A change of job may force it sometimes. But for most the possibility of movement is limited and it will normally only be within one District Council's area. All ministers should be encouraged to develop their skills and to explore new aspects of ministry, which is why it is important that non-stipendiary appointments are for limited terms and there is a proper review at the end of each term. The initiative for this review is the responsibility of the District Council, although other parties will be involved. There is a very uneven pattern in the way District Councils do (or do not) carry out such reviews.

The Ecumenical Movement

32 There are many myths about the way ministers and priests move in our sister churches. However, for many in the URC the myths are being dispelled because increasingly ministers are being shared. It is clear that for the URC and for others the process of the movement of ministers is a dynamic one, constantly changing. Often it seems that every denomination has a different process which could hardly be better organised to rub awkwardly against our own!

33 At some point this may make us want to look radically at our own process: The Assembly could be enlivened by such a discussion! There is no doubt that those who went before us in our previous traditions fought hard for the right of a local church to call its own minister. We have enshrined that in the Scheme of Union. Yet is it a matter of theological principle, or of best practice in particular religious and social circumstances? Within the World Reformed family there is a considerable variety of practice.

34 In the meantime some sharp questions are being raised in our many ecumenical pastorates. Is there any way of happily marrying episcopal or patronal appointment, Circuit appointment, and Church Meeting call? Is there a minimum level involvement of the URC members below which we cannot agree to go? If there is, must it be insisted that there is a similar involvement of members from other denominations? And how does the answer relate to those who are "common members"? Does it matter that in some cases the District Council's need to concur (or not) becomes academic because of the large number of other parties involved? Is it fair to some ministers that they have to enter a process which does not offer them the same protection and support as is available to their sisters and brothers candidating in URC pastorates?

35 These are but a sample of the questions regularly being faced - and answered - in ecumenical pastorates. They are an inevitable consequence of the present state of the ecumenical movement in this country. The whole church needs to be aware of that. Yet although at the moment these are largely questions to be answered and problems to be solved at the local or District Council level, the answers and solutions should not be too different from national practice. That in turn suggests that the Churches may soon have to look together at some measure of common practice in the movement of ministers.

36 Specific mention needs to be made of the Methodist Church, in view of present discussions and the increasing number of shared churches and ministers. Some fifteen months before they move Methodist ministers are appointed to a circuit for a fixed renewable term. All movements take place on 31 August and, because the number of circuit appointments is adjusted to equal the number of available ministers, there are normally no vacancies. Local church members are not directly involved in a decision about an appointment. Most of the work is done by circuit officers and nationally by the Stationing Committee.

37 The difference between our procedures are there set out starkly. There are, of course, similarities but the reader of the previous paragraph will easily realise that Methodist and URC ministers only move to and from joint pastorates because of a willingness on all sides to forego or adapt normal denominational procedures. Occasionally that willingness is strained to the point of dispute.

The Holy Spirit

38 This report has necessarily been much concerned with process, procedures, and good practice. A great deal has been written about what seems good to us in the various councils of the church, but is it also good to the Holy Spirit? Any description

of our process and practice would be incomplete without reference to the prayers offered by ministers and their families, by Elders Meetings and Vacancy Committees on meeting a candidate, by Church Meetings considering a call, by District Councils on giving concurrence, and by the Provincial Moderators at their monthly meeting. Anyone who is involved in the process should be aware of being part of a community of faith in which all are offering gifts, experience, and insight in seeking an answer to prayer. Sadly there are times in this regard as in others when people forget the true nature of what they are about. The process of movement of ministers always should be aimed at discerning the Holy Spirit.

The Moderators' Meeting

39 Movement is also a feature of the membership of the Moderators' Meeting. This year we bid farewell to Tony Burnham whose appointment as General Secretary means that we shall still be able to welcome him to part of each of our meetings. We are well placed to recognise the wisdom of the Assembly in making this appointment but we shall miss his regular incisive comments and his warm sense of humour. We also say farewell - again - to Alasdair Walker who for nine months has been Acting Moderator in the East Midlands Province. While recognising that it must have been difficult to combine a pastorate with this temporary role, we noted that Alasdair fitted quickly back into our meeting and helped us with his wisdom. We now look forward to welcoming Keith Forecast and Malcolm Hanson to our fellowship as they take up their responsibilities in the North Western and East Midlands Provinces respectively.

RESOLUTION

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.



1 The challenge of creating new patterns of working with the coming into being of the Mission Council and the demise of the Central Committee has provided an opportunity to explore the relation of the work of the four Assembly Committees within the Department and the Provinces, Districts and local churches. Two areas have emerged as important: (i) sharing national and international information with Provinces and Districts, and stimulating training in using this material; (ii) bringing groups together to enable them to share with one another and those on Assembly Committees experiences of mission at local level, of local ecumenical endeavour, and celebration of the World Church. Ways of fulfilling these tasks are being explored and plans made for the next two years, when progress will be reviewed and new plans made.

2 Work has been done on the nature of our missionary task within the URC at this time of the 1990s, as a Mission Council is set up. Theological reflection has taken place in small groups and has been gathered from the local churches by the Provincial representatives on Central Committee. The final meeting of that Committee will be almost entirely devoted to preparing a 'Mission Statement' to offer to the Mission Council at its first meeting.

3 The Revd John Parry relinquishes his job as Secretary of the Mission and Other Faiths Committee at this Assembly and the Department wishes to record their deep gratitude to him for the energetic and sensitive way in which he has promoted understanding between people of different Faiths and enabled the Committee to function smoothly. To all those who finish their term on Department Committees we express our thanks for their contribution and their commitment.



MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK AT HOME COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Murdoch MacKenzie
Secretary: The Revd Tony Coates

4 **Two Quotations** from two sons of Dublin's fair city. It was Oscar Wilde who said: 'I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read on the train.' Though not quite in the same category the minutes and reports of the MEW at Home Committee have added spice to the worst that British Rail could do. In the following report many a hidden agenda is revealed as this is now a time for declaration and hopefully resolution. As George Bernard Shaw said: 'There are two tragedies in life. One is not to get your heart's desire. The other is to get it.' The resolutions being brought to Assembly are the outcome of several years' work and are offered in the belief that greater flexibility gives the opportunity of greater effectiveness in mission. Inevitably part of the agenda will have to remain hidden for another year. It includes the ongoing work being done by the *Rural Consultant*, Revd Michael Cruchley, such as the proposed launch of a new magazine

for people in the countryside; the sharing of challenges and opportunities among *Town Centre Churches* arising out of their meeting at Windermere; an ongoing theological reflection on the meaning of mission including a discussion of the *Gospel and Our Culture Programme*.

5.1 Decade of Evangelism Working Group Since last Assembly DEMEG (Decade of Evangelism and Mission Education Group) has been further refined and now concentrates solely on the Decade of Evangelism. The purpose of DEWG is to stimulate and encourage in every possible way the healthy growth and appropriate development of the URC's commitment to the Decade of Evangelism, nationally and provincially, and at every district and local church level.

5.2 To this end DEWG seeks to provide support to all those working on evangelism programmes at grass roots level, by providing suitable resource material from our own or wider ecumenical sources, and helping to develop a proper integrated network of decade persons from all 75 districts. To this end a decade person has been sought to be identified from each district with a view to calling them together during 1992 in four regional consultations where they might share insights, strategies, difficulties and visions, as well as reflect together on the nature, scope and distortions of evangelism as they perceive them within their own situations.

5.3 DEWG therefore has a dual role, to inspire and support mature and appropriate evangelism within the URC at every level, and to create and develop opportunities for training, learning and reflection related to every aspect of the Decade within the life of our own church in the pluralistic culture in which we are set today.

5.4 To help this process, membership of the working group constitutes a spectrum of evangelistic experience and understanding such that our whole church can feel it is effectively represented in this particular part of its mission.

5.5 The Group warmly welcomes the publication by the Department of *So you think you have the answers - Other Faiths' views of the Decade of Evangelism*.

6.1 Urban Rural Mission Group The purpose of the Urban Rural Mission Group is "to help the people of the URC to engage in mission which addresses poverty and division and their causes".

6.2 The Group meets four times a year. The other URC Departments are represented on it, mainly by the Department Secretaries. The other members of the Group have been selected from a range of interests in the URC.

6.3 This year the Group reviewed progress on *Mission Pursuit*, various funding projects by the URC, examined rural consultancy, and sponsored a paper *Resource Sharing*. A consultation with all the URC related colleges' staff and the Group is being planned. The possibility of publishing a small book giving ten examples of mission in the URC is being explored.

7.1 Grant Making Mainly due to the work of Revd Roger Whitehead tremendous strides have been made regarding grants. Together with the Ministries Support Committee a leaflet has been prepared indicating all the available grants, suggesting steps which need to be taken when making application and offering guidelines for district councils. Particular emphasis is laid on districts developing a mission strategy.

7.2 During 1991 the *New Enterprise in Mission Fund* allocated £30,000 among 19 projects and of the £32,000 available for 1992 most has already been allocated.

From the new *Mission Expenses Support in the UK Fund* the £30,000 available was allocated among seven projects and the allocations for 1992 and 1993 are almost all already made. Over half has been allocated for 1994. It is expected that the budgets for these funds will rise in line with inflation and applications can still be made in case any of the original allocations are not taken up.

8 Free Church Federal Council The Committee is now meeting the URC/FCFC representatives annually and in addition has met with the Moderator and General Secretary of the FCFC. The decision to combine the positions of President of Churches Together in England and Moderator of FCFC is welcomed. Questions are being raised regarding the closer working relationships of FCFC with CTE, the theological understanding of what being Free Church means today and the identification of those essential functions which necessitate the continuation of the FCFC locally and nationally. It is felt that the URC has a continuing creative and critical part to play within the FCFC, particularly by raising questions about the appropriate role of the FCFC within the changing ecumenical scenes in England and Wales.

9.1 Methodist/URC Relationships Whilst the joint questionnaire had received some criticism it evoked responses from 9 out of 12 provincial synods and 53 out of 75 district councils. The Methodist response was proportionately less with 39% of circuits making returns compared with 70% of URC district councils. The Joint Methodist/URC Liaison Committee, after due consultation in both denominations, has produced a report called *The Next Steps*. This is to be found at **Appendix I** and is the subject of a resolution. **Resolution 2**

9.2 During the coming year the MEW at Home Committee will examine the implications of the commitment to unity in the URC Basis of Union.

10 Mission Projects Outreach in mission usually has fuzzy edges and requires imaginative and encouraging space in which to develop. Ways of providing such space are suggested in the document *Mission Projects* which appears as **Appendix II** and which is also the subject of a resolution. **Resolution 3**

11 Multi-Congregation Local Ecumenical Projects The East Midlands Provincial Synod brought a resolution to Assembly 1991 concerning the representation of constituent congregations of multi-congregation LEPs on District Councils and Provincial Synods. The Committee proposes additions to The Structure of the URC, both in respect of multi-congregation LEPs and of multi-congregation UR local churches. The provisions contained in these additions are permissive and not mandatory, and the additions are the subject of a resolution. **Resolution 4**

12 England

12.1 Code of Ecumenical Good Practice One of the fundamental objects of the new ecumenical instruments is to enable the churches to work increasingly closely together on matters of shared concern - beyond friendly co-operation towards the Swanwick goal of "clear commitment to each other, in search of the unity for which Christ prayed and in common evangelism and service to the world."

Churches Together in England, through its Enabling Group, invites the denominations nationally, councils at all levels of operation and local churches to take seriously the general principle that work is no longer to be done by ecumenical bodies on behalf of the churches, but by the member churches with and for each other. CTE offers Six Principles of Good Practice and these appear at **Appendix III** and are the subject of a resolution. **Resolution 5**

12.2 Churches Together Models In many places local Councils of Churches are moving to a Churches Together model. The Group for Local Unity has produced a suggested constitutional framework reflecting the pattern of Churches Together in England. This helps to ensure that the move from a Council of Churches is not merely a fashionable change of name but reflects a radical shift of thinking reflected in patterns of representation and working.

12.3 Guidelines for Review of Local Ecumenical Projects Published by the Group for Local Unity this booklet seeks to ensure that the review processes involving Local Ecumenical Projects include all the requirements of each denomination. The hope is that a Sponsoring Body review will be seen to have satisfied those requirements and so save LEPs the burden of a proliferation of denominational enquiries. **Resolution 6**

12.4 Confirmation and Re-affirmation of Baptismal Faith This is a service order offered by the Joint Liturgical Group for consideration by Sponsoring Bodies for use at joint services of confirmation/church membership in Local Ecumenical Projects.

12.5 Towards Visible Unity The Enabling Group of Churches Together in England has set in hand a process of trying to sharpen thinking on visible unity according to the following brief:

"Two inter-related pieces of work -

i) A pithy document on visible unity which would include questions/challenges to the churches such as

- what characteristics would a united church have?
- how far do we have to go in co-operation before we can describe it as visible unity?
- in terms of faith, what are essentials, and where can we agree to differ?
- subsidiarity - what decisions are local churches free to make and what must be left to wider denominational structures?

ii) A programme of action for Churches Together in England including studies to be made and things to be done in various fields and at different levels, eg on initiation.

12.6 We should make clear the overlap between i) the ideas we have and the problems we face in clarifying our vision of visible unity, and ii) the work we are doing. Bringing the two together will give us a pragmatic purpose."

13 Ireland

13.1 The Revd David Nesbitt spoke to the Committee regarding the ongoing situation ecumenically in the Irish Churches. In the Presbyterian Church of Ireland the 1992 Assembly is debating the theological and Biblical basis for relating to other churches. A wide examination of the life of the PCI (the 'Coleraine process') is underway. As regards the political scene a great many people want the political talks to take place and succeed.

13.2 Mr Nesbitt was thanked for the outstanding contribution he had made to the work of understanding between the PCI and the URC. The URC looks forward to welcoming his successor, the Revd S J Campbell.

14 **Scotland**

14.1 The Multilateral Church Conversation in Scotland has been in progress for about a quarter of a century. Working parties on Structures and Episcopacy having completed their work, a document is being sent to each of the six participating Churches asking 'Who Goes Where?' The Conversation asks if the Churches are ready to prepare a scheme of Union for the Churches or, if not, is there some other way they wish to proceed?

14.2 Close co-operation and contact has been maintained with the Congregational Union of Scotland through the Joint Liaison Group.

14.3 In 1986 five Churches in Scotland - the Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, Congregational Union of Scotland, United Free Church of Scotland and the URC - agreed a joint statement on Mutual Recognition of Members and Ministries and Related Matters in Scotland. In January 1992 representatives of these same Churches met again to review the present situation and see what further progress might be made in relations between one another.

15 **Wales**

15.1 **CYTUN** As a result of the first meeting of Y Gymanfa three important projects have emerged.

i) The Commission on Ecumenical Affairs is investigating the possibility of setting up a centre for Ecumenical Activity to be a spiritual and practical resource for all the Churches

ii) The URC has been asked by the Commission on Wales and the World to set up a working group to investigate theological issues relating to Peace and War

iii) The witness of the Churches at Eisteddfod Cenedlaethol is to go forward ecumenically with all Churches and Christian organisations sharing a single stand complex on the Eisteddfod field.

15.2 **ENFYs** The Commission of Covenanted Churches is considering in what way to reprint the agreed Rite of Holy Communion, current copies of which are almost sold out, due to its recent large uptake.

The report and Rite of Christian Commissioning which completes and complements the Rite of Christian Baptism has been published and the responses of the member Churches are now being sought.

The Covenanting Churches are investigating how their involvement in Rural Mission can be coordinated, possibly under an ecumenical Rural Mission Unit coordinating activity on rural issues in Wales.

15.3 **BILATERALS** Two recent publications have been the cause of rejoicing:

i) The agreed procedures for the election, ordination and induction of elders in Joint URC/PCW churches is commended to the churches for use.

ii) The Church in Wales Bill on Ecumenical Projects allows, among other things, single presidency at the Eucharist among covenanted partners.

16 **Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland** Three hundred members from thirty Churches met in Assembly from 24-28 February 1992. Major business

included setting the agenda to be brought to member Churches during the next two years. Particular prominence was given to the marginalisation of Africa, the situation in Northern Ireland, constitutional reform in Scotland and Wales and the underfunding of the work of CCBI by the Churches especially in relation to the provision of a Communications Officer and the work of the Community and Race Relations Unit. There was an excellent and purposeful spirit in the Assembly which augurs well for the future and the whole event was undergirded by meaningful worship and prayer.



MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK ABROAD COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Clabon Allen
Secretary: The Revd Tony Coates



17 This committee is appointed to guide and support the international relations of the URC. This is a two-way process - much is being done by individual congregations and we try to listen to what is happening. We also seek to listen to visitors from abroad and to others who have expertise. In response to these inputs we then shape our policies.

18 EUROPE

18.1 During the last year we have all been conscious of the dramatic changes in Europe, seen particularly in the conflict in Yugoslavia and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. To try to respond to this changing situation, a day Consultation was planned in September on relations with other European churches. This brought together a great variety of people, going well beyond this committee, and reminded us again of the multitude of links from congregations and Provinces as well as specialised agencies. There has been a very clear and positive outcome, worked out together with the Church and Society Department. There are now three Europe Co-ordinators, who will work together with the staff of the World Church and Mission Department and the Church and Society Department. The Church and Society Department has appointed the Revd Philip Woods to work on political and social concerns. The World Church and Mission Department has appointed Mrs Sheila Brain to work in the area of relationships and the Revd Geoffrey Roper to work on ecumenism and theology. They will bring suggestions and recommendations to the relevant committees and help us to be sensitive to the changing dimensions of Europe.

18.2 This particular concern is well represented by having Mr Jean Fischer, General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches, to speak to this Assembly.

19 SOUTH AFRICA

Our continuing concern for the developing situation in South Africa was expressed by a grant to the Southern Africa Alliance of Reformed Churches. This was done after consultation with our CWM partners, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa and the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. The aim was to help various smaller Reformed churches in that area to develop a clearer consciousness of their role.

20 COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

20.1 Their detailed report is found in **Appendix IV**. We are looking forward to new directions and fresh possibilities as the new General Secretary, Dr Preman Niles, settles into his job. We also want to say again to the churches how grateful we are for their generous support of CWM through the Unified Appeal (as it used to be). The actual figure for 1991 for the URC was £493,000.

20.2 There have been some changes in our budgeting processes so as to smooth out big fluctuations in missionary resettlement costs.

20.3 The URC and the Congregational Federation have jointly invited the 1995 CWM Council to meet in England as part of the joint celebration of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the London Missionary Society. This invitation has been accepted.

21 CHURCHES' COMMISSION ON MISSION

This is the new division of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland which is in the process of taking over from the Conference for World Mission. It is going through a major restructuring, which will result in a reduction in staff numbers. The plan is for a move away from a geographical to a thematic emphasis, and a departure from the idea of doing things on behalf of the mission bodies to the aim of one body acting on behalf of all. As a result, area secretaries for Africa, Asia and China will be phased out and there will be a new emphasis on mission both at home and abroad. The committee in general supported the restructuring but was concerned that there should be recognition of the particular needs of united churches (as in India and China) which wish to relate to an ecumenical body.

22.1 There are some ongoing issues where we do not yet clearly see the way forward. To inform us on issues of prostitution and child abuse, we joined a Network called "End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism". It is largely western tourists who create these problems, so we hope churches can find ways to sensitise those travelling abroad.

22.2 There has been a lot of discussion in the media about the "celebration" of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas. Since the arrival of the Spaniards led to a great deal of exploitation and violence, we need to be aware of the deeper issues. The ecumenical Lent discussion groups, in which many URC people will have been involved, made use of many illustrations from Latin America and the Caribbean. The presence of Sra Marta Benavides, from El Salvador, at our Assembly should also help us to be more aware of the issues.

22.3 A request for financial help towards a proposed visit from religious affairs officials from the People's Republic of China led to a lively discussion. While not wanting to appear to condone the violence of the Chinese authorities towards the protesting students in the Tiananmen Square incident, we gave approval to the request because the China Christian Council felt such a visit could lead to a deeper understanding of Church/State relations. The book *Neither Bang nor Whimper; the End of a Missionary Era in China*, by the Revd Dr George Hood, would give an excellent background for understanding some of the deeper issues of Church/State relations in China.

22.4 Another aspect of the work of the committee consists of approving grants, appointing people to attend international conferences and then hearing reports afterwards. This is much more than a routine task, because those involved can come back with renewed enthusiasm and a greater vision which should lead to local churches being stirred into an ongoing relationship. One very successful appointment was that of Mrs Susan Duah, of St Andrew's URC, Ealing, to represent the URC at the 50th Synod of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana. Her

presence was much appreciated by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and a photograph of her bringing the URC's greetings to the Synod appeared on the cover of *Reform*. We also heard from the Revd Elizabeth Welch about her attendance at the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. She raised a question that applies to much of our work in the URC. Are we so busy looking at social and environmental issues that we forget to think creatively about the nature of our life as a church? If we take seriously our membership of the world church, it can have a profound effect on the life of all our churches.



MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd John Sutcliffe

Secretary: The Revd John Parry

23 **Young people.** The impact of Other Faiths in British society and on world news is increasing and cannot be avoided. In a mobile society the likelihood of one's neighbour or one's colleague at work being of another faith becomes greater. Are our young people prepared for this? The Committee appreciates the commitment to Christian teaching affirmed in the 1988 Education Act and urges parents and other church members to support teachers as they seek to deepen children's understanding of our faith and that of others. We welcome and support the growing interest of FURY in interfaith dialogue and invite greater participation by young people in our Consultations.

24 **Consultations** have continued in the past year with the Sikh community with whom we discussed the question, 'Will our children have faith?' in the light of the impact of materialism and out of a common concern for the nurture of our children. Further consultations, sponsored by both the URC and the Sikhs, are planned for 1992. In November a consultation was called to consider the nature of pilgrimage to the Holy Land at which the speakers were the Revd Dr Bert Breiner and from Jerusalem, Rabbi David Rosen and the Revd Dr Kamal Farah who spoke on Jewish and Palestinian Christian perspectives on pilgrimage. Many people have expressed concern about relations with Muslims and the claims of Islam. In response the Committee is planning a Christian/ Muslim consultation on **The Nature of Authority**. The CCBI Secretary responsible for relations with people of other faiths has drawn our attention to the fact that the URC is the only denomination actively sponsoring such opportunities for dialogue.

25 **Race.** Increasing manifestations of racism have been reported by representatives of four major faith communities. Jews in particular, in Britain and throughout Europe, have been subjected to abuse and physical attacks. Young Asians are also vulnerable and good community relations with Muslims are likewise being seriously undermined. We urge congregations to be vigilant about racism in their localities and support all who are involved in building up understanding and reconciliation. We also remind members of Assembly that in 1987 Assembly adopted a Declaration on Racism [Assembly Record 1987, page 11], and commended it 'as a future point of reference throughout the church', and that last year [Assembly Record 1991, page 27] the churches were urged to take an initiative in extending the hand of friendship to Muslim neighbours.

26.1 **The Decade of Evangelism.** We reaffirm points made in our report to the 1991 General Assembly: "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..."

As well as being 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 among 'his peoples'."

26.2 The obligation on Christian people to share their distinctive understanding of the revelation of God need not prevent their entering into joint witness to moral and spiritual values with people of other faiths. Dialogue makes possible a combined assault on the failures and false gods of materialism. It opens the possibility of people of the major faiths collaborating to work for solutions to the major problems facing society. In such areas as just social order, the alleviation of avoidable suffering, the promulgation of equality with plurality, the recognition of the rights of women and the development of respectful partnership between women and men, inter-community and international trust and peace, care for the environment, and honesty and integrity in public life, there is desperate need for finding common ground and for co-operation.

26.3 There are many examples of people of differing faiths working together and sharing common values. Such work should not be overlooked as a witness in secular societies to faith in God.

26.4 We draw attention to the pamphlet "So you think you have the answers. Other Faiths' views of the Decade of Evangelism".

27 **'Mixed' Marriages and Funerals.** The issue of pastoral care for the **relatives** of those involved in such marriages and funerals is being considered by a working group of European churches. Your Committee seeks written reports from those who have given pastoral care in such circumstances.

28.1 **Worship with People of Other Faiths.** The Committee consulted the URC's Doctrine and Worship Committee before making a response, requested by the Archbishop of Canterbury, to a letter circulated throughout the Church of England in Autumn 1991. The letter raised questions about the propriety of Christians taking part in worship in which forms of words derived from more than one faith are used.

28.2 Our response is that we do not believe that worship with people of other faiths need in any way undermine Christian belief in the uniqueness and indispensability of Christ. Christians worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit even if the stimulation to worship does not have its source in the doctrine of the Trinity.

28.3 In passing, we draw attention to the fact that, because of its dependency on Judaism, Christian worship invariably includes words drawn from more than one faith. Indeed it has frequently taken forms of words from other faiths and used them regularly, eg "Mother Teresa's" prayer for peace which originates in Hindu scriptures.

28.4 We recognise that occasional worship with people of other faiths is different from the Sunday worship of the Church. Acknowledging this difference, there are two forms of worship with people of other faith we would encourage and one we discourage.

28.5 In meetings for study and reflection of small interfaith groups, there often comes a moment when, through the sharing of deep religious experience, people may wish to pray together in silence or using each others' words. In such a circumstance the previous conversation legitimises the action and the use of the words. It would be irrational to argue that such occasions do not afford the possibility of meeting with the living God. Indeed, they are essential to growth in mutual understanding.

28.6 There are more public occasions when people of different faith wish to make a statement together which, they believe, is best expressed in a context of worship. These grow out of a shared and common purpose such as the celebration of Commonwealth, commitment to the wellbeing of a local community, or concern about housing and homelessness. In such instances it is the common concern which leads to worship, not vice-versa. On these occasions it is appropriate for words drawn from more than one faith to be used, providing the sources of the words are made clear. Christians cannot deny the scriptural, moral and spiritual heritages of other faiths. We are compromised when words and ideas from one faith are used as though they belong to all faiths. We encourage such open recognition of each others' spiritual treasures and, though we have different perceptions of the nature of God, the implicit affirmation that there can be only one God. Shared common concerns draw people of different faiths into worship which celebrates wholeness and unity in a broken and divided world. The form of this worship may have to allow for there to be at one and the same time participants and observers. It may be more appropriate that where possible such worship is held on 'neutral' ground.

28.7 It follows from the foregoing that, conversely, we wish to discourage those forms of interfaith worship which do not grow out of a shared experience or common concern and in which words are used from one faith as though they represent all faiths. Such worship is contrived. It lacks both context and integrity in that the impression is given that there is no need for dialogue and for deepening understanding of our differences. Such a use of the spiritual heritages of the major faiths leads to obfuscation and confusion.

29 **Secretary.** The Committee wishes to record its gratitude to the Revd John Parry for his outstanding contribution as Secretary for Mission and Other Faiths for the past eight years. His expertise and respected involvement in ecumenical and other faith bodies have greatly enriched the work of the Committee and of the Church.



PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Raymond Adams
Secretary: Miss Sheila Rudofsky



"HEAR WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING"

30 Our report highlights five areas of the Committee's work which we believe the Church needs to hear, and be encouraged to make a response.

31 **Two voices from Romania:**

31.1 The Revd Janos Kerezsi, a minister of the Reformed Church of Romania, has spent six months at Princes Street URC, Norwich, working alongside their minister. Mr Kerezsi said how important it is for people like himself, shut in and shut off from the rest of Europe for so long, to be able to understand the Church in the UK from the inside, and for people here to learn about Romania. More opportunities of this kind, initiated by local churches, would be welcome.

31.2 Mr Hugh Morgans, having completed his year at Debrecen with the Reformed Church in Hungary, extended his short-term volunteer appointment at Oradea in Romania, working as English language secretary to the Bishop. In looking for a successor he wrote: "I'm hoping to impress upon you the importance I believe this

presence in Oradea/Nagyvarad is... it really is a way in which our Church can provide concrete assistance to the Reformed Church of Romania". Requirement: someone with a good grasp of English/ willing to learn Hungarian/ able to teach English as a foreign language/ under 30/ single.

31.3 The financial response to the Romanian crisis has been immense, but with the exchange of personnel, friendships are made, understanding becomes two-way, and relationships are deepened.

32 From Consultations in Southern Africa:

32.1 The Personnel Secretary met leaders of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, and the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, to plan an exchange visit with the URC/Congregational Union of Scotland in 1993/94. One leader said:

32.2 "We need a visit which has a clear educational purpose; we have no money for tourism. People are in great need of opportunities for learning new skills and acquiring knowledge."

32.3 Four people from Southern Africa will visit the URC/CUS in 1993; their likely areas of interest are: city churches and community centres; coping with declining and ageing populations; exposure to effective evangelism and outreach programmes; LEP's and special ministries.

33 Feedback from the Amity Teaching Programme in China:

Through the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, the URC is a co-sponsor of the Amity Programme, which sends teachers of English to China. The Personnel Secretary saw this year, on a visit to China, how warmly these teachers were received, and the perceptible depth of relationship which is being built up at a local level through this programme. The request from Amity is not for more money, but for more qualified teachers who are ready to share themselves, and volunteer for this befriending work in China.

34 A young URC participant in the Training in Mission Group:

34.1 Miss Liz Baker writes from Jamaica: "The last five months have been the most exciting, exhausting, challenging, changing times of my life... all because God decided to teach me what His mission is really about. TIM is a one year programme set up by CWM to bring together young people from all over the world to live and learn together about God's mission for us. My placement here in Jamaica is in one of the poorer areas of Kingston, working with students aged 16-18 years, helping with human and cultural development, and doing outreach ministry in the community."

34.2 We are looking for young people from the URC to be interviewed and possibly selected for the 1993/94 TIM group.

35 URC Missionaries who have resettled in Britain:

35.1 Two-way mission is not only about receiving Christians from other places into the URC; it is also about receiving back those who have gone in our name, enriched by and ready to share their experience of the World Church.

35.2 We sent a questionnaire to people returned from overseas; some had served short-term, and others for many years. The answers to two questions are worth sharing:

a) **What skills, qualities, and level of maturity did you acquire during your service overseas?**

- * "to worship and be at home in a variety of styles".
- * "the ability to contribute to different situations, respond to challenges, discover gifts previously unknown or untapped".
- * "to build a dependence upon God as other familiar structures are no longer present, and where so much is *regularly* uncertain".

b) **What experience do you have which can bring new insights to local church life in this country?**

- * "first hand experience of different ways of worship. But will people want to hear?"
- * "I find in our congregation a great interest while people are overseas, but no expectation that people with overseas experience will have new and valuable experience which can make a continuing contribution to the life of the church when they return. They say 'it's not our way', rather than seeing the experience as a reason to question 'our way'."

35.3 We encourage the Church to use the growing resource of people who have served overseas, not only to fill the church programme with slide presentations on a winter's evening, but to use their insights when tackling local issues as well.

35.4 To do this is to continue to explore the relationship between "World Church" and "Mission": stories about overseas partner churches will remain interesting but irrelevant to our local churches, unless we can discern what the Spirit is saying to us through the sharing of experience, through being in solidarity with others, and through the kind of people - whose words appear in this report - who bridge the gap between us.

35.5 We remain committed to the "face-to-face" encounters of Christians at every level, and we rejoice at the vitality which results from them, when the Church is built up and affirmed in its work.

36 **PEOPLE APPOINTED TO SERVE OVERSEAS**

Through CWM:

Mr David and Mrs Jenny Fraser.

Short-term experience:

- Mr Garry Hallett - one year at Debrecen with the Reformed Church in Hungary.
- Miss Rachel Lidgett - one year in Madagascar with FJKM.
- Mr Hugh Morgans - one year at Oradea with the Reformed Church of Romania.

MISSIONARIES WHO HAVE COMPLETED THEIR SERVICE with churches overseas through CWM:

- Mr Michael and Mrs Anne Schofield - Madagascar [April 1991].
- The Revd Robin and Mrs Muriel Sleight - South India - are expected to retire in June 1992.

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

RESOLUTION

WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION

The Revd Samuel Musonda Silungwe: United Church of Zambia - special ministry shared between World Church and Mission Department and Faith and Life Department.

PEOPLE FROM OVERSEAS RECEIVING SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT from the URC:

The Revd Tomas Adamek [Spring term 1992]; and

Ms Bohuslava Blazkova [Autumn term 1991]: Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren.

The Revd Adom Mark Yao: Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana.

Mr Amer Ibrahim El-Alam: Anglican Church in Ramallah, West Bank

[CCBI scholarship to Palestinian Christians].

Mr Onesmus Hailombe: Anglican Church in Namibia.

The Revd Kim Chang-Ju: Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.

Mr Nagy Attila: Reformed Church of Romania.

All at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak.

Mr Andre Taela Nhatsave: Free Methodist Church of Mozambique

[shared scholarship with WCC].

At Westhill College, Selly Oak, resident at St Andrew's Hall.

Ms Bak Zsuzsanna: Reformed Church in Hungary

[shared scholarship with Northern College, Manchester].

The above information is correct at 30 April 1992.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 (a) The Assembly welcomes the statement "The Next Steps" (Appendix I) prepared through the Methodist/URC Liaison Committee after widespread consultation.
 - (b) The Assembly is committed to this process of co-operation, is pledged to support the life and work of the many joint local churches, and instructs the Mission Council to report to Assembly in 1994 on progress towards the integration of our denominational policies and programmes.
- 3 (a) The Assembly, noting the need for flexibility in situations of mission and church growth, makes the following additions to "The Structure of the United Reformed Church" (Manual, section 2) (additions underlined):
 - 2(3) Functions of District Councils (Manual, p 21)
 - (x) to promote church extension within the area and to submit proposals to the synod for the establishing of new causes and the recognition of mission projects;
 - 2(4) Functions of Provincial Synods (Manual, p 24)
 - (iii) to promote church extension within the province and decide upon proposals submitted by district councils for the establishment of new causes and the recognition of mission projects;
- (b) The Assembly commends the paper "Mission Projects" (Appendix II) to District Councils and Provincial Synods to assist them in the performance of their function of recognition of mission projects.

4 The Assembly makes the following additions to The Structure of the URC:

1) At the end of para 2(3)(d) (Manual, p 20) insert

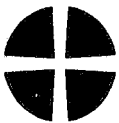
(Where a local church, whether a local ecumenical project or a local church organised according to the second sentence of para 1(1), comprises two or more congregations worshipping in separate locations, the Provincial Synod may, on the advice of the District Council, authorise that local church to appoint representatives to the District Council from each constituent congregation to such number as would be permitted by the above rule if each congregation were a separate local church)

2) At the end of para 2(4)(c) (Manual, p 22) insert

(Where a local church, whether a local ecumenical project or a local church organised according to the second sentence of para 1(1), comprises two or more congregations worshipping in separate locations, the Provincial Synod may authorise that local church to appoint representatives to the Synod from each constituent congregation to such number as would be permitted by the above rule if each congregation were a separate local church)

5 The Assembly receives the paper "Working together in the new ecumenical instruments. Suggested rules of good practice" (Appendix III) from Churches Together in England and commends it to Provinces, Districts and local churches.

6 The Assembly notes the publication of "Guidelines for the Review of Local Ecumenical Projects" by the Group for Local Unity of Churches Together in England and authorises District Councils to regard the review of a local church undertaken by a Sponsoring Body according to the provisions set out in the Guidelines as fulfilling District Council's responsibilities for oversight. (Manual 2(3)(iv) p 21)



APPENDIX I

REPORT ON METHODIST/URC RELATIONSHIPS

The Next Steps

1 **Results of the Enquiry.** In both churches the enquiry regarding relationships sought an expression of views about the advisability of moving into a union negotiation. Responses came from most Synods, District Councils and Circuits and from some local churches. The responses indicate that although a majority would favour a negotiation, it is a bare majority. Responses do not come from all Circuits and Districts and it is impossible to guess what those not responding would wish to say, but their voice is not likely to be one of great enthusiasm. In both churches there would be a 75% majority required in a final vote on union. Therefore the conclusion from the questionnaire is that there is not sufficient conviction at present to initiate a formal process of union negotiation.

There is, however, evidence in the responses of a desire to co-operate more closely. Where there are several joint local churches already in being there tends to be a desire for the two Churches to move together. There is widespread hope that central departments of the two Churches could be more closely integrated.

2 **The existing relationship.** The large number of local shared or joint churches is a major fact to be considered, and so are the joint Areas where Circuit and District have amalgamated. Many of our ministers serve congregations of the other denomination. The Methodist/URC Liaison Committee has assisted all forms of local co-operation. In theological education there is a great deal of teaching in common. In every part of the UK there are points of consultation and common work.

It is also true that the differences between the two churches are significant. These are not only to do with organisation and structure but with the understanding of the nature of the Church which underlies them. These differences shape the self-understanding of the denominations and need exploration.

Opinion in both Churches about the aim of union is diverse. There are those who regard a formal organic union as the necessary next step. There are others who consider this particular bilateral union inappropriate, and yet others who do not believe that any new organic union is the will of God. The discussion will continue, taking into consideration the WCC Faith and Order statement "The unity of the Church as koinonia: gift and calling", the international Methodist/Reformed dialogue, and the ways in which Methodist and Reformed traditions have been brought together in other parts of the world.

3 **The broader ecumenical scene.** Both churches are committed to the new ecumenical instruments, and to the ecumenical movement at every level of church life. Relationships among all the Churches are developing and there would be no support for any bilateral arrangements which led to a diminution of those broad engagements.

The Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church seek to implement the suggested principles of common action proposed by Churches Together in England. These are:

3.1 Member churches should be ready to share their own vision of the issues which are important and their own programmes of work with the officers of the ecumenical instruments and with one another.

3.2 When considering embarking on new items of work, or reviewing existing areas of work, member churches should ask themselves whether the principles of working set out in Churches Together in Pilgrimage are adequately embodied in the way they propose to proceed.

3.3 Member churches should take into account priorities established ecumenically when considering their own internal priorities for work.

3.4 Member churches should be on the look-out for opportunities to share resources with one another by offering to undertake particular pieces of work.

3.5 Member churches should consider carefully the development of methods of working which further ecumenical co-operation.

It is in the spirit of these principles and in line with CTE and CCBI policy that proposals are now made for the development of the bilateral relationship.

4 **The national scenes.** It is necessary also to note that both Churches are present in England, Scotland and Wales, and that the ecumenical development is distinctive in each place. The bilateral relationship of Methodist and URC is set in Scotland within the context of the Multilateral Conversation and ACTS; in Wales within the context of the Covenanted Churches and CYTUN; in England within the context of CTE. This is likely to mean different emphases and expectations which should be fully recognised within the life of both denominations.

5 **The next steps**

It is recommended that the two Churches should now approve the following steps.

5.1 The two Churches re-affirm their appreciation of and their support for the many local joint churches, for church members engaged in all forms of Local Ecumenical Projects, and for the Joint Areas where Circuit and District Council have been merged. They encourage the birth of more local projects and more Joint Areas and will do all they can to facilitate their life and witness.

5.2 The Methodist/URC Liaison Committee will continue to monitor and assist this process.

5.3 The District Synods and Provincial Synods are urged to consider a wide range of modes of co-operation. These might include the adjustment of boundaries, shared pastoral oversight, common resourcing of specialist work, joint celebrations of faith and consultation about capital projects.

5.4 The Secretary of the Conference and the General Secretary of the URC should be directed to arrange, at least once a year, a meeting which would include President, Vice President, Secretary of Conference, and Divisional General Secretaries; Moderator, General Secretary and Departmental Secretaries. The purpose of these meetings will be to spend time in prayer, to share information and to consider the ways in which further joint work at national level would be desirable and should be undertaken, remembering the Lund dictum that we should not undertake separately what could be done together.

5.5 Among the areas to be considered in these meetings the following are high priorities:

- Social Responsibility concerns
- Advocacy and education about the world church
- The Decade of Evangelism
- Publications, including prayer material
- Lay/Local Preacher Training
- Youth Activities
- Ministerial Training, including in-service training
- Faith and Order questions

In each case where a joint national programme or development is proposed, the Conference/General Assembly would be informed and approval sought.

5.6 The meetings will also consider how best to explore and point towards a resolution of the differences between the Churches referred to in paragraph 2 above. This will involve study of the nature of the local church and the denomination as expressions of the one universal church.

6 **A journey together.** These next steps are a response to the views most widely expressed in the consultation process over the last two years. They do not assume any particular form of union as the necessary end of the journey. They do not exclude the development of relationships with other denominations.

But they do testify to the widespread sharing which already exists and the mutual respect and care evident in a great many places. As the journey together continues, the Holy Spirit will be teaching the members of the Churches how best they may enrich each other through the gifts they have received, and how they may serve the whole fellowship of churches in these islands.

APPENDIX II

MISSION PROJECTS

Mission Projects

1 The missionary context of the Christian Church in Britain is being increasingly recognised. New initiatives in mission are taking place in many URC Districts. Some of these are the direct work of URC Districts, churches or individuals. Others begin in a variety of ways and then seek to be associated with the URC.

2 Where such association with the URC is sought, provision should be made by the District Council and Provincial Synod to enable a Mission Project to have:

i) Suitable oversight and support

ii) Appropriate opportunity to share in the decision-making process of the URC and to offer the insights and discoveries of its own ministry.

3 To enable this to happen it is proposed that constitutional changes be made to recognise Mission Projects as a new category of work, within the responsibility and oversight of District Councils and Provincial Synods.

4 Mission Projects would be listed separately under each District, after the list of Local Churches, in the Year Book.

5 Each Mission Project would need to formulate suitable constitutional and management structures to be approved by the District. Particular attention should be paid to regular evaluation of the Project and to the anticipated time-span of its existence.

6 In the event of a Mission Project developing the potential to become a permanent feature of the District's work, careful decisions regarding financial viability and responsibility for personnel employed, would need to be made by the District. Districts should develop a policy strategy for such work.

7 If the General Assembly accepts Mission Projects as a new category of work, the URC nationally would need to develop a policy strategy towards them.

Mission Projects Becoming Local Churches

8 In the event of a Mission Project developing the potential to become a local worshipping community and wishing to become a Local Church of the URC, Synod and District would be encouraged to handle such a request with imagination and sensitivity.

9 The newly recognised Local Church would be encouraged to retain the forms of worship, life and witness already developed within the context of the Mission Project.

10 The District Council would need to discuss and agree with the local community a series of points, including the following:

10.1 The local understanding of the URC and the desire to be fully a part of it.

10.2 The form of Christian worship, which should be in a pattern consistent with the URC Basis.

10.3 The local decision-making process which should be compatible with the life of the URC. Should this show that those taking local decisions form a broader grouping than a list of members as understood in the URC Basis, the District Council would determine what decisions could be taken locally and what it should itself decide after hearing the views of the local fellowship.

10.4 The forms of local leadership and how it will relate to the conciliar life of the URC.

10.5 The procedures for calling or appointing ministers or CRCWs.

10.6 The procedures by which URC members are transferred in and out of the local fellowship.

10.7 Financial support by the wider church to the local fellowship; and by the local fellowship to the wider church.



APPENDIX III

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND

Working Together in the New Ecumenical Instruments Suggested Rules of Good Practice

Introduction

One of the fundamental objects of the new ecumenical instruments is to enable the churches to work increasingly closely together on matters of shared concern. This is intended to go beyond friendly co-operation to, as the Swanwick declaration of 4th September 1987 put it, "clear commitment to each other, in search of the unity for which Christ prayed and in common evangelism and service of the world". (*Churches Together in Pilgrimage*, p.7f).

As a general principle, work is no longer to be done by the ecumenical instruments on behalf of the churches, but by the member churches with and for one another. A major role of the ecumenical instruments is to enable the churches to act together - by bringing together people in the churches with common interests, acting as a channel for the exchange of information, etc.

If the member churches are to work together effectively in this way, certain ground rules need to be agreed among them and followed within the individual member churches. Following ecumenical discussion, this note offers some draft ground rules or rules of good practice.

PRINCIPLES

1 Member churches should be ready to share their own vision of the issues which are important and their own programmes of work with the officers of the ecumenical instruments and with one another.

This is not an invitation to member churches to deluge one another with paper. They should, however, inform the relevant co-ordinating secretary in the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland or officer in Churches Together in England of work projected or underway and share information about it with the relevant network, commission, co-ordinating group or agency.

Work at intermediate (county or metropolitan area) level may be as interesting as work at national level in this context. The Field Officers of Churches Together in England have a role in this as well as the officers of the churches.

Among the key tasks of the officers of the new instruments are

- to ensure that networks, groups, commissions and agencies are established bringing together people in the churches with shared interests;
- to map out the work underway in the different member churches. Member churches can themselves help by mapping out the work, including ecumenical work, in which they are engaged;
- to act as a repository of information on work done or in progress within member churches.

2 When considering embarking on new items of work, or reviewing existing areas of work, member churches should ask themselves whether the principles of working set out in *Churches Together in Pilgrimage* and described above are adequately embodied in the way they propose to proceed.

At the Faith & Order Conference at Lund in Sweden in 1952 the participants asked the member churches "whether they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately". This question should be constantly before our churches as they consider all their activities. Of course there may be circumstances in which it makes sense to establish a working party or other group on a denominational basis. But many issues are of common interest to the churches, and can be addressed more efficiently and comprehensively if the work is done ecumenically.

When member churches are reviewing existing work or considering new work they should therefore share their proposals for action with other member churches through the relevant ecumenical body. In this way ecumenical considerations should become not an additional factor to be considered at the end of a project, but part of the very thinking about it from its inception, and also a regular factor in any review of existing work.

3 Member churches should take into account priorities established ecumenically when considering their own internal priorities for work.

All member churches and the new ecumenical instruments have limited resources. Choices have to be made about how those resources are to be used.

Priorities for the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland are decided by member churches through the Church Representatives Meeting, noting advice from the Steering Committee. Priorities for Churches Together in England are decided by the member churches through the Enabling Group, which includes representation both of the intermediate bodies (county or metropolitan area ecumenical councils) and of the member churches.

Each member church has its own different structure of authority through which decisions about priorities are taken.

There is no neat way in which the processes of establishing priorities within individual member churches and collectively within the new ecumenical instruments can be brought together. Denominational responsibilities and structures vary, and cannot easily be aligned. The important thing is that there should be a continuing process of dialogue - through representative bodies, groups, commissions, agencies, networks, etc. - so that decisions about priorities in each context are informed by thinking and views expressed in the other. It is also important that churches should be sensitive to the possibility of the gradual alignment of structures where that would pose no substantial threat to their particular structure of authority.

The principles laid down in the report *Churches Together in Pilgrimage*, and charity itself, demand that where one church or group of churches has a priority which requires action from other churches, the other churches take this very seriously.

4 Member churches should be on the look-out for opportunities to share resources with one another by offering to undertake particular pieces of work.

The Church Representatives Meeting or the Enabling Group may ask member churches to undertake particular pieces of work on behalf of others. But individual churches also need to be on the look-out for opportunities to offer their work in the service of all.

On the whole, given the limited resources of member churches, it makes sense to co-operate/share resources wherever possible. In that way, small contributions can together add up to a useful sum, and the smaller churches can be helped by the larger. Proposals for ecumenical sharing need to be cleared through the new instruments. They should:

- be agreed within the member church making the proposal;
- be agreed by the other member churches;
- include a clear understanding about how the shared arrangement is to work, what contributions are expected from each participating church, and how accountability to the member churches is to be ensured.

5 Member churches should consider carefully the development of methods of working which further ecumenical co-operation.

Methods of working which are normal in some churches may not help in achieving the involvement of other churches in a piece of work which is to be taken forward ecumenically. For example, it is difficult for those churches which lack large central staffs to participate in meetings during normal working hours, since they often have to rely on volunteers to represent them.

There may also be a need to think imaginatively about how reports developed ecumenically are processed within the member churches. For example, an ecumenical working group may

prepare a draft of conclusions and recommendations resulting from a piece of work, but it may help the handling and acceptance of a particular report if its conclusions and recommendations are put in final form by the board or committee which has direct responsibility for the subject within each member church.

There may also be ways for the churches to satisfy the needs of their own denominational networks as well as the need for ecumenical co-operation without adding extra meetings. For example it may be possible for the networks of all the churches in a particular field to meet at the same time, and to devote some of the meeting to separate denominational concerns in denominational groups, and some of the meeting to shared concerns in a plenary gathering.

6 The Enabling Group of Churches Together in England and Member Churches will need to think carefully about what work is to be done under the auspices of Churches Together in England and what under the auspices of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland.

The division of responsibility between the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland and Churches Together in England is not yet clear. It will need to be worked out in careful dialogue between the two. In that dialogue, the English churches will need to be alive to the sensitivities of the Scottish, Welsh and Irish ecumenical bodies when proposing joint action under the auspices of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland. At the same time it is in the interest of all churches to avoid duplication wherever it is possible and sensible to do so, and to ensure that the results of work by member churches are shared as widely within the new instruments as possible.

APPENDIX IV COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION



General Secretary: Dr D Preman Niles

- 1 1991 was a year of change and of new beginnings both for CWM and for me!
- 2 The Council meeting in Seoul, Korea, in June marked the culmination of Aubrey Curry's year as Acting General Secretary. The theme of the meeting was *Face to Face* which was also the title of the biennial report, edited by Eileen Thompson, who left us in September. I hope that by the time you read this report we will have appointed a new Director for Communication.
- 3 Although I did not take up the post until July, I was able to be present in Seoul and was in a position, therefore, to pick up the key issues: how CWM can engage in wider ecumenical co-operation; the need for greater participation by women and young people; the Churches' leadership development crisis; the continued redefining of the role of the 'missionary'.
- 4 I was able too, to join in the Pre-Council Consultation with the Presbyterian Church of Korea. It was good, at a recent meeting in London with representatives from that Church, to hear how much of the CWM ethos this new member has already absorbed into its life. We were very grateful to PCK for their hospitality in Seoul and for the thought and effort which had gone into the preparation for the Consultation and the Council meeting.
- 5 In 1991, we saw the beginning of new ecumenical initiatives in the Pacific and in the Caribbean. In both Regions, CWM partner Churches have played a key role in bringing together *their* partners and encouraging them to engage in the open dialogue to which the CWM family is accustomed.
- 6 In order to further CWM's commitment to support women in mission as a vital component of its Education in Mission programme, the Executive Committee decided at its meeting in New Zealand in November to ask two existing staff members to take on additional responsibilities. Francis Brienen, Assistant for Education in Mission, and Ekei Etim, Research

Officer, have been asked to engage in advocacy, solidarity building and networking in this area, as well as to convene the Women's Advisory Group. We expect new challenges to the Churches - and new opportunities - to come from their work.

7 The Revd Andrew Prasad, Secretary for Personnel, has been engaged in much ground work for a thorough re-examination of CWM's role in our Churches' use of people. Exchange of Personnel will be the key issue at our Executive Committee meeting in the Netherlands in May this year. We will also at that time be exploring with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands how their partnership with CWM can be renewed and deepened.

8 I am very conscious of the major contribution which the URC makes to the finances of CWM. While we continue to be extremely grateful for this, it is my view that it is now time for other partner Churches to increase their giving. Later in the year, therefore, Aubrey Curry and I will be challenging the Churches - targeting in particular those in East Asia - to consider whether they are sharing as fully as they are able in the material costs of CWM.

9 We look forward to the first ever meeting of the CWM Executive Committee in South Africa, taking place at the end of the year. Our hosts, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa and the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, are anxious that their partners should experience the *new* South Africa and share their fears and hopes for the future.

10 Finally we are grateful to the URC and the Congregational Federation for their invitation to hold the 1995 CWM Council meeting in England. We look forward to celebrating the bicentenary of the London Missionary Society and reaffirming the roots of CWM.

APPENDIX V

ST ANDREW'S HALL MISSIONARY COLLEGE

Principal: The Revd David Grainger

1 During the year Verna Cassells, Tutor, travelled to Jamaica in March to attend the annual Synod of the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman. Whilst there she was ordained into the ministry of that Church. After spending the Summer Term back in Britain, she returned to the Caribbean for a well earned period of home leave. She recommenced her duties here in September 1991.

2 Of the Scholarship Holders with us during the academic year 1990/91, the Revd Herbert Opong, of Ghana, completed the Diploma in Mission and Revd Sung Jae Kim, of Korea, completed a course in Church Education. Another Scholarship Holder, Walter Silva from Sri Lanka, studying at Northern College, spent a month undertaking some of the summer Mission Modules. It was also good to have Mr Jan Kotek from Czechoslovakia here for a one term course in English. The use of URC places at the College for participants from Eastern and Central Europe has continued in the current academic year.

3 On 30 November 1991 the College celebrated its 25th Anniversary with a special meal, Eucharist and a guest lecture offered by Professor David Bosch, a distinguished missiologist from South Africa. Copies of that lecture with the title, "The Vulnerability of Mission" can be obtained from the Publications Secretary, Selly Oak Colleges, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6LQ price £1.50. It was good to have Professor Bosch with us for a number of other days during which he gave another four lectures in the Mission Department at the Selly Oak Colleges.

4 We are making good progress in developing our interaction with local churches in the West Midlands by arranging visits for course participants. In addition, the placements undertaken by Scholarship Holders during the Easter vacation have proved to be very helpful.

5 The Mission Department at the Selly Oak Colleges, under the leadership of the Dean of Mission, the Revd Andrew Kirk, is undertaking a number of important developments. They include the introduction of a new MA in Mission Studies through the University of Birmingham and available from September 1992.

ADVOCACY REPORT

Convener: Revd Julian Macro

Secretary: Revd Bill Wright

INTRODUCTION

1. We come to the end of the third year in our five year life-span encouraged that a growing number of local Churches have sought to capture a vision of what God is calling them to do and have begun to challenge their members to make the vision a reality by releasing both human and financial resources. Others have yet to take action but are beginning to realise that it is possible to reverse the decline in membership and resources.

ACTION

2.1 Further seminars have been held to introduce the "Our Response" material and to date nearly 70% of Churches have been represented at them. In many of our Churches, perhaps the majority, 20% of the congregation contributes 80% of the income, furthermore a minority of members are too often left to do the bulk of the work. Those Churches which have used the "Our Response" material as a basis to produce their own programme are reporting a renewed sense of purpose, more active involvement by a greater number of people and increases in giving ranging from 40% to 60%. Our role is to encourage, support and provide resources; only those who are leaders in the local Church - Ministers, Officers and Elders - can engage in action which will challenge people to respond. We hope that those who have yet to act will be encouraged by those whose actions have proved so fruitful.

2.2 We are delighted that one Province is encouraging all the Churches in the Province to challenge their members to give 5% of their take home pay to God's work in the Church. We encourage other Provincial Synods to follow this example.

2.3 We rejoice that the response of local Churches to the needs of the Ministry & Mission Fund in 1992 is such that stipends can be raised to £11,500 but regret that so few seem willing to follow this through into 1993 and enable the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee achieve a stipend of £13,200.

ATTITUDES

3.1 Too often we find those in key positions in the local Churches are held back by their own attitudes and those of their members. We have heard with great frequency and as a reason for lack of action, the fact that many Churches have a congregation that is ageing and declining in members. An active 76 year old responded by saying "I wish my Minister would treat me and my age group the way he treats those who are younger. I don't need people to make excuses for me, I simply want to be challenged and allowed to respond."

3.2 "Ageism" is as much a prejudice as "Racism" and neither has a place in our Church. The Bible is full of people who in their "old age" served God and achieved great things in his name.

3.3 The "**Decade of Evangelism**" serves to remind us that sharing the Good News of God's saving love in Jesus is always a central activity of Christians and the Church. A more positive attitude towards evangelism would leave no room to talk of a declining membership.

RESOURCES

4.1 Through the Group's representation on the CCBI Stewardship Network we share resources with the other major denominations. Two of the resources we are currently offering our Churches have been developed from programmes which have greatly benefited Anglican and Methodist local Churches. The first, TRIO (THE RESPONSIBILITY IS OURS), is a financial planning programme which contains all the information and material a local Church needs to both inform and challenge its members. The basic cost is £45 - an amount which has been recouped many times over wherever the programme has been used. The second resource is in the form of a workshop designed to help local Churches capture a vision of what God is calling them to do and to be. A third resource, a leaflet and poster, inviting individuals to compare what they spend on non-essentials with what they give to the church, and challenging them to regard 5% of "take home pay" as a proper contribution to the church will be available at Assembly.

4.2 A fourth and under-used resource is the people who serve as **PROVINCIAL ADVOCATES**. All give of their time willingly and freely and want Churches to give them the opportunity of presenting a picture of the wider work of the Church which is made possible by the Ministry & Mission Fund. We are dismayed when we hear of Churches which have not called on the services of their Provincial Advocate yet complain that they do not know how this Central Fund of the Church is used.

4.3 In this last year we have lost two members of our Group Revd Dr Elliott Massey, who has returned to the U.S.A. and Revd Dr Lois Sundeen who will shortly return to the U.S.A. We have greatly valued their contribution and look forward to the appointment of their successors.

FUTURE

5.1 As we begin the last two years of our work we have opened conversations with the Faith & Life Department to ensure that what we have begun is built upon and becomes part of the ongoing life of the Church. In the meantime we urge all who are leaders in our local Churches to make use of the resources which are available to help them catch a vision of God's work for their Church and to challenge their fellow members to give of themselves and their money so that the vision may become a reality.

5.2 Twelve years ago when Stewardship was given a high priority in our Church we borrowed these words from the Church of Scotland 'The task ahead of you is never as great as the power behind you.' We should always remember that when God calls us to do something in his name, he does so knowing that we have it within us, aided by his Holy Spirit to achieve whatever he calls us to do.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 Assembly reaffirms the challenge made by Revd Robert O Latham in 1979 that members regard 5% of take home pay as a proper contribution to the Church and urges leaders of local Churches to challenge their congregations to release the resources which will enable the Church to do the work God is calling it to do.

FORWARD POLICY GROUP

Convener: Mr Raymond Clarke

Secretary: Mrs Connie Winter

Valuing the Past and Planning for the Future

1 Throughout its life the Group has received regularly the Minutes of Departmental meetings as well as other documents relating to the forward-looking processes of the Church. From these sources the Group has been kept aware of the extensive range of responsibilities accepted by those who, at all levels within the Church, plan, promote and administer its varied activities. At this stage, as the Church prepares to adopt a new pattern of central administration, the work of the Group is rightly brought to an end. In this final report it acknowledges the privilege of having been the recipient of a flow of invaluable information. It has been evident during the past year that, despite the preparations for a new central structure, the momentum of and commitment to existing work has been sustained.

2 Like any other organisation the United Reformed Church has to set in balance the traditions of the past, the needs of the present and the hopes for the future. Forward planning is always in the context of present commitments. With more than 100,000 members and probably twice that number of others involved in one way or another with the activities generated through worshipping and serving communities it is essential that there is cohesion between the four levels of activity and policy-making - Church, District, Province and Assembly.

3 In any sphere of the URC's work there needs to be clarity about whose responsibility it is to make the policy, determine the priorities, provide and allocate the resources - both human and material, review progress and effectiveness and, throughout, to seek the views of those involved in the particular activity. Then, what is learned and achieved is able to contribute to any further phase of forward planning. This process can appear rather formalised and even pretentious when related to some of the ways in which we support and serve each other in our Christian faith. Yet something of this sequence is equally applicable to, say, the planning of Elders' pastoral work; the preparation for and follow-up of a District Council meeting; Provincial involvement in ecumenical developments; the central preparation by the URC of comments requested by a Royal Commission; or assuring the financial contribution for our international activities. These are the kind of considerations that have to be taken into account when reviewing present work or coming to a decision about future possibilities.

Patterns of Ministry

4 The Assembly will focus on the important document on Patterns of Ministry. This comments on present practices in a central area of our work together. There are good practices but also some challenges relating to selection, training, deployment and movement, the use of time, the place of special ministries - ordained or lay. A critical issue is the role of Districts in identifying areas of special need. There is an issue about the realities of equality of opportunity within ministerial service, based on attitudes to gender, age and race. The Forward Policy Group repeats its belief, expressed last year, that 'the URC should gradually implement a regular review of all ministers in pastoral charge, in a manner similar to that in which special ministries are reviewed'. We also believe that a concern for ministry implies that all ordained and lay workers within the URC should be offered individual support and encouragement in considering the future patterns of their own ministry. It may not be appropriate, within Christian service, to think in terms of 'career development'.

However, it is essential that discussion should be possible about the sense of personal fulfilment and progress at any stage of a ministry. This is a sphere in which Provincial Moderators are able to contribute with sensitivity but it is not a responsibility which should be thought to rest with them alone.

Family Life and Age Groups

5 In considering future responsibilities there is a concern about the manner in which, within our families, churches and communities, we respond to the varied needs of different age groups. Inter-generational understanding is not necessarily easier to achieve in church circles than in the world at large. The URC's work among children and young people continues to develop in some encouraging ways, but not everywhere. Public attitudes to marriage and divorce reflect uncertainty on moral and legal issues. Lone parents or step-parents may have special needs which merit a response. So may those whose physical or mental health is impaired. People in the middle years are nowadays often more willing to speak about the stresses or disappointments they are experiencing. There is a growing recognition that we must not be apologetic about the presence of the many older people in our church, nor inadvertently appear to limit the service they can still offer. From all parts of the country there are good examples of new approaches by churches to the needs and opportunities represented by these age-related issues. Are they susceptible to any forward policy-making process?

Communication and the Use of the Media

6 At one of its meetings the Group was joined by representatives of the Departments, together with the General Secretary Elect and a Field Officer of Churches Together in England. The invitation to the occasion said : 'The new structures for central organisation within the URC combined with an accelerating range of ecumenical activities in many parts of the country provide an opportunity to review methods of communication and use of the media. Where there are good and effective practices these should be maintained; where there is need for improvement the means of achieving this should be explored'. The Group's concern was for communication upwards and downwards, inwards and out. Some ideas arising from this consultation are available in a paper from the Group, one of whose members said that: 'The paradox in the communication process, within and beyond the URC, is that we face two dangers. Either a top-level communication bureaucracy or a local attitude which implies that we please ourselves what we believe and what we say. Neither is acceptable within our form of church order and mutual responsibility. So, we need a loving bureaucracy (the new Mission Council) tempered by and co-operating with the local realities as expressed at Church meetings.

The Mission Council

7 As part of its comprehensive and coherent responsibilities the Mission Council will be in a position to keep all forward policy issues under constant review. It will be able to express and uphold the Church's beliefs, to formulate its policies and then to support those who put them into practice. It will also act as custodian or trustee of the Church's human and material resources, overseeing its activities and being accountable to its members. These responsibilities are complex but inter-locking. High levels of pastoral, theological and administrative competence will need to be available. The members of the Mission Council will contribute the experience and skills which they already possess. They will be challenged in accepting very wide perspectives and in devising a distinctive style of work.

8 It is recognised that through Provinces, and otherwise, considerable care has been devoted to achieving a balance of interests and experience when making nominations to the Mission Council. Comparable discernment will be required in

determining the composition of any task groups that are set up by the Mission Council. Opportunities will be needed to ensure that continuing assessment and evaluation can take place of the whole Mission Council process so that it can operate with appropriate flexibility and effectiveness.

9 In the discussions on communication, noted above, some comments were made about how the Mission Council might set high standards in communicating with the whole of the URC. For example it was suggested that:-

- * Its style of work must encourage the use of the visual image as well as the written and spoken word.
- * Its printed material must be communicated clearly and briefly in easily comprehended language and figures.
- * There should be face-to-face oral communicators available to attend Synods and Districts on behalf of the Mission Council.
- * There could be short videos to convey the issues and decisions from the Assembly or other major occasions.
- * The content and distribution of the Information Service should be kept under review to ensure that it is achieving its purpose.

In this discussion there was an assumption that the Mission Council would expect to be as open as possible in its style of work and that it would generally wish to share information, including financial information, as widely as was relevant and possible.

Provinces and Districts

10 The creation of the Mission Council is likely to have impact upon the processes of discussion, consultation and decision-making for Provinces and Districts. It may also have some bearing, in due course on their membership and the size of area which they serve. The question has arisen as to whether Provinces should also have Mission Councils. It is likely that diversity of practice in these matters will continue and prove to be a strength. What is important is that all levels of the Church should be open to the possibility of organisational changes and in new methods of communication. The report from the North West Province on the roles of Synods and Districts was a helpful document. Furthermore the Church has also discussed the scale of representation of churches on their District Councils. In all of this discussion the point has been stressed that while the main purpose of a District Council is to discharge its business, its meetings do provide a means of personal and inter-church fellowship. It is the spirit of the occasion which is so important.

The Local Church

11 Forward planning is perhaps more easily and customarily discussed at national or strategic level. But at the centre of the URC is the local church. It is primarily for the benefit of the local church and its members, and on their behalf, that the wider or higher structures exist. We therefore repeat in this, our final report, what we expressed at last year's Assembly:-

- * 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.

RESOLUTION
FORWARD POLICY

- * 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.
- * This Mission Council should facilitate this process provided that its composition reflects this priority.
- * The local church is our primary base for mission.

New Paths

12 As the retiring members of the Forward Policy Group we thank our predecessors and especially Professor Robert Steel, the former Convener, for setting the pattern of work which we inherited. We are also most grateful, especially to the General Secretary and Departmental Secretaries, to all who have nourished us by providing the on-going record of the Church's life. We have appreciated the task entrusted to us and have enjoyed carrying it out, despite the fact that we have had no executive responsibility. We are very happy that these matters are now to be integrated within the Mission Council. We hope that its members will share something of the occasional excitement which we have experienced as we have realised how people's faith, action and hope for the future were sometimes confirming them in their present work but often leading them into new paths of Christian service.

RESOLUTION

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.

ASSEMBLY PASTORAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Convener: The Revd Cyril Franks

Secretary: The General Secretary

The Committee has had a heavy year. At each of their meetings they have had to deal with about fifteen situations. Some problems we have been able to resolve at once, but others require our attention for many months. Suffering has been experienced both by ministers and congregations, although we are glad to report that healing has been achieved.

Confidentiality must be sustained, of course, as far as possible. We are not at liberty to report on specific circumstances but it can be said that we explore all possible avenues of support. Ultimately we are concerned to be able to discern the will of God for each minister and each congregation. There are times when we are not sure that that purpose has been achieved. Even when we are as clear as we can be what that will is, we are not able to bring it about and have to say, 'This is the best that we can do in the circumstances.'

We have to work within limits of denominational order and sometimes pay heed to legal requirements. That being so, it is inevitable that sometimes we are not able to arrive at a conclusion of a matter to the entire satisfaction of everyone involved.

Every 'case' is unique and requires attention to conditions which need special care. We have to rely heavily upon Provincial Moderators, Synods and District Councils for guidance and advice. There we meet with evidence of great care and many hours of deliberation, and judgements of love, and we are grateful for this. Some situations have required the help of professional counsellors and in these circumstances we have not been slow to obtain it and contribute to its cost.

There is still some evidence that we are not as careful as we might be in our candidating procedures. The responsibilities are sometimes passed from group to group with everyone hoping that at the next stage of decision-making clarification will come. We fall to the temptation to accept a candidate for fear of disappointing individuals by saying 'No' or 'Not yet'. While it is too much to expect that we shall never make a mistake, there is evidence that inadequate insight has been given into the stresses and tensions of ministry, the nature of the demands which will have to be faced and the character traits which must be present to enable a person to undertake effective service.

Alistair Black, the Treasurer, has taken his place amongst us and we are happy that we are able to have the benefits of his considerable skill and experience.

RESOLUTION

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.

FINANCE

Convener: Mr Alistair Black

Secretary: Mr Clem Frank

1. Angus Grimmond resigned from the post as Treasurer of the Church shortly after Assembly 1991. The Department wishes to record its thanks to Angus Grimmond for his unstinting service to the Church since his appointment as Treasurer in 1988. Whilst the Nominations Committee searched for a new Treasurer, Fred Brooman readily consented to act as Treasurer until the end of 1991. The Department is grateful to Fred Brooman for resuming temporarily a role to which he brought considerable past experience. The Executive Committee appointed Alistair Black as Treasurer of the Church with effect from the 1st January 1992.

Contributions to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and the Unified Appeal

2. The budgets approved by General Assembly 1990 for the General Fund and the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund in 1991 showed shortfalls of £81,000 and £34,000 respectively. In the circumstances, it is encouraging to report that the General Fund produced a surplus of £45,000 and the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund a surplus of £43,000. These improvements are attributable to the Provinces meeting their promised contributions (see Appendix I), coupled with an improvement in sundry income and a reduction in community charge costs. We were also able to make a modest improvement in the pension subvention payment.

3. Once again we wish to place on record our gratitude to the provinces, districts and local churches for their contributions which have enabled the Church to undertake its daily life and witness.

Stipends of Ministers holding Assembly Appointments

4. Information relating to the stipends and conditions of service of ministers holding Assembly appointments is given in Appendix II.

Supplementary Report to Assembly 1991

5. A Supplementary Report from the Department to Assembly was circulated at Assembly. It is attached, for reference purposes, to this Report as Appendix III.

Plan for Partnerships in Ministerial Remuneration

6. The Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration, was last substantially revised in 1984. Since that time, amendments to stipends and conditions of service and changes in funding have meant that large parts of the Plan have become obsolete. These changes are reflected in a new Plan which is shown in Appendix IV and were approved by the Executive, on behalf of Assembly, at its meeting in March 1992. The parts of the former Plan which related to church contributions have been adopted by the Financial Resources Committee as the Principles and Practice of the Ministry & Mission Fund, (see Appendix V).

7. The decision to hold Assembly in July enables the audited accounts to be included in the book of Reports rather than circulated separately. (see Appendix VI)

FINANCIAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Alistair Walker

Secretary: Mr Clem Frank

8. In accordance with its responsibility the Financial Resources Committee has prepared a budget for 1993. However, it faced a dilemma in doing so in view of the strong wish of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to raise stipends to £13,200 on 1st July 1993 as against the provisional figures emerging from the majority of Provincial representatives, which indicated that the requisite level of funding to underpin such an increase is unlikely to be forthcoming.

9. In the circumstances and after much agonising, the Committee have decided to present a budget for 1993 based on stipends increasing to £12,000 in July 1993, which calls for total church contributions of £15.033m but at the same time:-

Challenges the General Assembly, and through it the whole church, to lift the Ministry and Mission budget for 1993 to £15.632m, so that stipends can be raised in July 1993 to the level commended by Assembly 1991 (Resolution 5).

10. In laying this challenge before General Assembly, the Committee recognises that to meet the £13,200 stipend target in July 1993, the level of church contributions is required to increase by a further 22% in 1993 on top of the 24% increase this year. This is obviously a major undertaking. However, the Financial Resources committee is aware that in a number of individual churches where members have already been directly challenged, the level of giving has increased commensurate with this requirement.

11. The knock-on effect in 1994 will be to increase costs by 4% over normal funding costs.

12. The Committee imposed a limit of a 5% increase on all non Maintenance of the Ministry costs and the Departments are to be congratulated on limiting their requirement in 1993 to £1.85m, which is 3.9% above the 1992 budget.

13. In the light of the difficulty in estimating the number of ministers to be paid, and also the increasing costs of providing adequate stipends to ministers, and the decreasing number of members, the Committee requested the Ministries Department to consider measures which would provide greater precision in the number of stipendiary ministers in the two or three years ahead.

MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Alistair Black

Secretary: Mr Alan Taylor

Performance of the Fund in 1991

14. The Committee acknowledges with gratitude the level of contributions received from churches in 1991. Dividends and donations were £13,000 above budget and the Community Charge Supplement was £146,000 lower than anticipated, which largely offset the higher number of stipendiary ministers and the increased pension subvention, resulting in a small surplus of £43,000.

Stipend 1992

15. The Committee was encouraged by the response from the Provinces in meeting the challenge to raise stipends to a more realistic level through materially

increasing their contributions in 1992 to the Ministry & Mission Fund. In the circumstances, the Committee have implemented the proposal which was endorsed by Assembly in 1991 and the basic stipend is being raised to £11,508 on the 1st July 1992, with manse heat and light costs transferring to ministers and children's allowances terminating on the same date. In taking this decision, the Committee took account of the fact that the number of stipendiary ministers in service in 1992 is now expected to be higher than estimated when the budget was originally drawn up, which will add approximately £200,000 to this year's budget.

16. During the year the Committee found a way of avoiding the additional National Insurance liability which last year's Assembly was informed would arise in consolidating manse heat and light costs in the stipend. The new Plan incorporates the revised procedure.

Estimated costs in 1993

17. The Committee noted that the 1992 stipend decision will automatically raise funding requirements in 1993 by 16%, even if the stipend rise in 1993 only keeps pace with inflation.

Stipend 1993

18. The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee has considered over many months the appropriate level of stipend increase in 1993 and believes that an increase to £13,200 in mid-1993 would be right. The clear advice of those who raise the income, as representatives on the Financial Resources Committee, makes it impossible for the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to anticipate at this date that the church will provide the level of income necessary to support that figure. With great reluctance, therefore, the Committee is now budgeting for a stipend level of £12,000 in July 1993, but believes the church will only have fulfilled its responsibility to ministers if the figure of £13,200 is achieved in 1993.

Council Tax

19. The new Council Tax will be introduced in April 1993. Although there is uncertainty as to its level, it seems clear that the liability will revert to property owners which in the case of manses is usually the local church.

20. This change will mean that the costs will no longer need to be grossed up to include Tax and National Insurance and will be met by local churches instead of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund.

Pensions

Triennial Actuarial Review

21. The Supplementary Report tabled at Assembly 1991 by the Financial Resources Committee referred to preliminary advice received from the Actuaries indicating a deficit in the Pension Fund at 31st December 1990 of approximately £2 million. In the event the final Actuarial Report showed a deficit of £1.65 million.

New Pension Liabilities

22. Under the existing Rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund, pensions are automatically linked to changes in ministerial stipends. As a consequence, the increase in stipend to £11,508 from 1st July 1992 raises pension entitlements by approximately 35% and results in the substantial increase of £8 million in the current Pension Fund deficit.

23. As already stated, the targeted increase in stipends to £13,200 will increase this liability by a further £2 million.

Planned Response

24. The Committee considers it important for the Church to make an effective response to this substantial liability by tackling it within a reasonable time span so as to avoid the liability becoming a burden upon future generations of church members.

25. As a first step, the annual subvention to the Pension Fund has been increased by £100,000 in 1991 and a further £900,000 transferred from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund Reserves also in 1991, making up a total transfer to the Pension Fund of £1 million.

26. The subvention in 1992 has been increased to £615,000 and will be reviewed at the year end to see if there is any possibility of a further rise in this figure. A subvention payment of £825,000 is included in the 1993 budget and it is planned to increase this amount in each subsequent year by 10%, compound. Currently, this programme provides for the repayment of the current deficit of £10 million in approximately ten years. However, the Committee feels that it is important for the Church to recognize its obligation to seek ways of liquidating the deficit by an earlier date.

Current Pension Fund Rules

27. The inherent weakness in the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund Rules which has led to the current dramatic leap in liabilities is that pensions start at an abnormally low level but escalate, thereafter, at a uniquely high rate, because of the unusual feature of their automatic linkage with stipends.

28. Unless changes in these abnormal rules are introduced it is feared that similar liabilities will occur in the future and lead to further financial strain on the Church with current procedures for stipend and pension increases becoming frustrated. The two abnormal Rules are:-

- 1) The accrual rate of 1/100ths for the starting pension which gives an initial figure which is unduly low for current standards in Pension Schemes. Whilst the proposed upgrading of stipends in 1992 provides a much needed one off uplift in pension entitlements for retired and serving ministers it does not resolve the issue. This is against the background that a large part of a minister's remuneration, housing and other expenses is not pensionable.

- 2) The fixing of all pensions as a proportion of the stipend with the proportion maintained with every rise in stipend. This means that every extraordinary increase in basic stipend gives rise to an extraordinary increase in liabilities for pensions earned.

29. The Committee felt it necessary to share their concern over this situation with Assembly. It is their intention to undertake a careful study of the possibility of making the following changes in the Rules with a view to detailed proposals being brought to Assembly in 1993:-

- 1) Improve starting pensions by raising the accrual rate from 1/100ths to 1/80ths for each year of service. Pensions from the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme will continue to be paid in addition, to those so entitled.

- 2) Remove the automatic linkage with stipends and instead introduce the more usual escalation to match the annual RPI up to a maximum of 5%.
- 3) Remove the individual Pension Fund members right to set aside any rule change which may be felt likely to affect them adversely.

30. However, there is one change in the Pension Rules which it is felt needs introduction now relating to Ministers who are presently entitled to join the Fund at 50 years of age or over. The cost of providing a pension in these situations is placing an excessively high burden on the Fund to the disadvantage of other members.

31. It is the view of the Committee that the Pension Fund Rules should be aligned to those that are applied by the Retired Ministers Housing Committee where 15 years full time service in the Church is the qualifying period and that ministers aged 50 years or over should not be allowed to join the Pension Fund, but should be offered a percentage to be agreed by Assembly towards the individual's personal pension. The Committee are proposing this change to the Plan for Partnership and the Rules of the Pension Fund under Resolutions 8 & 9.

32. Rule 14.1 of the Pension Fund rules currently states:-

"Every Minister under the pension age inducted to the full time service of the local church or to full time service under the appointment of the Assembly shall normally be required to become a contributing member of the Fund.....".

33. This current requirement in the Pension Fund Rules for ministers to join the Pension Fund needs amendment in the light of current legislation which allows individuals to select their own personal pension arrangement. As at present, those under 50 years of age who elect to join a scheme of their own choosing will not benefit from contributions made by the Church.

Protection of the Pension Fund

34. In the light of the recent public criticism over the administration of the assets of certain Pension Funds, legal advice is being sought as to what changes, if any, should be introduced to safeguard members' interests in the URCMPF.

RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd David Hannen

Secretary: Mr Bob Carruthers

35. In the year 1991 housing was provided for 15 retiring ministers and three ministers' widows. All qualifying applicants were assisted and there were no delays in the provision of capital for property purchase. Assistance was provided also for the re-housing of a Minister's Widow.

Number of properties as at 1 January 1991	248
Number of properties purchased in 1991	16
Number of properties received as legacies	2
Number of properties rented in 1991	<u>2</u>
	268
Less number of properties sold	<u>6</u>
	<u>262</u>

Number of properties as at 31 December 1991

Not occupied	1
For sale	4
Occupied by	
Retired ministers	166
Ministers widows	82
Sitting tenants or other Non URC tenants	9
	<u>262</u>

36. All properties sold during 1991 and those for sale at the year end were in areas in which no applicant wished to reside at the time of sale.

37. At the year end two properties were in the process of purchase and two applicants were seeking suitable properties. In addition two applicants were under consideration for housing by Memorial Hall Trust in 1992 and two tenants were in the process of being rehoused.

38. It is anticipated that during 1992 housing will be provided for 12 applicants and four tenants will be re-housed in properties more suited to their need and state of health.

39. The purchase ceilings for the year 1992 are

Province	Society ceiling	Joint Purchase ceiling
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 ceilings quoted for the Province in which the property is situated: "purchase cost" is the purchase price plus the cost of repair, improvement, and/or extension identified as necessary at the time of survey of the property prior to purchase.

2. The Committee maximum contribution is not provided as of right to each applicant. The Retired Ministers Housing Society may provide less than its maximum; an applicant's contribution towards the purchase of a property depends upon the amount of capital available to the applicant.

3. An applicant who desires to have a retirement property costing in excess of the joint ceiling should consult with the Secretary of the Committee.

40. From 1 January 1993 the Committee ceilings will be based on the average price of semi-detached property in the county in which the property is situated. This will result generally in a higher level of contribution from the Committee: in consequence the joint purchase ceiling will be the Committee maximum plus one-third whereas previously it has been the Committee maximum plus one-half.

41. From the same date joint purchases will be restricted normally to the Committee and the Applicant. These revised arrangements should ensure that all applicants are treated equally irrespective of the Province(s) in which they have served.

42. Rental income in 1991 was based on a standard monthly rent of £47.00 and was sufficient to meet the cost of administration, maintenance, repair and insurance. The standard rent was increased to £48.00 per month from 1 January 1992.

43. The Committee is grateful for the generosity of people who give or bequeath property or sums of money to the Society for the housing of retired ministers. During 1991 £41,086 was received in gifts and donations and £291,949 in legacies. The continuing high cost of providing suitable properties indicates the need for District Councils and Provincial Synods to encourage a high level of regular giving to the Society by Churches and their members.

44. The oversight of the retirement properties is greatly appreciated by the resident ministers and widows. In the course of 1991 those Church members who so generously give their time in this work were responsible for maintenance and repairs costing over £82,000. The Principal Officers of the Society are grateful for the co-operation and assistance of those appointed to give oversight and would be grateful if more church members made themselves available for this work. During the year the Principal Officers made visits to 5 applicants, 50 tenants and 21 properties untenanted and participated in the Pre-Retirement Course held at Windermere Centre in November 1991.

WELFARE & EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Ray Heritage
Secretary: Mrs Judy Stockings

45. The Welfare and Emergencies Committee, as it's name implies, is charged to express on behalf of the whole Church a concern, through financial support, for the welfare of our Ministers when emergencies arise.

46. The resources available to the Committee come from eight Funds and in each case the purpose for which that fund is to be used is clearly stated. The amount available is not great and, therefore, judgements are not always easy to make. In the past year, however, we have been able to give help in many cases and in most of these we have received advice and often recommendations from the Provincial Moderators, to whom we are extremely grateful.

47. The help we are able to give, however, is not confined to Ministers and spouses in active service, for we also provide Christmas gifts to Ministers Widows. Immediate grants are also given to spouses when a Minister dies.

48. This Committee does not take a high profile in the book of reports, for it's work is confidential, but nonetheless it is through it's work that the caring of the Church is expressed in financial terms.

APPENDIX I

Contributions to the Maintenance of the Ministry and Unified Appeal 1991

Membership	Province	MOM £'000	Per Member £	UA £'000	Per Member £
9816	Northern	642	65.40	132	13.40
12649	North Western	780	61.66	195	15.40
8068	Mersey	570	70.65	140	17.37
7499	Yorkshire	565	75.34	146	19.47
7124	East Midlands	550	77.20	134	18.81
10063	West Midlands	685	68.07	144	14.25
8867	Eastern	719	81.09	170	19.17
7795	South Western	553	70.94	132	16.87
11211	Wessex	935	83.40	189	16.81
11383	Thames North	1032	90.66	256	22.49
16143	Southern	1355	83.94	305	18.88
<u>6053</u>	Wales	<u>382</u>	63.11	<u>56</u>	9.33
<u>116671</u>		<u>8768</u>	75.15	<u>1999</u>	17.13

APPENDIX II

Ministers Holding Assembly Appointment Stipends and Conditions of Service from July 1991

1. The stipend of Provincial Moderators is £11,484 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 costs 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 £11,484 per annum for Assistant Secretaries to £16,428 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 £11,484 to £12,672 per annum (plus any children's allowances). The housing provisions are the same as those for Provincial Moderators.

APPENDIX III

Supplementary report of the Financial Resources Committee to Assembly 1991

1. At the time the report was sent to the printer, the budget for the Ministry & Mission Fund showed a shortfall of £306,000. The Committee felt that this was an unacceptably large sum, and asked Provincial Representatives to consult their colleagues with a view to reducing this shortfall.

2. Since that time, two factors have emerged, which now enable the Committee to present a balanced budget.

- a. The Committee is grateful that the Provincial Commitments have been increased by £164,000, to the figure of £13,176,000. This will mean considerable sacrifice by the whole Church, and the Committee believes that this response reflects a widely held recognition by the churches of the need to redress the problems arising from the inadequacy in current levels of ministerial stipends.
- b. The officers of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee have reviewed the budget for the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund in the light of changes in Government policy with regard to National Insurance contributions and the reimbursement of statutory sick pay, and the level of community charge affecting the supplements to ministers following the reduction in personal charges of at least £140 per person.

In the light of this, the Officers feel that the budget of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund may be reduced by the amount required to balance the budget, ie £142,000.

3. Doubt still exists with regard to the future of the community charge. It appears that supplements will continue to be required until March 1993, but no definite proposals have yet been promulgated by Government, upon which we can make any estimates for the future.

4. The preliminary report of the Actuaries has now been received, and shows that, at December 31st 1990, the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund has an actuarial deficit of about £2 million. The report also indicates that in order to sustain the current level of pension benefit, the rate of the Church's contribution will need to be increased by 1.55% to 10.65% of basic ministerial stipend. If the annual contribution of £500,000 pa from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund to the Pension Fund continues, the deficit will be extinguished in about 4 years.

5. The pensions Committee asked the Actuary to comment on the proposed increases in ministerial stipends to £8,484 in July 1991, to £11,500 in July 1992 and £13,200 in July 1993. These stipend increases, which are in excess of 'normal' increases may well increase the Actuarial Deficit to about £10 million in respect of the 1992 increase, and by a further £2 million in respect of the 1993 increase. These sums are somewhat in excess of the figures that had been expected, and there has not been time for the Officers of the Maintenance of the Ministry and the Financial Resources Committees to take the matter to the respective committees for consideration. The Chief Accountant reports (after consultation with the Actuary) that the deficiency should be cleared within about 20 years, and this may be done if the annual subvention to the Pension Fund continues for this period, and escalates annually at the rate of 2% over increases in ministerial stipend.

6. The Chief Accountant has produced new budgets for the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund, taking account of the national insurance/sickness recovery change, changes in the community charge supplement costs, and the effect of changes in funding of the Pension Fund required after the actuarial review, and these budgets show that the requirements of the MoM

Fund for 1991 and 1992 will be met from the sums committed by the Provincial representatives on the Financial Resources Committee. However, the sums required to finance the stipend of £11,500 will require not only the commitments made toward the 1992 budget, but also considerable additional resources in 1993, and therefore no final decision will be taken with regard to the 1992 stipend increase until we can be satisfied that the 1993 budget (which will include the necessary amounts to adequately amortise the Pension Fund actuarial deficit) can be sustained.

APPENDIX IV

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

THE PLAN FOR PARTNERSHIP IN MINISTERIAL REMUNERATION

The Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration was first approved by Assembly in 1980 and revised by Assembly in 1984 and later years.

This document is a re-draft of the Plan, taking account of the changes in stipends, allowances and funding, to be introduced from July 1992.

This edition also includes for ease of reference other information relating to ministers.

Revised, and approved by Assembly Executive March 1992.

Abbreviations used in this Plan

URC	United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom
MoM	Maintenance of the Ministry
DSS	Department of Social Security

PART I - GENERAL

1. Objects of the Plan

To provide a unified scheme for the remuneration of stipendiary ministers and church related community workers in the service of the Kingdom of God within the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom (URC).

2. Principles of the Plan

2.1 The whole ministry of the URC is to be made available to the whole of the Church, and the financial responsibility for this ministry is to be shared throughout the whole of the Church. It is recognised that the extent and type of ministry will vary in different situations.

2.2 Payment of the basic stipends of ministers and certain other payments provided for by the Plan will be made from a central fund, known as the Maintenance of the Ministry (MoM) Fund, which will be substantially funded from local church contributions to the Ministry and Mission Fund.

2.3 The total budgeted requirement of the MoM Fund shall be submitted annually for approval to the Financial Resources Committee by the Central MoM Committee.

3. Administration and Consultation

3.1 The Plan is administered by the Central MoM Committee whose members are appointed by the General Assembly of the URC, together with a representative of each Province. The Central MoM Committee recommends to the General Assembly any changes in the Plan.

3.2 Normally in the October of each year, the MoM Committee shall consider the first detailed draft of the budget for the year after next. This will be submitted to the Financial Resources Committee for consideration. Early in the following year, a revised draft budget shall be considered by the MoM Committee.

PART II - SCOPE OF THE PLAN

4. Churches to be included:-

4.1 Each local church of the URC, and each ecumenical situation involving the URC.

5. Ministers, Church Related Community Workers, and Students

5.1 Ministers to be included:-

5.1.1 Ministers of the URC serving whole time a single church pastorate or a joint or a group pastorate, or holding a special appointment with a Province.

5.1.2 Ministers of the URC holding whole time chaplaincies (to such number as shall be determined from time to time by the General Assembly) in the appointment of whom the URC has agreed and whose remuneration is derived in whole or in part from the MoM Fund.

5.1.3 Ministers of the URC serving as Provincial Moderators or holding stipendiary appointments in the central departments of the Church; and those ministers inducted to teaching posts at Westminster College.

5.1.4 Ministers of the URC holding appointments in ecumenical situations approved by the Central MoM Committee.

5.1.5 Such ministers of other denominations working in ecumenical situations or otherwise serving the URC, as the Ministries Department shall, from time to time, determine.

5.2 Part time ministers to be included:-

5.2.1 Ministers and ministers (AR) who are not in other full time remunerated employment.

5.3 Students to be included:-

5.3.1 Students for the URC ministry, who have already commenced training, giving ministry with District Council approval in vacation periods to URC pastorates which are in pastoral vacancy.

5.3.2 Students in special situations. Where an ordained minister is undergoing further training required by the Ministerial Training Committee and has pastoral oversight of a local church the minister may be paid such stipend and allowances as may be agreed by representatives of the local church, the Provincial Moderator, the District Council, the Ministerial Training Committee, the College where the minister is studying and the Central MoM Committee, who shall agree from which sources the money shall be paid.

5.4 Special Cases to be included:-

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

5.4.2 Such other special cases as are accepted by the Central MoM Committee.

5.5 Church Related Community Workers to be included:-

5.5.1 Accredited Church Related Community Workers serving in posts recognised and designated by the Ministries Department.

5.6 Whole time ministers NOT to be included:-

5.6.1 Ministers ordained under Assembly Resolution (AR) who have not completed such further training as is specified by the Ministerial Training Committee; and local pastors.

5.7 Part time ministers NOT normally to be included:-

5.7.1 Ministers, ministers (AR) and local pastors who are already in, or enter into, full time remunerated employment.

5.8 Ministers NOT to be included:-

5.8.1 Non-stipendiary ministers

PART III - ENTITLEMENTS

6. Remuneration of Ministers and Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs)

The remuneration of each minister and CRCW included in the Plan consists of a basic stipend together with other entitlements and allowances as set out below.

6.1 Amounts paid from and at the expense of the MoM Fund.

6.1.1 Basic stipend: changes to the basic stipend will be determined by the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee after taking into account the views of the Mission Council or the General Assembly. In the case of "part time" pastorates the proportion of whole time basic stipend which is appropriate, having regard to the work involved, shall be determined by the provincial MoM Committee upon the recommendation of the District Council, subject to the approval of the Central MoM Committee.

6.1.2 Reimbursement of heat and light costs.

6.1.2.1 The basic stipend will be reduced by the amount returned by each minister annually, being the amount of heat and light costs paid for the manse in which the minister resides. A reimbursement of the actual heat and light costs will be paid, free of national insurance and income tax under PAYE to each minister, but will be subject to a tax assessment as a benefit in kind.

6.1.2.2 Each minister will be required to submit a return by 31st May of each year setting out the amount of heat and light costs paid in the preceding year ending 31st March. This return will form the basis of the amount to be provisionally deducted in the following year as well as being used to adjust the amount deducted in the previous year.

6.1.2.3 Paragraph 6.1.2 does not apply to Church Related Community Workers.

6.1.3 Payment during sickness: remuneration shall be paid during periods of sickness for such periods and in such sums as shall be determined from time to time by the Central MoM Committee and having regard to the arrangements operated by the Department of Social Security (DSS).

6.1.3.1 Ministers and CRCWs who are unable to work because of sickness or accident shall be paid full stipend (less any national insurance Sickness Benefit or Industrial Injury Benefit received) for a period of six months during any period of twelve months. Approximately three months after the beginning of any illness, the Central MoM Committee shall take steps to determine, in consultation with the Provincial Moderator, what further help, if any, should be given when the entitlement to full stipend comes to an end.

6.1.3.2 During the first twenty eight weeks of any period of sickness the URC recovers statutory sick pay from the DSS. All ministers and CRCWs who are unable to work for more than three days should advise the Finance Department, as soon as possible during their illness, in order that the necessary recoveries can be made.

6.1.3.3 Ministers and CRCWs who are sick for periods in excess of twenty eight weeks will draw sickness benefit from the DSS and should notify the Finance Department of the amount of the benefit each time it is received in order that the next available stipend payment may be reduced by the amount of the total benefits notified. Where the weekly sickness benefit from DSS received by a part time minister or CRCW exceeds the amount of the remuneration under the Plan, the amount of the deduction from stipend shall not exceed the amount of remuneration, on a weekly basis.

6.1.3.4 Local churches shall pay the fees and expenses of pulpit supplies during the minister's sickness, and in other circumstances as defined in para 10.

6.2 Amounts paid through the payroll system of the MoM Fund at the expense of the local church.

6.2.1 Housing allowance and other taxable remuneration: Where allowances are paid to a minister or CRCW who does not occupy a church-owned manse (see para 6.3.1), the allowances and the additional national insurance contributions based upon them should be paid through the central payroll system, the costs being an expense of the local church.

6.3 Financial Responsibilities of the Local Church(es)

6.3.1 House, free of rent, rates, (where payable) etc: For the purposes of the Plan a house or manse means a home for the minister or CRCW and his/her immediate family provided and maintained in good repair and decoration, free of rent, ground rent, all rates (where payable) and property insurance; and payment of costs of removal into such accommodation. If the manse is not owned or leased by the church, a housing allowance, agreed by the pastorate and the minister or CRCW, approved by the District Council shall be payable to the minister or CRCW. Guide-lines for calculating such allowances shall be issued by the Central MoM Committee (see Appendix B). For the avoidance of any doubt, community charge, which is a personal local tax, is not regarded as rates.

6.3.2 Travel: the costs of travel on church business shall be met as follows.

6.3.2.1 Car: where the regular use of a car is considered necessary by the local church(es) in consultation with the District Council, it is the responsibility of the local church(es) to provide a suitable vehicle; the costs of private motoring shall be borne by the minister or CRCW under locally agreed arrangements.

6.3.2.2 Where, however, the minister or CRCW provides the car, financial arrangements in regard thereto, satisfactory to the minister or CRCW and the local church(es), shall be agreed with the provincial MoM Committee. The Central Maintenance of the Ministry Committee shall distribute annually recommended rates of reimbursement of the cost of motoring on church business.

6.3.2.3 Other Travel: the cost of travel on church business by public transport shall be reimbursed by the local church(es) or other appropriate body.

6.3.2.4 Where a minister or CRCW, following an introduction by a Provincial Moderator, visits a church in pastoral vacancy otherwise than in connection with a preaching engagement, the cost of travel shall be paid by the church visited. A grant, which shall not exceed the cost of travel within the United Kingdom of the minister or CRCW and spouse shall be paid from the MoM Fund to the church.

6.3.3 Expenses: each minister or CRCW shall be reimbursed sums expended in respect of postage, telephone and stationery incurred on official business, by the local church(es) or other appropriate body. The reimbursement of expenses will be on the basis of actual cost incurred, and not by a predetermined lump sum.

6.4 Community charge supplement.

6.4.1 Where community charge is payable by a minister or CRCW, a supplement is payable to all ministers or CRCWs in receipt of a stipend from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund. In order that the amount of the supplement may be assessed, a claim is required.

6.4.2 A further supplement is payable in respect of the spouses of ministers or CRCWs paid from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund, if it is claimed and a certificate that the income of the minister or CRCW and spouse (excluding state benefits) is less than a prescribed sum is signed by the minister or CRCW.

6.4.3 The prescribed sum for any year commencing April 1st shall be one and one third times the annual rate of basic stipend, at that date, rounded up to the nearest £100, or such other sum as the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee shall decide.

6.4.4 The supplement will be the amount of the community charge, grossed up for income tax and national insurance (at the rate payable by a minister or CRCW receiving basic stipend). The supplement will not be a pensionable emolument so far as the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund is concerned.

6.4.5 Where the income of the minister or CRCW and spouse is marginally above the prescribed limit consideration to any circumstances will be given by the MoM Committee. Normally, in such cases the spouse's supplement will be reduced by £1 for each £2 of income over the prescribed limit.

6.4.6 Community charge supplement is payable in 12 monthly instalments (covering the months April to March) with the minister's or CRCW's stipend. If the minister or CRCW is in a part time pastorate, or is paid for only part of the year the amount of the supplement and spouse's supplement will be reduced accordingly.

6.4.7 In the case of ministers or CRCWs married to ministers or CRCWs, the supplement which will be most beneficial to the couple will be paid. However, in no circumstances will more than one supplement be paid in respect of one person.

6.4.8 Any anomalous situations brought to its attention will be considered by the Committee, whose decision in any particular case will be final.

7. **Additional Paid Work**

Stipends and other allowances to whole time ministers or CRCWs shall normally be paid on the basis that these represent the main earned remuneration. It is recognised that a minister or CRCW will from time to time accept other paid work (e.g. hospital chaplaincies or teaching). Where this work, in the view of the District Council and Provincial Moderator, can be performed without detriment to the pastoral care of the church, congregation, and area of local church witness, the additional remuneration shall be retained by the minister or CRCW involved, provided the work does not exceed the equivalent of one working day per week. Where more than one day per week is involved, the Central MoM Committee may reduce the stipend by an appropriate amount after consultation with the minister's or CRCW's District Council and Provincial Moderator.

8. **Miscellaneous Allowances to Ministers and CRCWs**

Grants and loans are payable from the MoM Fund as follows:-

8.1 Resettlement grant

8.1.1 Every stipendiary minister or CRCW, whether whole time or part time shall be entitled to a resettlement grant (as per Appendix A) upon settling into his/her first pastorate and each subsequent pastorate or into a full time appointment of the URC and upon final retirement always provided that the settlement involves a change in place of residence and that such grant shall not be payable more than once in every three years.

8.1.2 Where the pastorate is part time the grant shall be pro-rata according to the proportion of whole time basic stipend in respect of the pastorate to be served. Where a minister's or CRCW's years of service up to normal pension age have not all been whole time the proportion of the resettlement grant on retirement shall be determined by the Central MoM Committee.

8.1.3 In the case of a minister or CRCW who dies before retirement (no matter whether he/she has already passed retirement age or not) his/her spouse shall be entitled upon first changing his/her place of residence to the equivalent of a resettlement grant.

8.1.4 Where a minister or CRCW does not move upon final retirement (e.g. because he/she continues to live in his/her own dwelling or is permitted to remain in a manse that is not required for another minister or CRCW), he/she shall be entitled upon first changing his/her place of residence (subject to the three years' restriction in para 8.1.1 above) to a resettlement grant, and if the minister or CRCW dies after final retirement but before first changing the place of residence then his/her spouse shall be entitled to the equivalent of a resettlement grant.

8.2 Ordination loan.

8.2.1 An interest free loan (as shown in Appendix A) is available to ordinands for the whole time stipendiary ministry; this loan shall be re-payable by deduction from stipend over a period of not more than five years or such other period as the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Central MoM Committee, shall from time to time determine.

8.2.2 A similar loan is available to non-stipendiary ministers who have qualified for the whole time stipendiary ministry, or CRCWs, payable at the time that they take up the whole time stipendiary ministry.

8.3 Retirement removal grant.

The cost of removal, within the United Kingdom, shall be paid (as shown in Appendix A) on the first removal (whenever made) of a minister or CRCW following final retirement from a pastoral charge or from a full time appointment of the URC (or to the spouse of a minister or CRCW who dies before retirement) provided that at least two tenders have been obtained and normally the lowest figure claimed.

8.4 Supplementary Provisions.

8.4.1 Notwithstanding what is written above in para 8.1, in a case of husband and wife being ministers or CRCWs, their combined entitlements shall not exceed that of one whole time minister or CRCW.

8.4.2 In a situation other than those covered above the Central MoM Committee shall have discretionary power to pay, in whole or in part, a resettlement grant, ordination loan and retirement removal grant.

8.4.3 The above resettlement grant, ordination loan and retirement removal grant shall be payable whether or not the manse or retirement dwelling is church-owned.

8.4.4 Changes in grants and loans will be determined by the Central Maintenance of the Ministry Committee after taking into account the views of the Mission Council or the General Assembly.

9. Remuneration of Students

9.1 Students fulfilling pastorates to which para 5.3.1 applies may be paid from the MoM Fund such amounts as the Central MoM Committee shall from time to time determine. Housing and all out of pocket expenses (including the cost of travel to and from the pastorate) shall be borne by the local church. (See Appendix A).

9.2 Students in the circumstances to which para 5.3.2 applies may be paid such stipend and allowances as may be agreed in accordance with that paragraph.

9.3 Except as provided for in this paragraph, and for the provision of salaries of Church Related Community Workers the Plan does not provide for the remuneration from the Fund of any person prior to ordination, nor for pastoral expenses.

10. **Pulpit Supply Costs**

10.1 When it has been reported to the Central Maintenance of the Ministry office that a minister or CRCW remunerated under the Plan

1. is unable to work due to ill-health, and is receiving Statutory sick-pay,

Or 2. is the Moderator of the General Assembly,

Or 3. is absent on a sabbatical term which lasts for a period of more than four weeks, the actual costs of pulpit supplies incurred by the minister's or CRCW's church arising because of the minister's or CRCW's absence, to a maximum decided upon from time to time by the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee (see Appendix A) will be reimbursed from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund to the minister's or CRCW's church, upon receipt of an application in the Central Maintenance of the Ministry Office for such reimbursement. In group pastorates and part time pastorates, reimbursements shall be available only in respect of services which would have been conducted by the absent minister or CRCW.

11. **Grants**

The MoM Fund shall bear the cost of grants in support of ministry in ecumenical situations exercised by recognised ministers (of the URC or other denominations) or CRCWs as follows:-

11.1 Where a URC minister or CRCW serving a pastorate is succeeded by a minister from another denomination (see Appendix C).

11.2 In providing remuneration for a minister other than a URC minister who is in pastoral charge of a local church of the URC (see Appendix C).

11.3 In funding particular ventures approved by the Central MoM Committee.

PART IV - PAYMENTS

12. **Payment of Stipends**

12.1 The payment of the basic stipend, together with any allowances, shall be made monthly on or before the 26th day of each month by the Central MoM Committee.

APPENDICES

- A. Approved rates under the Plan
- B. Guide-lines for Housing Allowances
- C. Ecumenical Support Grants

NOTES

The following notes are given for information

- 1. Holiday provisions for Ministers
- 2. Continuation of Minister's Service at Retirement Age
- 3. Removal Costs

APPENDIX A - APPROVED RATES UNDER THE PLAN
as at 1.7.92.

para 6.1.1	Basic Stipend, whole time Maximum Stipend, part time	£11,508 75% of whole time
para 8.1	Resettlement grant	£2,000
para 8.2	Ordination loan	£2,000
para 8.3	Retirement removal grant	Actual removal costs up to £1000
para 9.1	Maximum weekly payments to students Maximum weeks for which payment made	£51 10
para 10.	Pulpit Supply costs (not generally payable from the MoM Fund except in cases of ministerial illness or sabbatical leave)	maximum refund per service: £20 plus appropriate travelling expenses.

APPENDIX B - GUIDE-LINES FOR HOUSING ALLOWANCES

1. **Resolutions of Assembly 1979** (Record pages 11 & 12) - revised by Assembly 1990 (Record pages 28 and 29).

1. The Assembly resolves that the provision of a dwelling for the minister shall continue to be part of the normal conditions of service.

2. The Assembly calls upon pastorates whose minister lives in a church-owned manse, to ensure that a separate room (in church or manse) is available for use solely as a study.

3. The Assembly requests District Councils (taking advice from Province where required) to take note of the condition and facilities of the manse, or if alternative housing arrangements are to be made, to approve the details of the arrangements, before concurring in calls and when making visitations.

4. The Assembly acknowledges

- a. The wish of some ministers to be owner-occupiers and
- b. The problem such a course can create for the stewards of the Church's material resources;
- c. The desirability of reviewing housing allowances annually.

2. **Basic Provision**

It is the responsibility of the local pastorate (perhaps with the help of the Provincial Synod) to provide a manse and to ensure, as far as possible, that the minister has the use of a separate room as a study. In some cases, ministers may agree to use a room at the church but normally it should be expected that a separate room will be made available at the manse itself.

3. **Basic Understanding**

In most cases, therefore, ministers who live in their own houses are doing so by choice, a choice which the Assembly has recognised they may make, whilst acknowledging at the same time that it can create problems for the Church. They are entitled to expect that the local

pastorate will pay, in lieu of the manse accommodation, as much money as it would otherwise be finding if they were living in the manse; and, presumably they will not expect the local pastorate to make greater provision than it would if they were living in a manse (assuming that the manse would be adequate for the minister and the immediate family).

4. Allowance

There are allowances currently being paid which may have been calculated on various bases and for different reasons, and it is expected that these allowances will be honoured. When determining new allowances the following should be taken into consideration:

a. Allowance specifically 'in lieu of manse accommodation'

This allowance should cover the cost of the following items which the local pastorate would normally have to meet:

- i rates (where payable)
- ii water rate
- iii interior and exterior re-decorations (estimated yearly average)
- iv repairs (estimated yearly average)
- v property insurance.

b. The allowance should be re-calculated annually.

5. Other factors

a. In some cases where the manse is let, it could be reasonable to take into consideration the net rent (ie the rent after meeting all expenses of the up-keep and letting) to see whether a further sum is available for payment to the minister. (The net rent is only being received because the minister is not living in the manse and the local pastorate would have paid all the expenses in para 4. in any case).

b. In those cases where a manse has been sold (perhaps because the minister or his/her predecessor wished to have his/her own house), and the money realised has been invested, the situation is more complex. Experience has shown that the only way to ensure that sufficient capital is available to purchase another manse in future, is to retain virtually all the interest being received on the original capital. Therefore the local pastorate should give very careful consideration before using any part of this interest other than to add to the capital available for the purchase of a future manse.

6. Exceptional circumstances

Where a District Council feels that a settlement has been possible only by the willingness of a minister to provide his/her own accommodation, the local pastorate shall pay a higher allowance than would otherwise be the case. In particular, consideration should be given to recognising the capital element contributed by the minister in providing the property. There may be other exceptional circumstances which justify a higher allowance.

Exceptional circumstances could also require the local pastorate to 'gross up' the allowance so that the sum received by the minister, after paying tax upon it, is not less than the equivalent original accommodation entitlement (the value of which is tax free). At a 25% rate of tax, this 'grossing up' would mean that every £100 has to be raised to £133.33 to produce £100 after tax had been paid.

7. Part time pastorates

Part time ministers will be paid the same proportion of the housing allowance, as computed in para 4 as determined by the scoping. However, it is recognised that there is an anomaly where a part time minister is living in a manse - the local pastorate should normally meet in full all the items in 4a, and the minister should use the manse without any adjustment being made to the percentage proportion of the stipend.

8. Central payroll

To avoid complications regarding tax and national insurance, payments of housing allowances should always be made through the central payroll system.

9. Procedure

The Central MoM Committee acknowledges that the determination of a fair allowance depends very much upon local knowledge. Therefore, each District Council should forward its recommendation to the Provincial MoM Committee for a decision, unless the provincial MoM Committee has delegated authority to the District Council.

APPENDIX C - ECUMENICAL SUPPORT GRANTS

These grants may be made

- a. when a pastorate is faced with the responsibility of contributing towards the cost of ministry of another denomination after the Ministry and Mission Fund contribution for that pastorate has already been agreed. For example, in a UR/Methodist church, where a UR minister is replaced by a Methodist minister, the Ministry and Mission Fund contribution would normally continue at the same level for the remainder of the Ministry and Mission Fund financial year, but the pastorate would probably have to contribute extra to the Methodist Circuit and a grant from the Ecumenical Support Account of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund would enable it to do this.
- b. where a local Church is paying an appropriate contribution, for its ministry (as determined by Province) and District Council deems it appropriate that such local ministry should be provided by the minister of another denomination, then Central MoM Committee (on the recommendation of the Province) may make a grant from the Ecumenical Support Account of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund bearing in mind the proportion of ministry being received.

NOTE 1 - HOLIDAY PROVISIONS FOR MINISTERS

The following guide-lines have been approved by the Executive Committee and were reported to Assembly 1982.

- i. We recognise the need for adequate holiday, which is freedom from all pastoral and preaching duty, and we believe that every local church will seek to ensure this for its minister. Ministers are urged to take holiday as provided, for the sake of effective future ministry.
- ii. We offer as guidance the provision that there should be 5 weeks such holiday in each calendar year; and that each minister should be enabled to take one further Sunday away from his/her pastorate without any claim upon him/her to arrange or pay for pulpit supply. On further occasions of Sunday absence from the pastorate the minister would be responsible for arranging and paying for pulpit supply.
- iii. We consider that circumstances may arise when one week of holiday is carried forward to the following year.
- iv. When a minister serves a part year in a local church on appointment or transfer or retirement, holiday provision should be pro rata, according to paragraph (ii) above, but we do not think that service of under three months in a calendar year should be a basis for such a calculation.
- v. The above sections do not refer to sick leave.
- vi. The above sections do not refer to in-service training courses or Sabbatical leave for study.

NOTE 2 - CONTINUATION OF MINISTER'S SERVICE AT RETIREMENT AGE

This procedure is to be followed when a minister in pastoral charge approaches normal pension age (Reports to Assembly 1982, page 3 and Record page 14).

- i. When the minister has reached the age of 64, the Provincial Moderator is required to ascertain whether the minister wishes to continue in that pastoral charge beyond normal ministerial pension age (i.e. 65).
- ii. If the minister wishes to continue, the minister will apply to the District Council for permission to do so.
- iii. On receipt of an application the District Council, through its appropriate Committee, will consult with the minister, and, separately, with the Elders of the church/es and with the Provincial Moderator.
- iv. The appropriate Committee will place a recommendation before the church/es concerned;
 - a. that the ministry should be terminated at normal pension age, or
 - b. that the ministry should be extended, in the first instance up to a maximum of three years, and the position reviewed in the final year.
- v. In the light of comments from the church/es, the minister and the Provincial Moderator, the appropriate Committee will place a resolution before the District Council.
- vi. Any requests for further extension will be dealt with as above.

NOTE 3 - REMOVAL COSTS

The local church(es) to which a minister is called is responsible for meeting the costs of removal (see para 6.3.1) but when removal costs exceed £250 a grant is available from Central Funds and application should be made via the MoM office.

Where the cost of removal within the United Kingdom is

£251-£1,000

The local church bears the first £250 plus 50% of excess over £250. Central Funds bear 50% of excess over £250.

over £1,000

The local church bears £625. Where prior approval has been given Central Funds bear £375 plus excess over £1,000; this approval will not be given until at least two estimates are submitted for approval to the MoM office.

Where a minister is called from abroad a special application needs to be made to the Financial Management Committee.

Ministers called to the United Reformed Church under the Overseas Recruitment programme in conjunction with the Ministries Department will be paid a grant of 75% of the costs up to a maximum of £1,500, towards the cost of removal of themselves, their families, and their baggage from abroad to the pastorate in the UK.

A similar grant will be paid for their return on termination.

APPENDIX V

THE MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

PRINCIPLES

1. The object of the Fund is to provide in partnership with local churches, district councils, and provinces, financial resources needed to train, equip and remunerate ministry, to support centralised services, and the world-wide work of the Church.
2. Congregations share in the financial cost of the programmes agreed by Assembly by making an annual commitment to the Ministry and Mission Fund.

Budget preparation and approval

3. Each General Assembly approves a budget for the subsequent year. During the previous autumn and winter the Financial Resources Committee, consisting of representatives of the Assembly, each province and each spending committee, prepares a draft budget for presentation to the Mission Council and Assembly. At these committee meetings, the provincial representatives endorse the budget by committing their churches to provide the necessary finance.

Division of provincial commitments

4. Each province has the responsibility for agreeing with its local congregations the share which each will take in meeting the budget commitment. Provinces are free to determine in their own way the contributions of each of their local churches, involving district councils as appropriate.
5. A substantial part of the expenditure of the Ministry and Mission Fund relates to the monthly payment of stipends, salaries and pensions, so it is essential that church contributions are received as evenly as possible throughout the year. To assist this, and to keep costs to a minimum, contributions are normally collected from each congregation by a direct debit of one twelfth of the annual commitment on the twentieth day of each month. Where in exceptional circumstances the payment of twelve equal instalments is not possible then a direct debit for a smaller sum may be agreed with the Finance Department, provided that the full commitment is met before the end of the year.

Any churches unable to enter into a full direct debit commitment should write to the Finance Department, to agree an alternative pattern of payment.

6. All contributions to the Ministry and Mission Fund will be recorded in the Finance Department by church, and a schedule of the sums received from each church will be despatched to each province, (or district if that is required) quarterly. This is the limit of the responsibility of the Finance Department and all initiatives for the alteration of individual church contributions or the collections of arrears of contributions rest with the church, district, or provincial treasurers.

PRACTICE

Division of provincial commitments

7. The responsibility for dividing provincial commitments between the churches rests at province level. It is understood that different provinces may approach the task in different ways, and it is also understood that agreement should be reached between provinces and local churches as to the level of each church's contribution. In many provinces, agreement is reached between local churches and the districts, and between districts and provinces.

Subsequent changes

8. Each spending committee will keep within its budget for the year, but with the budget being made so far in advance it is inevitable that changes will sometimes need to be made. On such occasions, the representative of the spending committee will seek the approval of the Treasurer of the church. The Treasurer is the final arbiter on budget variations and will take such advice as is necessary.

Arrangements with provinces

9. Where a province needs to raise finance from its churches to meet provincial & district costs, then a figure agreed by the Synod will be added to its commitment to the Assembly budget. Upon request of provincial officers the Finance Department will remit to provinces this part of the budget.

At the end of the year any sums received in excess of a provincial commitment will be set against the following year's commitment of that province.

Collecting local church contributions

10. By the end of October in each year, each province is expected to advise the Finance Department office of the amount of each local church's contribution to the Ministry and Mission Fund. (By arrangement, the advice may be given by districts).

Operation of the direct debit system

11. The United Reformed Church is authorised by its bank, Midland Bank plc, to operate the direct debit system. In the agreement with the bank, the Church has undertaken:-

1. To advise each church of the amount of the direct debit and the date(s) upon which it will be taken.
2. To advise each church of any change in the amount of the direct debit.
3. To cancel the arrangement if the local church so requests.
4. To reimburse immediately any sums of money that are taken inadvertently in contravention of the arrangements.

Any changes will be reported to provinces.

12. Before any sums of money are taken, a mandate has to be signed by the church treasurer. The mandate can be cancelled at any time by the church. If the mandate is cancelled, it cannot be resurrected, but a new mandate needs to be signed. For that reason, if any church does not wish the direct debit to be operated in any particular month, they are requested not to cancel the direct debit, but to advise the Finance Department by telephone. Immediate action will be taken to prevent the direct debit operating. Although normally direct debits operate on the 20th of the month, it is necessary for the Church to advise the bank two working days before the debit day. If the 20th of the month is a Saturday, Sunday or other day upon which a bank is closed, the debit is operated on the first working day after the 20th.

13. The department would emphasise that it may only debit sums approved by the local church, and therefore will amend any instruction following a telephone call. Any amendment of instruction will be confirmed by a computer-produced advice.

APPENDIX VI

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Central Office - 86, Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT.

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 1991

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TREASURER'S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS FOR 1991.

In presenting the Central Funds accounts for the year ended 31st December 1991, attention is drawn to the following points:-

1. The increase in Central Funds of £570,000 is mainly attributable to an increase in the Memorial Hall Trust Grants Fund to £300,000 and the receipt of £345,000 in respect of the Yardley Hastings Project.
2. The unfunded capital cost for Yardley Hastings, which last year's General Assembly agreed should be met out of Central Funds is not expected to exceed £230,000. This liability has yet to be met, and is not reflected in the accounts. Any shortfall will be met from the Church Buildings Fund.
3. Pension Fund liabilities will increase by approximately £8 million as a result of the stipend increase in 1992, and are referred to in accounting policy 9 on page 6 of the accounts, as well as in the accounts of the United Reformed Church Minister's Pension Fund.
4. Legacies and gifts continue to make an important contribution to Central Funds, and we are, as always, indebted to the donors.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

We confirm on behalf of the Financial Management Committee our approval of the accounts as set out on pages 4-26 .

A K Black
Treasurer
18th March 1992

C M Frank
Chief Accountant and Financial Secretary

The reports on pages 24-26 are extracted from the full accounts of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund and the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited. Copies of these full accounts may be obtained from the Finance Department of the Church.

REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

We have audited the accounts on pages 4 to 23 in accordance with Auditing Standards.

As detailed in the note on page 22, share certificates relating to investments of £19.12 million are held in the name of a nominee company and form part of a general pool. Therefore the scope of our audit was limited in that it was not practical to identify that specific share certificates related to the investment portfolio of the Investment Pool.

Subject to the above, in our opinion these accounts give a true and fair view of the state of the funds as at 31st December 1991, and of the income and expenditure for the year ended on that date.

We have also audited the accounts, in accordance with Auditing Standards, of the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited on which we have given an unqualified opinion, and the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund on which we have qualified our audit report for the same reason as stated above.

186 City Road
London EC1V 2NU

18th March 1992

ROBSON RHODES
Registered Auditor
Chartered Accountants

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1. Scope

These accounts comprise those funds administered in the central office of the United Reformed Church on behalf of United Reformed Church Trust or the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited. They do not therefore include funds administered by Provincial and other officers.

2. Basis of preparation.

The accounts, which should be read in conjunction with the report of the Finance Department to Assembly 1992, have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the inclusion of investments at market value in the Investment Pool on page 22, and the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund on page 24. These accounts are also prepared in accordance with the Accounting Standards Committee Statement of Recommended Practice, No. 2, - 'Accounting by Charities' and comply with this in all material respects.

3. Classification of funds

The capital accounts are permanent endowment accounts. The General Fund is for the "furthering the religious and other charitable work of the United Reformed Church". All other funds are more particularly restricted, as indicated by the respective fund titles.

4. Income.

Contributions to the Unified Appeal and to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund are brought into account on a receipts basis, with the inclusion of receipts in the early part of 1992 relating to 1991. However, where a Province had remitted more than the agreed contribution to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund by 31st December 1991, the excess is carried forward as an advance payment on account of the contribution for 1992 to the Ministry and Mission Fund. Legacies are credited on a receipts basis to the fund designated by the donor or to the General Fund if no fund is designated.

5. Depreciation

Property

No provision for depreciation is made on freehold or leasehold buildings. The Financial Management Committee considers that the requirement of the Statement of Standard Accounting Practice No 12 that freehold and leasehold buildings should be depreciated is not appropriate for the Church, because the Church's policy is to ensure that the buildings are maintained to such a standard that depreciation is negligible. Properties shown in Note 5 at £4.4 million are insured for £10.9 million.

Cars, furniture and equipment

Depreciation is provided on cars, furniture and equipment so as to write off the relevant assets over their expected useful lives at the following rates per annum:-

Cars	30% on cost
Major Equipment	
Computers	25% on cost
Printing Machinery	20% on cost
Other furniture and equipment	10% on cost

6. Investments

Investments held for the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund and the Investment Pool, are stated at market value.

Investments held for other funds are stated at cost. Units held in the Investment Pool are stated in the accounts of the investing funds at the cost of the units to those funds. The cost is based on quarterly market valuation of the underlying listed investments at the time of purchase. No account is taken of the excess of unrealised gains over unrealised losses in specific investments, having regard to the long term purpose of the investment funds.

Income from investments, including the associated tax credit, has been included to the extent that it was received during the year.

7. Stock

Stock consists of books and materials purchased for resale in the Communication and Supplies Section. The stock is stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

8. Westminster College

With the exception of certain improvements, bequests and purchases between 1983 and 1991, the buildings and contents of Westminster College are not included in the Central Funds balance sheet, since the College was originally a gift to the Church, the value of which cannot readily be ascertained. The College buildings are insured for £10.3 million.

9. United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund

The full accounts of the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund, an extract from which is shown on page 24, deal with the resources at the disposal of the trustees and short-term liabilities. Long-term liabilities for pensions and other benefits, which are expected to arise in the future, are not reflected in the accounts. The long-term financial position of the fund is dealt with in the actuarial report. A copy of the full accounts of the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund may be obtained from the Central office of the Church.

The fund is a defined benefit pension scheme. The assets are invested and managed independently of the finances of the Church.

The Church currently contributes, from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund, at the rate of 10.65% of basic stipend in respect of members, and makes further payments toward the actuarial deficit, as indicated by the Consultant Actuary.

The triennial valuation of the pension fund is performed by the Actuary, using the attained age method. The last valuation was at 1st January 1991, which indicated an actuarial shortfall of £1.65 million. The Church has been advised by the Actuary that if the proposals that the basic stipend be increased to £11,500 from July 1st 1992 are implemented, the unfunded past service liability will be increased by some £8 million. To meet this increased shortfall, the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee have taken steps which, if carried out, will eliminate this shortfall in about 10 years, based on the actuarial assumptions.

The contributing members of the fund are not contracted out of the State Pension Scheme.

CENTRAL FUNDS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 1991

THE CENTRAL FUNDS OF THE CHURCH		1991		1990	
	Note	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Accounts	1		2,612		2,603
Income and Expenditure Accounts	2		<u>13,090</u>		<u>12,530</u>
Total	3		<u>15,702</u>		<u>15,133</u>
REPRESENTED BY					
Fixed Assets					
Property	5	4,419		3,593	
Cars, furniture and equipment	5	<u>214</u>		<u>185</u>	
			4,633		3,778
Investments	6		8,044		8,051
Loans and Advances	7		<u>2,583</u>		<u>2,316</u>
	4		15,260		14,145
Current Assets					
Stock		40		20	
Debtors		618		993	
Cash	8	<u>1,485</u>		<u>1,495</u>	
		2,143		2,508	
Creditors		(1,257)		(1,217)	
Advance contributions to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund		<u>(444)</u>		<u>(303)</u>	
Net Current Assets			<u>442</u>		<u>988</u>
			<u>15,702</u>		<u>15,133</u>

NOTE 1 - CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

	Balance 31/12/91 £'000	Balance 31/12/90 £'000
General Fund	310	310
Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	289	289
Ministerial Training Fund	45	45
Church Buildings Fund	184	184
Homes for Retired Ministers Funds	355	355
Welfare Fund	68	68
Retired Ministers Aid Fund	40	40
World Church and Mission Funds	83	83
Westminster College Funds	469	469
Other Funds	<u>769</u>	<u>760</u>
	<u>2,612</u>	<u>2,603</u>

Changes in Capital Accounts are capital donations.

NOTE 2 - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS

	Page	Balance 31/12/91 £'000	Balance 31/12/90 £'000
General Fund	13	3,476	3,288
Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	14	1,230	1,880
Ministerial Training Fund	15	1,255	1,335
Church Buildings Fund	17	1,898	1,638
Homes for Retired Ministers Funds	17	858	853
Welfare Fund	18	160	147
Retired Ministers Aid Fund	18	165	165
Memorial Hall Trust Grants	19	1,347	1,047
World Church and Mission Funds	19	311	281
Windermere Fund	20	325	325
Yardley Hastings	20	344	-
Westminster College Funds	21	364	308
Other Funds	21	<u>1,357</u>	<u>1,263</u>
		<u>13,090</u>	<u>12,530</u>

NOTE 3 - INVESTMENT OF FUNDS AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 1991

	Total	Property	Cars Furniture & Equipment	Invest- ments	Loans	Current Assets
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund	3,786	1,863	133	2,274	221	(705)
Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	1,519	-	-	1,409	104	6
Ministerial Training Fund	1,300	-	-	984	-	316
Church Buildings Fund	2,082	263	-	425	714	680
Homes for Retired Ministers Fund	1,213	1,031	-	-	180	2
Welfare Fund	228	-	-	201	-	27
Retired Ministers Aid Fund	205	-	-	196	-	9
Memorial Hall Trust Grants Fund	1,347	-	-	-	1,347	-
World Church & Mission Fund	394	-	-	339	-	55
Windermere Fund	325	297	26	-	-	2
Westminster College Funds	833	561	3	264	-	5
Yardley Hastings	344	342	-	-	-	2
Other Funds	<u>2,126</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>1,952</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>43</u>
	<u>15,702</u>	<u>4,419</u>	<u>214</u>	<u>8,044</u>	<u>2,583</u>	<u>442</u>
Note		5	5	6	7	

NOTE 4 - MOVEMENTS RELATING TO FIXED ASSETS, INVESTMENTS AND LOANS

	Balance 1/1/91	Purchases	** Proceeds of sales	Movements not involving Cash	Balance 31/12/91
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Property	<u>3,593</u>	<u>826</u>	-	-	<u>4,419</u>
Cars	103	116	(32)	(43) (D)	144
Furniture	60	11	-	(15) (D)	56
Computers	<u>22</u>	<u>6</u>	-	(14) (D)	<u>14</u>
	<u>185</u>	<u>133</u>	<u>(32)</u>	<u>(72)</u>	<u>214</u>
Investments					
Investment Pool	6,490	108	(949)	246 (P)	5,895
Other Listed Investments*	1,414	989	(401)	-	2,002
Unlisted Investments	<u>147</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>147</u>
	<u>8,051</u>	<u>1,097</u>	<u>(1,350)</u>	<u>246</u>	<u>8,044</u>
Loans	<u>2,316</u>	<u>667</u>	<u>(441)</u>	<u>41</u> (I)	<u>2,583</u>
Total	<u>14,145</u>	<u>2,723</u>	<u>(1,823)</u>	<u>215</u>	<u>15,260</u>

* Other Listed Investments includes £950,000 (1990 £1,435,000) specifically deposited for sundry trusts in Building Societies.

** Movements not involving cash are designated (P) for profit on realisation. (D) for Depreciation, and (I) for interest debited.

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NOTE 5 - FIXED ASSETS

	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	Balance	Additions	Disposals	Balance
	at			at
	1/1/91			31/12/91
Property (at cost or original valuation)				
Freehold Property:				
Central Office	111	(5)	-	106
Houses	2,458	238	-	2,696
Westminster College additions	107	251	-	358
Yardley Hastings	-	<u>342</u>	-	<u>342</u>
	<u>2,676</u>	826	-	<u>3,502</u>
Leasehold Property:				
Long Leases				
Windermere Centre	297	-	-	297
Other	<u>530</u>	-	-	<u>530</u>
	<u>3,503</u>	826	-	<u>4,329</u>
Investment Property				
Freehold Ground Rents	28	-	-	28
Shop Property	<u>62</u>	-	-	<u>62</u>
	<u>3,593</u>	<u>826</u>	-	<u>4,419</u>
Cars, Furniture and Equipment				
Cost				
Motor Cars	178	116	(83)	211
Furniture and Equipment	157	11	-	168
Computer Equipment	<u>90</u>	<u>6</u>	-	<u>96</u>
	<u>425</u>	<u>133</u>	(83)	<u>475</u>
Cars, Furniture and Equipment				
Depreciation		Charged	Released	
Motor Cars	75	43	(51)	67
Furniture and Equipment	97	15	-	112
Computer Equipment	<u>68</u>	<u>15</u>	(1)	<u>82</u>
	<u>240</u>	<u>73</u>	(52)	<u>261</u>
Net Book Value	<u>185</u>			<u>214</u>

NOTE 6 - INVESTMENTS

	1991		1990	
	Cost	Market Value	Cost	Market Value
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Units in Investment Pool	5,894	8,434	6,490	8,744
Other Listed Investments	<u>2,003</u>	<u>2,015</u>	<u>1,414</u>	<u>1,449</u>
	7,897	<u>10,449</u>	7,904	<u>10,193</u>
Unlisted Investments at cost	<u>147</u>		<u>147</u>	
	<u>8,044</u>		<u>8,051</u>	

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7 - LOANS AND ADVANCES

	1991 £'000	1990 £'000
To the URC Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited		
from General Fund	186	139
from General Fund (interest free)	35	35
from Homes for Retired Ministers Fund	180	342
from Memorial Hall Trust Grants Fund	1,347	1,047
from Other Funds	<u>16</u>	<u>16</u>
	1,764	1,579
To Churches from Church Buildings Fund	715	645
To Ministers from Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	<u>104</u>	<u>92</u>
	<u>2,583</u>	<u>2,316</u>

Loans are interest free except that interest is charged at 1% below the Midland Bank base rate on the General Account loan to the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society, and generally at 7% per annum on loans from the Church Buildings Fund for building work, and for professional fees after the loan has been outstanding for two years.

NOTE 8 - CASH AT BANK

	1991 £'000	1990 £'000
Cash on call and short term deposit	4,261	4,438
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>64</u>	<u>146</u>
	4,325	4,584
Less Sums held for other funds, Provinces, and Congregations	<u>2,840</u>	<u>3,089</u>
	<u>1,485</u>	<u>1,495</u>

NOTE 9 - ASSETS HELD IN TRUST FOR OTHER BODIES

At 31st December 1991 United Reformed Church Trust held the following assets on behalf of Provinces and Congregations.

	1991 £'000	1990 £'000
Investments (at cost or valuation)	9,503	9,097
Money specifically invested externally at short notice	805	1,305
Loans	29	30
Cash on deposit	2,805	2,911
Other cash	<u>130</u>	<u>45</u>
	<u>13,272</u>	<u>13,388</u>

These assets are the property of and held to the order of the Provinces and Congregations concerned.

NOTE 10 - COMMITMENTS

At 31st December 1991 contracts for £485,000 had been placed for the building of the Yardley Hastings Centre, of which £144,000 (1990 nil) has not yet been paid. A further cost of £230,000 (1990 nil) for professional fees, fittings etc., will be required to complete the development. The cost in excess of the appeal made for this work will be met by the Church Buildings Fund. The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Ltd had no contracts unfulfilled to purchase property at 31st December 1991. (At 31st December 1990, £110,000 was committed.) The Housing Society has given approval for the purchase of further property to the value of £217,000 (1990 £270,000). These acquisitions will be funded from the unexpended income of the Church or from the proceeds of properties currently unoccupied and for sale. From its General Fund the Church has agreed to lend to the Housing Society any shortfall. The Officers of the Church Buildings Fund have authorised loans amounting to £80,000 (1990 £74,000) which were not paid at 31st December 1991.

CENTRAL FUNDS - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR 1991

GENERAL FUND

	1991	1990		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME					
Unified Appeal			1,999		1,747
Other Income					
Dividends on Investments	99			90	
Interest (net of allocation to other funds)	264			211	
URC Insurance Co. Ltd.	32			33	
Sundry Income	<u>2</u>			<u>1</u>	
			<u>397</u>		<u>335</u>
			2,396		2,082
EXPENDITURE					
Central Secretariat		78		69	
General Church costs		104		91	
Assembly		62		43	
Ecumenical Grants		63		55	
Moderators		256		231	
Ministries		116		108	
Faith & Life		292		207	
World Church & Mission	359				
Less receipts	<u>26</u>	333		292	
Church & Society		53		52	
Finance	179				
Less receipts	<u>23</u>	156		156	
Professional Fees		36		32	
Communications & Supplies	164				
Less receipts	<u>50</u>	114		103	
Advocacy		34		39	
Information Service		5		4	
Central Office costs		<u>134</u>		<u>130</u>	
		1,836		1,612	
Less Maintenance of Ministry Fund contributions to Ministerial Staff salaries		<u>199</u>		<u>190</u>	
		1,637		1,422	
ALLOCATIONS					
Council for World Mission		493		461	
Ministerial Training Fund		196		43	
Welfare Fund		<u>25</u>		<u>23</u>	
			<u>2,351</u>		<u>1,949</u>
NET SURPLUS FOR YEAR					
Profit on sale of properties			45		133
Surplus on realisation of CIF units			-		174
Legacies and major donations			-		664
			<u>143</u>		<u>82</u>
			188		1,053
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT					
Balance at 1st January			<u>3,288</u>		<u>2,235</u>
Balance at 31st December			<u>3,476</u>		<u>3,288</u>

MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY FUND

INCOME	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Contributions from local churches		8,768		8,060
Donations and Dividends		<u>241</u>		<u>209</u>
		9,009		8,269
EXPENDITURE				
Stipends paid to ministers				
Full time	6,156		5,636	
Part time	376		361	
Children's allowances	13		18	
Community charge supplement	377		450	
Church related community workers	65		55	
Employer's contributions				
Pension Fund	590		476	
National Insurance	606		603	
Grants and other costs	183		178	
Allocation to United Reformed Church Minister's Pension Fund	<u>600</u>		<u>500</u>	
		8,966		8,277
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) IN THE YEAR		43		(8)
Surplus on realisation of investments		207		865
Legacies		<u>-</u>		<u>3</u>
		250		860
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		1,058		198
Appropriation to United Reformed Church Minister's Pension Fund		(900)		-
Appropriation to Stipend Payments Reserve		(245)		-
Appropriation to General Reserve		<u>(163)</u>		<u>-</u>
Balance at 31st December		-		<u>1,058</u>
FUND BALANCES at 31st December				
General Income and Expenditure Account		-		1,058
General Reserve		430		267
Stipend Payments Reserve		<u>800</u>		<u>555</u>
		1,230		1,880

NOTE - STIPEND SUPPLEMENT

During 1991, in addition to the basic stipend, the Church paid as agents for local congregations and other bodies, supplements and housing allowances etc. totalling £356,000 (1990 £306,000), and further recoverable amounts totalling £516,000 (1990 £370,000). No part of this expenditure falls upon Central Funds.

MINISTERIAL TRAINING FUND

INCOME	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Dividends and Interest		97		101
Allocation from				
New College, London, Trust		196		188
General Fund		196		43
Other Donations		54		26
1989/90 Appeal		<u>-</u>		<u>400</u>
		543		758
EXPENDITURE				
Grants to Colleges				
Westminster College				
Bursary Fund	197		162	
General Account (See Page 16)	<u>(6)</u>		<u>(23)</u>	
	191		139	
Mansfield College				
Bursary Fund	122		101	
Northern College, Manchester				
Bursary Fund	131		136	
Queens College, Birmingham				
Bursary fund	47		32	
Other Colleges	<u>6</u>		<u>-</u>	
	497		408	
Cost of Training for the				
Non-Stipendiary Ministry	84		54	
Other Costs	<u>42</u>		<u>44</u>	
		623		506
NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS IN YEAR		(80)		252
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Surplus on realisation of CIF units		-		287
Balance at 1st January		<u>1,335</u>		<u>796</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>1,255</u>		<u>1,335</u>

NOTE: As shown on page 9 investments costing £984,000 (1990 £984,000) are held for the Ministerial Training Fund, and these are valued at £1,028,000 at 31st December 1991 (1990 £995,000)

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE - GENERAL ACCOUNT

	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Students' Fees	179		167	
Conference Fees	15		31	
Federation Catering Receipts	<u>5</u>		<u>3</u>	
		199		201
Net Property Rents	13		11	
Donations and Sundry Income	<u>3</u>		<u>3</u>	
		16		14
Endowment Income	16		15	
Grant from Cheshunt Foundation*	<u>4</u>		<u>3</u>	
		<u>20</u>		<u>18</u>
		<u>235</u>		<u>233</u>
EXPENDITURE				
Lecturers' stipends	56		52	
Lecturers' accommodation costs	6		4	
Chair Endowments	(14)		(12)	
Allocation from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	<u>(41)</u>		<u>(38)</u>	
		7		6
Staff Salaries	85		75	
Household Expenses	38		45	
Water, light, heat and insurance	34		26	
Maintenance	<u>25</u>		<u>23</u>	
		182		169
University & Federation Fees, Internship Programme	17		21	
Library	<u>8</u>		<u>1</u>	
		25		22
Office costs	7		8	
Sundry expenses	<u>8</u>		<u>5</u>	
		<u>15</u>		<u>13</u>
		<u>229</u>		<u>210</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR transferred to				
Ministerial Training Fund		<u>6</u>		23

* In addition to this grant, the Cheshunt Foundation supports the College by contributing to office costs, maintaining one Lecturer and by giving bursaries to students.

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CHURCH BUILDINGS FUND

	1991 £'000	1990 £'000
INCOME		
Donations	2	1
Dividends and Interest	134	141
Income from houses	5	2
Income from Ground Rents	<u>26</u>	<u>26</u>
	167	170
EXPENDITURE		
Grants	<u>14</u>	<u>2</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR	153	168
Proceeds of sale - Bangor properties	107	-
Surplus on realisation of CIF units	<u>-</u>	<u>21</u>
	260	189
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT		
Balance at 1st January	<u>1,638</u>	<u>1,449</u>
Balance at 31st December	<u>1,898</u>	<u>1,638</u>

HOMES FOR RETIRED MINISTERS FUNDS

	1991 £'000	1990 £'000	1990 £'000
INCOME			
Special rents	1	2	
Sundry dividend	-	-	
Income from Harrison Longhurst Will Trusts	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR	9		11
Legacies	-		93
Allocation to property management a/c	-		(10)
Surplus on sale of properties	<u>-</u>		<u>164</u>
	9		258
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT			
Balance at 1st January	<u>768</u>		<u>510</u>
Balance at 31st December	<u>777</u>		<u>768</u>
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT			
Rents received		19	17
Less Property Costs	20		13
Estimated management expenses	3		2
Adjustment to 1990 charge	<u>-</u>		<u>(5)</u>
		<u>23</u>	<u>10</u>
NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS IN YEAR	(4)		7
Allocation from general a/c	-		10
Balance at 1st January	<u>(14)</u>		<u>(31)</u>
Balance at 31st December	<u>(18)</u>		<u>(14)</u>
FUND Balances at 31st December			
General Income and Expenditure Account	777		768
Property management account	(18)		(14)
Nidalla Account	<u>99</u>		<u>99</u>
	<u>858</u>		<u>853</u>

WELFARE FUND

	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Donations		2		3
Dividends and Interest		20		14
Allocation from General Fund		<u>25</u>		<u>23</u>
		47		40
EXPENDITURE				
Grants		<u>34</u>		<u>32</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR		13		8
Surplus on realisation of CIF units		-		44
Legacy		<u>-</u>		<u>49</u>
		13		101
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>147</u>		<u>46</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>160</u>		<u>147</u>

RETIRED MINISTERS AID FUND

	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Investment Income		39		37
Allocation from the Sir William Dunn Trust		1		2
Sundry receipts		<u>-</u>		<u>-</u>
		40		39
EXPENDITURE				
Grants Paid	16		14	
Allocation to Ministers Pension Fund	<u>24</u>		<u>25</u>	
		40		39
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) IN YEAR		-		-
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>165</u>		<u>165</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>165</u>		<u>165</u>

ACCOUNTS - PAGE 19

MEMORIAL HALL TRUST GRANTS FUND

	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Grants from the Memorial Hall Trust		350		196
EXPENDITURE				
Grants		<u>50</u>		<u>30</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR		300		166
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>1,047</u>		<u>881</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>1,347</u>		<u>1,047</u>

WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION FUNDS

	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>				
INCOME				
Dividends and Interest		54		48
Donations		<u>-</u>		<u>-</u>
		54		48
EXPENDITURE				
Contribution to Departmental				
Expenditure	26		23	
Grants	<u>13</u>		<u>14</u>	
		<u>39</u>		<u>37</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR		15		11
Legacies		-		-
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>205</u>		<u>194</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>220</u>		<u>205</u>

OTHER FUNDS

INCOME				
Dividends and Interest		15		14
EXPENDITURE				
Grants		<u>-</u>		<u>1</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR		15		13
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>76</u>		<u>63</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>91</u>		<u>76</u>
FUND Balances at 31st December		<u>311</u>		<u>281</u>

WINDERMERE FUND

	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Donations and Other Receipts		-		5
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>325</u>		<u>320</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>325</u>		<u>325</u>

THE WINDERMERE CENTRE GENERAL ACCOUNT

	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Fees	92		89	
Sundry receipts	<u>11</u>		<u>9</u>	
		103		98
EXPENDITURE				
Secretarial, Office and General	33		22	
Centre Costs	<u>83</u>		<u>76</u>	
		<u>116</u>		<u>98</u>
NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS IN YEAR		(13)		-
Net deficit balance brought forward		-		(8)
Net deficit transferred to General Fund		(13)		(8)

THE YARDLEY HASTINGS CENTRE FUND

	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Donations and other receipts, less fund raising costs		<u>344</u>		-
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 31st December		<u>344</u>		-

FINANCE

ACCOUNTS - PAGE 21

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE FUNDS

	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Other receipts		2		14
Dividends and Interest		<u>57</u>		<u>60</u>
		59		74
EXPENDITURE				
Bursary Account Grants	204		169	
Ministerial Training Fund Grant	<u>(197)</u>		<u>(162)</u>	
	7		7	
Chair Endowments	14		12	
General Endowments	16		15	
Other Grants	<u>18</u>		<u>14</u>	
		55		48
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR				
		4		26
Profit on sale of investments		39		-
Legacies		<u>13</u>		<u>20</u>
		56		46
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>308</u>		<u>62</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>364</u>		<u>308</u>

OTHER FUNDS

	1991	1990
	£'000	£'000
INCOME		
Dividends and Interest	213	224
Donations and Other Receipts	<u>49</u>	<u>64</u>
	262	288
EXPENDITURE		
Grants	<u>177</u>	<u>155</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR		
	85	133
Profit on sale of investments	-	123
Legacies	9	-
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT		
Balance at 1st January	<u>1,263</u>	<u>1,007</u>
Balance at 31st December	<u>1,357</u>	<u>1,263</u>

INVESTMENT POOL

ACCOUNTS - PAGE 22

BALANCE SHEET at 31st December 1991

	1991		1990	
	1000 Units	£'000	1000 Units	£'000
CAPITAL				
Units in issue				
at 1st January	5,311	19,684	1,908	6,152
Units issued in year	209	800	3,423	13,166
Units cancelled in year	(339)	(1,285)	(20)	(68)
Management fees		(32)		(28)
Underwriting commission		7		6
(Loss)/Profit on sale of investments		(395)		456
At 31st December	<u>5,181</u>	18,779	<u>5,311</u>	19,684
Unrealised Surplus/(Deficit) in Market Value of Investments against Cost		<u>740</u>		<u>(822)</u>
		<u>19,519</u>		<u>18,862</u>

REPRESENTED BY

	Cost	Market Value	Cost	Market Value
Investments	<u>18,380</u>	19,120	<u>19,125</u>	18,302
Cash and Short Term Deposits		1,360		525
Net balance with the United Reformed Church		(961)		35
		<u>19,519</u>		<u>18,862</u>

Based on the underlying market value of investments and uninvested cash, the value of each unit in issue was

£3.7672

£3.5515

Distributions in respect of all investment income in the year were made as follows:-

	Rate per Unit	£'000	Rate per Unit	£'000
3 months ended 31st March	5.80p	309	6.72p	129
30th June	6.68p	356	5.52p	227
30th September	7.64p	412	8.03p	422
31st December	<u>8.31p</u>	<u>451</u>	<u>6.25p</u>	<u>331</u>
Total income distributed	<u>28.43p</u>	<u>1,528</u>	<u>26.52p</u>	<u>1,109</u>

Note: Investments made on behalf of the URC Investment Pool are held by James Capel Fund Managers Limited in a pool together with those relating to other clients funds under management. All the share certificates relating to this pool are designated in the name of the Managers' nominee company, James Capel (Third Nominees) Limited. The Fund Managers allocate the investment pool specifically to the various funds under management. The Trustee is advised of all changes in investment, and quarterly schedules of investments held are issued by the Fund Managers, and reconciled to records maintained.

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH RETIRED MINISTERS
AND MINISTERS WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS FUND (The Retired Ministers Fund)

BALANCE SHEET at 31st December 1991

	1991		1990	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
ACCUMULATED FUND				
Sums credited to date in the terms of the will of the late H. N. Clarke		116		1,085
Sums received on termination of G. H. Lea will trust		1		-
Net deficit in year		(100)		(170)
Loss on realisation of CIF units		(1)		(88)
Legacies received		-		10
		16		837
Balance at 1st January		<u>3,234</u>		<u>2,397</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>3,250</u>		<u>3,234</u>

REPRESENTED BY

	Market Value		Market Value	
Investments at Cost	<u>3,041</u>	3,075	<u>2,938</u>	3,152
Investment property		201		201
Net balance with the United Reformed Church		<u>5</u>		<u>67</u>
		3,281		3,420
Less Provision for possible claims from other churches		<u>31</u>		<u>186</u>
		<u>3,250</u>		<u>3,234</u>

INCOME and EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for
the year to 31st December 1991

INCOME

Investment Income (net of interest paid)		252		182
Allocation from the Harrison Longhurst Will Trust	21		27	
Income from the Clarke estate	39		14	
Sundry Income	<u>3</u>		<u>5</u>	
		<u>63</u>		<u>46</u>
		315		228

EXPENDITURE

Grants Paid		<u>415</u>		<u>398</u>
NET DEFICIT IN YEAR		<u>(100)</u>		<u>(170)</u>

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS PENSION FUND

Resources of the Fund as at 31st December 1991

	1991	1990
	£'000	£'000
INCOME		
Contributions from ministers and central funds	839	724
Return of contributions repaid	-	2
Transfer values received	<u>-</u>	<u>4</u>
Investment Income	1,292	1,387
Underwriting Commission	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>
Allocation towards the actuarial deficit	626	529
Donations	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>
	2,767	2,648
EXPENDITURE		
Benefits Paid	1,443	1,329
Commutation of pensions	-	7
Transfer Values paid	<u>28</u>	<u>14</u>
Management expenses	<u>90</u>	<u>75</u>
	<u>1,561</u>	<u>1,425</u>
NORMAL INCREASE IN RESOURCES IN YEAR	1,206	1,223
Special subvention from MoM fund	900	-
Realised Profit on Sale of Investments	757	598
Increase/(reduction) in Unrealised Surplus on Investment Revaluation	278	(2,497)
Legacies	<u>-</u>	<u>4</u>
TOTAL INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN RESOURCES IN YEAR	3,141	(672)
Balance of Resources at 1st January	<u>22,607</u>	<u>23,279</u>
Balance of Resources at 31st December	<u>25,748</u>	<u>22,607</u>
Represented by		
Investments	23,683	21,798
Net Current Assets	<u>2,065</u>	<u>809</u>
	<u>25,748</u>	<u>22,607</u>

Accounting policy 9 on page 6 forms an integral part of the accounts of this fund

Funds held for
HOUSING RETIRED MINISTERS

A consolidated account of the Homes for Retired Ministers Funds
of the United Reformed Church
and the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited.

BALANCE SHEET
as at 31st December 1991

	1991 £'000	£'000	1990 £'000	£'000
Property at cost or valuation		7,521		6,737
Current Assets				
Cash	41		29	
Current Liabilities	<u>(9)</u>		<u>(6)</u>	
Net Current Assets		<u>32</u>		<u>23</u>
		<u>7,553</u>		<u>6,760</u>
FINANCED BY				
Loans		1,590		1,243
Revenue Reserves	5,608		5,162	
Capital Reserves	<u>355</u>		<u>355</u>	
		<u>5,963</u>		<u>5,517</u>
		<u>7,553</u>		<u>6,760</u>

This account is a summarised and consolidated account of the Homes for Retired Ministers Funds of the United Reformed Church, with the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited. The accounts of the housing funds are shown on page 17 of this book, and the accounts of the Society are available from the Central Office of the Church.

Funds held for
HOUSING RETIRED MINISTERS

A consolidated account of the Homes for Retired Ministers Funds
of the United Reformed Church
and the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNT

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st December 1991

	1991 £'000	1990 £'000
Rents	126	112
Less Property costs	<u>102</u>	<u>84</u>
Net Surplus from property	24	28
Less Administrative costs	<u>18</u>	<u>13</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR	6	15
Transfer from General Account	-	10
Balance at January 1st	<u>7</u>	(18)
Balance at December 31st	<u>13</u>	<u>7</u>

GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st December 1991

	1991 £'000	1990 £'000	1990 £'000	1990 £'000
Donations, Dividends, and Sundry Income	54		60	
Legacies and gifts of houses	292		279	
Profit on property sold	<u>116</u>		<u>242</u>	
		462		581
Less Professional fees	5		3	
Committees	2		2	
Interest on money borrowed	<u>15</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>18</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR	440			563
Transfer to Property Account	-			(10)
Balance at January 1st		<u>5,155</u>		<u>4,602</u>
Balance at December 31st		<u>5,595</u>		<u>5,155</u>
<u>TOTAL REVENUE RESERVES</u>		<u>5,608</u>		<u>5,162</u>

LEGACIES AND MAJOR DONATIONS

	£	£
<u>General Fund</u>		
Allocation from S. H. Burns Trust	11,733	
The late J. W. Hillary (additional)	6,262	
K. M. Leaper	52,106	
J. M. Haymes	53,558	
M. L. Edmondson	1,236	
L. A. Quillet	2,051	
D. W. Waller	7,500	
E. Elkington (additional)	3,461	
M. J. Hynard	150	
W. F. Crick	13,222	
	-----	151,279
Less Appropriation from legacies to other funds		<u>8,500</u>
		142,779
 <u>World Church and Mission Funds</u>		
The late J. C. Anderson		200
 <u>Westminster College</u>		
Allocation from S. H. Burns Trust	11,733	
The late W. M. Cullen	1,000	
	-----	12,733
 <u>The Retired Ministers Fund.</u>		
The late H. N. Clarke (further sum)		115,459
D. W. Andrew		200
 <u>The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund</u>		
The late H. C. Clanahan		393
 <u>The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Ltd.</u>		
The late M. D. McGuarrie	34,430	
N. W. Grant	12,718	
G. M. Busby	100	
G. T. Grimes	4,000	
E. M. Lewis	959	
S. M. Hawkins	28,368	
M. S. V. Browne	64,483	
D. L. Brind	4,000	
J. C. Armstrong	2,989	
L. V. McCollum	1,000	
A. E. Cormack	13,148	
E. M. Lewis (additional)	16,000	
D. L. Brind house valued at	50,000	
M. K. Gray house valued at	59,754	
	-----	291,949
 <u>The Welfare Fund</u>		
The late E. A. Fawkes		300

Total		<u>£564,013</u>

MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND BUDGET FOR 1993

	Actual 1991 £'000	Budget 1991 £'000	Budget 1992 £'000	Draft Budget 1993 £'000
INCOME				
Ministry and Mission Fund			13,176	15,033
Church contributions to MoM fund	8,768	8,741	-	-
Unified Appeal	1,999	1,992	-	-
Sundry income of General Fund	397	227	239	293
Sundry income of MoM Fund	<u>241</u>	<u>228</u>	<u>180</u>	<u>180</u>
	<u>11,405</u>	<u>11,188</u>	<u>13,595</u>	<u>15,506</u>
GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURE				
Central Secretariat	78	76	86	92
General Church costs	104	87	92	109
Assembly	62	40	56	62
Ecumenical Grants	63	63	83	84
Moderators	256	271	270	283
Ministries	116	120	132	137
Faith and Life	292	255	295	330
Advocacy	34	32	37	38
World Church and Mission	333	313	397	383
Church and Society	53	60	69	71
Finance	156	176	168	181
Professional Fees	36	42	37	39
Communication and Supplies	114	99	121	124
Information Service	5	5	5	5
Central Office costs	<u>134</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>143</u>	<u>145</u>
	1,836	1,788	1,991	2,083
<u>Less</u> Maintenance of the Ministry Fund contributions to Ministerial Staff salaries	<u>199</u>	<u>202</u>	<u>211</u>	<u>233</u>
	1,637	1,586	1,780	1,850
Allocations				
Council for World Mission	493	493	530	576
Ministerial Training Fund	196	196	206	216
Welfare Fund	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>2,351</u>	<u>2,300</u>	<u>2,536</u>	<u>2,662</u>
MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY FUND EXPENDITURE				
Cost of Ministers' stipends	6,532	6,472	8,012	9,626
Children's allowances	13	14	6	-
Community charge supplement	377	527	458	98
Employer's contributions to National Insurance and Pension Schemes	<u>1,196</u>	<u>1,165</u>	<u>1,527</u>	<u>1,882</u>
	8,118	8,178	10,003	11,606
Church Related Community Workers	65	91	150	115
Grants and other costs	183	234	291	298
Grants to Ministers Pension Fund	<u>600</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>615</u>	<u>825</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>8,966</u>	<u>9,003</u>	<u>11,059</u>	<u>12,844</u>
Expenditure of General and MoM Funds	<u>11,317</u>	<u>11,303</u>	<u>13,595</u>	<u>15,506</u>
NET BALANCE IN YEAR	<u>88</u>	<u>(115)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the Report for debate.
- 2 Assembly gratefully acknowledges the giving of the churches in 1991 to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and to the Unified Appeal.
- 3 Assembly adopts the Accounts for 1991.
- 4 Assembly approves the budget of the Ministry & Mission Fund for 1993, which provides for an expenditure of £15.033 million.
- 5 Assembly challenges the whole Church to lift the Ministry & Mission budget for 1993 to £15.632 million, so that stipends can be raised in July 1993 to the level commended by Assembly in 1991 and authorises the Mission Council to amend the 1993 budget as responses to this challenge are received.
- 6 Assembly accepts the Church's obligations to make good the substantial deficit arising in the URCMPF, as early as possible.
- 7 Assembly encourages the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to investigate appropriate amendments to the Rules of the Pension Fund to minimise the possibility of similar levels of liability automatically arising in future years.
- 8 Assembly amends the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration by the addition of paragraph 6.1.4:

"Ministers who have not attained the age of 50 years at the date of ordination or commencement of full time stipendiary service under the Plan may join the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund. If a minister who is entitled to join the URCMPF elects not to do so, no contributions will be paid to any alternative pension arrangement chosen by a minister, unless the minister is already a member of the Pension Fund of another denomination at the time that the minister qualifies for stipend payment under the Rules of the Plan. Where a minister is aged 50 years or over at the date of his ordination, he may not join the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund, and in these exceptional circumstances only an amount agreed by Assembly will be paid to any personal pension arrangement chosen by that minister. From July 1st 1992 this will be 10% of basic stipend".

- 9 Assembly amends the Rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund as follows:-

Rule 14.1. to read:- "Every minister who is under the age of 50 years, at the date of ordination or commencement of full time stipendiary service may at the time of ordination or commencement of full time stipendiary service become a contributing member of the Fund....."

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPLIES COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Christopher Wright

Secretary: Mrs Carol Rogers

REFORM

1. *Reform*, the URC's monthly magazine, has undergone production changes since last year. Virtually all the contents are now keyed in on word processors by the editorial secretary and the editor, who effectively 'type-set' the magazine. This is teaching them new skills, besides keeping costs down, and speeds up the final proof-reading. (It is also harder to blame mistakes on the printer!)

Our printers have been very helpful. Print quality seems to have been maintained through this change and a new process improves the reproduction of photographs. Advertising revenue held up extremely well in 1991, despite the business recession. Many readers have expressed spontaneous appreciation for *Reform's* contents.

2. What is still needed is a sign that newcomers to our churches are being introduced to *Reform* and becoming readers - and subscribers. Cost-cutting and advertisement space-selling are heartening, but real benefit to the life of the URC will come when a magazine prepared with thought and care for 17,000 subscribers is commended to and welcomed by another 17,000.

ANNUAL PUBLICATIONS

3. Two books were published in 1991. "Looking at Leisure" a Book of Sketches by Bernard Thorogood and "Don't Ask Me Why: Sixty Years a Woman Minister" by Kathleen Hendry. There has been considerable interest in these titles particularly the latter, from a wide readership. "Children of the Wilderness" by David Jenkins and Stephen Thornton, a previous annual book, continues to sell consistently. Through the distribution of a trade list and adding URC titles to the lists of the selling representatives of A. Guy Taylor, URC books are now being stocked in many local religious bookshops.

4. The annual book for 1992 "Straws in the Wind" by Edmund Banyard will be introduced at General Assembly.

5. The Year Book and Diary were published as usual. Both attracted a deal of comment, most of it constructive, all of which has been noted, and will be acted upon.

DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPLIES

6. The reorganisation of the past eighteen months is now completed. The system is working effectively and more efficiently. The peak distribution time of October - December and the annual stock-taking were achieved without any disruption to normal working hours. Material is able to be supplied on a "sale or return" basis for "one-off" occasions including Provincial, District and local church events - but those responsible for maintaining church bookstalls are recommended to contact a local christian bookshop for regular supplies of books on this basis.

IN HOUSE PRINTING

7. The desk top publishing system is now working effectively, and is used in the preparation of all material. Many items are still printed 'in house' using an "off-set" machine, but the production of camera ready art work has cut the cost of items which by necessity have to be sent to an outside printer. The introduction of a large-volume Kodak copier has led to the whole area of in house printing being under review.

8. Following the resolution of General Assembly 1991, environmentally friendly paper is used for the majority of work produced both in house and printed elsewhere. Fewer copies of all items are being produced in an effort to comply with the resolution.

PRESS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

9. The Communication and Supplies Committee has decided to make this their major item on the agenda for 1992. There are many opportunities available to local churches in broadcasting on both local and community stations, and in the press. The committee wish to encourage all local congregations to take advantage of the facilities offered and to provide opportunities for those interested to receive suitable training and encouragement. Ecumenical Training Days are organised by the Churches Advisory Council on Local Broadcasting, the Media Awareness Project and the Catholic Communications Centre. We encourage members to seize these opportunities.

10. A subscription to a Press Cuttings Agency has highlighted the fact that many local church events are covered in local newspapers - but often with a misspelled title! Churches are encouraged to continue to provide information for the local media.

11. After much discussion it has been decided to concentrate the resources available for Publicity, Press and Public Relations into the latter area for a trial period. It is hoped to open channels of communication with the media, which will ensure that the work and activities of the United Reformed Church, will receive the recognition they deserve.

Resolution 2

INFORMATION SERVICE

12. The Information Service continues to be dispatched at regular intervals. After some experimentation new methods of packaging will soon be introduced, eliminating plastic bags, which will make the collating and packaging somewhat easier for the volunteers who perform this service so faithfully. A copy of the Information Service is sent to each church secretary free of charge, but additional copies are available at a modest charge.

VIDEO

13. The number of loans from the video library continues to rise. There is a constant search for material suitable for use in house or discussion groups.

REJOICE & SING

14. Following the presentation at General Assembly 1991 and correspondence in Reform, the secretary has received many requests for a large print words only edition of "Rejoice & Sing". This is now under active consideration by Oxford University Press as is the publication of a Companion to "Rejoice & Sing".

COPYRIGHT

15. Churches continue to seek help in obtaining copyright clearance for special services and for supplements of hymns and songs in regular use. Local churches are encouraged to ensure that the laws of copyright are not infringed in any way and are reminded that the penalties incurred can be prohibitive.

ECUMENICAL BODIES

16. The Secretary continues to serve as a member of the Media Awareness Project, and the Churches Advisory Council for Local Broadcasting. Those who are actively engaged in broadcasting are urged to become members of the Association of Christians in Local Broadcasting.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 This Assembly recognises that every Christian is a communicator, in word or deed. Recognising the value of those working particularly in communications and to express support for their work, Assembly recommends that each Province be asked to appoint a Communication Officer(s) with responsibility for training, enabling and encouraging every local church and its members to communicate their life in the gospel through local broadcasting, the press and other public media.

MINISTRIES

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

INTRODUCTION

1. Our Department, in common with others, has been dominated by thought and talk of change. In our case the atmosphere has been intensified by three major concerns: the debate concerning changing patterns of ministry; the new arrangements we have been putting in place to develop the ministry of Church-Related Community Workers; and the new style of national assessment we have adopted for candidates for the ministry. These matters feature in our reports.

2. Changes in the structure of the department have come about, of course, as a result of the forthcoming advent of the Mission Council and we have taken advantage of this to modify working responsibilities within the office team.

3. Among staffing changes, Mrs Grace Main, who has served us for thirteen years, administering the 'Exploring the Faith' course, leaves us in July and we want to record our gratitude to her for what she has done and the cheerfulness with which she has done it and to wish her well.

4. Also at this Assembly Michael Dunford comes to the end of his second term of service as Departmental Secretary and Secretary for Ministerial Training. He has worked with considerable conscientiousness and administrative efficiency and has always sought to bring a pastoral concern to his bureaucratic tasks. As a mark of our esteem a presentation was made to him at the final Departmental Central Committee in February and we know we speak for the whole Church in wanting to express our thanks and to wish him well as he moves to a new phase of ministry in the pastorate at Felixstowe.

5. Change is evident wherever one looks! As always it involves pain and anxiety. However, it also brings growth and development and we look forward with some excitement to the new patterns which are emerging, some evidence of which may be seen in the committee reports which we present for debate.

Resolution 1

VOCATIONS COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd G Derek Gill
Secretary: Revd Michael G Dunford

INTRODUCTION

6. Our work falls into two distinct halves. We have to consider individual circumstances in relation to the criteria set by the church for admission to our Roll of Ministers from outside our church. Much of this information is confidential. We also handle the equally demanding tasks of recruitment and assessment of potential ministers and Church-Related Community Workers. We find the former necessary and exacting, and the latter exciting and demanding.

ROLL OF MINISTERS

(From 1st March 1991 to 29th February 1992)

7. ADMISSION TO THE ROLL OF MINISTERS**8. By ordination - stipendiary:**

Sigrid Werner, Barrie Scopes, Robert Day, Allan Smith, Brian Clarke, John Braund, Kenneth Newborough, Margaret Tait, Roy Cole, Norman Riley, Margaret McKay, Peter Crocker, Martyn Coe, Harold Bignell, Alison Chart, Valerie Reed, Douglas Burnett, Elizabeth Byrne, Martin Kitchener, Pat Nimmo, Sandra Pickard, Rowena Francis, Stephen Newell, Robert Warwick, William Frame, Jean Black, Andrew McLuskey, David Harkison, Derek Redfern, Jane Stranz, Susan Cox, Richard Turnbull.

9. By ordination - non-stipendiary

Marina Kennard, Mary Read, Marina Jeffrey, Andrew Pugh, Helen Matheson, Martin Legg, Jacqueline Knight, Trevor Legge, Patricia Ford, Audrey Boon, Vivien Langfield, Susan MacBeth, Jennifer Marsh, Mirella Moxon, Richard Gray, Howard Farson, Grenville Fox, Alison Brooks, Bert Barraha, Iain Bentley, Leslie Watson, Marjory Swift, Richard Bittleston, Christine Willis, David McNair, Gwyneth Jones.

10. By transfer from other churches

Revd Brian McDowell (Presbyterian Church in Ireland)
 Revd Dr Brian Phillips (Uniting Church in Australia)
 Revd Richard Kayes (formerly Baptist Union)
 Revd Stewart Hynd (Church of Scotland)
 Revd Jaroslav Raich (Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren)
 Revd Geoffrey Collins (Baptist Union)
 Revd Dr Alexander Wedderburn (Church of Scotland)
 Revd Geoffrey Ward (formerly Congregational Church in England and Wales)
 Revd Allen Morton (Baptist Union)
 Revd Gillian Boorne (Baptist Union)

11. By reinstatement

Revd Barry Barker

12. Transfer within the Roll of Ministers

Auxiliary to Stipendiary: Revd Reginald Moore, Revd Malcolm Deacon, Revd Stephen Sawyer, Revd Andrew Newman.

13. DELETIONS FROM THE ROLL OF MINISTERS**14. By resignation**

Revd Robert Steedman, Revd Alexander Martin, Revd Norman Clarke, Revd J G D Allan

15. By transfer to other churches

Revd John Geyer to the Congregational Union of Scotland

16. Certificates of Eligibility to serve the URC have been granted to 12 ministers of other denominations in the past year.

17. We note with sadness that 36 ministers have died during the past year and tribute is paid to them during the Assembly.

YEAR BOOK DESIGNATION OF MINISTERS

18. Some dissatisfaction has been expressed about the designations of ministers in the annual URC Year Book, using the letters A, C, D, and R. They have been difficult to substantiate and sometimes imply a relationship with the whole church which is either incorrect or misleading. We also note that the term 'Auxiliary' now disappears in favour of 'Non-stipendiary' ministry. We are therefore in discussion with those responsible for the Year Book and have recommended a more helpful system of designation.

MINISTERS OF OTHER CHURCHES

19. We are called upon to monitor the list of those who serve the URC whose names are on the Roll of Ministers of other Churches. We also give authority to the Maintenance of the Ministry committee to pay stipends to those who are entering the Plan for Partnership from elsewhere for a short period of service.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES

20. (a) **National Assessment Board** - We have welcomed cooperation with the Nominations Committee in the setting up of an entirely new Board of Assessors under the Convenership of Mr Raymond Clarke. He will meet with us when there are items of common concern and interest, and he has already reported a first meeting of the Board and the coverage of two assessment conferences. The Panel is small, will retire by rotation, and meets regularly to plan conferences and to train for its tasks. A number of issues are to be explored including Equal Opportunities, interview techniques, psychological testing, the implications of the Children Act, and changing patterns of ministry.

21. (b) **Assessment Procedures** - In a significant debate last year, Assembly reaffirmed its view, by a very small margin, that a final decision on candidature for the ministry shall rest with the Province, after due consideration of the recommendations of a national assessment conference. This sharpened up our thinking in this whole area. In the debate, a number of valuable suggestions were offered indicating a general desire that there should be careful consultation and cooperation throughout the whole candidating process, and our committee has given this a great deal of thought. We have to get this right.

22. We believe that there is a need for **training opportunities** to be offered to Provincial committees in the field of interviewing techniques and selection processes. There are several options before us: one is that members of the national Board share their training experiences with others around the country; another is that members of local groups can be invited to join the Board for national training days. Possibly we can combine the two.

23. Experiences from other churches, notably the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand, which were shared with us in the Assembly debate, are being studied in relation to **District Council** or **Provincial involvement** in national conferences. There are a number of difficulties associated with the idea in our context but the underlying principle of cooperation is of potential value and we will report our findings at a later stage.

24. It is clear to us that our immediate response to the situation is to welcome the cooperation of Provinces who request **consultation** where there is an area of disagreement about a particular candidate. The situations are not uncommon and always painful for all concerned and everyone has the good of the candidate and the church at heart. We therefore propose that in such a situation, and before a decision is reached, the Province shall ask for a meeting to take place of those representative of the two interviewing groups concerned: the national panel and the provincial committee. In this way the candidature can be reviewed from every angle and a common mind reached as to the best way forward. **Resolution 2**

CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS

25. During the year we have monitored the national list of Accredited CRCWs:
Admissions - None
Deletions - Mary Thomas, Susan MacBeth

26. On the advice of the Support Committee, we have submitted suggested names to the Nominations Committee in order that they might appoint a specialist Panel for Assessment Conferences. Consideration is now being given to procedures for assessing those with professional skills as well as church involvement, parallel with those adopted for ministerial candidates but also distinct.

AN APPEALS PROCEDURE

27. Our attention has been drawn to the fact that the normal Appeals Procedure in the URC is inappropriate when applied to an appeal lodged against a council of the church where a candidate is not recommended for the next stage in the assessment process, e.g. from District Council to National Assessment Conference. With advice from the Executive Committee we offer a special procedure to deal fairly and correctly with such appeals.
See Appendix I and Resolution 3

MINISTERIAL RECRUITMENT

28. We have continued to encourage and support Enquirers Conferences and Ministry Experience Weeks. We are currently examining our publicity approach, in the face of the continuing need to recruit for the ministry, taking careful account of the requirement of the church. We have revised the **Book List**, and also produced **More about the Ministry of Lay Preaching**.

29. We recommend that churches observe Vocations Sunday on November 1st, 1992, and will provide the usual worship material. It is hoped to cooperate with the Methodist Church in launching a joint event in 1994.

30. We continue to recruit from overseas, and have welcomed amongst us for short periods of service ministers from New Zealand, Holland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Australia, Germany, Canada, and the United States.

TRAINING COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs Elisabeth Jupp
Secretary: Revd Michael G Dunford

INTRODUCTION

31. In every generation the Church needs an effective ministry. In order to provide new ministers with knowledge and skills fitting for the twenty-first century, the Training Committee must be alert now.

32. A constant theme throughout another busy year has been the criteria needed for ministry. Partly this grew naturally from the review of ministerial training in the early 1980s entitled **Preparing Today for Tomorrow's Ministry**; partly the need for a definition which could be understood by us all has developed naturally from the topics with which the committee has wrestled. We have therefore asked for a paper on the subject of **Criteria for Ministry**; a very helpful guideline. We are continuing to work on it, and copies will be available on request from the Department.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

33. During the year the Principals of Northern and Westminster Colleges, and the Director of Ordination Training at Mansfield College all completed their periods of membership on the committee. We are grateful for their significant contributions over a long period, along with Donald Hilton, Moderator of the Yorkshire Province.

Taking account of other retirements we have been able to welcome Dr Susan Parsons of the East Midlands Training Course, Dr David Peel of Northern College, John Proctor of Westminster College, Josephine Williams of the Huddersfield Group of Churches and Chris Warner of the Salford Urban Mission. Already they are making their mark. The membership is therefore well balanced and able to tackle important tasks for the church.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMME

34. Amongst the range of training programmes now offered to candidates for the stipendiary ministry, the Alternative Programme offers the chance for mature students with family and work commitments to study part-time for three years, before taking advantage of a fourth year in one of the colleges.

35. Two issues have arisen which have been given careful consideration:

36. (a) **Synod Resolution** - The South Western Province was supported by the Assembly last year in requesting for a reconsideration of the structure and content of the fourth year, paying particular attention to the training needs, the pastoral implications for the student and his/her family, and the cost. The committee is considering this resolution within the wider context of a general discussion on **Criteria for Ministry** which we believe will have direct implications for our training programme. So anything we might say must be qualified by reference to that debate and our conclusions later.

37. Our discussions recognise the maturity and previous experience of the majority of our ordinands. We have long moved successfully away from the idea that stipendiary training should entail 4 full-time residential training years for candidates of all ages. The present provisions under the Alternative Course allow for flexibility to take account of personal and family needs, always bearing in mind the basic requirements of the Assembly. Thus we have given encouragement to Mansfield College in setting up special courses on an experimental basis for three of their mature candidates, using local university and provincial resources in Wales and in London, culminating in appropriate placements during the final year. Other new difficulties arise as a consequence, however. Students training locally can tend to feel isolated from the college community, and may not necessarily receive systematic training in the URC tradition. Colleges are doing their best to counteract such problems.

38. We shall continue to take each individual situation seriously within the overall requirements of the programme, which is itself kept continuously under review. We also confirm our desire to keep an eye on educational standards, a coherent central programme located in four colleges, and the basic training requirements of the URC.

39. (b) **The "One Year" Rule** - We are also giving consideration to the present requirement whereby all candidates for the stipendiary ministry are to spend at least one year on a college-directed course. When this was raised in 1985, it was agreed that we would "keep the matter under careful and constant review". Since then we have seen the development of local ordination courses all round the country, which we have utilised for non-stipendiary training, and the non-residential part of the Alternative Programme, and Provincial training resources have increased. We have rehearsed above the arguments for sympathetic and imaginative course planning for candidates with family responsibilities.

40. We are aware that the arguments put forward in earlier years cannot be ignored. Whilst on the ecumenical scene, the other major denominations allow

certain candidates to train on local courses alone, their Post Ordination Training is closely monitored, and is undertaken within the context of a curacy or probationary ministry. In our church we have established the Internship Programme and this is mandatory for all stipendiary candidates. A coherent training package is still to be developed in the Provinces. Maybe this can only be achieved against the background of the expressed desires and needs of the Church, but we cannot rely on local resources at this stage. Some will argue that we continue to need a national training programme and would feel uneasy with twelve provincial training schemes. Finally, the colleges continue to provide a good community base for groups of students training for the URC ministry, and we would be very much the poorer without them.

41. We are debating how best we can take account of all these factors by continuing to regard the "One Year" rule as the norm but allowing for the fact that there are some students who would be better served and trained outside it. The personal situation and any personalised programme would have to be very carefully analysed to sift out those who might seize on something that looked like an easy and individualistic option, but we believe it could emerge as a hard, but for some, a necessary way of responding to a Call to the ministry. We would welcome a view from the Assembly.

Resolution 4

RECOGNITION OF PART-TIME COURSES

42. All part-time courses are monitored by our committee, and are then recognised by the Assembly as appropriate, in the same way as colleges. They are subject to an ecumenical inspection on a regular basis. New courses are commencing at the present time in response to various needs in different parts of the country, but we will wish first to take note of the implementation of the **ACCM Paper 30** recommendations. Throughout the past two years, the URC and the Methodist Church have been in full membership of the Bishop of Lincoln's Working Party, and we have subscribed to a document setting out the Policy and Guidelines for changes and improvements to the whole national training network in the Church of England.

43. Full details are not known at the time of writing, but it is hoped that a report on the subject can be brought to the Assembly in York. The intention is to provide quality ministerial training in all parts of the country, with full ecumenical involvement. We are confident that those who train on courses, both for stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministry, will be well served.

44. One student is attending a pre-theological course at the Simon of Cyrene Institute in London preparatory to training at Westminster College.

CAMBRIDGE VISITATION

45. In November 1991, the URC participated in an ecumenical inspection of Westminster College, and the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges. Visitors were Mrs Ruth Clarke (Cumbria), Revd Alan Green (Romsey, Hants) and the Revd Canon Ian Bennett (Church of England, Diocese of Newcastle), and the Revd Noel Shepherd (Littlehampton) joined the team visiting Westcott House (an Anglican college in the Federation). The Chairman of the Federation Inspection Team was the Revd Dr Gordon Wakefield of the Methodist Church.

46. The full report on Westminster College is included in an appendix together with the Recommendations to the Training Committee arising from visits both to the college and the Federation. In general terms support is given to what has been written and recommended and in particular we would wish Assembly to note the progress that has been made since the last visit to our college.

Appendix IIA and IIB, and Resolution 5

WESTMINSTER/CHESHUNT POST

47. **The Revd Dr Stephen Mayor** retires this August from the Directorship of the Cheshunt Foundation and the Nivison Chair of Church History at Westminster College. He has discharged these tasks, and others before them, including the teaching of Pastoral Studies, with great ability and we record with thanksgiving his distinguished service not only to generations of students but to the whole church with thanksgiving. **Resolution 7**

48. **The Revd Dr David Cornick**, MA(Oxon), AKC, South Western Provincial Training Officer has accepted the invitation of the Executive Committee and of the Governors of the Cheshunt Foundation to serve as Dr Mayor's successor and we welcome him to this post.

STAFFING CONCERNS

49. We seek to encourage many ministers to continue research, for the enhancement of the ministry as a whole. Recognising that a number of staff at our colleges are due to retire within the next five years, the Church can help to prepare potentially suitable candidates for college posts by encouraging further theological study. This may take the form of part-time research, and thus in many cases the support of local churches will be crucial. Additional finance is being made available through central funds:

STUDENT SETTLEMENTS

50. Following the concern expressed at the Assembly as to the timing of Moderators' visits to colleges to discuss settlements with final year students, a recommendation for change has been withdrawn. Visits will therefore continue for all students in October. As a direct result of these discussions however, we have paid particular attention to the annual reports of students sent to their respective Provinces, and have urged that these should reflect on a student's growth towards suitability for ministry. Every year must be regarded as probationary.

POST ORDINATION TRAINING

51. We continue to monitor progress of the scheme whereby the church pays particular attention to the support and continuing training programme of those newly ordained amongst us. This operates in all Provinces now, with regional variations, and the wishes of the 1984 Assembly in this regard are being met. In a few instances some ministers are not being helped as they should and we urge Provinces to pay attention to this vital part of our service to those who minister to us.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

52. Joint discussions are currently taking place within the Department as part of a general review of the In-Service Training provision. A report is being issued by the Support Committee which has our backing.

REFRESHER COURSES

53. Currently each year two conferences take place, one at Westminster College lasting a week, and one at the Windermere Centre over a long weekend which is specifically geared to those non-stipendiary ministers who are unable to take time off work. These enable ministers who have completed their first three years in the ministry either stipendiary or non-stipendiary to reflect on that experience, and they are joined by ministers invited on a regular basis every seven years until their retirement. We are paying attention to the contents of the programme and the

objectives which lie behind it, and seek to make it a truly refreshing event. It is not always so and we find it helpful to be given first hand impressions so that we can enhance the experience.

MINISTERIAL TRAINING FUND

54. **Bursaries.** The Fund has been able to respond to all the requests for funding from students in full and part-time training during the past year, as well as for in-service training. The fact that the National Appeal in 1990 realised its target was a significant factor at a time when the number of students was its highest in recent years, and the need at its greatest. The ultimate underwriting comes now from the new Ministry and Mission Fund of the Church and we are co-operating with them with advice and prediction in relation to the years ahead, so that we can recruit with confidence. Nonetheless we would call for caution in the longer term because costs continue to rise, particularly for those engaged in full-time college-based training, and the URC has a whole range of other priorities as well as ministerial education.

55. **Particular requests** for assistance have been attended to very carefully, personally, and on a pastoral basis. We have noted the financial strains put upon students with dependent families and been able to ease some burdens as well as relieving unnecessary anxieties. We have endeavoured to obtain expert guidance and help for those who have to find their way through the effects of the new legislation that brought in the Student Loan Scheme with loss of social security benefits, and, as previously reported, pursued a policy of turning loan offers into cash grants. We continue to help fund student conferences and retreats, together with ministers sabbaticals, summer schools and pre-retirement courses.

56. **We would wish to acknowledge** with gratitude the co-operation and help we receive from college and course authorities; Provincial In-Service Training Officers; those concerned with Post Ordination Training; and the Financial Resources Committee, along with all those students and ministers we seek to help in a realistic and caring fashion. They actually make the system work, and we seek to act as careful stewards of the resources given into our charge.

LAY PREACHING COMMITTEE

57. **Training** We have been glad to accept an invitation from the College of Preachers to share in their planning for an ecumenical future. The college has played a valuable training role within the Church of England and is now looking to adapt its work to serve the whole Church. We believe that in due course it could provide a helpful supplement to the training available for our ministers and lay preachers.

58. The committee is reviewing the need for, and style of, national URC training events for lay preachers. No national denominational conference will be held in 1992 and views on how we can be most helpful in the longer term are welcome.

59. The revision of "Exploring the Faith" has been suspended awaiting a clearer indication of the way ahead on the integration of the URC's training programmes. However the committee has produced a supplement to the new Methodist course "Faith & Worship", mainly for the use of URC students in united churches. At the time of writing the administration of "Exploring the Faith" is under review.

60. **Accreditation** Using the term "accredited" for both local and national purposes causes confusion. We have suggested that Districts use some other term for the preachers on their local lists, and that the description "accredited" be used only for those on the national list.

PERSONALIA

61. During the year we recorded with sadness the death of two friends and servants of the church. **The Revd Dr Edgar Jones** was Professor of Biblical Studies at Yorkshire Independent College and later Principal of the Congregational College, Manchester, and his work as pastor, teacher, and scholar was much respected. **Dr Raymond Evans** much loved and former Headmaster of Silcoates School, was Chairman of the Governors of Northern College, Manchester, a Lay Preaching Commissioner and member of the Lay Preaching committee for many years, and will be greatly missed.

62. We thank again members who give time, energy and the benefit of their skills and experience to the service of this committee and the denomination.

SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Dr David Cornick

Secretary: Revd Michael C Diffey

63. During the seven years of its existence, the Agenda of the Support Committee has steadily grown and it has become necessary to review the work it undertakes to ensure that it represents a manageable load.

64. While acknowledging the importance of the Support Committee within the structures of the Church, the Committee recognizes that its role is not to offer primary support but to enable Districts and Provinces to offer it. In so doing we affirm the importance of providing appropriate support for all engaged, in any way, in the Church's ministry.

65. Throughout the year the Committee has been involved in discussions and decisions about a wide range of topics such as the Management of Resources, Rural Ministry, Interim Ministry, Ministry in Secular Employment, Community Work, Chaplaincies to the Forces, Higher & Further Education, Urban Industrial Mission and In-Service Training. This alone is a vast agenda, and coupled with issues like Women in Ministry and Appraisal of Ministers, it becomes apparent that there is a need to determine priorities.

MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

'Special Category' Ministries

66. In January this year (1992) there were 30 posts approved. Vacancies meant that only 25 ministers were in post. Of these, 12 were for Chaplaincy posts in Higher and Further Education or Urban Industrial Mission, 8 in new or priority areas of outreach and 5 were innovative ministries in unique situations.

67. Two concerns which continue to occupy the Committee in connection with these 30 posts are:

1. How easily a major piece of work can be jeopardized when a minister leaves and is not quickly replaced, or in some cases, never replaced.
2. The increasing demand for posts means that arbitrary decisions often have to be made about the allocation of these scarce resources.

68. In spite of these difficulties the Committee is aware of the enormous advantages these 30 posts offer in terms of the Church's mission.

Ministries in Ecumenical Situations

69. The Committee continues to administer the allocation of grants to ecumenical ministries in which the URC is involved. Our budget in 1992 amounts to close on £100,000. Of this just over £76,000 has been allocated, including £17,700 towards posts for Ecumenical Officers in line with the proposals contained in 'Churches Together in Pilgrimage'. The unallocated amount is reserved for the growing number of ecumenical posts around the country.

70. The committee is grateful to Mrs Mary Stacy of Muswell Hill, London for her work in assisting in the administration of these resources.

71. Over the past 12 months the Committee has worked closely with the World Church & Mission Department's Mission & Ecumenical Work at Home Committee in the approval of projects, the allocation of grants, and in establishing common procedures for those applying for assistance.

MINISTRIES IN THE COMMUNITY SUB-COMMITTEE

72. The new management structure for the Church-Related Community Work Programme is now being implemented. The Department is grateful to Mrs Maggie Hindley for her work in connection with this.

73. Last year Assembly agreed a post for a Development Worker to be responsible for the management, development and support of the CRCW Programme. We are grateful to the World Church & Mission Department, Trinity URC, Harrow and the Thames North Province for contributions towards the local expenses and hope to make an appointment soon.

74. It is good to report that the few CRCWs we deploy around the country are involved in a number of pieces of work of major significance in areas of multi-deprivation where existing major problems have become exacerbated by the economic recession.

HIGHER & FURTHER EDUCATION

75. There are over 90 Chaplains, 4 of whom are full-time, serving the URC in Institutions of Higher or Further Education. At a time when Polytechnics are due to change their status to Universities, and student numbers are set to rise considerably, the URC appreciates the work of our Chaplains in what is often a difficult but important area of ministry.

76. Contact with students is a high priority of many Chaplains and the URC Link-Up Scheme facilitates this process. It is pleasing to note that many churches now use this service.

77. The Co-ordinator, The Revd Kevin Swaine, continues to represent the URC on the Churches Higher Education Liaison Group, and also the National Ecumenical Agency in Further Education, of which body he now acts as Secretary.

UNITED BOARD

78. There are 15 full-time United Board Chaplains serving the three services, 4 of whom are URC ministers and there are 6 Territorial Army Chaplains (4 URC). Reports from the Forces indicate that they are held in very high regard. Several served with great distinction, in spite of considerable distress in the Gulf War.

URBAN INDUSTRIAL MISSION

79. The URC supports eight 'Special Category' ministries in Urban Industrial Mission evenly spread north and south. In addition, ten posts receive some support from the 'Ministry in Ecumenical Situations' fund. Other URC ministers are totally funded from non-URC sources, and several others exercise their Urban Industrial Mission ministry 'part-time' as part of a local church job. There are 45 names on the Network mailing list. Anyone interested in this work is invited to contact the Revd Dick Wolff.

80. The emphasis of this ministry is on understanding the economic context in which the URC seeks to express its mission, by engaging with the structures of the economy and with people marginalised within it. It involves much face-to-face contact with people at all levels; listening, enabling, supporting and encouraging people to identify the deeper questions and face them. There is a fair amount of energy spent in project development and management related to unemployment and economic disadvantage. Likewise, there is a considerable degree of involvement with secular groups and working parties involved in consciousness-raising, campaigning or policy formation - on a wide range of issues, from HIV AIDS to defence industry restructuring and arms conversion.

81. Recently, and in some quarters, there is a heavy involvement in empowerment of people marginal to the structures of the economy through involving them in active (and often transnational) networking.

82. The work is firmly rooted in the URC at all levels, and practitioners do a considerable amount of work within the church:

- i) preaching on Sundays, and generally 'servicing the institution'.
- ii) policy formation through participation in working groups, councils, and committees.
- iii) doing special study and research, especially on mission-related issues.
- iv) development and delivery of projects and programmes within the church.

83. If Christ in majesty is 'towering o'er the wrecks of time', the humiliated Christ is very much to be found trapped within the economic structures of our time. Through their work, our UIM practitioners continually have to rediscover what the gospel word and action is in the 'real world' where people earn their living (or fail to).

COMMUNITY CHURCHES' CONSULTATION

84. The Department, in conjunction with the Church & Society Department, is once again this year planning a Conference for Lay and Ordained Workers involved in Community Centres and Community Projects, Community Development or Urban Regeneration. The purpose will be 'to experience and reflect upon the contrasts of the East End of London and consider the implications for our own work'. It will be based at Newham from the 13th-14th July.

APPRAISAL

85. The question of Appraisal or Review for Ministers in Pastoral Charge has been raised in a number of places including the reports on 'Patterns of Ministry' and In-Service Training. The Committee is aware of the need to examine this important but sensitive matter carefully in order to determine what might be an appropriate method for the URC. A small Working Party has been formed to consult with other churches, and to identify and suggest a process by which the URC can establish an **appropriate** method of Appraisal.

REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON IN-SERVICE TRAINING

1.1. The Working Party consisted of: Revd Dr David Cornick (Convener), Revd Michael Diffey (Secretary), Revd Wendy Baskett, (Provincial In-Service Training Officer, West Midlands), Mr Jim Wilkinson, (Provincial In-Service Training Officer, Yorkshire), Revd Dr John Simmonds (In-Service Training Officer, Methodist Church)

1.2. Our terms of reference were set by the report **EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE IN THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH** (para 4.3.3) which recommended a thorough review of the system of Provincial In-Service Training Officers including consideration of IST financing, which varies between Provinces.

1.3. We have not addressed the matter of sabbaticals as this was a subject of a review and report by the Ministries Department to Assembly in 1988.

THE CURRENT POSITION

2.1. We issued a questionnaire to the twelve Provincial In-Service Training Officers to discover current practice. This confirmed the suspicions embodied in the **EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE** report. Provincial responsibility for in-service training is included as part of the responsibilities of three posts - full-time Training Officers, part-time Training Officers, who are also in pastoral charge, and ministers in pastoral charge who seek to cope with in-service training amongst a variety of other time consuming duties. All Officers agreed on the components of the job - liaising between the Ministries Department and ministers, processing applications, offering guidance about appropriate courses, promoting in-service training and providing courses (most commonly through Provincial schools). The resources of time and finance available for the work was shown to vary enormously.

2.2. There is a wide discrepancy of funding by Provinces, ranging from no budget for this work to a budget of £4,000 pa (1990 figures).

2.3. Currently each IST grant application is forwarded by the Provincial In-Service Training Officer to the Ministries Department with a request for funding from the Ministerial Training Fund. The policy of the Department is to contribute two-thirds of the cost of a course up to a ceiling of £220 in any one year. Some Provinces and Districts also make contributions but the amounts vary considerably (see 2.2. above). A few pastorates and some trust funds also make some contributions but the major contributor is the Ministerial Training Fund.

2.4. The URC's provision of ministerial training outlined in **PREPARING TODAY FOR TOMORROW'S MINISTRY** (1982) (henceforth PTTM) falls into 3 phases: pre-foundation, foundation and post-foundation. Post-foundation training begins with post-ordination training (POT) which culminates in a refresher course after three years and thereafter ministers fall within the provisions of in-service training.

2.5. PTTM defined the purposes of IST as 'to refresh and update earlier learning, to help a minister to face new problems that have arisen in the course of service and to provide encouragement and collegiality. It may include training for new tasks, study of social changes and the opportunity to undertake research or develop skills. We envisage among the many possibilities the renewal of the life of prayer through retreats, biblical and theological studies, specialised studies in industrial, hospital or student chaplaincy, ecumenical experience and fresh training in communication skills'. (PTTM page 13 No 49). It recommended that ministers should be released for in-service training for periods of at least 7 days' concentrated study each year, not counting as part of holidays.

2.6. PTTM also recommended that the financial provision for IST should be made 'by the congregation concerned, District and/or Province, with appropriate support from the Ministerial Training Fund'.

2.7. In 1991 the Ministerial Training Fund budgeted £39,000 for IST of which £34,000 was taken up.

2.8. In summary there is much to be commended in our present practice. We have a national network of Officers, a useful annual consultation for Officers, and we are aware through our Network of some excellent courses. The denomination has already acknowledged the importance of IST and, in places, makes general provision for it.

2.9. Equally there is much that could be done to improve the system, thereby benefiting more of our ministers and churches. We are aware of the heavy burden that the responsibility for in-service training places on the shoulders of Provincial In-Service Training Officers for whom this is but one of a number of responsibilities.

A WAY FORWARD

3.1. We would like in-service training to be appropriate, coherent and available to all. It should be appropriate to particular stages of a minister's development, providing opportunities for reflection, research and development of skills. It should be coherent in relating to and developing from foundation training. Financial provision and time should be made available to all ministers. Ministers should not be expected to finance their own in-service training. We appreciate that ministry is a vocation which eludes precise definition, but that does not excuse us from attempting a profile of ministry as a basis for identifying IST needs.

3.2. Ministry is multi-faceted, demanding a rainbow of skills, attitudes and knowledge. We were attracted by a number of metaphors and analogies which seemed to us to capture something of the variety of ministry. Amongst the gifts of Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:28) Paul includes administration (kubernesis). The kubernesis was the oarsman or helmsman on a Greek ship. He was not the slavemaster, nor the captain, nor the owner. It was not his duty to see the destination or decide about the cargo. Those responsibilities lay elsewhere. However, he was responsible for the ship, and was answerable to the captain and accountable to the owner. He was the one who knew the strengths and weaknesses of the slaves, who understood how much strain the vessel could take, and above all, he was the one who could read the signs of the times - the tides and the prevailing weather conditions.

3.3. This metaphor may help us to see how the spiritual, theological, pastoral, liturgical and administrative aspects of ministry are integrated. The following are some of the components we felt would be important in a ministerial profile.

3.4. All ministers will be (at some point, and however reluctantly) administrator, chairer of meetings, someone able to work with others, communicator, counsellor, delegator, disciple, enabler, evangelist, leader, manager, pastor, preacher, teacher, theologian, visionary, worship leader. We hope they will strive for competence, that they will be prayerful, mature in faith and vision, self-aware, open to the world, able to stand on boundaries, embodiments of the Gospel. Obviously no one will be omniscient, but we trust that all ministers will be aware of the need for continual development in all aspects of their life and work.

3.5. We draw attention to the fact that the ministerial tasks of administration and management did not appear in 'Preparing Today for Tomorrow's Ministry' and we recommend that consideration be given to the development of appropriate management skills for ministers. An ill-considered annexation of secular

management programmes would be inappropriate. We need to define and practise management within a spiritual and theological context. That in turn leads us to ask questions about the nature of ministerial leadership and the skills entailed. It is beyond our remit to make detailed recommendations about specific components of training, so we recommend that the Department considers this further.

3.6. We are concerned about the varying amounts that Provinces contribute towards IST. However, we recognise it as a problem which is pervasive elsewhere in the URC and reflects the uneven distribution of resources throughout the church. We ask the Mission Council to consider this complex and sensitive issue as a matter of urgency.

3.7. We have considered the possibility of the Ministerial Training Fund funding in-service training completely as with foundation training. We consulted the MTF about this but are informed that in their opinion the present policy 'seems reasonable and generous'.

3.8. We are reluctant to bring a recommendation at this time which may add unrealistic financial pressures to already hard-pressed churches but we do emphasize the need for continuing education of ministers. We remind all concerned that in-service training is a responsibility shared by the minister, pastorate and the wider councils of the church and is too important to be left to chance.

3.9. We have considered the suggestion made by some that in-service training should be compulsory. We have deliberately backed away from this mainly for practical reasons and not least because in our opinion IST would need to be better constituted with appropriate appraisal built in. We welcome the space included in the Ministers' Personal Profile forms recommended by Assembly in 1990 for use during a vacancy (Record: Page 10, 3A) for in-service training to be recorded. We hope that individual ministers will take seriously their responsibility to continue their education and development and understand this within the context of their accountability to those whom they seek to serve in Christ's name, and to God for wise stewardship of God-given gifts.

3.10. We recommend that all ministers changing their sphere of ministry should be provided with suitable induction training. In some cases this may be appropriately provided regionally or locally (eg. Liverpool or inner London), in other cases nationally using agencies like the Arthur Rank Centre for those moving into rural areas. We suggest that this responsibility should lie with the Province or District into which a minister moves and we ask the Department to consider offering guidelines to assist with establishing such training.

THE JOB

4.1. It had been the intention of the Working Party to produce a Job Description for a Provincial In-Service Training Officer. It was decided against this for the following reasons:

- a) The time allocation for Provincial In-Service Training Officers varies enormously from Province to Province and is determined by whether or not the job is undertaken by a minister in pastoral charge, by a part-time or full-time Training Officer.
- b) Provinces need flexibility in deciding how to discharge their responsibilities for the in-service training of ministers. Consequently the decision was taken to list the tasks associated with the in-service training of ministers which Provinces need to ensure are catered for in some way or another.
- c) It is the responsibility of the Province to be concerned for all aspects of the in-service training of ministers (stipendiary, non-stipendiary).

- 4.2. We recommend that each Province ensures that the tasks listed in the Appendix are undertaken.

APPENDIX

1. Each Province will need to decide how best to discharge the responsibility for encouraging and supporting the in-service training of ministers under its care, bearing in mind the following factors:

- a) The needs of ministers and pastorates
- b) Liaison with the Provincial Moderator, those who have a pastoral responsibility for ministers and churches in the Districts, those in the Province and/or District who are involved in other aspects of training, and the Ministries Department.
- c) The need to network with those in other Provinces who carry similar responsibility for the sharing of information and expertise.
- d) Appoint representatives to the national network (consultation) for IST and other training networks.

2. A Province will need to cater for the following tasks:

- a) Raising awareness of the importance of training within the Province, among ministers, churches and districts.
- b) Making contact with ministers, churches and districts and with the Ministries Department, to enable communication to be maintained.
- c) Acting as consultant to ministers, churches and districts, to advise on perceived needs and the training required to meet them.
- d) Assisting with the regular review (appraisal) of training undertaken by ministers and districts.
- e) Taking steps to ensure continuity between the phases of training by being aware of the current schemes of Foundation Training and POT.
- f) Gathering and distributing information about existing courses, making use of the in-service training network wherever possible.
- g) Evaluating courses by receiving feedback from participants and sharing this through the network.
- h) Setting up new courses where required, provincially or nationally through the network, including induction courses.
- i) Incorporating the work of Provincial Ministers' Schools into the training plan.
- j) Liaising with other denominations to provide and share ecumenical training where appropriate (eg. in induction to new forms of ministry)
- k) Keeping records of training undertaken to assist with other responsibilities set out above.

3. Provinces should consider setting up a training budget in order to provide the following:

- a) Training equipment.
- b) Expenses incurred by those involved in providing for in-service training.
- c) Cost of setting up courses.
- d) Subsidies to individual ministers undertaking IST.

- e) To gather and distribute information about existing courses, making use of the IST Network wherever possible.
- f) Evaluate courses by receiving feedback from participants and sharing this through the Network.
- g) Setting up new courses where required, provincially or nationally through the Network.
- h) Incorporating the work of Provincial Ministers' Schools into the training plan.
- i) Liaising with other denominations to provide and share ecumenical training where appropriate (eg. in induction to new forms of ministry). **Resolution 6**

PATTERNS OF MINISTRY

1. Attention is drawn to the Discussion Document "**Patterns of Ministry in the United Reformed Church**, which was received by the Assembly last year (Book of Reports pp.114-126) and referred for discussion throughout the Church. A further copy of the document is included in the Assembly papers as circulated. This document is now the subject of full Assembly debate.

2. Our objective has been to gather together a number of strands in our thinking about particular ministries in the URC, and to look ahead to the next century. The Department has not set out to provide some kind of blue-print or formal plan for the future. It has merely sought to listen to what the church and the churches are saying to us, and then to reflect it back to see what kind of patterns are emerging which we all would want to encourage and develop.

3. The Department has been encouraged by the debates which have begun, with many written responses already received by the end of February from committees, councils, local churches and individuals in answer to our invitation. There is much more to come not least from the March Synods, and all these are useful preliminaries to the main debate itself.

The Faith and Life Department, in particular, has contributed significantly to our work, through its responsibilities for Christian Education and Stewardship and also Doctrine and Worship.

4. Early responses have enabled us to discover which parts of the document **Patterns of Ministry** have excited the most interest, and provided areas of both agreement and disagreement. These have included the Ordained Ministry and the whole body of the Church; Ordination, Orders and Orderliness; Presidency; the Location of Ministers in Pastoral Service; Collaborative Ministry; Review or Appraisal, and the Numbers of Ministers.

5. We note that the Support Committee is in process of consulting other Churches, and doing research within the URC about methods of regular review and appraisal, and they will report to us later.

6. We wish to make brief comments for clarification in two areas and to propose some draft resolutions which could take us on to a more practical stage if Assembly so wishes.

7. **Ordained Ministry and the whole body of the Church** (Section 1.1.)

7.1. Many comments expressed dissatisfaction with the treatment of this theme in the original paper, preferring the exposition in **God's Reign and Our Unity** (Anglican-Reformed International Commission) or in **Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry** (World Council of Churches). Some comments urge that we should not move beyond the wording of the Basis of Union. Those who write to uphold the total distinctiveness of ordained ministry do so from different convictions; some see 'professional' as distinct from 'amateur'; others see functions as the critical matter; yet others regard spiritual gifts as the key. While several learned commentators stress the themes of historic continuity, others note that the growing Christian communities in Britain stress spiritual gifts and calling to many varied disciples.

7.2. We would affirm, with **God's Reign and our Unity**, para 73;

The Church as a whole, and all ministry within and on behalf of the Church, have one source in the action of the Father in sending the Son into the world anointed by the Spirit to announce and embody God's blessed reign over all humankind and all creation.

The primary minister of God's grace, Jesus Christ, commits the pain and the authority and the hope of his ministry to those who trust him and learn to follow his way. There is a ministry of the whole people of God who are called by the Holy Spirit to announce and embody God's blessed reign. To that service we are committed by baptism and incorporation into the body of Christ. It is in this sense that we see all particular ministries arising within the broadest concept of ministry. A particular ministry does not subtract something from the whole, does not deny the work of the Spirit in all believers, but brings the gifts and calling into a personal focus so that continuity and order are maintained and leadership given after the pattern of Jesus Christ. "In order to fulfil its mission, the Church needs persons who are publicly and continually responsible for pointing to its fundamental dependence on Jesus Christ, and thereby provide, within a multiplicity of gifts, a focus of its unity". (**BEM II A8**)

7.3. Within the URC we have inherited three traditions of how those persons are recognised; we seek to receive the riches of those traditions. But we also seek to affirm that we are a united church, living its theology, open to reform, dedicated to mission and so building a new tradition which develops day by day.

7.4. This means that we do not precisely fit with the understandings and practices of ministry followed by our sister Churches in the ecumenical fellowship. For example, the ordained eldership sets us apart from our partners in Churches Together in England, and our understanding of 'oversight' from the Church of England. But in our understanding of the ministry of the Word and Sacraments we have not reached a position far from the rest of the Reformed family of Churches or from the non-conformist group of churches in Britain. We see a calling of God to certain members of the church to give themselves to the service of the Gospel through the proclamation of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, the pastoral care of the community and the leadership of the church's witness in the world. All four of those elements are both personal and communal - the Word does not in any sense belong to the minister alone, the sacraments are community celebrations of faith, the members of the church care for one another, witness in the world is the calling of all - and it is the community of the Church which authorises the ministers whom God has called. We fully recognise how the gift and calling of God to certain people is acknowledged by the action of the Church and so places particular responsibility in their hands. This is affirmed in the Basis of Union, para 21.

8. **Presidency** - (Section 3.10)

8.1. Almost every correspondent has referred to the proposal for the appointment of Presiding Elders either to express warm support or to express anxiety. Our intention is not to introduce a new order of sacramental ministry parallel to the present ordained ministry, but

- a. to provide a more consistent practice than our present one where District Councils adopt very different ways of authorising persons to preside,
- b. to provide a link between presidency and pastoral care,
- c. to ensure that in every local church there is no restriction on the regular celebration of the sacraments, and
- d. to remove from the stipendiary ministry of the Church the pressure to conduct sacramental worship as an itinerant service.

8.2. This we see as an orderly way of maintaining local church and District Council responsibility. It is within that grouping of service that we call presbyteral. It will bring fresh freedom to District Councils as they grapple with the problems surrounding the location and scoping of stipendiary ministers. In the resolution we recommend that the idea be further explored and brought back to a future Assembly. In the following text we offer a revision of paragraph 3.10 for clarification:

"that each local church, of whatever size, should be invited to nominate from among its eldership (or the eldership of neighbouring churches) those elders whom the District Council might consider and recognise as Presiding Elders for a stated period of years (but not normally more than five) with authority to preside at any service of worship of that local church as need arises, that is, when an ordained minister of Word and Sacraments is not available."

9. We trust that the debate and the on-going discussions will be stimulating, constructive and helpful to the whole Church.

Resolutions 1-6

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 Assembly recommends that, where there is an area of significant disagreement over a candidate for the ministry, the Province shall convene a meeting representative of the national assessment panel and provincial interviewing group, to share information and views, before a final conclusion is reached by the Province.
- 3 (a) Assembly gives first approval to the following amendments to the Structure of the URC:
 - (i) The Functions of the Church Meeting (Manual page 18), 2 (1) (x) "to consider, always on advice from the elders' meeting, any application for recognition as a candidate for the ministry and to transmit it, **with information**, to the District Council."
 - (ii) Appeals (Manual: page 28) to add:
"Appeals by persons candidating for the ministry against a decision by the councils of the Church about their candidature are excluded from the above provisions for Appeals and will follow regulations approved by the General Assembly and available from the Ministries Department."

- (b) The Assembly gives approval to the Regulations for Appeals regarding candidates for the ministry, as set out in Appendix I, to come into effect if and when resolution 3 (a) is ratified.
- 4 Whilst reaffirming the rule whereby candidates for the stipendiary ministry are required to spend at least one year of full time study on a college-directed course, Assembly encourages the Ministries Department to explore its variation in special circumstances agreed with the Training Committee to permit the full course to be undertaken under the care and direction of a province, and in ecumenical circumstances wherever possible.
- 5 Assembly receives the report of the Inspectors to Westminster College, Cambridge, in November 1991 and supports their recommendations. (Appendix II).
- 6 Assembly receives the report of the Working Party on In-Service Training and commends it to Provinces for consideration and comment by 31st December 1992. (Book of Reports pp 167 to 171)
- 7 Assembly acknowledges with gratitude the outstanding ministry exercised by Dr Stephen Mayor as Director of the Cheshunt Foundation and Nivison Professor of Church History at Westminster College and the great contribution he has made to the witness of the whole Church and wishes him and Janet well as they retire.
- 8 Assembly records its debt to the Revd Michael Dunford for his ministry as Secretary first of the Church Life Department and latterly of the Ministries Department and its thanks for all the service he has offered. It wishes him and Doreen well as they move to Felixstowe and continue in ministry there.

PATTERNS OF MINISTRY

1. (a) Assembly re-affirms the statement in the Basis of Union (paragraphs 19-25) about the ministry of the whole people of God and the place of particular ministries within it.
- (b) Assembly requests the Doctrine and Worship Committee to consider how this section of the Basis of Union relates to 'Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry' and to offer the Assembly a comment on this, with any amendments considered desirable.
2. Assembly instructs the Ministries Department and the Faith & Life Department to do further study on the Presiding Elder suggestion and to bring the matter back to the Assembly for further debate.
3. Assembly requests the Ministries Department to consult ecumenical partners about URC patterns of ministry and to report back.
4. Assembly asks the Ministries Department, the Finance Department and the Provincial Moderators to keep under review the number of new entrants into the stipendiary ministry, so that all ordinands and ministers may be properly supported by the Church, and to advise accordingly.
5. Assembly records its appreciation of all non-stipendiary service generously given to many forms of ministry and in particular notes the trained service of accredited lay preachers as a significant contribution to the worship of the URC.
6. Assembly encourages the Ministries Department, in consultation with the Mission Council, to continue its exploration of other themes identified in its document "Patterns of Ministry in the URC", and to initiate further debate and action as it seems appropriate.

APPENDIX I

APPEALS PROCEDURES - CANDIDATING FOR THE MINISTRY

1. **The Manual Procedure - Unsuitability**

1.1. The present procedures are designed primarily to deal in a judicial manner with constitutional, legal or disciplinary cases and not for the discernment of the call of God to an individual. They are thus too cumbersome for the matter in consideration.

1.2. The appeal ladder goes from District Council to Provincial Synod. But in candidating procedure the Synod is the body which makes the final decision. It is therefore inappropriate for it to make an intermediate decision on appeal.

1.3. The Manual procedures could lead ultimately to an appeal on the floor of the General Assembly. We would exclude that as at all appropriate in this matter which requires intimate consideration of individual vocation.

2. **Need for a procedure**

2.1. The Church must always be aware of the possibility that its councils may make wrong decisions, and the Manual procedure is available because of that risk. We ought not to remove that safeguard in the case of candidates.

2.2. The process of application is often a highly charged emotional matter for the candidate who is convinced of a calling to ministry. We may never be able to remove the sense of disappointment for a person not accepted, but we should be able to assure them of the fullest and fairest possible hearing, so that bitterness does not result.

3. **Present stages of Candidating**

3.1. There are four main steps at present:

Local Church
District Council
National Assessment Conference
Provincial Synod

The questions which have arisen come at the second stage. The District Council may commend or not commend a candidate to proceed, and candidates have appealed against a negative decision, which, barring an appeal, brings the process to an end.

3.2. **We propose that a new appeal procedure should apply at that level only.**

3.3. At the level of the local church, experience indicates that it is very hard for a Church Meeting to do other than commend to the District Council. It is recommended that the work of the Church Meeting should be not to make a judgement about suitability, but to provide information to the District Council about the person's background, talents and church activities. The questions asked by the Ministries Department should be clear and comprehensive so that the local church knows what is needed. This would be a more realistic task and more helpful to the District Council than a recommendation which, in the light of experience, is of doubtful value.

3.4. At the level of National Assessment Conference and Provincial Synod we would exclude the possibility of an appeal. The only possible route would be to the General Assembly, but the Assembly has already delegated its task of discernment to the Assessment Panel. The decision of the Provincial Synod should therefore be final. That does not imply 'for ever' and there may be instances where a negative judgement now is accompanied by a suggestion to apply again in a few years. Normally two years would be the minimum period before a renewed application.

4. **Re-hearing Tribunal**

4.1. If the District Council, through its normal procedures, has reached a negative decision, a candidate may question the decision on the ground of wrong or inadequate procedure or because their case was not fully heard or understood or because of alleged bias in the panel. The candidate who wishes to appeal will write within one month to the Secretary of the District Council for a re-hearing, stating the grounds for the appeal.

4.2. The Secretary will inform the Synod Clerk and the Secretary of the Ministries Department. The tribunal will comprise three persons, from other Provinces, appointed by the General Secretary, together with a person representing the Ministries Department who will be available if requested by the panel. The assessors will be persons with experience in the matters referred to in 4.1. The tribunal will meet as soon as possible and invite the appellant to meet with them. The appellant may be accompanied by a friend who can assist in presenting the case.

4.3. All the papers which were available to the District Council will be available to the tribunal. On request any or all of the papers will be made available to the appellant.

4.4. The function of the tribunal will be to decide whether or not the candidate should proceed to the National Assessment Conference. Neither that Conference nor the Provincial Synod will be in any way restricted in reaching a judgement. Having reached a decision the tribunal will inform the candidate, giving the principal reasons for it. In the event of the candidate going forward to the Assessment Conference, the report of the tribunal will go forward with the candidate's papers.

4.5. The decision reached by the tribunal will not be subject to any further appeal.

4.6. The tribunal will consider all matters, both procedural and/or material, which affected the decision of the District Council, and therefore may be concerned with the suitability of the appellant for training for ministry in the URC.

4.7. The costs of the tribunal will be met by the Ministries Department.

5. **Manual Amendment**

In order to give effect to such a procedure the following amendments to the Structure of the URC will be needed:

The Functions of the Church Meeting (Manual p.18) 2 (1) (x) "to consider, always on advice from the elders' meeting, any application for recognition as a candidate for the ministry and to transmit it, *with information*, to the District Council."

Appeals (Manual page 28). To add:

Appeals by persons candidating for the ministry against a decision by the councils of the Church about their candidature are excluded from the above provisions for Appeals and will follow regulations approved by the General Assembly and available from the Ministries Department.

6. **Confidentiality**

6.1. There has been some doubt and difficulty regarding material about candidates written by referees 'in confidence'. We note that at present there is widespread movement away from a confidentiality which hides papers from the person written about. We consider that this movement will become increasingly applicable in church affairs. Our hesitations about this are only that we fear very bland written material and very trenchant spoken material. And that reflects our difficulty within the Christian community of being fully open face to face. There is no quick solution for this.

6.2. We recommend that in the instance of tribunals described in section 4 above, all documents requested by the appellant should be made available. In all other parts of the candidating process, confidentiality will remain as at present.

6.3. This means that in future, referees should be aware of the possibility that what they write may be shared in this way and a note will need to be appended to the letter to them to make this clear.

7. Giving reasons

7.1. It is bound to be difficult for a candidate who has received a No to have no reasons for it. It may also be difficult for the body to give reasons, for there may be a complex of attitudes perceived and doctrinal emphases expressed and reports from colleagues, a whole mix of items which add up to a general impression of unsuitability. But we consider that generally those bodies which reach decisions should be prepared to give the candidate reasons for it (4.4 above).

7.2. Alongside this there is certainly a requirement to give pastoral care to the individual who has received a No. It will often be the Provincial Moderator who is the most suitable person. The group which reaches the decision should ensure, as part of its work, that a person is aware and available.

8. Using our judgement

8.1. The intention of this procedure is to give confidence to District Councils to use their judgement, for that is a vital constituent in the whole process and should not be evaded. There are, however, instances where there is no clear judgement but very reasonable uncertainty. The Ministries Department has indicated in its paper on Candidating Procedures that where the proper work has been completed and real uncertainty remains, the District Council may pass on the candidature to the Assessment Conference. We see this not as the evasion of responsibility but the proper sharing of responsibility between the councils of the Church.

8.2. We note that an appeal against the decision of a District Council has been very rare indeed. This is a sign that the Councils' judgement is widely respected. While offering this scheme for an appeal procedure we are confident that it will very seldom be needed.

Regulations for Appeals regarding Candidates for the Ministry

1. The only part of the candidating procedure where an appeal may be lodged by a candidate is when a District Council has reached a decision not to commend the candidate to the National Assessment Conference.

2. The candidate may appeal against that decision on the grounds of wrong or inadequate procedure, or because their case was not fully heard or understood or because of alleged bias in the panel.

3. The candidate wishing to appeal will write to the Secretary of the District Council within one month, stating the grounds for the appeal.

4. The Secretary of the District Council will inform the Synod Clerk and the Secretary of the Ministries Department.

5. At the request of the Ministries Department, the General Secretary will appoint a tribunal consisting of three assessors from provinces other than that of the appellant, and the Ministries Department will appoint a person to be available if requested by the assessors.

6. The tribunal will:

- (i) Receive and consider all relevant papers from the District Council.
- (ii) Invite the appellant to meet the tribunal. The appellant may be accompanied by a friend who can assist in presenting the case.

- (iii) Reach a decision on whether the appellant should go forward to the National Assessment Conference.
 - (iv) Inform the appellant of the decision and the reasons for it.
 - (v) Report its work to the Ministries Department.
 - (vi) If the decision is for the appellant to go forward, pass on all papers to the Ministries Department; if the decision is for the appellant not to go forward, return all papers to the District Council.
7. On request, any or all of the papers made available to the tribunal will be made available to the appellant. This does not include medical reports which are covered by a separate process.
8. Costs of the tribunal will be met by the Ministries Department.
9. The decision reached by the tribunal will not be subject to any further appeal.

APPENDIX II

ECUMENICAL INSPECTION OF THE CAMBRIDGE FEDERATION OF THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES November 18th-22nd, 1991

[A] WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

Report of the Visitors led by Mrs Ruth Clarke.

INTRODUCTION

1. It was a privilege to take part in the ecumenical inspection of the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges and we endorse the report on the Federation. We express thanks to the staff and students in all four colleges but particularly in Westminster College for their generous hospitality and patience with our exhaustive enquiries. We have pleasure in presenting an account of good present practice. We hope the report will be a useful growing point for the future. Throughout the document we generally use headings suggested by the Ecumenical Committee on Inspections.

THE AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION

2. The purpose of the college is to provide a thorough and rounded education for a general pastoral ministry, basic training which should be continued after ordination. It therefore prepares people of particular gifts and calling mainly from the URC for the 'ministry of Word and Sacraments' as required in the URC Basis of Union, stipendiary ministers who will enable others to take their place in the ministry of 'the whole people of God'. The ecumenical setting of the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges opens up many opportunities through the wide-ranging skills and scholarship of the teaching staff and the experience brought by the students from different traditions. This means that the college contributes substantially to the ecumenical formation of future ministers. Some local people who are training for lay and non-stipendiary ministry might well find the existing courses appropriate, convenient and stimulating.

CONSTITUTION AND ORGANISATION

3. The URC General Assembly lays responsibility for the college upon the Training Committee of the Ministries Department. Responsible to that body are the Board of Studies and the Management Committee. The Board of Studies approves the curriculum and monitors the readiness of the students for ministry. The Principal and other members of

Senatus (teaching Staff), report on developments and progress to that Board. The Management Committee is responsible for the finances, buildings, grounds and furnishings of the college, and the Bursar and House Committee report to it. Relationships between these bodies seem to be satisfactory. The Management Committee could benefit from some new members with particular professional and technical skills.

4. The Cheshunt Foundation continues the work of Cheshunt College and has its own Board of Governors representing both historical links and present responsibilities. It makes an annual grant to Westminster College, helps to fund the library and offers in-service training to ministers mainly through providing sabbatical terms in Cambridge. It also provides stipend, housing and expenses of one member of the teaching staff of the college who currently also acts as Director of the Foundation. We would like to place on record the very significant contribution made by the Revd Dr Stephen Mayor in this post for 23 years. He has carried the dual responsibility of administration and teaching first Pastoral Studies and then Church History with grace, dignity and humour. He retires in 1992.

5. The college has a full-time Secretary and a Bursar for 20 hours a week. The Bursar's is a new post and she had been working only six weeks at the time of the visitation. Her job was still dominated by the aftermath of substantial building works and refurbishment in the residential wing. The Secretary had been appointed recently as a replacement for the previous post-holder. This new team seemed to be working well together and will help to relieve the academic staff, particularly the Principal, of administration they have to carry.

TEACHING STAFF

6. There are 5 members of the Senatus to cover Biblical Studies (OT & NT), Church History, Systematic Theology and Pastoral Studies. All teaching staff teach the Federation courses and therefore there is a representative from the Federation on college appointment bodies.

7. Some more recently appointed members of the Senatus are appointed for a seven year term which is renewable. The Director of Pastoral Studies is an exception, appointed for a fixed term of 5 years with the possibility of another 2 years. We feel that the fixed term appointment is right in order to achieve a balance of continuity and change, but that it should be the same for all teaching staff.

8. There is concern among the staff that they should maintain contact with the life of local churches as well as keeping themselves up to date with reading in their particular subject. This is difficult with the demands which are placed upon them. A term of study leave for one of the Westminster staff per year is arranged with the Federation so that teaching commitments can be covered. No other regular in-service training is provided, but some meetings of the Federation and of staff from all URC-related colleges have a training component.

TEACHING AND LEARNING: METHODS AND RESOURCES

9. Much hard work and negotiation since the last inspection have resulted in a breakthrough in Cambridge. The University Faculty of Divinity has recognised a unitary course called the Federation Certificate in Theology for Ministry. This includes Biblical, theological, historical practical and pastoral studies. This course began in 1991 and all students completing it will have a qualification validated by the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Cambridge. There is a great breadth of content and staff have to balance carefully how much choice an individual student can exercise and how much that individual needs direction in selecting courses.

10. This CTM is one of four University courses available to Federation students. Only one student at Westminster was reading for the University Tripos and one for the Diploma, which is a one year course based on part of the Tripos together with an extra dissertation. None were pursuing the M Phil course.

11. We would like to commend the quality and commitment of the teaching. Members of the Senatus take great care to present their material clearly, to ensure that students understand and to offer time (well beyond what is timetabled) to deal with particular needs or struggling students. Essays of widely varying quality are given careful attention, grading and comment. At lectures and seminars handouts are regularly provided, and an opportunity is given for questions and discussion.

12. We affirm all that is being done and would like to encourage the Senatus to develop teaching that is already good into the very good, and the very good into the excellent. The improvement and refurbishment of some of the lecture and seminar rooms would be a further help.

13. We also commend the efforts of staff across the Federation to arrange more regular meetings of subject groups and of the whole teaching staff. Such meetings would give the opportunity:

- a) to keep colleagues informed about what is being taught;
- b) to exchange ideas on teaching method
- c) to discuss possibilities for cross-curriculum cooperation.
- d) to plan team teaching and to exchange information about research interests.

14. There are areas where improvements could enhance the learning of students, e.g. devices to break a 45 minute lecture, to renew concentration at the half-way point, ways of varying the style and usefulness of student participation, ways to reinforce important learning points, ways to re-arrange furniture so that white boards and screens are visible. These points apply across the Federation and we would encourage the whole staff to work on them, possibly with the help of an experienced adult education trainer from outside.

15. The college library, following the recommendation of the previous visitation now shares with other colleges of the Federation in the employment of a Library Assistant. She is available for 9 hours a week in Westminster and this has greatly improved the administration of the library and the work-load of the Honorary Librarian (a member of Senatus). Each college library catalogues the contents of all four libraries, so that books are readily accessible, and some specialisation is possible in the different collections. We believe that the college is very adequately served by its library, and that its budget is fully adequate. We also commend the decision to create a Worship Resources and Periodicals Room in the Cheshunt Room, and note the generosity of the Cheshunt Foundation in helping to make this possible. At some time in the future we believe it will be sensible for the Federation libraries to move to a single computerised cataloguing system, with a terminal in each library. This would, once set up, greatly simplify the work of maintaining catalogues.

STUDENTS

16. Candidates are admitted to the college through the assessment procedures laid down by the URC or under the auspices of the Cheshunt Governors. The college reserves the right to refuse acceptance of candidates considered unsuitable for its particular courses. We noted with concern that, because of the delay in setting up Provincial meetings, the final stage in the assessment, some students had only a few weeks notice of acceptance. This made it particularly difficult for people with work and family responsibilities to make decisions about moving to Cambridge.

17. Qualifications of present students on entry ranges from the equivalent of five O levels to a Ph.D. Staff are commended for their flexibility in dealing with the varied needs of the students and in being able and prepared to assess projects and other work showing skills and abilities other than the traditionally academic. Women form a small proportion of the present student body and there are no black students. This has implications for the development of all students. We were impressed by the way in which everybody is encouraged to develop to their full potential, the staff showing equal concern and care for all.

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LIFE

18. All courses are taught with a view to ministry, so that discussion includes the relevance of the course to practical understanding. The internship year is an opportunity to try out these connections and the students who have a final year beyond the internship are encouraged to use it to work out theologically what they have experienced in practice.

19. Some students benefit more than others from the ecumenical dimension present in the Federation and the cultural and social life of the University and City of Cambridge. We hope that all students may recognise this unique opportunity and open their hearts and minds to it.

PRACTICAL TRAINING

20. One of the significant developments of the last 5 years has been the introduction of a greater range of Pastoral Studies Units. These involve the use of secular organisations and resources external to the colleges. The purpose of the Units is to see the world as it appears to people who work in other professions, disciplines and life-contexts and then to reflect theologically on this. Every student normally undertakes at least one Unit and each Unit counts towards the CTM. We were pleased to note the advice to students that they should choose the one they are 'most afraid of'.

21. There is a project at the beginning of the year organised throughout the Federation in which students work ecumenically on an aspect of church life with the cooperation of many churches in Cambridge. Short courses in January also involve practical application and these all contribute to the CTM.

22. We were delighted to see that the Internship programme is now well established and the original network of local churches has been extended in variety and to other areas. The internship year is generally the third year of training. Each student spends four days a week in a pastorate doing the practical things they will face as ministers. They return to college for two days to share and reflect upon experiences. It is satisfying to note that this also counts towards the CTM.

23. The students clearly appreciate this part of their training. We wish to place on record the significant contribution made in all these developments by the Revd Janet Sowerbutts who completed her 5 year appointment as the first Director of Pastoral Studies in 1990.

24. One important development in the Federation is the appointment from January 1992 of a new Federation teacher of missiology who can give an important focus on training for mission and evangelism.

WORSHIP

25. Worship in the college chapel is led four mornings a week by students, occasionally from other houses in the Federation. Hymns are practised each week and new ones are introduced at this time. Follow-up to the conduct of worship in chapel is largely informal, often in discussion with other students. The weekly sermon class does analyse one service more formally and for this all students in college have done a preliminary Bible study. Students expressed some concern that the Sermon Class is too staff dominated. We must admit similar unease ourselves after observing one such session. Also we question whether such analysis of a sermon preached within the context of worship in the college is very helpful to those preparing to preach to local congregations. We were pleased to note that courses to help students prepare and preach sermons are being revised and we hope that students will be encouraged to preach in our churches more frequently, perhaps sometimes during vacations. We note that the use of inclusive language in Chapel is an issue that has not yet been resolved. There is also a service on Friday evening, usually led by somebody from outside the college who often addresses the Student Society after dinner.

26. At the time of the inspection there was a Federation Eucharist every week, generally conducted in the church tradition of one of the colleges, but sometimes ecumenically celebrated to mark special events and concerns. Attendance at the Federation Eucharist opens up the possibilities of the use of liturgies and worship material from the wider Church. We were somewhat disturbed to learn that only about half of the Westminster students attended regularly.

PASTORAL CARE, SPIRITUAL AND PERSONAL FORMATION AND COMMUNITY LIFE

27. We are happy to note that a chaplain has been appointed after recommendation from the last visitation. She is from outside the college to remove any hesitation which students might have about taking pastoral problems to staff who are also assessing their progress. Academic staff nevertheless take seriously the pastoral needs of students and are consulted by many of them.

28. Each student is included in a pastoral care group with a member of staff where prayer, Bible study and discussion can take place. There is also a one to one relationship between the tutor and each student which can provide the opportunity for spiritual development. The Chaplain has made a recent sabbatical study of spiritual direction and the Senatus has asked to share in her experience and insights.

29. The fact that the Chaplain is a woman is important because there is no woman among the teaching staff. This lack is something of which the Senatus is fully aware; it means that the voices of women are less clearly articulated in teaching and discussion. The women students (who are themselves in a minority in the college) feel less confident and sometimes marginalised, and there is no role model for women candidates for the ministry. The Chaplain therefore carries several different kinds of expectation and rather more than her 3-4 sessions per week in college make possible. We hope that she might be enabled to spend more time in college and have a higher profile, but we are acutely aware that this would have to be at the expense of other important work, and that she is already over-working. We believe that if the college and the district could make this possible it would benefit both women and men students. We noted that there are a few men students who probably avoid using the Chaplain because she is a woman, and conversely that women students tend to turn to her predominantly. This suggests that there are gender issues which the student body and the staff need to work at.

30. Another area of potential need and personal growth is that of spouses and families. We noted a number of issues:

- a) There is stress on families moving to Cambridge, sometimes at very short notice.
- b) The students adopt a great variety of living patterns. Some families stay put and the students become weekly commuters. Other families move to Cambridge and may have college accommodation or find their own, often several miles away from the college. Those who already live within 20 or 30 miles of Cambridge stay put and the student commutes daily. There are also a few single students for whom the college becomes their home at least in term-time. The complexity of this means that community life in college is perceived very differently by different students, spouses and families. It also means it is difficult to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is given.
- c) There is also the matter of expectations among students and spouses as to what the role of a minister's spouse should be. Some speak of 'unpaid curates' without the training, some have their own careers and some do not share their partner's faith.

31. All these factors mean that pastoral care, preparation for changing roles in the church and sheer practical issues of family life are likely to be problematic and create sources of stress. We offer some suggestions:

- a) Provinces should see candidates as soon as possible after they have been to the Assessment Panel meeting to give the maximum time possible for decisions and adjustments over the move.

- b) For spouses and families who remain a long distance away there may need to be some form of briefing paper, occasional visits to the college and an assurance of informed pastoral support through their local church and district. A briefing paper for the local minister might be helpful.
- c) There could be occasions when it is appropriate to provide child-care facilities (creche and/or babysitting) so that spouses and students might share in some activities.
- d) Some students and spouses need help in understanding what are - and are not - the church's expectations of spouses. Written material and meeting with local networks of minister's spouses could be considered. We see no easy way of reducing the great diversity of ways in which students, spouses and families 'belong' to the community, and are aware of the mutual concern and care among students and staff. The 'Prayer Partner' scheme organised by students is found very supportive by many, including some of the staff. We noted with pleasure the informal family occasion of Thursday lunch and the mutual support group of spouses and children who live in or near the college. Spouses are welcomed to the Friday evening worship, meal and speaker, though child-care through the early evening makes attendance difficult for many.

ACCOMMODATION AND ADMINISTRATION

32. The residential wing for single students has been adapted and refurbished during 1991. This provides more convenient living for single ordinands and for groups of students from other colleges in the University. The facilities for conference guests during vacation are also enhanced. We commend this work undertaken largely from the college's own resources through the sale of a house and legacies.

33. The last visitation noted that the number of married students was likely to remain high and we would re-emphasise this. The attempt by the Management Committee to respond to the recommendation to provide further married accommodation, especially for students with families, has been frustrated by the local authority refusing planning permission to rebuild on a site in the college grounds.

34. The college is indebted to former students who have bought houses in Cambridge which are now available for renting. If building in the grounds proves impossible perhaps the college might be provided with finance either by Provinces or the Ministerial Training Fund to purchase modest properties in the Cambridge area also for rent. We appreciate the difficulties involved but we hope the college will soon be able to improve the accommodation situation to alleviate stress for students and their families.

35. The non-teaching staff consists of the Bursar and College Secretary (para 5), the Cook Housekeeper with other catering and domestic staff and a part-time maintenance person. All work together well and many express pleasure at working for the college. The standard and variety of the food provided is excellent. The kitchen would be helped by having its own microwave oven to help with fast defrosting. The cleaning is done efficiently and cheerfully and small maintenance jobs are attended to daily. Day to day accounting, payment of staff etc. is being computerised and is managed by the Bursar, helped by the Secretary. A second computer would aid efficiency as the Bursar and Secretary could both use them during office hours.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER BODIES

36. The local URCs are supportive of the college. Many churches of different traditions support the work of the Federation. The college staff and student representatives play their part in the URC district. Cooperation with the University Faculty of Divinity is closer than ever. There is a special relationship with Fitzwilliam College who readily admit Westminster students if they pursue University courses and an ongoing arrangement with Clare Hall for a group of students to live in Westminster.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE TRAINING COMMITTEE OF THE URC

(We were pleased to note that most of the recommendations from the last visitation report have been implemented. Where they have not been the reasons have been noted and further recommendations made.)

1. That consideration continue to be given to the use of the college for training for lay and non-stipendiary ministry for students for whom existing courses would be appropriate and convenient. (para 2)
2. That the Training Committee seek to strengthen the representation of local people with appropriate professional and practical skills on the Management Committee. (para 3)
3. That the URC move towards terms of appointment that are the same for all members of the Senatus and consider carefully whether they should all be on fixed term contracts, comparable to those of Provincial Moderators and Departmental Secretaries. (para 7)
4. That there should be a regular programme of appraisal and staff development for teaching and administrative staff preferably throughout the Federation. (paras 5, 8, 12, 13)
5. That in-service training for all members of the Senatus be provided for the development of a greater variety of teaching methods that improve the quality of student participation and encourage more interchange between students. (para 14)
6. That the Management Committee explore the possibility of refurbishing one or more of the teaching rooms and that the library is used as little as possible for teaching. (para 12)
7. That the Senatus continue to review the way preaching and leading worship is taught and the amount of practice that students have throughout their course. (para 15, 25, 26)
8. That consideration should be given to making training in racial awareness a compulsory part of the course. (para 17)
9. That more positive steps be taken to understand the particular place of women in the college (students, spouses and staff) and the issues that arise. (paras 14, 17, 25, 29, 30, 31)
10. That the Senatus seek ways of raising the students' awareness of the Federation and the opportunities for ecumenical understanding, dialogue and co-operation which it offers. (para 13, 14, 19, 21, 26)
11. That students be positively encouraged to widen their experience of worship, culture, social action etc. in the Federation and in the University and City of Cambridge. (para 19, 26)
12. That the District Council and the College should review the overall workload of the Chaplain and explore the possibility of increasing her presence in the college. (para 29)
13. That the present students and their spouses should be encouraged to think through the needs of ordinands' spouses and suggest a policy to the URC for informing and

caring for them and giving them opportunities to prepare for the differing roles that they will expect to play in support of their spouse when s/he becomes a minister.

(paras 30, 31)

14. That the recommendation from the last visitation that urgent consideration be given to the provision of further accommodation for families in the vicinity of the college, still stands. (para 33)
15. That a microwave oven be obtained for the college kitchen and a second computer or other additional word processing equipment be provided, mainly for the use of the Bursar. (para 35)

[B] THE CAMBRIDGE FEDERATION.

Recommendations of the Visitors led by the Revd Dr Gordon Wakefield.

Summary of Recommendations

1. That the offices of Moderator and President be replaced by those of Dean and Executive Officer.
2. That every aspect of the catering arrangements be most rigorously reviewed.
3. That Denominations and Governing Bodies earmark an amount for the Federation in the Budgets for their own colleges.
4. That constant vigilance be exercised to ensure that staff appointments in the four colleges are made with the Federation in mind.
5. That consideration be given to upgrading the salary of the Librarian.
6. That there be three full staff meetings each year with some leisure for prayer and theological sharing as well as non-routine business matters.
7. That in-service training be provided for all members of the Federation staff to develop a greater variety of teaching methods and ensure a better quality of student participation.
8. That wherever possible University courses be used for students taking the Certificate in Theology for Ministry.
9. That the possibility of members of the Federation staff offering courses in the more practical aspects of Theology for the University list be discussed with the Faculty.
10. That more positive steps be taken to understand the particular place of women in the Federation (students and staff) and the issues that arise.
11. That the requirements of the CTM course should be the same for each student, allowing for flexibility in the teaching and assessment methods in each college.
12. That the possibility of closer association between the Federation and the East Anglian Ministerial Training Course should be explored.

APPENDIX III

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

1. This year's report can take as its theme "building", since there has been major work on the physical plane and an inspection to review the ways in which the college builds ministry for the churches.
2. **The Residential Wing** has been thoroughly refurbished, with new external fire escapes, as required by the Fire Safety Officer, complete electrical rewiring, the renewal of kitchens and bathrooms and the creation of additional kitchens and bathrooms to bring that provision into line with the use of the building for a larger number of students and lodgers than it was originally equipped to house. This work was completed despite some major hazards, including a builder going into receivership and the discovery of asbestos lagging on pipes. Funding was largely provided by the careful management of a house sale and purchase at the time of a change of staff.
3. **Planning Consents** were not easily obtained for the work now done, since the exterior of a listed building is carefully guarded in the Cambridge setting. So far planning consent has been refused for a series of attempts to provide for building additional accommodation for married students and their families.
4. **The Inspection**, of which the report is set out for members of the General Assembly, was the occasion of much hard work by the college and their visitors. Attention was given to the physical buildings but even more to the building of ministry. Both staff and students appreciated the care shown in pointing the way forward in our enterprise.
5. **The Community.** Student numbers have remained high, with thirty-six URC ordinands, one from the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, visiting students from Australia and the USA and an external student from the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches. Only seven of the forty are women, only four are single. Sixteen are entering upon ministry during 1992.
6. **Building a Staff Team.** This year has seen the conclusion of twenty-three years work in Cheshunt and Westminster Colleges by the Revd Dr Stephen Mayor. He has blended historical scholarship, pastoral experience and concern, administrative diligence and a humane wit in the service of the churches and of their ordinands; we are delighted that he and Janet will still be living in Cambridge. The Cheshunt Governors and the Executive Committee of the General Assembly enabled the filling of the gap in the staff team by ratifying the nomination as Dr Mayor's successor of the Revd Dr David Cornick, Training Officer of the South Western Province, and a former Congregationalist historian of former Presbyterians - his doctorate from King's, London, being on the subject of the Presbyterian Church in England 1836-1876.
7. Another important addition to the staff team of the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges is the Revd Graham Kings, federally appointed with funds provided by the Henry Martyn Trust as lecturer in missiology and overseas adviser to students, after four years in a multi-racial parish in London and six years teaching theology in Kenya. It is for a world church that Westminster College and the Federation seek to build ministry.

MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

8. Much is happening at Mansfield. For the 24 ordinands, an **Aims and Objectives** paper was approved by the appropriate committees and this has given us a focus for our activities and studies. Members of Assembly and others are welcome to write to the college for a copy.

9. We are pleased that the Mansfield-based **Oxford Centre for the Environment, Ethics and Society** is off the launching pad and will draw on insights gained from the "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation" model of integrating environmental ethics with politics, law, geography, religion, sociology, and the environmental sciences. We are grateful to the World Wildlife Fund for Nature for sponsoring this venture and we hope to have two or three full-time experts at the college in the future. Most of the Fellows at the college will be involved in this interdisciplinary approach, and we trust that all the students and especially the ordinands will contribute to the task of working on these issues.

10. Plans are being laid for summer conferences in the above area and also in the important arena where the college has another expertise - the relation of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. We are fortunate to have a member of the Oriental Institute as a Fellow of the college who is Jewish and an Islamic specialist with wide contacts in these religions. With him and others we hope to mount a major world-wide conference in 1993. It should be also noted that the Principal is a member of the Board for the Islamic Studies Centre.

11. Elaine Kaye is working on a history of the college and some of her work will be included in the new history of the University of Oxford. We were intrigued to find that the idea of having a non-conformist college in Oxford (the first in Oxbridge) was the brain-child of Gladstone himself, though it was R W Dale who raised the money and persuaded Spring Hill College, Birmingham to sell its premises and give the proceeds to Mansfield.

12. Relations with Mansfield Settlement, the college's 19th century venture in the East End, have been renewed and are on a good footing again. Frequent visits between staff and students take place, and 6 undergraduates help youth members with exam preparation at the Settlement during the Easter break.

13. We were pleased that the Revd Robin Pagan led a course in East Oxford for both Ripon, Cuddesdon and Mansfield ordinands. Because of his work in industrial, urban and rural mission and his keenness to help recast educational methods, it has been a good experience for both students and staff.

14. The Revd Charles Brock, the Director of Training, continues to be involved with the University and his church at Wheatley. He teaches at Cuddesdon and is also developing joint teaching possibilities with St Stephen's House, the high church college. Relations with Wycliffe Hall, the low church college, remain viable as well. Warm relations with the four Catholic houses, the Baptist and Unitarian colleges continue, and Charles Brock is external examiner for the MA programme at Westminster College (Methodist). He is also Chair of the Central Courses committee of the twelve theological colleges and Associate Scholar of the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. He remains Convener of the URC Urban Rural Mission Group.

15. The Revd Tony Tucker organises the Internship Programme, Pastoral Theology, Placements, and much else. The Revd Dr John Muddiman, the Fellow in New Testament, is Secretary of the Faculty of Theology and packs them in at lectures. The Revd Dr Scott Ickert, the Lutheran Lecturer, has contributed much to the church history teaching both at Mansfield and Cuddesdon and continues the well established link with the Lutherans. Ms Frances Flatman is the Ethics Tutor and Dr Peggy Morgan teaches World Religions. Dr Donald Sykes continues as Tutor in Patristics and we use many faculty members for special subjects as well as local ministers for help with placements.

16. We said farewell to the Revd Justine Wyatt as Assistant Chaplain, Tutor in Church History and originator of the college Internship Programme. She is now the Oxford and Reading Area Director of Christian Aid. For ten years she helped shape the programme and her influence and judgement were highly valued.

17. We are considering how to replace her. One option at the time of writing this report is to advertise for a half-time Assistant Chaplain including a half-time research project, but we have to put together a financial package for this from a number of sources.

18. The Appeal is going well and amounts to £643,000. Two additional special funds are the Yvonne Workman Fund which is specifically designed to help ordinands and staff who are interested in theological/environmental concerns and the George Caird Fund which helps with the New Testament teaching. There is also a separate Ordination Training Fund. Contributions are most welcome to any of these appeals.

NORTHERN COLLEGE, MANCHESTER

19. Another of the college's links with history was broken by the death of its Principal Emeritus, Dr Edgar Jones on 31st May 1991. He joined the staff of the college in 1958 and was Principal from 1968 to 1971. His sound scholarship, administrative skills and warm pastoral concern for staff and students served the college well. He is remembered with affection by all whom he taught, formally and informally. The service of thanksgiving at Manchester on the 5th July 1991 was attended by Mrs Eirlys Jones and the family and a large company of former students, staff colleagues and friends.

20. The college puts on record its indebtedness to Revd John Francis who after thirteen years of service as part-time tutor is now in full-time pastoral work. John was responsible for integrating the ministerial training formerly done by the Churches of Christ with that done at Northern College and made a particular contribution to the college and the churches by developing internship training at Manchester.

21. The college has also lost the services of its Secretary, Mr Fred Y Abel. He rendered invaluable service during the years when the college was transferred to its present site, particularly in regard to the amalgamation of the libraries. The new secretary is Mr Alan E Hart, who is a member of St Andrew and St George URC Bolton.

22. This year's student group includes the Revd Zsuzsanna Bak from the Reformed Church of Hungary and the Revd Elly Kapaya of the Moravian Church of Western Tanzania. These students, along with other overseas students within the Federation are making a valuable contribution to our life and worship. We are also benefiting from the experiences of students who use the College Travel Award to visit countries overseas.

23. Dr David Peel's visit to seminaries in the United States has helped the thinking not only of the College Review Group but others interested in education and training for ministry.

24. The Report of the Review Group will be presented to the Education Committee and the Governors in the spring. The group is indebted to the individuals, churches and bodies whose opinions were sought in regard to the education and training of students. Included in the report will be recommendations concerning the staffing of the college in view of the imminent retirement of most of the present staff.

25. The college continues to play its part in the life of the **Northern Federation for Training in Ministry**, through which **Luther King House** provides training for ministry not only to ordinands but for elders and other church groups. Cooperation within the Federation continues to grow. There are an increasing number of joint courses nowadays. This year's Mission is a joint URC/Methodist project. It is appropriate therefore that the Federation plans to become a local ecumenical project.

26. Previous reports have drawn attention to matters of interest in regard to the Faculty of Theology in the University of Manchester. The Faculty is to become a department within the Faculty of Arts. This change is being made in the interests of administrative efficiency and academic collaboration, which, it is hoped will result. It is also to be hoped that the change will give theology greater security within the university. The introduction of modular courses in the university should provide greater flexibility for the colleges.

THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM

27. This year has seen a slight reduction in numbers to 82. The denominational breakdown at the beginning of the academic year was 43 Methodist, 32 Anglican and 8 URC students, one of whom has subsequently withdrawn. A major difference this year is the absence of any ministerial students from overseas.

28. The college welcomes the concern of the URC and other churches that we should continue to take our responsibilities to our sponsoring churches seriously, in particular with regard to annual reports and the Fitness for Ministry criteria.

29. There are no changes of staff this year, but there will be three changes in September. We are appointing a new Old Testament tutor to replace the Revd Dr Stephen Dawes, a new tutor in Mission and Pastoral Ministry to replace the Revd Bridget Woollard, and making a new appointment of a tutor in Black Theology. This latter we regard as a significant new development for the college and the Church as a whole. Last year David Butler and James Walker were on sabbatical for a term each, and two more staff members are to take their sabbaticals this year.

30. This year sees the new curriculum fully operational, as well as the inauguration of the new BTheol course, which has four candidates in their first year. This is taught at Queen's and validated by the University of Birmingham. The postgraduate Diploma in Theology, which significant numbers of Queen's students have traditionally undertaken, has been reconstituted this year as a BD by the University, and eleven of our first year students are doing this course.

31. The upgrading of the kitchen facilities is continuing. Major expenditure over the year has included the replacement of the flat roof on the Handsworth Building, and the provision of wash-handbasins in the larger study bedrooms in the Old Building. Other structural work has been put in hand in anticipation of a student with a disabled spouse arriving next year. The Library budget has just financed the installation of a CD-ROM system.

APPENDIX IV

BOARD OF STUDIES FOR THE AUXILIARY (NSM) MINISTRY

1. **It is encouraging** to note that the number of students in training for the non-stipendiary ministry remains at the constantly high figure of around 80.

2. **The Board of Studies** has endeavoured to ensure that a number of factors are taken into account in setting up their training courses and guiding them along the way. It is essential to understand the background of each individual from an educational, and personal point of view, and to fashion a realistic and helpful programme. Much of this is done at the Assessment Conference, and confirmed and finalised in the Province, but then Provincial Directors of Training take over to support the student. Wherever possible we avoid duplication of work already done in another sphere, and restrict ourselves to a curriculum that has in mind the goal of a particular and personal ministry. The non-stipendiary ministry gives us that freedom, and does not demand all round competency. Nonetheless we are preparing those who will become ministers of word and sacraments. They will be operating in a local church or work context where expectations are high and the demands are great, and we have to take seriously the need to prepare them adequately for the task.

3. **Programmes these days** are enriched by being linked in, either directly or indirectly, with an ecumenical training network in which the URC is an increasingly involved partner. Alongside this enrichment, and to acknowledge our own churchmanship and style and needs, we are currently preparing a unit of training material under the general title of "Our Heritage

of Faith". Wherever possible a student is given the opportunity to train in a group situation at least for part of the time, and weekends and summer schools are vital and precious to the programme. Demands on time and emotional energy are great, and we seek to ensure a proper support system related to a particular students' needs. We are paying particular attention to regular reports on progress and have just agreed to operate an open reporting procedure so that students are aware of progress, learn from errors and share in their own development.

4. **We use the courses and facilities** of the Windermere Training Centre, and we are able to incorporate a wide range of additional specialist courses around the country. Once again we have a flexible pattern to engage for the individual. Costs of training continue to rise, particularly on the ecumenical front, but with careful monitoring and control through representation on the governing bodies of Courses we ensure that we get value for money.

5. **Future developments** will take account of the proposed reorganisation of courses throughout the country on ecumenical lines. We anticipate that this will enable us all to make better use than at present of regional resources. We hope that changing patterns of ministry in the URC will also encourage the training of stipendiary and non-stipendiary students in a closer relationship to mutual advantage.

6. **The Board** continues to be most grateful to Mr Barry Wakefield of Colchester, for his administrative work on our behalf.

7. **It is a cause of considerable satisfaction** to be able to give each year a Certificate of Completed Study to a significant number of students who will then go on to ordination and service in a variety of situations, enriching the whole ministry, and extending its effectiveness into whole new areas of operation. There is no cause for complacency but clearly the decision in 1980 to set up an Auxiliary Ministry was right. Now we are feeling its effect and reaping the benefit.

APPENDIX V

CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKER TRAINING REPORTS

(a) SALFORD URBAN MISSION TRAINING OPTION

The Salford Urban Mission Ecumenical Training Programme is now well into its second year and actively recruiting for 1992-93. The initial years of research and development have given a sound framework to the programme which now involves participants in a wide range of church and community work for three days each week, 44 weeks each year over a three year period. On another two days of each week this experience is used as a basis for developing knowledge and specific skills, for sharing in theological reflection and peer group support. The modular approach to learning means that some of the training can be shared with local activists, other lay workers and a variety of voluntary sector groups, all of which makes possible a very broad experience.

SUM has paid particular attention to the support each participant needs through what is a rigorous period of training and personal development. This includes the provision of an individually chosen personal consultant, a supervisor for church and community work engagements, opportunities for peer group sharing and worship, and access to tutors and the training programme staff team.

The Training Programme uses the Greater Manchester Community Work Training Group's Accreditation Unit to validate participant's community work experience with a nationally recognised Certificate in Community Work. This, integrated with SUM's own accreditation process, leads to a Certificate in Community Work and Theological Reflection.

SUM's aim is that when a participant completes their training, any future engagement will effectively be a move into a second post.

Participants:-

YEAR	NUMBER	URC	ANGLICAN	METHODIST	CHURCH ARMY	JESUIT	OTHER
1990-91	3	1	1			1*	
1991-92	4	1		2	1*		
1992-93	(4)	(2)	(1)				(1)*
	*	For one year only					
	()	Applications in process					

(b) **SELLY OAK TRAINING OPTION**

St Andrew's Hall

We continue to offer a programme of training Church-Related Community Workers, using the resources and skills available through Selly Oak Colleges and the context of the West Midlands and its churches. The first year programme involves mainly theological studies, leading to a Certificate. The following two years entail completion of the Westhill Youth and Community Worker Certificate or Diploma courses which combine placements and appropriate educational methods. Throughout that period, links with churches and participation in our own life at the college, with its international, ecumenical and denominational dimensions are crucial elements in the formation process. A number of folk who have undertaken our CRCW programme have made visits abroad to maintain and develop links made whilst here.

Recently Helen Madden completed her course and at the moment Bethan Galliers and David Twine are due to finish in the summer of 1992. All three have made an outstanding contribution to the life of the college. David participated in the CWM Youth Camp in Namibia whilst in training and Bethan was able to make an extended visit to India. David Gray joined us to commence studies in September 1991 and has settled in well.

Although we are still deeply committed both to CRCW training and to the CRCW programme of the Church, we are concerned at the limited number of projects being offered as potential posts for folk completing their studies.

APPENDIX VI

STUDENTS IN TRAINING 1991/92

NORTHERN PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Timothy London (Northern/NEOC), Peter Grey (Northern), James MacAulay (Westminster), Norma Johnson (Westminster), Geoffrey Rodgers (Westminster), Alan Morris (Northern).

Non-stipendiary

Steven Orange (NEOC), Suzanne Hamnett (NEOC).

NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Peter Colwell (Mansfield), Pauline Elliott (Northern), Duncan Goldie (Westminster), Philip Nevard (Mansfield), Lythan Nevard (Mansfield), Eric Massey (Northern), Hamish Temple (Northern), Peter Jordan (Northern).

MINISTRIES

Non-stipendiary

Shirley Farrier (MCI), Muriel Jeffrey (MCI), Michael Storr (MCI), Paul Brewerton (URC), David Allen (URC), David Ireland, (MCI), Jane Weedon (Carlisle).

MERSEY

Stipendiary

Andrew Dawson (Northern and Mansfield), John Downing (Northern), Keith Hulse (Northern), Heather MacLeod (Northern), Heather Gabbott (Northern), Graham Knights (Northern), Jean Seddon (Northern), Susan Flynn (Northern), Alison Hall (Northern).

Non-stipendiary

Linda Elliott (MCI), Bill Fraser (URC/MCI), Iain Prentice (MCI), Ronald Reid (MCI).

YORKSHIRE

Stipendiary

John Campbell (Westminster), Elaine Dunn (Mansfield), David Fraser (Westminster), David Haslam (Northern), James Kissack (Mansfield), Fran Kissack (Mansfield), David Purse (Northern).

Non-stipendiary

Allan Blue (MCI), Brenda Sugden (MCI), Nancy Haslam (MCI).

EAST MIDLANDS

Stipendiary

Robert Jones (Westminster), Ruth Haward (Northern), Keith Brown (Westminster), Ian Smith (Westminster), Adam Britten (Northern), Simon Helme (Northern).

Non-stipendiary

Paul Burton (EMMTC), Maureen Buxton (URC), Betty Chadwick (EMMTC), Barbara Flood-Page (EMMTC), Stephen Gilbert (SADMTS), Edward Landon (URC), Kathryn Louch (EMMTC), Douglas Watson (URC), Leslie Gill (URC), John New (URC), Brian Russell (EMMTC), Geoffrey Townsend (URC).

WEST MIDLANDS PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Timothy Huc (Westminster), Kristin Ofstad (Westminster), Paul Stokes (Westminster), Peter Cruchley-Jones (Mansfield), Simon Walkling (Mansfield), Timothy Key (Northern), Jeffrey Hancocks (WMMTC/Queen's), Kevin Jones (Mansfield), Barrie Cheetham (Queens), Revd Geoffrey Ward (Queen's), Revd Roger Woodall (Queens).

Non-stipendiary

John Bassett (MCI), Mary Buchanan (WMMTC), Aileen Walker (WMMTC), Deidre Lee (WMMTC).

EASTERN PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Geoffrey Clarke (Northern), Fleur Houston (Westminster), Neil Messer (Westminster), Ruth Maxey (Mansfield), Rosemary Tusting (Westminster), Nicholas Percival (Westminster), Mark Ambrose (Westminster), Peter Balls (Westminster), David Coote (Westminster).

Non-stipendiary

Angela Cotton (URC), Irene Hinde (URC), Mary Irish (URC), Michael Lithgow (URC), Owen North (SADMTS), Jeremy Priest (URC), Colin Hunt (Oak Hill).

SOUTH WESTERN

Stipendiary

Graham Hoslett (Northern), Peter Phillips (Northern), Gillian Brown (Northern).

Non-stipendiary

Myra Dillistone (SWMTC), Heather Pencavel (URC), Valerie Price (SWMTC), Dinah Whittall (SDMTS), Pat Cemlyn-Jones (SWMTC), John Evans (SDMTS), Geoffrey Glead (SDMTS), David Mapp (SWMTC), Rosalind Harrison (SDWMTS), Maureen Roberts (SDMTS), Mary Sweeting (SWMTC).

WESSEX**Stipendiary**

Gwen Collins (Mansfield).

Non-stipendiary

Ann Collins (URC), Robert Damer (SDMTS), Christopher Dean (SDMTS), Keith Green (URC), Birgitta Johnson (SDMTS), Peter Norris (SDMTS), Maureen Ponsford (SDMTS), Margaret Tilley (SDMTS), Gillian Jackson (SDMTS), Philip Osborn (SDMTS).

THAMES NORTH**Stipendiary**

Anne Wilson (Westminster), Andrew Sellwood (Westminster), Norman Vivian (Westminster), Richard Goldring (Queen's), Brian Harley (Westminster), Brian Shenk (Westminster), Janet Lees (Mansfield), James Brown (Westminster), Norma Leveridge (Westminster), Alex Mabbs (Northern), Pauline Duckett (Mansfield), Maggie Hindley (Mansfield), Trevor Jamison (Mansfield), Margaret Thomas (Mansfield), Richard Alford (Westminster), Janet Conway (Mansfield), Nigel Douglas (Westminster), Mark Elvin (Simon of Cyrene Inst.).

Non-stipendiary

Hugh Graham (SOC), Jonathan Hyde (Oak Hill), Ann McNair (SOC), David Skipp (URC), Ann Stokes (URC/SOC), Elizabeth Davies (SADMTS), Roger Orme (SADMTS), David Simpson (URC).

SOUTHERN**Stipendiary**

Peter Henderson (Mansfield), Seth Brown (Westminster), Carole Ellefsen (Westminster), Ranald Macdonald (Westminster), George Watt (Mansfield), Geoffrey Davis (Westminster), David Littlejohns (Westminster), Adrian Skelton (Queen's), Neil Thorogood (Mansfield), John Young (Westminster), Martin Smith (Mansfield).

Non-stipendiary

Alex Aldridge (URC), Meriel Chippindale (URC), Jose Finlayson (SDMTS), Susan Marsh (Canterbury School of Ministry), Daphne Toppie (SOC), Margaret Collins (URC), David Sturt (URC), Maureen Wilson (SOC).

PROVINCE OF WALES**Stipendiary**

Keri Eynon (Westminster), Ruth Ball (Mansfield), Alison Davis (Northern), Shelagh Pollard (Mansfield), Kirsty Thorpe (Mansfield).

Non-stipendiary

Martyn Evans (URC), Peter Gaskell (URC Prelim).

CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS**Selly Oak:**

Bethan Galliers (Southern), David Twine (South Western), David Gray (South Western).

Salford Urban Mission:

Janine Maddison (East Midlands), Diane Benson (Yorkshire).

Recognised courses for non-stipendiary training

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 Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme
SDMTS	Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme
SOC	Southwark Ordination Course
SWMTS	South West Ministerial Training Course
EAMTC	East Anglian Ministerial Training Committee
WMMTC	West Midlands Ministerial Training Course
URC	Non-stipendiary Ministry Training Programme

APPENDIX VII**TRAINING STATISTICS**

	Students in training February 1991	Students in training February 1992	Anticipated entry into URC service			
			1992	1993	1994	1995+
Stipendiary Colleges						
Westminster	41	36	16	6	6	8
Mansfield	22	24	8	5	2	9
Northern	30	27	7	6	7	7
Queen's	8	7	2	2	1	2
	101	94	33	19	16	26
Non-stipendiary Courses						
	78	80	25	22	29	4
Church-related Community Workers						
Selly Oak	3	3	2	-	1	-
Salford	1	2	-	1	1	-
	183	179	60	42	47	30

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Convener: Dr Mary Ede

Secretary: The Revd Peter Brain

Introduction

1.1 As this report goes to the printer the General Election campaign is under way. We understand that there are ecumenical all-party meetings arranged in over half the constituencies in Britain, using the briefings produced by this Department for the CCBI. Not only do Christians differ in their voting, they also disagree as to the importance of this particular contest; for some will challenge the election process itself as an unworthy successor to the idealistic debates and struggles out of which it has come. And few will dispute that the democratic process requires more of the citizen/subject than an 'X' in a voting booth from time to time.

1.2 First there is the need for constitutional change, unavoidable in Scotland and therefore inevitable elsewhere, to renew our systems of regional and local government and also to take account of the greater power now being exercised by European institutions. We are concerned at the rate of abstentions from voting (on one ground or another) as a symptom of the disenchantment felt by many about the present arrangements.

1.3 Then there is the need to sustain pressure on decision-makers of every kind, for the greater well-being of the individual and of the community, other than when an election looms. Christians are among those who, graciously and yet persistently, must continually interpret their vision of such well-being in the terms of successive political debates. We have dealt with issues as varied as South Africa, Sunday trading, abortion, Hong Kong, criminal justice, East Timor, Third World debt, national lottery and bio-engineering alongside the handful on which we are reporting in detail with resolutions on these pages. We seek to inform and educate the church and also to publicise our concern. The task is easier for church bodies such as this Department away from election campaigns when every comment is weighed hypersensitively and then as likely as not misused! One body which combines education and lobbying in a steady manner is Church Action on Poverty; we feature a report prepared by C.A.P. as an appendix to this report, as we did for Christian Aid last year, to demonstrate that this is **our** work being done by them, effectively given their modest resources, accountably and trustworthily.

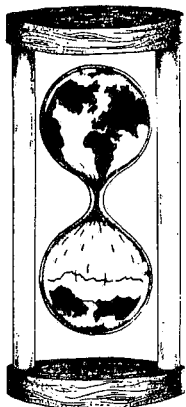


1.4 Power exercised without love is demonic indeed. In a secular society a Church and Society Department cannot simply cry 'Thus says the Lord' and expect the world to hold its breath; the word of justice and peace which was even resisted in a theocracy like Old Testament Israel will hardly divert the stream of contemporary history. And yet to preach "not ourselves but Christ on the cross" is to take a view of history, the pattern of events around us, that challenges the view of power as all about winning with a belief in power as opportunity for service, to be used for the good of all especially the weakest, "the least of these". In that spirit we shall continue to pray for and seek to influence the new Government of whatever colour or composition.

Commitment for Life

2.1 For over 20 years the United Reformed Church and its predecessors have run a 1% appeal for world development. Assembly last reviewed this in 1979 and we are re-presenting it this year. The review process has been careful, including a 24-hour conference, two days with a management consultant (free!), a small group to look at detail and lots of helpful correspondence; the Department is appreciative of all those who have aided the review.

2.2 What amounts to the prospectus for the revised programme is printed at the end of our Departmental report as Appendix I. We call it *Commitment for Life* since that name subtly points to both the purpose and the style of the new programme.



This prospectus first sets out the guiding principles which continue to undergird this programme as they did the previous appeal; it tries to anticipate queries about the collection of money; it then signals an important, though modest change in the allocation of sums raised and a more profound change in the relationship between participating congregations and overseas partners; it points out how those who take part will be expected to do more than send money, giving time and living more carefully; and finally it suggests how *Commitment for Life* and all that it represents can be communicated to the members and adherents of our churches. We are taking the best of what is already in place, the 1% principle, the emphasis on international partnership, the need to press governments to do more, and the opportunity thus provided for education in world development in the churches. And we are renewing it for the 1990s.

2.3 We are particularly grateful to several staff members of Christian Aid who have shared fully in the review and are busy now with the design stage of what we hope will be attractive materials for the programme; these will go to every local church, to those supporting the existing 1% appeal in August and to the others in November. The basic 'programme kit' will include, as well as the more predictable items, a paper for congregations who have never even discussed the previous appeal, some advice on how to introduce *Commitment for Life* in one hour at a Church Meeting, the programme's distinctive prayer card, introductions to the three primary overseas partners and a paper for church treasurers. Local churches who agree to support *Commitment for Life* have a chance to buy the distinctive pulpit fall being designed and made by Pamela Pavitt, creator of the embroideries in 'Threads of Creation' and 'Leaves from the Tree of Peace'. There will be a small team of people, suitably trained, available to visit Districts and congregations in early 1993 to introduce the programme around the country. To assist the presentation at Assembly Christian Aid is bringing over Marta Benavides, a Baptist minister from central America, to participate in the debate.

Resolution 2

Housing and homelessness

3.1 General Assembly, in official reports and in contributions from the floor, has frequently recognised bad housing and homelessness as crucial indicators of poverty and injustice in our society. The appended report from Church Action on Poverty reinforces that view; thus CAP enabled the formation of the Churches National Housing Coalition (see below 3.4).

This remains a priority for the Department. Our Housing Adviser, Craig Russell has been busy across the country.

3.2 As to poor housing and homelessness in Britain today, the figures are still shocking; here are a few. In 1990, 145,800 households (over 400,000 people) were officially designated homeless in England; 13% of these are due to mortgage arrears. This excludes those ineligible for statutory help, such as the single homeless. These may total 2,000,000 with around 50,000 young homeless people (aged 16 - 19) in central London alone. The numbers in hostel accommodation rose by 12% between September 1990 and September 1991; those in B&B 'hotels' by 10% to 13,350 households.

Such statistics represent human misery and hardship, much of it preventable. We should aim for a cross-party and inter-agency consensus on a consistent and long-term approach to housing investment, so that stable policies could be developed and the **underlying causes** of homelessness and bad housing tackled; on issues such as economic migration in a changing labour market, family break-up and the needs of young people the church does have a contribution to make.

3.3 The balance between owning and renting raises some fundamental questions of values as well as of politics. For example, a fundamental re-evaluation of housing subsidies is long overdue. One of the main subsidies, Mortgage Interest Tax Relief (£6.9bn in 1990/91) has hardly succeeded in the aim of its advocates, secure home ownership. Home ownership for the majority of people on low incomes or the already homeless is simply not an option. Over 50,000 homes were repossessed in 1991 as household budgets stretched beyond breaking point; for them the ideal of ownership went very sour.

The existence of such substantial subsidies to owner occupiers continues to make investment in privately rented housing an unattractive and uneconomic proposition, other than at the luxury end of the market. Though over 40% of new households cannot afford to buy, affordable rented accommodation continues to decline in both private and public sectors.

Public investment in new homes for rent has been progressively cut since 1974/5. Local authority new starts in 1991 were under 13,000 compared with 100,000+ in the mid-1970s. Even the increased building programmes of Housing Associations is only creating 30,000 new homes a year. The Duke of Edinburgh's Inquiry into Housing of 1991, together with numerous other reports from across the political spectrum, concluded that to replace unfit housing stock and meet the projected growth in the number of households over the next decade, around 100,000 new homes for rent need to be completed **every year until 2001**.

3.4 Many churches have a sustained commitment to those in housing need, through housing associations, including the URC Housing Association (see below 3.6), campaigning work, hostels and day centres, and community work. A few individual properties (e.g. manses) are rented. We commend this effort and would wish to use such evidence to encourage others.

The main development during the year has been the establishment of the Churches National Housing Coalition, of which the United Reformed Church is a founder member and Ruth Clarke a Vice-President.

The CNHC is striving to:

- *educate and inform local and national churches about housing needs and how they can be tackled;*
- *seek to promote good practice by the churches in the effective use of their resources, including church land and buildings;*
- *develop and encourage work in both rural and urban areas through CNHC networks and through alliances with those concerned with issues of housing and poverty, especially tenants and those in housing need;*
- *organise events and lobbying in support of policies that will address current shortages and alleviate the tragic consequences of inappropriate and inadequate housing.*

Craig Russell has been involved with the formation and launch of the CNHC, continues to serve on its Co-ordinating Committee and convenes its working group on Theology and Housing.

When his term as our Housing Adviser ends later this year the Churches National Housing Coalition will be firmly in place as a resource and rallying-point for individuals and congregations keen to identify with its aims and join its work for justice; we encourage support for the CNHC national lobby of Parliament in December.

3.5 A key element in the appointment of a National Housing Adviser was to promote work across the country. Thus Craig Russell has been active in the organisation of events in Birmingham and on Merseyside and is responding to opportunities in Hampshire, Cumbria, Sheffield and elsewhere. He is also co-author of a housing action handbook 'Windows and Walls' which is proving a valuable



resource for congregations and groups who are starting to get involved in housing work or are seeking fresh ideas and new understandings; three of Craig's drawings from "Windows and Walls" are used in this report.

Resolution 3

3.6 This is an appropriate place to record thanks for the work done by the United Reformed Church Housing Association and its Presbyterian forerunner for over 60 years. As their report (printed at the back of this Book of Reports) spells out, the merger with English Churches Housing is both a logical and constructive step in these ecumenical days. ECH, already a merger of Anglican and Baptist Associations, has over 8,000 units making it one of the largest associations in Britain, but the URC properties and their residents will still receive very individual care and the two remaining staff kept on. Assembly Executive welcomed the move last autumn and we congratulate the chairman, Revd Alwyn Knight, and the committee, for the imagination and the effort they have put into the merger.

Homosexuality

4.1 As intimated last year, the working party on homosexuality published its statement in the autumn and called it 'Homosexuality: a Christian View'. It is not strictly a report, made to help fashion the policy of the Department or the church, but rather a contribution to the ongoing debate, a particular view on a contentious subject. In that spirit the Department has undertaken to consider the publication of further contributions. So we hope that many will read the statement, with its accompanying papers, and that some will feel able to share (in confidence if necessary) their reactions or their experiences in writing.



4.2 Yet in taking the line that this is not an issue appropriate for policy pronouncements, the Department acknowledges that it has by implication accepted the position that no single view on the issue of homosexuality is of the essence of the Christian faith and witness today. There is a range of attitudes, genuine and sincere, held by thoughtful people across the church. Homosexuality is one of the issues of personal and public morality on which Christians are not agreed and on which we can all pray for greater light to discover God's purpose in our life together.

4.3 It is part of the task of this Department, and of the whole church, to encourage such serious consideration across a range of issues and to encourage the required gifts and disciplines: an openness to the Bible and the Spirit, an awareness of contemporary science and culture, a determination for God's justice and a joyful hope born of faith. This is how we learn and grow. This is how we come to distinguish those areas where Christians "can do no other", the sticking points of confession and conscience, and those where Christians can and must disagree (at least for the foreseeable future) and learn how to do so with love and respect.

Resolution 4

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)

5.1 The period between writing this report and the meeting of Assembly will witness the holding of Earth Summit in June in Brazil. This is a unique opportunity to take stock of the prospects for our planet; we trust there will have been full participation by the new British Government.

5.2 Following the Assembly resolution of 1991 which set Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) at the heart of our agenda, the Department has encouraged churches and individuals to share in specific ways in the build-up to the Earth Summit, including uses of the 'leaf' pledges for the Tree of Life and the One World programmes on BBCTV, since it can be authentically welcomed by Christians from a JPIC perspective. This certainly ties in well with the thrust of the *Commitment for Life* (see 2.1 - 2.3 above).

5.3 The main hopes for the Earth Summit are explained in a special centre-spread in the May issue of REFORM: the signing of an 'Earth Charter'; some inter-governmental agreements on global warming, reforestation, etc.; assisting North-South technology transfer as part of a fresh commitment to global, truly sustainable development; and the affirming of AGENDA 21, a 'global manifesto' of things to be done if the new century is not to be the last. Here is the vision of JPIC authentically earthed and interpreted into political priorities. And alongside the official summit tens of thousands of people, from every kind of non-governmental organisation and including at least two British church representatives, will hold their alternative Earth Forum, demonstrating in word and activity the deep concern felt by 'ordinary' people everywhere.

5.4 The issues of justice for all people and care for the created environment cannot be disentangled. Our concern is on the one hand that the needs of the impoverished South are addressed in a spirit of global community; thus relief of Third World debt is a legitimate matter for UNCED. On the other hand, much of the pollution and resource depletion experienced throughout the world is the result of activities in industrial countries which have enhanced our own lifestyles while concealing or ignoring the true cost of environmental damage. It must be right that the richer countries should be expected to shoulder the economic costs of addressing both the problems of development and of the environment which we have largely caused. For even pollution caused in the South is almost always the by-product of a plant or process controlled in the North, e.g. Bhopal.



ONE WORLD 92

5.5 The Department will table a brief supplementary report and resolution at Assembly, when the outcome of UNCED is known, to encourage churches and individuals to share in the follow-up.

Resolution 5 (to follow)

People working together

6.1 During the year Revd Martin Hazell accepted a call to a local pastorate and concluded four and a half years of pioneering ministry as National AIDS Adviser. Martin will be publishing his reflections on that ministry which has earned the admiration and thanks not only of the United Reformed Church but of other churches and of several bodies in which he has made a vital contribution, in particular the World Health Organisation and Terrence Higgins Trust.

Assembly Executive agreed to this Department's request for a second appointment. The job description was partly and necessarily re-written, the funding secured, and after the due process of advertisement and interview, Revd Hazel Addy was appointed. She will start work in September, based in Manchester and ready to travel the country, to encourage and enable ministers and laypeople to face up to HIV/AIDS.

6.2 We continued the practice of engaging the services of part-time advisers in special fields, rather than appointing a second generalist staff member. Craig Russell remains with us until the end of the year. Philip Woods has been appointed European Issues Adviser within the Department in recognition of the increasing importance of the European dimension of almost every issue on our agenda. He is developing our existing links and establishing several new ones; this work will feature more prominently in our 1993 report.

6.3 The process of establishing appropriate ecumenical bodies for co-ordination of effort in the field continues. Under the auspices of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland there are now meeting regularly an International Affairs Liaison Group, Social Responsibility Consultation, Peace Forum, Environmental Issues Network, Refugee Network and Human Rights Forum; the Department is represented on all of these and more.

RESOLUTION

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

6.4 This year sees the 77th and last meeting of the central committee of this Department. Because from the first we have resisted the formation of standing committees and subcommittees, relying rather on short-term single-issue working groups and depending on the central committee to work(!), we now find ourselves needing to form one such standing committee; this is reported elsewhere. At this point, therefore, it is fitting for the thanks of the whole church to be expressed to all who have served as conveners, members and staff of this Department and its groups under the disappearing dispensation; they have faithfully carried the baton for their laps of the race for which we are entered and we all owe them a very great deal.

6.5 This year we also bid farewell to the Departmental Convener, Dr Mary Ede, who has given her considerable talents to our work and to the other bodies on which Departmental conveners are also expected to serve. We are grateful for and appreciative of this major contribution and all rejoiced at her full recovery from an operation.

As reported elsewhere it is now recognised as unreasonable to expect laypeople in full-time employment to give the 30+ days a year to the unmitigated demands made on Departmental conveners; the duties which Mary Ede has carried will therefore be divided between a Convener and an Associate Convener.

RESOLUTIONS

- 1 The Assembly receives the report for debate.
- 2 Assembly welcomes and endorses the programme 'Commitment for Life' as described in Appendix I and commends it to every local church.
- 3 Assembly, mindful of the critical situation in the housing system and concerned at the growing number of homeless people, urges each local congregation and each Provincial Synod (or appropriate ecumenical body or URC District Council as the Synod may determine):
 - to affiliate to the Churches National Housing Coalition,
 - to discover, by research and by listening, the housing needs of their own area and to establish links with those in housing need,
 - to consider the urgency of housing need when disposing of land or buildings;and agrees to make representations to Her Majesty's Government and representative bodies of major builders, local authorities, building societies, etc., to reform the British housing system to ensure provision of safe, secure and affordable homes for all.
- 4 Assembly welcomes the willingness of the Church and Society Department to oversee publication of 'Homosexuality: a Christian View' and of further contributions to the continuing debate.
- 5 *on Earth Summit; to follow at Assembly*

APPENDIX I

COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

incorporating the world development (1%) appeal

1.1 *Commitment for Life* continues the emphasis placed on world development over the years by the United Reformed Church and by its predecessor denominations. 25 years ago it might have been hoped that such an emphasis and this fresh presentation of an appeal in 1992 would not be needed.

But the United Nations paints a grim picture of our world:

one billion of our fellow human beings destitute;

3 billion without sanitation;

2 billion without safe water;

1.5 billion without any basic health care;

100m children of primary school age not attending school;

900m illiterate adults;

... and that income per head in sub-Saharan Africa and in Latin America **declined** during the 1980s which were relatively prosperous for us. According to UNICEF the deaths of 500,000 children are directly attributable to the crippling burden of Third World debt repayments.

1.2 Such is the global context. We have to consider also the eternal context, the clear commands of God to work for justice as the basis of peace, and to turn away from selfishness whether individual or corporate. "When I was hungry .." remains the ultimate test for rich Christians in an age of hunger. Sin is not an abstract concept; it is a term descriptive of much of our life including "the good we have left undone". To live as forgiven sinners is our privilege; in Christ we are overwhelmed neither by the scale of human suffering nor by our own inadequacy. Rather, complacency is our danger, the subtle self-righteousness which overtakes forgiven sinners in every age and which our relative affluence does nothing to dispel. Let us then do good, and go on urgently doing good, feeling grateful not guilty.

1.3 This review seeks to reawaken the vision that has inspired the URC world development appeal throughout the years. With these fresh proposals we seek to tackle some of the misunderstandings that have arisen in the present appeal and to broaden its scope and reach. **We are calling *Commitment for Life* a programme rather than an appeal to counter one misconception, that it is only about money.**

2 THREE PRINCIPLES

2.1 **More than relief** First, insofar as we can distinguish between relief and development, the point is to attempt both, for the sake of the wretched of the earth.

From time to time disaster strikes, maybe a flood or earthquake or drought, and immense human suffering follows; though much of the suffering is preventable, nevertheless it is described as a 'natural disaster' and we all respond with compassion and collections. This relief is in line with the teaching of most religions and is certainly commanded in the Bible.

Our responsibility for the weakest goes further, however. This is why development programmes are important, tackling the deeper effects of poverty by improving agriculture, schooling, clinics, economic opportunities, etc. This is why considerable effort goes into trying to persuade governments to increase the quantity and the quality of official aid and in the longer term to reorganise the economic order to deal with poverty itself. Just as in Britain we have moved beyond Poor Law relief and now expect certain basic needs for food, education, health care, security to be met and basic opportunities to be universally available, so we recognise that relief offers only temporary help to the poor across the world.

The URC world development appeal has supported longer-term development over the years, while at the same time members have also contributed generously to relief programmes directly. *Commitment for Life* will continue to concentrate on development.

2.2 **We benefit too** Individuals and churches who do participate fully in the appeal actually gain from it! At the heart of our discipleship is the principle that giving enriches the giver, that loving others brings us closer to God in peace and joy. Active involvement should produce an enrichment of worship (personal and corporate), a heightened awareness of the world and of God's purposes, and even a healthier lifestyle if we ask the right questions about our patterns of consumption.

The 1% element of personal giving is important - and this target is retained in the new programme. It is meant to be a symbol of a more open and satisfying life in which our response to poverty is not clouded by the guilt and frustration which can easily build up if we are constantly told that we are "not doing enough"; rather it is part of our response to God as we share with others who can never repay us.

2.3 **Power to End Poverty** The third principle underpinning such an appeal is that it brings the church's fine words down to earth. It is relatively easy to talk about justice and peace, about love and hope. Any revised programme and appeal must help the church to interpret what these ideals actually mean in the world of hard decisions, of economics and international affairs, a world full of corruption and unworthy compromise, of vested interests and double-dealing. There is a connection between the upper room and the boardroom, between the Servant King and the President of the United States. Power must be used to end poverty; the poor need an alternative PEP, initials familiar to people planning their own personal security. *Commitment to Life* can provide a framework in which the links can be explored.

2.4 **The world development appeal has been a response of faith; in this respect it remains the same - otherwise it does not deserve to take up so much time and energy and money. As a response of faith following the example and command of Christ himself, then we need to press ahead with the new programme.**

3 RAISING THE MONEY

3.1 To many people the URC world development appeal has been 'another' fundraising effort. Over the years the total received has gone from £98,700 in 1975 to £318,529 in 1990. In the decade 1982-1991 some £2,621,652 was given. Though that seems a large sum, no-one could suppose that it represents 1% of the net income of participating individuals and congregations, even taking into account that only a minority of members in a minority of churches took part. By the criterion of its title it has failed, though it would be churlish and unfair to use the word 'failure' when so much else has been achieved.

Some interesting statistics about the appeal over the years are presented in an Appendix.

3.2 **It is proposed** to retain an appeal made direct to church members and adherents; this cannot be a direct charge on the funds of local congregations. It will change from an annual appeal into a more continuous programme with a four-yearly review cycle. Thus *Commitment for Life*, though evolving every year with fresh material and ideas, will run in this form until 1996.

3.3 **Committed giving** Practically, this should encourage participants to covenant their contributions for at least four years; a facility for doing this, and for contributing by bankers' order, will be incorporated in the material about *Commitment for Life*. This should encourage quarterly contributions, instead of the present assumption that people can actually find 1% of their net income in a single annual gift. There will be opportunity for those who choose to contribute through GiftAid, by payroll giving (GAYE), or by a cash collection. Church treasurers will be given the option of handling as much or as little of the local administration of the appeal as they choose; a regular report of the contributions made from within each congregation will be sent to each treasurer, whether or not they have personally forwarded them.

3.4 There will be better facilities for direct contributions by people in churches where Church Meeting has decided not to support the programme or where local treasurers are reluctant to process additional covenants. But it bears repeating that this is in no sense an

appeal for contributions from church funds; although the educational and advocacy aspects of the programme are directed at congregations, the appeal for money is to individuals (households) and their personal budgeting.

3.5 Stewardship This approach is deliberately complementary to the broader stewardship programme involving the national Advocacy Secretary which invites URC members to contribute a fixed percentage of their income to church funds and to designate a further percentage for giving away. The 1% contribution to *Commitment for Life* would be part of that second category of giving and should feature in any integrated local stewardship campaign.

4 ALLOCATING THE MONEY

4.1 In accordance with the 1979 Assembly resolution, at present 85% of the money received goes overseas to partner bodies of Christian Aid, 10% goes to the World Development Movement for its work in Britain, and the rest (apart from about 1% on printing etc.) goes on grants for development education work in Britain and Europe. Each year a report on the previous year lists the projects supported.

4.2 *It is proposed* to put 10% of the money raised through *Commitment for Life* into development education and advocacy. The same proportion as now, 10%, will be used for campaigning, principally through support of the World Development Movement in Britain and similar bodies in continental Europe.

4.3 80% would go direct to partner bodies around the world for their programmes under the headings of community development, basic education, care for human health and for the environment. As the body most accountable to the churches, Christian Aid will be the principal channel for finding overseas partners. As the programme evolves local congregations will find themselves drawn into a closer relationship with certain partners as some of their dreams come to pass. Such relationships can be genuinely mutual, although care is needed to avoid a demeaning or patronising approach. British congregations can gain much from the experiences of Third World partners, not least the example of courage in the struggle for justice.

4.4 To double the percentage devoted to education signals the importance of sharing information and ideas much more deliberately across the church; it may incidentally lead to an increase in the overall level of giving. Here Christian Aid will again be directly involved since they place great store on education and advocacy and have the specialist staff on whom *Commitment for Life* will call. Opportunities for meeting overseas partners, conferences and training events, and the production of good material for individuals and congregations all cost money; this is an **investment** which will bear much fruit in the life and work of the United Reformed Church.

4.5 The education and advocacy work will require some additional help from an organisation or from individuals, at least for an initial period, to do some work on training and on preparing materials, including audio-visual presentations. The staff time for administration of the programme will not be a charge on the programme; as the take-up increases, some extra voluntary administrative help will probably be required. (see also 6.4 on Advocacy)

4.6 It is sometimes necessary to resist the criticism that only money sent abroad actually helps to tackle the suffering of the poor; campaigning for justice and changing our own attitudes may achieve more in the longer term than sending modest sums direct.

5 ACTION

5.1 **Give time** Those who take part in *Commitment for Life* will not only contribute their money; they will be asked to give some time. Again there can be no imposed rule, but the 1% target might be applied again. Maybe there are 2,000 leisure hours a year - not 'spare time' of course, but time in which we can choose what to do. 1% of that would certainly be enough to send off the monthly Action Calendar card or to write to a local MP or to attend monthly meetings of a local World Development Movement group or perhaps do all three. The 1% time

may be spent reading a recommended book or preparing to lead a house group on some aspect of the subject. It may be spent quite creatively, designing a poster or display for the occasions when *Commitment for Life* is being featured at church, or making up one of the pulpit-fall embroidery kits (being specially designed by Pamela Pavitt) on offer to churches that participate. Another possibility is writing a short dialogue for use in worship or preparing one written by someone else, e.g. the 'Wild Goose' writers of the Iona Community.

The point is the same as when considering giving money; do not be miserable about it! Those who tick the box on the leaflet to receive the twice-yearly mailings will get ideas for action as well as extra background information.

5.2 Speak out The programme will include some activity which is non-charitable, such as the campaigns of the World Development Movement. Care will be taken to ensure that the operation of the revised programme involves no breach of UK charity or covenant legislation. It is interesting to observe that, although it usually finds itself criticising those in power, the World Development Movement is positively and equally commended by leading members of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties. World Development Movement has a good track record of attracting funds into overseas development and of challenging unfair regulations which stop poor countries exporting to us.

The kind of political activity which individuals might engage in as part of their support for a programme like this is that which needs to be encouraged in an open democracy. There is no way that support for one party over against another is being advocated by the church or in *Commitment for Life*. For an MP or MEP to be lobbied not in the narrow self-interest of the constituent but on behalf of the poor of the world may be a refreshing change! Political activity it may be, but appropriate even for an otherwise apolitical Christian, concerned for peace and justice in God's world.

5.3 Buy wisely Those participating in this programme will not only be asked to behave as good citizens in a democracy but as good consumers in the market-place. For those who choose to receive it, there will be information on how to purchase 'Third World products' in ways which best benefit the ordinary inhabitants of these countries. Many individuals and churches already support Traidcraft or similar trading bodies; others have begun to adopt critical environmental or 'green' scrutiny of purchases. This practice needs some encouragement and it is hoped that *Commitment for Life* will give it a boost. To give away 1% seems generous but never to reflect on how the other 99% is spent seems inconsistent!

6 ADVOCACY

6.1 How are we to get this message across? At present a leaflet is published each year introducing the theme and giving information about contributions; a second leaflet gives some detail of the use of the funds from the previous year. The appeal funds have enabled One World Week to provide suggestions for local churches. Similarly, the contributions to World Development Movement have enabled that body to serve the many URC members who belong to it, and the same might be said of other beneficiaries of grants. From time to time conferences have been supported at which URC members have returned better equipped to speak and act in their local situations. More recently, articles in REFORM have told the stories of projects funded out of the appeal. However, a specially-produced tape/slide set had only limited use despite a copy being sent to every District.

6.2 It is proposed that the main work of advocacy for *Commitment for Life* will be done in local congregations. A handy pack will be prepared to introduce *Commitment for Life*; this should be in a format that can be readily adapted to larger or smaller churches. An extra 'starter unit' will be available for congregations in which the appeal has not been supported previously. Churches will be able to acquire additional specially-produced worship suggestions. All of this will include items introducing the overseas partners or prepared by them. Material about the programme will be produced for other URC groups and occasions. In particular, we are confident that FURY will commend *Commitment for Life* as part of their own emphasis on commitment within FURY and include it in the 'menu' for young people.

6.3 Personal advocacy However, there is no substitute for an informed personal presentation. It is planned to recruit a number of volunteers who would be trained and

equipped to visit local churches (and Districts) to introduce *Commitment for Life* both to churches who have supported the appeal and those who have not. The form of these presentations would be tailored to local circumstances; sometimes an occasion (One World Week, church weekend, Lent course, etc.) can be the 'peg' on which to hang the introduction of this programme.

6.4 There will be one national person acting as a co-ordinator for the new programme and for these regional advocates. It is good that a timely legacy for the church's world development programme enables a person to be employed (part-time) without calling on the programme's own funds. However, the administration will be handled as now at no cost to the programme. (see above, 4.5)

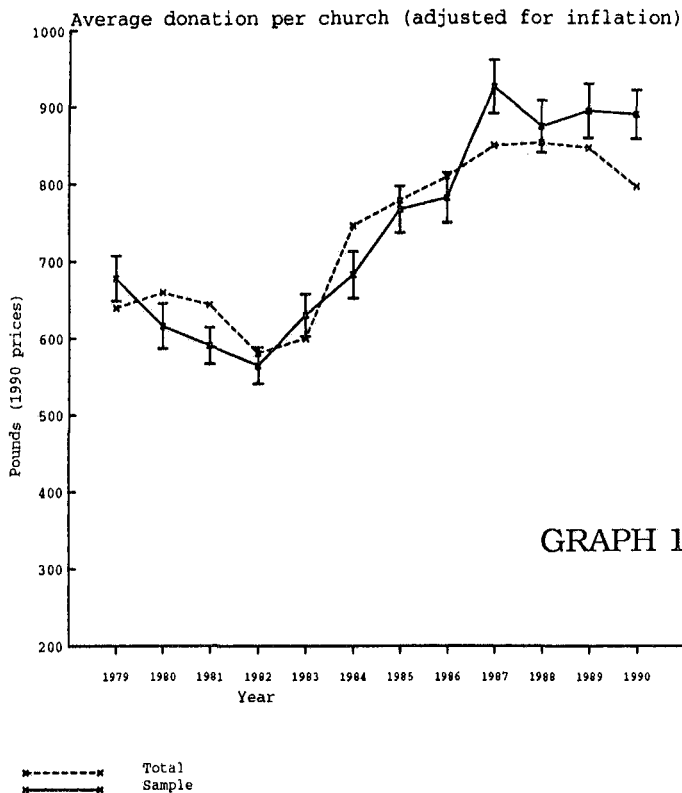
6.5 **Ecumenical or denominational?** Many churches who have not supported the appeal to date have raised considerable sums for overseas relief and development; some have asked "why bother with this distinctive URC appeal?". As in other areas of church life, there need be no sense of rivalry in running a denominational programme alongside ecumenical ones. The aim is not to divert existing contributions away from Christian Aid, but to build on such support in a way that encourages more and more United Reformed Church members to have a share in *Commitment for Life*. Any reservations can be explored and answered by a careful presentation of the principles and strategy of the programme as outlined in this paper when interpreted on a personal visit.

6.6 **Methodist/URC congregations** Both denominations run programmes including appeals for world development. Maybe a choice is required at local level; that is not a bad thing. Certainly no church need decide to support neither because it cannot support both! It has therefore been agreed that a joint letter from the URC Church and Society Department and the Methodist DSR to these united churches will spell out the possibilities.

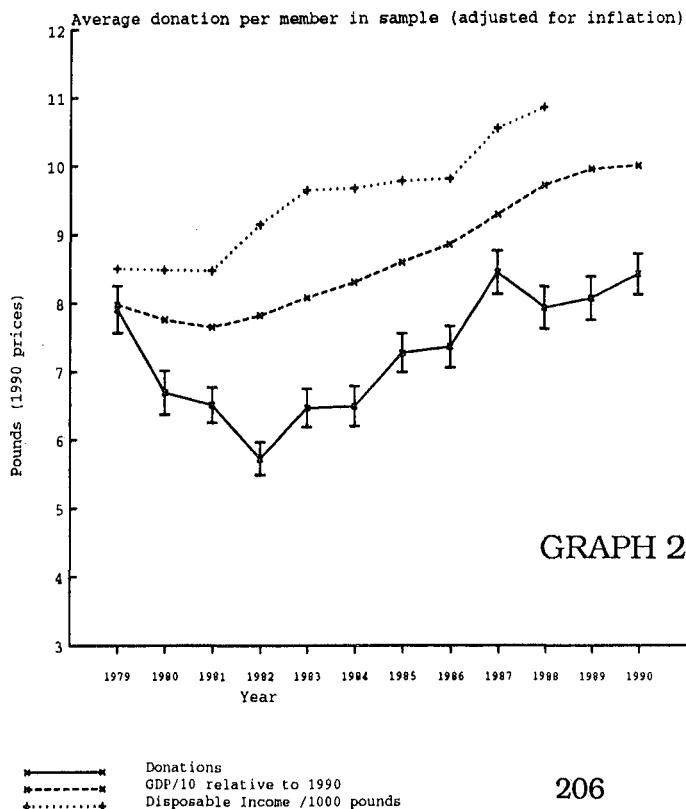
Commitment for Life is offered to the Assembly, congregations and members of the United Reformed Church as a challenge and an invitation, one way of expressing our obedience to the words of Jesus as we follow in his way, our solidarity in the Spirit with our partners and the poor with whom they are striving for justice, and our faith in the God of hope, of peace, of love.

Analysis of donations to world development appeal 1979-1990

Prepared by S J Welham



GRAPH 1



GRAPH 2

The analysis derives from data and membership returns of 72 churches from 1979 to 1990, 6 per Province (3 average over 100 members, 3 smaller); figures from earlier years are based on a smaller sample and therefore slightly less reliable.

Graph 1 demonstrates the relative reliability of the sample; it shows how the contributions from the sample compared with the total appeal receipts. The blip in 1987 is due to the small size of the sample (e.g. one church sending an extra £500) but does not invalidate its usefulness.

In this summary report we use only one main graph (2); further details and the tables of figures on which the graphs are based (before and after adjustments for inflation) are available from this Department.

The first main finding is that the fluctuating pattern of giving year by year largely follows the changes in economic climate. During the recession of 1979-81, disposable income remained static (adjusted for inflation) and the national gross domestic product (GDP) even dipped slightly; in those years contributions to the world development appeal slumped but have risen steadily in real terms ever since, with the blip in the 1987 figure mentioned above. We hope that the response to the new programme will cause this graph to turn upwards sharply.

The second main finding is that it is evident that very few members, even in churches which support the appeal, do so at all generously. The contribution from each church divided into the membership (in the Year Book) gives a surprisingly low contribution of under £10 per person. This means that even if one in ten members on average income* gave 1%, the figure would come out at roughly that of the dotted line (per capita GDP divided by 10) instead of significantly less. There are several reasons for this low response, one of which may well be that church members' incomes are below the national average; the new programme is intended to attract many more individual participants and contributors.

*Per capita GDP is the total national income in a year divided by the total population - a statistically artificial figure since of course the national income is not divided like that!

APPENDIX II

CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY

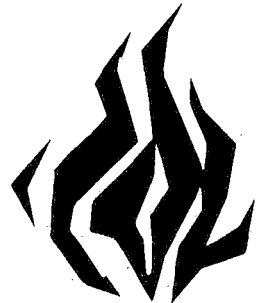
Church Action on Poverty (CAP), is a Christian-based, ecumenical organisation committed to a programme of education and campaigning on the issue of poverty in Britain. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that whilst poverty was a problem in the 1970s it has become a crisis in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Government figures contained in the "Households Below Average Income" report as well as independent research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the TV programme "Breadline Britain", all indicate that poverty affects the lives of over 10 million people in Britain. Christians need to be aware of and respond to the acute moral dilemma we face, namely that as a nation we increase the advantage of those who are already comfortable whilst those with low incomes are cast aside. CAP regards itself as a vital part of the educational process which is needed to underpin such a response.

CAP began in 1982 and quickly gained a reputation for providing reliable information, thorough analysis, relevant theological material and effective action. In 1989 we published a declaration 'Hearing the Cry of the Poor', which received wide ecumenical support, including that of the URC General Assembly. Since then we have undertaken a great deal of work on such issues as the widening gap in incomes between rich and poor in Britain, the impact of Poll Tax, the need to retain Child Benefit and the growing problem of homelessness and inadequate housing. We continue to respond to the impact which public policies have on the poorest people in society and most recently have made detailed responses to the Government's proposals for changes to the system of maintenance payments and the consultation paper 'A New Tax for Local Government'. CAP was invited to give evidence to the House of Commons Social Security Committee in March 1991.

In May 1991 we initiated a national campaign under the title 'Breaking the Chains of Poverty' and in June 1991 we launched a campaign along with Child Poverty Action Group, the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux and the Low Pay Unit, to focus attention on poverty issues in the run up to the General Election.

We have also been committed in recent years to attempts to increase co-operation and collaboration between a wide variety of church-based organisations with concerns about poverty. This has been greatly valued by participants and has given rise to the newly formed Churches National Housing Coalition.

One of CAP's strengths is that it is a national organisation with strong grassroots support. Some of our local groups have been successful in ensuring that people who are themselves affected by low income and poor housing participate fully in our educational and campaigning work e.g. on the Meadowell Estate in Tyneside. Further developments in this area are central to our plans for the next two years.



CAP would be unable to do any of this work without the assistance of a wide range of individuals and organisations. We are grateful for the help and support given by the United Reformed Church throughout the last ten years. In addition to the valuable time which many members of the URC give voluntarily we now receive an annual grant of £4,000 which is a considerable contribution to our funds.

If you are interested in starting a group or furthering CAP's work in some other way then please contact the CAP office.

Church Action on Poverty,
 Central Buildings,
 Oldham Street,
 Manchester M1 1JT (061-236 9321)

SYNOD RESOLUTIONS

Northern Province Synod

1. The Assembly gives first approval to the following amendment to the Structure of the URC:
 - 2 (4) (a) All ministers, deaconesses, registered local pastors and Church Related Community Workers who are for the time being members of district councils within the province.

Two years ago the Assembly approved a similar change - the addition of CRCW's - to the membership of District Councils. This proposal would provide that a similar provision exists for membership of Synods.

Yorkshire Province Synod

2. The Assembly directs the Mission Council to take steps:
 - 2.1 to alert Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches to the Baby Milk Action Coalition;
 - 2.2 to encourage Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches to boycott the purchase of 'Nescafé';
 - 2.3 to write to the Managing Director of the Nestlé Company at St George's House, Croydon, Surrey CR9 1NR expressing deep concern at their policy in providing free baby food to mothers in Third World Countries.

Proposer: Mrs V Morrison
Seconder: Mr J Morrison

3. The Assembly decides to increase ministers' stipends in 1993 only to the extent necessary to cover inflation.

East Midlands Province Synod

4. The Assembly, expressing gratitude that issues in "Patterns of Ministry" are being raised, asks that further study be undertaken and reported on the following themes:
 1. Reconsideration of the value of eldership ordination
 2. Revision of the structures of "authority" in terms of Minister, Elders and Church Meeting, in an endeavour to reduce frustration and stress.

Eastern Province Synod

5. Assembly instructs the Ministries Department to review the practices followed for providing finance to ordinands training for the Ministry, in view of the changed support available from Government sources since Assembly established the basic policy that no candidate shall be prohibited from taking a course of training because of lack of funding.

South Western Province Synod

6. The General Assembly requests Oxford University Press to publish a large print edition of "Rejoice and Sing".
7. Assembly calls on Nestlé to end the promotion of breast milk substitutes by means of free and subsidised supplies to Third World hospitals and maternity wards, and encourages individual members of the United Reformed Church to boycott 'Nescafé' and other Nestlé products until this is done.
- 8.1 The General Assembly believes that all workers with children in local churches should undergo a period of training and recommends that local churches require newly appointed workers (in consultation with the YCWT and/or District Children's Work Secretaries) to equip themselves in this way, and provide adequate financial support where necessary.
- 8.2 Assembly requests the Children's Work Committee to make available suitable material and trainers to enable this to happen.

Wessex Province Synod

9. The Assembly recognises St Francis LEP, Hardwick, Banbury, as a local church of the United Reformed Church.

St Francis LEP, Hardwick, Banbury is serving a population of over 7,000 people north of Banbury and comprises the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the Brethren and the URC. Applications have been made to build a further 300 houses and eventually the population is expected to be 10,000.

A Covenant was agreed in 1989 and the Constitution has recently been agreed, although it has not yet been signed. While the churches have agreed not to do separately anything which can be done together, they acknowledge Communion with the Roman Catholics is not yet possible. They speak of reconciled diversity. Services began in 1990. The Sharing Agreement was signed early this year and building of the church began early in February. The URC have contributed over £10,000 to the building costs and the services of a non-stipendiary minister whose work with other colleagues has proved valuable and most acceptable to them. There are a few URC members. Five were confirmed jointly into the four Protestant churches in July 1991.

The Reading & Oxford District Council have ensured that the necessary questions have been asked and answered by the local congregation who have made formal application through the District Council to be a member church of the URC from the date of the General Assembly in 1992.

10. The Assembly recognises St Francis LEP, Valley Park, as a local church of the United Reformed Church.

St Francis LEP, Valley Park, is in an area north of Southampton next to Chandler's Ford - a new development of about 10,000 people. From the very beginning the Methodists and URC at Chandler's Ford began working in the area and when the Winchester Diocese appointed a priest to the project, ecumenical work continued in a new and exciting way.

A new church building was opened in the presence of the Church Leaders on 4th October 1991, when the Constitution was signed. The Sharing Agreement is in

its final stages and will be signed within weeks. The URC have contributed to the costs of furnishing the building and the Chandler's Ford URC minister shares in ministry on Sundays and at other occasions. There is a Church of England School on the same site and there are strong hopes that the Methodist Church, as well as the URC, will be actively involved in this.

The church has applied to be a member church of the URC and the Southampton District Council has received satisfactory answers to the questions about our involvement and has recommended to the Wessex Synod that this application be forwarded to General Assembly.

11. The Assembly recognises Christchurch LEP, Creekmoor, as a local church of the United Reformed Church.

Creekmoor is a new estate on the outskirts of Poole and since its beginning has served a large area. The United Reformed Church contributes to the LEP in ministry and has made financial contributions to the furnishings of the church buildings. The Dorset District Council has ensured that all the necessary questions have been asked and answered by the local congregation, who have made formal application through the District Council to be a member church of the URC from the date of the General Assembly in 1992.

Southern Province Synod

12. The Assembly resolves to create the post of National Children's Advocate.
13. The Assembly recognises the St John's Church Local Ecumenical Project, Grove Green, near Maidstone, as a local church of the United Reformed Church.

Proposer: Mr H Ring
Seconder: Mrs C P Meekison

St John's, Grove Green, Local Ecumenical Project, is situated in a large private housing estate near Maidstone, Kent. When completed the estate will house some 10,000 people.

A service marking the signing of a Covenant for this Local Ecumenical Project was held on May 9, 1991. Representatives from the Baptist Church, Church of England, Methodist, Roman Catholic and United Reformed Church were present.

St John's is served by an Anglican priest (half time). Sunday worship is held in St John's School, (congregations average 25, though there are 100 or more people at Festival times) and is conducted by a variety of ordained and lay people from each of the participating denominations.

The Council of St John's Church meets every two months and is made up of elected members. Ministers and others from the participating denominations are invited to attend.

SCHOOLS LINKED WITH THE URC

1. In 1991 the Heads and Governors of the Six Schools met for their Annual Conference which was held at Walthamstow Hall, Sevenoaks in October. The new Headmaster of Silcoates School (Mr A P Spillane) was welcomed to his first meeting of the Six Schools.

2. Grants made by the United Reformed Church from its share of the Memorial Hall Trust and by the Milton Mount Foundation allow the schools to exercise their responsibility to the wider Free Church community. These grants contribute particularly to the education of children of serving ministers and missionaries as well as those of women and men preparing for ordination.

3. Acknowledgement is also made of the grant, currently for three years, made to the Six Schools by the Leverhulme Trade Charities Trust towards sixth-form scholarships.

4. In acknowledging the Schools' particular relationship with the United Reformed Church, they would draw attention to the range of bursaries and allowances which it is often possible for them to make to members of the URC. Enquiries are always welcomed, for each school seeks to share the continuing opportunity for Christian education with the churches which provided its founders.

5. **Caterham School.** The year 1991-2 may go down in the history of education as the one in which academic league tables were published for the first time. Caterham shares in the disquiet felt by many over certain aspects of this development but it appears that they are here to stay. The School came out very well, however, being placed among the top one hundred schools nationally. 98% of Sixth Form leavers in July 1991 went on to University or Polytechnic.

The measure of a good school is not merely its academic results. Caterham values its connection with the URC and seeks to promote in the day-to-day life of the school its Christian values. We welcomed onto the Board of Governors our new local URC minister, Revd David Flynn. The basement of the school's Memorial Hall has been refurbished and transformed into a beautiful Chapel thanks to the generosity of the Old Caterhamians. It has been named the Memorial Chapel and will be home to a Book of Remembrance containing the names of all Old Boys of the school who lost their lives in times of war.

The URC connection was highlighted at Speech Day when the guest speaker was Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow, former Moderator of the General Assembly. She was the first woman speaker at a Caterham Speech Day, a point not lost on her in a year which commemorated the first ten years of the school having girl pupils in the sixth form. In the Autumn a boarding house for Sixth Form girls was opened by the Rt Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, M.P. The school chaplain, the Revd Derek Lindfield and his wife Carole, run the house which is proving to be a great success.

Caterham performed the musical "Guys and Dolls" at the end of the Autumn Term. This exciting and memorable production played to packed houses.

The School has been concerned for others. Pupils raised through the year £500 and the Summer Fayre raised over £2,500 for the NSPCC in their Centenary Year in Surrey. The school was also involved in fund raising for a variety of other causes.

The School and Old Boys mourned the death of their former Headmaster Mr T R Leathem last September. Fitting tribute was paid by the Revd Derek Richmond at the funeral service. The School Choir was privileged to take part.

The number of ministers' and missionaries' children at present in the school is eighteen, comprising twelve URC, three Baptists, two Methodists and one Anglican.

6. **Eltham College.** The year under review has been increasingly active as the school's 150th Anniversary celebrations have gathered momentum.

On 7th November the school had its first Royal Visit when the Prince Edward spent an hour and a half at Eltham College. He opened the Antony Barnard Hall for Performing Arts and visited the new Technology Studio. The occasion was both happy and successful, and it was followed the next day by the first broadcast from the new hall: BBC Radio 4's "Any questions?", chaired by Jonathan Dimbleby.

On 18th November the BBC was again at the school for its Daily Service broadcast from the Chapel. The Chamber Choir under Michael Bailey, the Director of Music, sang the Taize Chant "Laudate Dominum" and John Rutter's "Open Thou Mine Eyes".

The following Saturday the whole school assembled at Westminster Chapel for the Thanksgiving Service, chaired by the Revd Dr R O Latham, and at which the Revd Bernard Thorogood gave the address to a huge congregation which filled the Chapel. The combined choirs sang first a new anthem by Stephen Farr (an Old Elthamian now Assistant Organist at Oxford Cathedral) and then Parry's "I Was Glad". It was a memorable occasion.

The year has been marked by other notable events: Lord Tonypany's visit to the school for Speech Day in July, for instance. There has been a series of fine dramatic productions from different age groups, including a special performance in honour of Prince Edward's visit; and a variety of concerts, choral, chamber and orchestral, have kept the musicians on their toes. The Chamber Choir toured to Peterborough Cathedral in the summer holidays.

Cricket was highly successful, the 1st XI and the Under 15s winning the Kent trophies; the swimmers returned from the County Championships with 20 medals, Elliot Webb going on to win silver and bronze medals at the Scottish national championships; Phillip Burch represented England at Biathlon (running and swimming); and the Rugby season produced a 1st XV which, after losing its first two matches, enjoyed a long undefeated run.

As it moves into the second half of its celebratory year the school looks forward in expectation, and back to its foundation in gratitude.

The number of ministers' and missionaries' children at present in the School is twelve, comprising four ministers' sons (United Reformed Church) and eight sons of serving or recently serving missionaries (Baptists).

7. Silcoates School. In September Mr John Baggaley retired after thirteen years' distinguished service as Headmaster. His successor, Mr Paul Spillane, was previously a Housemaster at Wellington College and Second Master at Trent College.

In January 1992 the School learned of the death of Mr Baggaley's much-remembered predecessor as Headmaster, Dr Raymond Evans. Dr Evan's most recent visit to Silcoates had been for the opening of its new Music School.

There have been girls in the Sixth Form for a number of years: from next September the School will be fully co-educational. Indeed, such has been the demand since the announcement of this news that a number of younger girls have already been admitted.

Declining numbers of boarders have sadly led to the planned phasing-out of full boarding. A small weekly boarding unit for Sixth Formers is being established, however, and so this valued tradition will not completely die.

The summer of 1991 saw the completion of a magnificent new building which houses Science, Design, Technology, Information Technology, Mathematics, Economics, the Careers department and the Library. All the other academic departments have consequently acquired more spacious accommodation.

The Junior School too has moved into more spacious premises. Its pupils have the best of both worlds, being based in a Junior School with its own special identity and enjoying the use of many Senior School facilities.

The new Music School was opened by Sir Charles Groves in October, a very happy occasion which included a memorable Chapel Service.

It is an exciting time for Silcoates, as it experiences dramatic change and development, while retaining its distinctive character and identity.

The number of ministers' children at present in the School is fifteen, of whom seven are URC, two are Congregational, two are Salvation Army, two are Anglican, one is Baptist and one is from a Chinese Church.

8. Taunton School. In his review of the School year 1990/91 at Speech Day in July, James Priory, the Head of School, was able to report an active three terms for the community, in the Chapel, in music and drama and in games, though modesty did not permit him to congratulate himself on his success in winning the World Debating and Public Speaking Championship that had been held in the School in March.

The Choir provided two half-hour programmes for the BBC, and the Choral Society, augmented by parents and staff, filled the Chapel for a memorable performance of the "Messiah". Three plays were produced - Alan Ayckbourn's "Season's Greetings", "Cabaret" and Schaeffer's "Black Comedy", the last entirely by the pupils. A debating team reached the final of the Observer Mace - the Schools' National Debating Competition.

Three teams completed the Ten Tors Expedition on Dartmoor; 35 pupils completed their Bronze Awards in the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, 23 Silver and 4 Gold. The Combined Cadet Force thrived under its new Commander.

School games flourished: the Under 14 Rugby XV won the Taunton RFC competition, Nicola Phelps represented England at Under 18 in Hockey and Sarah Duncton captained the Under 16 England team. Ben Wellington was a member of the Under 17 England Cricket squad and a team qualified for the National Schools Bridge Finals.

The School's Radio-Astronomy team led by Trevor Hill recorded a record solar flare that was duly reported in the journal of the Radio Astronomy Society.

A talented year group did well academically with 90% pass rate at Advanced Level.

It was a great pleasure to welcome four members of Staff from the Liceul Andrei Saguna in Brasov at the beginning of the Summer Term following the Headmaster's visit to Romania at half-term in the Autumn.

The Representative Governors met termly. The Right Reverend Richard Hawkins, Bishop of Plymouth, preached at Commemoration and Mr Marmaduke Hussey, Chairman of the BBC, was the guest of honour at Speeches.

Twenty-two pupils in the Senior School and a further eleven in the two Junior Schools receive Ministerial Bursaries.

9. Walthamstow Hall. Undoubtedly, one of the highlights of 1991 for Walthamstow Hall was the chance to host the Six Schools' Conference in October. Our theme was "Christians and the Environment", and the Revd Timothy Royds, URC, opened our deliberations with a most stimulating examination of the theological implications of our chosen topic.

Talks on conservation were given by a member of staff whose recent sabbatical was spent on a project with endangered bird-species in Mauritius, by National Trust staff on work being undertaken by Ightham Mote, which we visited, and by a group from a local school who had won a national conservation award.

We discussed environmental measures we were taking or could take in our respective schools, and the Conference ended with a communion service led by the Revd Dr Robert Latham, URC. The fellowship and the exchange of ideas was greatly appreciated.

Another highlight was the festival of music and drama celebrating the second birthday of our Ship Theatre with a week-long programme of events involving girls, staff, Friends and Parents and guest artists.

Work for charities and voluntary service has been enthusiastic. We were especially pleased to join other schools in "The Six" to raise funds for a jeep-ambulance for Neyyoor Hospital, South India.

Academically, too, it has been a very successful year, with pass-rates of 95% at both Advanced Level and GCSE, and 98% of our leavers going on to higher education.

The number of missionaries' daughters at present in the school is six and there are three ministers' daughters, of whom two are URC and one is Congregational.

10. **Wentworth Milton Mount.**

Four features might be seen as distinguishing the School. They are:-

- A tradition of high academic standards in the context of classes where girls are seen as individuals and where the potential of each one is fully realised. Collectively our Upper Sixth achieved an 89% pass rate in their Advanced Level examinations this summer. Most have gone on to higher education to read for degrees in such diverse fields as medicine, French and politics, ophthalmics, law, education and business studies.

- An emphasis on personal fitness which is achieved not only through the usual team games, but also through a variety of sports. Our sporting achievements this year have included the selection of six lacrosse players for the Dorset Junior County team; the U12 and U14 netball teams won their sections of the Bournemouth Schools' Rally; the U17 athletics team won their section of the Bournemouth Town Championships; three of our athletes represented Dorset at the South West Championships and one has joined the Dorset U16 Badminton Squad.

- A concern for building character and developing leadership potential through participating in such activities as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, canoeing or caving, the most recent addition to the range of activities provided by our new Outdoor Education Department. We also organised a comprehensive Sixth Form Induction Programme for fifth years in their post-GCSE period. This lasted for two weeks.

- An extension of an individual's cultural horizons through visits to the theatre, art exhibitions and concerts. We gained pass rates of 100% in each of the LAMDA examinations sessions in 1991 and our achievements in the Bournemouth Festival were highly commendable. We enjoyed a very successful and hugely entertaining production of "Daisy Pulls It Off" in the autumn term. During the spring term there was a concert with a programme showing the considerable musical talent at present in the school. This has been further demonstrated by the woodwind trio which was placed second in the semi-finals of a national chamber music competition. Three of our girls play in the Bournemouth Youth Orchestra and in the most recent Associated Board examinations we achieved 21 distinctions and 26 merits within a 100% pass rate.

The School continues to worship in three local churches and we are fortunate that, from the summer term, we have had as School Chaplain the Revd Roger Hall, minister of Richmond Hill URC.

Since January 1991 we have upgraded the Junior and Middle School boarding houses. Once again boarders are able to bring a pet rabbit or hamster to school as we have provided a new "wild house" to accommodate them and, inevitably, we have acquired a School Vet.

Also we have established the "Mead Technology Suite". This was opened in November by the Revd Colin Mead, who until 31 May was the Chairman of the Board of Governors. The basis of the new suite is the network of 12 IBM compatible computers. The system is running business standard software and the girls are now being prepared for public examinations which will give them credit for practical computing and information technology skills.

There are 302 girls at present in the School, sixteen of whom are daughters of ministers.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 1991 - 1992

1. The 1991 Annual Meeting took place during the General Assembly at Torquay. After a lunch Revd Michael Whitehorn gave a short and informative talk on the life of his father, Revd Dr Roy Whitehorn.
2. The Council continues to provide a volunteer service of supervision for visitors and replies to all the correspondence on historical matters received at 86 Tavistock Place. A continuous supply of local church histories is received and catalogued. The Society also keeps a record of all URC ministers and stores the photographs of deceased ministers.
3. The number of congregations who take out subscriptions has fallen in recent years. Although always anxious to enrol individuals the Society reminds local churches that it is possible to support the voluntary work of the Society and receive a copy of the Journal. In the past many local churches have ensured that the minister or other interested people receive a copy of the Journal in this way.
4. The Society is considering how to collect and store records in the form of audio and video tape. Records of interesting events and people in the life of the church can be recorded this way. It would be good to hear of any successful local projects of this kind and to gather information on the most successful formats.
5. We are meeting at 12.30 pm on Sunday, 5th July, in York for lunch, followed by a short address from the President, Revd Dr Buick Knox.
6. The Society is planning a Study Weekend, including the Annual Meeting and Lecture, at Nottingham University 18 - 20 September 1992. This event is open to non-members and is an excellent way to get to know the Society and catch some of its enthusiasm for church history.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

Chairman: The Revd Alwyn Knight

Small may be beautiful, but in the post-1988 world of the voluntary housing movement, efficiency in the use of financial and human resources has led to a growing pressure upon smaller Housing Associations to merge to form larger organisations. In his report to the General Assembly last year our Director, Richard Foot, asked: How should we change to respond to the new needs, demands and challenges? He added: This question has exercised us greatly during the year.

The outcome of that period of discussion was a decision to merge with another Housing Association. Our partner is to be the English Churches Housing Group - itself the result of a merger (in 1991) between the Baptist and Church Housing Associations. If all goes well, we will become part of ECHG from the 1st April 1992.

There is inevitably some sadness at the loss of our separate identity, but we believe that our decision will benefit existing and future tenants. ECHG is one of the larger Associations in England, with a number of regional offices, and with the range of professional skills and financial resources Associations now need for their work. It provides housing across a range which includes hostels, sheltered and shared homes for the elderly, and homes for people with special and general needs. We look forward to making our own modest contribution.

We are indebted to the many men and women who form our Local Management Committees. In the main they are members of United Reformed Churches, but a growing and welcome trend has been for members of other churches to serve on LMCs too. LMCs will have a continuing role within the new Association.

The Association's Committee of Management has had a particularly busy year, as it has wrestled with all the issues posed by the merger. It has been a particular pleasure for me to work with this committed group of people, who have so willingly given their time and their professional experience to the work of URCHA.

But I must end with a special word of thanks to our staff at Wickham House. Despite some natural anxieties about the future they have continued to serve our tenants and the Association with loyalty and commitment. We are particularly indebted to Basis Mullinger, our Secretary and Financial Manager, who has taken charge of the many and complex procedures necessary for the merger, and overseen the day to day activities of the Association in the absence of a Director for much of the last year. We are very grateful.

We hope that local churches will still think in terms of using their land for housing schemes. If you have a site suitable for development, or would simply like to find out more about the Housing Association movement, do write to ECHG at the following address:

English Churches Housing Group,
Sutherland House,
70-78 West Hendon Broadway,
London NW9 7BT.

Tel: 081 - 203 9233

URC MUSICIAN'S GUILD REPORT 1992

Commenting on or writing a summary of Guild activities over the past year in a short form is not possible or, we believe, necessary. We claim with certainty that our programme of events and meetings was relevant to the needs of the church, incorporating training, education, worship and enjoyment of a rich variety of music in worship.

The Guild is not a club for organ buffs! We are pledged to help and encourage pianists, organists, singers etc. of all grades of proficiency and those with no grades at all. Our affiliation to the RSCM helps considerably with our work and we are blessed with a number of talented and skilled musicians in our membership. We are the only church to have the privilege of seven Guild Branches in various parts of the U.K. Details of meetings are published widely by Branch secretaries, Guild Review and the notices column in Reform.

John Mansfield, our publication editor, produces three excellent editions of Guild Review each year, which reviews Guild activities, contains articles of interest about church music, informed reviews of new music and so much more. For example, the January/April 1992 edition contains a review of "Rejoice and Sing", by Leslie Ivory, which is informed, constructive, stimulating and excellent reading.

Our objective of achieving membership including people from *all* the churches in the URC, has still to be realized, but at a modest £4-00 per year subscription we hope 1992 will prove to be encouraging in this respect.

The movement of redundant organs off our register is very slow. However, do not despair - we do have successes. Churches which require instruments, please check with us first.

In conclusion, the Guild has, through its membership, the potential to enrich the life, work and worship of the church through music. Your encouragement and support is appreciated.

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.

STANDING ORDERS

- 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, 5b and 5c 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 3(1) and (2) of the Structure.
- 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 it 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 10 of the Basis of Union.
- 8d. The decision of the Moderator on a point of order, or on the admissibility of a personal explanation, or on the right to have a dissent recorded, shall not be open to discussion.

9. Admission of Public and Press

Members of the public and representatives of the press shall be admitted to the Assembly unless the Assembly otherwise decides, and they shall occupy such places as are assigned to them.

10. Circulation of Documents

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

11. Records of the Assembly

- 11a. A record of attendance at the meetings of the Assembly shall be kept in such manner as the Executive Committee may determine.
- 11b. The minutes of each day's proceedings, in duplicated form, shall be circulated on the following day and normally, after any necessary correction, approved at the opening of the afternoon session. The minutes of the closing day of the Assembly shall normally be submitted at the close of the business and, after any necessary correction, approved.
- 11c. A signed copy of the minutes shall be preserved in the custody of the General Secretary as the official record of the Assembly's proceedings.
- 11d. As soon as possible after the Assembly meeting ends, the substance of the minutes together with any other relevant papers shall be published as a "Record of Assembly" and a copy sent to every member of the Assembly, each Synod, District Council and local church.

12. Suspension and Amendment of Standing Orders

- 12a. In any case of urgency or upon motion made on a notice duly given, any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting so far as regards any business at such a meeting, provided that three-fourths of the members of 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.



