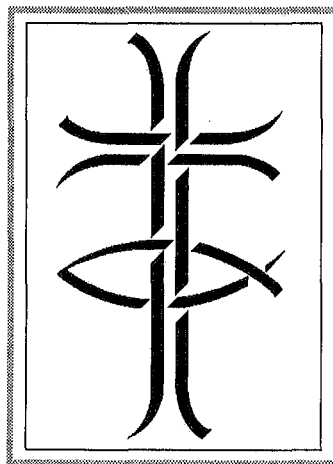


The United Reformed Church
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1995



July 3rd - 7th Eastbourne

**Annual Reports,
Resolutions & Papers**

From the General Secretary

It is intended that committee reports, with resolutions, will be presented by committee conveners. This will enable members of the Assembly to put faces to the names of those leading the new committees.

This has resulted in a different layout to this book of annual reports from last year. Each committee report is followed by its own resolutions. In most cases the supporting text is in the body of the report. Members may recognise this as the pattern followed up to 1992.

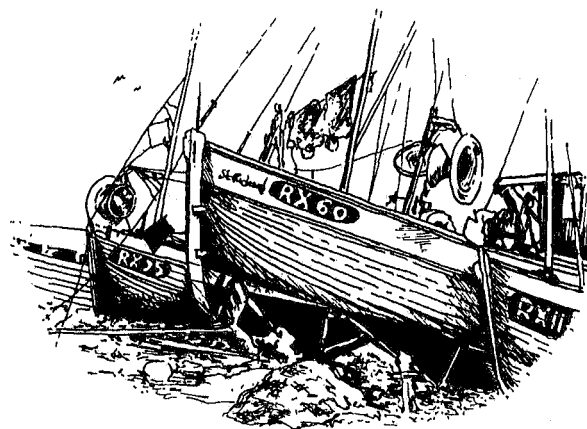
Appendices I - XII contain miscellaneous matters which are only subject to debate if they are referred to directly in the appropriate committee report. These ought not to be confused with the Appendices to the report on Patterns of Ministry which are lettered A - E.

Anthony G Burnham

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**SYNODS REPORTS
and RESOLUTIONS,
CHURCHES - CHANGES
and PROVINCIAL
MODERATORS' REPORT**



**GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1995**

NORTHERN PROVINCE

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

We are delighted that Terry Oakley has accepted the invitation to be our Development Officer. We are now moving to recruit the rest of the Team - a *Youth and Children's Work Trainer*, *Adult Training Officer*, *Creativity Officer* promoting activities such as crafts, music, dance and drama in our churches, and a *Skills Agent*, co-ordinating the attracting and release of skills and talents across the Province. We look forward to them starting work in the autumn, offering new patterns of challenge and support to local churches and the councils of the Church.

HOLY ISLAND PROJECT

Plans are now one exciting year further on for the visitors' centre at St Cuthbert's Church to complement the resources that our ecumenical partners have established to offer both a focus for the growing number of pilgrims exploring Celtic spirituality and a window into the Kingdom of God for our day for the large number of tourists attracted to the island. A first anniversary concert heralded what is hoped will be another creative year leading to fulfilment of the plans and appointment of the director.

PROPHETS WITH HONOUR

David Jenkins charmed Synod with stories of his sabbatical and examples of a whole range of effective and manageable music he has found to enhance worship. We look forward to his efforts to make these resources available and accessible to the churches of our Province and beyond.

Some high hopes that the other labour of his time away - *A Tourguide to Rejoice and Sing* - will encourage people to explore fresh ways of using the still-new hymn book to the best advantage.

We also share the pride in Stephen Thornton's reflections on his study tour on behalf of CWM - *Let the Children Be*. His sensitive but trenchant comments are a challenge to all who dare discover what it means to be the people of God the world around.

RURAL CHURCH MATTERS

We are planning a major consultation on rural affairs over the next twelve months with the assistance of Michael Cruchley. The aim is to work on a number of fronts to discover - what help and assistance our rural churches need to support and encourage their regular life and worship - how to challenge and support them in making a creative contribution to the issues of economy, community and lifestyle in their areas - how to help members of small scattered churches talk to each other of their common troubles and joys, and together express their concerns to the churches of the Province as a whole, especially when considering fraught matters of finance and deployment.

CONNECT

We are thrilled that CONNECT is coming to the Northern Province in October. Many folks are already looking forward to so many people coming North for the weekend, and preparing for the tasks of hosting and guiding our visitors to give them a real taste of Tyneside hospitality.

The theme is *Reaching out - to the North-east - to each other - to God*. Two of our young people have prepared the theme prayer:

Lord, you reach out with your love to us,
and in your arms embrace us.
Help us find the strength to reach out to others
and spread your love throughout our world
and throughout our lives.

NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE

NEW INITIATIVES IN CITY MINISTRY

During 1994, important issues concerning two of our inner-city pastorates were being discussed separately at our General Purposes Committee. We began to see the need for all our inner city churches to form a 'cluster', in order to share information, success stories, problems and to seek ways of finding resources.

The churches in question are: Hulme, Moss Side, Cheetham Hill, Wythenshawe East Manchester, Salford Chapel Street and Hope, Salford Central, and Roby. All these churches are facing the challenges of their surroundings, some undertaking imaginative outreach. All struggle with limited resources. This idea has been taken up with enthusiasm and will lead to a more coherent strategy for City Ministry in the Future.

BLACKPOOL

Blackpool is noted for its 100 year old golden Tower, bright lights and the biggest roller-coaster in the world. However, Blackpool has a problem of homelessness, poor housing, and a severe drug problem. We propose to use the resources from the sale of Claremont URC to develop a new ministry in central Blackpool.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK TRAINER

We recognise how vital it is to nurture the Faith of children and young people. We are aware that churches struggle to find more imaginative and appropriate ways of teaching children, who mature at an early age these days. We have taken the decision to appoint a Youth and Children's Work Trainer to work in this Province. This is our top priority. We have had a successful Ginger Group in the Province for two years. Sadly, due to limited resources this will have to be discontinued.

TRAINING CHURCH OFFICERS

Willing members are so often asked to take responsibilities, but receive little or no training for their tasks. We propose to hold a Training Day for Church Secretaries, and for Church Treasurers, to offer those in large or small churches the opportunity to reflect on their role within the church and to learn new skills.

EXCHANGE WITH CHURCHES IN ILLINOIS

The Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ (USA) has offered the Mersey and North Western Provinces an interesting programme of exchange. A visitor will come from Illinois to England for four weeks in February. (A different person each year for four years). In the Autumn each year, one of our people will be invited to undertake a reciprocal trip. All expenses for this programme will be paid by the Illinois Conference from a special trust.

RAVENSTONEDALE

In this delightful village high in the Pennines, we have a historic chapel, and a large manse. We are planning to use the manse as a place of renewal for ministers and others who need space for reflection.

TOWARDS RENEWED EFFECTIVENESS

Last year we reported that we were beginning to restructure our committees at Province and District level. We are pleased to report that the new structures are working well thanks to the co-operation of all concerned.

PROVINCIAL DAY

We are looking forward to our Provincial Day to be held at Heaton Park on July 15th 1995 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the London Missionary Society. There will be a mixed programme of activities including Worship, drama, sports, seminars, rock band, and videos.

MERSEY PROVINCE

The word which dominates the scene in the Mersey Province is "**CHANGE**".

Picking up the story from last year's report the Province "farewelled" the retiring Moderator, Eric Allen, at a full-house in July at Christ Church URC, Port Sunlight, (The URC "Cathedral" of the Province). A short time later, or so it felt, Graham Cook was inducted as the new Moderator and welcomed on a truly ecumenical occasion in the presence of Church Leaders from Merseyside and Cheshire at the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool. The Dean and Chapter invited us to "think of using the Cathedral as our church for the day" and we did! It was our special delight for the Revd Dr Andrew Rogers, recently Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, to be able to attend and to reinforce the links between our Province and our sister Church.

CHANGE: Ecumenically - but slower than we had hoped in that progress on the Joint Methodist / URC Project has not moved on as much as anticipated. The appointment of a "facilitator" to develop co-operation at District / Synod and Circuit / District has not happened. However, a consultation of representatives from fifteen LEPs in the Province resulted in a fruitful list of "Good things", "Difficulties" and "Where do we go from here?". An agenda of serious topics is to be followed up, which undoubtedly relates to LEPs around the country. The topics indicate many of the frustrations experienced in the LEP, some of which can only be resolved at national level.

Change of Free Church Moderator in the Merseyside and Region Ecumenical Assembly with the retirement this year of the Revd Dr John Newton. At our March Synod Dr Newton gave us a stirring address on "The Changing Pattern of the Christian Mission".

Further afield the United Church of Christ (Illinois Conference, USA) have generously made available an exchange programme for the next four years to be shared with ourselves and the North Western Province. Our links with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland continue as we share in an Educational Exchange in 1995. Some Churches in the Province continue their contacts with visits to Eastern Europe.

CHANGE: in Structures - in order to take account of changes to the Structure of Assembly Committees and the changing needs of the Province, the March 1995 Synod accepted the report of a Working Party from the Mission Council / Business and Nominations Committee - "Becoming More Effective" - which reshapes committees, creates task groups and networks. The purpose is to help the local churches become more effective in mission.

Synod also agreed the change from a half-time YLTO (a sharing arrangement with the North Western Province) to the appointment of a full-time Youth and Children's Work Training and Development Officer; this appointment is most urgent especially as the survey of youth / children's work in the Province presented to Synod indicated exciting opportunities. This appointment is most urgent especially as the survey of youth / children's work in the Province revealed that we have over 10,000 children and young people connected to our churches in one way or another, and over 1,000 people giving leadership to them. Many of these are crying out for support, resources and training.

The needs of Training and Communication have been identified and the appointment of a full-time (or equivalent) Training Officer is to be investigated along with that of a half-time Communications Officer.

Change in the presentation of written reports to Synod using desk top publishing technology has been warmly received; members have even expressed their enjoyment in the reading of them!

Changes in the world and society was the basis of a talk - "The Changing World - its impact on the URC" given by an elder to representatives from Chester URCs. This topic will go for wider discussion in the Province later in the year to help local Churches with practical recommendations and encouragement for their implementation.

Changing the Church for Mission - the old-style quinquennial visits are being revised to become more mission orientated. The Cheshire District has held a successful pilot scheme of Pastoral Consultation, in which the local church is enabled with the help of District Visitors over some months to identify its role and function and to set aims and objectives for mission. Surely a "MUST" for all churches of the URC?

A minister has been appointed by the Synod Mission Council to spend a sabbatical term researching into Mission and Church Growth. We expect to gain insight and learn some important lessons from the "good stories" both from within the URC and also the wider Church.

Will there be **CHANGES** in the way our twelve Provinces share with, talk to and network with each other as a result of the Mission Council Resource report? We look forward to the challenges for **Change!**

WHAT ELSE IS CHANGING? The Mersey Province is learning how to take seriously its new responsibility for the care of its listed buildings and those in conservation areas - more than a quarter come into this list and are subject to the Ecclesiastical Exemption Order. We have been helped by the Chester Diocesan Committee, long-experienced in this kind of work, and we are grateful for their willing co-operation.

Change of people: we are delighted to make a "Gift" to the wider URC, as we release David Lawrence to become the new Editor of "Reform". David will be greatly missed in our Provincial and District work and we wish him and his family well.

CHANGES WE WANT TO SEE:

to be able to respond better to the financial challenges facing the Church and to encourage more of our churches to take up TRIO or equivalent stewardship programmes;

for our Districts to find ways of overcoming the problems they face due to a shortage of personnel to make their work effective.

YORKSHIRE PROVINCE

What is the Province for? This question was raised at a meeting of a group of Provincial Executive members called to discuss the need for a re-think in the Faith and Life/Training and Mission area. It was also an important question for us to answer if we were to make the correct response to the new national committee structure. The Basis of Union gives some clear guidelines, and points to the role of the Province in co-ordinating and supporting the work and witness of the Churches in our various Districts, and in linking them with the life of the national Church. In detail, however, there is scope for a variety of understandings, as was apparent in our Synod discussion and debate on some of the issues that confronted us this year.

BUILDINGS

Nowhere was this more clear than in our view of the Ecclesiastical Exemption Order. An animated Synod debate dwelt on both the Christian stewardship of resources (human and financial) and the inevitability of compromise in a secular state, before we made a decision, in line with the other Provinces, to operate the procedure prescribed by the Order.

TRAINING

At least, surely, there is no doubt that training is one of the Province's main functions? But why is training so often received with little enthusiasm? What's in a word? Throughout the year, a Provincial Training Review Group, usefully defining training as "the process by which we become more effective Christians", tried to establish, in consultation with District Councils and local churches, what our training needs were, and what structure would best serve them. Meanwhile, earlier training initiatives continued to flourish : we were pleased to see our "Starting to Lead Worship" course adopted by other Provinces, and individual local churches continued to exchange good practice as they became involved in "Turning the Tide", an initiative bringing together individual members of those churches in mutual support and encouragement. We hope that the report of Mission Council's Resource Sharing Task Group may help us towards a similar exchange at provincial level.

MINISTRY

"Patterns of Ministry" reminds us that ministry of the Word and Sacraments is one very important resource that may be in increasingly short supply. In this context, it was a great joy to welcome our Moderator back to the Province full-time, enriched by the experience of his year of service to General Assembly. During one brief period in the summer and early autumn, he presided over nine inductions, mostly of newly ordained ministers. Many of our members will certainly have seen this influx of new ministers as the most significant development of the year.

One of the most interesting was the appointment of a part-time children's/family worker at Shiregreen Church, Sheffield, with financial support both from our Provincial Amalgamation fund and the New Enterprises in Mission Fund. At a more prosaic level, so as not to hinder our co-operation in LEP'S, nor prevent the appointment of URC ministers at the appropriate time, we have had to take steps to ensure parity in the relative cost of URC and Methodist ministry.

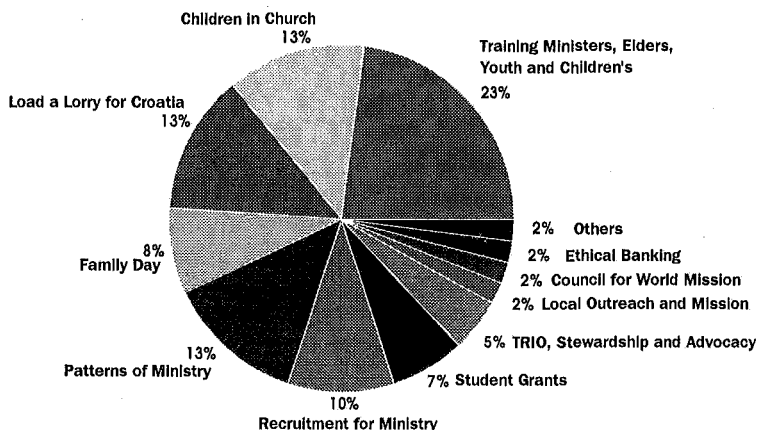
In three areas of the Province (Sheffield, Selby and Morley), URC ministers continue to serve as members of ecumenical industrial mission teams, funded through the Special Category Ministry Scheme. There is the clear danger that funding might be cut off, at the end of a five year term. We need to find ways of enabling successful work to continue.

MISSION

Immediate inspiration beckons from two coming events. First, our celebration - and especially our Provincial celebration at Selby Abbey - of the Bicentenary of the foundation of the London Missionary Society will remind us that it is our responsibility, and our privilege, to share with all people the faith by which we live; and, secondly, the visit of Bishop John Spong can be guaranteed to make us think seriously about what we need to do - and not to do - if that faith is to be seen to be relevant to the end of our twentieth century. We are happy that other Provinces are co-operating with us in arranging the Bishop's visit.

EAST MIDLANDS PROVINCE

In October 1994 members of Synod were invited to comment on topics to be included in the Province report to General Assembly. The following chart shows the main areas members felt should be included.



These indicate that we are involved, as might be expected, in churchly issues of the moment such as the Patterns of Ministry discussion.

We are also concerned that children hear the message of the gospel and find a place in our churches. The needs of those children and young people who are in any way connected with our churches and the importance of trained and committed leadership for them are stressed and we include young people in the uniformed organisations. The Province is committed to trying to have its own Youth and Children's Work Training Officer and welcomes the appointment of the national Children's Advocate. This leads on to our worries about the declining levels of grant support for students and a petition on the subject was sent from the October Synod.

Overall, the need for training in all its various forms for all involved in church life came out as a very high priority for the province and so the revival of a Provincial Training Day in 1996 will be widely welcomed. We are already feeling the benefits of the appointment last September of a full-time training officer and of the increased time from our Youth Leadership Training Officer.

The 1994 Provincial Day obviously provided a welcome focus for the province and another is planned for 1997. Above all the "Load a Lorry for Croatia" appeal caught the imagination and enthusiastic action of people in the province and 630 boxes of food and toiletries were sent through this scheme to refugees in Croatia. The Moderator's fund for Croatia has also been well supported and several churches have developed their own links to help especially the Reformed Churches of Croatia.

Unsolicited votes for the importance of local mission and evangelism and votes given to the recruitment for ministry remind us of the imperative demand that the gospel be increasingly known and believed.

At the March Synod some further points were added:

Renewed awareness of the importance of CWM seen especially in Johnson Jesudoss serving in the province through CWM.

Emphasis on Church Related Community Work as an important aspect of our mission.

The production of new guidelines for Quinquennial visits.

The Moderator's challenge to the Province to be **Making a Difference** and become a province full of **MaD** churches.

WEST MIDLANDS PROVINCE

The month of August saw the Provincial Office floor being taken up in an attempt to cure a three-foot deep layer of persistent Arctic chill which had defeated all previous less drastic attempts to combat it. This provided the opportunity to carry out some other improvements which have produced a more acceptable working environment, greater security, widened doorways for wheelchair access, our very own toilets and what must surely be the dinkiest kitchen in the URC!

A major presentation on Finance at the Autumn Synod highlighted the urgent need to increase the Province's income. Despite a reallocation of priorities between 'people' money and 'buildings' money last year our funds are becoming insufficient to cover our present, let alone our future, commitments. Churches have been challenged to respond to a number of alternative suggestions as to how to handle the problem. Not surprisingly, TRIO featured on the same agenda, the West Midlands being the bottom of the league of participants so far.

At the same Synod, agreement was given to the centralisation of Trusts within the Province, to include a phased transfer of Trusts from the four remaining Incorporated Unions to the West Midlands Trust - the culmination of many years of discussion!

Youth work has featured strongly during the past year. The YCWT Strategy Group has been reorganised in line with national thinking, making it more of a management, rather than a support, group and linking it more effectively with the Districts. The Provincial Youth Coordinators have put time and energy into stimulating youth work and encouraging the District youth officers. Pilots and the URC Guide and Scout Fellowship have been promoted at Synod, and the churches challenged with the results of a survey showing that there are 3,560 children in uniformed organisations within the one-third of our churches which replied to the questionnaire.

Talks about closer cooperation with the Methodists have been an ongoing feature of our life for some time now, with a joint working party considering the way forward. Progress is slow, but in a number of places conversations about ways of sharing are going on, and in January '96 a joint Synod Council/ District Policy Committee meeting is planned.

Following a memorable visit to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland by a group from the Province led by the Moderator in 1993, a reciprocal visit was offered and accepted in principle. This is now planned for October, to coincide with the Autumn Synod. During their five-day stay our guests will be offered visits to some of the more interesting projects around the Province. Churches are currently being challenged to put in their bids to be considered interesting!

The West Midlands has been chosen as a 'guinea pig' area to try to develop a coordinated policy for Free-Church chaplaincies in Higher Education. In the past there has been no consistent policy. A working group representing the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches is currently being set up to look at the issues involved and to try to establish a policy which could be applied nationally.

An innovation this year has been the Moderator's offer of a block of time to be spent within a District, resulting in a stimulating and exhausting four-day visit by John Waller to Gloucestershire, a planned trip to Hereford and Worcester, with Shropshire waiting in the wings for early '96. This policy, together with the focusing at every Synod on the life of each District in turn, acknowledges the importance of vigorous District Councils for the mission of the Church.

Other concerns during the year have included Commitment for Life, and an attempt to send a resolution to Mission Council asking for a reconsideration of the programme because it had failed to 'capture the imagination of the churches'; Equal Opportunities and ways of implementing the General Assembly resolution; and, of course, computerisation!

Perhaps next year the Clerk will be able to report that the West Midlands has joined the rest of the world and installed computers in its offices!

From 1st September, the Clerk will be Mr Simon Rowntree, currently Senior Assistant Registrar at Aston University, Birmingham, and an Elder at Carrs Lane Church.

EASTERN PROVINCE

The churches of the Eastern Province face challenges and change. Discussions on "Patterns of Ministry" led many into a deeper exploration of the meaning of *ministry*. For some of our Districts, this coincided with a substantial number of - and in many cases, completely unexpected - removals of Ministers. Witnessing to the gospel, in circumstances that have left individual faith shaken is no easy task for member, elder or church; yet the Synod's challenge to the churches and the District Councils *to reflect on being the church in their local situation* was taken up by many. One local church tells of the opportunity that arose through a time of great personal tragedy - shared by the community - to witness to the love and care by God, even in those difficult times. Our failure to date, has been to find the time in Synod necessary to allow proper exposition of the results of this - and the time to share the news of the excellent work going on in many churches and through the work of so many of our members,

Since the end of the second term of office of our YLTO, and the move of our Provincial Youth Secretary, youth work has been vigorous in only isolated places in the Province. Synod expressed its appreciation for the magnificent work that John Quitter had done as YLTO over ten years, and to Russell Furley-Smith for his excellent work as Youth Secretary. Appointments continue to be made in pursuance of the policy of investing in people to enable the preaching of the Word. We have appointed a Childrens' Work Training officer and are in the process of appointing our own full-time YLTO. Together with the Moderator, the Life & Mission Development Officer and the Finance Officer, these will form the basis of the Province's support for local churches throughout our region. In addition there are those women and men, involved in ministry in many local spheres, who provide part-time/voluntary support for such work. To enable all this work to be carried out in the best possible way the Synod has now agreed to consolidate its presently scattered offices onto one site in a village in Cambridgeshire. This will allow greater sharing of common resources and the tangible expression of mutual support amongst the members of the Provincial Team. We look forward to seeing the building work for this office, progress in partnership with the local United Reformed Church.

The partnership relationship with our neighbours in the Netherlands continues to develop too. We benefited from the visit of representatives of the "hervormde" (Netherlands Reformed Church) and the "gereformeerde" Reformed Churches in the Netherlands - a partner church in CWM) to discuss how effective ministry is exercised. This has particular interest for each of our churches, which are mainly scattered in small rural communities. Further discussions on this and other topics are anticipated. We look forward to more possible local church links between our two regions.

We rejoice in the commitment of our local churches to the support of CWM - especially at the time of the bi-centenary of the LMS with which many in the Eastern Province have personal links. We are glad too, that so many of our members continue that tradition

though in different ways, and are willing and able to serve the church nationally in various roles. As we face the decisions of the future, we hope that we are gradually responding to the call from God to become more effective witnesses. We try to remain open to the Spirit and to be tolerant and loving towards each other - but it's difficult to achieve that. With God's help we believe we shall!

SOUTH WESTERN PROVINCE

As in human living joys and sorrows are interwoven into a whole tapestry, so in the life of the South Western Province. We have rejoiced at the coming amongst us of our new Moderator, Revd Ray Adams, and greatly value his gifts and insights as he has exercised his leadership and ministry in our midst. We look forward to coming days and years of working, serving and witnessing together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Sadness has been keenly felt in the Province and among our local churches at the illness and subsequent passing of our Administrative Officer, Malcolm Johnston. Malcolm served our churches nobly, dealing principally with property and Trust matters. His energy, skills, abundant knowledge and vision are sorely missed within the Province and in wider spheres like PLATO. To cope with Malcolm's absence policy has been somewhat re-defined; more work is remitted to the Property Officers of District and Area Councils. Provincial co-ordination has been handled by Mr Geoffrey Lunt, to whom the Synod is extremely grateful. At the time of writing the process of finding a successor to Malcolm is nearing conclusion. A resource document "Church Property - Care, Procedures, Guidance" has been produced and issued to Ministers, local churches and DC officers.

Following a full Review, we are delighted that our YCWT, Ivan Andrews, has been reappointed for a further term. His Strategy Group has been strengthened and is now more clearly anchored to the General Purposes Committee and to the Synod.

On 1 Jan 95 the arrangement under which our Director of Training, Revd Dr Catherine Middleton, gave 40% of her time to the South West Ministry Training Course ceased. She now devotes all her time to the Province and we are looking forward to a whole series of training events on topics like "Managing Conflict", "Making Committees Work" and "Worship" for differing groups of people.

Changes have been made in the on-going work of the Province, The Ministries Committee has been strengthened and the Moderator has convened a Provincial Strategy Group. A Listed Building Advisory Committee has been created and is coming to terms with its demanding responsibilities. The creation of a Christian Life Committee has been approved; as yet its membership is not confirmed, but from it, and as spawned by the GP Committee, Task Groups on special topics will be set-up. The work of the Silence & Retreats Group has continued to be highly valued and is proving to be a widely appreciated resource in our Provincial life. We are eagerly looking forward to our Provincial Day in Torbay in July.

Much thoughtful discussion took place at all levels on the 'Patterns of Ministry' document; thinking has been stimulated in our churches and the tight timescale concentrated minds wonderfully! District Councils continue to wrestle with the question of Deployment of Ministerial Resources; we are pleased that progress has been made towards the achievement of the policy under which the Province aims to raise 100% of the local cost of Ministry used within it.

Our links outside the Province continue to flourish, especially with the United Church of Christ in Wisconsin. Ministerial exchange visits have continued and the recent Youth Exchange was much enjoyed by all participants. We've welcomed Revd Andrew Midian,

through CWM, from Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Andrew serves in a special category post at Christchurch LEP, Estover, Plymouth. Revd Jeff Armitstead visited Taiwan and Revd Dr John Bradshaw journeyed to the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa, joining the 150th Anniversary celebrations of the Theological College where he was once Principal. More recently, Revd Chris Searle visited the Karen Tribe on the Thai/Burmese border, helping to bring relief for distressed people there.

The Province is beginning the process of providing support to the Christian witness in the major North Swindon development. Exciting times of newness and experiment lie ahead. In contrast, maintaining a Christian witness and an active URC structure and presence in other areas of the Province causes more difficulty.

Joy and sadness; success and difficulty, insights and perplexities!! Life is varied, but in all things the Province seeks to discern the Will of God and to respond to the promptings of the Spirit. Please continue to hold us in your prayers.

WESSEX PROVINCE

Throughout the year considerable discussion has taken place concerning the theme "Where Next in the Decade of Evangelism?" A number of papers have been prepared to help churches in this important issue and part of the thinking has centred round the research of the Rt Revd John Finney, who led a study day on the subject "Finding Faith Today". The Synod has also spent time in considering the whole field of Industrial Mission. The Moderator of Assembly, the Rt Revd Jack McKelvey has led a study day and a Christian Healing day received a considerable amount of support.

In the wider field, the Province, in conjunction with the Southern Province, sent some 200 representatives to Calais for a celebration following the opening of the Channel Tunnel. At the October Synod, Miss Wendy Clarke, who had been part of a Christian Aid visit to South Africa and Zimbabwe, spoke on her work and at the same Synod, some of the young people who had been to Bangladesh reported on their visit and referred to the visit of young people from Bangladesh this summer. The London Missionary Society 200th anniversary is being celebrated at a Provincial Day in July. Following the Assembly resolution concerning "Next Steps", a meeting has been held with the Southampton District of the Methodist Church - an area which covers 75 % of our Province area. The two Synods have endorsed resolutions confirming our anxiety to work closer together and not duplicate essential Christian work. The former Salisbury & Wells Theological College, which provided the college base for the Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme on which most of our non-stipendiary ministers have been trained, has now ceased to exist under that heading, but the SDMTS course continues to use the premises which have now been called Sarum College. This is to be an ecumenical Study Centre, being used by the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the URC and we are finding this centre of considerable help.

Following the Assembly suggestions, the 11 - 14 year old young people attended the March Synod and considered among other things, with the whole Synod, the work of Traidcraft; they also interviewed various students for the URC ministry. In connection with Church & Society matters, a lot of work has gone into Commitment for Life, the supply of water and water metering, the Arms trade and the cutbacks regarding the National Health Service.

The Province churches are finding it increasingly difficult to raise all the necessary money required for the Ministry & Mission fund, but a number of churches, following a presentation by the Revd Bill Wright, are now taking up TRIO. It is the policy of the Province that we should be a net contributing Province and this commitment we will do

everything we can to honour. A useful meeting was held with representatives from the Mission Council on the question of Resource Sharing and Good Practice. The Province itself has recently conducted a professional building inspection on all our church buildings, in the hope that we can find what repairs and renovations need doing and can improve the work and witness in which we are engaged. It is hoped that in the autumn we will be able to appoint a full-time Training Officer to serve the Province, a half-time Training Officer's work having proved so successful. We also wish to emphasise the work of Mission and appoint a Mission Enabler as a half-time post as soon as this may be possible.

Throughout the year much thought, prayer and discussion have gone into the question of the appointment of a new Moderator. Nelson Bainbridge retires, having served the Province well for the past ten years and we are exceedingly grateful to God for his work and ministry. We now trust that Assembly will appoint the Revd Derek Wales to be our Moderator from September in 1995 and we look forward to his leadership in the work that we seek to do together.

THAMES NORTH PROVINCE

Some of the headlines that might have appeared about the Province during the year would have been inexplicable to an outsider! It would however have been difficult for any editor to interpret the environment in Thames North Province as inactive or lacking progress.

- "Synod's working structure revolutionized!"
- "Great Banquet for the have-nots planned at London's Guildhall"
- "Province predicts findings of patterns of ministry group"
- "City Temple hosts appeal by ordinand in absence of national policy"
- "Priorities addressed aggressively by working groups"
- "Moderator says membership is NOT in decline"
- "The URC addresses the future of a new home for capitalism"
- "A congregation of over a hundred after years of single figures"

The newly formed Synod Executive does much of its work through small, carefully selected teams, appointed to address particular issues in depth and on tight timescales. The teams are disbanded after their final report. There are seven groups like this at present - this is around the maximum that can be managed. This method of involving the skills of the province over a short period of commitment enables many more people to give of their time, especially some of those who could not take on a standing committee responsibility.

The Organisation of the London-wide celebrations and ecumenical witness for Pentecost in 1995 have been led by a team based at the URC Bromley-by-Bow centre. This is an enormous undertaking. The planning of hundreds of different events have been encouraged and supported around the churches of London and the suburbs, highlighting in the march of new Christians to Westminster Cathedral and the dinner with a unique mix of guests, the very famous and the most ordinary, at the leading banqueting venue in London.

It is a fact that since 1989 total membership of the churches in the Province has remained static until last year when we saw a net increase of growth of just three members. This does not sound much but it is significant when compared to the general view that the URC is in decline nationally. There is cause for great encouragement at signs of growth and innovative Christian outreach in many areas. In Newham, East London, a newly planted New City Church reaches out and thrives. At Windsor Meadows, Slough, West London, the Mustard Seed church began in 1990 when the URC and Anglicans decided on joint support of a presence on an estate without any Christian place of worship. Twenty-one confirmations and thirty-three received into membership of the URC demonstrates the

progress being made here. In Clapton, North London, a congregation has more than quadrupled within the year, and fifty new members received, as ministry is made available and premises improved through targeted support from the Province.

Provincial concerns, and therefore selected for priority action, have been,

- care of ministers and their families, and churches, new approaches to pastoral support are being developed and put in place
- the changing needs of training for the future, highlighted by the work on ministry carried out at all levels within the Province, reinforced by the national Patterns of Ministry group report
- deployment of all the resources of ministry, lay and ordained, local and other, including a special look at the use of sector ministries
- ecumenical communication, enhanced action
- the need for a clear vision of future direction for the URC through the Province

The London Docklands study project, led by a Church of England priest seconded to the Province, came to its conclusions and launched recommendations at a seminar held on the Isle of Dogs in the shadow of the Canary Wharf tower block. Publication of a book was part of the project but it was to be no novel! It could only tell of some hard truths and set out some tough challenges. This area of East London has a potential ranging from a glorious future to one that is deprived and God-less. The church seeks its role as the bringer of Good News. This project could have implications for the commercial areas of all major cities of the world.

One of the hottest days of the year brought out the clowns for the Provincial Day's "Fools for Christ" theme with over a thousand present at Chesham, Buckinghamshire. The joys, the diversities, the potential for the gospel of Jesus Christ among the people of Thames North Province were there to be seen and to be celebrated.

The year was one of progress and great hope.

SOUTHERN PROVINCE

Every two years we engage in a one-day Consultation involving about 70 people who have responsibility within our Provincial Committees and District Councils. On the last four occasions the Consultation has focussed on some aspect of "growth" and, in the Autumn of 1994, we posed the question.- "Whose Vineyard Is It Anyway?". Seeking God's purpose for the direction of our work and witness we concluded that, whilst business maintenance is important, our future depends on spending less on fabric and more on people and mission.

To this end we have been greatly encouraged by the work undertaken by the Provincial Evangelism Enabler, Revd Peter Southcombe. Every District and local Church has been approached with an invitation to identify particular areas of evangelism which it is appropriate to explore. It is emphasised that there is no one blue print for evangelism, and that each situation requires its own prayerful planning and preparation. A "Badge Project" has been initiated within the Province, in which all members and adherents of local congregations are encouraged to demonstrate their Christian commitment by wearing a badge which depicts a cross, a dove or a fish. A leaflet and support material has been written to accompany the idea. This is envisaged as a non-threatening way of evangelism which will create confidence in people to take further steps in sharing their faith. The leaflets are available for other Provinces who may wish to take up the idea.

Two major celebrations are well on their way to fruition in the early Summer of 1995. Ecumenically planned, "The Great Banquet" has so far inspired about 120 groups of local Churches to prepare together for a whole series of Banquets across London on Saturday 3 June, in which local communities are fully incorporated. On the following day there is to be a major Service in Westminster Cathedral, with a procession of one thousand people who have been baptised or confirmed as Church Members during the last twelve months. Later in June, Churches Together in Kent are sponsoring "Wellspring", in which well-known national Christian speakers will lead workshops relating to many areas of Christian life and witness. In both these events the Province is playing a significant part.

A vibrant Church and Society Committee has conducted a survey amongst the Churches throughout the Province, seeking ways of more effectively helping congregations to tackle issues like Immigration, AIDS, Sex and various areas of Social Funding which are so difficult to deal with. The annual Provincial Weekend drew together in residence over 80 representatives from Churches to consider "Hard Choices" - questions relating to Christian Ethics in a changing bio-medical world. A very stimulating weekend was ably led by Revd Dr Jack Lawson and his wife, Judith Williams-Lawson.

Appreciation of the work of the Provincial Training Officer, Revd Bill McCrorie, has been evidenced by the number of Churches using his services. He has encouraged congregations to discover a more balanced perception of their latent potential, not least within their eldership and membership. It is hoped to encourage more training at a District level, recognising that Districts have a better perspective of training needs.

For the first time the Province published a Lent Book, written by some fifty members of the Fairmile Fellowship, with a reading, a reflection and a prayer for each day from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. The book, "In Silence And In Trust", has sold well both within and beyond the Province.

The Province looks forward to hosting the General Assembly at Eastbourne in 1995.

WALES PROVINCE

UR Together in Wales was the theme for Provincial Day in July 1994. Nearly 20% of our membership travelled to Llanidloes (look at your maps!) to be together in workshops, play, procession, music and communion. Rural Wales hospitality was great and Zion URC Llanidloes excelled itself, not only in spearheading that hospitality, but also in producing an original musical based on scenes from the life of Jesus. This has since been on tour in the Province. It was an important day for churches of all sizes, and a day which served to further our confidence-building process.

UR Together in Wales has provided a theme for much more in the Province. The restructuring of the way the Province works through committees was agreed by Synod and is at present being implemented - with the emphasis on what needs to be done to enhance the mission of the local congregation - fewer meetings with more involvement and task groups of those who may have been mystified by the 'them' of the previous way of working.

Our sense of togetherness has been one of the main reasons why Synod has been able to set achievable goals and objectives. This was first done in March 1994, and the review of these in March 1995 shows a high degree of success, the first two paragraphs of this report being examples. In the light of this review, further goals are being set to be reviewed next Spring. It's a way of measuring movement, identifying directions and stepping stones along the march in God's light.

For many years the Synod has been well served by a Director of Training. This year, for the first time, it has been able to appoint two people who between them will provide the equivalent of a full-time Training Officer for the whole Province. These two people will spearhead and work with a team of others to implement Synod's emphasis on training for the whole people of God. Again we look forward to setting new goals and objectives in this area as an essential part of the ongoing confidence-building process.

The Province will have entered into a first in May 1995 with a visit by a group of people whose ministry is exercised from Tavistock Place. The purpose of the visit is for those who work for the Assembly to learn and experience something of the peculiarities and specialities of Wales and of the URC contribution to church and community here. It will also be an opportunity for folk here to meet names in *Reform* and share with them the mutual experience of 'belonging together' not just in this country but across the three nations.

It was with real delight that at the beginning of 1995 we learned that John and Norah Morgans had each been honoured with the OBE for their service to the community of Penrhys in the Rhondda. This is Frontier Mission which they have shared not only with the URC in Britain and many local congregations but with seven other denominations in Wales, the World Church through CWM and the Province's links with Hungary, and many, many folk besides from the community of Penrhys and the wider community of business and politics.

RESOLUTION

East Midlands Synod

- 1 Assembly, recognising the importance of the issues relating to organ donations and autopsies,
- affirms its support for the Government's initiative to institute a national computer register of donors;
 - encourages district councils, local churches and families to engage in frank discussion of the issues;
 - encourages church members to take the necessary steps to become registered card-carrying organ donors;
 - encourages church members to consent to an autopsy when a hospital seeks permission to carry out this procedure; and to this end
 - requests the Church and Society Committee to make available appropriate information and discussion material.

*proposed: Revd Mark Dunn
seconded: Revd Mark Cole*

ORGAN DONATIONS AND AUTOPSIES

1.1 Despite the fact that 75% of the population in the UK say they support and believe in organ donation and transplantation, only 25% fill in a card and only 18% carry one. The UK Transplant Support Services Authority (TSSA) has 5,700 patients on its register; there are only about 1,000 donors per year. The low rate is due to a number of factors: an important one is that not enough people offer to become organ donors; another is that not every person who dies is a suitable organ donor.

1.2 The concurrent development of surgical procedures for organ transplantation and advances in immunology are making possible an increasing variety and range of organ and tissue transplants. The variety and range of organ or tissue transplants that surgeons can now carry out includes kidney, heart, lung, liver, pancreas, heart valves, corneas for eyes, bone, bone marrow. Some donations (e.g. kidney, bone marrow) may be from living donors; most are from donors after their death. We can expect that in the years ahead, transplants of other organs, tissues or genes will become increasingly important forms of medical care, offering many people a new lease of life.

1.3 Autopsies are a very important part of the complex structure of medical care. They remain one of the most powerful learning tools in clinical medicine, providing vital information in a number of key areas. The advent of "high tech" medicine has **not** diminished the pivotal role of autopsies in maintaining a high standard of medical care in the community.

1.3.1 **Accurate Cause of Death:** In approximately 10-15% of autopsies carried out on deceased patients, the treating doctor's diagnosis has been proven to be inaccurate. Information obtained from autopsies may lead to improved treatment of patients.

1.3.2 **Public Health Statistics:** With many public health decisions being made on the basis of statistical information, it is important that this information be as accurate as possible. The discrepancy between the actual cause of death determined by autopsies and the cause recorded on death certificates written before autopsy, can vary by as much as 30%.

1.4 **Personal feedback:** With accurate information obtained from autopsies, it is often possible to allay feelings of guilt, anxiety, or fear lingering after the death of a family member.

2 Organ donation or giving permission for an autopsy are acts of responsible Christian discipleship rooted in some very important affirmations of the Christian faith. The book of Genesis affirms that we are made in the image of God. In the person of Jesus Christ we are given a glimpse of what this means. We can learn much about how we should treat our bodies by remembering how Jesus' body was so central to his ministry. When God became human in Jesus Christ, God said something important about our bodies: our body is good and wholesome. Body, mind and spirit are a unity. St Paul declared, "We are united with Christ in His death". Our bodies are of great but not ultimate value. Death is real and inescapable. In Christ's death, God breaks the power of death for us. Death is not the end. Many people have a subconscious fear that if they donate organs or agree to an autopsy, this will somehow threaten their 'resurrection body'. However, God took Jesus' body, badly broken on the cross, and raised him to life. Our hope is not in our perfect bodies, but in God who raises the dead.

3.1 Organ transfer is not like other medical procedures. It involves the unselfish giving of part of one's self. This means that we favour an "**opt in**" system where the consent of the giver is required, either directly or by proxy. We do not support an "**opt out**" system that allows hospitals to take organs or to conduct autopsies without prior consent.

3.2 We consider that brain death is one appropriate criterion for determining the death of a person. When our brain is dead, as persons we are dead. Our bodies are not merely machines that can gain "life" from other machines; they are part of our whole person. The importance of this is that when we are dead, it is quite appropriate for doctors to use machines to keep blood circulating through our organs, so that an organ or organs may be transplanted into another person's body before the organs deteriorate.

4.1 The Church has a special responsibility to offer loving pastoral care to all caught up in the mystery of human organ transfer. This may include the donor's family, the recipient and his/her family and members of the medical staff. For these people this may be a traumatic experience. Families of patients who have agreed to an autopsy after death may also need and welcome sensitive pastoral care.

4.2 Services of worship are being written for families who want to face the sadness of turning off life support systems - and/or the donation of organs - in the presence of a loving, caring God. In similar ways, the church can provide opportunities in public worship for people to bring to God the joy and the pain - the thankfulness and the sorrow - involved in organ donation or autopsies.

5.1 We recognise that there can be a "dark side" in the world of organ transplants. We need to be alert to these dangers, so that we can seek ways to put a stop to practices that are dehumanising. The sale of organs, for example, has led to exploitation, especially in some third world countries. We are opposed to the sale or purchase of organs.

5.2 We believe that we need to take care in the language we use in public discussion. Talk of "harvesting" or "salvaging" organs from the dead suggests plundering human bodies, which is a totally unacceptable attitude. We recommend that such language be not used.

5.3 We need to be alert to see that procedures are in place in hospitals to ensure that organ donors and their families continue to be treated with dignity, respect and compassion and that autopsies be carried out in ways that express an appropriate respect for the dignity of the deceased person.

6 We give thanks to God for the highly developed skills of modern medical personnel, for their commitment to their vocation and for the sensitivity and understanding that most bring to their work. We trust that they will continue to be aware of the mystery and privilege of being caught up in matters of life and death. We remind them, that no matter how important **cure** may be, it must always take second place to **care**. Care is always possible, even when cure may not be.

*(Acknowledgements and thanks for much of this material to the
Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria, Committee on Bioethics)*

RESOLUTIONS

West Midlands Synod

- 2** The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church calls upon all Churches involved in Churches Together in England (CTE) to consider, as a matter of urgency, revising their boundaries so that they may have common boundaries with each other and with the Intermediate Bodies of CTE, making sure that any such changes now under consideration move in that direction.

Proposer:

Seconder:

In the structures of Churches Together in England, intermediate bodies have been set up nationwide with the intent of enabling the Churches to work together more closely at regional levels but it is at that level that our differing denominational boundaries cause most overlaps. In many regional areas, Anglican and Roman Catholic Dioceses; Methodist Districts and Circuits; Baptist Associations and Districts; and United Reformed Church Provinces and Districts; are involved with more than one intermediate body. This causes great difficulty in co-ordinating our work in many fields so that we tend to deal separately with matters of common concern, e.g. Youth Work, Church & Society, Mission, etc. These could be done more effectively if we were able to share expertise, personnel, finance and other resources.

In October 1994, Ecumenical Officers of all denominations in the West Midlands met to share experiences. Many positive things were said but all spoke of the frustration caused by our different boundaries and a proposal similar to this was agreed and forwarded to CTE.

It is also on the agenda of CTE as the tenth of its 'Aims and Functions' so the intention of this resolution is not to convince anyone of the need to engage in this process but to encourage Churches to begin integrating boundaries as 'a matter of urgency'. It will be difficult and maybe painful but the sooner it begins the sooner the healing will take place.

It is proposed with the prayer that this may be one more step along the Pilgrim Way in obedient response to Christ's prayer, 'That we may all be one, that the world may believe'.

3 The Assembly, recognising that a minority of districts have not taken seriously the resolution urging district councils to include one young person in the representation of the district to General Assembly,

- a) resolves that a place on the representation from each district to General Assembly shall normally include one place specifically reserved for a person under the age of 26; and
- b) amends paragraph 2 (3) ix of the Structure of the United Reformed Church to read:

'to appoint from time to time such number of representatives to the General Assembly (ministerial and lay in equal numbers) as the General Assembly shall determine. This shall include, when possible, a representative under the age of 26. As far as possible all appointments shall be made in rotation from local churches within its district'.

Proposer:

Seconder:

Each year the URC holds its General Assembly, and each year the Districts of the Church address the same question, 'Who are we going to send to General Assembly?' The places are limited and, in certain respects, easy to fill - 'Who went last year? Are they free again this year?' By the time the Ministerial places have been filled, only two or three places remain in each District to be filled by lay candidates. It is primarily the makeup of the lay section that is the subject of this motion.

In 1974, the Church passed a resolution urging District Councils to include at least one member of the District Youth Forum (i.e. under 26 years old) in the representation of the District at General Assembly. This point is highlighted each year by Church House in its communications with District Secretaries etc. Unfortunately the recommendation does not appear to be receiving full consideration within all districts, with many sending no young people to General Assembly. It is a sad fact that one Province has for the last two years sent no young people from any of its Districts. Surely, this sort of oversight should not continue.

At present about 30-40 members of Fury attend General Assembly each year, not all of them in District capacities. What has happened to the other Districts? Do they have no young people or is it simply too difficult to find an appropriate young person in the area? Yes, District Secretaries are trying to find people, but we would urge them to try harder and with more tenacity.

The under 26 age group forms the main breeding group for new members of the URC, it contains much of the future of the church. Feelings of usefulness can only be to the good. If young, eloquent church members are given the chance to really shape the future of the URC through better representation, then our young people will feel valued and more willing to contribute to the life of the United Reformed Church.

RESOLUTIONS

Churches - Changes

- 4 The Assembly receives notice of the closure of the local churches listed below and gives thanks to God for their worship, witness and service throughout their history.

1 CLOSURE OF LOCAL CHURCHES

1.1 Claremont - Blackpool

North Western

Claremont United Reformed Church was built in 1901 to serve the then prosperous North Shore, Blackpool. During its relatively short history the church faced a great deal of change both nationally and locally. It has provided a 'holiday venue' for many worshippers.

However the ravages of the Blackpool air have taken their toll on the extensive premises and the Claremont area of Blackpool is in decline. The small number of worshippers took their own decision to close and it is testimony to their faith that almost all the 45 members have transferred to other churches.

1.2 Zion - Levenshulme

North Western

The church opened in 1899. Eight ministers have served this church over the years (including the Revd S O Burnham, late father of the Revd A G Burnham). The new Sunday School hall was completed in 1954 and was used for worship during the past twenty years, following the demolition of the church.

There have been many changes in the neighbourhood in recent years. For several years Zion was part of the 'Heaton Group of Churches'. After much reflection, the members of Zion took their decision to close the church.

The closing service took place on 9th April and was conducted by the Revd A G Burnham, who as a teenager laid the foundation stone of the present building.

1.3 Bell Green, Coventry

West Midlands

This church was founded in 1926 in what was then a new and growing part of the city. Its early life reflected that growth and a church and hall were built. Recent years have seen a slow decline and the decision was taken to close the church on 31 March 1995. This was done with a great sense of thanksgiving to God for the past. Some of the human and financial resources of the Church have been given to the East Coventry Group, of which Bell Green was a part.

1.4 West Down

South Western

West Down United Reformed Church was part of a group pastorate with Braunton and Muddiford. Its members were drawn from a wide area, with many travelling considerable distances to worship. In recent years numbers have dwindled and the Church Meeting voted to close on Easter Day. The remaining members will travel to Braunton to worship, thus remaining within the pastorate and continuing under the care of Red. John Ticehurst.

1.5 Longworth

Wessex

The Longworth group near Abingdon has been serving the District for a number of years and the Longworth Church itself was founded in 1848. Over the recent years, the congregation has gradually declined, so that there was only a congregation of four meeting

on alternate Sunday afternoons. These travelled to Cumnor United Reformed Church on the other Sundays and following discussion the three remaining church members decided that it would be right that the church should be closed. Thanks were expressed to those who have kept the congregation in being and those from the District who had served. On 10 January 1995 a recognition of the work and witness of the Longworth Church took place at the District council.

1.6 Alton

Wessex

Although the fellowship at Alton began in 1662, meeting first in the homes of members, it did not join the United Reformed Church until 1989. Although the church was very strong through most of the 19th Century until well after the second World War, after that numbers fell steadily. There were serious problems for the members in connection with the buildings and it was decided by the church that it would be right to close the church. A decision followed considerable discussion with and support from the District council and officers of the Province. Eventually the decision was endorsed and the final service at Alton was held on 30 October 1994.

1.7 Stoke Newington, Albion Road

Thames North

Stoke Newington, Albion Road held its final worship as a church fellowship on 26 June 1994 after the Lea Valley District Council agreed its closure at their March meeting. Much work regarding the future of the premises needed to be done and this having been satisfactorily completed, Synod finally endorsed the closure in March 1995.

1.8 Shortlands

Southern

By resolution of Church Meeting and upheld by Bromley District council, Shortlands Church closed on 20 November 1994. former members and many friends joined with the remaining four elderly members in a service of thanksgiving on that day.

1.9 Plumpton Green

Southern

By resolution of Church Meeting and upheld by Sussex East District Council, Plumpton Green Church closed on 20 September 1994. A final service of thanksgiving was held that day.

1.10 Berea, Southsea, Wrexham

Wales

Berea was founded in 1904 as a Welsh chapel, as evidenced by foundation stones in Welsh. During the formative years the Secretary was Mr Edward Powell and his position as manager of a local colliery meant that many miners became members and the closure of the pit was a severe blow. A brass plate near the pulpit records the death of his son Gwilym killed in an aircraft whilst on service to this country.

Mr Evan Henry Roberts devoted 50 years of service to Berea, serving as Treasurer and Sunday School superintendent; a brass plate near the pulpit recognises this. His wife Elsie led the Ladies Guild for a time. His daughter Sheila is one of the few remaining members and has served as organist together with Mrs Phyllis Hughes. Mr Idris Hughes has served the church for over 40 years, recently being both Secretary and Treasurer, but is unable to continue and despite efforts made to attract new members closure has become inevitable.

1.11 Bethany, Goodwick

Wales

"Bethany English Congregational Church" began its life in 1906 when chapel life in Wales was still at flood tide. The coming of the railway to Fishguard and the development of the harbour coincided with the religious revival associated with Evan Roberts so that time and place were right for the establishment of a new Independent cause. The congregation first met in Reading Rooms owned by the GWR but quickly built its own premises, with a seating capacity of over 100. This was known locally as the "Tin Church". It became a centre of worship for many fishermen. In 1980 the congregation in faith entered into a

sharing agreement with its neighbour, Berachah Presbyterian church of Wales, and (its own premises having become unsafe) moved to its new home. Fifteen years later Bethany formally closed and on 1 January 1995 its twelve members joined the Presbyterian Church of Wales as full members of the Berachah congregation. So the implications of the Covenant for Church Unity in Wales are being realised at a local level and the foundations of a twenty first century church are being laid. Its many friends wish the congregation well, and are grateful for its leadership.

1.12 Bethel, Upper Cwmbran

Wales

The fellowship was begun in 1837, in what was formerly a pub, and maintained a witness in a small mining community. Demographic changes have led to the increasing inaccessibility of the building which also fell into a poor state of repair which the declining congregation was unable to tackle. In 1994 the congregation decided to vacate the building and, after a short period of reflection on its future, to disband. The members now worship at another United Reformed Church in Cwmbran or with Methodist, Baptist, or Church in Wales congregations.

1.13 Carew Newton

Wales

"Zoar English Congregational Church" was founded in 1861 by Mr William Davies, a Home Missionary in the neighbourhood. The brief history prepared for the Centenary celebrations records: "He met with great opposition ...(but)... optimism was the driving force of his nature, and the secret of his success. He saw victory teeming in every opposition". The first chapel was opened in May 1862 and by 1865 a second, larger, place of worship had been constructed to meet the needs of the expanding congregation. These premises were renovated in 1922. The chapel stands remote from the increasingly busy high roads of Pembrokeshire, in a tiny hamlet of a few dwellings. Demographic changes and the life style of the late twentieth century left it isolated so that, though it served its rural community and its time well, there were few left to continue its tradition into the next century. In June 1994 the last service was held and the remaining members joined the variety of other centres of worship that serve the rural neighbourhood. In particular, the United Reformed Church looks forward to continuing its ministry in the locality through the busy Methodist Church situated in Carew just a mile away.

1.14 Rhyddings, Brynmill, Swansea

Wales

The first Congregational Church on this site was built in 1886 on land leased by Mrs Elizabeth Beor. This building of galvanised iron with timber frame cost £420.10s (less £4 as a bell was not wanted!). In 1900 it was decided to build a more substantial church, and the land was leased for 999 years by Elizabeth Beor to the trustees of the church. Later the freehold was given to the church by the Beor Family Trust in memory of two members of the family who died in 1963. In 1972 Rhyddings decided to become part of the United Reformed Church and ten years later became part of a joining pastorate with St. Andrews, Swansea, which closed in 1992. A closing service was held on 31 December 1994, with thanksgiving for the past and hope for what will be. The majority of the remaining members will worship at the nearby Argule/Rhyddings Presbyterian Church of Wales.

2 **NEW CHURCHES**

- 5** Assembly receives the Church of the Holy Family, Killingworth as a local church of the United Reformed Church

*Proposer: Ann Jackson
Seconder: David Hannen*

2.1 The Church of the Holy Family, Killingworth, is one of the earliest Local Ecumenical Projects in the country, dating back to 1969. Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists and United Reformed members now participate in the Project, and the building is used for Roman Catholic worship as well. Located in the centre of Killingworth Township, the church grew out of a vision of close co-operation with the community services and has always exercised a strong social ministry.

- 6** Assembly receives The Ragged School Blackburn, as a local church of the United Reformed Church

*Proposer: C Keith Forecast
Seconder: Ruth A Wollason*

2.2 The Ragged School has been an Independent Institution since its inception in 1880, serving the neighbourhood of Blackburn. It now sees the need to join a mainstream denomination, and has asked to be part of the United Reformed Church. District Council has arranged instruction in Membership, and a Membership roll has been drawn up, and Elders elected. A service of Recognition took place on 19 February 1995, at which the Provincial Moderator preached.

- 7** Assembly receives The Wootton Trinity Christian Centre as a local church of the United Reformed Church

*Proposer: Ann Ball
Seconder: Christopher White*

2.3 Wootton Methodist Church was formed in 1818 and maintained a witness in the village to the present time. The inclusion of Wootton within the Northampton development area and the small number of active members (as few as nine at one stage) caused the church to initiate talks with a view to becoming an LEP. The only denomination to express interest was the United Reformed Church.

From August 1991 Wootton has had the services of a United Reformed Minister 25% scope.

In April 1994 the Province Officers, acting on the recommendation of the Northamptonshire District Council, accepted the final draft of the Constitution for the LEP, which is known as Wootton Trinity Christian Centre.

The LEP was inaugurated on 1st May 1994 and the constitution signed during the service.

Wootton Trinity Christian Centre now requests that it be accepted and received as a United Reformed Church at General Assembly in July. This request was agreed, with rejoicing, by Northamptonshire District Council on 9 January 1995 and following agreement by the East Midlands Province on 11 March 1995 is now brought to General Assembly.

8 Assembly receives The Community of Grace, Leicester as a Mission Project of the United Reformed Church

*Proposer: Irene Wren
Seconder: Christopher White*

2.4 The Community of Grace is a registered charity (519849) whose aims are the "relief of poor persons... who are homeless or otherwise socially isolated by providing accommodation and supporting and further assisting such persons who by reason of any physical, emotional or social infirmity are in need of advice or counselling in order to encourage their self-reliance and develop their personalities to the full extent to which they are capable so that they may become full members of society".

The Community was founded in 1987 having been proposed some years before. It originated from ideas developed partly from within the work of Action Homeless (1974-86) and partly from ministry at Charnwood (now Emmanuel) United Reformed Church during the 1970's.

The Trustees (presently three, to be increased to five) are responsible for the work of the Trust. The day to day work is carried out by the Director, who is also a Trustee, helped by Companions who are main workers and Associates who are learning the job.

The Community operates from premises in Gwendolen Road, Leicester with residential accommodation, workshops and a chapel. Funding comes from the Department of Social Security Board and Lodging payments and/or Care Fees, grants from Charitable Grant making Trusts and gifts and interest free loans from churches and individuals and earnings from Community of Grace Industries but grants are not received from any statutory agency.

Audited accounts are produced in accordance within the requirements of the Charity Commission and a new computer accounting system has recently been put in place.

The Leicestershire District Council and the East Midlands Synod have appointed the Director, Revd David H Morris, as a member of both bodies; a report on the Community's work will be received at least once a year by District Council and a member of District Council will be appointed to attend the meetings of the Companions of the Community.

3 CHANGE OF DISTRICT

A report to General Assembly under Basis of Union paragraph 2(4)(ii)

After recommendations from the Bromley and Croydon District Councils, the Synod of the Southern Province has determined that Upper Norwood United Reformed Church shall move from the Bromley to the Croydon District Council.

PROVINCIAL MODERATORS' REPORT

Ever New Obedience

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 At each ordination and induction of elders and ministers involving the United Reformed Church, the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church is read. In giving thanks, particularly for the saints of the past, the saints of the present within the United Reformed Church family reaffirm their commitment to the discipline of ever new obedience to the Living Christ.

1.2 To live with ever new obedience is not to dismiss the insights and courage of the past. What has been important and creative in the history of the church is rooted in the courageous commitment to obey Christ and not merely to repeat past patterns. Without people's commitment to ever new obedience no congregation would have been established. To live with ever new obedience is to affirm the commitment and courage of the saints of the past without idolising their expression of that commitment. It is as the community of God's people seeks to mature in its vision and knowledge of God that it is able to recognise the frontiers at which it is being called to live and thus discover more of its present mission and through mission its identity.

2 EVER NEW OBEDIENCE - IN THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

2.1 The church always runs the risk of defining its identity only by where it has come from. The Hebrew slaves having crossed the Sea of Reeds were confronted by an unknown future. They longed for the certainty of where they had come from, and only gradually could they become excited about who they were becoming. The refugees who wept by the waters of Babylon longed for the 'good old days' where they had grown comfortable. There were only a few prophetic characters who could glimpse God not only with them but liberating them to discover more of Him and their own identity even in exile.

2.2 Jesus' religious opponents were threatened because their well rehearsed pattern of religious obedience and human relationships were profoundly questioned. When confronted with the then traditional religious, social and political barriers to the wholeness of human community, Jesus, in His person and ministry, crossed them. He questioned the does and don'ts of the religious status quo so that no-go areas of human interaction were transformed into frontiers at which his ministry and person lived in ever new obedience to the Living God. Jesus was discovering his identity as he reached out to women, Samaritans and lepers as persons, prophetically and with radical love. In each person and group he recognised dignity.

2.3 Refuge in past identity is always a powerful temptation. The people in the wilderness, though longing to turn back to the Pharaoh's slave camps, discovered by listening to God's painstaking leadership through Moses and Joshua that their identity was before them and not just in the stories of the patriarchs. Whilst identity does come in part from the past it also comes through wrestling with the issues of the present in the light of how God is calling his people to be. The ever new obedience which may result in new Statements of Faith recognises those crisis moments of choice in life's movement between past and future identity (cf. The Covenant Ceremony at Shechem - Joshua 24).

2.4 The crisis moments are not to be sidestepped. The Bible does not refer to bridge-building over chaotic waters. The Hebrew slaves had no bridge across either the Sea of Reeds or the wilderness. They had no bridge across the Jordan, nor were there bridges to ease their return from exile. It is in and through the confusion of human life that the Bible describes people discovering God with them and leading them. God's presence and comfort bring hope which leads the attentive not away from troubled waters but through them. God does not avoid the crisis places.

2.5 The significance of Jesus' baptism is in part his identification with humanity's need of conversion which lies at the heart of ever new obedience. His baptism continued as he stood at the male/female, Jew/Samaritan, holy/unholy, whole/broken frontiers of his society and crossed them. Jesus does not side-step the confusions, agonies and possibilities of kingdom building and peace making within his society untouched and unscathed. Religiosity marginalised him as he, living out ever new obedience, was immersed in the world of the marginalised and enabled them to be stunned by the identity to which God led them also.

2.6 'Can you be baptised in the way I must be baptised?' (Mark 10, v. 38) This question permits the church to engage in mission and to continue being raised in and by Christ the source and goal of its identity. The purpose of ever new obedience is not to create a gimmick-orientated church but one which, enriched by past and present experiences, knows it must continue the journey of reformation.

3 **EVER NEW OBEDIENCE - A BROADER PERSPECTIVE**

3.1 As the church seeks its identity from the coming Christ there are many issues where limits to its vision and knowledge make expressing a oneness of heart and mind impossible. The church has at times to choose between pretending to know and being open to the chaos of views to which its limited knowledge and vision contributes. The first century church agonised over the standing of Gentiles within the Body of Christ. At present one of the issues confronting the United Reformed Church may be the decision by the General Assembly to begin seeking vision and knowledge about the place and purpose of God for lesbian and gay women and men in the church and in society as a whole. The question of human sexuality, which involves each person, is one of the many contemporary issues which require the church to wrestle with the question of biblical truth about the nature of God and community. Whilst particular issues may be avoided and some would rather not explore openly matters of human sexuality, the debate about the nature of biblical truth is part of the discipline of ever new obedience to the Living Christ.

3.2 Even when the United Reformed Church feels it can be of one heart and mind over particular questions, this does not mean there is no longer a journey of discovery to be travelled. The United Reformed Church has, for example, a relatively long tradition of ordaining women to the ministry of Word and Sacraments. It is not sufficient to act as though this accepted tradition ends the exploration of the nature of biblical truth. The vision of the wholeness of the community of women and men is still only being glimpsed.

The nature of the church's ways of understanding that community and thus how it orders its life still requires (and doubtless always will) a conscious and sensitive ever new obedience. The United Reformed Church is in part an equal opportunity employer but the expression of this remains limited.

3.3 This year the United Reformed Church joins in the celebration of the 200 year old story of the London Missionary Society/Council for World Mission. The courage of women and men seeking to live with ever new obedience within this pilgrimage has enriched the pattern of mission. Once European churches sent people to communicate Christ in non Christian contexts. They took with them a confusion of Christianity, European languages, culture and behaviour patterns. The meeting of this Christian mission with other languages, cultures and ways, meant that the mission evolved through teaching and administration to equip indigenous churches to be the Body of Christ within their own people. The Council for World Mission is now a partnership of churches in which these islands can also receive. The British context for mission is not predominantly Christian. Mission is now multi-directional because of mutual, but not identical, needs. The United Reformed Church has been used to receiving missionaries on furlough to hear their interesting stories, and yet the church struggles to receive mission which involves changing because it also involves encountering others' experience of the Risen Christ. Is it significant that even before the embargo on ministers of other churches serving in the

United Reformed Church it has never made full use of the five World Church and Mission posts giving opportunity, not to receive missionaries as guests, but to see mission as integral to the church's life? Is it the lack of John Williams' collecting boxes or the anxiety about what receiving mission means that has reduced awareness and involvement in the Council for World Mission for many church members?

4 **EVER NEW OBEDIENCE - LOCALLY**

4.1 Many congregations do not cling to past identity (cf. Isaiah 43, v 18). For many the Annual General Meeting is not merely a time to look back but also a time to set priorities for future service. The congregation which wrestles with the ways in which it is being called to worship and witness discovers that its identity cannot remain unchanged. The discipline of ever new obedience is exemplified in a variety of ways :-

- in areas of local (ecumenical) partnership where the insights of various traditions are discovered as mutually enriching
- in worship which explores the Word and Sacraments with a language and format which has meaning for contemporary life
- in small rural congregations which have responded to the needs and anxieties of their communities caused, for example, by the closure of village schools, shops, etc. to work out positive roles in community life
- in partnerships between congregations and non-church organisations which have both enabled and shaped mission
- in the development of regular, lively and searching Bible and other study groups
- in the encounter with the needs of other communities across the world, for example through the fund raising and educational work of Christian Aid, this year marking 50 years.

4.2 There are, however, still examples of congregational life where the attitudes of and a harking back to the fifties or even earlier prevents congregations from engaging with mission in to-day's world. Society has radically changed in the lifetime of even one generation, so that the patterns of one generation's obedience have already become anachronistic.

4.3 The responsibility of District Councils to know and visit each congregation on a regular basis has an important role in enabling congregations to learn from and be both challenged and encouraged by each other's pilgrimage. Sometimes personnel may be usefully 'lent' by one congregation to another, training can be shared by neighbouring congregations, and congregations can be encouraged to share and express their hopes and fears to one another.

4.4 Most District Councils cover a large enough geographical area to ensure that their member churches are of a great variety of cultural and social settings. District Council therefore has a central role in enabling congregations to enrich one another's experience of how God is leading them to discover their identity in their varied situations. In assessing the best use of available ordained ministers, District Councils still encounter anxiety where congregations (even within the United Reformed Church) express reluctance to work together with a minister. 'We have nothing in common with congregation X we are a very different people with a different congregational life'. This may be true, but it can also be true that a searching and honest appraisal of strengths, insights and weaknesses can lead to a recognition of complementarity in ministry. Do District Council agendas enable congregations to discover a mutuality of mission? Do District Councils make time on their busy agendas to talk about the frontiers for mission being confronted by member congregations and individuals? Do District Councils encourage and enable team ministry between ordained and non-ordained?

4.5 It is sad that Church Meetings tend to attract a 'good number' (particularly in the larger churches) only when the minister or buildings are being discussed. Why do the Gospel and the church's mission not attract? Does the United Reformed Church with its

participative structure in all areas of decision making grasp the freedom and responsibility these can give to be spontaneous? Church structures (denominational and ecumenical) are necessary and useful for the functioning of the Body of Christ. Yet they, too, can inhibit a wrestling with biblical truth and thus inhibit some of the things the church does or feels called to do. There are a variety of attitudes towards church structures. Some enjoy the process. Some enjoy the subculture of being negative about the structures and 'them'. Many different attitudes inhibit ever new obedience. Barriers are created both by pedantry and by carelessness as well as by frustration and a tendency to scapegoat, and at times to forget the nature of God which is grace. The United Reformed Church structure can be slow to act on issues because of the very principle that decisions are conciliar. Conciliar decision making demands a discipline of participation - praying, listening, speaking. Does the life of the United Reformed Church lay hold of this discipline in order to recognise and spend time in troubled waters, acknowledging that it is not the conflict and uncertainty which is wrong but shying away from that conflict and uncertainty. (The graves of Egypt would be as comfortable as the graves of the wilderness.)

5 **EVER NEW OBEDIENCE - AN IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBILITY**

5.1 Each congregation, District and Province has very positive stories to tell, though too often people forget or simply do not have time in pressurised agendas to tell the stories. Perhaps the great stories of the past few years on an international scale will enable the church to tell its great stories on a local scale. The United Reformed Church, along with many others, has been involved in demolishing barriers in South Africa and in Central Europe. The important role of the church is even recognised by the secular media. The church's role is not always 'to raise its voice or make loud speeches in the street' but 'to open the eyes of the blind and set free those who sit in dark prisons' (Isaiah 42, vv 2 and 7).

There are many stories of churches experiencing the grace which God gives to enable them to be obedient and to risk losing their well-earned identity in order to receive the identity that the coming Christ is offering to them.

5.2 The church should not be bound by the past, nor should it be permanently high-jacked by a particular vision of the future. The church can risk making mistakes, the church's present life is a temporary state. The church is an interim people called to be responsive to the God who has commissioned them and to look forward to the coming of Christ. The church's agenda is worked out to-day as it takes account of the blessings and curses of yesterday alongside visions of where and how Christ calls it to be. Called to share in Christ's baptism the church can rejoice in the many ways in which the courageous and imaginative examples of ever new obedience are free to become an instrument of God's mission in to-day's world.

6 **COMINGS AND GOINGS**

During the past year we have been pleased to welcome Ray Adams and Graham Cook to the Moderators' Meeting as they have taken up their ministries with South Western and Mersey Provinces respectively.

The Moderators' Meeting owes a great debt of gratitude to Nelson Bainbridge who this summer retires, having ministered as Moderator in Wessex Province since 1985. Nelson has also been Secretary to the Moderators' Meeting since 1987. His careful, efficient and quiet manner has enabled the meeting to keep abreast of the work that it needed to do.

During the past year David Jenkins (Northern Province) has been on sabbatical for three months, and we have been pleased to welcome Peter Poulter to share in our work for that period.

We look forward to welcoming Derek Wales and to share his collegiality as the newly-appointed Moderator for Wessex Province.

MISSION COUNCIL
REPORTS & RESOLUTIONS



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1995

MISSION COUNCIL

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 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.

1 THE TASK

1.1 Mission Council has both a large agenda and a large membership of eager participants. In group work and plenary session everyone has to work in a disciplined way in order to cope with the business and make opportunity for all to speak and be heard. The most frustrating moments have come when certain constitutional matters have absorbed time and energy.

1.2 **The Moderator** has provided some of the highlights of the meetings in his leadership of the bible study. His chaplain, Stephen Brown, has also led our worship with imagination and verve. Amongst our guests have been Sr Lavinia Byrne a member of the staff of the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland and Revd Andrew Prasad a member of the staff of the Council for World Mission, who both reflected on the way the work was done and the picture this gave of the church.

1.3 **New Committee Structure.** The changeover has inevitably brought some confusion but the transition to new committees was made by 1 January 1995. This involved a change in Mission Council membership as long serving departmental conveners were replaced by conveners of the new committees.

1.4 **Decisions on Priorities.** At the March meeting, the Council discussed the church we hoped to be at the end of the year 2001. This is in the context of preparations for a rolling five year plan, covering the use of human and financial resources, which it is intended to bring to the Assembly in 1996 to take effect from January 1997.

1.5 On the recommendation of the Ecumenical Committee, Mission Council resolved to bring a resolution to the General Assembly to mark the 200th year of the founding of the London Missionary Society. **(Resolution 9)**

2 RESPONDING TO THE ASSEMBLY

2.1. **Constitutional change** No objections were received by the General Secretary to the amendment of the Basis and Structure removing the reference to provincial moderators serving to the age of sixty-seven years. **(Resolution 10)**

2.2 **Provincial District Committees** In July 1994 Assembly instructed Mission Council to consult with synods on the future pattern of provincial and district committees. As the new committees only began working at the start of the year, it was decided to consult the synods in time to report to the Assembly in 1996.

2.3 **Guidelines on Provincial Moderators' Reviews** It was hoped to bring new guidelines to this Assembly but the work is not yet complete. A report will be made next year.

2.4 **Multi-racial Ministry Post** In 1994 Assembly instructed the Mission Council to consider a motion from Thames North Synod on the allocation of a special multi-racial ministry and to make proposals to the General Assembly of 1995 in consultation with the

Equal Opportunities and Finance Committees as to what post, if any, is needed and how it should be funded. The Equal Opportunities Committee has not yet had sufficient time to consider this matter and therefore Mission Council is unable to make proposals this year. It is intended to report to the Assembly next year.

2.5 The Use of Westminster College In 1993, Assembly resolved that "the Mission Council be authorised to take such steps as are necessary to recommend to the General Assembly a future policy regarding the use made of Westminster College, due regard being given to the relationship of other centres of training to the Assembly; and to report to the Assembly not later than 1995".

Mission Council appointed CAFcert Consultancy Services to undertake the task of making inquiries, meeting the relevant people, receiving submissions and preparing a report with recommendations for the initial consideration of Mission Council. The report was discussed at the October 1994 meeting and it was sent to the Training Committee, Westminster College, the Cheshunt Foundation, Mansfield and Northern Colleges, the Cambridge Theological Federation, to Synods and other bodies. Responses were received by the end of the year and collated by the Mission Council's Advisory Group which brought proposals to the March 1995 meeting. It was noted by the Mission Council that future decisions on Westminster College depended on the outcome of a comprehensive review of training being undertaken by the Training Committee. It is intended that this review will be completed in time to report to Mission Council in January 1996. It was also noted that the present Principal will retire in August 1996.

It was therefore agreed to recommend to continue using the College for various training purposes until 31 August 2000 (**Resolution 11a**) and to recommend that the future training aims and purposes be considered as part of the Training Committee's review (**Resolution 11b**). Westminster College had made its own response to the Consultants' report in the form of a Strategic Plan 1995-2000 and it was agreed to endorse this, subject to any modifications resulting from the training review (**Resolution 11c**). However Mission Council believes that Assembly must take the final decisions on the future of the College after the training review is complete (**Resolution 11d**). In order to oversee the work of the College, it is proposed that the Assembly appoints a Board of Governors and devolves to it the management and financial structure. Detailed proposals for the Board of Governors will be presented to the Assembly (**Resolution 11e**). These proposals enable a new Principal to be sought in succession to the Revd Martin H Cressey (**Resolution 11f**).

3 ACTIONS ON BEHALF OF ASSEMBLY

3.1 Council for World Mission - Membership On the recommendation of the Mission and Ecumenical Work Abroad Committee, Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly, agreed to support the application of the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa for admission to membership of the Council for World Mission.

3.2. Churches Together in England had undertaken a review of its life and the United Reformed Church was asked to respond to this. As a response was needed before the Assembly, a draft was considered and the Mission Council, acting on behalf of the Assembly, agreed to forward it as the response of the United Reformed Church.

3.3. A Pastoral Measure dealing with the Suspension and Resignation of Ministers was agreed by the General Assembly in 1988. It included the following definition "Suspension. This means a temporary bar on the activity of a minister who is in pastoral charge". The Measure also states: "such suspension carries no implication for future ministry nor for any subsequent discussion of conduct".

A District Council had asked, as a matter of urgency for an interpretation of this definition. Mission Council, acting on behalf of the Assembly, agreed the following interpretation:

"A minister under suspension, whether in pastoral charge or not, shall not present him/herself as a minister and therefore shall not preside at Communion. The minister shall refrain from all activity which might lead others to believe she/he was acting as a minister of religion. Suspension also means that the minister may not exercise the ministerial rights of membership of any council of the Church save those accorded by the process of determining the disciplinary matter which has led to the suspension".

3.4 Functions of the Synod and the General Assembly An urgent matter had arisen which required the interpretation of clauses in the Basis of Union related to the functions of Synod and General Assembly. The issue related to deletion from the Roll of Ministers.

The Legal Adviser judged that in paragraphs 2(4)(viii) and 2(5)(xviii) the phrase "questions regarding inclusion" could properly be read as meaning questions as to who should be on the Roll of Ministers i.e. referring to initial inclusion, continuance, resignation and deletion.

Mission Council therefore, acting on behalf of the General Assembly confirmed the interpretation of the functions of District councils, Synods and the General Assembly which requires that all cases of deletion from the Roll of Ministers be decided by General Assembly and therefore requires Synods to make a recommendation on every such case to the General Assembly.

3.5 Moderator of Wessex Provincial Synod After receiving a recommendation from the nominating group it was agreed that "the Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly, appoints the Revd Derek M Wales MA BD as Moderator of the Wessex Province Synod from 1 September 1995 for seven years or to the normal age of retirement whichever is the sooner".

3.6 Children's Advocate After receiving a recommendation from the nominating group, it was agreed that the Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly appoint "Mrs Rosemary Johnston as Children's Advocate from 1 April 1995 for a period of five years".

3.7 Editor of REFORM and Media Officer After receiving a recommendation from the nominating group it was agreed that Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly, appoints "the Revd David Lawrence as Editor of REFORM and Media Officer from 1 July 1995 for a period of five years".

3.8 Deputy General Secretary With the call of the Revd Terry Oakley to a new ministry in the Northern Province, the post of Deputy General Secretary will be vacant from 1 September 1995. The Mission Council Advisory Group, having given consideration to the implications of the changes brought by the creation of the Mission Council, the new committee structure and other matters, on the responsibilities and work load of the General Secretary, proposed that the post of Secretary for Doctrine, Prayer and Worship be replaced by that of a Deputy General Secretary. It is expected that the staff link with the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee will be included in the job specification. This was agreed and a group to bring a nomination to the General Assembly was appointed consisting of Convener, appointed by the Nominations Committee (Revd George Thomas), a member of staff (Revd Sheila Maxey), a provincial moderator (Revd Donald Hilton), the General Secretary and two members elected by Mission Council (Mr Alistair Black and Mr William McVey).

It is intended that the Deputy General Secretary will be an experienced minister who will work in collaboration with the General Secretary, deputising during the latter's absence, assisting at other times and together making provision for the oversight, support and pastoral care of Assembly appointed staff. The Deputy General Secretary will, in addition, have particular responsibilities in relation to Mission Council and the Assembly Pastoral Committee.

4 PROPOSALS

4.1 **Interpretative Resolution as to Trust Corporations and Section 19 of the United Reformed Church Act 1972** As a result of a review of the working of the United Reformed Church Trust some doubts were expressed as to whether the General Assembly had approved certain trust corporations as required by the Act. In order to remove such doubts a resolution interpreting the Resolution of the Assembly in 1972 is commended.

(Resolution 12)

4.2 **National Youth Secretary** It was agreed that the post of National Youth Secretary be continued until 31 December 1997. In reaching this decision account was taken of the review of training and other staff changes. It was also agreed to reappoint Paul Franklin at least until 31 December 1997.

(Resolution 13)

4.3 **Committee Structure** Some minor adjustments are required to the remits presented to the 1994 Assembly relating to a few committees. Each remit is printed at the head of the committee's report. Changes have been made to the following committees: Discipleship and Witness, Doctrine Prayer and Worship, Ecumenical, Ministries and Accreditations Sub-committee.

(Resolution 14)

5 OTHER ACTIONS

5.1 **Address to the Throne** It has been the practice of the Assembly since 1972 of presenting a Loyal Address to the Throne. This has normally been part of the opening session. At the first Assembly the Address was adopted "by a standing vote". However the practice developed of signifying assent by the singing of The National Anthem.

Mission Council has considered our practice and been helped by papers from the Revd A L MacArthur and Dr David Thompson. Amongst the many points noted were the facts that the right of address to the throne has been highly prized by Dissenters since the Toleration Act of 1689; that in the Statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church our conviction is clear that "in things that affect obedience to God the Church is not subordinate to the State"; and that in the Loyal Address we acknowledge that we live in a society in which the rights of all citizens are upheld by the State which is a Monarchy; but because we recognise the State as itself under Christ, there is a ground for comment critical or condemnatory upon the actions of the Queen's Ministers.

It was therefore resolved to continue the practice of sending An Address to the Throne which would be prepared, as in the past, by the immediate past Moderator who would consult the General Secretary, the secretary for Church and Society and others as appropriate. It was also agreed that it would be presented towards the end of the Assembly and that its adoption would be by means of a vote.

5.2 **Committee Structure** In tidying up the loose ends with regard to the new structure, Mission Council has given approval to i) the Ecumenical Committee's request to set up a Europe Task Group to complete its work early in 1996; ii) the Training Committee's request to set up a Studies Panel sub-committee and a Ministerial Training Fund sub-committee. Approval was also given to set up a Training for Learning and Serving Task group which would complete its work in 1997; iii) the Ministries Committee's request for a Pensions Working Party responsible to the Maintenance of the Ministry sub-committee and to the Pensions Trust. It was also agreed to give approval to the setting up of a sub-committee to be the Central Management Committee for Church Related Community Work.

5.3 **Pastoral Measure** The Vocations Committee had worked on a revision of A Pastoral Measure which deals with the Suspension and Resignation of Ministers which was agreed by the Assembly in 1988. However Mission Council decided that more work was necessary and therefore set up a task group to continue the work and report to Mission Council in October 1995. The group consists of the Conveners of the Ministries Committee and Accreditation's sub-committee, the Clerk, the Legal Adviser, the secretary of the Assembly Pastoral Committee (who is the General Secretary) with the Revd Michael Diffey as secretary.

5.4 **Information Technology (IT)** A task group has been set up with the following terms of reference.

5.4.1 Comprehend and record current practice throughout the URC of the collection, storage, processing and retrieval of information to which the benefits of IT might be applied.

5.4.2 Review the current and expected future state of IT in the marketplace.

5.4.3 Identify and record the opportunities for the application of IT in the URC and assess, where possible, the possible improvements in efficiency and economy which might thereby accrue.

5.4.4 Develop and document a strategy for the implementation of IT throughout the URC.

5.4.5 Make recommendations for the short and medium term implementation of the strategy, including training needs.

5.4.6 Recommend how the strategy is to be developed and its implementation monitored beyond the current life of the Task Group.

5.5 **Dombodena Congregational Church** A message of greeting was sent to the Dombodema Congregational Church in the Zimbabwe Synod of the United Congregational Church of South Africa on the occasion of the celebration of its centenary.

6 **COMMITTEE AND TASK GROUP REPORTS**

6.1 **Future meetings of the Assembly** The Assembly Arrangements Committee has reported to the Mission Council that the Yorkshire Province has invited the Assembly once again to meet residentially at the University of York in 1996 and that Wessex Province has invited a return to Portsmouth for a non residential Assembly in 1997. **(Resolution 15)**

6.2 **Resource Planning Advisory Committee** The Mission Council presents the 1996 budget for acceptance by the General Assembly (**Appendix I**). The budget anticipates a deficit on the general fund of £431,500. Because of the substantial reserves in the accounts, to which more than £400,000 was added in 1994, and in the light of the plans for the future outlined below, this deficit is felt to be acceptable. **(Resolution 16)**

The budget comes in a new format approved by the Finance Committee. It is intended to make clear the major headings of both income and expenditure. For example, it can be seen that the great majority of our finance is raised locally and is spent on ministry. It is also clear that training is a significant claim on our resources and that the church is considerably indebted to grants from trusts.

The expenditure policy in the budget is that, because the new committee structure needs time to settle down, 1996 expenditure should generally be held at 1995 levels, increased in line with inflation. In certain specific cases this has not been possible.

The number of stipendiary ministers expected to be on the payroll is the most significant figure in the budget and one of the hardest to estimate. A great deal of careful work has been done in the past year. As a result, the budget assumes that the average number of ministers to be paid throughout 1995 and 1996 will be the same number as at the end of 1994. The basis for this assumption and the means of fulfilling it are to be found in the report of the Number of Ministers Working Party.

The income policy in the budget is that local churches may need a 'breathing space' after some years of significantly increased giving. This policy was endorsed at a consultation with Provincial financial representatives - who nonetheless have been able to confirm Provincial commitments which represent an overall increase in giving of 2.1%.

For 1997 and thereafter, budgets will be presented in the context of a five-year rolling plan. The plan will set out what the church hopes to do over the period and what human and financial resources will be needed to do it. The first plan will be presented to the General Assembly in 1996 and consultations about its shape have already begun. It is hoped that the discussion will be widespread and that the resultant plan will give the church a sense of purpose and direction to which all can contribute.

6.3 Advisory Group on Grants and Loans With the new committee structure it was decided from January 1995 to merge the grant-making funds of the old committees into a new Combined Grant Fund. This includes the New Enterprises in Mission and Ministry Expenses in the UK Funds (formerly Missionary & Ecumenical Work At Home), the Funds supporting ecumenical posts (formerly Ministries) and the Ecumenical Projects Fund (for World Church & Mission's use at home and abroad).

Local churches no longer have to frame their application to suit one fund. The merger provides flexibility and recognises overlap; by readjusting the 'headings' it has been possible for the first time to make grants for Social Action projects at national level. In due course Mission Council will be able to focus grants on particular aspects of mission while supporting what has already been done.

A leaflet about the grants was circulated with the Information Service encouraging several local churches to think imaginatively of what they might do with some financial help. The Secretary, Revd Roger Whitehead, receives all applications; he is available to help local churches make their case.

The funds are administered by the Advisory Group in the light of recommendations in accordance with guidelines decided by the relevant committees. The Advisory Group has also sought to review the URC's contributions to ecumenical and inter-church bodies.

This group was set up in 1992 with the Mission Council and its remit, work and membership will be reviewed before the next Assembly.

6.4 Resource Sharing Task Group Mission Council endorsed an interim report on the sharing of resources from the Task Group which concluded that:

- The URC's resources of buildings, people and money are chiefly controlled within the Province, as distinct from being available at 'national level'
- the sharing of resources within and between Provinces cannot, and should not, be imposed by other councils of the church
- enterprising models of resource sharing already exist and these should be identified and shared by means of 'one-off' inter-Provincial team visits to each province.

The visits took place in the first two months of 1995. The results are still being analysed and will form the basis of a report to be distributed to Provinces, with a recommendation from Mission Council that it be considered carefully. It is hoped that every Province will have something to learn from the report and that the best models will be more widely adopted. The Task Group continues its work in following up this exercise and in other areas which need additional work.

6.5 Task Group on Human Sexuality

6.5.1 The Mission Council at its meeting in September 1994 established a Task Group to enable the Mission Council to place the issue of Human Sexuality on the agenda of the 1995 General Assembly. The Task Group consisted of Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow (Convener), the Revd Donald Hilton, the Revd Roberta Rominger, and Dr David Thompson (Secretary), with the Revd Peter Brain (Secretary for Church and Society) in attendance.

6.5.2 The establishment of the Group was prompted by the decision of the Board of Studies of Westminster College in June 1994 to "accept declared homosexual candidates for training only if the Assembly gives clear guidance that this is in accordance with Church policy". This decision arose from the case of a candidate whom Westminster was asked to receive for training after acceptance by his Province. Westminster raised several questions about his candidature, of which sexual orientation was only one. While these were being considered, the candidate asked to be sent to a different college and was accepted by Mansfield. Another candidate who declared his homosexual orientation was provisionally accepted by the Ministerial Training Committee of Mansfield College, "recognising that this does not contravene any existing national URC policy" and was formally accepted as a candidate by the Provincial Synod after an appeal in October 1994.

6.5.3 The Task Group was asked by Mission Council "to work out a process whereby the URC can be enabled to hold an informed debate on the matter of human sexuality and come to a decision on the implications for ministry within the Church". The Group has met four times and considered a variety of material. It rapidly became clear that there was a conflict between the wish for an informed debate in the Church on human sexuality, which requires time, and the felt need for a relatively speedy decision on the specific question of admitting practising homosexuals as candidates for training with a view to ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

6.5.4 Accordingly the Group sought and obtained approval from the meeting of Mission Council in January 1995 that the General Assembly of 1995 should not be asked to decide on any matters of policy but rather to approve a process by which the Church might discuss the ordination of homosexuals in the context of human sexuality as a whole. Such a discussion is particularly important for Provincial Synods since at present they have the responsibility of accepting candidates for training and determining their eligibility for a call when training is complete. The Group also believes that the process should include discussion in District Councils and local churches. To assist the discussion the Group is preparing papers to enable informed and careful discussion; if Assembly approves this process, these will be distributed in July. Mission Council has decided that the period provided for discussion should be a year, so that any resolutions on policy would come to the 1997 Assembly.

6.5.5 The question of homosexuality is not a new one for the United Reformed Church. Debate in the late 1980s prompted the former Church and Society Department to set up a working party which published *Homosexuality: a Christian View* (1991). The Department sought the approval of Assembly in 1992 for the publication of further contributions to the ongoing debate, recognising that "no single view on the issue of homosexuality is of the essence of the Christian faith and witness today" and that there was "a range of attitudes, genuine and sincere, held by thoughtful people across the church" (*Reports to Assembly, 1992*, p198). Subsequently the Department published the report of a working party set up by the Group for Evangelism and Renewal in the United Reformed Church (GEAR), entitled *Homosexuality and the Gospel* (1993). Most recently the Church and Society Committee have published *Speaking for Ourselves*, written by a group of Lesbian and Gay Christians in the United Reformed Church (1995). Other churches have also been involved in similar debates, including the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church, not to mention a variety of churches in North America and elsewhere. The process of discussion envisaged by the Task Group involves a serious engagement by Provinces, Districts and local churches with the issues raised in these and other reports on this subject.

6.5.6 The Group draws the attention of the Church to the following points:

- a) the United Reformed Church is already a church which has practising homosexuals as members, elders and ordained ministers. Even if this were not apparent before, it has been made clear by the publication of *Speaking for Ourselves*. This implies that any decision that the Assembly might make either not to ordain or not to accept as candidates for ordination practising homosexuals will immediately raise questions about the position of those who are already ordained;

- b) the two reports, *Homosexuality: a Christian View* and *Homosexuality and the Gospel* show that, even if it were possible to reach agreement on how the relevant biblical material were to be interpreted, there is no possibility of reaching agreement on their authority for the Church today without movement on one or both sides from the positions set out in those documents. Hence those who discuss this subject in the Church have to recognise that the topic is highly charged with emotion on all sides and must therefore handle the matter with great sensitivity and forbearance, recognising the real potential for damaging division over the issue;
- c) the current constitutional position is that:
 - (i) the Church Meeting of the congregation to which the candidate belongs has initially to testify to "their faith and character, and their aptitude for the work of the ministry" (*Manual*, p134);
 - (ii) all colleges have to bear in mind "the need to exercise a judgement on the overall fitness of the ordinand to exercise ministry in the URC" in granting a Leaving Certificate (*Manual*, p143);
 - (iii) the Provincial Synod has the responsibility of deciding whether to accept candidates for training and to declare them eligible for a call, but it is only when a candidate has received and accepted a call from a pastorate or for another recognised ministry that ordination takes place;
- d) although the Church is not legally bound by Sex Discrimination legislation in respect of ministers, the General Assembly in 1990 adopted a declaration of Equal Opportunities policy (*Manual*, p165). There would, however, be difficulties both in principle and in practice in seeking to develop any policy over the ordination of homosexuals on such a basis. It is not possible to base any case for the ordination of homosexuals on Equal Opportunities legislation.

6.5.7 Many questions arise when these matters are discussed. We shall indicate some of these in our discussion papers. For example, we have to ask ourselves whether the sexual orientation and behaviour of candidates should be identified and added to other considerations in assessment or eligibility, such as age or academic achievements, as a matter on which the Assembly should formulate a policy. We need to consider whether the same question should be raised by local congregations in considering eligibility for the eldership or for membership, and if not, why not. The question of whether a distinction can or should be drawn between homosexual orientation and practice in determining policy will need to be addressed.

6.5.8 The Group recognises that this is not an easy subject to talk about in public because it involves matters that are not only personal but also intimate. The atmosphere in which morality is discussed in contemporary society also allows openness on such questions to be misunderstood or misrepresented, particularly if debates are reported in the media. The background papers we are preparing will therefore include suggestions about how discussion might be handled: for example, after a general presentation of the issues it may be helpful to organise discussion in smaller groups which enable a large number of people to express their views and seek to understand one another, before any wider debate takes place.

6.5.9 The purpose of discussion in all the councils of the Church whatever the issue is to listen for what the Spirit is saying to us, to hear one another, and to find the appropriate way forward, recognising that part of our task as Christians is to learn how to live with differences of conviction. That process will be harmed if we are tempted to collect mandates or try to create majorities in favour of a particular point of view. If the General Assembly of 1997 is to discern the mind of the Church, it will need to gather together all the points being made whilst remaining ready to hear what is said at the Assembly itself. For this prayer, as well as debate, will be required. **(Resolution 17)**

RESOLUTIONS**Mission Council**

9 The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, in this 200th year of the founding of the London Missionary Society,

gives thanks to God for its founding and for the mission agencies now incorporated in the Council for World Mission, and gratefully acknowledges the service of missionaries, administrators and supporters over the years;

rejoices in the change of missionary understanding expressed in the present Council for World Mission, in which the United Reformed Church joins with other churches in a world-wide fellowship of equal partners in mission; and

re-affirms its commitment to share in the proclamation of the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God throughout the world through the mutual sharing of the resources of people and money, supported by the prayers, informed interest, time energy and giving of its members.

10 The Assembly ratifies its decision made in July 1994 to amend the Basis and Structure of the United Reformed Church as follows:

Paragraph 2(4) in the note on Moderators of Synods, delete the second sentence. The first sentence shall read: 'There shall be a moderator for each provincial synod being a minister appointed from time to time by the General Assembly according to its rules of procedure and responsible to the General Assembly'.

11 The Assembly

- a) commends Westminster College for its past and current work in preparing ordinands and others for their ministry and recommends that the United Reformed Church continue to use the college for various training purposes at least until 31 August 2000;
- b) requests that the future training aims and purposes of the college be considered together with those of the other recognised theological colleges in the review of training needs for the United Reformed Church presently being undertaken by the Training Committee;
- c) endorses the five year plan for the college suggested in the Westminster College Strategic Plan 1995-2000, subject to the college modifying its strategy in the light of any decisions resulting from the training review;
- d) agrees to decide on the future use and purposes of Westminster College in the light of the training review and the College's response to it;
- e) agrees to appoint a Board of Governors accountable to the General Assembly for the college with (i) oversight of all the activities in the college, (ii) accountability for the management and finances of the college, with the object of demonstrating financial viability by 31 December 1999; and

- f) in the light of the above recommendations, agrees to appoint a new Principal for the college from 1 September 1996 for five years in the first instance; and
- g) instructs Mission Council to take any other necessary steps to give effect to the working out of the proposals in resolution 11.

12 Assembly resolves that the resolution of the United Assembly of 1972 approving the Scheme of Union in full shall be interpreted as approving for the purposes of Section 19 of The United Reformed Church Act 1972 all those Trust Corporations which from the date of coming into force of the Act held land for purposes relating to The United Reformed Church and further resolves to ratify all actions taken by such bodies since that date in acquiring land whether by purchase, transfer or Trusteeship or otherwise.

13 Assembly confirms the decision of Mission Council to reappoint Paul Franklin as National Youth Secretary until at least 31 December 1997.

14 Assembly agrees to accept the revised remits of the following committees:-

- a) Discipleship and Witness
- b) Doctrine, Prayer and Worship
- c) Ecumenical
- d) Ministries and the Accreditation's sub-committee

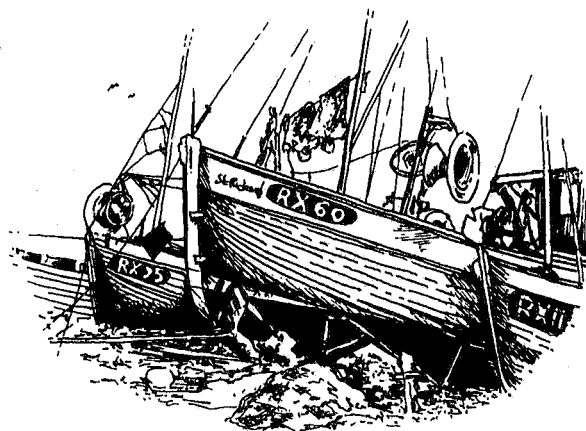
15 The Assembly resolves to meet in 1996 at the University of York from Saturday 6 to Tuesday 9 July and in 1997 at Portsmouth from Monday 7 to Friday 11 July.

16 Assembly approves the budget for 1996 (Appendix 1).

17 Assembly:

- a) invites the Mission Council Task Group on Human Sexuality to circulate material to enable the Church in all its councils to discuss the matter of human sexuality and its implications for ministry within the Church;
- b) requests that this discussion takes place in Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches, leading to a further discussion in Synods in the autumn of 1996;
- c) requests Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches to send their responses to the General Secretary by December 1, 1996, in order to allow Mission Council to bring any further resolutions to General Assembly in 1997.

COMMITTEE
REPORTS & RESOLUTIONS



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1995

Church and Society



Convener: Professor Malcolm Johnson
Secretary: Revd Peter Brain

The brief given to Church and Society in the 1994 Report is straightforward:

This committee seeks to serve local churches, district councils and synods, ecumenical and appropriate secular bodies, in raising awareness, sharing information and encouraging reflection and action on matters of justice and peace, healing and reconciliation. It seeks to represent the concern of the church for such matters to government and others with power over the life of people in these islands, acting ecumenically wherever possible. It is responsible for Commitment for Life (including the 1% appeal) and will promote such other programmes as will help the above aims.

After the former Departments were abolished and with them the Departmental Central Committees a new Church and Society committee was formed in autumn 1992. The revised brief given here corresponds to the vision, style and agenda of Church and Society committees past and present.

1 ONLY CONNECT!

1.1 This famous cry from E M Forster sums up our task in Church and Society. Forster continues: *"This was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion and both will be exalted ... Live in fragments no longer"* and this we try to do. There is a wholeness in our aim; words like *shalom* and *oikoumene* describe the ideal.

1.2 Connections between persons are the starting point for this report. Our third **National AIDS Adviser**, Justine Wyatt, was appointed during the year to work out of an office at Temple Cowley church in Oxford. A new Management Committee is in place and our thanks are due to the previous Manchester-based committee which supported Hazel Addy during her time in post. Justine continues offering the blend of pastoral and educational ministry that represents a significant contribution by the United Reformed Church in this crucial area of our common life.



01865 749585

1.3 **Europe** is a topic that moves between too much prose (boring, regulatory) and too much passion (threatening, exciting) in debate in society, in the media and Parliament, and probably in the churches also. Connections are made in several ways, many of them co-ordinated by our European Issues Adviser, Philip Woods. Philip is a member of a European working group run by BECCS (*European Ecumenical Commission on Church and Society*) which is feeding church concerns into the preparatory process of the 1996 Inter-Governmental Conference and is producing material for the churches on that Conference and the vital issues at stake. However, Church and Society is only one area of 'European' concern; there is now to be a Europe Task Group under the umbrella of the Ecumenical Committee (see their report).



0181 554 4036

1.4 One of the critical issues to face our **Fieldworker/Animateur** is whether to limit or to expand the connections. For Susan Flynn and for many engaged in Church and Society, the question is how far to 'go ecumenical'; what are the pro's and con's of keeping or struggling to keep denominational groups and committees as contrasted with ecumenical ones? A gathering of Provincial Church and Society representatives revealed considerable difference of experience and opinion across the country and within the four Provinces which are Susan's primary focus. Within the URC, her efforts are bearing some fruit as Districts and local churches recognise that life is to be lived as a whole, that the 'Church and Society type agenda' is not just any other business but vital to our mission.



01260 280883

1.5 Since there is due to a be a full report and debate on **Commitment for Life** in 1996, we may report three matters only. A small review group (convener Wilma Frew) will consider the programme and produce an assessment with comments and recommendations. The 1995 materials (to include some worship ideas) are being prepared for a July mailing to churches; some like them sooner and we can offer this if asked. Janet Davies is still co-ordinating the advocacy of **Commitment for Life** responding to requests where churches and Districts would like a briefing; further regional days are planned to follow those at Windermere and Barnes Close.



017048 72788

1.6 Our **commitment to work ecumenically** is driven in part by necessity (since we cannot cover the agenda ourselves) and partly by desire (since we wish to contribute to broad-based ecumenical debate). We are kept in touch by individuals some of whom represent us and some of whom are only too pleased to report back on their involvement.

1.6.1 Malcolm Compston is on the **Churches Peace Forum** which has been following up with political activity the resolutions on the arms trade and the nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty passed by General Assembly last year. We have published an essay by Malcolm on the arms trade as our contribution to the rising level of ecumenical concern.



01705 583812

1.6.2 Alan Hart serves on the steering committee of the **Churches Human Rights Forum** which has published reports on minority rights in Europe and convenes meetings to further its basic aim of promoting ecumenical reflection education and action on the nature of human rights, the various legal frameworks and the reported abuses.



01204 653145

1.6.3 Molly Kenyon is a member of the Board of **Christian Aid**. 1995 sees their 50th anniversary celebrations focussing on the weekend September 30/October 1; every local church has been invited to join in, with suggestions on how to mark the anniversary in worship and other ways. (see also 3.1.3 below)



01274 576189

1.6.4 David Pickering belongs to the **Environmental Issues Network** of CCBI and contributes to their submissions to government. He is a member of a European working group on 'economy and ecology' preparing a submission for the European Union. David has established a network for the URC members of Christian Ecology Link.



01642 361214

1.6.5 Sandra Ackroyd serves on the **Churches Commission for Racial Justice** which recently published 'One Race' (a study pack for churches on racial violence). This Commission is producing materials for the first ecumenical Racial Justice Sunday, September 10, 1995; a flier about this has been sent to every church. Sandra also serves on Commission Three (for Justice Peace and Creation) of the **World Council of Churches** and on their working group on racism, indigenous peoples and ethnicity.



0181 888 7120

1.6.6 Glyn Eatock and Elizabeth Nash are both elected members of the committee of **Church Action on Poverty (CAP)**. Their current main campaign 'Local People, National Voice' is referred to under our second resolution. CAP also produces policy briefings on policy and has now appointed a Parliamentary Liaison Officer.



0115 962 2365

1.6.7 Ruth Clarke is now vice-chair of the **Churches National Housing Coalition** which is being continued for a second 3-year term to inform, mobilise and co-ordinate activity around this most pressing area of policy.



01539 568 449

1.7 These Church and Society 'operators' are trying to connect you; hence the telephone numbers which you are invited to use. Our Secretary even includes his InterNet e-mail address on letter-heading. We are all here to help and support, not as a pressure-group but as a resource.



"Live in fragments no longer". Do get in touch. **Only connect.**

peterbraln@gn.apc.org

2 CRISIS OF VALUES

2.1 "something rotten ..."

2.1.1 This work has developed in a somewhat different way from that anticipated in last year's report to Assembly, mainly because we have taken seriously the advice of ecumenical colleagues. We are all aware of the general concern across society about the perceived deterioration in the standards of behaviour and relationships, private and public. This programme of work is one of several in this area currently running within the churches and outside.

2.1.2 Church and Society joined those protesting at the apparent blurring of value, worth, price and cost in the reduction of every relationship to a transaction and every kindness to a commodity. For example: *"Marriage is thus not seen as a celebration of love and mutual commitment but as a contract between two parties to maximise their returns through rational specialisation of roles!"* (Will Hutton *The State We're In*; Jonathan Cape; p226)

2.1.3 We have wondered aloud whether any of the traditional institutional vehicles for transmitting values, e.g. the establishment and education system, are any longer capable of so doing. Just where are the role-models? (On the football pitch, in the media ..!) Despite the pleas from the right for 'a little more respect' to be shown we felt it was scarcely deserved. Private morality requires public authentication and, vice versa, credible public figures ought to maintain skeleton-free wardrobes.

2.2 what is wrong

2.2.1 We began a mapping exercise as to what might be the elements of the current concern over values, even if some feel that words like 'collapse' or 'crisis' are too strong.

2.2.2 We noted the subverting effect of individualism as consumerism, turning relationships into transactions. Whatever happened to the common good? We lamented the short-termism which is such a blight on government and British financial institutions - and on our church councils too. Again, there is a refusal to accept responsibility for mistakes (one might say, to confess); credit is grasped when things go well but public figures will not take any blame.

2.2.3 For Christians, in addition, there is the crisis in theology: in the blue corner we have the conservatives affirming traditions (and tending to fundamentalism); in the red corner the liberals offering dialogue (and tending to meaningless relativism).

2.2.4 We have also been discussing the degree to which Christian values are in fact 'embedded' in the social fabric. If the institutional churches are among the traditional means of transmitting values down the generations which have failed, then those traditional values which might broadly be termed Christian (without exclusive claims to them) may also wither - values like justice, compassion, caring, truth-telling, fidelity, modesty, sharing, etc., the legacy of past centuries. There is a real danger that these are being replaced with, say, ambition, success, retribution, individualism, consumerism, affluence, etc. A stable society which is to be anything other than a totalitarian horror or a complete mess requires the bonding power which the values in the first list offer.

(A fuller paper is available from Church and Society)

2.3 into focus

All this is to abridge to the point of distortion the ideas and themes which are being addressed in this work. We decided that to explore values in four areas - **family, neighbourhood, workplace, politics** - would offer a useful, contrasting and manageable agenda. Accepting that even this would be manageable only if additional help was available, we therefore approached the Joseph Rowntree Trust to ask for funding to engage a part-time worker.

2.4 **consultation**

During the year a conference was held at Windermere which has prompted us to attempt certain **tasks**, involving URC members and ministers in different ways in each of the four identified areas plus some research and further consultation.

2.4.1 We wish to discover and compare the underlying attitudes and values of various categories of people: active URC members (e.g. members of General Assembly or Elders Meeting), other URC members, non-URC church people, non-church people. This research should lead to the production of material designed to make people more aware of the actual values operating in their choices and decisions in institutional settings.

2.4.2 We have asked some ministers working in Industrial Mission and some Church-Related Community Workers to draw out from their contacts and from within the communities in which they work some of the values implicit in the workplace and the neighbourhood, compare them with explicit value statements and thus develop a greater appreciation of the part played by value assumptions in decision-making and choice.

2.4.3 We plan to produce an annotated list of resources to guide individuals and local churches to greater awareness in this area; there are a number of non-verbal resources already available (e.g. video, board-game, role-plays) and we might discover the need to commission some additional material.

2.4.4 We have identified a dozen local congregations who have agreed to do some work on 'family values' using the report of the Church of Scotland on 'The future of the family', together with our own questionnaire or survey.

2.5 **coming next year**

For the dissemination stage of this project, it is planned that there should be a full promotional programme with report(s), study materials, events, etc. made available in the public arena, as well as within the churches.



3 *Our report on some other current work still explores the mix of "prose and passion" since without either mind or heart our work would falter.*

3.1 **Remembrance**

3.1.1 This year, of course, marks the **fiftieth anniversary** of so much that happened in 1945. Half a century of so-called 'post war years', although as we know there have been hundreds of wars and millions of dead since then. Yet 'the bomb' itself has still only been used twice, fifty years ago, though the lingering threat (e.g. of terrorism or escalation of tension in the former USSR or the Middle East) remains. The involvement of German representatives in the commemoration of VE Day is welcomed; we supported the German church leaders' visit in April. We are conscious of profound difficulties being encountered in attempts to achieve reconciliation with the Japanese and can only hope and pray that the VJ Day commemorations do not make it even harder.

3.1.2 We recall the founding of the **United Nations** and the signing of the Charter in 1945, although the first General Assembly and Security Council meetings in neighbouring church buildings in London were not until January 1946. This is a time for serious - and hopeful - reappraisal; a timely booklet from CCBI provisionally entitled 'The churches and hope for an international order' (including the powerful text of the preamble to the Charter 'We, the peoples') should offer an appropriate overview. Many local churches have affiliated to the United Nations Association; we would encourage others to do so and, in any case, to mark this anniversary in worship using the specially-prepared material.

3.1.3 The founding of **Christian Aid** (formerly Inter-Church Aid) in 1945 is being marked by several events and publications. Churches are urged to plan special worship and other meetings over the weekend September 30 / October 1. Christian Aid has been through a painful period of readjustment ('downsizing' from 230 to 200 staff) and restructuring (the formation of 30+ more flexible and focused teams). Their new Statement of Intent (due out in the summer) should be on every notice-board and quoted in every church magazine.

3.2 **Work and employment**

We have been impressed at the willingness of Mr Andrew Britton, one of the country's leading economists, to take early retirement and become executive officer for the new Churches' Enquiry into Unemployment and the Future of Work. This Enquiry team will surely follow the formula of 'the prose and the passion' as they wrestle with apparently intractable policy dilemmas and also spend lots of time meeting unemployed people around the country. This was an Anglican initiative which has been broadened into a fully ecumenical one, endorsed by CCBI and welcomed by URC Mission Council as well as by Church and Society. At time of writing it is, unsurprisingly, dependent on securing sufficient funding. It is hoped to have two URC members and Ruth Clarke is on the project's sponsoring group.

3.3 **Sharing agenda and resources**

3.3.1 If the need to avoid duplication and unnecessary overlap is a problem as between Districts and Provinces (not only in respect of Church and Society), how much more so as between the different denominations. There is a constant struggle to keep open the channels of communications; co-ordination points become blocked narrow gateways and central staff trying to enable the flow end up as obstacles themselves. So much material arrives in the Church and Society office on so many topics and about a surprising range of countries that we cannot do justice to it; how to promote more use of these valuable files remains a problem for us. When it come to church documents - what the Church of Scotland has said about X or the Church in Wales about Y, etc. - the problems multiply. Steps are being taken to create a decent archive of such material, to be accessed in a variety of ways (including the humble postcard) but increasingly through Information Technology. As to the latter, we hope to have a Church and Society Web 'home page' on-line before Assembly (cf 1.7 above).

3.3.2 The most obvious recycling of some ideas and materials is that three times a year we mail to the Church and Society **national network**; to join, please ask. There are also events; once again we shall hold a **National Gathering**, this time in Milton Keynes on September 16, including a keynote address from Dr John Hull; to come, please ask. We are hoping that this URC National Gathering will be replaced in 1996 by some regional ecumenical events; this will inevitably be patchy but we believe there is much to be gained by taking this approach.

3.4 **Amnesty call**

In consequence of the 1994 resolution on General Assembly in support of the CCBI call for a 'selective amnesty', representations were made to government; a petition of 30,000 signatures was presented to Parliament and a delegation including Revd Jack McKelvey, Assembly Moderator, met Baroness Blatch at the Home Office. *"Since 1979 the Immigration Rules have been comprehensively revised to ensure that the numbers admitted for work and settlement are reduced to a minimum." This letter from the Immigration and Nationality Department continues: "You may be assured, however, that the power to make a deportation order is not exercised in any arbitrary or summary way. The Rules require us to weigh all relevant factors - including length of residence and domestic circumstances - against the public interest before deciding whether removal is the right course. ... Outside the Rules there is a concession applied ... that a person would not be deported if he or she has lived here for ten years lawfully or fourteen years which may include a period of unlawful presence. A lesser period, and certainly the five years suggested, would have the effect of allowing foreign nationals to settle in the UK when they might reasonably be expected to return to their country of origin."*

There are several points in this policy - and in its implementation which is often far from the reasonableness of an official letter - which the Churches Commission for Racial Justice will continue to challenge.

In two particular cases where local churches are strongly involved in campaigning against deportation and have offered sanctuary, the Ogunwobi family in Hackney and the Okolo family in Hulme, we have made specific and repeated representations to government.

3.5 Ethical investment

The Ethical Investment Advisory Group, linking Church and Society and Finance, has met a further three times. Revised investment guidelines have been offered to the two Trusts which manage the 'pool' and the Pension Fund and should be reported on by them.

3.6 Et cetera

Within the new structures, the Secretary has some additional responsibilities which are independent of the committee. Work with and for the Assembly Task Group on Health and Healing, the Mission Council Task Group on Human Sexuality and the Ecumenical Committee is reported elsewhere. But it does make extra work for the Administrative Assistant whose quiet competence is vital though rarely acknowledged.

06/04/95

RESOLUTIONS

Church and Society

18 Assembly

- a) offers encouragement to all who are working for a just and lasting peace between the peoples and nations of the Middle East and especially Israeli and Palestinian leaders;
- b) welcomes and supports the ecumenical statement from church leaders in Jerusalem calling for "*a special judicial and political statute for Jerusalem which reflects the universal importance and significance of the city ... a symbol and a promise of the presence of God, of fraternity and peace for humankind, in particular the children of Abraham, Jews, Christians and Muslims*";
- c) urges visitors from Britain to take advantage of the possibilities of meeting people of all faiths, including Palestinian Christians, during their time in the 'Holy Land'.

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

"Pray for the peace (shalom, well-being) of Jerusalem" says the Psalmist. It is almost 3,000 years since David captured the hill-town from the Jebusites and made it his capital city (see also Joshua 10). Since then it has become the unique 'holy city' containing so many holy places for Jews, Christians and Muslims (who believe that Muhammed ascended to heaven from the city).

Now the leaders of all the main Christian communities there have issued an unprecedented joint statement following a meeting in November 1994. Here is a further extract from their 5-page statement: "*In order to satisfy the national aspirations of all its inhabitants and in order that Jews, Christians and Muslims can be 'at home' in Jerusalem and at peace with one another, representatives of the three monotheistic religions, in addition to local political powers, ought to be associated in the elaboration and application of such a special statute ... Jerusalem is too precious to be dependent sole on municipal or national political authorities. Experience shows that an international guarantee is necessary*".

There have been fears that continued dissent between Israeli and Arab leaders over the status of Jerusalem could derail the whole Middle East peace process. All acknowledge that this is the most difficult question in the peace negotiations, with the Israeli government insisting that Jerusalem must remain united under Israeli sovereignty and the Palestinians seeking to establish their own state capital in East Jerusalem. Human rights are disputed: Christian and Muslim leaders have complained that Israel prevents Arab clergy and laity of their faiths from attending services in Jerusalem. If there is to be peace, the 'city of David' must be honoured as 'city of God'.

The ups and downs of the church in Jerusalem through the centuries have been well chronicled, from the Acts of the Apostles onwards. This recent church leaders' statement reminds us that "*the continuing presence of a living Christian community is inseparable from the historical sites; through the 'living stones' the holy archaeological sites take on life.*" Relatively few visitors meet any 'ordinary' Israelis; it is even rarer to be able to meet Palestinians. That is the nature of tourism today. A publication from CCBI, 'Holy Land Pilgrimage', encourages visitors to meet with their Palestinian fellow-Christians as well as with Jews and Muslims; it includes a brief directory of organisations that can enable such meetings to happen. Many can testify to the very real welcome and hospitality offered and received. Such meetings can be among the highlights of any pilgrimage as visitors catch a fresh vision of the 'holy land'.

19 Assembly,

- is concerned and dismayed at the **persistence of poverty and growing inequality** in Britain as evidenced by the findings of the 'Inquiry into Income and Wealth' supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and by the testimonies being gathered during 'poverty hearings' arranged by Church Action on Poverty through its programme "Local People, National Voice";
- is aware of increasing **personal insecurity** affecting a wide range of people in work, in education and in retirement;
- welcomes the more **integrated approach to a range of policy areas** being taken by church bodies, individual commentators and, for example, the Commission for Social Justice chaired by Sir Gordon Borrie;
- calls on all political parties to press for a **major review** of the tax and benefits systems, of employment legislation and social policy with the defined aim of reducing poverty and polarisation in our country;
- invites local churches and/or District Councils as appropriate to participate in, or if necessary to instigate, local **'poverty hearings'** in co-operation with Church Action on Poverty and to report to their MPs and to the Church and Society committee.

OUR COMMON LIFE IN BRITAIN

No consideration of poverty can be limited to consideration of income levels or wealth. In every report and testimony there is pictured the multiple deprivation of people whom the systems of health care, education, housing, employment and training have failed every bit as much as the welfare or taxation systems. The 'Inquiry into Income and Wealth' chaired by Sir Peter Barclay (sponsored by the Rowntree Foundation) and the Social Justice Commission chaired by Sir Gordon Borrie (sponsored by but by no means limited to the Labour Party) both work from this premise.

Sir Peter writes: "Taken together, these findings paint a picture of a dramatic social and economic change in Britain over the 1980s, the scale and consequences of which are probably not yet fully appreciated by policy-makers or by the population at large". "Internationally, the UK was exceptional in the pace and extent of the increase in inequality in the 1980s".

Sir Gordon writes: "The problem is not just that poverty, unemployment, poor education and ill health are a blight on so many lives. There is a wider malaise to be addressed which concerns our capacity as a nation to understand and reverse what seems to so many people to be inexorable decline." "The UK need not be a tired, resentful, divided, failing country".

This resolution sets the political task firmly within the context of our Christian concern for, and work on, values (on which we report elsewhere). Church Action on Poverty, the body we support and fund to work on these issues, has been mounting a series of 'poverty hearings' across the country under the title 'Local People, National Voice'. The core content of these events has been the evidence from people who have simply, often movingly, described their life in Britain today and the cumulative distress in which they live - circumstances which might well prove intolerable for the moral and personal stamina of many others, including church members, who regard 'the poor' as less worthy, unreliable, feckless and lacking motivation.

From the first, Christian instincts have been to build up the common life, to share possessions (often recklessly as in Jerusalem at the beginning), to value each other whatever their social standing and generally to demonstrate an inclusive love for the undeserving which is nothing less than an expression of the nature of the Christlike God. We have discerned this instinct set out in secular terms by the Social Justice Commission: "First, the belief that the foundation of a free society is the equal worth of all citizens ... Second, the argument that everyone is entitled as a right of citizenship to be able to meet their basic needs for income, shelter and other necessities ... Third, self-respect and equal citizenship demand more than the meeting of basic needs; they demand opportunities and life chances ... Finally ... although not all inequalities are unjust ... unjust inequalities should be reduced and where possible eliminated."

The agenda being revealed by high-level reports and the testimony of ordinary folk is, in the words of Bishop John Gladwin (a member of the Social Justice Commission), "to build strong communities from the bottom up. To do that we need to regenerate their economies. But we also need to invest in their social capital, in the networks and local institutions which make communities places worth living in".

Will Hutton comments: "It is amoral to run a society founded on the exclusion of so many people from decent living standards and opportunities." The 'Rowntree' report, while acknowledging that "our prime concern is not with morality" continues: "we are concerned with the overall *social* effects of the changes in distribution which impact on the whole community, with the accumulation of problems as those being left behind are concentrated in particular *areas* and with the long-term economic costs of what has happened." (their italics) "It might be possible to justify a growth in inequality on the grounds that the beneficial effects on growth would raise the living standards of the poorest but there is no evidence that this has occurred in Britain: there is no sign of 'trickle-down'".

The 'Rowntree' report has been assailed by some, much as 'Faith in the City' was ten years ago. We invite members of Assembly to share Sir Peter's welcome for "the fact that a widening debate is now taking place across the political spectrum", to contribute to it and to act upon it.

'Inquiry into Income and Wealth', Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 40 Water End, York YO3 6LP;
'Social Justice', Sir Gordon Borrie and others, Vantage Press;
Church Action on Poverty, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JT;
'The State We're In', Will Hutton, Jonathan Cape.

- 20** Assembly urges the members and councils of the church to disassociate themselves from the Lottery by refusing to buy tickets and by declining to apply for Lottery-generated funds for church purposes.

NATIONAL LOTTERY

Around 27% of Lottery income is to be disbursed to 'good causes' by five bodies, the Arts Council, the Sports Council, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Millennium Commission and the National Lottery Charities Board. They have together received around £260m in the first four months though no grants have been made at the time of writing. Churches and church bodies may be involved in projects that are eligible to apply under the first four headings; but it is to the Charities Board that they, like most small voluntary bodies, will mostly be looking for help.

The question which Assembly is invited to debate is whether it is right for churches to be involved in such applications. The Church and Society committee is not united in its view. Mission Council members were evenly divided when the matter was discussed last October and agreed to send a discussion paper to every local church; this has generated a minimal response. That paper reviewed the steps already taken and set out a number of considerations:

- i *Gambling is surely wrong when it does damage disproportionate to the benefit that might accrue if chance went otherwise.*
- ii *One reason why it has been traditionally condemned is because it can become addictive; the fantasy of 'winning next time' drives some people to reckless and ruinous gambling.*
- iii *Another argument is that gambling appears to bolster the notion that material possessions are a guarantee of happiness and thus appeals to greed and selfishness.*
- iv *Another is that promotion of gambling often appeals to - and distorts - otherwise good things like courage, excitement or powers of judgement.*
- v *Others allege that gambling confers on chance or, more properly, uncertainty (which is a basic element in the way the world works) a pseudo-divine status with consequent superstition and quasi-religious practices attached, often derived from true religion (such as crossing one's fingers - the logo used by Camelot).*

Assembly is invited to express a view, noting that this cannot be a ban imposed on every local church or URC-connected body and that it may not always be possible to identify funding originating from the Lottery.

NOTE:

Concerns about the proposal for a national lottery were expressed at an earlier stage in representations made to Government and other interested parties by Church and Society; these were summarised in a REFORM article back in February 1993 under four heads:

- i *Would there be any new money in it for charities, given the risk of support being diverted from existing giving?* There is some anecdotal evidence that this switching is happening; a research team from the University of Manchester are monitoring this.
- ii *Would the Treasury take too much?* The Chancellor must be pleased, since 12% tax on turnover generated over £120m in the first four months' income of over £1bn. Camelot, too, are making more substantial profits than anticipated when their licence was awarded.
- iii *Does anyone care about the temptation to frequent purchase by younger people or addictive gamblers?* This argument seems to have got lost, though it has been raised with Peter Davis, the regulator, and will be monitored.
- iv *What is the risk of Government mainline grants being reduced to bodies that are benefiting from the lottery?* This cannot be answered for a few years but must remain a concern; for example, the original restriction on grants for capital projects has been changed to allow some revenue funding.

COMMUNICATIONS AND EDITORIAL

Convener: Mr Christopher Wright

Secretary: Mrs Carol Rogers

This committee is responsible for the setting and maintenance of standards of all publications. It acts as the Editorial and Management Board of REFORM, and is responsible for media relations.

1 The final meetings of the Communication and Supplies Committee and of the Editorial and Management Board of Reform identified the main areas of work which it is essential to continue. The two previous committees had a membership of 20 - the new committee 8 plus 3 staff members.

2 The new committee met for the first time in January 1995. It was agreed to set up subgroups to undertake specific tasks. These groups may include those who are not members of the committee, but have skills or expertise in particular areas. Initially these would be

- (1) Subgroup to liaise with and support the Editor of Reform.
- (2) Subgroup on Broadcasting matters including membership of the Churches Advisory Council on Local Broadcasting.
- (3) Subgroup to liaise with and support the Media Officer.

3 PUBLICATIONS BOARD

A Publications Board has been established to ensure a more co-ordinated publishing programme and answer and advise on all matters relating to the publication of the General Assembly and its Committees. The task of the Board is to oversee all publishing matters including style presentation, potential market and pricing and to advise the Communications and Editorial Committee on the use of the budget for larger projects.

4 REFORM

The editor, who retires in September, has been much encouraged by the number of people writing to *Reform* in recent months who have praised the quality and readability of the magazine. Many of the comments have been made unprompted by the knowledge of change to come and are the more appreciated for that.

A magazine thus valued could be reaching more readers and will be strengthened when they are also subscribers. It will be an enormous encouragement to the incoming editor if all those who are glad to receive it every month will introduce it to someone who does not.

Only once in its 23-year life has *Reform* reported a deficit; in every other year, including all the most recent, it has been fully financed by subscription and advertising income and not a charge on the URC budget. A succession of paper price increases way above the rate of inflation have necessitated careful budgeting in the last year but we have been well served by our printers, who offer us modern full-colour technology with excellent personal service.

One writer to *Reform* put at the end of his letter, 'Thank you for holding us together'. To have our own publication offers this possibility in a society in which people often feel isolated.

To recall a favourite advertising slogan which was felt to be too elitist to use freely - - *Ecclesia semper reformanda est*: Your church always needs Reform.

5 YEAR BOOK

The Year Book for 1995 was published on January 1st. The alternative loose leaf format is proving very popular.

6 DIARY

All copies of the URC Pocket Diary for 1995 were sold.

7 DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPLIES

The reinstatement of a small discount for ministers and students for the URC Ministry has been well received.

The mail order distribution of all material continues to work smoothly. During the summer of 1995 the staff of the URC Bookshop will be present at Provincial Days in Scotland and Torquay and will supply material for several other similar events.

In addition to material from the URC there are some 1000 other titles stocked, mainly in the area of resources for those leading worship and working with children and young people, pastoral care, and books by authors connected with the URC.

8 INFORMATION SERVICE

The Information Service continues to be despatched to all church secretaries at regular intervals. A personal subscription is available at a modest cost. All retired ministers are offered a free information pack. The URC is indebted to the volunteers who collate and pack the Information Service.

9 DESIGN AND IN-HOUSE PRINTING

The standard of design and production of URC material has continued to rise, which in turn leads to constant demand for higher quality materials and increased expectations. This challenge is met and techniques are frequently being upgraded.

10 PRESS AND P.R.

The contract of the present Press/P.R. Officer, George Anderson, ends in April 1995 and we are grateful for all he has done during the past 3 years. The post has now been combined with that of the Editor of Reform and the new appointment will commence in July 1995. During the past year the URC has been well represented in the media. Among those involved in local broadcasting, there are many from UR Churches. Media training courses are available and details are sent to all Provinces.

11 COPYRIGHT

Local churches continue to seek help in obtaining copyright clearances particularly for hymns. A paper has been circulated to all local churches outlining the regulations regarding copyright. This also draws attention to the fact that the period of copyright, which has been fifty years from the death of the copyright holder, is to be extended to seventy years from 1st July 1995. Local churches are encouraged to pay serious attention to this matter since there have been several prosecutions in recent months leading to substantial fines being paid.

12 DATA PROTECTION ACT

After prolonged correspondence with the Data Protection Registrar it has been agreed that for "the time being at least" the URC can register at Provincial Trustee level to the holding of personal data at local church level. This ruling applies only to churches whose property is held by a Provincial Trust.

13 ECUMENICAL LINKS

Through the committee the URC is represented on the Churches Advisory Council on Local Broadcasting and the Media Awareness Project.

14 PERSONALIA

Norman Hart was appointed as Editor of Reform in 1977. The United Reformed Church has been well served in the following 18 years by an editor whose writings have been some of the finest to be found in the world of religious journalism and whose commitment and integrity have always shone through his work. Norman has always been willing to listen to suggestions and to act upon them. In the past few years he has had to change long-standing working methods to begin to embrace the fast growing world of desk-top publishing. His wide knowledge of the United Reformed Church and those within its congregations has meant that Reform has covered a wide variety of subjects and been appreciated by all sections of the Church. In addition to his duties with Reform he has also edited the Annual Book and taken a leading part in courses at Windermere and in other local situations.

We wish Norman a long a happy retirement, assuring both him and his wife Linda of the affection in which he is held.

DISCIPLESHIP AND WITNESS

Convener: Revd Elizabeth Caswell
Committee Secretary: Revd Roger Whitehead
Staff Member: Mrs Muriel Garrow

to encourage growth in faith among people of all ages;
to support the work of exercising pastoral care, particularly by elders, lay preachers and members of local churches, and the work of District Councils in their pastoral oversight of the local church;
to challenge the local church to share the gospel and stimulate Districts and Synods in the development of their own strategies for outreach;
to encourage churches in their participation in the Decade of Evangelism;
to listen to concerns raised, to share information and provide appropriate support;
to be responsible for the Windermere Centre.

1 As we begin our work we acknowledge our debt to the committees and groups upon whose work we are building: from Faith and Life the work of Christian Education and from World Church and Mission, work on Mission and Evangelism. The new structure allows us to move on; and we are eager to seize this opportunity to see things in a different way.

2 THE TASK

Discipleship and witness belong together. As people and churches mature in faith, commitment, understanding and experience, so they will bear witness to Christ. The development of pastoral care for individuals and churches and the encouraging of people to "become what they are" are foundations of mission. Disciples who are "growing up in all things into Christ" will be witnesses, individually and together, in word and lifestyle and action.

A committee cannot make this happen; our task is to make it easier for this to happen. What tools shall we be using as we attempt to fulfil this task?

3 THE TOOLS

Information

We shall listen and share in order to be able to encourage and stimulate, so that together we may catch God's vision and put it into practice.

One of the dangers of the national church is that through ignorance we may fail to support and encourage each other. Innovation, examples of good practice and helpful courses or materials need to be shared across the church (as do financial resources.... but that's another story.)

The committee will need to gather information and listen to the church in order to pass on stories, ideas and news that may stimulate faith and action.

Resources

As well as sharing information about what has proved helpful we will also be concerned, when appropriate, to provide resources to help the church in the areas of discipleship and witness. This year the "Members Together" church membership material will go into its second re-print, and we hope to publish the follow-on "Developing Discipleship" course later this year. The Windermere Centre continues to be a major resource for the whole church, and we include here their reflections on the last twelve months:

The Windermere Centre

"This has been a year of **change, development and good times** in the Lakeland House.

Change, with a new Director in place since last September, the first change of this kind since the centre opened in July 1986. For him, not so much a learning curve as a sheer rock face, but a real privilege and an enjoyable one for all that. The Cook fed us, now the McIntosh equips us for all weathers, and Kendal remains a constant support!

Change, with a new domestic manager in place since last July, and another Scot at that, and yes we might have haggis on the menu, and yes the food is of a very high standard. Would you believe heart-shaped meringues on Valentines Day, and sparklers in the pud on Guy Fawkes Night!

Development to the house itself, thanks to kind generosity, includes new and more comfortable chairs in the lounge and conference rooms, three bedrooms now available with en suite facilities, and every bedroom with a proper reading lamp. There is the possibility of a stair-lift to the first floor, and decoration and refurbishing to maintain the highest standards of comfort and cleanliness is, of course, an ongoing process. It's not an hotel, it's not a conference centre, it's not a hostel, it's not a retreat centre, it's all of these; and a very pleasant, relaxed place to call home!

Development to the programme offered continues. People can come and EXPLORE issues and matters related to faith, gospel and belief -- anything from crime and punishment to morality and medicine; or DISCOVER how to do this, that or the other related to calling, ministry, work or mission -- anything from how to minister to the bereaved to how to develop church growth; or you can come and EXPERIENCE a retreat or creative activity -- from healing and wholeness to fell-walking or painting. At the same time the centre still provides sanctuary for those desperate for a break, good space for sabbaticals, a place for groups, networks and churches to come and enjoy their work or evaluate their goals, or simply a place to call "home" whenever anybody feels like it. People still ask what Windermere is for, and one answer is: whatever you and the church want or need it to be.

Good times are an essential element of the centre's life and work, whoever comes and for whatever reason. We continue to see the sad manage a smile, the lonely find new companionship, the disillusioned renewed, the weary refreshed, communities enriched, the marginalised affirmed, plans and strategies enlivened, and the Spirit at work as the centre opens its doors in welcome.... **nearly 40,000 times during the past nine years.**

We do well to give thanks for those who had the vision, took the risk, and sustain the centre's life now. **Thanks be to God."**

People

We also have the rich resource of people:

We express our appreciation for the leadership and enthusiasm that Rosalind Goodfellow has brought as Convener, to the Windermere Policy and Planning Committee. As she comes to the end of her term of service we say a big "Thank you Rosalind".

Muriel Garrow continues to respond to churches all across the country, stimulating their thinking and providing training and encouragement.

Terry Oakley's highly valued work, especially in the national field of Christian education, is drawing to a close, but we trust that we shall be able to maintain an enthusiastic concern for the discipling of people of all ages.

Michael Cruchley is continuing his work as Rural Consultant, now full-time. He writes:

Rural Consultant

"Every District of the URC has been contacted by the **Rural Consultant** to discover how many of our congregations are "rural" (defined as settlements of under 10,000 -- the measurement used by the Rural Development Commission). With seventy two replies from seventy five Districts, we know that:

- a) approximately 24% of our churches are "rural", and that
- b) some apparently urban districts have significant rural "pockets".

Each of these churches is a potential growth point since there is a net increase in the number of people living in the countryside. It is our concern to encourage these churches to look forward. At a time of crisis for some of our fellow denominations, the future has to be in co-operation, and this ecumenical risk is one we must willingly take. The rural church faces many challenges, some of which make headline news. We are anxious to enable a growing understanding of the context within which we witness, and to assist in this resources suited to these small congregations are being developed. The role of the Rural Consultant is one of encouragement for these churches in the work of the gospel.

The Churches' Rural Group, linked to CTE and CCBI, is encouraging every denomination to look carefully at its strategy for rural areas. H.M. Government's forthcoming White Paper on the Countryside will offer further opportunity for the Church to voice its concerns and insights into living together in community.

The Arthur Rank Centre, where the Rural Consultant is based, offers a number of courses at local and regional level for exploring discipleship and witness in a rural context. **Country Way**, the magazine for all interested in faith and life in rural Britain, is published from this centre. It is good value, and a useful resource.

In the whole nation, whether urban or rural, our concern is to encourage the church to catch the mood of mission and look to the future with God."

There is also a wide range of people in Provinces and Districts serving as mission enablers, Decade of Evangelism correspondents, and training and development officers. They will be vital partners in our work.

4 LOOKING AHEAD

As we embark on our first full year as a committee we have inherited four pieces of work on which we shall be concentrating.

Eldership

A great deal of valuable work has been done in the area of eldership training and pastoral responsibility. From across the URC we hope to gather information of good practice and of the courses which are being run and share it widely. The revision of "Being an Elder" is now available. We hope soon to produce a comprehensive list of elders training resources.

District Pastoral Visits

New patterns of visiting churches within Districts are evolving, and useful consultations have taken place. We will encourage the sharing of ideas, and explore ways in which these visits may help to develop both church and District mission strategies.

SPIN

"Sharing People in Network" was set up as the URC's response to the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. In co-operation with the core group of SPIN we hope to evaluate its work, so that we may ensure an appropriate URC response during the remaining years of the Decade.

Mission Strategy

To help us in our task we need to define "mission", "evangelism" and "evangelisation". This will help us develop our theology of mission: we want to encourage churches, Districts and Provinces to do their own mission thinking as they develop strategies for outreach.

The Decade for Evangelism Working Group, which was one of our predecessors, considered what might be a URC evangelism strategy, and we would like to share with you some of their conclusions:

- "A. The URC has welcomed the Decade of Evangelism/Evangelisation as an encouragement to Christians to consider how they may share their faith, and to local churches to experiment in mission projects and become involved in wider evangelising activity.
- B. The URC believes that the primary agent for evangelism is the local church. It is the task of the wider church to stimulate, encourage and equip the local church to evangelise; to evaluate what is done; and to share the stories. It cannot be over-emphasised that a committee or group meeting in London cannot do the work of evangelism for the URC. Only local people in local churches can do this.
- C. The wider church may also help to create conditions which are conducive to evangelism by widening theological reflection about the Gospel, reflecting on trends in society and supporting nation-wide evangelising initiatives. It can provide some of the tools, but local Christians must finish the job.
- D. The URC is committed wherever possible to work with other Churches and Christian agencies in the common task of evangelising our country."

DEWG encouraged each District Council to develop an overall mission strategy based on those of each local church.

Part of the URC's mission strategy is church planting. We are gathering information about how and where the URC is involved in church planting, and how much use has been made of the "mission projects" concept in The Manual. DEWG had also begun an exploration of the possibility of employing an evangelist, and this will be on our agenda.

There are several ecumenical ventures afoot under the auspices of the Churches Together in England's Group for Evangelisation. These include:

- a) using the 1400th anniversary of Augustine & Columba in 1997 to celebrate the evangelisation of Britain, possibly under the theme of "Journeying".
- b) raising consciousness in our society about the place of the Bible, under the title of "The Open Book", with the year 1999 as a focus.
- c) seeing the millennium as an opportunity for reflecting on 2000 years of Christian faith and history.

The prospect of further national ecumenical projects highlights the importance of learning from the various national campaigns of 1994. The URC participated in the CCBI Lent Course "Have Another Look", and "On Fire". Many local churches also took part in the "JIM Challenge" and "From Minus to Plus". As we learn from these nation-wide initiatives, we will also seek to learn from local churches about mission in the marginalised areas of British society. We commend the book "Sightings of Hope", published by the URC last year, as a useful tool for exploring the meaning of mission in urban and rural areas.

5 OVER TO YOU

The URC is committed to an understanding of discipleship and witness rooted in local churches. The effectiveness of our work as a committee, and the appropriateness of what we offer, depends very largely on what we can learn from the experiences of local churches. Please tell us what you are doing.

DOCTRINE, PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Convener: Dr David Thompson

Secretary: Revd Dale Rominger

The 1994 Assembly agreed to combine the proposed Doctrine and Prayer and Worship Committees in a single Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee, consisting of 12 members, one of whom is also a member of Youth and Children's work. The responsibilities of the Committee are:

- a) to lead the Church in its continual study of theology, enabling it to reflect upon and express the doctrines of the United Reformed Church;
 - b) to participate in and respond to ecumenical and inter-faith discussions on doctrinal matters;
 - c) to advise the Assembly, its officers and committees on questions of doctrine;
 - d) to listen to the concerns of local churches, district councils and provincial synods about public worship and personal devotion;
 - e) to develop programmes and material which will encourage the growth in faith and spiritual experience of those involved in the life of the Church;
 - f) to encourage by such means as may be appropriate at national level the greater participation of all ages and both sexes in the worship, prayer and work of the Church as it serves the mission of God;
 - g) to respond to requests for national materials and consultations;
 - h) to share ideas for the prayer and worship life of local congregations with and from the national and world church and to develop ecumenical collaboration in the area of faith and order, and spirituality;
 - i) to publish regular and occasional worship materials for the use of the Church, including the Prayer Handbook, Orders of Service for Public Worship and Hymnody;
 - j) to oversee the network for Silence and Retreats.
-

1 There is substantial continuity between the membership of the new Committee and the old Doctrine and Worship Committee, though the smaller size means that some former members have not been re-appointed and we have also welcomed new members. Terry Oakley has served the Committee as Secretary for Doctrine, Prayer and Worship, and as he leaves for his new appointment in the Northern Province we take this opportunity of thanking him for all the hard work he has put in for the Committee over the years.

2 The old Committee held a residential meeting in July and the new Committee met residentially in January. It is proposed to continue the pattern of two twenty-four hour residential meetings per year, making use of sub-groups as appropriate. The main business has been:

- a Confession of Faith in inclusive language
- resources for worship
- ecumenical discussions
- Patterns of Ministry
- young people and church membership.

A CONFESSION OF FAITH IN INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

3 As reported last year, we have been working on an alternative version of the Confession of Faith in paragraph 17 of the Basis of Union. When amendments to the *Manual* were approved by the General Assembly of 1990, this was specifically excluded (*Record of Assembly 1990*, p31). Subsequently we were asked by SPIN and other individuals to consider an alternative version of the Confession of Faith. The Confession in paragraph 17 was not intended primarily for liturgical use (though it was used at the inaugural service in Westminster Abbey in 1972), but we were persuaded that an authorised Confession of Faith in inclusive language would be welcome.

4 We are grateful to the Revd Alan Gaunt for his work in drafting and redrafting such a Confession. The Confession presented in the accompanying resolution is, in fact, the third draft, based upon extensive discussion of the two earlier versions. Paragraph 18 of the Basis of Union affirms the Church's right "to make such new declarations of its faith and for such purposes as may from time to time be required by obedience to the ... Spirit". The Committee therefore unanimously proposes that this Confession be added to the Basis of Union after Schedule D, with a note saying that the Assembly has approved it for use as an alternative to the statement in paragraph 17. The status of the existing paragraph 17 would be unchanged. This procedure was adopted for the alternative version of Schedule D by the Assemblies of 1980 and 1981. Since it constitutes an amendment to the Basis of Union, it will be necessary to refer it, if approved, to provincial Synods.

RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP

5 Unfortunately the third set of Festival Services promised for last year were not available until March. This set concludes our current programme. The Committee's Worship Reference Group, which has the task of identifying and publicising resources, has established a base at Westminster College. We have also done some work on providing an outline order of daily prayer, which might be included in the *Prayer Handbook*.

6 There has been no progress so far on the development of a common lectionary among the churches to replace the existing two-year lectionary, though there are some signs of disappointment with the new Joint Liturgical Group's four-year lectionary. We therefore propose to continue our policy of publishing both the two and four-year lectionaries, together with the themes from *Partners in Learning* in the annual *Scripture Readings*, which is available in September each year.

7 The stock of the 1989 *Service Book* are almost exhausted. We are considering whether to reprint some of the services in common use separately, possibly in a revised form. Work is nearing completion on the Companion to *Rejoice and Sing*.

ECUMENICAL DISCUSSIONS

8 The Committee provides representatives for certain national and international theological discussions, often in collaboration with the Ecumenical Committee. We have begun work on the reports produced by the 1994 Assembly of the Churches participating in the Leuenberg Agreement. The Committee nominated the Revd Fleur Houston as a URC observer on the discussion initiated last year between the Church of England and the Reformed and Lutheran Churches in France, and her first report was most interesting. As a result we suggested that informal discussion take place between the URC and the Church of England on outstanding issues arising from *God's Reign and our Unity*, the report of the Anglican-Reformed International Commission of 1984. The first meeting took place in June.

9 The Committee's exchange of representatives with the Methodist Faith and Order Committee continues to be valuable. The Baptist Union has initiated discussions with the URC concerning baptismal policy in Local Ecumenical Partnerships, and we have been involved in the discussion of the proposals arising from the joint working group between the two churches.

PATTERNS OF MINISTRY

10 The Committee contributed to the theological sections of the Interim Report of the Mission Council Working Party on "Patterns of Ministry", shaped on the general discussion of the report throughout the Church both before and after publication.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

11 During the year we have received several enquiries on the question of the age at which children and young people might become church members. In some cases this seems to arise from policies adopted on admission to communion, and in others from questions about the appropriate age for baptism when a child has not been baptized as an infant. It is clear from the Basis of Union that anyone baptized upon confession of faith is immediately admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of church membership. We have initiated a discussion with the Youth and Children's Work and the Discipleship and Witness Committees, to link the baptism and mission policies of the Church.

THE COMMITTEE AND THE CHURCHES

12 The Committee regularly receives more correspondence than can be handled in full committee meetings; but members of the Committee are always ready to help churches, districts and provinces discuss the matters within its remit.

RESOLUTION

Doctrine, Prayer and Worship

- 21** Acting under paragraph 18 of the Basis of Union, Assembly exercises its right to make a new declaration of its faith, and adopts the following Confession of Faith as a Confession authorised for use in addition to, but not in place of, the Confession of Faith in paragraph 17 of the Basis of Union:

We believe in the one and only God,
Eternal Trinity,
from whom, in whom and for whom,
all created things exist:
whom alone we worship;
in whom we put our trust.
We worship God,
Source and Sustainer of creation,
named by Jesus, Father,
proclaimed in the Scriptures by many names;
revealed as Love, in Jesus Christ,
the eternal word of God made flesh,
proclaimed by the apostles, Son of God;
who lived our life,
died for us on the cross,
rose from the dead,
and comes in judgement and mercy,
as Saviour and Sovereign,
to bring us to eternal life;

present as Power and Wisdom in the Holy Spirit,
who brings this gospel to fruition;
forgives our sins,
giving us the fullness of eternal life,
making us sisters and brothers of Jesus,
daughters and sons of God.

We believe in the one
holy catholic and apostolic Church,
united in heaven and earth:
on earth, the Body of Christ,
empowered by the Spirit
to glorify God and to serve humanity;
in heaven, eternally one
with the power, the wisdom and the love of God in Trinity.

We believe in the promise of God,
that in the fullness of time
all the things in heaven and earth
will be reconciled in Christ,
and God be perfectly honoured and adored.

We rejoice in God who has given us being;
in God for ever human with us and for ever glorious with us;
in God, our source of prayer and power of praise;
to whom be glory, praise and adoration,
now and evermore.

ECUMENICAL

Convener: Revd Murdoch MacKenzie

Secretary: Revd Sheila Maxey

This committee is a channel for the United Reformed Church's commitment to the World Church, to the British and Irish ecumenical pilgrimage, to our European setting and the world in which we live. On behalf of Mission Council, it will examine the need for a body to oversee, co-ordinate and develop the church's involvement in Europe, in accordance with the Assembly resolution in 1993. It also seeks to ensure that wherever the URC meets in worship, council or committee, it is aware of its partnership within the World Church and the whole human family. So its membership will include members from other Assembly committees and part of its task will be to listen to those with experience of the World Church, including those of other Christian traditions in these islands, and to those with experience of current affairs and of other faiths. It will maintain official URC links with overseas churches and international church councils, and guide the URC's participation in the Council for World Mission. Through it official contact will be made with British and Irish ecumenical bodies, and it will respond to national and international events making the URC voice heard in co-operation with other churches. It is responsible for the URC's involvement in St Andrew's Hall. Because its agenda is so wide its way of working may include breaking into groups to prepare work for decision by the whole committee; and more than one member of staff will be required to take forward these decisions. The work of selecting, training, and caring for missionaries and overseeing exchange of personnel will be undertaken by the Overseas Exchange Sub-Committee.

1 THE SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

The Ecumenical Committee has inherited much but not all of the remit of the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home and almost all the remit of the Missionary and Ecumenical Work Abroad Committee together with much of the international affairs brief of the Church and Society Committee. This report will only attempt to cover the work of the new Ecumenical Committee which has met, as yet, but once.

2 WAYS OF WORKING

Networking with other Assembly committees, with all 75 URC district councils, with the provincial synods, with CWM, with other partners in Europe and around the world, as well as with ecumenical bodies in Britain and Ireland and their constituent churches, is the means by which the work of the committee will be done. **Communication with URC district councils** is seen as a top priority and the newsletter '**URC Filings**' will continue to provide a vital link with **District Ecumenical Officers**. **District and Provincial World Church people** will continue to be resourced by central staff members. Items of business having particular ecumenical implications will be brought on to the agenda from other Assembly committees.

The work of selecting, training, and caring for missionaries and overseeing exchange of personnel is being undertaken by the **Overseas Exchange Sub-Committee** convened by the **Revd Barrie Scopes**. From time to time **Task Groups** will be set up in consultation with Mission Council. The **Europe Task Group** is a present example, with **Philip Woods** as Secretary.

3 THE STANCE OF THE URC ON ECUMENISM

following the **Provincial Moderators' Report** to the 1994 Assembly there was some expectation that a full scale debate on the **URC's attitude to Church Unity** would be held in 1995. As the new committee has only had one meeting it was felt that it would be irresponsible to present such a major topic in 1995 but it was agreed to prepare for a major debate on the URC's ecumenical stance at the 1996 assembly.

4 **THE URC'S WORLDWIDE ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS**

An up-to-date and comprehensive list of all URC ecumenical relationships both within and without the British Isles is available. It includes world ecumenical bodies, the Council for World Mission by regions, European churches, and churches in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The extent of URC involvement world-wide is illustrated by the following examples. In the **World Council of Churches** we have members on the **Central Committee**, the **Working Group on Racism**, the **Faith and Order Commission** and also three staff members. The URC will be sending a delegation of six to the **European Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches** in August 1995 and the WARC General Secretary is coming to the URC 1995 Assembly. At present we have **22 URC missionaries** serving through CWM and together with the Congregational Federation the URC is hosting **CWM Council** in the summer of 1995. The annual **CWM European Region Swanwick Conference 'Window on the World'** is a major mission education event in the life of the URC. The report of the Council for World Mission appears at Appendix I.

Of particular note in 1995 is the **Bicentenary of the London Missionary Society** which is the subject of a Mission Council resolution.

The **Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland's Churches' Commission on Mission**, which is the body co-ordinating mission work at home and overseas on behalf of the UK and Irish churches, has three URC staff members. The URC's continued involvement with **St Andrew's Hall** brings contact not only with CWM students but world-wide, particularly with Korea, Ghana and central and eastern Europe. Many URC young people have gone as **short term volunteers** to churches abroad, mainly in eastern Europe (Hungary, Romania) but also, for example, to Bombay. In addition to all of this many local churches have twinning and other arrangements with people around the world and experience what it means to belong to the body of Christ on earth.

5 **REPORT OF THE OVERSEAS EXCHANGE SUB-COMMITTEE**

Convener: Revd Barrie Scopes

Secretary: Revd Tony Coates

The work of selecting, training and caring for missionaries and overseeing exchange of personnel [is] undertaken by the Overseas Exchange Sub-Committee.

The Overseas Exchange Sub-Committee is in its remit, and almost in its membership, a direct continuation of the former (World Church and Mission) Personnel Committee and has taken over its programme of work. The following report relates to the work of both.

i **Sending and Receiving**

The work of this committee focuses on the sending and receiving of people. Where possible and appropriate this is done mutually, sending individuals, or a group, and receiving individuals, or a group, in return, in order to share insights and experience and be involved in mission.

ii **Appointment of Missionaries through CWM**

The Revd Bill and Mrs Maureen Sewell have been appointed for service in Botswana with the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.

iii **Southern Africa Exchange**

In 1993 four visitors from churches in South Africa spent six weeks in Britain. This year, the Revd Robert Dagleish, from the Scottish Congregational Church, and Mrs Olive Bell and the Revd John Hardaker from the URC, are paying a return visit from

12 April to 26 May. They each will be seeking to learn from the experience of churches in Southern Africa in areas of mission of particular interest to them and will be sharing their own insights.

iv **Bangladesh Exchange**

Following a visit by ten young people from the Southern and Wessex Provinces to the Church of Bangladesh in 1994, ten young Bangladeshi Christians will be in Britain during July and August and will be attending the Swanwick World Mission Conference along with their hosts.

v **Volunteers**

The Committee continues to arrange placements for some volunteers in churches in Eastern Europe and in CWM member churches and has assisted in recruiting others to work in Yardley Hastings and Penrhys. Mr Ronald Chongo, from the United Church of Zambia, is a volunteer at Yardley Hastings for one year.

vi **LMS/CWM Bicentenary**

In 1995 CWM's member churches are celebrating the LMS Bicentenary. From 1795 missionaries were sent by the LMS Board to proclaim "the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God" in the South Seas, India, South Africa and many other countries.

Now, two hundred years later, churches have been established in all these lands and we, in the United Reformed Church, have begun to receive missionaries as well as to send them.

This involves the challenging task of caring pastorally for these people. It is proving stimulating and rewarding to have dedicated Christians from other countries helping with the mission outreach of our local churches. The following two are the most recent examples:-

Christ Church, Estover, Plymouth

The Revd Andrew Midian, his wife Ruth and their four children (the youngest born in Britain in December, after their arrival) have come from the United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands to work in Estover, Plymouth, where he is a member of an ecumenical team serving the Local Ecumenical Partnership at Christ Church, which includes Methodists, Anglicans, Roman Catholics and URC members. As he shares in their worship, and outreach in witness and service Andrew's own perspectives have begun to make an impact on the communities, particularly his concern at the lack of young people in the churches.

Peace and Justice Centre, Milton Keynes

Mr Johnson Jesudoss has been recruited from South India to share in the work of the Peace and Justice Centre in Milton Keynes. He is working with the team there in helping Christians, and others, identify and tackle concerns which need to be addressed in the search for greater peace and justice in society. His experience within the Student Christian Movement and the Church of South India is enabling him to bring fresh perspectives and thinking to British problems.

vii **Inter-Church Exchange**

Note: The following lists, which cover the year March 1994 to February 1995, are not exhaustive but give only those appointments made by the Personnel Committee (until 31 December 1994) and the Overseas Exchange Sub-Committee (from 1 January 1995).

URC as Sending Church

Missionaries Newly Appointed

Revd Bill and Mrs Maureen Sewell, for service with the Botswana Synod of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.

Short Term Volunteers

Mr John Fenemore - with the Reformed Church of Romania
 Miss Gwenllian South - with the Reformed Church in Hungary
 Miss Nicola Watson - with the Reformed Church in Hungary
 Mr Paul Watson - with the Reformed Church of Romania

Note: all serving missionaries (at present 22) are included in the list of URC Personnel Overseas in the 1995 Year Book (pp 243-44).

URC as Receiving Church

a) Special Category Ministries

Revd Emmanuel K Frimpong, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, serving as Ghanaian Chaplain.

Mr Johnson Jesudoss, Church of South India, serving in the Peace and Justice Centre, Milton Keynes.

Revd Andrew Midian, United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, serving at Christ Church, Estover, Plymouth.

b) Short-term Volunteers

Mr Ronald Chongo, United Church of Zambia, at the National Youth Resource Centre, Yardley Hastings.

STUDENTS

a) At Westminster College, Cambridge

Ms Eva Khasarova Reformed Church of Slovakia

b) At St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak, Birmingham (see report at Appendix III)

Bishop Eduard Berger	Pomeranian Evangelical Church, Germany
Revd Lubomir Cervenka	Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren
Revd Konrad Gloekner	Pomeranian Evangelical Church, Germany
Revd Lee, Kwang-Soo	Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
Revd Miroslav Rosboril	Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren
Ms Anna Tamas	Reformed Church in Hungary

6 EUROPE

Since the **European Issues Adviser Consultancy** began in 1993 as a joint venture between Church and Society and World Church and Mission, a great deal of work has been done. This has included a recent **visit of Free Church Leaders to European Institutions**, participation in the **European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society** and the **Churches (Social Responsibility) Network on Europe**, and many other activities. A Europe Task Group has been established by Mission Concil and will report on Policy, links and structures in 1996.

The committee has been kept informed of **recent doctrinal developments** in Europe by the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee.

7 COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FOR BRITAIN AND IRELAND

A Lent 1996 study programme on the theme of reconciliation is scheduled for publication by September 1995; this anticipates the theme of the proposed Second European Ecumenical Assembly in 1997. Questions are being raised about the future of the Churches' Commission on Racial Justice after the end of 1997. Membership of CCBI by the Serbian Orthodox Church is being considered but application for observer status was not admitted in the case of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. The constitutions of CCBI and of CTE are being altered to include a category for councils of churches to become full members. This would enable the Free Church Federal Council to become a full member and this has been welcomed by the URC.

8 THE URC AND INTERMEDIATE LEVEL ECUMENISM

(see Resolution 23)

9 ENGLAND

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND A provisional response to the questions on the visible unity of the Church was sent to CTE by the committee. Mission Council approved the URC response to the review of CTE. It is proposed that Local Ecumenical Projects be renamed Local Ecumenical Partnerships with four categories: Church Partnerships, Covenant Partnerships, Chaplaincy Partnerships and Community Partnerships. The committee has expressed URC support for the change of name but some reservations about the categories. CTE FORUM meets 16-18 July 1995. The question of baptism/re-baptism in LEPs is being examined and Dr David Thompson is representing the URC.

BILATERAL RELATIONS The Methodist /URC Liaison Committee continues its work and has produced the annual broadsheet 'Quickstep'. The annual Joint Staff Meeting took place in January when restructurings, other bilateral relationships and some of the issues which divide us were discussed. The West Midlands URC Province and the Birmingham Methodist District continue exploring closer relations. Similar explorations are taking place in Mersey and Wessex Provinces.

A URC/Church of England Consultation has recently taken place when issues raised by LEPs, the implications of our respective European commitments for the UK ecumenical scene, reconciling of memories relating to 1662, and unfinished business from the 1984 Anglican/Reformed International Commission reported in 'God's Reign and Our Unity' were on the agenda. This initiative was taken jointly with the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee.

10 IRELAND

The committee thanked the Revd Jim Campbell of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for his valuable contributions to the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee and welcomed his successor, the Revd Jim Waring. The mutual support of the PCI and the URC for one another is greatly valued by both churches. The PCI continue to have the assurance of the active interest and prayers of the members of the URC.

11 SCOTLAND

The URC has a very small but valued presence in Scotland. The October 1994 Mission Council, on behalf of General Assembly, accepted the invitation of the Scottish Episcopal Church to begin to plan a basis for union along with the other members of the Multilateral Conversation. This initiative is the direct result of the decision to ordain women priests but it also aims to take forward the fine work of the Multilateral Conversation. The Scottish Congregational Church/URC Liaison Committee continues to be a means of co-operation, resource sharing and support. In November there will be a 24 hour consultation between the URC and the Church of Scotland. The topics for discussion will include our European links as part of the Reformed family and our different understandings and practice of eldership.

12 WALES

Local Ecumenism continues to make slow and steady progress. With the combined support of CYTUN and ENFYS the first steps have been taken to set up a system of **regional and area sponsoring bodies** for local ecumenical projects. Also as a response to the challenge of local ecumenism CYTUN has organised a wide ranging **consultation of church leaders** on the promotion of local ecumenism. On a national level there has been a call from the Free Church Council of Wales to seek to form a **single Welsh Free Church**. The URC Wales synod, at its meeting on 11th March 1995 responded to that call.

(see **Resolution 24**)

13 REPRESENTATION

The UK ecumenical bodies will in future be invited to send an observer to General Assembly in rotation and CCBI has been asked to help us to plan a rotation of voting representatives from the smaller churches.

The committee has invited the Methodist Church and the Church of England to send representatives to its meetings.

A one-off meeting together of the ecumenical committees of the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church, the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and the URC in September 1996 has been suggested by CTE and the committee has expressed its support.

The World Convention of the Churches of Christ in 2004. The committee has agreed to welcome the coming of the convention to Birmingham in 2004 and to send one or two representatives to the 1996 convention in Calgary, Canada.

14 CONCLUSION

Having had only one meeting and with a huge agenda, the committee is still finding its feet. Members of Assembly are asked to note with satisfaction that the **URC secretary for ecumenical relations, the Revd Sheila Maxey**, has been appointed moderator of CTE's **Group for Local Unity** for two years from CTE Forum in July 1995.

RESOLUTIONS

Ecumenical

- 22** a) The Assembly affirms the URC's need for the insights, skills and vision of Christians from our partner churches and strongly re-affirms the policy inaugurated at the 1988 General Assembly of budgeting five special category posts for such World Mission work in the UK.
- b) The Assembly invites district councils in consultation with local churches to continue to identify appropriate innovative ministries for the five World Mission posts as they become vacant.

WORLD MISSION POSTS IN THE UK

The 1988 General Assembly formally recognised that the URC needed to receive missionaries as well as send them by setting aside five special category ministry posts for such missionaries.

The appointments are for three years and provide, in selected situations, the opportunity for learning from the life and experience of Christians from other cultures and churches. Four of the posts are, at present, filled: the Revd Andrew Midian from the United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, serving in Estover, Plymouth; Mr Johnson Jesudoss from the Church of South India, serving as a peace and justice worker in Milton Keynes; the Revd Dineke Ferwerda from the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, working in the Southall Inter-Faith Project; the Revd Emmanuel Frimpong from the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, chaplain to the Ghanaian community.

In the conviction that it is important to strengthen this kind of partnership in mission and believing that the year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the London Missionary Society is a particularly appropriate moment, the following resolution is put forward.

- 23** a) The Assembly adopts the policy statement on intermediate level ecumenism.
- b) The Assembly calls on provincial synods and district councils to work together in the appointment of the URC representatives on intermediate bodies and in determining responsibility for the URC share of the cost of County Ecumenical Officer posts.

THE URC AND INTERMEDIATE LEVEL ECUMENISM

One of the declared aims and functions of Churches Together in England is 'to promote, co-ordinate, support, service intermediate bodies in England, assisting them in their care for local ecumenical activity and representing their concerns at the national level.'

Definition of terms

An **Intermediate Body** is the means of cooperation between the churches at a level between the national and the local. A large number of these bodies are based on English counties but not all. Some are based on large cities, two on new towns, and some deal with only part of a large county.

A County Ecumenical Officer (more accurately called an intermediate body ecumenical officer) is someone appointed and paid ecumenically to service the body and usually also to promote and advise on ecumenical development within the county/area. There are, at present, 8 full-time, 27 part-time and 6 spare-time CEOs and 6 Anglican diocesan ecumenical officers acting as county ecumenical officers.

The URC's relationship to the intermediate bodies.

The URC's ecumenical commitment is well known. It is demonstrated by the fact that at least 350 of our 1800 churches are shared congregations. It is also demonstrated by the fact that, although we only qualify for 12 representatives on Churches Together in England Forum, there were nearly 30 URC people at the 1993 Forum because URC people were there representing regional and other ecumenical bodies. But if the ecumenical vision and life of those joint congregations and those people is to get into the URC bloodstream and give the whole church new energy, then our district councils and the intermediate bodies must feed into each other more systematically.

Each provincial synod relates to several intermediate bodies but district councils are more likely to relate mainly to only one. It is important, therefore, if the URC at district and local level is to be more effectively fed by and engaged in ecumenical relations, that district councils are more clearly linked to the appropriate intermediate body. This would be facilitated if each district council shared with the provincial synod in the responsibility of appointing the URC representative(s) to the appropriate intermediate body. Where there is determination and commitment the mismatch of denominational boundaries can be overcome. **Good two-way communication between the district council and the intermediate body** can be developed if it is made clear to which committee (for example pastoral or executive) the URC representative on the intermediate body relates and if ecumenical affairs are regularly on the agenda of the district council.

When the new national ecumenical instruments were set up one of the ways in which the URC signalled its commitment was by setting up the **Ministry in Ecumenical Situations Fund**. The larger part is mostly used to pay the URC's share of the salary where the minister in the Local Ecumenical Partnership is not from the URC. The smaller part is used to pay the URC's part of the salaries of County Ecumenical Officers. County Ecumenical Officers have a vital role to play in our pilgrimage together but, being ecumenically appointed and funded, they also test our good practice in working together and are easy targets for cut-backs.

The following policy statement seeks to reaffirm the URC's commitment to intermediate level ecumenism and to the role of the County Ecumenical Officer, to define good practices in the appointment and funding of the posts, whether full or part-time, and to spell out the URC's financial commitment .

Policy statement on intermediate level ecumenism

- 1 The URC would encourage all intermediate bodies to aim to appoint a County Ecumenical Officer who is at least half-time.
- 2 The URC would expect County Ecumenical Officer posts to be advertised openly and the candidates interviewed by a representative panel. The URC would expect every County Ecumenical Officer to have a job description approved by the intermediate body.
- 3 The URC believes that all the expenses of the post should be paid through the intermediate body concerned and that payments in kind, such as housing and office facilities, should be clearly identified. There should be clear guidelines about out of pocket expenses such as travelling and £5,000 p.a. is considered reasonable for a full-time County Ecumenical Officer's expenses.
- 4 The URC would expect each intermediate body to have its own budget and separate funding.
- 5 The contributions of the different denominations to funding County Ecumenical Officers will vary according to how many are involved and whether, in a particular

situation, one church chooses to lead the way. The URC would support the general rule of: Church of England 33%, Roman Catholic Church 33%, Free Churches 34%, with the Free Church share divided: Methodist 40%, Baptist and URC 25% each, and other small churches 10%

- 6 The URC continues to commit itself to funding the salary costs of approved County Ecumenical Officers out of the Ministry in Ecumenical Situations Fund in line with the formula in paragraph 5.
- 7 The Ministry in Ecumenical Situations Fund should also be available in the form of 'start-up' grants to encourage new posts and to enable initial difficulties within intermediate bodies to be addressed where funding from other denominations is not immediately available.

- 24** The General Assembly welcomes the resolution passed by the Wales Synod of the United Reformed Church on 11 March 1995 that

In order to further the mission and ministry of the Gospel it [the Wales Synod] should support conversations to establish a United Church, affirmative of the linguistic and cultural identities of Wales, and to include Enfys and non-Enfys churches who wish to be included in the conversations.

and instructs the Ecumenical Committee, in full consultation with the Wales Synod, to take responsibility for the URC's share in these conversations.

CONVERSATIONS TO ESTABLISH A UNITED CHURCH IN WALES

At a national conference called by the Free Church Council of Wales (FCCW), held at Aberystwyth on 11 October 1994, the following resolution was passed by a substantial majority:

We are of the opinion that new conversations should be opened between the Nonconformist denominations in Wales with a view to the formation in Wales of one United Free Church comprising both Welsh speaking and English speaking churches.

Since then, the FCCW has communicated with all the denominations it believes belong to the Council urging them to respond positively to the above resolution.

Representatives of the URC in Wales consulted with representatives of the Council for Methodism in Wales and agreed to the wording of a resolution to be put before the Synods of both churches.

Note: Enfys (meaning 'rainbow') refers to the Commission of the Covenanted Churches in Wales, whose members are the Church in Wales, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the United Reformed Church and certain churches of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Convener: Mrs Susan Rand
Secretary: Revd Simon Walkling

- a) To develop detailed equal opportunities policies.
 - b) To have oversight of training programmes in equal opportunities.
 - c) To monitor the implementation of the equal opportunities policy.
 - d) To report annually to the General Assembly on the implementation of the policy.
-

1 The first meeting of this new committee was held in January. It was therefore necessary to spend time in exploring the range of the remit, and discussing the wider issues.

2 The Committee felt that it has a specific task and a broad aim. The task is to provide the detail of a workable equal opportunities policy, in consultation with those affected by it. This would cover staff recruitment; the acceptance of ministers for training; the call of ministers to pastorates; and representation on URC committees. The broader aim is to develop awareness in local congregations of the issues relating to equal opportunities.

3 The Committee has begun its work by asking for information about current practice within the URC, and collecting a range of the policies adopted by other churches. The theological basis for the work is also being considered.

4 In 1994 the General Assembly asked Mission Council to consider the allocation of a special multi-racial ministry, and make proposals in consultation with the Equal Opportunities Committee, (Resolution 20(b), as amended). Explorations are under way, and it is hoped that recommendations can be made by Mission Council to General Assembly in 1996.

FINANCE

Convener: Mr Alistair Black

Secretary: Mr Clem Frank

"The Committee is responsible for the proper keeping of accounts and records the oversight of all funds and properties and will give advice on all financial matters".

1 The remit of the Finance Committee was agreed by General Assembly in 1994 as above;

However, as United Reformed Church Trust is presently considering its responsibilities for the funds and properties of the Church, it may be necessary to amend these terms.

2 The accounts have been prepared under the guidance of the Committee and follow the same format as for 1993, which introduced some modest changes in anticipation of the recommendations to be included in the final version of SORP 2, covering accounting by charities. However, the delay in the publication of these recommendations as has meant that no further changes have been made in the format of the 1994 accounts.

3 Now that these recommendations are available, the Committee will study them with a view to considering their application to the URC Accounts for 1995 alongside the simpler revised layout which the Finance Committee has agreed with the Resource Planning Advisory Committee and which has been introduced for the 1996 budget.

4 The Committee will also provide advice to local churches on the impact of these recommendations.

RESOLUTIONS

Finance

25 Assembly adopts the accounts for 1994

The audited accounts covering the United Reformed Church central funds for 1994 are shown in Appendix X.

26 Assembly gratefully acknowledges the giving of the churches in 1994 to the Ministry and Mission Fund

A surplus of £159,000 was recorded in 1994 as compared with a budget deficit of £38,000, due to the transfer of £269,000, which represents most of the Memorial Hall Trust grant received in the year, to the general funds of the church to assist in offsetting the increased Maintenance of the Ministry costs of £304,000.

In 1994, contributions to the Ministry and Mission Fund from churches increased by 4.25% over 1993, which is an encouraging response in view of the singularly low level of earnings inflation.

MINISTRIES

Convener: Revd Keith Forecast
Secretary: Revd Christopher Baker

The Committee is responsible for the ministry of word and sacrament, church-related community workers and lay preachers. It is concerned with numbers, recruitment, central care and conditions of service, chaplaincies in industry, higher and further education and in the armed forces and 'special category' ministry. It will have concern for the pastoral support of ministers, church-related community workers and lay preachers, including supervision, appraisal, self evaluation and counselling. It will oversee the work of the national assessment Board, whose convener will be a member of the committee. It will also be assisted by three sub-committees:

- (i) **Accreditation**
 Maintaining the Roll of Ministers, this sub-committee will accredit those applying for inclusion after training or coming from other denominations.
- (ii) **Maintenance of the Ministry**
 Will advise on the level of stipend and ministers' conditions of service through the Plan for Partnership. It will also be concerned for pensions through its associated Pensions Working Group.
- (iii) **Retired Ministers Housing**
 Will continue the work of the existing Committee in association with the URC Retired Minister's Housing Society Ltd.

1 A Working Party has been established to consider the implications of resolutions from the Mission Council (March '94) and Assembly (July '94) in connection with the number of ministers paid from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and there is an ad hoc Task Group set up by the Mission Council in January '95 to revise the Guidelines Concerning Suspension and Resignation from Ministry and Deletion from the Roll of Ministers (Pastoral Measure) and the National Assessment Board.

2 **CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORK MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

No provision for this sub-committee of the former Support Committee was made within the new structures. The Committee was made aware of the fact that the Central Management Committee was established after a thorough and protracted review of the Church-Related Community Work programme involving practitioners, trainers and those involved in management and support of Church-Related Community Workers (CRCWs) at local, intermediate and national levels. As a result, the management of CRCWs is shared between local management committees and the Central Management Committee and is based on a Covenant signed by the local 'Church in Community', the CRCW and the Central Management Committee. To impose a change so soon on this new management structure would be harmful at a fragile stage of this ministry and a rejection of the work undertaken to secure church-related community work as a relevant and exciting way for the Church to engage in mission. The Ministries Committee therefore requested the Mission Council to recommend to the General Assembly that the Central Management Committee be recognised as a Sub-Committee of the Ministries Committee.

3 **LAY PREACHING**

3.1 The Committee was informed that the Lay Preaching Sub-Committee of the former Training Committee had not been discharged due to confusion about the new structures and, therefore, on how the work of the Sub-Committee would be handled within the new structures.

3.2 The Committee agreed the following:

- (a) matters relating to the training of Lay Preachers should be the responsibility of the Training Committee;
- (b) matters relating to the national accreditation of Lay Preachers should be the responsibility of the Accreditation Sub-Committee.

3.3 Regarding responsibility for the future policy, three possibilities were noted:

- (i) authorisation for a Sub-Committee;
- (ii) a network for lay preaching commissioners to be established which would meet annually to discuss matters of common interest such as advocacy and policy;
- (iii) all matters relating to policy to be the responsibility of the Ministries Committee.

3.4 The Committee agreed that the former Lay Preaching Sub-Committee should be called together for consultations on the way ahead and to be formally discharged.

4 Concern was expressed by members of the Ministries Committee about the limited resources to cope with such a major remit. A committee of eight with two meetings a year would be unable to deal adequately with the major items included in its terms of reference. In order to delegate work to smaller groups and working parties there would need to be an adequate budget.

5 In order to achieve a better balance of responsibilities the Accreditation Sub-Committee was requested to be responsible for the following items:

- Number of Ministers,
- Deployment,
- Recruitment,
- Accreditation of Lay Preachers,
- National Assessment Board.

It was agreed to appoint the Convener of the National Assessment Board to be an ex officio member of the Accreditation Sub-Committee.

6 The Committee recognised the importance of chaplaincies in Industry, Higher & Further Education and the Armed Forces.

7 The Co-ordinating Secretary for Higher & Further Education, Kevin Swaine, is due to relinquish this responsibility at the end of July. The Committee is grateful to him for undertaking this important work and wishes him well in the new ministry he commenced last September. In due course the Committee will appoint a successor.

8 The United Baptist & URC Board will continue to represent their respective denominations with regard to the work of Chaplains to the three services. The Revd. Philip Schofield retired as Secretary to the Board in January after 11 years of diligent service. The Committee asks Assembly to convey to him its greetings and appreciation. The new Secretary to the Board is a Baptist, the Revd John Murray.

9 One of our URC Chaplains, the Revd Jackie Petrie (RAF) is a member of Assembly.

10 The Committee has agreed arrangements to continue the Support Committee's work in relation to the thirty 'special category' ministries. (A schedule of these posts is included as **Appendix IX**) We are grateful to Mrs Mary Stacy, a former member of the Support Committee, who has agreed to assist the Committee with the administration of these posts.

11 The Committee has responsibility for receiving and processing applications for grants for Ministry in Ecumenical Situations (MES Grants) and Industrial Evangelism (for projects within the area covered by the London Presbyteries of the former Presbyterian

Church of England) and bringing recommendations to the Advisory Group on Grants and Loans for final decision. Procedures for dealing expeditiously with applications are being established so that decisions are not delayed while awaiting the next meeting of the Ministries Committee.

12 The Committee noted that a Working Party on Appraisal for Ministers had, at the request of the Mission Council meeting in October 1993, suspended its work pending the monitoring of a scheme initiated by the West Midlands Province. Decisions will need to be made about how this work is to be monitored and by whom. It will be necessary either for the original Working Party to be convened as a task group or for a new group to be appointed.

13 The Ministries Committee has taken over responsibility, in conjunction with the Retired Ministers Housing Sub-Committee, Finance and Windermere, for the Pre-Retirement Courses for Ministers and Spouses. Two courses are planned for this year for those retiring in 1997.

14 **CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORK**

14.1 During the past year four new posts have been accredited: Ely (Cardiff), Watling Valley (Milton Keynes), South Aston (Birmingham) and The Ortons (Peterborough). David Twine has been commissioned to his first post in Ely and David Gray is now working in South Aston, having completed his training at Selly Oak last summer. Marie Trubic has been commissioned to the Milton Keynes post having worked for nearly five years as a CRCW in Everton. The Everton post has been reviewed with a recommendation that it be re-accredited. The local Management Committee is currently addressing the issues raised in the review prior to making an application to the Central Management Committee. The recently accredited post in Peterborough has yet to be filled.

14.2 In July, Simon Loveitt started his second five year term working with the church and community of Hulme, Manchester. This followed a positive review of the work he had undertaken and a decision of District Council and the Central Management Committee to re-accredit the post. The post in Nechells (Birmingham) has been re-accredited and it is anticipated that a CRCW will take up the post there in September, extending the work started by Kate Breeze.

14.3 The seven CRCWs currently in local posts continue to work alongside churches and communities, in most cases in areas of social and economic need where unemployment, poor housing, family breakdown and poverty are widespread. However, the decision to accredit the post in a new part of Milton Keynes is an indication of the Committee's determination to consider all applications on their merits and not just on the basis of statistical definitions of deprivation.

14.4 At the Strategy conference in October involving workers, local and central management committee members and representatives of the wider church, a mission strategy aimed at consolidating and developing the CRCW programme was adopted. The strategy document sets out proposals on the future deployment of CRCWs, advocacy, recruitment and training. The Conference itself concluded that the most significant challenge of the next few years was the need to increase the number of candidates for this ministry. Although there are now two CRCWs in training (one with Salford Urban Mission and one at Westhill College) this is below the five candidates a year to be sent for training at Salford which was recommended in last year's review of training. One option being considered by the Central Management Committee in conjunction with Salford Urban Mission is a more flexible course of training in community work and theology for those candidates unable to move to Salford.

15 NUMBER OF MINISTERS WORKING PARTY

15.1 Background

During the early part of 1994 the Treasurer warned Mission Council that the number of ministers to be paid from the Ministry and Mission Fund was in excess of the number which had been used to calculate the Budget for that year and for 1995.

Discussion revealed that there was no effective mechanism in place to control the number of ministers coming on to the pay roll. In most years the number of those entering had more or less been matched by those leaving through retirement, resignation or death. The situation now being presented had come about because during 1993 this balance had been upset. The need for a control system had thus been made evident.

In order to bring about some immediate short term control Mission Council in March 1994 imposed a moratorium on the issue of certificates of eligibility to ministers of other denominations seeking to enter our stipendiary ministry.

General Assembly in July 1994 agreed to extend this moratorium until Assembly 1995 at the latest.

15.2 Assembly 1994 resolution

"The Assembly instructs Ministries, in consultation with Synod Moderators, the Patterns of Ministry Working Party and Finance (and with power to consult more widely) to submit to General Assembly, or the Mission Council, regulations for stipendiary ministry, including any necessary revision of the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration, which shall:

- a) enable a more accurate estimate of future numbers of ministers and CRCWs available for call;
- b) ensure that (with some possible tolerance for small and temporary variation and with the retention of a scheme of issuing certificates of eligibility to ministers of other Churches) there cannot at any time be an excess of ministers and CRCWs to be paid from the Maintenance of the Ministry account over the full time equivalent number used in calculating the current year's budget;
and
- c) to consider any other relevant issues not covered by the Patterns of Ministry Working Party."

15.3 Ministries' Response

A working party was set up comprising the following:-

The Revd Keith Forecast (Convener, Ministries Committee)
The Revd Malcolm Hanson (Convener, Patterns of Ministry Working Party)
The Revd John Waller (Provincial Moderator and, later, Convener, Resource Planning Advisory Committee)
The Revd Lesley Husselbee (Secretary for Training)
Mr Clem Frank (Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant)
The Revd Michael Diffey (Secretary for Ministries)
The General Secretary joined the group at its later meetings.

15.4 The Present Situation

The present control of the number of pastorates, and the introduction of ministers to them, is in the hands of district councils. There is no central control. Decisions about who should be accepted for training are made by synods. In the case of CRCW posts and the introduction of CRCWs to them, the Central Management Committee of the CRCW programme is also involved.

Ministers and CRCWs entering such stipendiary service do so by one of the following routes:-

- a) upon ordination (or commissioning) following training
- b) upon transfer from non-stipendiary to stipendiary ministry;
- c) by transfer from the ministries of other denominations;

Ministers and CRCWs of our denomination sometimes return to stipendiary service after:-

- a) service in another denomination;
- b) service overseas;
- c) the service of the wider church in ecumenical posts;
- d) teaching in a theological college or other institution where the staff are paid locally;
- e) secular employment;
- f) a period under discipline.

All stipendiary ministers and CRCWs on the Roll of Ministers are eligible to be considered for a call to a pastorate.

Only those seeking to transfer to our ministry from other denominations are required to apply to the Accreditation Sub-Committee for a certificate of eligibility.

15.5 Attempts at Forecasting

The number of ordinands likely to be ordained and Church-Related Community Workers to be commissioned in any one year is predictable, though it is not always possible to do so with total accuracy. Other numbers are more difficult to forecast.

Complicating factors include:-

- a) the unpredictability of the number of candidates offering;
- b) the fact that acceptance for training is finally decided at synod level;
- c) the fact that not all students complete their training by the expected date;
- d) the fact that some students, for a variety of reasons, defer ordination after completing their courses of training;
- e) the difficulty of predicting which ministers will seek to return to stipendiary service from other employment or to enter it from non-stipendiary service;
- f) the possibility of ministers seeking to transfer from full-time to part-time service or vice versa;
- g) the continuation of applications for certificates of eligibility;
- h) the unpredictability of resignations and deaths in service.

In 1994 720 ministers, on average, were paid from the Maintenance of the Ministry account. The same number has been placed in the budget for 1995 and 1996.

The numbers are likely to drop to 717 in December 1995 but increase to 719 in December 1996. On this basis, in order to keep the number within the budgeted figure of 720, we should only permit 1 minister to transfer to the URC Roll during this 2 year period. However, the situation will be constantly monitored in order that further introductions can be authorised so that any additional unpredictable vacancies on the payroll can be filled as soon as possible.

15.6 Control Mechanism

We are aware of the need to address the mission opportunities of the Church and the consequent need for stipendiary ministers. We also do not wish to live for long with a situation in which available finance seems to dictate policy. Nevertheless, we are faced with an immediate problem which has alerted us to the need to have in place an effective system of control. We are glad to know that the Resource Planning Advisory Committee are addressing these issues. We hope that their recommendations, if accepted, will lead the Church in to a new and healthier system of assessing needs, resources and priorities.

We, therefore, make the following proposals:

- i that the deployment policy initiated some years ago and still being carefully followed in many provinces, be reactivated and applied more universally and with greater stringency. We realise that this cannot have any radical effect for some years, but there is evidence that where such a policy is given a high profile it has an impact upon district pastoral strategies; **(Resolution 27)**
- ii that the Resource Planning Advisory Committee, which proposes to consult with provinces annually concerning human and financial resources, shall recommend each year the number of ministers to be paid in the year for which the budget is being set and that this number be placed in the budget;
- iii that, acknowledging the impossibility of completely accurate forecasting in this matter, a measure of tolerance be permitted within single figures either way;
- iv that the following, upon acceptance of a call to a declared vacancy, should be admitted to the payroll;
 - a) students in training for the stipendiary ministry including non-stipendiary students and ministers transferring to the stipendiary ministry;
 - b) ministers of the United Reformed Church seeking to return to the payroll from approved ecumenical posts, training college posts, and other ministries endorsed by the Church;
- v that the General Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Secretary for Ministries should confer regularly to establish whether there is at any time a difference between the number of ministers budgeted for and the number actually being paid, and agree how many ministers, if any, can be accepted on the payroll from other sources;
- vi that URC ministers who are currently in secular employment wishing to return to the stipendiary service of the Church should indicate to the Secretary for Ministries, as soon as possible, their intention to seek an introduction to a pastorate;
- vii that ministers of other churches applying to transfer to the URC Roll of Ministers shall make application to the Secretary for Ministries who shall place their completed application before the Accreditation Sub-Committee for a decision on whether or not a Certificate of Eligibility shall be issued;
- viii that a list of ministers eligible to be introduced to pastorates shall be passed to the provincial moderators on June 1st and December 1st each year, together with a note of the number who may be introduced and that the moderators seek to make introductions, taking account of the needs of vacant pastorates and the skills and experience of the ministers listed. **(Resolution 28)**

15.7 *NOTE: The 30 'special category' Ministries and the five special ministries allocated to ministers of partner churches with CWM are not at present affected by those proposals.*

15.8 Though it is hazardous to forecast with accuracy, we believe that the trend indicates that the number of stipendiary ministers currently serving the Church is about to diminish through what the secular world would call 'natural wastage'. For this reason we are not proposing any control on the number of applicants being accepted for training, nor any change in the role of Church Meeting, District Council and Synod in the assessment, call and concurrence procedures. The Ministries Committee will, however, keep the matter under regular review and be ready to bring further proposals should that at any time be thought necessary.

15.9 With the kind of monitoring and regular review suggested above we believe it is possible to lift the moratorium on ministers from other churches transferring to the stipendiary ministry of the URC without exceeding the number used to calculate the budget. **(Resolution 29)**

ACCREDITATION SUB-COMMITTEE

Convener: Mrs Margaret Carrick Smith

Secretary: Revd Hazel Martell

16.1 The Sub-Committee met for the first time on 26th January. The majority part of its remit is to continue the work of the former Vocations Committee which met on three occasions between Assembly last year and December '94. Although two meetings a year will be planned in accordance with Assembly decisions regarding committees, because a major part of its work, in maintaining the Roll of Ministers, will require reports and proposals to Assembly, it may be necessary to arrange additional meetings.

16.2 The Accreditation Sub-Committee's predecessor, the Vocations Committee, spent a considerable amount of time revising the Guidelines Concerning Suspension and resignation from Ministry and Deletion from the Roll of Ministers (Pastoral Measure). It reported to the Mission Council in January and welcomed the decision to appoint a special ad hoc Task Group to take this work forward.

16.3 Responsibility for recruitment will be the responsibility of the Accreditation Sub-Committee. Two Enquirers' Conferences a year are organised by provinces on behalf of the whole Church. These events are always well attended and greatly appreciated by those enquiring about the possibility of offering for ministry. Details about these events are sent to churches.

16.4 Vocations Sunday continues to be observed on the second Sunday in Epiphany and involves the Scottish Congregational and Methodist Churches as well as the URC. Plans are progressing to produce material for 1996 and will be circulated to churches well in advance.

16.5 **ROLL OF CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS**

- i) Admissions to the Roll (from 1st Feb 94 to 31st Jan 95)
 - a) **By Commissioning:**
David Gray

16.6 **ROLL OF MINISTERS**

- i) Admissions to the Roll (from 1st Feb 94 to 31st Jan 95)
 - a) **By Ordination** - stipendiary:
Richard Alford, Mark Ambrose, Peter Ball, Paul Brewerton, Peter Colwell, Alison Davis, Brian Harley, Maggie Hindley, Graham Hoslett, Neville Husband, Norma Johnson, Robert Jones, Peter Jordon, Timothy Key, Kathryn Louch, Sally Martin, James McNaughton McAulay, James Peter Norris, Nicholas Percival, Jean Seddon, Andrew Sellwood, Rosemary Tusting, Richard West, John Young
 - b) **By Ordination** - non stipendiary:
David Allen, Joyce Ashworth, Mary Buchanan, Alison Chippindale, Elizabeth Davies, John Evans, Shirley Farrier, Geoffrey Gleed, Hugh Graham, Colin Hunt, Jonathan Hyde, Gillian Jackson, Deirdre Lee, Susan March, Owen North, Philip Osborn, Ian Prentice, Ronald Reid, Maureen Roberts, Brian Russell, David Skipp, Anne Stokes, Michael Storr, David Stuart
 - c) **By Transfer from Other Churches:**
Daniel Von Allmen (Switzerland), Charisa Hunter-Crump (Christian Church, Disciples, USA) Jean Fletcher (Methodist), Tom Lowe (Presbyterian Church of Ireland), Rickey L Mearkle (United Church of Christ, USA), Cheryl Slusser (UCC USA), Peter Stevens (UCC USA), Julian Templeton (Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand), Kenneth Thom (Church of Scotland)

d) **By Reinstatement:**
David Lewis

ii) Deletions from the Roll

a) **By Resignation:**

Peter R Crocker, Lindsey Hassall, Roger Jones, David Pennells,
David Lindsay Smyth, Stanley David Webb

b) **By Resignation and/or Transfer to Other Churches:**

Martin Henninger (Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz),
Robert McGaha (Presbyterian Church, USA)

c) **By Recommendation:**

Donald McIlhagga

(Resolution 30)

16.7 **Changes within the Roll:**

Non-stipendiary to Stipendiary:

Barry Richard Parker

17

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT BOARD

Convener: Mr Raymond Clarke
Secretary: Secretary for ministries

17.1 During 1994 the Board met 57 candidates, of which 39 were accepted by synods for training, 27 were accepted for the stipendiary ministry including 5 transferring from the non-stipendiary ministry; 12 for non-stipendiary. 2 withdrew their application; a decision on one candidate is still awaited.

17.2 The Board is continuing work on establishing the criteria for commending those attending assessment conferences to synods and hopes to complete this work by Assembly '96.

17.3 Elizabeth Caswell, Peter Clarke, Leslie Green and Alan Hart completed their terms of service as members of the Board and we are grateful to them for their invaluable contributions. We welcomed Leonard Bhagwandin, Brian Evans, Pat Peirce, Marva Ward and Cecil White to the Board. Induction training was arranged for new members which proved to be much appreciated.

18 **MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY SUB-COMMITTEE**

Convener: Mr Michael Harrison
Secretary: Mr Alan Taylor

18.1 The 1994 General Assembly gave the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee the task of advising on ministers' stipends, pensions and conditions of service. In practice, with the considerable help of the Pensions Sub-Committee and its Convener, the MoM Sub-Committee has also had to decide executively how to implement agreed policies; most frequently has had to be done by the "Officers" (Convener, Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Payroll Supervisor) between Sub-Committee meetings. Occasional differences of opinion have not in any way weakened the good spirit which has been characteristic of our meetings.

18.2 The new central committee structure will not work unless there is good collaboration between committees as well as consultations with Provinces, Districts and local churches. For example the MoM Sub-Committee's work is dependent on

that of the Resources Planning Advisory Committee and the Number of Ministers Working Party; we are, after all, responsible for advising on the expenditure of some 85% of centrally raised funds. The most effective and economical ways of collaborating and consulting need constant scrutiny; fragmentation into small groups with limited responsibilities may not always be the best solution, for it may lead to duplication of work and/or massive overload on co-ordinators.

- 18.3 The need for control of the number of ministers (full-time plus full-time equivalent) admitted to the URC payroll was an issue brought urgently to Mission Council's attention early in 1994 by the old MoM Committee. That need for early and effective action remains; the nettle has to be grasped. The new MoM Sub-Committee cannot otherwise function as it should.
- 18.4 It is good that from 1.1.95 stipend levels have reached the level we have been aiming to achieve over the last five years. It seems right that for 1996 the only increase should be that needed to match the RPI. Indeed that may well be the correct policy for several years, provided that changes in wage levels approximately reflect changes in the RPI.
- 18.5 1995 sees the retirement of Alan Taylor as our Secretary. He has been one of the host of good folk in the URC who quietly carry out onerous duties, sometimes difficult, sometimes dull but vital, without appearing in the limelight. We thank him sincerely for his loyal service and for helpful contributions to our meetings.

19

PENSIONS WORKING GROUP

Convener: Mr Victor Hughff

Secretary: Mr Alan Taylor

- 19.1 The £11.3m deficit on the long-term valuation basis provisionally reported to the 1994 Assembly was duly confirmed in the Actuary's Report and the next valuation is not due until 1st January 1997. That deficit has its origins in the large stipend rises of 1992/3 which increased dramatically our liabilities for pensions in payment as well as for those not yet begun. It has been worsened by the effects of a reduction in the rate of tax we could reclaim on dividends and a, hopefully short-term, standstill or reduction in dividends on our investments.
- 19.2 Our pension fund is based on the 'fully funded' principle, which means that every minister's pension should be paid for during working lifetime. The current state of the fund is that with liabilities of about £42m, and income and outgo roughly equal at about £2.75m our requirement is almost static. The continuation of the pattern of subventions already agreed should still be adequate.
- 19.3 At 1st January 1994 we were paying pensions to 897 members or their widow/ers, and there were 767 active members contributing.

20 RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING SUB-COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd David Hannen

Secretary: Mr Clive Willis

20.1 During the year 1994 10 retiring ministers and 1 minister's widow were assisted with housing by the Committee. All qualifying applicants were assisted and capital for property purchase was provided when required. In addition seven tenants were rehoused in properties more suited to their needs.

Number of properties

As at 1 January 1994	289
Purchased in 1994	18
Received as legacies or gifts	2

	309
Less number of properties sold	23

Number of properties as at 31 December	286
	===
Of which	
Not occupied	1
For Sale	7
Occupied by	
Retired ministers	168
Ministers widows	99
Sitting tenants or other Non URC tenants	11

	286
	===

All the properties sold and those for sale at the year end were in localities in which no known applicant wished to reside.

20.2 At the year end eight properties were in the process of purchase and nine applicants were seeking properties.

20.3 It is anticipated that during 1995 housing will be provided for 26 applicants.

20.4 Properties are purchased in either in the name of the United Reformed Church Trust or of the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society. In either case they are managed by the officers of the Housing Society. Where a tenant has a financial stake in the property, this is recognised by means of a Declaration of Trust.

20.5 The maximum contributions made by the Committee or the Trust are determined annually on a county-by-county basis by reference to average prices for semi-detached houses during the preceding year. More detailed information about these maximum amounts is available from the Secretary. It should be noted that:-

- (1) Where applicants have the financial resources to do so, they may put in their own funds so as to permit the county maximum amounts to be exceeded by up to 50%. This is known as the joint ceiling figure.
- (2) Applicants wishing to have a retirement property costing in excess of the joint ceiling figure should consult with the Secretary.

- (3) These figures relate to total purchase cost, which includes not only the agreed purchase price, but also the cost of any repairs or improvements identified as being necessary at the time when the property is surveyed.
- (4) The maximum amount of contribution is not provided as of right to each applicant; the determining factor in deciding the amount is how much capital is owned by the applicant and spouse.

20.6 In 1994 the standard rent was £52 per calendar month. This sum is the rent payable by those who are provided with the maximum contribution when acquiring their property. If less than the maximum contribution is provided, the rent payable is reduced proportionately.

20.7 Rental income for 1994 was £152,000 (as compared with £146,000 for 1993). This sum was credited to Property Management Accounts, from which all costs relating to maintenance, repair, insurance and administration are taken. Expenditure for 1994 amounted to £148,000, thus giving a surplus for the year of £4,000.

For 1995 the standard rent has been set at £56 per calendar month.

RESOLUTIONS

Ministries

27 Assembly, accepting the need to share the ministers paid from the Maintenance of the Ministry account, instructs the Mission Council through the Resource Planning Advisory Committee to consult with representatives of the provincial synods about the present deployment and to decide on and recommend an appropriate policy to the 1996 Assembly.

28 Assembly accepts the procedure for controlling the number of ministers to be paid from the Maintenance of the Ministry Account set out in paragraph 15.6.ii-viii above.

29 Assembly agrees to lift the moratorium imposed at Assembly 1994 concerning the application of ministers from other denominations to enter the stipendiary ministry of the United Reformed Church.

30 Assembly affirms the action taken by the Ministries Committee as reported in para 16.6.ii.c to delete the name of the Revd Donald McIlhagga from the Roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church.

RESOLUTIONS

Maintenance of Ministry

- 31** Assembly amends para 5.5 of the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration to read "Lay workers to be included".

Assembly amends the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration by addition of a new para 5.5.2 "Lay missionaries serving in posts recognised and designated by the Ecumenical Committee".

Approval was given by the Executive some time ago for the payment of lay missionaries from overseas serving in the UK from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund. This decision by the Executive has not been formalised in the Plan for Partnership, and to do so requires the above resolution.

- 32** Assembly adds the following para 8.4.5 to the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration "Where the minister has attained the age of 60 and, with the approval of the pastorate and the District Council, moves into the property designated as the retirement home, retirement resettlement and removal grants, as set out in this para, shall be paid. Retirement removal and resettlement grants shall only be paid once during the ministry of any minister, or ministerial married couple".

From time to time ministers move to their final retirement home before ceasing to serve their local church, and are thereafter paid a housing allowance. In such circumstances the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee is asked to pay retirement removal expenses and retirement resettlement grant. In order to provide for this contingency, the above resolution is required.

- 33** Assembly amends para 6.1.3.2 of the Plan for Partnership to read "All ministers and CRCW's who are unable to work for more than 3 days should advise the Finance Office, as soon as possible during their illness, in order that the necessary records can be maintained".

Regulations with regard to sickness have changed recently, and as para 6.1.3.2 is now out of date the above resolution is proposed.

RESOLUTIONS

Pensions

- 34** Assembly amends the Rules of the United Reformed Ministers' Pension Fund (both the rules applying before Assembly 1993, for those who elect to be dealt with under these rules, and the rules adopted by Assembly 1993) as follows:-

Rule 22.3 to read "Where a member leaves one or more children below the age of 24 years, an annual pension in respect of each child until the child attains the age of 24 years, or until the child ceases to be dependent, whichever is the earlier. Initially this pension is £256 and this level of pension will be reviewed annually."

Members of the Assembly may recall that at Assembly 1994 the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee brought a resolution to increase the amount of the children's award under the Rules of the Pension Fund to £250 initially. The resolution was not put, as following a proposed amendment, difficulty arose with regard to the wording. Increased allowances are temporarily being paid from discretionary funds, in the care of the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee, but the above amendment to the Rules to the URC Ministers' Pension Fund is proposed.

It should be noted that all pensions including the children's benefit escalate annually in terms of Rule 25.

- 35** Assembly approves the deletion of the words "every year on 1 November commencing 1 November 1994" in Rule 25.1, and the deletion of the words "September immediately preceding 1 November" in Rule 25.2 of the rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund, and by their substitution of the words "every year on 1 January commencing 1 January 1996" in Rule 25.1, and the words "November immediately preceding 1 January" in Rule 25.2.

Difficulty has arisen with regard to the computation of pensions in respect of ministers who attain the age of 65 between the normal pension escalation date (1 November) and the normal stipend escalation date (1 January). In order to overcome these difficulties, the Pensions Sub-Committee propose to change the pension escalation date to 1 January. This will require a resolution as above.

If this rule change is passed by Assembly 1995, there will be no requirement under the rules to escalate pensions on 1 November 1995, and it is proposed that a 14 month escalation shall be paid on 1 January 1996. The escalation under the rules will then be that the RPI for the month which is published in September 1994 will be compared with the RPI published in November 1995. Thus, in 1995 only, the comparison will be made with the index published for the same month 14 months earlier. It is not considered necessary to amend the ruling of Rule 25.2 to take account of this anomaly, but members of the Assembly should be aware of this technical departure from the wording of Rule 25.2.

- 36** Assembly amends Rule 20 of the Rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund to commence "In the event that a member retires before normal pension age on account of incapacity to undertake the duties of a stipendiary minister due to ill-health duly certified to the satisfaction of the Pension Trustee, he/she shall be entitled to an immediate pension"

Members of the Pensions Sub-Committee have felt that the wording of Rule 20 with regard to ill-health retirement is not as clear as might be, and the above resolution is proposed.

- 37** Assembly amends Rule 20.4 of the Rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund by the additional of Rule 20.4.1 as follows "If any member who has been granted an ill-health pension recovers sufficiently and undertakes remunerated employment, that member must advise the Trustee accordingly". Rule 20.4 is renumbered as 20.4.2.

In connection with ill-health retirement, Rule 20.4 currently provides that the Pension Trustee may vary or suspend any pension under this rule if the member makes a full or partial recovery before normal pension age. The Pensions Sub-Committee wish to seek powers to require ministers who have taken ill-health retirement to advise the Trustee, and the above resolution is proposed.

NOMINATIONS

This committee nominates to Assembly the names of people to serve as conveners and secretaries of all Assembly committees, and as members of those committees. It also suggests names of URC representatives on other bodies. It recommends the people to make up appointment groups for provincial moderators and Assembly appointed staff.

Our principal task this year has been the nominating of conveners, secretaries and members of the new committees as agreed at last years General Assembly, and we are grateful to all who, in any way, have facilitated this task. Special thanks are due to those whose term of service was ended by this change in our committee structure.

In addition, the following appointment and review groups have been convened:-

- 1 Appointment Group for the Moderator of the Synod of Wessex Province, convened by the Revd Jessie Clare.
- 2 Appointment Group for Editor of Reform and Media Officer, convened by the Revd Donald Hilton.
- 3 Appointment Group for Children's Advocate, convened by the Revd Glyn Jenkins.
- 4 Review Group for National Youth Secretary, convened by the Revd John Humphreys.
- 5 Review Group for National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer, convened by Mr Jim Wilkinson.

COMMITTEES AND REPRESENTATIVES

- 1 The Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator and the General Secretary are members ex officios of every Standing Committee.
- 2 All the main central committees are newly appointed under the restructuring that had taken place following upon the decision of the General Assembly 1994. Only in those situations unaffected by restructuring are asterisks used, one denotes those appointed since the 1994 Assembly, two astericks denoted those whom Assembly is invited to appoint for the first time.
- 3 The date in brackets following the names indicates the date of retirement, assuming a full term.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Convener: Prof. Malcolm Johnson [1998]

Deputy Convener: Mr Aubrey Curry [1996]

Secretary: Revd Peter Brain

Revd Michael Powell [1999]

Revd Hazel Barkham [1999]

Ms Janine Lawley [1998]

Mrs Val Morrison [1998]

Revd Ermal Kirby [1997]

Mr David Wrighton [1997]

Mr Paul Franklin representing the Youth & Children's Committee

NOMINATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS AND EDITORIAL

Convener: Mr Chris Wright [1999]

Secretary: Mrs Carol Rogers

Revd Miles Parkinson [1999]

Mr Andrew Jackson [1998]

Revd Graham Spicer [1997]

Mrs Sue Brooks [1997]

Mr Doug Fletcher [1997]

Mr John Rawnsley [1996]

Revd Brian Baker [1996]

DISCIPLESHIP AND WITNESS

Convener: Revd Elizabeth Caswell [1999]

Secretary: Revd Roger Whitehead [1998]

Revd David Tatem [1999]

Revd Jean Forster [1998]

Mr Jim Wilkinson [1998]

Dr John Stocks [1997]

Revd Dr Tom Arthur [1996]

Revd Eileen Sanderson representing the Youth & Children's Committee

WINDEREMERE - Policy and Planning

Convener: name to follow at General Assembly [1999]

Secretary: The Director of the Windermere Centre

Representatives of Finance, Revd Wynn Young, Revd Bill Mahood, Revd Dr Stephen Orchard, with the Administrator, the Convener of Programmes Committee, the Convener and Treasurer of the Management Committee, the Convener and Secretary of Discipleship and Witness, and a representative of Carver URC, Windermere.

DOCTRINE, PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Convener: Dr David Thompson [1997]

Secretary: Revd Dale Rominger [1999]

Revd Fleur Houston [1999]

Revd Stephen Brown [1999]

Revd Donald Norwood [1999]

Mr Tony Cheer [1998]

Miss Fiona Gow [1998]

Revd Wendy Baskett [1998]

Revd Alan Sell [1997]

Prof. Graham Stanton [1997]

Revd Alan Gaunt [1996]

Revd Derek Gardiner representing the Youth & Children's Committee

ECUMENICAL

Convener: Revd Murdoch Mackenzie [1997]

Secretary: Revd Sheila Maxey

Revd Peter Arthur [1999]

Revd Norman Healey [1999]

Mrs Claudette Binns [1998]

Revd David Fox [1998]

Revd Philip Woods [1998]

Mr Desmond Curry [1997]

ECUMENICAL - Sub-Committee - OVERSEAS EXCHANGE

Convener: Revd Barrie Scopes [1999]

Secretary: Revd Ken Graham [1999]

Revd David Helyar [1998]

Revd Mia Kyte [1998]

Mrs Muriel Sleight [1998]

Revd Bernie Collins [1997]

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Convener: Mrs Susan Rand [1999]

Secretary: Revd Simon Walkling [1999]

Revd Elaine Dunn

Mr Alan Hart

Revd John McCauley

Revd Justine Wyatt

Mr Doug Thacker

Mrs Daphne Beale

[the retirement dates have yet to be agreed]

FINANCE

Convener: The Treasurer

Secretary: Mr Clem Frank

Mrs Elizabeth Reeve [1999]

Revd Richard Wiggins [1999]

Mrs Edwina Rockey [1999]

Mr Graham Stacey [1998]

Revd Paul Bedford [1997]

Mr Ron Turner [1996]

Convener of the URC Trust

MINISTRIES

Convener: Revd Keith Forecast [1997]

Secretary: Revd Chris Baker [1998]

Mr John Ellis [1999] Ms Geraldine Swaine [1999] Revd Sandra Lloydlangston [1999]
 Revd Vaughan Jones [1998] Mrs Doreen Courtney [1997] Revd David Comick [1996]
 Convener of National Assessment Board

MINISTRIES - Sub-Committee - ACCREDITATION

Convener: Mrs Margaret Carrick-Smith [1999]

Secretary: Revd Hazel Martell [1998]

Mr Bert Worrall [1999] Revd John Humphreys [1999] Revd Dean Tapley [1997]
 Mrs Ruth Clarke [1997]

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT BOARD

Convener: Mr Raymond Clarke [1997]

<i>Retiring 1999</i>	<i>Retiring 1998</i>	<i>Retiring 1997</i>	<i>Retiring 1996</i>
Mrs Shirley Moss**	Mrs Pat Peirce	Revd John Humphreys	Revd Graham Long
to be announced**	Mrs Marva Ward	Dr Fiona Liddell	Mrs Edith Tolley
to be announced**	Revd Cecil White	Revd Dr Catherine Middleton	Mr Peter Richards
	Revd Barbara Plenderleith	Revd Christine Craven	
	Mr Brian Evans		
	Revd Leonard Bhagwandin		

PANEL FOR ASSESSMENT CONFERENCES - CRCW - Sub-Section

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

MINISTRIES - Sub-Committee - MAINTENANCE OF MINISTRY

Convener: Mr Michael Harrison [1999]

Secretary: name to follow at General Assembly [1999]

Mrs Barbara Martin [1999] Miss Margaret Atkinson [1999] Revd Bill Gathercole [1997]
 The Treasurer

MINISTRIES - Sub-Committee - RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING

Convener: Revd David Hannen [1998]

Secretary: Mr Clive Willis [1999]

Mr Martin Ballard [1998] Revd Janet Sowerbutts [1998] Mrs Pauline Mewis [1997]
 Mrs Barbara Williams [1997] The Treasurer

RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING SOCIETY LTD - Management Committee

Convener: Revd David Hannon

Secretary: Mr Clive Willis

Ass. Secretary: Mr Ken Meekison

Mr John Gilbey	Mr George Anderson	Revd Janet Sowerbutts
Revd George Hooper	Mr Martin Ballard	Mrs Barbara Williams
Mr Brian Vaughan	Mr Brian Gould	Mr Norman Fabb
Mrs Pauline Mewis	Mr Bob Carruthers	

ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

Convener: Mrs Wilma Frew [1998]

Secretary: Office & Personnel Manager

Provincial Representative for forthcoming Assembly

Provincial Representative for previous Assembly who is then replaced after 'review' meeting by

Provincial Representative for Assembly two years hence.

Moderator, Moderator-elect, General Secretary, Clerk to Assembly

NOMINATIONS

NOMINATIONS

Convener: Revd Jessie Clare [1998]

Secretary: Revd Arnold Harrison [1998]

Provincial Representatives

I	Revd David Jenkins	VII	Revd David Tatem
II	Revd Geoff Tolley	VIII	Revd Sandra Lloydlangston
III	Mr John Yates	IX	Revd George Thomas
IV	Revd Donald Hilton	X	Mrs Mary Stacy
V	Revd Chris White	XI	Mrs Christine Meekison
VI	Revd John Waller	XII	Mrs Eileen McIlveen

together with the immediate past Moderator.

PASTORAL

Convener: Revd Alasdair Walker [1999]

Secretary: General Secretary

Revd John Humphreys [1999]** Miss Ruth Archer [1997] Mrs Sheila Pratt [1996]
Revd Daphne Hull [1996] Convener of Welfare Sub-Comm. The Treasurer
Revd Nelson Bainbridge [1996]

WELFARE - Sub-Commiffee

Convener: name to be brought to General Assembly [1999]

Secretary: Mrs Judy Stockings

TRAINING

Convener: Revd John Sutcliffe [1999]

Secretary: Revd Dr Catherine Middleton [1998]

Mrs Carol Dixon [1999] Revd Chris Warner [1999] Revd John Proctor [1997]
Revd Elizabeth Nash [1997] Dr Jean Butler [1996] Revd Peter Noble [1996]

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK

Convener: Revd Stephen Thornton [1998]

Secretary: Revd Joan Grindrod-Helmn [1997]

Miss Kathryn Swift [1999] Revd Ron Forster [1999] Revd Barbara Plenderleith [1999]
Mrs Jean Antcliffe [1999] Mrs Elizabeth Crocker [1998] Ms Catherine Rook [1997]
Ms Shirley Dale [1997] Mr John Dryburgh [1996] Mr Nick Raggett [1996]
Revd Duncan Wilson [1996]

MISSION COUNCIL

Moderator, Moderator-elect, immediate past Moderator, General Secretary, Clerk, Legal Adviser, Deputy General Secretary, conveners of standing committees (except the Pastoral Committee), conveners of the following task groups: Advocacy and Stewardship, Mission and Other Faiths, and Health and Healing, two representatives of FURY, and four representatives of each synod including the provincial moderator.

The provincial representatives, other than moderators, are:

Northern	Revd Peter Poulter, Miss Janet Turner, Miss Sheila Fairbairn
North Western	Mrs Delyth Rees, Mr Andrew Goodier, Revd Brian O'Neill
Mersey	Revd Angus Duncan, Revd Jean Forster, Mr Wesley Woodside
Yorkshire	Mr Brian Evans, Revd Duncan Wilson, Mrs Angela Hughes
East Midlands	Mr Geoff Prentice, Mrs Maureen Buxton, Revd Margaret Taylor
West Midlands	Mr Ron Webb, Mrs Jennifer Shaffery, Revd Patricia Nimmo
Eastern	Mr William McVey, Mrs Elizabeth Whitten, Revd Margaret McKay
South Western	Revd Sandra Lloydlangston, Mrs Joan Trippier, Mr Ivan Andrews
Wessex	Revd Bernie Collins, Mr David Butler, Mrs Christine Hardwick
Thames North	Revd Geoffrey Bending, Miss Marian Crack, Mrs Marlene Hunter
Southern	Mrs Christine Meekison, Revd Raymond Singh, Revd Simon Thomas
Wales	Revd Henry Gordon, Revd Nanette Head, Mr Denis Earp

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION TRUST LTD - BOARD MEMBERS**Chairman:** Revd Dr Arthur Chadwick**Secretary:** Mr Geoff Lunt

Members of the URC:	Mrs Gwen Hall	Mr Desmond Davies
	Mr Tom Swan	Mr Geoffrey Lunt
Members of the Fund:	Revd Pam Ward	Revd Tony Spring
	Revd Raymond Royston-Bishop	Revd Dr Arthur Chadwick

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST**Convener:** Mr Desmond Davies**Joint Secretaries:** Mr Tony Lodde and Mr Ian Neilson

Mr Bob Carruthers	Revd Dennis Clague	Revd Tony Burnham
Mr Clem Frank	Mr Robert Hardie	Mr Alistair Black
Mr Harold Kempton	Mr Ron Masser	Mr William McVey
Revd Richard Wiggins		

TASK GROUPS**HEALTH AND HEALING** (To report no later than General Assembly 1996)**Convener:** Revd Robin Hine**Secretary:** Revd Jim Hollyman

Dr Eileen Gorrod	Revd John Jenkinson	Revd Kate McIlhagga	Mrs Connie Bunker
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ADVOCACY AND STEWARDSHIP - (To continue until 1st April 1999)**Convener:** Revd Julian Macro**Secretary:** Revd Bill Wright**Provincial Representatives**

Revd Stephen Thornton	Miss Janet Turner	Mr Keith Webster
Mr Stanley Griffiths	Revd David Netherwood	Revd Bob Maitland
Mrs Clare Shepard		

MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS - (To report no later than General Assembly 1996)**Convener:** Revd Bill Mahood**Secretary:** Revd Brenda Willis

Revd David Bowen	Mrs Joyce Killick	Mrs Linda Hopley
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Consultant: Revd Ron Lewis

Co-options: Revds John Parry, Christopher Lamb and Martin Foreward

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ON OTHER BODIES**1 OTHER ASSEMBLIES**

Presbyterian Church in Ireland	1995	Revd Jack McKelvey
	1996	Revd John Reardon, Revd Jim Brown
General Synod of Church of England		Revd Christine Craven
Methodist Conference		Revd Sheila Maxey
Baptist Union of Scotland		Dr Peter Arthur
Church of Scotland		Revd Jack McKelvey, Revd Stephen Brown
Scottish Congregational Church		Revd David Jenkins
Presbyterian Church of Wales		Revd Jack McKelvey
Union of Welsh Independents		Revd Glanville Jones
Congregational Federation		Revd Geoffrey Roper
Uniting Church of Australia		Revd Dr Bernard Thorogood
Waldensian Synod		Revd Jack McKelvey
Presbyterian Church in Taiwan		Revd Brian Sturtridge

NOMINATIONS

United Church of Christ (USA)	Revd David Jenkins
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa	Revd Jack McKelvey
Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa	Revd Jack McKelvey
Evangelical Church of the Palatinate	Revd John Reardon
6th International Consultation of United and Uniting Churches	Revd James Breslin
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa N.Z.	Revd Maurice and Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee
World Alliance of Reformed Churches European Area Council 1995	Ms Wendy Clark, Revds Rudolph Dixon, Elizabeth Nash, Donald Norwood, Jane Stranz and Revd Prof Colin Gunton

2 CHURCH BODIES

The Report of Nominations includes those who are United reformed Church Representatives on ecumenical Assemblies, Forums, Councils and Executives and are nominated directly through the Nominations Committee. A list of all other representatives to ecumenical bodies, commissions and committees, many of which are made directly by the Ecumenical Committee, are available, on request, from the Secretary for Ecumenical Relations.

Churches Together In England - Forum

Revd John Johansen-berg	Revd Richard Mortimer	Revd Elizabeth Welsh
Revd Barbara Gates	Mr David Butler	Mr John Bradbury**
Revd Rudolph Dixon**	Miss Betty Vickerton**	Ms Rachael Ingles
Revd Mark Fisher**	Revd Geoffrey Roper**	Revd Sheila Maxey
Revd Gillian Bobbett**		

Churches Together In England - Enabling Group

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

Council Of Churches For Britain And Ireland - Assembly

General Secretary	Convener of the Ecumenical Committee	Secretary for Ecumenical Relations
plus		
Revd Greta Morgan	Mrs Eileen McIlveen	
Mrs Ruth Clarke		
Mr David Butler	Revd Elizabeth Welsh	
Dr Mary Ede		
Ms Melanie Smith	Revd Peter Arthur	
Revd Susan Durber		

Council Of Churches For Britain And Ireland - Church Representatives Meeting

General Secretary	Mrs Ruth Clarke
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Action Of Churches Together In Scotland - Central Council

Revd David Taylor	Mrs Kathleen Ziffo**
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CYTUN

Assembly	The Provincial Moderator (Wales)	Provincial Ecumenical Officer
	Revd Peter Trow	Ms Kirsty Thorpe
		Ms Mary Jones

Council	The Provincial Moderator (Wales)	Mr John Rhys (Synod Clerk)
	Ms Jackie Yeomans	

Steering Committee

Provincial Ecumenical Officer

FREE CHURCH FEDERAL COUNCIL

Council	General Secretary	Secretary for Ecumenical relations
	Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow	Revd Peter Beaman
	Revd Eric Woolaston	Mr Desmond Curry**

Executive	General Secretary
Chaplaincy Board	Revd Peter Beaman, Revd Brian Holroyd, Revd Daphne Williams
Education Committee	Mrs Mary Ede, Mr Penry Roberts, Co-options - Dr Stephen Orchard and Revd John Sutcliffe
Women's Council	Janet Lees**
Methodist/URC Liason Committee	
Revs Susan Henderson	Revd Michael Hubbard
Revd Joe Clemson	Miss Betty Vickerton
Secretary for Ecumenical Relations	

3 OTHER COMMITTEES AND NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Aged and Infirm Ministers Fund:	Mr Ken Meekison* Revd Geoffrey Satchell and Mr Laurence Macro (Honorary Treasurer)
Cambridge Federation Examination in Theology Committee of Management:	Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee
Christian Education Movement Council:	National Youth and Children's Work Training Office
Churches Commission for Racial Justice:	Mrs Sandra Ackroyd
Churches Community Work Alliance:	Revd Tony Addy (Trustee)
Churches Main Committee:	Revd Vaughan Jones (Management Committee)
Congregational Fund Board:	Mr Clem Frank, Mr Harley Oldham Mr Tegid Peregrine
Joint Liturgical Group:	Revd Cyril Grant, Revd Dorothy Havergal-Shaw
Methodist Faith and Order Committee:	Revd Aubrey Lewis, Revd John Taylor and Revd Geoffrey Satchell
National Christian Education Council:	Revd Susan Durber, Dr Colin Tompson
National Council of Voluntary Organisations:	Revd Kim Fabricius
National Ecumenical Agency for Further Education:	Revd Keith Forecast, Mrs Rosemary Johnston**
Scottish World Day of Prayer:	Revd Peter Brain
Society for the Ministry of Women in the Church:	Revd Michael Diffey, Revd Kevin Swaine Mrs Molly Glen
United Navy, Army and Airforce Board:	Revd Florence Frost-Mee
United Reformed Church History Society:	Revd Michael Diffey, Revd Dennis Friend, Revd John Paull, Revd Philip Scofield, Revd Tony Burnham
Wharton Trust:	Mrs Mary Davies, Revd Peter Jupp, Mrs Carol Rogers, Revd Eric Wollaston, (Dr David Thompson also serves)
Widows Fund of the Three Denominations:	Mrs Betty Taylor
Women's World Day of Prayer:	Mr Ken Meekison, Revd Geoffrey Satchell and Mr Laurence Macro Mrs Ruth Bowyer

4 COLLEGE AND SCHOOL GOVERNORS AND COUNCILS

Aberystwyth (Memorial College):	Revd Dr Glyndwr Harris, Mr Leslie Jones
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 Revd David Flynn
Cheshunt Foundation:	Mr Desmond Davies, Revd Michael Dunford
Eltham College/Walthamstow Hall:	Mrs Jean Garwood
Homerton College Trustees:	Mr John Chaplin, Revd Bill Gathercole, Mrs Margaret McKay, Miss Elizabeth Jupp, Mrs Mary Cornick, Dr David Thompson

NOMINATIONS

Mansfield College, Trustees:	Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee, Revd Peter Jupp, Revd Tony Tucker and Mrs Elaine Kaye
Milton Mount Foundation, Governors:	Miss Margaret Canning, Mrs Ruth Clarke, Mrs Gwen Hall, Revd Peter Grimshaw, Revd Erica Beglin and Revd Dr Catherine Middleton*
Northern College:	Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee, Revd David Jenkins, Revd Brian O'Neill and Revd John Marsh*
Queen's College, Birmingham: St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak:	Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee Revd Ray Adams, Miss Betty Vickerton, Revd Michael Diffey, Revd Tony Coates and Mrs Marieke Arthur
Silcoates School, Governor:	Dr Clyde Binfield
Taunton School:	Revd Ray Adams
Tettenhall College, Governors:	Dr William Blakeley, Mr Roddy McKenzie, Mr R J Whild and 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

Revd Tony Burnham	Ms Bethan Galliers
Revd Mia Hilborn	Mr Wallie Warmington

6 CONGREGATIONAL MEMORIAL HALL TRUST

Revd Dr Philip Morgan	Mr Alistair Black	Mrs Christine Meekison
Revd Maurice Husselbee	Mr Fred Lodde	Mr Robert Hardie
Revd Geoffrey Satchell	Revd David Hannen	Mr Arthur Smith
Revd John Taylor	Revd Peter Grimshaw	Mr Hartley Oldham

7 NEW COLLEGE LONDON FOUNDATION TRUSTEES

Mr John Smethers	Revd Dr Robert Latham	Revd John Pugh
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REPRESENTATIVES APPOINTED BY COMMITTEES

OTHER COMMITTEES AND NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

BBC Central Religious Advisory Committee:	Revd Tony Burnham
Church Hymnary Trust:	Mr G R Barr
	Mrs Fiona Smith
Churches' Commission on Overseas Students:	Revd Kevin Swaine
Churches' Consortium on Industrial Mission:	Revd Michael Diffey
Churches' Council for Health & Healing:	Revd Robin Hine
	Mrs Connie Bunker
	Revd Michael Playdon
Churches' Advisory Council for Local Broadcasting:	Mrs Carol Rogers
Churches' Commission for Inter-Faith Relations:	Revd Brenda Willis
Council of URC Boys' Brigade Companies:	Revd Michael Rees
	Mr Paul Franklin
Funerals, Cremations & Crematoria:	Revd Peter Jupp**
Guides' Religious Advisory Panel:	Revd Gillian Bobbett
International Bible Reading Association:	Vacant
Media Awareness Project:	Mrs Carol Rogers
Scout & Guide Fellowship (URC):	Mr Paul Franklin
Scouts' Religious Advisory Group:	Mr D Marshall-Jones

RESOLUTION

Nominations

- 38** The Assembly appoints Committees and representatives of the Church as set out on pages 87-93 of the Book of Reports subject to the additions and corrections contained in the Supplementary Report before Assembly.

PASTORAL

Convener: Revd Alistair Walker

Secretary: Revd Tony Burnham

This committee will consider the cases of ministers which are referred to it by district councils or provincial synods their officers or committees. (See GA 1983 Reports, pp 5 and 6). By a Welfare sub-committee (2), it will also deal with all welfare and emergency matters including the use of welfare funds. Because of the nature of many of the cases, it is a confidential committee which will report, in general terms only, directly to the General Assembly.

1 With the reorganisation of committees agreed at the last General Assembly, the committee's title has been changed to that of "Pastoral Committee", instead of "Pastoral Reference Committee", but it retains the terms of reference given to it in 1983 - with the addition of the tasks of the former Welfare Committee, which has become a sub-committee of the Pastoral Committee. The convener of the subcommittee serves on the main committee, and we have welcomed Mr Ray Heritage in that capacity. A report of the sub-committee is printed below.

2 Last year, we referred to an invitation to consult with representatives of the Baptist Union about the possibility of the URC sharing in the scope and work of their Ministerial Counselling Service. Shortly after the last General Assembly, representatives of the committee met with representatives not only of the Baptist Union but also of the Methodist Church; the General Secretary of the Free Church Federal Council was also present.

It was a helpful and encouraging meeting, and so far as the URC is concerned the matter was referred to the Ministries Committee.

3 The committee continues to have on its agenda the cases of ministers referred to it by Provincial Moderators and the councils of the Church. We do not report names or details of cases, but at any meeting we may have up to 12 cases to consider. Some are very complex, and during the past year we have had to double the usual number of our meetings.

4 Once again, we are much indebted to the Westminster Pastoral Foundation for advice and practical help given to the committee and to ministers and their families when the need has arisen.

5 The work of the committee brings us close to the pain and hurt felt in church fellowships and in the homes of ministers when pastoral relationships fail - and that happens from a wide variety of causes. We value the support of the prayers of members of the Church as we attempt to fulfil the role which the General Assembly has given to us.

6 WELFARE AND EMERGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

This year has seen a change in the structure of the Committee since it has become a sub-committee of the Assembly Pastoral Committee. The former Welfare Committee has been disbanded and the Convener of that Committee has become a member of the Assembly Pastoral Committee. Decisions in between meetings are made by the Convener, the Secretary and the Chief Accountant (the latter two being Staff Members), and then those decisions are reported to the Assembly Pastoral Committee. When there are matters for which clear guidelines do not exist, then decisions are delayed and made by the next meeting of the Pastoral Committee.

The welfare work of the Church has continued quite satisfactorily through this new arrangement, and assistance has been given in many cases of need, for example payment of a grant to the spouses of Ministers who die, grants to ministers to help with the provision of School Uniforms for their children, and in many other ways.

In all this work the guidance of Provincial Moderators is greatly appreciated.

TRAINING

Convener: Revd Dr John Sutcliffe
Secretary: Revd Dr Catherine Middleton

"The Committee will encourage and enable the integration of the training of the whole people of God and to this end will seek to influence the philosophy and methodology of learning; the core content of courses; and the deployment of resources. It gives direct support to, and acts in partnership with Doctrine, Prayer and Worship; Discipleship and Witness; Church and Society, and Youth and Children's Work Committees, and synods and districts, as they respond to the needs of local churches in training matters. It collaborates with the Ministries Committee in the training of ministers of word and sacrament, CRCWs and Lay Preachers. It also supports all other committees and task groups, in particular the Ecumenical Committee and the Advocacy and Stewardship Task Group. It also gives oversight to the YLTO and YCWT programmes."

1 METHODS OF WORKING

1.1 The hand over to the new Training Committee is now complete. The Training Committee met for the first time in January 1995.

There is a vast agenda. Members of the Committee recognise they cannot do justice to it without the co-operation and help of many people in the URC. This includes college and course tutors, YLTO/YCWTs and others working in a variety of paid and voluntary training posts in the provinces, districts and local churches, who are already in the front line of training.

1.2 The Committee felt that it could not begin seriously to tackle this agenda as long as there was the possibility of a Review of Training being undertaken by another group to be appointed by the Mission Council. When it was known that the January 1995 meeting of the Council was due to discuss a paper on 'Training Review', the Committee agreed to offer to undertake this work on behalf of the Council. It was argued that this would prevent overlap, assist the Committee to develop a vision and strategy, order its priorities and see its way ahead for the next few years.

1.3 Working Groups

In order to maintain work which hitherto has been overseen by subcommittees, the Committee proposes to establish three working groups:

- (i) a Studies Panel which will be concerned with the training of Non Stipendiary Ministry ordinands and Lay Preachers. Once candidates have completed their training, their names will be passed to the Ministries Committee for recognition. This Panel of six people, two each representing the interests of Non Stipendiary Ministers and Lay Preaching and trainers, will combine the work which was done hitherto by the Board of Studies for Non-Stipendiary Ministry and the Lay Preaching committee.
- (ii) a Ministerial Fund Group. This will be concerned with the administration of the Fund especially in relation to appeals for assistance. It will be composed of the three people representing finance, who will include the Treasurer and Chief Accountant and three members representing the Training Committee.
- (iii) a Training for Learning and Serving Group which will be responsible for the initial setting up of TLS as a Training Scheme within the URC. This will be composed of six people who have carried the work thus far. Once this Course is running well, it is proposed that the responsibility for TLS should pass to the Studies Panel.

2 **REVIEW OF TRAINING**

This review is concerned with every aspect of training in the URC as listed in the first paragraph above. It will deal also with such matters as the cost and effectiveness of training, assessment, areas of neglect, the number of places the URC requires in theological colleges, criteria by which the Church may be guided in recognising courses and with the possibility of the Assembly deciding that there should be parity between Stipendiary and Non-Stipendiary ministerial training. Some aspects of this review were already before the Committee, in papers on 'Tutor Training', 'Criteria by which the Committee will be guided in recognising Courses for Ministerial Training' and 'Training for Ordained Ministry (Stipendiary Ministry and Non Stipendiary Ministry)'. Through letters to individuals and to the Church via Reform, the Committee has sought the views and assistance of as many people as wished to contribute. It is hoped that a report will be ready to be presented to the Mission Council in January 1996.

3 **TRAINING FOR LEARNING AND SERVING**

3.1 The Committee has welcomed the preparatory work which has made possible the introduction of this Course. TLS is an ecumenical Course developed and extensively used in Scotland. The Course is designed to last two years and to involve candidates in residential tuition as well as in work with a local tutor at home. TLS is intended gradually to take the place of 'Exploring the Faith' as the recommended course for National Accreditation of Lay Preachers in the United Reformed Church, but it is also designed to be used by anyone who wishes to discover more about their faith and who may later go on to train for a recognised ministry. No new candidates for 'Exploring the Faith' will be accepted after 30th June 1995

3.2 **A history of the adoption of the "Training for Learning and Serving" Programme within the URC**

In 1989 an Integrated Training Working Party was set up to consider the integration of training programmes within the URC. (A major report of their findings was reported to General Assembly in 1991.) In response to the debate on developing new courses the group was asked to make use of existing resources. The Integrated Training Working Party looked, therefore, at courses which were currently available. In October 1993 the Christian Education Committee commended the TLS Course as a follow-on from the 'Developing Discipleship' Course (a course which is being developed as a post membership course by the Integrated Training Working Party). In June 1994, a special group consisting of representatives from the Integrated Training Working Party and the Lay Preaching Committee considered various courses to replace the 'Exploring the Faith' Course. This group commended the TLS Course as the course that included the best educative participatory approach, readily understandable language and which reflected the Reformed tradition. The group also agreed that work should be begun towards developing in the long term an ecumenical course for lay preachers and readers in England and Wales, and that other ecumenical courses such as the Milton Keynes Lay Preacher/Reader Course or the Methodist 'Faith and Worship' course could be used for those working in Local Ecumenical Projects providing that this was agreed by the Training Committee. This decision was later ratified by the Ministries Training Committee in June 1994.

3.3 In January 1995 the new Training Committee also commended the course, and Mission Council in March 1995 agreed that a fund of £11,500 be set up to provide bursaries for both lay preachers and others who will be taking the 'Training for Learning and Serving' Course and other approved courses.

3.4 **Application**

It is hoped that the first candidates will begin the Course in autumn 1995. Application should be made through Regional Organisers - Mr Jim Wilkinson, 18 Carleton Avenue, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 2TE for Provinces 1, 2, 3, and 4; the Revd David Jenkins,

61 Lakeside Road, London N13 4PS for Provinces 5, 7, 10, 11; and the Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT for Provinces 6, 8, 9, 12.

4 **PUBLICATIONS**

4.1 '*Developing Discipleship*': this is a new post-membership course. There are five modules which are designed to be worked on in groups. The whole course lasts about one year.

4.2 '*Spectrum*': this popular and much used ecumenical Training Course for Youth Leaders has been revised and will be available later in the year prior to a re-launch in January 1996.

4.3 '*Challenging Racism*': produced in collaboration with 'Evangelical Christians for Racial Justice', which was advertised at last year's Assembly, is now available.

5 **YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK TRAINING**

5.1 Youth and Children's Work Training has continued to develop through the work of Youth Leadership Training Officers, Youth and Children's Work Trainers and the many people who work with them. This work included a great variety of activities such as, helping local churches to review their quality of life and their work with children and young people, ensuring training is available for youth and children's workers, arranging youth exchanges, working with students in Westminster and Mansfield Colleges, attending FURY events and involvement in developing written material for use by the Church.

5.2 In September 1994 a Consultation was held, at which the Provinces were well represented, on the future of the training team. This gave a positive affirmation of the value of the work of the team and of Provincial Strategy Groups which determine, with the officers, the direction of the work in the Province. The partnership between Province and Assembly was reaffirmed and relevant material passed on for consideration in the Training Review. Team members also attended the URC Trainers Network Conference held in Windermere and represent the URC on the development group of the Methodist/URC Trainers' Diploma.

5.3 The ecumenical training material for Children's workers, '*Kaleidoscope*', continues to be in demand and to stimulate the need for the training of volunteer tutors.

5.4 The Assembly policy to develop a Youth and Children's Work post in each province is being pursued as Provinces explore their future training needs. A shared appointment for two years between Yardley Hastings and East Midlands Province began in January. An appointment is proposed in the Eastern province, with the possibility of other appointments being considered in other Provinces.

6 **EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE**

6.1 The Committee will take seriously its part in the appointing and work of Youth and Children's Work Training Officers and the National Youth and Children's Working Training Officer. It was noted at the first meeting of the Committee that a review of the latter post was overdue. In common with much of industry and the voluntary sector, the URC uses fixed term contracts for some of its staff, including those employed as trainers. Lay people employed on contract by the church have no guarantee or expectation of lifelong employment in the church beyond the end of their contracts.

6.2 Fixed term contracts offer opportunities for review for employer and employed which can be valuable. However, employment practice is poor when reviews are done late and/or do not distinguish between post and person and where the possibility of future change results in very short contract extensions. The result of this is staff demoralisation and work which is not creative or good as it should be. Many local churches, as well and

the church nationally and provincially, now employ lay people and sometimes in situations where the continuity of funding is uncertain. The Committee rejoices in the enrichment this variety of staff brings to the ministry of the church; it also expresses its concern where our employment practice is poor and is alert to the need for training which reflects good employment practice and the management of change.

7 URC SCHOLARSHIP

The Scholarship was advertised in Reform and short-listed applicants were interviewed in February. It was decided not to award the whole fund but to make small grants to the Revd Maggie Hindley for studies in Hebrew and Old Testament (King's College, London) and the Revd Peter Cruchley-Jones for studies in missiology and liturgy (Birmingham University).

8 COURSE AND COLLEGE INSPECTIONS

Members of the URC continue to be involved in ecumenical inspections and the Committee has opportunity to comment on the ensuing reports. The Committee appointed Jack McKelvey to take part in the review of Queens College, Birmingham; Roger Scopes to the Northern Ordination Course and John Sutcliffe to the Southern Dioceses Ministerial Scheme. Efforts will continue to be made to put these inspections on a more balanced ecumenical footing and to work towards the ecumenical recognition and validation of the Courses with which we are involved.

(Appendices IV - VIII contain reports from colleges used by the United Reformed Church and a list of students.)

RESOLUTIONS

Training

39 Assembly requests the Training Committee to validate programmes for ordination training for Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and to report its decisions about the validation of Courses and Colleges to the Assembly and to Provincial Ministerial Committees.

40 Assembly adopts the following criteria by which the Training Committee will be guided in recognising Courses and Colleges for Ministerial Training:

Ministerial Training should:

- (i) take place in an ecumenical context wherever possible and also include working in partnership with secular bodies¹;
- (ii) be open to both lay people and ordinands who will experience learning together²;
- (iii) take seriously the experience of participants and integrate experience and learning, theoretical and practical work, academic disciplines and life in the world and in the church³;
- (iv) include supervised and assessed placement experience either over the full length of the course or for an internship year;
- (v) be international by helping participants to learn from the world church and from other cultures and faiths⁴;
- (vi) be flexible in relation to the needs of different people whilst maintaining academic excellence relative to the abilities of individual participants;
- (vii) use methods of teaching and assessment appropriate to current adult education;
- (viii) be collaborative in style.
- (ix) take seriously issues of race, class, gender and disability and actively promote anti-oppressive practices.
- (x) include at least two modules per year which will be taught by at least one active member of the URC;
- (xi) ensure that there will be opportunity for participants, as part of an ecumenical diet of worship, to worship following patterns and ethos commonly experienced in the URC.

The Training Committee will recognise a Course or a course within a College only if :

- a) It is satisfied re (i) - (xi) above;
- b) two experienced ministerial and theological educators, appointed by the Training Committee, assess a Course, and recommend its recognition by the Committee as a whole.

CRITERIA BY WHICH THE URC'S TRAINING COMMITTEE WILL BE GUIDED IN RECOGNISING COURSES AND COLLEGES FOR MINISTERIAL TRAINING

1 Debate about courses and colleges is a common feature in the major denominations. The demands being placed on Courses by the churches and the exigencies of mission have led in many places to a recognition that it is no longer possible to respond adequately simply by adding subjects. More far reaching changes in the content and style of Courses are necessary. Further, the pressure of denominational funds is making many to ask questions about the most appropriate location for training, especially for candidates whose family has to be supported for the duration of a Course. Several Courses teeter on the edge of financial vulnerability.

2 A number of these common issues have particular relevance within the URC. With an annual entry of relatively only a small number of candidates, year groups are viable only because Colleges and Courses work ecumenically. The Training Committee wants URC candidates to enjoy and benefit from ecumenical collegiality and the riches of other traditions and worship. This must be balanced with opportunities also to experience a warmth of collegiality and support among URC candidates, to encounter a variety of styles of worship common to URC churches and to learn about the history and practices of Reformed churches and the polity of the URC. In recent years a number of Diocesan Courses have been recognised by the URC largely because they were convenient for candidates in particular geographical areas. It seems reasonable now to question whether there are not more important factors at stake than geographical convenience and, as a consequence, whether all these Courses should continue to be recognised.

3 The Training Committee believes that URC resources should be used to support those Courses which best serve the needs of the URC and its candidates. Financial strictures must be faced. The fees for Courses are not negligible. While it might be to the benefit of the Courses and URC candidates if URC Tutors were appointed, it is not financially possible to do so.

4 The Church of England is rigorous in monitoring Courses. The URC takes part in the quinquennial inspections but, in general, has a very weak voice. It is important that the Training Committee should set out a policy for the Church and that quinquennial visitors should do their work, within URC and ecumenical establishments alike, in the light of that policy. Where a URC inspector felt it to be necessary, we would welcome the writing of separate report addressed to the Training Committee covering issues of special concern to the URC.

5 The ecumenical validation of Courses could be a massive help to the URC. But it would be useful only if, in spite of our small numbers, we had an equal voice with all other partners. Until Ecumenical validation is agreed, it seems right that the Training Committee should be able to see, comment on and make recommendations about any Courses on which URC candidates are placed or which it is asked to recognise.

6 In view of the foregoing the Committee proposes to review the published list of recognised Courses and that no further candidates should be placed on other Courses. Where the Committee has not seen recent Course documentation this will be requested. Should this be deemed to be unsatisfactory recognition will be withdrawn. Since this is likely to be a recurring and detailed task, the Committee seeks permission to act on behalf of the Assembly in making decisions about Courses and to report its findings to the Assembly and Provincial Committees.

7 The URC's own Course, in significant ways, does not meet the criteria set out above. In view of the availability of other options it must be questioned whether it any longer provides an appropriate preparation for ordained ministry.

Footnotes:

- a) 1 This reflects the ecumenical commitment of the URC and the fact that many ministers will work for some time or throughout their ministries in union churches or Local Ecumenical Projects. Secular Bodies refers to public education institutions.
- b) 2 Experience suggests that where lay people and ordinands learn together there is a dynamism which benefits both.
- c) 3 No experience of ministry draws on only one discipline. The process of integration should be part of the learning process.
- d) 4 Patterns of learning must be developed which take seriously the commitment of the Church to be part of the world ecumenical community in which resources and theological insights are shared and the issues of the 'one household' are recognised as part of the context of learning.
- e) Courses refers to the (mainly Anglican) institutions who offer part-time training for ministry courses refer to programmes taught by Colleges or Courses.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK

Convener: Revd Stephen Thornton
Secretary: Revd Joan Grindrod-Helmn

This Committee supports, encourages and promotes work among children and young people, including the policy for the YLTO and YCWT programme, giving oversight to Pilots, the National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings, and relates to FURY Council. It also ensures that its concerns are fully taken into account in Doctrine, Prayer and Worship, Church and Society and Discipleship and Witness committees facilitating the involvement of young people in all the councils of the church.

1.1 The principle undergirding the work of this Committee is that youth and children are key partners in the life of the church. Without them, the church is stunted and disabled. With them, and others, comes life, vigour and vision.

1.2 GOOD NEWS

It is good news for us that the United Reformed Church has appointed a Children's Advocate. We welcome Rosemary Johnston and know that this new post is a key part in the strategy of the whole church.

1.3 BAD NEWS

For years young people have fought for a place on the committees of the church and their eventual contribution to them was greatly valued. Sadly, none of the Committees now have a young person save for ours and the request for us to provide someone on Doctrine, Prayer and Worship, Church and Society and Discipleship and Witness Committees. However, seeing that we only have three young people ourselves and the committees often meet at times inconvenient for young people, a youth presence is now not possible. This is a major loss and we trust that when vacancies occur, young people will be approached. We can suggest names.

2 CHILDREN'S WORK

2.1 Much study still needs to be done to help our churches understand the place of children in the life of the church. Theologians need to recognise that a theology of humanity is not only a theology of adult humanity.

2.2 The implications of the United Nations Convention on the rights of children, signed by our government, are not yet grasped by them or by the church. We want to make the rights of children accessible to children themselves.

2.3 The Consultative Group on Ministry among Children (CGMC) in which we share, will, by the time of Assembly, have published a new document leading on from the influential 'The Child and the Church', (1976). It is called, 'Children and Churches - Unfinished Business', and will be an important document for all. Our committee intends to produce a simplified version.

2.4 We are delighted that the 'Good Practice' pack has been so well received and is being well used. This is an on going exercise which involves the whole church and we shall continue to encourage its use. A new document, 'What if...' is now available to help churches when the possibility of abuse comes to someone's attention.

3 PILOTS

At present there are 220 companies, 4000 Pilots and 750 Officers. Much work is done to service these companies and new material this year to celebrate the bicentenary of CWM will be useful for many groups within the church as well as to Pilots.

The training of Officers is an important part of Pilots and there has recently been a very successful national resources weekend at the National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings.

The Pilot Committee shares with the Youth and Children's Work Committee a deep concern for the millions of children untouched by any faith community. We are all wrestling with the challenge of how to alert churches to the need to establish work midweek to serve these children. Pilots is a ready made organisation to help us do just that.

4 **YOUTH WORK**

4.1 FURY Assembly

Around 200 young people from the United Reformed Church descended upon Swanwick when FURY Assembly made its annual visit in January. As usual, this was a very memorable Assembly and only the second organised by FURY Council. Decisions were made as well as a lot of discussion stimulated on subjects from AG1 Forms to elderly abuse and FURY colours to Live Animal Transportation.

One of the highlights this year was the launch of FURY's Instant coffee/Instant action campaign, a joint campaign being organised with FURY and Christian Aid, a campaign to promote, even more strongly, fairly traded goods. The launch of this involved every FURY Assembly delegate being given a jar of fairly traded coffee, a FURY/Christian Aid mug and a press release to be taken to local radio stations and newspapers.

4.2 FURY Council

By the time General Assembly meets, FURY Council will have met on two occasions in 1995. Initially this year we will follow up the motions and actions from FURY Assembly. This will range from presentations at General Assembly to reinforce the Nestle boycott to arranging presentations on personal safety to the members of FURY Council.

Also this year, FURY Council, possibly as a result of our fair trade campaign, is very interested in ethical investment and we are discussing this issue with the appropriate Committee in the United Reformed Church.

4.3 11/14's

In March 1995, many Synods witnessed the launch of this age group into FURY. There were events for this age group alongside the Synods, many were challenged to think about how they can develop this work in their local churches.

4.4 Friends of FURY

Friends of FURY is an opportunity for over 25's to offer practical support and encouragement to FURY. It is hoped in the very near future to have Provincial representatives to help encourage membership of Friends Of FURY, so much more practical support can be offered. We commend it to Assembly and the churches and look to see it grow.

4.5 Programme Committee

A Programme Committee has overall responsibility for a very varied programme for young people over and above what happens at the National Youth Resource Centre. Last year 28 events were planned, including 'All Aboard' the joint event with the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs. This year, Connect 95, our national youth weekend is being held in the North East at Newcastle Upon Tyne on 27/29 October, over 900 young people are expected to attend.

4.6 Networking

Both Youth and Children's Work have a well developed network across the three countries, and we are deeply grateful to all who carry responsibility in Districts, Provinces and local churches. We shall seek to develop these in the future. Regular mailings keep us all in touch and we commend to you FURY Information Service, Urchin and Interview.

5 **YARDLEY HASTINGS**

Almost 5000 residential guests!
 Budgeted deficit for 1994 halved!
 Over 30 Community Team Members ??
 Visitors from all over the world!
 Exciting developments planned to buildings!

Such headlines, facts and figures are cause for celebration and almost speak for themselves! There can be no doubt that the Yardley Hastings Centre is meeting the needs of our young people, their leaders and their local churches in so many exciting ways. Most of the national youth events are hosted by the Centre as well as the popular and inexpensive Pick and Mix weekends on which youth groups, large and small, choose their activities and workshops which are run by the staff and Community Team. The networking, training, spiritual encouragement and inspiration provided by this programme alone have benefited groups from all over the country.

Support to churches and schools continues with visits by the Chaplain and Community Team to lead worship or special projects and to promote the work of FURY. Schools also use The Centre throughout the year for their educational visits taking advantage of the Village Study Pack the Centre offers and, no doubt, the essential help with lessons, outings and fun activities offered by the Community Team!

The staff and team live in Christian Community offering guests an alternative lifestyle of worship, service, love and creativity. Above all, the Centre builds relationships between those of different ages, cultures and backgrounds; between denominations; between different youth groups and between FURY and local churches. It is through these new and dynamic relationships that so many have grown in faith and discerned God's call on their lives.

6 **TRAINING**

A vital factor in Youth and Children's Work is training. Kaleidoscope is working well; Spectrum is being developed and the Training Team grows.

This Team has been instrumental in producing a pack for exploring racism with young people, called 'Challenging Racism' and 'Climbing the Walls', a practical booklet to help Youth and Children's Workers play their proper part in the Church.

7 **PUBLICATIONS**

Many important documents have already been mentioned. The Convener's book, produced by CWM and available from the bookshop, 'Let the Children Be ...' is a challenging document for the churches. Stephen and Jill Thornton's book to help parents explore communion with young children, 'Time to Eat ...' should be ready for Assembly. The Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Gospel is the major resource working with young people and is still available.

8 **PARENTING AND FAMILY LIFE**

There was a good response to the follow-up leaflet (sent to every local church) and report from last General Assembly's sessions on the family. There has been growth in 'Carer and Toddler' groups, parenting courses and Contact Centres and interest in good materials for discussion about 'family'. Our ecumenical co-operation continues as plans are made to merge the International Year of the Family group with FLEEP (Family Life Education Ecumenical Project) under the CTE (Churches Together in England) umbrella. We also link with the Methodist Church Family and Personal Relationships committee. Interesting developments here include step-parenting material; Ministers will be sent a booklet on step-weddings.

9 **ECUMENICAL**

Youth and Children's Work has always had a high ecumenical profile, and the United Reformed Church has played a vital part. This will continue. The Committee noted plans to develop a Joint Churches Youth Service and we have agreed to a continued involvement.

Co-operation with the Methodist Church in Youth and Children's work is well developed.

Other ecumenical youth projects include National Youth Sunday, and Time For God.

The Convener and Children's Advocate represent the United Reformed Church on the Consultative Group on Ministry Among Children and Stephen will host the group in the North East in November. They will also represent us at the European Conference on Christian Education in Estonia in June.

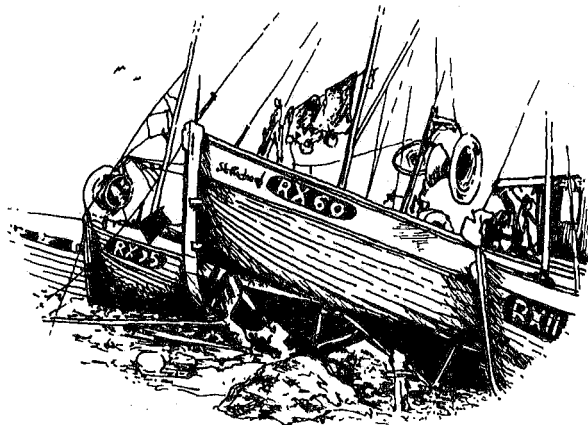
In October 1995, the Secretary for Youth Work and the FURY Chair will be visiting Ethiopia as part of a Christian Aid exposure trip, when they come back, they will be open to invitations from Provinces and Districts to share their experiences.

10 **BACKGROUND**

This is the background to our work after the first meeting and it by no means covers all. The Committee is a dynamic and exciting group and we shall seek to serve the churches in old and new ways in the challenging days ahead.

TASK GROUPS

REPORTS



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1995

ADVOCACY AND STEWARDSHIP

Convener: Revd Julian Macro
Secretary: Revd Bill Wright

1 **TRIO (The Responsibility Is Ours)**

1.1 **TRIO** has continued to meet the needs of churches by increasing income from direct giving. The response falls into two clear areas:

- a) Churches which have not challenged their members in recent times have increased the giving of the congregation by as much as 80% and income from tax refunds has increased by an average of 100%
- b) Churches which have challenged their members on a regular basis have increased the giving of the congregation by 30% whilst income from tax refunds has increased by 50% and usually these have been churches which thought that everyone who could covenant has been doing so.

1.2 To date four hundred copies of **TRIO** have been purchased for use in more than five hundred local churches. As there are more than 1800 churches in the URC that still leaves many more which have yet to purchase a copy. Among them are many small churches with less than forty members some of which have asked if a version of **TRIO** for small churches could be produced. **It is anticipated that such a version of TRIO will be available in time for Assembly priced at around £15.**

1.3 Whilst **TRIO** is a financial challenge programme we know its effect on the lives of many churches has reached far beyond increasing giving. One church said of **TRIO**,

'Whilst the focus is on finance, it also highlights that our responsibility does not end there. It renewed our team spirit and enthusiasm, and encouraged us as we began to look at a vision for our church.'

2 **TRIO FOLLOW UP PROGRAMME**

2.1 **TRIO** has proved that it is effective in making people aware of the needs of the church and in helping individuals determine what their level of giving should be. However, the cost of running the church increases year by year because of inflation and expanding local church programmes. Congregations need to be kept aware of this, so it is necessary each year to present a picture of church costs and challenge the congregation to meet them. **The TRIO Follow Up** (price £2.50) enables churches to do this effectively but without the high profile approach of **TRIO**. We urge every church as an essential part of engaging in God's mission to challenge the congregation, each year, to provide the financial resources required.

3 **VISION WORKSHOPS**

3.1 In response to churches which felt they needed a clear sense of direction and purpose before they engaged in **TRIO** we developed a Vision Workshop. These have helped churches to: -

- a) to look objectively at their lives
- b) capture a picture of what God is calling them to be and do
- c) Make plans which will turn the vision into a reality.

3.2 In January we included a leaflet about the workshops in the Information Service and received an immediate response from local churches resulting in workshops being booked to the spring of 1996. We recognise the need for a team of people to be available to lead the Workshops and are actively seeking to involve people on a regional basis.

4 **GIVING**

4.1 We have found that in many churches there is an assumption that people know how to give and at what level. At a time when many people coming into the church have either no church background or only have experience of another denomination it is an assumption which has no relation to reality. To help individuals we have prepared a leaflet on the different ways to give, including the benefits of covenanting and gift aid. The leaflets will be available in quantity so that everyone in the church can have a copy.

4.2 To help church treasurers respond to those who take the contents of the leaflet seriously we are preparing a 'Treasurers Pack' which together with the leaflet should be available in late summer/early autumn.

5 **WIDER WORK**

5.1 Part of our task is to communicate a vision of the wider work of the church to the local church. Finding an effective way of doing this has occupied a good deal of the committee's time but we feel we have found a way forward which we will be discussing with the Staff based at Tavistock Place and then with the new Assembly Committees. We hope to report our progress to the Assembly.

6 **ECUMENICAL LINKS**

6.1 In partnership with other members of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland Stewardship Network we are actively involved in producing a stewardship 'Work Book' as well as a successor to TRIO.

HEALTH AND HEALING

Convener: Revd Robin Hine
Secretary: Revd Jim Hollyman

1 REMIT

This group will complete outstanding work undertaken by the previous committee. In addition it will explore how the URC may continue to express its concerns in these matters ecumenically. This group will report not later than General Assembly 1996.

2 HANDOVER

The business of the previous committee has been handed over to the task group. It is intended that the established network of Provincial Consultants should continue.

3 COMPLETION OF ONGOING BUSINESS

3.1 After some delay the paper *The experience of emotional distress* is now published.

3.2 Work on a new Study Pack on Health and Healing was well in hand. This is being completed and prepared for publication. Ecumenical partners are well aware of this work in hand.

3.3 Reference was made last year to the Churches Council on Health and Healing day conference on euthanasia. Some concern was raised with the committee on this subject. Two documents have been published which may help members of local churches explore the issue. The Church of Scotland Board of Social Responsibility published an extract from its report *Euthanasia*, May 1994. During 1994 the Baptist Union and the Methodist Church have jointly published *Shadows - a study pack on Euthanasia*. These are well informed recent introductions to an area of concern where pressure has been growing.

4 EXPLORATION OF ECUMENICAL WAYS OF WORKING

4.1 What are the issues? Hitherto we have had a single committee holding together concern for the ministry of healing within the church, concerns of hospital chaplains, and health care throughout the community. Contact with the Methodists, the CCHH (Churches Council on Health and Healing), and the Free Church Federal Council has been close. The URC has in earlier years produced literature that has been recognised and used far more widely than our own church. There exist various other Christian organisations concerned with healing, each with their own networks. These include the Christian Guilds of Healing, Acorn Trust and some of the homes of healing.

4.2 These seem to be some of the former functions of the old committee:

- a) a network of provincial consultants able to encourage developments in the ministry of healing;
- b) provision of suitable resources for churches exercising their own ministry;
- c) a channel to bring concerns from the perspective of hospital chaplaincy to the wider church;
- d) occasional provision of conferences and training events;
- e) a body to offer informed Christian perspective on developments in health care and the National Health Service.

These are the tasks identified for which continuing provision should be made. It is too soon to know what is the appropriate way forward.

4.3 The CCHH (Churches Council on Health and Healing) is an organisation which brings together four categories of membership - churches, the colleges of the health professionals, healing homes and fellowships, and individual members. The URC has been a

strong supporter of CCHH, and through it we are exploring possibilities. It is an umbrella organisation with a very small staff.

They are calling a meeting of the representatives from the Churches for a consultation on May 2nd. This will be the first meeting of this grouping for some years.

4.4 The Methodist Church is restructuring its committees for 1996. We have had close contact with them. We have tried not to duplicate work in the past. There is a strong possibility of linking their network of District Secretaries for Health and Healing with our Provincial Consultants and this is being pursued.

4.5 There is a great public concern about what is happening in the Health Service. Since decisions are made more visibly about allocating resources, and about offering or not offering treatment these are issues that will not go away. The Methodist Church has been working on the *Ethics of Health Care Delivery* and we look forward to the publication of that paper this year. Churches have the perspective of people who work in health care, receive health care, and offer spiritual support to people in times of illness. An informed interest in what is happening, and a commitment to play our part in a healthy community is a continuing responsibility.

MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS

Convener: Revd Bill Mahood

Secretary: Revd Brenda Willis

1.1 The ethos of the Group has always been one in which we seek to relate the life and faith of the church and its continuing role in mission to the reality of the society all around us.

1.2 We believe that other faith issues continue to be important for every single member of our denomination. Church members are faced with them each time they turn on the television or read a newspaper. For many it will be obvious when they walk down their local street. We want to help churches and individuals to face the questions posed for them, and to do it with confidence rather than fear. For people involved in inter-faith dialogue their constant discovery is that it leads to a strengthening of their own faith and an eagerness to understand it better.

1.3 Our present concerns are for the building up of a network of interested people. This has already begun and we have started sending regular information to approximately a hundred people who have so far expressed interest. They are receiving information about our concerns, the work of the consultants, booklists and apologetic material. We see this preparation of apologetic materials as an important part of our work during the next few years. It helps us to explore how Christians can best share their faith with their neighbours. What are the things that we would want to highlight when we are talking to Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists or those of no faith at all?

1.4 We continue to see our work as firmly related to all other committees and groups within the church who are engaged in mission. Equally, we believe that we are deeply involved with Church and Society issues - often it is the people from other faith communities who are the victims of racism in Britain today. Such concerns mean also that we must constantly strengthen our ecumenical relationships with others working in this field. This was an important element throughout the life of the former Mission and Other Faiths Committee. The URC has been at the forefront of inter-faith work and continues to play a very active part in the Churches' Commission for Inter-faith Relations. In turn, the Commission looks to the URC and the other denominations for leadership and support. Both the denominational structure and the ecumenical commitment are important.

1.5 Much of our work could be described as slow and mundane. It is done faithfully by our various consultants as they build up and maintain relationships with other faith communities. It is a matter of trust, which needs time and patience to develop but can also too quickly and easily be destroyed. This has always been the main focus of our work and will continue to be.

PATTERNS OF MINISTRY

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PATTERNS OF MINISTRY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The remit of the Patterns of Ministry Working Party arose from the 1992 General Assembly which asked for further consideration of the themes in the Patterns of Ministry report of 1991, and specifically

- (a) reaffirmed the ministry of the whole people of God and the place of particular ministries within it;
- (b) requested the Doctrine and Worship Committee to relate '*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*' (the Lima text 1982) to paras 19-25 of the Basis of Union;
- (c) asked for further study on the Presiding Elder suggestion;
- (d) requested consultation with ecumenical partners;
- (e) asked for a review of the number of new entrants to the stipendiary ministry;
- (f) recorded its appreciation of the work of Non-Stipendiary Ministers and accredited Lay Preachers;
- (g) requested a report back to a future Assembly.

Work has been done on all of these points, and in particular -

- (b) led to the drafting of Appendix A of the Interim Report 1994 which is reproduced here in a slightly amended form at **Appendix A**.
- (c) was not reported on fully in the Interim Report, but receives more attention here in paragraphs 4.4.1 - 4.4.3.
- (e) is now the subject of further work being done by the Numbers of Ministers Working Party.

1.2 The Interim Report on Patterns of Ministry was sent out to the churches at the beginning of September 1994. The first stage in the wider process of discussion took place throughout the autumn. Comments were requested by mid-December. In the event the quantity and quality of those responses - from local churches, councils, committees and colleges of the church and from individuals - were overwhelming. Over 550 documents were received in the form of comments, questions, suggestions and even complete studies on particular aspects of ministry. The working party is glad to acknowledge all these contributions which so clearly indicate the depth of concern and the breadth of interest there is around the church on the subject of ministry.

1.3 The responses revealed a wide variety of opinion within the church. Many were supportive of the general direction of the report. Others were not. All have been read and considered, and the responses of the church have therefore played a large part in the re-formulation of the report. The United Reformed Church is a diverse church. Contradictory and incompatible opinions were expressed on almost every issue dealt within the report; that means that some people will believe they have not been heard. The Working Party has had a two-fold task - first, to listen; second, to suggest a way forward which, whilst heeding the diversity of views within the church, presents a vision which might obtain consensus.

1.4 A number of general points stand out and call for comment. A significant number of these asked for greater emphasis on particular concerns, such as the context of mission, ecumenism and the need for a fuller response on the presiding elder concept. Further comments on the responses received are summarised in **Appendix D**.

1.5 This report is now presented to Assembly in the hope that, through discussion beforehand and at Assembly itself, there will be sufficient clarity and unanimity for the church to move forward into the implementation of these proposals, so that the work of ministry in this part of the Church of Jesus Christ may be enhanced and made the more effective.

2 THE MISSION CONTEXT

2.1 Together with the whole Christian Church, we believe in God, who created the heavens and the earth; we believe in the Word of God, who was in the beginning with God, through whom all things were made, and who was revealed on earth in Jesus Christ our Lord; we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who has spoken through the prophets and guides the Church into all truth. Christ continues his ministry through the Church, which is called to tell the story of God's creating and redeeming love through word and deed; yet like the world to which it tells God's story, the Church always stands under God's judgement. Both world and Church need to be continually transformed by grace to become the communities they were created to be, enfolded in the self-giving, life-creating love of the Trinity. The Church, therefore, exists for the sake of God's world, and its ministry is focused in the world, for the world, for God's sake. Jesus called his disciples to be light - that is, to be distinctive signs of hope and truth. He also called them to be salt and yeast - that is, to be dissolved in the world as agents of God's transforming grace and love.*

(Resolution 51a)

2.2 By the wonder of God's grace, through the calling of Christ and the gifts and guiding of the Holy Spirit, the life of the Trinity flows through the Church. So too does the life of the world, for Christians are part of humanity. So the Church is a meeting point between the life of the Trinity and the concerns and joys of creation. It is impossible to be the Church without being part of humanity, experiencing the intersecting contexts of what it is to be human today. These contexts are at once global and local, for our relationships are economic and political, as well as familial and social. At the end of the twentieth century we are aware as never before that our neighbourhood embraces the world, and that the Church cannot truly be the Church if its life does not reflect that.

2.3 It is for this reason that we value and celebrate the fact that the United Reformed Church is part of God's global mission and ministry. We express this in a variety of ways -

- we recognise that we are part of the world church through our membership of such bodies as the World Council of Churches, the Council for World Mission, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Disciples' Ecumenical Consultative Council.
- we recognise that we are part of the European church and the British church through partnership with European churches and participation in the ecumenical instruments of Britain and Ireland.

These bodies help us both to be more fully aware of the challenges of God's mission in our varying contexts and to formulate responses to economic, social and political issues. Our Christian lives are enriched by our pilgrimage to deeper unity as we seek to discern God's will together. The experience of Local Ecumenical Partnerships is essential to our understanding of mission and evangelism.

2.4 The Church shares in God's global yet local mission by participating in the priesthood of all believers (see **Appendix B** for a theological commentary on the priesthood of all believers), by being 'in Christ', by telling and enacting God's story in each generation. The Church ordains some of its members, in response to God's call, to the ministry of Word and Sacraments. Such ministers are identified by the Church to stand under the discipline of the living Word, to study scripture and to pray, to interpret that living Word to the Church and the world, and to preside at the celebration of the sacraments which enact the Word. Ministers are servants of the Word so that the saints of God may be built up in the ministry given to all God's people through the many gifts of the Spirit for the work of Christ.

* The theological basis for mission is spelt out more fully in relation to the Basis of Union, and the 'Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry' and 'God's Reign and our Unity' documents in **Appendix A**. It is suggested that the Doctrine Prayer and Worship Committee be asked to revise this statement to put it into a form in which a later Assembly might be willing to recognise it as a statement which reflects the mind of the church.

2.5 Ministers of Word and Sacraments therefore have a particular role in the ministry of the whole people of God. Nevertheless, ministry, as we understand it, is shared: it is collaborative. Each person within the body of Christ is given particular gifts. Together they make up the total work of ministry. In the United Reformed Church this is expressed by Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Elders having collective responsibility for worship and pastoral care of the congregation through the elders' meeting. It is also seen when the members of the church, Elders and Ministers gather together to listen for the Word of God and discern the mind of Christ in church meeting, district council, provincial synod and General Assembly. The gifts given to God's people thus complement one another, creating a circle of service and praise rather than a pyramid of status and power.

2.6 We are called to play our part in God's mission where we are. We must therefore pay particular attention to the needs of the society of which we are a part. Patterns of industry, employment and unemployment, social structure, cultural and ethnic groupings, all require a response from the church which should be expressed in its patterns of ministry as well as in other ways.

2.7 Reformed Christians have always wrestled with the tension between the 'local' and the 'catholic' or universal experience of being the Church. Our commitment has always been to a 'local' church, to a particular congregation set in a specific place - though that place might be as small as a village or as large as a town or city. Improved access to public and private transport has meant that such congregations may be 'gathered' from a wide distance. In other places, particularly as denominational boundaries have become more permeable, congregations are much more the expression of the Christian life of a neighbourhood, more on the pattern of a 'parish'. Whatever the shape of local commitment, it has always been understood as a commitment to the Church catholic, to the whole body of Christ stretching through time and space. Just as we know what it means to be citizens of our city, town or village, and through that what it means to be a citizen of the world, so we know what it means to be part of the Church catholic through our membership of the local church.

2.8 There is an exciting diversity of ways of being the Church within the body of Christ for which the Spirit gives a rich variety of gifts. The New Testament itself bears witness to these differing patterns of church life. This report offers a framework within which the United Reformed Church can be faithful to the Spirit's guidance in a variety of ways, and also further the wider unity of the Church to which it is committed by the Basis of Union.

3 SHAPING AND USING MINISTRY FOR MISSION

3.1 The work of ministry belongs to **the whole people of God**. Therefore while we speak of the training and deployment of ministry, meaning ordained ministers, this must always be seen within the total context of the mission of the church and the building up of the whole people of God.

3.2 The church must first of all seek to **discern the will of God for mission** in each place. The world needs the gospel; communities need healing, integration and purpose; institutions and structures need care and challenge; congregations need support, leadership and teaching. Prophetic and evangelistic voices need to be heard; service needs to be given; love and forgiveness need to be demonstrated. There will be particular opportunities in particular areas at particular times. The whole church needs to be alert to these and to respond by providing appropriate ministry.

3.3 The church needs then to decide how its **ministerial resources** may most effectively be used. It will be concerned for all forms of ministry, how people are trained, how they relate to one another, how they are supported and how they are deployed.

3.4 While the church gives national oversight to these issues, some matters are dealt with in other councils of the church. In particular, the **detailed deployment of ministry** must be the responsibility of each district council in its own area. District councils have the

responsibility of exercising "oversight of the ministry" and engaging "in study concerning the Church's mission in the region" (Structure 2 (3) (i) and (ix), Manual page 21). The proposals that follow are intended to help in that task. They permit rather than prescribe developments. Different districts will approach their situations differently. They will be concerned for the care and nourishment of congregations and will encourage and support members and ministers in the many ways in which they participate in mission within the area. They will wish to deploy ministers in the most creative way without excessive regard to their source of income or time available. Of course these points matter in working out practical details, but they have no further significance. Each district will have a mixed, rich team of ministers, including Stipendiary Ministers, to use in ways that honour their own callings and further the work of the church in that area.

- 3.5 This will have **implications** for -
- the oversight and guidance of synods;
 - ecumenical considerations;
 - the integration and support of all these forms of ministry within the life of district councils;
 - recognition and continuous training of all forms of ministry;
 - the respective needs of local churches and communities;
 - the recognition of opportunities for fresh ministry.
- 3.6 We suggest therefore that it is the **responsibility** of the church -
- nationally to authorise those patterns of ministry which might best serve the work of the church;
 - in district council, in consultation with provincial synod, to work out strategies for such use of ministry locally and regionally;
 - locally to use those patterns of ministry imaginatively, flexibly and creatively.

This calls for prayerful awareness of needs and possibilities, for interaction between different parts of the church, for willingness to think strategically about the mission of the church and to offer support to that wider work gladly and sacrificially.

3.7 It can hardly be overemphasised that all mission is the work of the whole church, and that therefore all responses in the form of ministry need to be looked at within an **ecumenical framework**. When district councils and local churches consider their plans, they should always look beyond United Reformed Church boundaries to see what resources are available ecumenically, and wherever possible make decisions in consultation with ecumenical partners.

(Resolution 47a)

4 **PROPOSED PATTERNS OF MINISTRY**

4.1 **Introduction**

4.1.1 There was overwhelming support in the responses we received for focusing on the needs of **local congregations** and helping them develop appropriate forms of ministry and leadership. The suggestions we now make are based on the experience of some of our churches. They represent good practice. We believe the time has come to share and develop those visions.

4.1.2 The United Reformed Church has at present about **1800 congregations** served by approximately 1,000 ministers, including some 200 Non-Stipendiary Ministers. A further 250 ministers of other denominations serve in ecumenical situations in which the United Reformed Church is a partner. The number of ministers has been declining faster than the number of churches. While we are committed to providing ministry to every congregation, to expect ministers to serve ever more congregations is unrealistic. However, these congregations are also served by 15,000 Elders and 650 Lay Preachers. We want to encourage the church to think creatively about developing the ministry of Elders and to look afresh at the original vision of non-stipendiary ministry.

4.1.3 The responses also underline the crucial importance of having **flexible patterns** of ministry because different situations require different solutions. We therefore want to allow room for as much flexibility as may be beneficial, within a coherent understanding of ministry. The pattern we are offering is both flexible and locally based. It grows from our experience of collaborative leadership and the contribution which non-stipendiary ministry has made to the United Reformed Church. It seeks to extend the operation of non-stipendiary ministry in a way we believe to be in accord with the vision of its original proponents and to offer new possibilities for the leadership of Elders within each congregation.

4.1.4 As we have considered possible patterns of ministry for the future, we have found it helpful to identify some degree of distinction between **leaders and ministers**. Leadership in the Christian community is about vision, direction and priorities in a particular context. Each congregation exists within and for a community (geographical or otherwise) and the leaders need to be known and recognised in that community, able to act as a point of contact and as a focus for the pastoral caring of the congregation.

4.1.5 **Ministers of Word and Sacraments** have a distinctive role within the life of the Church. They are called by God and set apart by the church to be servants of the Word and have a particular responsibility to ensure that the church continues to tell and enact God's story in Word and Sacraments. In fulfilling this responsibility they help the church to maintain its Christ-like nature. In some instances a minister may embody both the ministry and leadership functions, as has often been the case in the past.

4.1.6 **Leadership** within local congregations is the corporate responsibility of the Elders' Meeting, which includes the minister(s). The district council provides oversight and encouragement to that leadership function. Our proposals remain within that framework.

4.2 **Outline of proposals**

We believe that the church needs to recognise a '**spectrum**' of **ministries**, lay and ordained:

Stipendiary Ministers, Non-Stipendiary Ministers, Local Ministers, Ministers in Secular Employment, Church Related Community Workers, Moderating Elders, Elders, Lay Preachers.

This list is not a status-laden hierarchy; indeed the very concept of hierarchy in the church is foreign to our tradition. However, we do embrace different functions and styles of ministry. Ministers serve in a variety of different ways and should be trained and prepared appropriately for new forms of service throughout their ministry. The purpose of this 'spectrum' of ministries is to enable the local church to be itself and to share in the mission of God in the most effective way as church members offer their own gifts of ministry within the whole body of Christ. In the sections that follow we shall consider each of the colours in this spectrum.

4.3 **Elders**

4.3.1 The **eldership** is one of the distinctive features of the Reformed tradition. It needs to be treasured and valued within our own church. We do not recommend any change to our understanding of Elders, but do feel that our overall pattern of ministry would be strengthened if the full richness of the eldership, as outlined in the Manual, was more evidently displayed in more churches.

4.3.2 From our own experience of eldership within the United Reformed Church we gladly offer its insights into **ecumenical** discussions and Local Ecumenical Partnerships. Many of our ecumenical partners already value it, but we are concerned that it can too easily be overlooked in the construction of LEP constitutions and in the practical working life of LEPs.

4.3.3 We have given further consideration to the question of the **ordination** of Elders. We are aware that some find this anomalous and would prefer, for instance, some form of commissioning. Others find ordination a barrier to accepting a call to the responsibilities of eldership. We are not persuaded, however, that the issues have changed sufficiently to justify a recommendation to abandon the agreement reached at the formation of the United Reformed Church.

4.3.4 Previous reports have floated the idea of greater **district involvement** in the appointment of Elders. This has been widely seen as impractical and we do not pursue it further here.

4.4 Leadership in the local church

4.4.1 We have considered seriously the proposal of the 1991 report to have a '**presiding elder**' in each congregation. We share wholeheartedly the vision that leadership in our tradition is rooted in the life and work of congregations. We note, however, that the 1991 report introduced the possibility of this ministry primarily as a response to the need for presidency at the sacraments, and only secondarily to provide effective and continuous local leadership (paras 3.10 and 3.12 of the 1991 report).

4.4.2 We wish to treat those two issues separately. The question of **presidency at the sacraments** is sensitive, both within the United Reformed Church and in ecumenical relations. We deal with it in more detail in para 5.1. The responses we have received have only heightened our awareness of the wide divergence of views throughout the church about presidency, and the consequent complexity of attempting to alter the present balance. Our normal practice is for Ministers of Word and Sacraments to preside at the sacraments except in cases of pastoral necessity. To give permanent authorisation to some elders to preside would therefore have been inappropriate because it would have formalised a pattern of ministry which we do not perceive as normative but exceptional. Such a change would also have ecumenical implications. It might be taken by our fellow Reformed Christians to imply a change in our view of the distinctive characteristics of the ministry of Word and Sacraments and therefore to call into question existing links of pulpit and table fellowship. Furthermore it could have implications for the position of the United Reformed Church in Local Ecumenical Partnerships. If we were to initiate such a change, a much wider consultation would be required than has taken place.

4.4.3 The 1991 report was working from an understanding that ministers and elders share the **same presbyteral ministry**. Whilst we believe this has certain attractions, we acknowledge that this has always been, and still is, a matter of debate within the Reformed world. The question of whether Elders and Ministers of Word and Sacraments share a common presbyterate as ruling and teaching elders respectively, or are distinct ministries, reaches back to the time of Calvin and has been fiercely debated throughout the history of the Reformed tradition. It should be noted that the Scottish and English traditions of presbyterianism never considered presidency at the sacraments as part of the ministry of the eldership. At the time of union with the Churches of Christ, the Joint Committee took the decision to make Churches of Christ Elders Non-Stipendiary Ministers precisely because they did preside at communion. That, presumably, was an expression of the United Reformed Church's mind on the nature of the presbyterate. We note that the Basis of Union takes care not to confuse the two ministries. Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Elders are both ordained, but they are ordained to different yet complementary ministries.

4.4.4 We do, however, wholeheartedly agree with the 1991 report about the need for effective, continuous and identifiable local leadership within each congregation, and we believe that this should be rooted in the eldership. We therefore propose not presiding elders but **Moderating Elders**. We stress that the basic qualification for any Moderating Elder would be an understanding of servant leadership within the Church of Jesus Christ and of collaborative leadership within our traditions. Ministers and Moderating Elders are called to be catalysts, people whose gifts, offered sacrificially, enable the whole Body to function more effectively.

4.4.5 The identification of Moderating Elders reinforces our tradition of **shared leadership** rather than challenging it. The office should arise naturally from within the elders' meeting. Moderating Elders working alongside ministers should reduce the sometimes excessive concentration of leadership tasks focused on the minister. Moderating Elders would be expected to have an intimate knowledge of local people and the local setting and in many situations be the local representative of the congregation to the community. They would need to work very closely with ministers who in turn would bring their experience from outside the local setting. Moderating Elders would in some situations be able to share the tasks of the Church Secretary; indeed some Church Secretaries might become Moderating Elders.

4.4.6 What would **Moderating Elders actually do**? Their role would vary depending on the particular context and their particular gifts. For instance they would -

- provide stimulus, leadership and initiative within the congregation;
- be the identifiable local representative of the congregation;
- act as points of administrative contact;
- focus the pastoral care of the church.

Depending on their gifts, they might also -

- have a role in leading worship;
- chair elders' and church meetings.

Such a pattern is already present in some of our churches, sometimes formally acknowledged and named in a variety of ways, sometimes unacknowledged. We believe it is worthy of recognition and support, and extension to many more churches.

4.4.7 Ideally, we would wish to see **one, and possibly more than one, Moderating Elders** in each church, although we recognise that some congregations would find it hard to identify more than one. If a congregation could not identify a suitable person within its own elders' meeting, but recognised the need for such help, we would encourage the district council to explore whether an Elder of a neighbouring church might be called to the task.

4.4.8 We envisage that the **local church**, in collaboration with the district council, would identify Moderating Elders, define their role and periodically review their appointment. Moderating Elders should be appointed for a limited term, perhaps five years. Their appointment would be appropriately recognised in the context of worship in the local church with representation from the district council. Their possible training is referred to in para 6.5. There would be no age limit on the appointment.

(Resolution 41 and 51b)

4.5 Ministers of Word and Sacraments

4.5.1 In our Reformed understanding there is but **one ministry** of Word and Sacraments. That one ministry at present exists in two forms - stipendiary and non-stipendiary. Non-Stipendiary Ministers are currently designated in four categories or models (Manual page 131):

- Model 1:** Service in a congregation as part of a team. The pattern is taken from the former eldership of the Churches of Christ and is limited in scope and local in nature. It is of a pastoral nature and is shared with others and with stipendiary ministers.
- Model 2:** Pastoral charge of a small local congregation.
- Model 3:** Service as a part of a team of ministers caring for a group of churches, according to gifts and availability.
- Model 4:** Service set apart to be a focus for mission in the place of work, or leisure, where there is little or no Christian presence. It is related to a local church or district council.

4.5.2 We wish to do all we can to emphasise the unity of the ministry of Word and Sacraments. We therefore suggest that in future, *for all but internal administrative purposes*, the term '**Minister of Word and Sacraments**' is used of all ministers. We also

suggest a re-modelling of the various forms of non-stipendiary service which we believe will both simplify the present system and present a challenge to the church to take seriously the pressure from congregations, district councils and synods for each congregation to have a minister of its own. That may be a distant prospect, but we can begin the journey in faith.

(Resolution 44a)

4.5.3 We recognise that ministry is more than the care of local churches, so we suggest adopting the term '**serving ministers**', in parallel to the term 'serving elders', to refer to all serving ministers including those 'in pastoral charge'. Within this category would be included all those under the oversight of and recognised by district councils as serving in chaplaincy, administrative, evangelistic, community, ecumenical and training posts as well as those serving local congregations. District councils should be encouraged to see all such ministers as part of its mission strategy. It would be implicit that such ministers would be -

- engaged in ministry recognised by the district council;
- eligible to be members of district council, if so appointed; and
- in some sense exercising their ministry as part of the life and mission of the United Reformed Church.

(Resolution 44b)

4.5.4 Alongside the proposal for Moderating Elders, we want to draw further on the former Churches of Christ pattern and develop what we have so far known as **non-stipendiary ministry model 1**. Many respondents told us that they thought our vision of local ministry in the Interim Report was what non-stipendiary ministry was intended to be. We entirely agree. There are doubtless many reasons why 'model 1' non-stipendiary ministry has had such a low profile. We believe there is a substantial need for this style of locally rooted, collaborative ministry of Word and Sacraments within the United Reformed Church. It has been found effective in a number of pastorates, and we wish to share that vision with the wider church. It could be a potent part of mission strategy.

4.5.5 We understand this as **Local Ministry**. We must ask again if God is calling some people to become ordained Ministers of Word and Sacraments within their local congregations and pastorates on a non-stipendiary basis. We would expect such people to have substantial gifts and considerable experience of the life of the church. If they are called, they should be nationally assessed and then appropriately trained. This would lead to ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacraments with authorisation to exercise ministry in one specific congregation or pastorate. It needs to be stressed that this involves ordination to the one ministry of Word and Sacraments, which, being recognised as such amongst us, would be recognised by our ecumenical partners similarly.

(Resolution 51b)

4.5.6 The appropriate **training** for Local Ministers is discussed further in para 6.4. The purpose of this training is to build on past experience and provide a range of core competencies. It would not be as extensive or prolonged as that for Stipendiary or Non-Stipendiary Ministers. This does not mean that the process of selection of candidates need be in any way casual or lacking in rigour.

(Resolution 42)

4.5.7 **Non-stipendiary ministry** has been one of the gifts of God to the churches. Some 200 now serve the United Reformed Church in various ways, many in teams or in local churches. Clearly, however, the original distinction between models 2 and 3 has outlived its usefulness. We therefore recommend that these models be combined.

(Resolution 43a)

4.5.8 Many of our correspondents were warmly in favour of the removal of any **distinctions** between Stipendiary and Non-Stipendiary Ministers, as far as is practicable. Some distinctions must remain for administrative purposes, not least because Stipendiary

Ministers are paid by the church and Non-Stipendiary Ministers obtain their income from elsewhere. However, that distinction has no theological significance. Other distinctions can be more easily removed. There should be equivalent criteria of assessment, and we invite the Training Committee to work towards equivalence of training. Changes in the pattern of higher education, the introduction of modular degree courses and credit accumulation and transfer should make this a much easier goal than it has been in the past. We welcome the introduction of such opportunities in various theological training centres.

(Resolutions 44a and 49)

4.5.9 We considered ways of meeting the **financial needs** of Non-Stipendiary Ministers, for instance by meeting full expenses and possibly other basic costs, such as housing, particularly where this would help them to exercise their ministry more effectively. However this is a complex matter which requires fuller consideration. We suggest that the Ministries Committee be asked to address the issue and report back to a subsequent Assembly.

(Resolution 48a)

4.5.10 We suggest that Non-Stipendiary Ministers model 4 be re-named '**Ministers in Secular Employment**'. This would more adequately reflect the fact that their ministry is focused in the world in which they work.

4.5.11 Some ministers who have previously been trained or have served as Stipendiary Ministers are no longer in pastoral charge and now see their ministry being fulfilled through their **work in the world**. They are in effect already non-stipendiary ministers in secular employment. Their part in the mission of the church could more readily be recognised if they were included in this part of the overall pattern of ministry and were recognised as Ministers in Secular Employment and identified as 'serving ministers' (see para 4.5.3). It would be for district councils and synods to recognise such ministers and to determine whether they should be members of district council and synod.

(Resolution 43b)

4.5.12 We believe that the United Reformed Church will continue to need **Stipendiary Ministers**. Far from contracting, the need for Stipendiary Ministers continues to increase as the needs of the church and the world change. We believe that the church must continually monitor these needs and then decide how it will deploy its financial resources to meet those needs. Inevitably the number of Stipendiary Ministers the United Reformed Church can afford to employ will fluctuate according to the financial resources available to the church. However, we have no inclination to plan for decline. Numerical decline is not a statistical inevitability. Equally the TRIO programme has proved that giving can increase joyfully and dramatically. Stewardship is a question for the whole church. Wise stewardship is a judicious balancing of need and the call of God against the resources available at any given time.

4.5.13 We remain convinced that Stipendiary Ministers are central to developing **strategies of ministry and mission**. The nature of ministry has been evolving over the past decades. Fewer and fewer ministers have pastoral charge of just one congregation. Responsibilities within the wider church and chaplaincy roles within the community have steadily increased. We believe that district councils should deploy Stipendiary Ministers with care and creativity, and we would not wish to be prescriptive about that deployment. In some situations it may be appropriate for such ministers to be in sole pastoral charge, in others for them to be part of groups and team ministries, in others for them to play distinctive roles in mobilising, leading and empowering the whole church for purposeful and distinctive engagement with the world. Whilst recognising the growth of and need for specialist ministries, we have no desire to lose the minister as general practitioner.

4.5.14 Summarising these different forms of ordained ministry we suggest they might have the following characteristics -

- **Stipendiary Ministers:** available to the whole church; supported nationally and locally in relation to stipend and expenses; subject to call by a pastorate or appointment by district council, synod or Assembly as may be appropriate; retire at 65.
- **Non-Stipendiary Ministers and Ministers in Secular Employment:** generally only available in a limited location; supported locally in relation to expenses; subject to call by a pastorate or appointment or recognition by a district council, synod or Assembly as appropriate; subject to periodic review, usually five-yearly; normally retire at 65, but may be reappointed or recognised for shorter renewable terms.
- **Local Ministers:** only available to a serve in a regular capacity in a designated congregation or pastorate, usually their own home church; supported locally in relation to expenses; subject to call by the local church or pastorate or appointment by district council as appropriate; subject to periodic review, usually five-yearly; no specific retirement age.

4.6 Lay Preachers

4.6.1 We emphasised in our Interim Report the crucial role played by our **Lay Preachers** in maintaining and invigorating the worship of our local churches. Their work will continue to be vital, and we need distinctive insights from them as they bring together the Word and the world. By being available to a number of churches, Lay Preachers can help to bring an awareness of the wider church and the wider world to the local situation.

4.6.2 Achieving a pattern of Local Ministers will take some years, perhaps a generation, but it will gradually reduce the need for others to be **authorised to preside** at the sacraments. However, where a district council believes that pastoral necessity requires a special authorisation that cannot be met from within the congregation, we hope it would look first to Lay Preachers known to the relevant congregation.

4.6.3 In our Interim Report we suggested a change of name to 'Preachers'. This prompted many comments. Some reminded us of the welcome growth of worship teams, worship leaders, worship groups and various styles of worship not familiar to previous generations. None of this led to any consensus on titles. Nevertheless, in view of our belief (affirmed in para 4.2(h) of the Interim Report) that the conventional distinction between lay and clerical is not true to the understanding of the *laos* as the whole people of God and that therefore 'lay'/'clerical' language should be avoided, we propose that the name 'Lay Preacher' be replaced by '**Local Preacher**' (as used in Methodism and in the former Churches of Christ).

(Resolution 46)

4.6.4 Under our proposals many present and future Lay Preachers would continue to focus their work on **acts of worship**. Others would be seen as well-suited to providing a more general local leadership and would be candidates for consideration as Moderating Elders or Local Ministers or might become part of local leadership teams sharing with ministers and Elders. They would serve either in their home congregation or in another where they have established strong links.

4.7 Church Related Community Workers

Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) undertake a ministry which is both diaconal and prophetic. Their work is difficult, radical and vital. They seek to help communities discover themselves in all their God-given potential. They work to enable the voiceless to find voice. Their style of ministry has a methodology which has much to offer to the life of the church. Apart from Stipendiary Ministers, CRCWs are the only people paid directly from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund. This means that the number of CRCWs is closely linked to the number of Stipendiary Ministers. This balance should be kept under review. It may be that in some places the church's ministry would be better enabled by an increase in CRCWs in proportion to the number of stipendiary ministers. With these provisos, we do not recommend any change to existing practice.

4.8 Other forms of ministry

4.8.1 There has been a significant development in recent years in paid work focused in the **wider church**, for example in training and administration. These servants of the church are sometimes Ministers of Word and Sacraments, or have specialist skills to offer. Examples would be provincial directors of training, Youth and Children's Work Trainers and development officers. Ministers in such posts may, with agreement, be deployed in that capacity.

4.8.2 It is the responsibility of district councils in consultation with provincial synods to explore the **development** of other forms of ministry. Possible examples might be evangelists or district ministers. In the development of any ministries of this nature, full consultation needs to take place and there needs to be clear agreement about such things as recognition, regular review and accountability.

(Resolution 47a)

4.8.3 In recent years, some local churches have appointed pastoral assistants, administrators or other **local workers**. Their support and encouragement is part of the district council's responsibility in its oversight of the local church.

4.8.4 We have not given detailed consideration to the possibility of developing the **Interim Minister** concept. Such a minister might be available to serve a congregation during a time of vacancy, particularly if there were difficult circumstances. There has already been some practical use of ministers in this way. We suggest that this issue be referred to the Ministries Committee for further consideration.

(Resolution 48b)

4.8.5 We suggest that where the role of **lay pastor** has been developed, district councils might consider whether our proposals for Moderating Elders or Local Ministers are not more appropriate.

4.8.6 We draw attention to the particular role of **Special Category Ministries** which represents about 4% of our total stipendiary ministry. These posts have provided opportunity for a great variety of imaginative and valuable ministries. We hope that their numbers would be maintained at the present level of 30 posts.

4.9 A way forward

We do not imagine that our proposals for a spectrum of ministry, including Moderating Elders, will lead to immediate solutions for every church's problems. Still less do we pretend they are beautifully tidy. We do argue that they offer exciting possibilities to those prepared to grasp the opportunities with enthusiasm, and that they are fully within our tradition of collaborative leadership. The experience of some districts who have experimented with patterns akin to those proposed here is that sometimes many more people discover a vocation in the new forms of leadership than was initially thought possible.

5 RELATED ISSUES

5.1 Presidency

5.1.1 Each local church needs someone who is able to preside at the celebration of the sacraments. (In passing we note that although most comment on this matter refers to presidency at the Lord's Supper, the same need also applies to the administration of baptism.) Many of the responses we have received have been on this topic, and this has reminded us of the significance of the commitments made by Congregationalists and Presbyterians in 1972, and by Churches of Christ in 1981. Entry into a united church has not removed **differences of conviction** on this issue. Some have told us that lay presidency is as important to them as the ordination of women. Others tell us they would rather not celebrate the sacraments than have a non-ordained president. The continuing

practice of weekly communion among former Churches of Christ reminds us that different congregations have different understandings of what constitutes pastoral necessity. The comments which follow attempt to enable us to continue to live a common life together.

5.1.2 The Basis of Union provided a framework which enabled two smaller churches (Presbyterian and Churches of Christ) and a larger church (Congregational) to come together without hurting one another's consciences. We believe that it is of the utmost importance that the spirit of that union be observed in this matter, for in the nature of the case it cannot be resolved by a simple majority vote. Paragraph 24 of the Basis of Union provides for lay presidency in cases of **pastoral necessity**, and for the periodic review of each local situation. There is wide variation in practice across the Church. Some district councils treat each authorisation individually; others give a general authorisation to all lay preachers. Such regional variations cause unnecessary hurt, particularly when people move from one part of the country to another. We believe therefore that there should be an agreed pattern for the United Reformed Church as a whole.

5.1.3 As a Church we are committed to the ever-deepening unity of all God's people. We have a particular responsibility therefore to be sensitive to the **ecumenical dimensions** of presidency at the sacraments. More than 10% of our congregations are joint United Reformed-Methodist churches, and we are involved in many wider Local Ecumenical Partnerships and ecumenical projects throughout the United Kingdom. We need to be ourselves, but as we do so we must bear in mind the comments of our ecumenical partners about the difficulties that some views of presidency create for existing LEPs and future developments.

5.1.4 With this in mind we reiterate what we said in the Interim Report. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are Christ's gifts to the Church. Each in a unique way signifies and re-enacts the appropriation of Christ's saving work for his people. Those who preside when these sacraments are celebrated link congregations together in a common intention. That means that those who are baptized and admitted to communion in one place are gladly received in other places also. Thus two principles should guide us in this perplexing and sensitive area. First, the sacraments belong to the **whole Church** as Christ's gift. Secondly, we must be **sensitive** to the ecumenical dimension of the way in which we order our sacramental life. The first principle means that no congregation should ever be deprived of the sacraments, and that there must always be someone available and authorised to preside. The second principle implies that those normally authorised to preside should be Ministers of Word and Sacraments.

5.1.5 We suggest the following **pattern of presidency** -

- (a) a Minister of Word and Sacraments should preside when available;
- (b) in situations of pastoral necessity where no minister is available, the district council should make provision for lay presidency; Moderating Elders and Lay Preachers should be considered first;
- (c) authorisation for lay presidency should not cover a period longer than a year without consultation and review of the needs of the congregations concerned.

We believe that such a process will remain true to the spirit of the Basis of Union. It will enable us to be ourselves, and it will be sensitive to our ecumenical context.

(Resolution 45)

5.2 Diaconal ministries

5.2.1 Our suggestion of a '**loose diaconal association**' attracted a mixed response, ranging from horror that we were trying to institutionalise prophets, to excitement that a United Reformed Church report had at last identified a central concern of ministers in secular employment! Our aim was, and still is, not to institutionalise or marginalise but to support and hear those whose ministries, either as Church Related Community Workers or as ministers of Word and Sacraments lead them to missionary engagement with the

socio-economic and political structures of our society. It may well be that this should be the task of all ministers and members, but that manifestly does not happen, and it is therefore all the more important that we both listen and enable. Our vision of a diaconate was not of a specific office or 'order' within ministry, but of a community of those whose varied ministries had a distinctly diaconal emphasis, whether Ministers of Word and Sacraments (who would *remain* Ministers of Word and Sacraments), CRCWs or lay people.

5.2.2 Given the mixed reaction to the proposal, we recommend -

(a) that district councils review their relationship with those serving ministers who do not work in local pastorates, and consider how they can support and learn from them;

(Resolution 47b)

(b) that Ministries Committee encourage appropriate networking amongst those working in similar situations;

(Resolution 48c)

(c) that the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee give thought to the nature of diaconal ministry within the United Reformed Church, its relationship to the ecumenical debate on the diaconate, and any possible implications for the pattern of ministry in the United Reformed Church.

(Resolution 51c)

5.3 Transfers

When ministers wish to transfer from one form of ministry to another there should be a fresh assessment of their gifts, their need for any further training, an identification of the kind of work they might undertake in future and a decision on any appropriate induction programme. When ministers change roles substantially within one form of ministry, there should be some assessment of any further training needs. When ministers seek to become stipendiary, there has to be agreement that they may come onto the payroll once they have received a call. This must involve, as at present, an assessment of their ability and availability to carry out such a ministry, confirmation of their good health and some indication that there is reasonable possibility of there being a place for them on the payroll.

(Resolution 48d)

5.4 Oversight

Oversight is a significant feature of the church's ministry, and in some traditions it is an integral part of a three-fold pattern of ministry incorporating bishops, priests and deacons. Clearly, for us, oversight is shared between the councils of the church and their officers. It is most focused in the work of the Moderators of provincial synods. The responsibilities of Moderators have grown and developed, amongst former Congregationalists for the greater part of this century, for others only since becoming part of the United Reformed Church. The balance of the work of the Moderators has continued to change throughout this time, but the need for their ministry has become increasingly accepted. We think it is time to review and reflect on the role of Provincial Moderators in relation to the workload, expectations and the exercise of oversight generally. We suggest therefore that the Mission Council be asked to carry out such a review.

(Resolution 50)

6 TRAINING

6.1 We recognise that **training policy** is a matter for the Training Committee. However, we offer the following outline suggestions in the light of our other proposals.

6.2 We recommend that **Stipendiary Ministers** and **Church Related Community Workers** be trained in colleges and on courses which have close relationships with the local church and community. We commend the introduction of mixed-mode learning, to enable candidates to transfer from part-time to full-time.

6.3 Following the recommendation that there should be equivalence of training between stipendiary and non-stipendiary training, we recommend that the Training Committee reviews the provision for **non-stipendiary ministry** training. The development of modular courses, credit accumulation and transfer, and the accreditation of prior learning will help candidates to blend part and full-time study. Changes in higher education present opportunities for the validation of courses at a variety of levels - e.g. certificate, diploma, degree - and of developing learning further over a long period. Each course should comprise a basic minimum foundation training, which can be added to during the continuing education of ministers. We understand equivalence to mean that Non-Stipendiary Ministers and Stipendiary Ministers should develop their core competencies to the same level. The inevitable consequence is that it will take longer to train part-time than it does full-time. It will be the Training Committee's responsibility to define equivalence in detailed terms.

6.4 Training for **local ministry** should establish basic ministerial competence in the conduct of worship, pastoral care, biblical hermeneutics and theological reflection, but should, ideally, be modular so that courses already completed can be added to at a later stage. Courses should be nationally designed but locally delivered, using a flexible 'portfolio' approach so that a candidate's past experience and qualifications can be accredited and additional formal training not be required in areas where the individual is already competent.

6.5 We believe that those who are willing to serve as **Moderating Elders** will already have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes from their extensive experience of church life. However, Moderating Elders should be encouraged to develop their abilities in such areas as church administration and pastoral care and their knowledge of the structures and working of the United Reformed Church. The Training Committee is invited to consider how this may be best accomplished.

(Resolution 49)

7 EMERGING PATTERNS

7.1 It is disappointing how few United Reformed Church members seem aware of the **diversity of patterns** of church life outside their home congregation. Our proposals may seem less radical when the existing variety is appreciated.

7.2 In a minority of churches the pattern for ordained ministry is the **single pastorate** where a minister works with one congregation. In some districts there are no churches of this sort, although we would want to affirm this pattern as entirely appropriate in certain circumstances.

7.3 A much more common pattern is the **joint pastorate** where one or more ministers serve several congregations, each of which continues a largely independent congregational life. With a declining number of Stipendiary Ministers and an uneven spread of Non-Stipendiaries, formation of such pastorates has often seemed the natural answer to the problem of providing ministry to every congregation. The pattern can result in a lack of leadership in some of the churches or in impossible burdens on the ministers.

7.4 In some settings it has proved more helpful to form **group pastorates** in which there are more churches than ministers, but the churches have some degree of common life. Sometimes a ministry team develops to serve the group, perhaps including Stipendiary and Non-Stipendiary Ministers together with Lay Preachers and other worship leaders, and some Elders. The leadership of such a team can lie with a Stipendiary Minister but need not do so.

7.5 Equally widespread are our **Local Ecumenical Partnerships** involving other denominations with a very wide variety of leadership patterns. They might follow any of the above three patterns and include ministers and other leaders from beyond the United Reformed Church.

7.6 Ministers have also been increasingly used outside local church structures in **specific institutions and communities**.

7.7 There are additionally those ministers who serve in a variety of **specialist ministries** within the church separate from pastoral charge of particular congregations, e.g. Assembly staff, Provincial Moderators and training officers.

7.8 As ministry develops in many situations, ministers, together with Moderating Elders, Lay Preachers, worship leaders, and perhaps others, will work together as **ministry teams**. This will be a matter of introducing collaborative styles imaginatively and flexibly. This will serve not only to emphasise the shared nature of ministry, but to provide mutual support and stimulus.

7.9 All ministers should, whenever possible, be referred to simply as 'ministers'. When for **administrative purposes** distinctions are required, such as in the Year Book, we might adopt simple letter codes and the descriptive titles such as the following:

- S Stipendiary Ministers (as now)
- N Non-Stipendiary Ministers (current models 2 and 3)
- L Local Ministers (current NSM model 1 and new local ministry)
- E Ministers in Secular Employment (current model 4)
- R Retired Ministers (as now)

7.10 In all these changes and developments the most important matter is that these ministers and others in appointments that promote the Church's work, are properly **cared for** by the local church and the wider councils, and encouraged to contribute out of their experience to both.

8 **LOOKING AHEAD**

8.1 The embryos of our proposals can be found in experimental and established aspects of the life of different parts of the United Reformed Church. But let us dream. Let us take a look at the Riverside District of Nussex Province in the year 2005.

8.2 We have been offered the use of the provincial helicopter to tour the eleven churches in the District one Sunday morning. As homework, we make a quick check of the Year Book which reminds us this is a mixed District. The City of Cranston alongside the river has become polarised between well-off and inner-city communities; there are six other URCs in the towns and villages south of the city:

<i>Church</i>	<i>Membership</i>
CRANSTON	
St John's Memorial	157
Suffolk Gardens	212
Cornwall Estate	41
Rutland Avenue	79
Borderland LEP	24
NELSON BRIDGE	73
COLE	102
THE SOUTHBANK GROUP	
Barnfield	26
Tollgate	35
David's Brook	17
Three Camels	3

8.3 Circling over Cranston it is easy to spot the fine spire of St. John's Memorial URC. With a building in grand Gothic style, this congregation values its history and traditions. Its minister has always felt his call is to lead a single congregation and the District has been glad to support him in this. Even on our brief visit, it is clear the church is a hive of activity.

8.4 It is only a short hop to Suffolk Gardens URC in a leafy suburb. They share their Stipendiary Minister with Rutland Avenue URC and she explains how they have developed a joint leadership team. Both congregations have several able Moderating Elders, and they have proved especially helpful at Suffolk Gardens where the elders' meeting is very large. Also in the team are a Local Minister and several Lay Preachers who together ensure a coherent pattern of worship through the year in each church.

8.5 Arriving at Cornwall Estate URC, we can hardly help noticing the different standard of building! Fortunately, the District saw the opportunity here, so it encouraged a Local Minister at Rutland Avenue to be seconded here for four years. He works with the adult members and alongside the District's non-stipendiary Evangelist, who specialises in work with the younger residents of the estate.

8.6 Landing in the playground of a school, we were able to call on Borderland LEP, a joint project with the Baptists and Anglicans. Nobody ever doubted that Stan was the true leader of the URC contingent and when he could be ordained as a Local Minister it greatly simplified and clarified his relationship with the clergy of the other denominations.

8.7 Flying out of Cranston we soon come over Nelson Bridge. The town here is growing and the URC has a part-time Stipendiary Minister. An imaginative woman of boundless energy, she provides intensive teaching for parts of the year; the rest of the year she is travelling in her other job as a part-time training officer. Church life at Nelson Bridge by no means falls apart in her absence as their Local Minister, although never pretending to be an 'ideas man' himself, is well able to guide the fellowship.

8.8 We find the gathered church at Cole a little anxious about their vacancy. We are glad to hear they are a great deal less anxious than they were last time, because in the interim their minister had trained together their team of three Moderating Elders, who keep surprising themselves at the gifts God has given them that they never knew about before. They give excellent leadership to the twelve elders here.

8.9 The other four URCS in Riverside are all small causes and were linked as a Group even before the Patterns of Ministry report. The district council had been worried for some time about the future of the chapel in the hamlet of Three Camels, and felt that in its current five year plan it should channel a specific effort there to see if the work could be revived. The minister of the Group is enthusiastic about spending a disproportionate share of her time there for the present. This would have caused major problems in the other three churches in years gone by, but they all see Three Camels as a mission opportunity. Their confidence is also greatly increased by having, at Barnfield, a retired minister as their Moderating Elder, and at Tollgate a Local Minister. The previous Moderating Elder at David's Brook was not reappointed after his first term of service expired last year, so they do feel slightly exposed with the group minister being away more often; but we leave feeling that an imaginative District like Riverside will work with them to find a way forward.

9 NUMBERS, MOVEMENTS AND FINANCE

9.1 Statistics

The Statistical Supplement prepared alongside the Interim Report has provoked little comment, but has proved a valuable resource document. If it is to have any long term value it is imperative that the database be fully established and kept up to date. It is recommended that a decision to this effect be taken by General Assembly.

(Resolution 48e)

9.2 Deployment

9.2.1 Following further discussions within the Number of Ministers Working Group and in Mission Council, the deployment issues raised in section 8.2 of the Interim Report have now been referred to the new Resources Planning Committee. That committee will have its own plans for taking this matter forward in consultation with all of the Provinces.

9.2.2 It should, however, be noted that parts of this report deal with some of the principles which should underlie any policy of deployment or the sharing of ministry. We hope that the principles will not be lost as detailed patterns for the responsible sharing of resources for mission are set up.

9.3 Movement of Ministers

9.3.1 While we do not propose any significant change in the processes by which a minister is called by a local church or appointed by a district council or some other body, it should be noted that patterns are changing, that there is an increasing number of termed appointments, some of them in ecumenical situations. This does create difficulties in a system which is largely one of local call with conciliar concurrence and without time constraints. This may well put additional pressures on district councils.

9.3.2 We reiterate the points made in the Interim Report (8.3.2) -

- that there should be early planning and, where possible, early decision when a timed appointment is coming towards its end,
- that all agreements about the length of termed appointments should be set down clearly in writing and agreed by all involved, and
- that adequate pastoral care and support be given.

9.3.3 We also suggest (following responses to para 8.3.3 of the Interim Report) that all ministers, including Stipendiary Ministers, should be subject to review at five yearly intervals. Ideally, this might be part of the process of regular district oversight visitation, but since these are not likely to coincide regularly with the five yearly intervals in a minister's service it is probably better that it be conducted as a separate exercise. This review would be shared between the minister, pastorate and district council; it should be distinct from any appraisal process that may be introduced; it would have the purpose of advising on the future pattern of a minister's service. Its status would be exploratory and advisory only. We understand that Ministries Committee will advise Assembly in due course on the introduction of such a procedure.

9.3.4 Regarding any kind of 'early retirement package' (Interim Report 8.3.4), further enquiry suggests that a policy requiring the enhancement of such pensions would be very costly and therefore no action is proposed.

9.4 Number of Stipendiary Ministers

The number of Stipendiary Ministers employed by the church is a matter for the General Assembly to decide. Our understanding is that further work is being done in the Ministries Committee on the number of Stipendiary Ministers the church needs and can sustain financially.

9.5 Finance

Clearly, all the proposals set out here have financial implications, both in terms of the number of stipendiary ministers to be paid and the level of training to be provided for all forms of ministry. As the Resource Planning Advisory Committee prepares its plans for the coming years, it will want to consider whether an increased proportion of the church's financial resources needs to be made available for these additional training needs. This will be a matter of priorities for the Assembly to decide.

10 **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

1. **God's mission** involves the whole of creation. God calls the Church to engage in that mission. The work of mission is served by a variety of forms of ministry. Our vision is of the Church as local as well as universal (2.1 - 2.8)
2. The **Church** has the task of shaping and using ministry in the most effective ways for its missionary task. Ecumenical considerations should have a key place in all our thinking (3.1 - 3.7).
3. Within our understanding of the whole people of God, **patterns of ministry** need to be flexible, coherent and collaborative; they need to be responsive to the needs and opportunities of local churches and communities; different ministries need to be seen as part of a wide spectrum. (4.1 - 4.2)
4. **Eldership** is greatly valued as an integral aspect of shared leadership (4.3).
5. There is a need to develop local leadership alongside other ministries. The concept of Presiding Elder is not acceptable (4.4.1 - 4.4.3). We propose that from within the eldership **Moderating Elders** be identified and recognised (4.4.4 - 4.4.8).
6. There is **one ministry** of Word and Sacraments, but this ministry may be expressed in a variety of forms (4.5.1 - 4.5.2). We propose three forms of ministry - Local Ministers, Non-Stipendiary Ministers and Stipendiary Ministers (4.5.14) and introduce the concept of 'serving ministers' (4.5.3).
7. **Local Ministers** would be developed from the Non-Stipendiary Minister model 1 pattern (4.5.4 - 4.5.6).
8. **Non-Stipendiary Ministers** models 2 and 3 would no longer be distinguished separately and would be known as Ministers except for administrative purposes (4.5.2 and 4.5.7 - 4.5.9).
9. Non-Stipendiary Ministers model 4 and other ministers working on a similar basis would become known as **Ministers in Secular Employment** and be seen as sharing in the mission of the Church (4.5.10 - 4.5.11).
10. There is a continuing need for **Stipendiary Ministers** (4.5.12 - 4.5.13).
11. There is a continuing need for **Lay Preachers**, perhaps under the title of 'Local Preachers', and with the possibility of some becoming Moderating Elders or Local Ministers (4.6).
12. No change is suggested in relation to **Church Related Community Workers** although their place in the mission of the Church will need to be monitored constantly and creatively (4.7).
13. **Other forms of ministry** should be explored (4.8).
14. A pattern of **presidency** is proposed (5.1).
15. There is need for further consideration of **diaconal ministries** (5.2) and **oversight ministries** (5.4).
16. There are practical consequences in emphasising the one ministry of Word and Sacraments. The means of **transfer** from one form of ministry to another needs to be considered (5.3).
17. Relevant **training** issues will need to be considered in more detail (6).
18. These proposals offer a **framework** for developing local strategies in relation to mission (2.8 and 4.9). Some emerging patterns are described (7), an illustration is given (8), and practical issues are addressed (9).

RESOLUTIONS

Patterns of Ministry

41 Assembly agrees in principle to the development of Moderating Elders as set out in paras 4.4.4 - 4.4.8 of the report, and asks Mission Council to prepare detailed proposals for the introduction of Moderating Elders, particularly with regard to the recognition, length of service and title, and to report to Assembly in 1996.

42 Assembly agrees in principle to the development of Local Ministers as set out in paras 4.5.4 - 4.5.6 of the report, and asks Mission Council to prepare detailed proposals for the introduction of Local Ministers, particularly with regard to recruitment, training, deployment and terms of service, and to report to Assembly in 1996.

43 Assembly resolves that from the date of Assembly 1996

- a) Non-Stipendiary Ministers models 2 and 3 be combined [para 4.5.7]
- b) Non-Stipendiary Ministers model 4 be renamed Ministers in Secular Employment and that this title be used of other ministers where appropriate; [paras 4.5.10 - 4.5.11]
- c) it will recognise three forms of ministry of Word and Sacraments, as set out in paras 4.5.4 - 4.5.14 of the report.

44 Assembly agrees

- a) that for all but internal administrative purposes the terms 'ministers' and 'Ministers of Word and Sacraments' shall be used for all ministers; [para 4.5.2]
- b) that the term 'serving minister' is appropriate in relation to ordained ministers serving within the United Reformed Church, and accepts the guidelines set out in para 4.5.3 of the report.

45 Assembly receives the statement on Presidency at the Sacraments, set out in para 5.1 of the report, as expressing the mind of the church at this present time.

46 Assembly agrees that the term 'Local Preacher' shall now be used in place of the term 'Lay Preacher'.

- 47** Assembly encourages district councils in consultation with synods and local churches
- a) to explore the deployment of all ministry, especially Stipendiary Ministers, and the development of a variety of styles of ministry in ways which will stimulate the life of the church, be ecumenically responsible and enable more effective missionary engagement;
[paras 3 and 4.8.2]
 - b) to review their relationships with ministers not serving in local pastorates to see whether they might be regarded as serving ministers.
[para 5.2.2]

- 48** Assembly
- a) asks Ministries Committee to reconsider the question of expenses and benefits for Non-Stipendiary Ministers in the light of current needs and practicalities, and report to Assembly;
[para 4.5.9]
 - b) refers the 'Interim Minister' concept to Ministries Committee for further consideration and report to Assembly;
[para 4.8.4]
 - c) asks Ministries Committee to encourage appropriate networking among those working in similar situations;
[para 5.2.2]
 - d) asks Ministries Committee to prepare detailed guidelines in relation to ministers wishing to transfer from one form of ministry to another;
[para 5.3]
 - e) instructs Ministries Committee to maintain relevant records on database.
[para 9.1]

- 49** Assembly refers the training issues raised in the report to the Training Committee and asks for a report to Assembly in due course.
[para 6]

- 50** Assembly asks Mission Council to carry out a review of our present understanding and practice of oversight, and in particular to consider the work and responsibilities of moderators of provincial synods, keeping the ecumenical context in mind.
[para 5.4]

- 51** Assembly requests the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee
- a) to produce a further statement on the Theology of Ministry based on Appendix A of the report;
[para 2.1]
 - b) to offer guidance concerning services for the ordination and induction of Local Ministers and for the recognition of Moderating Elders;
[paras 4.4.8 and 4.5.5]
 - c) to undertake further study of the concept of diaconal ministry.
[para 5.2.2]

APPENDIX A

THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION

Each tradition which is contained within the United Reformed Church originally justified its pattern of ministry on the ground that it reflected the pattern of the New Testament Church. The historic pre-Reformation patterns were rejected on the ground that they needed reform, and the criteria for the reformed pattern were derived from scripture, as the reformers understood it. Few today would wish to argue either that the New Testament provides a single pattern of ministry or that the patterns in the various churches can be evaluated by the extent to which they conform to a single New Testament pattern. On the other hand, there is disagreement on the relative importance of New Testament patterns and the needs of the Church today. This issue is not addressed in the Basis of Union and only to a limited extent in BEM. The use of the historic present tense in both documents leaves it unclear whether the primary reference is to theological or historical affirmations.

The following abbreviations are used in the text which follows:

BEM: Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry; Faith and Order Paper no. III, World Council of Churches, Geneva 1982. References are to the text on Ministry unless otherwise stated. The General Assembly approved a formal response to this text in 1985;

GRU: God's Reign and our Unity, the Report of the Anglican-Reformed International Commission, London & Edinburgh, 1984. The General Assembly of 1985 asked the Doctrine and Worship Committee to prepare a response which was contained in the Committee's report to Assembly, 1986;

URC Basis and URC Structure: the Basis of Union and the Structure of the United Reformed Church, originally approved by the Uniting Assembly of 1972, but (except where otherwise noted) quotations are from the Basis as revised by the General Assembly of the Church from time to time and printed in the 3rd Edition of The Manual of the United Reformed Church 1991.

1 MINISTRY IN THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

1.1 God created the heavens and the earth, including human beings, as an expression of the divine glory: despite human resistance to God's purpose, God's grace and love are manifested in a continuing mission to reconcile humanity and the whole universe to God (GRU 25).

1.2 God calls the whole of humanity to become God's people. By sheer grace God chose Israel and then in fulfilment of that purpose called the Church into being through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit: mission refers primarily to God's continuing activity in the world, summed up in the accomplished work of Christ (URC Basis 1, BEM 1, GRU 26).

1.3 The life of the Church is based on Christ's once-for-all victory over the powers of evil and death and comes from the power of the Holy Spirit, given to those who believe in the Risen Lord and are recreated as the Body of Christ (BEM 2-3).

1.4 The sovereign rule of God, to which the Church bears witness, is the reality underlying the world God created: the Church is the beginning of the new creation, but has only a provisional character in the service of God's rule, provisional first because it contains only part of the human family and secondly because those within it are only partly conformed to God's purpose (GRU 29, 30).

1.5 The task of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel to the world and to be a foretaste of the joy and glory of God's rule by its witness and service (BEM 4, GRU 73). Christ thus continues his ministry in and through the Church (URC Basis 19).

1.6 The Holy Spirit bestows on the members of the Church diverse and complementary gifts; members should discover, with the help of the community, the gifts they have received and use them for the building up of the Church and for the service of the world (BEM 5, cf. URC Basis 19-20, where these gifts are attributed to Christ). Through the power of the Spirit members of the Church are enabled to participate in the ministry of Christ to the world (GRU 74).

1.7 The first disciples were both the first followers and the first apostles sent to call others to follow (GRU 76). Thus from very early times people were called and set apart to lead and build up the local churches in their life and service to the world, particularly in the proclamation of the Word, the celebration of the sacraments and the exercise of oversight (*episkope*) (BEM 8-9, 13).

1.8 By the third century a common pattern of ministry was emerging which involved a chief pastor in each local church who worked with a body of colleagues and other helpers or assistants to forward the work of Christ in Church and world: this was the origin of the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon (GRU 91, BEM 19-25).

2 MINISTRY IN THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

2.1 In the later sixteenth century those who wished "to complete" the Reformation in England, whether presbyterians or congregationalists, rejected the mediaeval form of the threefold ministry, expressed in the understanding of the local church as a diocese. Instead local congregations called a pastor to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, who was surrounded by a group of elders and deacons. At the regional level oversight was exercised not by a single pastor but by councils of pastors and elders (GRU 94).

2.2 Different variations of this pattern were found in the constituent traditions of the United Reformed Church - Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Churches of Christ. The Basis of Union states the common understanding of church and ministry underlying these traditions.

2.3 The United Reformed Church undertakes to make available, so far as possible, ordained ministers of Word and Sacraments to every local congregation, to accredit suitable people as lay preachers, and to recognise certain members, normally elders or accredited lay preachers, who may be invited to preside at baptismal and communion services where pastoral necessity so requires (URC Basis 24). All ministries are open to both women and men (URC Basis 25).

2.4 Within the local congregation the elders' meeting (which consists of the minister(s) and elders) is responsible for ensuring that public worship is offered, the sacraments are celebrated and the word is preached (URC Structure 2(2)). A congregation or group of congregations, with the concurrence of the District Council, calls an ordained minister or ministers of Word and Sacraments to undertake these tasks (URC Basis 21). Some ordained ministers are stipendiary and others are non-stipendiary; the difference between them relates primarily to availability for service. Many congregations, to an extent which varies significantly from place to place, also invite lay preachers to lead worship.

2.5 Responsibility for pastoral care and oversight is shared among ordained ministers and elders, who also constitute the wider councils of the Church (URC Basis 20, 21, 22). The pastoral responsibilities of elders are usually exercised through the assignment of a group of members to each elder for pastoral care. The responsibilities of elders in the government, oversight and leadership of the church are necessarily corporate or collegial in character, and by its relation to the wider councils of the Church the elders' meeting represents the whole Church to the local church.

2.6 The procedures for recognising and calling people to ministry vary according to the ministry concerned. Elders are called, elected and ordained within each congregation; ordination to the eldership is not repeated if an elder moves to another congregation, but such a person does not become a serving elder in the new congregation unless that congregation so decides. Ministers of Word and Sacraments are selected for training by a process involving several councils of the Church but the decision on eligibility for ordination is by the provincial synod on behalf of the whole Church. In each case ordination is to a ministry recognised throughout the United Reformed Church.

2.7 The Basis of Union (23) provides that the General Assembly shall decide what other ministries shall be exercised within the United Reformed Church and how those who are to exercise them shall be set apart. Lay preachers are accredited by District Councils but not ordained; there is also a list of nationally accredited preachers kept by the Accreditation Sub-Committee. The General Assembly keeps a roll of accredited Church Related Community Workers.

2.8 Other ministries are recognised within local congregations with varying degrees of formality, e.g. youth workers, childrens' workers, organists and leaders of music.

2.9 The United Reformed Church recognises the work of Youth and Childrens' Work Trainers and Youth Leadership Training Officers, but they need not be ordained ministers.

2.10 The General Assembly appoints a Moderator for each provincial Synod, who is a minister, separated from any local pastoral charge, and appointed for a period of years, with the possibility of reappointment for further periods if the General Assembly so determines. The task of the Moderator is to preside over meetings of the Provincial Synod and exercise a pastoral office towards the ministers and churches within the Province. The Moderator is involved in the process of suggesting names of ministers to vacant pastorates, and presides, or appoints a deputy to preside, at all ordinations and inductions of ministers within the Province. The Moderator is also a member of each district council in the Province and shares in the council's responsibility for oversight of local churches and ministers (URC Structure 2(4)). The Moderator therefore exercises a personal *episkope* in a conciliar setting, but a Moderator's ministry is not understood as constituting a separate order of ministry. Constitutionally Moderators are officers of the General Assembly, though unlike other Assembly officers they have responsibilities which are primarily regional rather than national.

2.11 The current discussion requires us to clarify our understanding of:

- a) ordained and non-ordained ministry;
- b) stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministry;
- c) elders and lay preachers;
- d) diakonia.

3 ORDAINED MINISTRY

3.1 Christians understand the qualities of character, which enable them to live the Christian life and show forth the good news of the Kingdom of God in the service of others, as gifts from God rather than resources originating in themselves. Everyone has a unique combination of such gifts. The exercise of such gifts is what we mean by the ministry of the whole people of God. That ministry of self-offering in sacrificial service to and prayer for the world is one way in which Christ's completed work is represented to the world. (See further in Appendix B.) For the building up of the whole people of God in God's service, certain members of the Church are called to a particular ministry.

3.2 In ordination certain members of the Church are designated for public ministry in the Church in the name of Christ by the invocation of the Spirit and the laying on of hands. Such public ministry is understood as a particular gift of the Spirit, which builds upon the individual combination of gifts of the candidate concerned (BEM 39). The existence of such ministry points to the initiative of God in Christ for redemption.

3.3 Those who ordain do so not in their own right but as representatives of the Church, and the ordination prayer is a reminder that the risen Lord is the true ordainer who calls to and bestows the gift of ministry. The laying on of hands is the sign of the gift of the Spirit to a particular person in a particular place at a particular time and also an acknowledgement of the prior gifts and commitment which that person brings to ministry. The prayer of the congregation represents their commitment to support the one ordained (BEM 39-44).

3.4 The word "ordination" has traditionally been used to refer to the commissioning for public office within the church. It has different intentions, according to the specific tasks of the ministries concerned, which are reflected in the liturgies of ordination (BEM 39). Ordination to a particular ministry, like baptism, is not repeated: this is why ordination has been described as "for life". The Basis of Union recognises the crucial point more precisely when it says that "those who enter on such ministries commit themselves to them for so long as God wills" (URC Basis 20).

3.5 There has been much discussion over whether ordination confers a different kind of being or character, which leads into such questions as the indelibility of orders, etc. The Commentary on BEM 40 notes "a certain difference between the unspoken cultural setting of the Greek *cheirotonein* and that of the Latin *ordo* or *ordinare*. The New Testament use of the former term borrows its basic secular meaning of "appointment" (Acts 14:23; II Cor 8:19), which is in turn derived from the original meaning of extending the hand, either to designate a person or to cast a vote... *Ordo* and *ordinare*, on the other hand, are terms derived from Roman law where they convey the notion of the special status of a group distinct from the plebs, as in the term *ordo clarissimus* for the Roman senate". Within the discussion there is a cluster of ideas, which can usefully be separated.

3.6 The act of ordination is described in BEM as involving invocation to God that the new minister be given the power of the Holy Spirit in the new relation between minister and Church, the sign of the granting of this prayer by the Lord who gives the gift of the ordained ministry, acknowledgement by the Church of the gifts of the Spirit in the one ordained, and commitment by

Church and ordinand to the new relationship (BEM 42-44, reprinted in GRU 84). The emphasis in this description on the new relationship in which the ordained person stands is significant for the long debate over whether ministry is to be understood essentially in ontological or functional terms. Public ministry is never completely described by listing the minister's tasks: the relationship to others created by a public recognition of the minister's calling to those tasks itself reshapes the being of the minister, as those who exercise such ministry can testify. The ordinand is therefore different from those not ordained because of the new relationship. Moreover the fact that ordination to a particular ministry is not repeated emphasises the definitiveness of the act.

3.7 Although BEM and other documents use the term "the ordained ministry" as though it were a single ministry, the United Reformed Church is not alone in using the term ordination to denote the setting apart of at least two different orders of ministry. The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church now use the term "ordination" in relation to bishops, priests and deacons, whilst clearly understanding that those ministries are different. Ordination has usually been linked with a public role in services of worship for the celebration of the Lord's Supper and the preaching of the Word: these actions in worship are the way in which the whole community is especially built up in their ministry to the world. Those responsible are also those most intimately concerned in the pastoral care of the congregation. Nevertheless the act of ordination has to be understood in terms of the intention of the ordination prayer which defines the character of the ministry exercised.

3.8 What ordination does in a particular way is to point beyond itself and the person ordained to the initiative of Christ. A person may feel called by Christ to ministry, but that call has to be tested and recognised by the Church: ordination is the solemn ratification of that call by the Church as it prays that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, will enable the ordinand to use and develop his or her gifts for the public ministry to which he or she is called. It is in this sense that the United Reformed Church can endorse such statements in BEM as "In order to fulfil its mission, the Church needs persons who are publicly and continually responsible for pointing to its dependence on Jesus Christ, and thereby provide, within a multiplicity of gifts, a focus of its unity" (8) or "Their presence reminds the community of the divine initiative and of the dependence of the Church on Jesus Christ" (12). The idea that the minister is a pointer to Christ is perhaps more helpful than the commoner view that the minister is the representative of Christ, a view which tends to lead implicitly to the idea that there can be only one minister in a congregation. Moreover there are some who are called to special ministries such as hospital or industrial chaplaincies, etc., which cannot be understood in the same way as ministry within a local congregation.

3.9 The United Reformed Church can readily accept the statement in BEM 13 - "The chief responsibility of the ordained ministry is to assemble and build up the body of Christ by proclaiming and teaching the Word of God, by celebrating the sacraments and by guiding the life of the community in its worship, its mission and its caring ministry". The question of the difference which ordination makes tends to be focussed on the extent to which such responsibilities are exclusively those of the ordained ministry - a point which is not adequately met in the Commentary on this paragraph "These tasks are not exercised by the ordained ministry in an exclusive way", even though that was presumably its purpose. What can be said firmly is that ordination is a matter of authorisation rather than power: it is concerned with relationships (compare 3.6 above) and particularly the relationships between congregations in different places, since the mutual recognition of those authorised embodies the links which bind the Church together and manifest its unity (GRU 82). Furthermore, whilst it can be said that ordination confers status, in a Christian context that is the status of the servant of all, following the example of Christ himself. The fact that ordination is understood as primarily a matter of authorisation explains why Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Churches of Christ have all had procedures which enabled those responsibilities entrusted to the ordained to be exercised by those not ordained on occasions. In each tradition the argument for the normal exercise of such responsibilities by the ordained is one of order in the sense of orderliness, not that they have exclusive powers or rights.

3.10 If ordination is understood as the process of authorisation, rather than the conferring of power, the question as to which ministries in the Church are to be the subject of ordination is raised more acutely. Why does the United Reformed Church ordain elders as well as ministers, but not, for example, lay preachers or Church Related Community Workers? Historically, the answer to this question for the Church as a whole is largely pragmatic and traditional. However, there is a sense in which ordination has been reserved for those ministries which most closely recall us to the foundational ministry of Christ himself. The ministries of Word and Sacraments are linked because each amplifies the significance of the other. The ministry of oversight and pastoral care is linked to Christ as king and shepherd. The diaconal ministry is linked to Christ as servant. A case could therefore be made for ordaining Church Related Community Workers as deacons. A case could also

be made for ordaining lay preachers to the ministry of the Word if they were regular rather than occasional preachers, and in view of the link between Word and Sacraments it would seem logical to ordain those who regularly conduct worship to the ministry of Word and Sacraments, particularly if their ministry is exercised in several congregations. The important point here is that made in GRU 83 when the advocacy of "lay celebration" on the ground that it witnesses to the priesthood of all believers is shown to be self-contradictory since it implies that the president alone is the priest. It is important that the theology behind ordination is understood, since an extension of ordination might be opposed both by ministers concerned to defend their clerical status and by lay people who wished to reject that same clerical status.

3.11 The practice of the United Reformed Church in the ordination of ministers is that this is an act of the District Council, in fellowship with the local church. The Provincial Moderator or his/her deputy presides, and will be assisted in the laying on of hands by at least two other ministers and often one or two elders appointed by the District Council (unlike the Church of Scotland where elders do not lay on hands at the ordination of a minister).

3.12 The practice of the United Reformed Church in the ordination of elders is that this is an act of the local congregation which elects them. The minister (or interim moderator) presides and will normally be assisted in the laying on of hands by at least two elders (as suggested in the Service Book rubric). Although responsibility for conducting ordinations of ministers is specified as a function of District Councils, a similar responsibility for conducting ordinations of elders is not assigned to either the Church Meeting or the Elders' Meeting in the URC Structure. In view of the fact that one of the functions of elders is to represent the congregation in the wider councils of the Church, particularly the District Council, it would be appropriate for the District Council to be formally represented at the ordination of elders and for the Council to provide appropriate training.

3.13 The following statement to explore the relationship between ordination and the ministry of the whole people of God, the links between spiritual gifts, patterns of ministry and experience, and the relationship between servanthood and leadership is offered for consideration:

The Church embodies an upside-down reflection of the world - the first shall be last and the last shall be first, the greatest among you shall be your servant, etc. Secular leadership models, whether based on ancient kingship or modern business practice, will always need to be transformed in a Christian context to embody this reversal of worldly values. This means that the authenticity of ministerial leadership will be experienced in the minister's service to the congregation and to the world in which it is set. It is as a servant of God to the people of God, alongside fellow-Christians, that an ordained Minister proclaims and teaches the Gospel, celebrates the sacraments, guides the life of the community or serves in the world. More particularly, ministers have a responsibility to help congregations interpret the Gospel for today and to pray for the Church and the world. This helps to make sense of ordination, because ordained ministry points beyond itself to Christ, upon whose reconciling work all ministry depends. Ordination to representative servanthood emphasises identification with rather than separation from. It involves the recognition of gifts given by God, which can be nurtured by appropriate training or experience. Ordained ministry does not therefore detract from the ministry of any Christian, but it adds an availability to all which is costly service. Like the ministry of every baptized Christian, it is essentially reciprocal in character, depending on the wider community in which it is set. In sum, therefore, the distinctive identity of the minister, like the distinctive identity of every Christian, is created by relationships rather than tasks.

APPENDIX B

THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

1 God's people are on pilgrimage, caught up in adoration, spent in joyful and sacrificial service to one another and all people everywhere, all the time growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. By sharing in the life of the local church, they enter into the life of the Church throughout the world and in all ages, being made part of the communion of saints (URC Basis 16; cf BEM 2-40). The church meeting is the place where the priesthood of all believers is gathered to confess the Lordship of Christ. It is through this whole people (the *laos* of God), not through clergy alone, that the Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry (URC Basis 19). (It cannot be too often emphasised that the clergy are part of the *laos*, which has a more all-embracing meaning than the popular connotation of "laity".)

2 In the Basis of Union (20) the role of those who exercise particular ministries in offices recognised within the Church is understood as the equipping of the whole people of God for their total ministry. This total ministry is sometimes referred to as "the priesthood of all believers". That phrase in turn is sometimes misunderstood as implying that "anyone can do anything". Since it is important that the calling of ordained ministers is affirmed in a way which does not derogate from the calling of the whole people of God, the relationship between "lay" and "ordained", "priesthood" and "ministry" needs to be explored and placed in the context of Scripture and our traditions.

3 The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers finds its principal New Testament support in 1 Peter 2:9 and occasional references in Revelation - 1:6, 5:10. 1 Peter 2:9 is a notoriously difficult verse to translate and interpret; but however it is translated, it is the Church as a corporate body which shares in the high priesthood of Christ. The verse is not speaking about the ministry or priesthood of Christians as individuals. Priesthood is a corporate description not an individual mandate. It is a function of the community of believers, derived from their participation in the high priesthood of Christ.

4 "The priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of the baptised have in their respective ways the function of sacrifice and intercession. As Christ has offered himself, Christians offer their whole being "as a living sacrifice". As Christ intercedes before the Father, Christians intercede for the Church and the salvation of the world. Nevertheless the differences between these two kinds of priesthood cannot be overlooked. Whilst Christ offered himself as a unique sacrifice once and for all for the salvation of the world, believers need to receive continually as a gift of God that which Christ has done for them" (BEM 17 Commentary).

5 Christ's sacrifice has broken down all barriers both between God and humanity and between peoples, so the Christian priestly community is inclusive, not exclusive. It is the whole people who are called and sanctified by the Spirit to share Christ's ministry (1.2; 1.5). All ecclesiology is ultimately an expression of God's self-revelation in Christ, which is another way of saying that its focus must be a missionary focus.

6 The New Testament doctrines of the high priesthood of Christ and the priestly function of the believing community undergird the concept of the ministry of the whole people of God. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers properly belongs in that context. There is little evidence in the New Testament of a doctrine of the ordained ministry being built on the foundations of the priesthood of all believers. There is no clear link between the two concepts in the New Testament.

7 Although the New Testament speaks of an exciting and creative diversity of ministry in the primitive communities, it is equally clear that most (if not all) of these churches had a ministry which was less than the sum of its members (eg 1 Cor 12:27-30; Eph 4:11-12). Ministry in some form (rarely Ignatian orthodoxy, cf Appendix A, 1.8) was pervasive, its purpose to enable the ministry of God's people, not to usurp it, "to knit God's holy people together for the work of service to build up the body of Christ" (Eph 4:12).

8 The traditions belonging to the United Reformed Church derive their emphases on the priesthood of all believers from Scripture and the writings of the reformers of the 16th century. It is therefore important that their understanding of the doctrine is appreciated. The agenda of the reformers was to recover that set of relationships between Christ, his people and the ministry, which they perceived to have been lost. Luther, Zwingli and Calvin were not against the ministry but against a particular view of the priestly office. They did not intend to wreck the unity of

Christendom. They have surprisingly little to say about the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Their attention was focused primarily on the relationship between God and humanity, on sin and forgiveness and the workings of the penitential system. Ministry was a secondary concern.

9 Luther is regarded as a champion of the doctrine. However, although it is a necessary consequence of his conviction of the free availability of God's grace, his treatment of it is ambiguous and frequently polemical. Luther's first discussion of the doctrine was in his polemical writings of the early 1520s in which he attacked the privileges of Roman clergy and criticised Roman ordination. The radical logic of his rhetoric was tempered by his innate conservatism - elsewhere he claims the parish to be a divine institution, and in 1532 loudly insisted on the need for an official ministry in the face of the number of self-appointed preachers who were over-running Saxony. In some places he seems to build his understanding of the ministry on the priesthood of all believers, but elsewhere he argues that the ministry is dominically appointed and of the *esse* of the Church. By the Diet of Augsburg of 1530 Melancthon could dismiss the priesthood of all believers as of secondary importance, and it is passed over in silence by the Augsburg Confession.

10 Calvin was logical and clear on the subject. Ministry was derived from the universal priesthood, which in turn was dependent upon the priesthood of Christ. He was equally clear that the doctrines of the priesthood of all believers and the ordained ministry were distinct. Ministry was essential to the life of the Church - "neither are the light and heat of the sun, nor meat and drink, so necessary to sustain and cherish the present life, as is the apostolic and pastoral office to preserve a Church in the earth" (*Institutes* 4.3.2). Ministry was not priesthood, a point made with admirable clarity by the Second Helvetic Confession:

"Accordingly, there are great differences between a priesthood and a ministry. For the former is common to all Christians... but the same is not so with the latter, and we have not removed the Ministry out of the midst of the church when we have cast the papistical priesthood out of the Church of Christ".

In other words, by denying a separated priesthood and affirming the priesthood of all believers, it was possible to base the theology of a separated ministry on a different foundation.

11 It should now be abundantly clear (in Gordon Rupp's words) that the priesthood of all believers did not mean for the reformers what it tends to mean for us, "an otiose ministry and an omniscient laity". The reformers did not think that anyone could do anything in church, far from it. They had discovered something much more exciting - that the whole people of God participated in the intercessory priesthood of Christ.

12 The blurring of the doctrinal boundaries between the priesthood of all believers and the doctrine of the ministry is a relatively recent phenomenon. Early Congregationalists and Presbyterians did not doubt the truth of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, or the calling of some to ministry.

13 The Evangelical Revival and explosion of church planting and building which followed, increased the demand for ministry and hastened the breaking down of prejudice against lay preaching - most clearly evidenced by "Mr. Wesley's preachers". It was the occasion of little theological comment because the right of the believer to preach was part of the English dissenting tradition. The theological difficulties began when English dissenters (particularly Congregationalists and Baptists) reacted against the sacerdotal emphasis of the Tractarians and their successors in the mid-nineteenth century. Ministers strove to become as un-priestlike as possible. Amongst the leaders of this movement (like R.W.Dale) distinctive clerical dress was rejected along with the title "Revd". Ordination fell out of favour and testing of calls became much less stringent. It was in this context that Dale asked the Carr's Lane, Birmingham, church meeting to allow a layman to preside at communion once a year as a reminder of the priesthood of all believers. Such a view prevailed for some thirty years, when it was severely criticised by such leaders and scholars as J.D.Jones and P.T.Forsyth.

14 This was at best an aberration in the history of Congregationalism. It is ironic that Dale's real aim, the spiritualisation of the laity, led only to the debasing of the ministry. In any doctrine of ministry within the Reformed tradition, a distinction between the doctrines of the priesthood of all believers and the ministry must be maintained (as in the New Testament and the writings of the reformers) or else neither will be honoured.

15 *God's Reign and our Unity* provides an attractive snapshot of ministry in the early church, when it observes that "the company gathered behind their closed doors on that first Easter evening was the church in embryo" (para 74) and "also the ministry in embryo" (para 75). To extend that image, the infant church's DNA included a patterning of "calling and sending" so that the church always had a structure of leadership. "Ministerial leadership in the church may therefore be defined as following Jesus in the way of the cross so that others in turn may be enabled to follow in the same way" (para 76). Although it is true that different accounts of Easter evening (e.g. Luke 24:33 and Acts 1:14) present a different theology of the relationship between church and ministry, the emphasis in John 20:19-23 is paralleled elsewhere: those whom Jesus called, he also sent to proclaim God's word of peace and forgiveness. This strand in early Christian experience echoes our own experiences of ministry under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that we remain uncomfortable with the language of "clergy" and "laity". Ministry is Christ's gift to the whole *laos*.

APPENDIX C

HISTORICAL NOTE ON ORDINATION

1 The constituent traditions of the United Reformed Church had different practices in relation to ordination. Congregationalists ordained ministers but not deacons (elders having disappeared quite early on in the history of English Congregationalism). Presbyterians ordained ministers and elders, but not usually deacons (although the United Presbyterians did prior to 1876). Churches of Christ ordained ministers, elders and deacons.

2 Although Calvin's views were differently expressed in different editions of the *Institutes*, in the final edition (*Institutes* 4.3.8) he regards bishops, presbyters or pastors (the terms are for him equivalent) as exercising the ministry of the word in local churches, and sees two other ministries as of perpetual duration - viz. government and care of the poor. "By these governors I understand seniors selected from the people to unite with the bishops in pronouncing censures and exercising discipline". The care of the poor was committed to deacons, among whom Calvin distinguished two distinct classes: those who administered alms, and those who actually took care of the poor (3.9). In discussing the appointment of ministers he emphasised that "if any one would be deemed a true minister of the Church, he must first be duly called; and secondly, he must answer to his calling (3.10). The choice of ministers lay with the people, though the fact that this was accompanied by prayer and fasting showed the serious nature of the action (3.12-15). Calvin understood ordination by the laying on of hands to have apostolic precedent for pastors, teachers and deacons. He acknowledged that there was no fixed precept concerning the laying on of hands but said that it would be regarded "in the light of a precept" because of its careful observance by the apostles. He added that it was useful "that by such a symbol the dignity of the ministry should be commended to the people, and he who is ordained reminded that he is no longer his own, but is bound in service to God and the Church" (3.16).

3 Within the Reformed tradition there have been different approaches to the office of elder in different countries. The evolution of the office in Scotland in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century is a complex one. The Scottish Book of Discipline of 1560 made elders and deacons offices to which election was made annually, and they were clearly understood as lay offices. The Second Book of Discipline (adopted by the General Assembly in 1578 but rejected by parliament) reflected the triumph of presbyterianism both in its rejection of the principle of diocesan episcopacy and in its stipulation that elders were to be elected for life. The development of the elders' role in discipline was a threat to the powers of the ecclesiastical courts in this area, and also indirectly to the powers of the civil magistrate, given that the Church of Scotland was established. Towards the end of the sixteenth century elders also tended to assume the functions of deacons in relation to the poor, thereby rendering the specific ministry of the diaconate less clear. The revival of this model of eldership by Thomas Chalmers at the beginning of the nineteenth century reinforced the problem and led indirectly to the development of managers as a distinct group from the elders concerned with matters of church finance and fabric.

4 Elders and deacons are mentioned in *The Form of Church Government* of 1645, when the English Parliament passed an ordinance regulating the election of elders. But ordination was not a central issue, and indeed the opposition of independents to presbyterianism at this point was based

mainly on the fear that the Church would henceforth have an authority which would come into conflict with that of the state. Ironically the *Statement on The Institution of Churches* annexed to the *Savoy Declaration* of 1658 specifies ordination by prayer and the laying on of hands for pastors, elders and deacons (para 12), probably because its authors were clearer in their minds that these were officers of a congregation rather than a civil parish. (The Savoy Declaration omitted the Westminster Confession's paragraph on Church Censures.) Nevertheless it was within presbyterianism rather than congregationalism that the practice of ordaining elders and deacons persisted. In congregationalism deacons became the primary group of lay church officers, and ordination was dropped.

5 The United Secession Church (and later the United Presbyterian Church after 1847) whose formularies on the relation between church and state and on the ordination of ministers and elders were reflected in those of the Presbyterian Church of England and the United Reformed Church, was clear that elders and deacons should be ordained, and as a non-established church had a congregational, rather than a parochial, view of the extent of their responsibilities. Alexander Campbell, who grew up in the Secession tradition, drew on this for his views on church government in *The Christian System* which was written for Disciples or Churches of Christ in the 1830s. Campbell distinguished three ministries - of bishops, deacons, and evangelists - and argued that all should be set apart by prayer and the laying on of hands (*Christian System*, xxv, 6, 16-17). He was also clear that "it is, indeed, the Holy Spirit and not the congregations which creates Bishops and Deacons" (*ibid*, p 185). Churches of Christ in Great Britain, where full-time ministers have always been few, placed much more emphasis on the ordained eldership in the leading of worship, than Disciples of Christ in the USA, where full-time ministers have been more plentiful. Within Churches of Christ, in fact, elders tended to have a more important public role in the leading of worship, preaching and pastoral care, while deacons (though ordained) tended to be more like Congregationalist deacons and Presbyterian elders. The mid-twentieth century practice in Churches of Christ was determined by the Reports of two Commissions approved by the Annual Conference, that on Ordination approved in 1942 and that on the Ministry approved in 1954. The Report on Ordination proposed forms of service for the ordination of ministers, elders and deacons, and for services in which voting on the election of elders and deacons took place. The emphasis, however, was on the divine action: "It is Christ himself, through the Church, who appoints, ordains, and sends His Ministers forth" (*Year Book* 1942, p 134). Also ordination has been the mark of those called to ministry rather than paid service.

6 Interestingly, the question of the length of tenure has tended to influence attitudes to ordination. Mention has already been made of the shift between the First and Second Books of Discipline in the tenure of elders in Scotland. After reunion in 1929 the Church of Scotland specified that elders would always be ordained, as would deacons if elected to office for life. However, it is open to congregations to elect deacons for a term of years, and if this happens they are not ordained. The same provisions existed in the Presbyterian Church of England before union, except that the option of election for a limited time was mentioned before the option of election for life. No provision was made for deacons in the United Reformed Church. In Congregational Churches deacons originally served for life, but from the nineteenth century, particularly in larger congregations, it became customary for them to serve for a specific number of years; in Churches of Christ it was customary for elders and deacons, once elected, to serve for life.

APPENDIX D

RESPONDING TO THE RESPONSES

1 The widespread discussion of the Patterns of Ministry Interim Report published in September 1994 resulted in a very large number of detailed comments - over 550 - being received by the end of the year. Many of these responses focused on a range of issues which have now received further attention within this report. Among the most significant of these are the following -

The mission context. All ministry needs to be set within the overall context of mission. The shape of this report seeks to affirm that.

The ecumenical context. Although an ecumenical context was assumed for the whole of the Interim Report, we have noted the plea that this be addressed more explicitly.

Local leadership. A great deal of comment was received concerning the need for identifiable local leadership. We have continued to explore this as a major concern.

Presiding elder. The work done by the working party on the presiding elder proposal was not presented in detail in the Interim Report. We now present our reasoning more fully in paragraphs 4.4.1 - 4.4.3.

Training. While the working party did not see it as its responsibility to consider training issues in any depth, the nature of the ministry to be exercised and the appropriate training for that are so inextricably bound together as to require some further exploration. We have therefore added some comments on training.

Collaborative styles. Many responses emphasised the need for ministry to be collaborative in style. This should, of course, be a natural feature of eldership and all forms of ministry. This has been re-emphasised in this report.

2 **Integrating theology.** The request was made that theology should not be treated as a series of appendices, but be integrated within the flow of the report. On further reflection we have endeavoured to do both. The theological appendices in the Interim Report were important, and were clearly valued, as an indication of the basis for the proposals and as comprehensive statements in their own right. They are therefore retained, but with some minor alterations in the light of comments received.

3 **The influence of tradition.** To a remarkable and unexpected extent, the responses reveal a stress on the traditions and practices inherited from our pre-1981 and 1972 experiences. Those traditions are of course crucial to our self-understanding as a church and to our future, but the indication is that there is need for still closer growing together and for greater tolerance and awareness of differences amongst us. Possibly this indicates not so much the need for changed structures or for new patterns, but for a closer observance of principles already set out in the Basis of Union which so carefully and creatively drew our traditions together. In this light the working party considered that what was required was the commending and encouragement of a variety of good practices which might well be contained within present structures. Indeed, it is arguable that these proposals are more a reflection of a variety of models which are already permissible within the terms of the Basis of Union than a range of fundamental changes. What is being encouraged is some more adventurous thinking in the local context, a more thorough exploration of the mission dimension in all our life and activity and an affirming of a variety of existing styles of ministry. This whole discussion is about how we can best help one another within a conciliar church to develop good models for ministry, and to do so in such a way that congregations and districts can take them up practically.

4 **Church and world.** The Interim Report was criticised by some for drawing too sharp a distinction between church and world. The comment is accepted, although there is a distinction which must not be blurred. Reflecting on this we have found it helpful to think of the church in its two major modes, i.e. "gathered" and "scattered". As a gathered community the church is called to worship, fellowship, prayer, learning and growth. As a scattered community it is called to sacrificial and loving service, witness and prophecy. The two modes are interactive and cannot be separated. They might be compared to the body breathing in and breathing out. Ministry operates in both dimensions and needs to enable the church to fulfil both sets of functions.

5 **Responding further.** In the light of some of the fundamental issues concerning the nature of the United Reformed Church raised within the responses, the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee has undertaken to take a further look at the responses from the perspective of our church's self-understanding. It may be possible to follow up some of the responses individually where these relate to specific concerns locally or more widely.

6 **Flexibility and growth.** Fundamentally, we have sought to present patterns which might be flexible and adaptable in a wide variety of situations while still maintaining some coherence of pattern, and which will be equally appropriate whether the local church is large or small, and whether the church as a whole is growing or declining in size. We trust that the very focusing of concern on ministry for mission will sharpen our minds and expectancy to look and pray for growth.

APPENDIX E

WORKING PARTY

The following were appointed by Ministries Department to serve on the Patterns of Ministry Working Party which began its work in March 1993 -

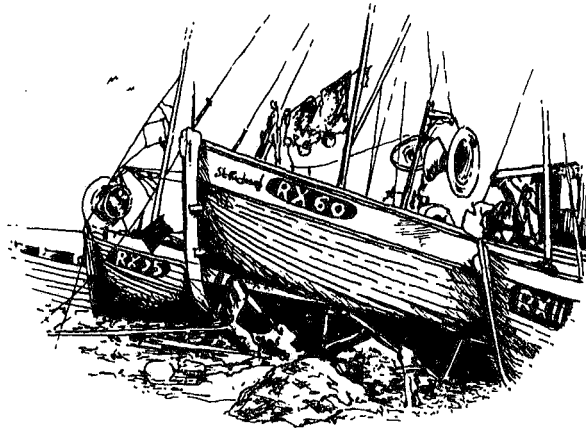
Revd Dr David Cornick (Secretary), Mr John Ellis, Revd Malcolm Hanson (Convener),
Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee, Revd Terry Oakley, Revd Graham Robson and
Dr David Thompson.

Sister Lavinia Byrne of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland and the Revd Philip Sheldrake of Westcott House, Cambridge, have helped the Working Party as ecumenical consultants.

In the early stage of the discussions a number of issues were referred to standing committees and specially convened working groups. More details of this process appear in the Interim Report 1994, para 2.

Ecumenical consultation also took place in relation to the drafting of the theological appendices (A - C) and ecumenical consultants participated in the residential consultation in January 1995. The present proposals are being sent to ecumenical partners as part of the preparation for discussions at General Assembly 1995.

APPENDICES



GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1995

APPENDIX I

EXPENDITURE	1995 <i>Revised</i>	1996	
a	MINISTRY		
	Stipends, NI & Pension (Local & Special Ministries)	12176434	12577750
	Stipends, NI & Pension (CRCWS)	97366	152510
	Disturbance allowance, grants etc. (inc Welfare)	348000	355500
	Provincial Moderators - stipends, housing, expenses	354250	352900
	Pension Fund Additional Contribution	998000	1100000
	-----	-----	
	13974050	14538660	
b	TRAINING		
	College Training for the Stipendiary Ministry	729000	760000
	Other training for the Stipendiary Ministry	61000	64000
	Non-Stipendiary ministry training	108000	113000
	YLTO/YCWT programme	330000	322900
	Support for Westminster College	42000	55000
	Support for Windermere Centre	34800	35700
	Support for National Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings	30700	32500
	Lay Training		11500
	St. Andrew's Hall Grant	76000	78300
	-----	-----	
	1411500	1472900	
c	ASSEMBLY APPOINTED STAFF		
	Salaries/Stipends - Executive staff	215700	239000
	Salaries/Stipends - Support staff	187550	189600
	Housing and expenses	95100	101740
	-----	-----	
	498350	530340	
d	MISSION		
	Council for World Mission	576000	593280
	Missionaries	89300	91900
	Grants for national and local mission	199150	204660
	Ecumenical Councils	104818	108610
	General Assembly	61300	63300
	Assembly committees/conferences	42560	44360
	Mission Council committees/conferences	25200	26000
	-----	-----	
	1098328	1132110	
e	COMMUNICATION AND EDITORIAL		
	Salaries	132100	116000
	Other costs	27200	28450
	-----	-----	
	159300	144450	
	1995 <i>Revised</i>	1996	
f	ADMINISTRATION		
	Salaries - Personnel & Finance	219800	225700
	Management and personnel services - other costs	16385	16950
	Finance - other costs	1924	2570
	Premises costs	128409	141950
	Professional Fees	49000	50450
	Miscellaneous expenses	162490	178540
	-----	-----	
	578008	616160	
	-----	-----	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	17719536	18434620	
	-----	-----	

INCOME

m	INVESTMENT INCOME		
	Dividends	297000	324000
	Interest on Cash	167000	171000
		-----	-----
		464000	495000
n	GRANTS		
	Memorial Hall Trust	385000	440000
	New College London Trust	206000	216000
	Deed of Covenant - URC Insurance Co Ltd	36000	37000
	Department for Education	56450	58170
		-----	-----
		683450	751170
o	MINISTRY AND MISSION CONTRIBUTIONS	16122000	16464000
p	LEGACIES		
q	SUNDRY INCOME		
	Donations and Profits on activities	64550	63450
	Provincial Contributions to YLTO/YCWT programme	94800	87500
		-----	-----
		159350	150950
		-----	-----
	TOTAL INCOME	17428800	17861120
		-----	-----
	(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT IN YEAR	290736	573500
		-----	-----
	MET BY:		
	Ministerial Training Fund	201000	142000
	General Fund	89736	431500
		-----	-----
		290736	573500

APPENDIX II

COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

General Secretary: Dr D Preman Niles

1 In 1795, a group of men gathered together to consider how they could further the work of world mission and as a result the London Missionary Society was founded. The year 1995 is, therefore, our Bicentenary year, which we have invited all member Churches to celebrate. The gathering in London in July is only part of the events which will be taking place around the world throughout the year with the theme *Dare to Dream*.

2 Between the celebrations in London and the Council Meeting at High Leigh, CWM members and others will be spending the weekend of 15-16 July with local churches throughout the UK and in the Netherlands. They will have an opportunity to see their work, hear their stories and worship with them. I hope that they in turn will challenge and stimulate the people they meet. For example, the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar is asking why should CWM churches only dare to dream? Why not act! We have also been told from within the UK that we are not daring enough - the Celebratory Worship will be at Westminster Central Hall: the Royal Albert Hall was booked for the 150th anniversary of the LMS!

3 During the Celebratory Worship, the 1995 Council meeting will be opened in order to receive into membership the Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa in the presence of a thirty-strong delegation from that church. This will help to emphasise that the Bicentenary is not simply a matter of remembering the past, but very much to do with the present and the future.

4 It is with this very much in mind that we are holding a major consultation on Partnership in Mission in April with the theme *Rethinking CWM's Theology of Mission*:

*Do not cling to events of the past
Or dwell on what happened long ago.
Watch for the new thing I am about to do.
It is happening already.
You can see it now!*

Isaiah 43: 18-19

We hope the Consultation will help us to identify the way forward for CWM to become a community of churches in mission.

5 The end of the year will bring change to a major programme of Education in Mission, when the second stage of the Training in Mission programme shifts from Jamaica, where it has been based since its inception, to Bangalore in South India. This is an exciting development offering fresh challenges and opportunities and I look forward to hearing the stories of the young people and the Church of South India.

6 Another development over the last year has been the production of training modules for missionaries which can be used by churches - particularly those which do not have easy access to traditional training facilities - to prepare people for missionary service. These will be launched at a workshop in March.

7 After the excitement of the Celebrations, Council members will have a very full agenda to complete in only four and a half days. Among the items to be considered will be the six-yearly review of the work of CWM from 1989-95 and the whole question of how funds from the sale of land in Hong Kong should be used. We will also be saying farewell to Aubrey Curry, who will be retiring at the end of July after serving CWM for many years as a member of Council, Chair of Corporations and, most recently, as Secretary for Finance.

8 With so much to be accomplished, I think that the incoming Executive Committee for 1995-7 will inherit a formidable agenda for its meeting in Madagascar in December!

9 Because of the preparations for the Bicentenary and the Council meeting, executive staff will not have time to travel abroad to visit member churches this year and I will be taking this opportunity to spend some quality time with the European churches as I enter into my second term of service as General Secretary.

APPENDIX III

ST ANDREW'S HALL

Principal: Revd David Grainger

1 Verna Cassells left us at the end of our Summer Term and has taken up an appointment with the United Theological College in Kingston, Jamaica. In June she was made an Honorary Fellow of Selly Oak Colleges.

2 The new tutor, Revd Fei Janette Taule'ale'ausumai, is from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. Her combination of youth, experience and knowledge of the Pacific, and particularly of Samoan culture, is already having a considerable impact.

3 It is very good to have Revd Gwen Collins, a minister of the United Reformed Church, as Secretary to the Council.

4 The College has continued to receive a significant number of scholarship holders through the URC, particularly folk from Eastern and Central Europe. In many cases, although people come with very specific needs and expectations, it proves to be the combination of international and ecumenical community which is the most important aspect of their being here.

5 It has been good to have Bill and Maureen Sewell here in January prior to their work in Botswana and also Malcolm Smith for a few weeks before going to Malawi. At the moment, Martin and Taara Vickerman from Kiribati are also here in preparation for their work in Samoa.

6 We have recently had a small group of participants from Hungary, Romania and Georgia undertaking a month's course in Church Management, which is an example of some of the short term opportunities we offer. Alongside that it is encouraging to note the steady growth in Post-graduate studies (MA and Diploma in Mission) offered through the Selly Oak Colleges and the University of Birmingham.

7 The College continues to offer a wide range of courses, mainly through the Selly Oak Colleges. These are available to students from a very wide range of backgrounds, cultures and experience at Post Graduate, Graduate and non academic level.

8 We do not have any Church Related Community Workers in training at the moment, but continue to see that as an important part of church work and would be interested to see it develop ecumenically. Apart from existing relationships with Westhill College, there are a number of relevant programmes at Selly Oak Colleges, including Studies in Ethnicity and Race, Responding to Conflict, and Studies in Active Citizenship.

9 Over the years a number of URC ministers have come to us for sabbatical studies and this continues to be a popular feature of our work in relation to folk from other churches too.

10 The College is looking forward to participating in the current process of review of the work of all the URC colleges in the hope that we can both clarify and develop our service to the Church.

APPENDIX IV

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

1 DISTANT PAST

1994 was a year of special events, as the college celebrated the sesquicentenary of the opening of the Presbyterian College in London on November 5th, 1844.

As when the centenary was celebrated in 1944, the widest invitation went out for a Commemoration Day focused on the celebration. With the help of the Friends and the substantial support of the Reid Lecture Fund, commemoration was extended over three days, with Reid Lectures by Professor Gerd Theissen, a distinguished visitor from the University of Heidelberg, twinned city of Cambridge.

The lectures linked New Testament study to the tasks of church leadership in any generation.

Dr Cornick, in a special lecture, gave an illuminating glimpse of the issues which arose for the Presbyterian Church in England as it founded and slowly made secure its college. It was good to be able to link this lecture with the portraits of college staff of that era which are in the dining-room and library.

The many commemoration visitors covered an unusually wide span of years in the College's Cambridge history. There were many messages of greeting from all over Britain and around the world. Those who shared meals in the specially provided marquee on the croquet lawn were conscious of being the visible part of a much larger company of reminiscence - and the bursar, Mrs Sinclair, the cook/housekeeper, Mrs Anderson, and all the office and domestic staff rose magnificently to the occasion.

2 RECENT PAST

At the end of the term the college sent out another unusually large group, fourteen, leaving for settlement in pastorates, twelve being ordinands and two non-stipendiary ministers moving to stipendiary charge after a year at the college. Five of these settlements were in Northern Province. Thither the College chaplain had preceded them, when in April the Revd Kate McIlhagga moved from St Ives' Free Church to the pastorate of Belford, Embleton and North Sunderland. The renewal of a long college history of service in the north-east was a bonus for the anniversary year. Kate is missed and the college is looking forward to the ministry of the Revd Rodney Wood at Victoria Road Church, Cambridge, whose pastorate is now to include the college chaplaincy.

It has been a privilege over the years to have an annual visit from the Moderator of the General Assembly. In February the Revd Donald Hilton continued that tradition. The Revd Dr Jack McKelvey then kindly agreed to be the guest of honour for the actual anniversary weekend; on November 3rd he preached in chapel and later spoke on "Our Theological Task Today".

One further celebratory event has been added to the programme through the kindness of a well-known alumnus. Professor Brian Gerrish, who teaches church history at the University of Chicago, has accepted an invitation to repeat on the Reid Lectureship foundation the Sprunt Lectures which he gave at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia in January 1994. The subject is "Faith, Confession and Jesus Christ" and the lectures in Cambridge will be on May 9, 10, 11, 1995.

3 PRESENT

The second phase of the major refurbishment of the college buildings has been completed. Visitors through the year have been enjoying the new Healey Room, created from two lecture rooms on the ground floor. An extra house has been provided in the Bounds by the sub-division of No 1, following on the earlier sub-division of No 2.

No 1a became in December the home of the Revd Dr Janet Tollington, who is now well launched into teaching the Old Testament here and caring for the college library. Her energetic chairing of the Federation library committee is much appreciated and great strides forward are being taken in using

to the full the rich resources for teaching and study in the six bodies which compose the Cambridge Theological Federation; they are now working closely not only with the University of Cambridge but also with Anglia Polytechnic University and the University of East Anglia. Such extension is particularly assisted by the addition to the residential colleges in the Federation of a regional and ecumenical body, the East Anglian Ministerial Training Course.

It is sad that in the sesquicentenary the "In Memoriam" list included Basil Hall, who died suddenly on October 8th. Professor of Church History here from 1963 to 1967, he then moved to the Chair of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Manchester. Having there become an Anglican he returned to Cambridge as Dean of St John's College from 1975 to 1980 and then retired to Exeter. In a sermon commemorating the benefactors of St John's College, he spoke of the life of that College in a way adaptable to summarise his own life style and the aims of Westminster College: "finding the freedom of a Christian ... gave us the possibility of new knowledge, it gave us integrity of life, it gave us dignified worship, and it gave us a reasonable faith. We do well to remember those who handed on to us these things".

4 **FUTURE**

The review initiated by the 1993 General Assembly of Westminster College as a major resource of the URC is the subject of report to the General Assembly by the Mission Council.

The Senatus submitted to the Mission Council a five-year strategic plan for the college, assuming its continuance in Cambridge. The Federation very strongly supports such continuance as vital to its total future.

The sesquicentenary is followed by the bicentenary of the founding of the London Missionary Society. A fascinating talk from Dr George Hood reflected on three generations of missionary vocation - his wife's grandfather and father and himself, all students of the college. He will take up the theme, more briefly, as a speaker at the Friends' Assembly lunch. The 1995 Commemoration Day has a bicentenary background.

MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

1 As Mansfield approaches the goal of becoming a full college of the University, an important part of our mission is to promote the Christian religion and especially to represent the traditions which originate in the Continental Reformation and English Dissent. This has been a concern of the college since its arrival in Oxford in 1886, and it is fascinating to read about it in Elaine Kay's new book on the history of the college to be published by Oxford University Press. What does it mean for today? And what does society need in the way it understands itself now and for the future? How do we affirm some common aims that the Western heritage offers? This needs to be continually worked out by students and staff, and not only by theologians but all who are interested within and outside the college. We consider this an important part of our task as both a sacred and secular college and as the first nonconformist foundation to become full college in Oxford.

2 We have 33 ordinands mainly from the URC but also Congregational Federation, Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and the United Church of Christ in Japan. There are 13 others reading theology. In total there are about 300 students in the college, 40 members of the Senior Common Room (Academic Staff) and about 25 Household Staff. We have grown somewhat in the past few years. "Bursting at the seams" is an accurate description for us now. It is a wonderful mixture of all sorts and types these days.

3 Staffing remains the same. We have 7 on-site theological tutors and in addition a new Associate Chaplain, the Revd Flora Winfield, whose main task is to relate to undergraduates. Flora is the youngest ever member of the World Council of Churches Faith & Order Committee and the new Moderator of the Anglican/Lutheran Dialogue.

4 The University is rewriting the BA in Theology to include three tracks that one can choose - biblical; study of religion; doctrine. These are inter-related but students can specialise depending on what they are looking to do in the future. All of these can be used for ordination training, although

the BTh is the one specifically designed for the church. A new full or part-time MTh has also started. This can be used in ministerial training for theology graduates or it can be used for ongoing education.

5 An exciting University Mission with Archbishop Desmond Tutu took place in February for a week. He played to packed houses three times a day. Thousands came along and we used university scholars on panels as well for topics such as politics, race and wealth. Who said the interest in religion had waned?

6 Three new study centres started by or connected with Mansfield continue to attract much attention. The Oxford Centre for Environment, Ethics and Society has a big programme and 5 full-time staff members. The International Interfaith Centre is raising money for endowment and a building. The American Studies Centre between ourselves and Rhodes House will soon be in operation. The first Fellow has been appointed and is based at Mansfield. We encourage the ordinands to take part in all these activities when possible.

7 We began a new concept for us in Spirituality class this year. Each ordinand and staff member presents a half-hour on where she/he is coming from in any form desired. The results have been fascinating and we are getting to know people much better.

We also began a new class organised by Elaine Kaye, our colleague historian, on "Roots". This looks at how the Reformed and Independent traditions emerged in England and relates problems they faced to the great issues of today.

8 We want to consider possibilities for NSM and Lay Education at the college. We hope the URC will use the colleges in this way. For too long there have been suspicions that college as an "ivory tower" and not in the "real world". This has happened in the past and still can be the case, but it is rare now. Though Britain lags behind Europe in college-based education, it is trying to catch up. More and more church members are college educated, and to have our ministers without that benefit is difficult for them and their congregations. The Reformed leaders have had the best educations in the Christian world and we want to extend that gift to all our ministers and lay leaders. How can we deny this? People want to know about the relation of science and faith, religious aspects of psychology and politics, history and art as well as having a caring pastor, a wise interpreter of the Bible, a sensitive historian, and a mission enabler. Mansfield and the other colleges are keen to be of service. We are all "contextual" trainers now. Our four contexts are college, university, church, and community. They are equally important and need to be related to each other in creative ways.

9 The Dale Lecture this year was given by Revd Professor Colin Gunton, a member of the college, and professor at King's College, London. His topic was Dr Dale's doctrine of the Atonement. There is also an exhibition in the Library. The Dale Centenary celebrations were planned in conjunction with Carrs Lane URC, Birmingham, which has given us an opportunity to think about the great gift of nonconformity to the university, nation and the world and we honour his memory as one of our founders.

10 A very sad loss for the college this year was the death of Dr Michael Mahony, our history Fellow and specialist in 17th century parliamentary history. Our gardener, Tony Vale, also died. We are proud of Dr Richard Buckley who is the new laws professor at Reading. We are sad to lose the Revd Dr Scott Ickert, our Lutheran World Federation Fellow, who has accepted a call to a church in Washington, DC. We are pleased for all our ordinands who have found interesting churches. We miss them all but are glad they have graced our lives with their presence.

NORTHERN COLLEGE, MANCHESTER

1 There are thirty students on our roll, with ten offering themselves for ordination in the URC this summer and two taking up the stipendiary ministry following previous service as NSMs.

2 Following the retirement of the Revd Dr Stanley H Russell at the end of last session, the Revd John M Parry BA, BD, our present Mona Powell Fellow was appointed as a Tutor. He will teach in the areas of World Church and Apologetics and help Frances Ward with our rapidly developing placement programme when the tenure of his Fellowship ends in September 1995.

3 Lis Mullen, an Elder at Carver Memorial URC, Windermere, was appointed as Chaplain at the start of the session. This post has recently been expanded and is now shared with the Northern Baptist College.

4 In June the Northern Federation for Training in Ministry became an Affiliated Institution of the Victoria University of Manchester, thus enabling the Northern Baptist College, the Manchester Christian Institute and Northern College to mount the new university validated "Faith in Living" course. This now becomes the main means the College has of preparing people for ordination. It leads to either an undergraduate Diploma in Theology or a Bachelor of Arts Degree. It is accessible to both full-time and part-time participants and attempts to integrate experience and learning, lay people and ordinands, life in the world and life in the church, theoretical and practical work and the various academic disciplines. Now the Department of Education has granted its mandatory award status we are anticipating increasing numbers of full-time lay participants taking the course.

5 Students now have attachments in community agencies and churches throughout their courses. The move from the three years academic work plus one year internship model to what in the USA is known as "concurrent field work" is now complete. Placement work therefore figures even more highly in our programme. We are seeking to develop ways in which supervisory ministers and local congregations can be better equipped for their important roles in preparing people for ministry.

6 Individual progress is now assessed and future learning objectives are agreed with each student at End of Session reviews. These involve a member of the college staff, the supervisory minister, a representative from the sending Province, a student friend (if requested) and the student reflecting fully on what has been achieved and planning future goals. This new departure follows a successful pilot project with students from the Province of Wales.

7 Our ongoing contacts with the world church remain a rich source of benefit and challenge. A Staff and Student group visited the Reformed churches in Hungary and Romania during the summer. We are hoping that a theological educator from the Third World will be joining the staff in September 1996. Meanwhile, we have continued to enjoy the presence of the Revd Laurent Ramambason from the United Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar who has been completing his PhD studies at the University of Birmingham.

8 During the year the College made advocacy visits to the Durham and Fylde Districts of the URC. It will be good to meet up with friends associated with the College (and its forebears in Bristol, Nottingham and Bradford) at the Assembly. People wanting to know more about how Northern College prepares people for ordination are welcome to borrow the video which has recently been produced.

9 It was fitting that many connected with the College were at Lancaster last year when the former Principal, Jack McKelvey, was inducted as the Moderator of the General Assembly. We are grateful that the wider church has benefited from a ministry so appreciated by those associated with his Principalship here in Manchester.

10 Northern College remains committed to producing for the churches people of proven theological ability. So, congratulations go to Helen Bond, our Tutor in New Testament studies, and Andrew Dawson, a final year student from the Mersey Province, who have recently been awarded their doctorates. New opportunities for mounting higher degree programmes through the Northern Federation for Training in Ministry are now being taken up. Coupled with the existing provisions available at Luther King House and the University these will make Manchester a rich resource for lay and pre and post ordination theological education in the immediate future.

THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM

1 Last year's report saw us looking forward to the arrival of our new Principal. The Revd Peter Fisher came to us in April 1994 after ten years as Rector of Houghton-le-Spring and previous experience in theological education as Sub-Warden of Lincoln Theological College. He has been with us now for nearly a year, and we are increasingly benefiting from the new sense of direction that he has brought to the college. A new Bursar was appointed during the autumn term, following the unfortunate retirement of the previous Bursar due to ill-health after a very short stay with us; George Hollis, who has come to us from Crowther Hall, one of the Selly Oak Colleges, is imparting a similar sense on the financial and administrative front of a wise and tactfully exercised control, combined with creative ideas about the college's future. In a time of change in theological education, in which all three of our sponsoring churches are involved, we are encouraged in being so effectively led.

2 URC students in the college this year have increased from seven to nine, plus one alternative student who is completing her third year on the West Midlands Ministerial Training Course before transferring to a full-time College course next year. We have two internship students, and we are more than normally grateful to their supervisors, who supply a distinctively URC oversight which the full-time Queen's staff are unable to provide. The appointment of a URC member of staff remains an important priority for us; meanwhile we are grateful to a number of local URC ministers who lecture on a visiting basis and preach in the College chapel, as well as, especially, to the West Midlands Provincial Moderator, together with the Oversight Committee, for teaching, guidance and care.

3 The College community has been enriched this year by the arrival of a group of black lay students, under an initiative of the Methodist Church aimed at empowering its black members. This is encouraging us to think more systematically about the place of lay students alongside those in training for ordained ministry, an issue which we need to address if we are to respond creatively to future developments in theological education; and it is also important to us in our growth as a centre for black theology. Our tutor in Black Theology, Robert Beckford, continues to develop this part of our life and work, both within the College and outside it; a notable event in the past year was a conference on Black Theology in Britain organised by Robert last summer.

4 Important work is being done this year in reviewing the relationship between the College and the West Midlands Ministerial Training Course, which is based on the Queen's premises. Following the departure of the Course Principal, the Revd Dr Alan Billings, in the summer of 1994, it was decided to postpone the appointment of a permanent replacement until a new relationship had been worked out which might enable closer co-operation between the two bodies in responding to future needs and opportunities. Since September 1994, the Revd Dr Christina le Moignan has been Principal of the Course (half-time), while retaining a half-time position as tutor in the College; and the permanent appointment will be made from September 1996, when she is due to leave. Discerning the constitutional implications of a fruitful new relationship is absorbing considerable energy, as is the preparation of a new curriculum, for the first time jointly designed between College and Course; but we are convinced of the rightness of a closer relationship.

5 Other features of the year include a reorganisation of our catering system which has been an unqualified success (nearly all comments about food now are appreciative!); the forthcoming publication of the Revd David Butler's *Methodists and Papists* (DLT); and the making of a BBC documentary series about the College. We thought long and hard before deciding that we should present ourselves and what we are about to the world in this way. Watch us this autumn and see if we were right!

APPENDIX V

BOARD OF STUDIES FOR THE NON-STIPENDIARY MINISTRY

Certificates of Completed Studies were issued for 21 Non Stipendiary Ministry students during 1994 but the flow of candidates for training for the non-stipendiary ministry continues to decline. Only 12 students commenced their studies. None of these twelve plan to follow the full URC course as the main basis of training. At the end of the year 43 students were under training, 14 expecting to complete during 1995.

These developments are in line with our policy to encourage students to follow ecumenical courses but the increased demands of these courses is placing heavy burdens on students. Each student is required to complete the Preliminary URC course but to burden students with the additional requirement of attending a URC Summer School, during or after their course, is becoming an imposition. We are investigating the possibility of providing a weekend residential course for all recently accepted ordinands for Non-Stipendiary Ministry before they begin work on ecumenical courses.

APPENDIX VI

CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORKER TRAINING REPORTS

SALFORD URBAN MISSION TRAINING PROGRAMME

1 This last year has been one for review and planning, as the Training Programme adapts to many changes taking place within the churches, and within the broader field of training for community development. The increasing awareness of the importance of lay ministries for mission work in this country, and the rising concern for the fragmentation of community, have created a vital role for the resourcing and support of community based ministries. It has, however, to be recognised that these opportunities and developments in perception come at a time of increased financial 'realism', and introversion within many of the denominations.

2 Six full-time or in-service participants completed their time with us this year, going on to either further study or employment in the community. We currently have two full-time participants this year, one trainee Church Related Community Worker for the URC, and a Roman Catholic lay woman preparing for a similar ministry. The need for recruitment to the ministry of Church Related Community Work within the URC, and for the resourcing of training for this work by other denominations, is vital for us, but more importantly for the ongoing mission of the church.

3 The programme has seen a rapid increase in the number of part-time participants on the programme; over the last twelve months 120 people have attended specialist courses to enhance their work in the community.

4 The nationally recognised professional certificate we offer in Youth and Community Work is currently complemented by a Certificate in Theological Reflection, which is recognised by the URC. We are hoping that in the future we will be able to offer 'Joint Honours' degree and diploma qualifications to those successfully completing our full programme. Negotiations continue to this end.

APPENDIX VII

STUDENTS IN TRAINING 1994-1995

NORTHERN PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Alan Morris (Northern/NEOC), Margaret Robb (Northern), Duncan Tuck (Northern)

Non-Stipendiary

Arthur Banister (URC), Suzanne Hamnett (NEOC), Anthony Haws (NEOC),
Stanley Johnstone (NEOC), Steven Orange (NEOC: completed training 1994),

NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Janet Calderley (Westminster), Robert Heathcote (Northern), David Lee (Northern),
Craig Muir (Northern), Jane Weedon (Northern)

Non-Stipendiary

Joyce Ashworth (MCI) (Ordained 17.9.94), Barbara Exley (MCI), David Ireland (MCI),
Brenda Moore (MCI), Christopher Tonge (MCI),

MERSEY PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Andrew Dawson (Northern), Alan Pearson (Northern), Ivor Smith (Northern),
Pamela Smith (Northern)

Non-Stipendiary

Mark Houghton (MCI), Graham Mercer (MCI), Alan Poolton (MCI),

YORKSHIRE PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Philip Hanson (Northern), Pauline Parkin (Northern),

Non-Stipendiary

Sandra Griffiths (MCI), Nancy Haslam (MCI), Angela Hughes (MCI), Tjarda Murray de Boom (MCI),
Peter Sharp (MCI), Hilma Wilkinson (URC),

EAST MIDLANDS PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Michael Burrell (Westminster), Barbara Flood-Page (Northern), Philip Gray (Westminster),
Simon Helme (Northern), Barry Hutchinson (Westminster), Jeffrey Tunningley (Northern)

Non-Stipendiary

Mair Bradley (EMMTC), Barry Drake (EMMTC), John Hayton (EMMTC), Patricia Lloyd (EMMTC),
Rosemary Smith (St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course),

WEST MIDLANDS PROVINCE

Stipendiary

Marilyn Allen (Mansfield), Richard Becher (Westminster), Barbara Bennett (Queens),
Mary Burgess (Queens), David Cassidy (Northern), Barrie Cheetham (Queens),
David Coleman (Mansfield), Derek Hopkins (Mansfield), Stephen Lewis (Queens),
Jean Spragg (Queens), Aileen Walker (Queens)

Non-Stipendiary

Marion Thomas (WMMTC), William Young (WMMTC),

EASTERN PROVINCE**Stipendiary**

David Coote (Westminster), Steven Faber (Westminster), Simon Franklin (Westminster), Geoffrey Haigh (Westminster), Timothy Lowe (Northern), Donald Macalister (Queens), Kenneth Martin (Westminster/transferring from UC in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands), Ruth Maxey (Mansfield), Kathryn Taylor (Westminster)

Non-Stipendiary

Deborah McVey (EAMTC)

SOUTH WESTERN PROVINCE**Stipendiary**

Tim Clarke (Mansfield), Peter Philips (Northern/Aberdeen), Kathy Wilson (Mansfield)

Non-Stipendiary

Kenneth Coles (SWMTC), Ivan Fowler (WEMTC),

WESSEX PROVINCE**Stipendiary**

Vernon Broomfield-Payne (Westminster), Philip Burroughs (Mansfield), Patricia Clamp (Mansfield), John Du Bois (Mansfield), Barry Griffin (Queens), Owiny Laber (Northern), Monica Mills (Queens), Michael Shrubsole (Westminster), Raymond Stanyon (Northern)

Non-Stipendiary

Alan Clarredge (SDMTS), Tom Grant (SDMTS), Brian Hesketh (SDMTS), Heather Morgan (SDMTS), Philip Osborn (SDMTS) (Ordained 10.12.94), David Parkin (SDMTS)

THAMES NORTH PROVINCE**Stipendiary**

Wilfred Bahadur (Westminster), Pauline Barnes (Mansfield), Sue Chapman (Northern), Janet Conway (Mansfield), David Dones (Westminster), Nigel Douglas (Westminster), Mark Elvin (Westminster), Richard Goldring (Queen's/Glasgow), Trevor Jamison (Mansfield), Alistair Jones (Westminster), Janet Lees (Mansfield: completed training 1994), Alex Mabbs (Northern), Iain MacDonald (Mansfield), David Miller (Westminster), Philip Nicholas (Mansfield), Rosalind Scott (Mansfield/St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course), Margaret Thomas (Mansfield)

Non-Stipendiary

Robert Calderon (URC), Ann Jeffers (URC), David Simpson (URC), Fiona Thomas (SEITE)

SOUTHERN PROVINCE**Stipendiary**

Dawn Baiden (Westminster), Delia Bond (Westminster/SEITE), Andrew Camper (Mansfield), John Danso (Westminster), Clare Downing (Westminster/SEITE), Carole Ellefsen (Westminster), David Featonby (Westminster), John Gordon (Northern), Carolyn Lanham (Westminster), Jennifer Martin (Westminster), Michael Meachin (Mansfield), Michael Perrott (Northern), Robert Pickering (Westminster), Martin Smith (Mansfield), Robert Street (Mansfield), Jane Wade (Mansfield), Michael Whitfield (Westminster)

Non-Stipendiary

Margaret Collins (Kings College/URC), Mark Dennis (North Thames MTC), Bryn Thomas (URC/Kings/ Westminster Pastoral Foundation), Jean West (SEITE), Maureen Wilson (SEITE),

PROVINCE OF WALES**Stipendiary**

Sarah Bevan (Northern), Jennifer Davies (Mansfield), Jackie Gavin (Wales), Ian Kirby (Mansfield), Diana Lewis (Queen's), Shelagh Pollard (Mansfield/Cardiff), Kathryn Price (Northern), Kirsty Thorpe (Mansfield /Cardiff),

Non-Stipendiary

Martyn Evans (URC), Peter Gaskell (United Theological College, Aberystwyth)

APPENDIX VIII

TRAINING STATISTICS

	Students in	Students in	Anticipated entry into URC Service			
	Training	Training	1995	1996	1997	1998+
	February 1994	February 1995				
<u>Stipendiary</u>						
Mansfield	24	25	10	8	5	6
Northern	28	27	12	2	4	9
Queens	7	10	3	6	3	2
Westminster	30	29	10	6	7	6
TOTAL	89	91	35	22	19	23
<u>Non-Stipendiary</u>						
Courses	57	44	12	14	12	2
<u>Church Related Community Workers</u>						
Selly Oak	1	1	1			
Salford	3	1	1			
TOTAL	150	136	49	36	31	25

APPENDIX IX

THE "SPECIAL CATEGORY" MINISTRIES AS AT 1ST APRIL 1995

Province	Category	Place	Scoping	Minister
North Western	3	Salford	1	Keith Argyle
North Western	1	Wythenshawe	1	Bob Day
Mersey	2HE	Liverpool Higher Education Chaplaincy	1	Sandra Dears
Yorkshire	2IM	South Yorkshire Industrial Mission	1	Vacant
Yorkshire	2IM	Selby Industrial Mission	0.5	Michael Wear
Yorkshire	2HE	Leeds Higher Education Chaplaincy	1	Elizabeth Brown
Yorkshire	2IM	Leeds Industrial Mission	0.5	Helen Drummond
East Midlands	1	Boulevard Nottingham	1	Sally Martin
East Midlands	1	Milton Keynes Watling Valley	1	Dorothy Spence
East Midlands	1	The Ortons Local Ecumenical Project Peterborough	1	Tony Bradshaw
West Midlands	1	Winson Green/Lodge Road	1	Paul Whittle
West Midlands	2IM	Coventry Industrial Mission	1	Dick Wolff
West Midlands	2HE	Aston University	1	Graham Sweeney
Eastern	1	East Springfield Local Ecumenical Project	1	Bryan Shirley
Eastern	2IM	Norwich Industrial Mission	1	Chris Warner
South Western	1	West Swindon Local Ecumenical Project	1	George Gibson
South Western	1	Newquay	1	Leonard Phelps
Thames North	2HE	London University Chaplaincy	1	Vacant
Thames North	3	Southall Inter Faith	1	Albert Ferweda
Thames North	2IM	Herts and Beds Industrial Mission	1	Tony Ruffell
Thames North	3	Canary Wharf	1	Barry Thorley
Thames North and South	1	Urban Churches Support	0.5	Harry Undy
Thames North and South	2CH	Chinese Chaplaincy	1	Kah Geh Chong
Southern	2IM	South London Industrial Mission (SLIM)	1	Raymond Singh
Southern	2IM	Kent Industrial Mission	1	Vacant
Southern	1	Thamesmead	1	Harry Lanham
Wales	1	Penrhys	1	John Morgans
General Assembly	4	National AIDS Advisor	1	Justine Wyatt

TOTAL

26.5

		Number of Posts	Numbers in Post
Category 1	New and Priority Areas of Outreach requiring Priority Work	11	10.5
Category 2IM	Chaplaincies in Industrial Mission	8	6
Category 2HE	Chaplaincies in Higher Education	4	3
Category 2CH	Chaplaincies to Chinese	1	1
Category 3	Innovative Ministries in Unique Situation	3	3
Category 4	One Off	1	1
TOTAL		28	24.5

APPENDIX X

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
Central Office - 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT.

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 1994

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NOTE ON ACCOUNTING PRACTICE.

Good accounting practice requires the Finance Committee and the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of financial affairs of the Church and its funds and of any surplus or deficit for the year. In preparing these financial statements the Finance Committee, on behalf of the Trustee, has;

selected suitable accounting policies and applied them consistently;

made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

followed applicable accounting standards;

prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The Finance Committee and the Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Church and its funds, and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with good accounting practice. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Church, and hence for taking steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

We confirm on behalf of the Trustee and the Finance Committee our approval of the accounts as set out on pages 4-25 .

A K Black
Treasurer.

D Davies
Chairman,
United Reformed Church Trust.

C M Frank
Chief Accountant and
Financial Secretary.

24th March 1995.

The reports on pages 26-28 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 Central Office of the Church.

REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

We have audited the financial statements on pages 4 to 25 which have been prepared on the basis of the accounting policies set out on pages 4 to 6.

Respective responsibilities of the Finance Committee, and the auditors.

As described on page 2, the Finance Committee is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. It is our responsibility to form an independent opinion, based on our audit, on those statements and to report our opinion to you.

Basis of opinion.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Finance Committee in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the circumstances of the Church, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Church as at 31st December 1994, and of the surplus or deficit on the various funds for the year then ended.

186 City Road
London EC1V 2NU

24th March 1995

ROBSON RHODES
Chartered Accountants and Registered
Auditor

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1. Scope.

These accounts comprise those funds administered in the central office of the United Reformed Church on behalf of the Church, United Reformed Church Trust, The United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Trust Limited, and the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited. They do not include funds administered by or on behalf of Provinces, Districts and Local Churches.

2. Basis of preparation.

The accounts, which should be read in conjunction with the Finance Committee report to Assembly 1995, have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the inclusion of investments at market value in the Investment Pool on page 25, and the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund on page 26. 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 Ministry and Mission Fund is for "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 Ministry and Mission Fund are brought into account on a receipts basis, with the inclusion of receipts in the early part of 1995 relating to 1994. However, where a Province had remitted more than the agreed contribution to the Fund by 31st December 1994, the excess is carried forward as an advance payment on account of the contribution for 1995. Legacies are credited on a receipts basis to the fund designated by the donor or to the Ministry and Mission Fund if no fund is designated.

5. Depreciation.

Property

With the exception of certain major works at Westminster College, which will be amortised over a short period of years, no provision for depreciation is made on freehold or leasehold buildings. The Finance 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 4 at £6.15 million are insured for £27.61 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
Photocopiers	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.

In 1994 surplus cash has been invested in a Gilt edged security. In order to maximise the income of the Church, this holding has been purchased at a cost greater than the expected redemption proceeds. This stock will be amortised in order to reduce the value shown in the accounts to the expected redemption value by the redemption date. This holding, of £3 million 8.75% Treasury Stock 1997, is included under the heading "Current Assets".

A further holding in a Gilt edged security has been purchased, as a long term investment, and this holding is being amortised in the same way.

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 Editorial 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 since 1983, 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 £12.9 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 26, 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 Finance 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 Account, at the rate of 10.65% of basic stipend in respect of members, and makes further payments towards 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, assuming that the rate of return achieved by the fund will exceed the rate of stipend increase by 3% pa.

A valuation of the pension fund was undertaken by the Consultant Actuary as at 1st January 1994. The final report upon this valuation shows that the expected shortfall on the long term valuation basis will be in the region of £11.3 million. The Church has been advised by the Actuary that, based upon the current actuarial assumptions, it will be necessary for the series of annual subventions increasing by 10% per annum compound (the amount for 1994 was £907,500) to be continued until 2006 inclusive. The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee intend that these payments shall be made.

The contributing members of the fund are not contracted out of the State Pension Scheme.

10. In the accounts for 1993 a capital donation of £460,000 was included in "Other Funds". After consultation with the Trustees it has been agreed that this legacy should not be treated as a fund of the Church: accordingly the comparative amounts have been adjusted to exclude £460,000 from "Other Funds" and "Investments".

APPENDIX X

ACCOUNTS - PAGE 7

CENTRAL FUNDS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 1994

THE CENTRAL FUNDS OF THE CHURCH		1994		1993	
	Note	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Accounts	1		2,644		2,634
Income and Expenditure					
Accounts	2		<u>18,732</u>		<u>17,967</u>
Total	3		<u>21,376</u>		<u>20,601</u>
REPRESENTED BY					
Fixed Assets					
Property	4	6,153		5,310	
Cars, furniture and equipment	4	<u>201</u>		<u>225</u>	
			6,354		5,535
Long term Investments	5		11,724		11,463
Loans and Advances	6		<u>3,376</u>		<u>3,208</u>
			21,454		20,206
Current Assets					
Stock		54		55	
Short term Investments	5	3,076		-	
Debtors		643		598	
Cash	7	<u>625</u>		<u>5,031</u>	
		4,398		5,684	
Creditors		(1,333)		(1,430)	
Sums held for Provinces and Congregations		(2,658)		(3,452)	
Advance contributions to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund		<u>(485)</u>		<u>(407)</u>	
Net Current (Liabilities)/Assets			<u>(78)</u>		<u>395</u>
			<u>21,376</u>		<u>20,601</u>

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (Income and Expenditure Account)
for the year ended 31st December 1994

	1994	1994	1994	1994	1993
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Capital	Total	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME IN THE YEAR					
Ministry and Mission Fund					
Contributions	15,598			15,598	14,961
Dividends and interest	441	778		1,219	1,192
Grant from Memorial Hall Trust		406		406	385
Grant from New College, London Trust		239		239	196
Donations and other income	125	255	9	389	250
Gross receipts from other activities	<u>472</u>	<u>238</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>710</u>	<u>707</u>
	<u>16,636</u>	<u>1,916</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>18,561</u>	<u>17,691</u>
EXPENDITURE IN THE YEAR					
Cost of Central Departments	2,298			2,298	2,216
Costs of Maintenance of the Ministry	11,869			11,869	11,288
Costs of Ministerial Training		777		777	708
Grants					
From MoM Fund	288			288	275
To CWM	598			598	580
To pensioners		550		550	462
Other		327		327	321
Appropriation to the URCMPF	908	13		921	843
Direct cost of other activities	<u>504</u>	<u>329</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>833</u>	<u>809</u>
	<u>16,465</u>	<u>1,996</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>18,461</u>	<u>17,502</u>
Transfers between Funds	<u>18</u>	<u>(18)</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
	<u>16,483</u>	<u>1,978</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>18,461</u>	<u>17,502</u>
NORMAL SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	153	(62)	9	100	189
Profit on sale of investments	258	28	1	287	11
Profit on sale of property		40		40	5
Legacies	<u>60</u>	<u>288</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>348</u>	<u>461</u>
NET SURPLUS	<u>471</u>	<u>294</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>775</u>	<u>666</u>
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT					
Balance at 1st January	<u>5,041</u>	<u>12,926</u>	<u>2,634</u>	<u>20,601</u>	<u>19,935</u>
Balance at 31st December	<u>5,512</u>	<u>13,220</u>	<u>2,644</u>	<u>21,376</u>	<u>20,601</u>

NOTE There were no recognised gains or losses other than the surplus for the two years ended 31st December 1994.

All operations are continuing.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT for the year ended 31st December 1994:

	1994		1993	
	£'000		£'000	
NET SURPLUS for year		775		666
Decrease in Stock	1		3	
(Increase) in Debtors	(45)		(148)	
(Decrease) in Creditors	(19)		(13)	
(Decrease) in sums due to Provinces and Congregations	(794)	(857)	(341)	(499)
Items not involving cash				
Depreciation	143		89	
Asset written off in the year	-		4	
Profit on Property Sales	(40)		(5)	
Profit on Investment Sales	(287)		(11)	
Loans introduced	(40)		-	
Interest added	(44)	(268)	(48)	29
NET CASH (OUTFLOW)/INFLOW FROM ACTIVITIES		(350)		196
Net proceeds of Asset Sales				
Property	55		25	
Investments	2,403		119	
Cars	14		20	
Loans Repaid	366	2,838	458	622
		2,488		818
Investment of cashflow:				
Cost of Purchase of assets				
Property	(883)		(198)	
Long term Investments	(2,409)		(459)	
Short term Investments	(3,091)		-	
Equipment	(61)		(96)	
Loans made	(450)	(6,894)	(831)	(1,584)
(DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		(4,406)		(766)

NOTE 1 - CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

	Balance 31/12/94 £'000	Balance 31/12/93 £'000
Ministry and Mission Fund	310	310
Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	289	289
Ministerial Training Fund	45	45
Westminster College Funds	479	479
Church Buildings Fund	184	184
Homes for Retired Ministers Funds	355	355
Welfare Fund	68	68
Retired Ministers' Aid Fund	40	40
Other Funds	791	781
World Church and Mission Funds	<u>83</u>	<u>83</u>
	<u>2,644</u>	<u>2,634</u>

Changes in Capital Accounts are capital donations of £8,750, and the profit on the sale of investments of £1,250.

NOTE 2 - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS

	Page	Balance 31/12/94 £'000	Balance 31/12/93 £'000
Ministry and Mission Fund	15	5,512	5,035
Ministerial Training Fund	16	956	1,052
Westminster College Funds	18	611	661
Church Buildings Fund	18	2,319	2,173
Homes for Retired Ministers Funds	19	1,156	899
Welfare Fund	19	182	171
Retired Ministers' Aid Fund	20	231	231
Retired Ministers' Fund	20	2,802	2,976
Memorial Hall Trust Grants Fund	21	1,993	1,993
Other Funds	21	1,719	1,539
World Church and Mission Funds	22	375	360
Windermere Funds	23	332	333
Yardley Hastings Centre Fund	24	<u>544</u>	<u>544</u>
		<u>18,732</u>	<u>17,967</u>

NOTE 3 - INVESTMENT OF FUNDS AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 1994

	Total £'000	Property £'000	Cars Furniture & Equipment £'000	Invest- ments £'000	Loans £'000	Current Assets £'000
Ministry and Mission Fund	5,822	2,648	96	4,636	117	(1,675)
Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	289	-	-	289	-	-
Ministerial Training Fund	1,001	-	-	534	84	383
Westminster College Funds	1,090	725	1	458	(84)	(10)
Church Buildings Fund	2,503	425	-	425	1,145	508
Homes for Retired Ministers Fund	1,511	1,377	-	-	-	134
Welfare Fund	250	-	-	200	4	46
Retired Ministers' Aid Fund	271	-	-	235	-	36
Retired Ministers' Fund	2,802	137	-	2,793	-	(128)
Memorial Hall Trust Grants Fund	1,993	-	-	-	1,993	-
Other Funds	2,510	62	18	1,754	117	559
World Church & Mission Funds	458	-	-	400	-	58
Windermere Funds	332	297	24	-	-	11
Yardley Hastings Centre Fund	544	482	62	-	-	-
	<u>21,376</u>	<u>6,153</u>	<u>201</u>	<u>11,724</u>	<u>3,376</u>	<u>(78)</u>
Note		4	4	5	6	

NOTE 4 - FIXED ASSETS

	Balance at 1/1/94 £'000	Additions £'000	Disposals £'000	Balance at 31/12/94 £'000
Property (at cost or original valuation)				
Freehold Property:				
Central Office	125	1	-	126
Houses	3,153	674	15	3,812
Westminster College additions	334	214	-	548
Yardley Hastings	<u>644</u>	<u>(6)</u>	-	<u>638</u>
	4,256	883	15	5,124
Leasehold Property:				
Long Leases				
Windermere Centre	297	-	-	297
Other	<u>530</u>	-	-	<u>530</u>
	5,083	883	15	5,951
Investment Property				
Freehold Ground Rents	28	-	-	28
Flats	137	-	-	137
Shop Property	<u>62</u>	-	-	<u>62</u>
Total property	<u>5,310</u>	<u>883</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>6,178</u>
Amortisation				
Deferred repairs at Westminster College		<u>25</u>		<u>25</u>
Net book value	<u>5,310</u>	<u>858</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>6,153</u>
Cars, Furniture and Equipment				
Cost				
Motor Cars	253	21	44	230
Furniture and Equipment	251	25	3	273
Computer Equipment	<u>116</u>	<u>18</u>	-	<u>134</u>
	<u>620</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>637</u>
Cars, Furniture and Equipment				
Depreciation		Charged	Released	
Motor Cars	152	42	30	164
Furniture and Equipment	143	24	3	164
Computer Equipment	<u>100</u>	<u>8</u>	-	<u>108</u>
	<u>395</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>436</u>
Net Book Value of cars, furniture and equipment	<u>225</u>			<u>201</u>

NOTE 5 - INVESTMENTS

	1994 £'000	Market Value £'000	1993 £'000	Market Value £'000
Units in Investment Pool at cost	9,305	13,570	9,286	15,613
Other Listed Investments at cost	<u>2,304</u>	<u>2,197</u>	<u>2,030</u>	<u>2,598</u>
	11,609	15,767	11,316	18,211
Amortisation of Gilt-edged securities	<u>32</u>		-	
	11,577		11,316	
Unlisted Investments at cost	<u>147</u>		<u>147</u>	
	<u>11,724</u>		<u>11,463</u>	
Short dated Gilt-edged securities held as current assets, at cost	3,091	<u>2,918</u>	-	-
Amortisation of Gilt-edged securities	<u>15</u>		-	
	<u>3,076</u>		-	
Total investments	<u>14,800</u>		<u>11,463</u>	

NOTE 6 - LOANS AND ADVANCES

	1994	1993
	£'000	£'000
To the URC Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited from Ministry and Mission Fund (interest free)	35	35
from Memorial Hall Trust Grants Account	1,993	1,993
from Other Funds	45	20
from the Church Buildings Fund	<u>300</u>	<u>300</u>
	2,373	2,348
To Churches from Church Buildings Fund	846	736
To Churches from other funds	37	-
To Ministers from Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	<u>120</u>	<u>124</u>
Total loans	<u>3,376</u>	<u>3,208</u>

Loans are interest free, except that interest is charged at 1% below the Midland Bank base rate on the loans from the Ministry and Mission Fund and the Church Buildings Fund to the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Ltd, 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, although some loans are charged interest at 1% below the Midland Bank base rate.

The loan from the Memorial Hall Trust Grants account to the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Ltd has been appropriated by the Society, with the approval of the Church, to certain properties. When the properties are sold, any profit accruing will be credited to the Memorial Hall Trust Grants loan account, and any loss debited.

NOTE 7 - CASH AT BANK

	1994	1993
	£'000	£'000
Cash on call and short term deposit	2,052	5,625
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>240</u>	<u>43</u>
	2,292	5,668
Less Sums held for other funds	<u>1,667</u>	<u>637</u>
Total cash	<u>625</u>	<u>5,031</u>

NOTE 8 - ASSETS HELD IN TRUST FOR OTHER BODIES

At 31st December 1994 United Reformed Church Trust held the following assets on behalf of Trusts, Provinces and Congregations.

	1994	1993
	£'000	£'000
Investments (at cost or valuation)	13,837	11,566
Loans	25	28
Cash on deposit	2,667	3,399
Other cash	<u>9</u>	<u>53</u>
	<u>16,538</u>	<u>15,046</u>

These assets are the property of and held to the order of the Trusts, Provinces and Congregations concerned.

NOTE 9 - COMMITMENTS

The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Ltd had contracted to purchase property at 31st December 1994 which will cost a further £166,000 in excess of the deposits paid, and included in the accounts as property (1993 £0). The Housing Society has given approval for the purchase of further property which will cost £812,000. (1993 £128,000). These acquisitions will be funded from the cash balance held by the Society.

The Officers of the Church Buildings Fund have authorised loans amounting to £266,000 (1993 £149,000) which were not paid at 31st December 1994.

THE MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND

INCOME		1994	1993
		£'000	£'000
Province 1	Northern	1,005	974
2	North Western	1,480	1,385
3	Mersey	1,060	1,020
4	Yorkshire	1,004	975
5	East Midlands	987	943
6	West Midlands	1,140	1,102
7	Eastern	1,437	1,340
8	South Western	955	915
9	Wessex	1,778	1,650
10	Thames North	1,850	1,808
11	Southern	2,337	2,305
12	Wales	560	540
Non provincial contributions		5	4
Total receipts		<u>15,598</u>	<u>14,961</u>

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR 1994

MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Ministry and Mission Fund		15,598		14,961
Other Income				
Dividends on Investments	243		221	
Interest (net of allocation to other funds)	201		187	
URC Insurance Co. Ltd.	42		35	
Appropriation from Memorial Hall Trust Fund	269			
Excess of hymnbook royalties over costs	67			
Sundry Income	<u>16</u>		<u>19</u>	
		<u>838</u>		<u>462</u>
TOTAL INCOME		<u>16,436</u>		<u>15,423</u>
EXPENDITURE				
CENTRAL OPERATIONS				
Central Secretariat	90		91	
General Church costs	122		99	
Assembly	65		57	
Ecumenical Grants	99		102	
Moderators	340		317	
Ministries	226		209	
Faith & Life	372		361	
World Church & Mission	372		362	
Church & Society	74		60	
Finance	182		176	
Professional Fees	58		55	
Communication & Supplies	107		122	
Advocacy	39		38	
Information Service	10		4	
Central Office costs	<u>136</u>		<u>144</u>	
	2,292		2,197	
ALLOCATION				
Council for World Mission	598		580	
Ministerial Training Fund	302		270	
Welfare Fund	<u>20</u>		<u>20</u>	
		3,212		3,067
COSTS OF MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY				
Costs of Ministers in local appointments				
Basic Stipends	9,874		9,291	
Other stipend costs			86	
Church Related Community Workers	90		82	
Employer's contributions for Pension and National Insurance	1,905		1,829	
Appropriation to URCMPF	908		825	
Grants and other costs	<u>288</u>		<u>275</u>	
		<u>13,065</u>		<u>12,388</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>16,277</u>		<u>15,455</u>
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR				
Profit on sale of investments		159		(32)
Legacies and major donations		<u>60</u>		<u>66</u>
		477		34
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>5,035</u>		<u>5,001</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>5,512</u>		<u>5,035</u>

MINISTERIAL TRAINING FUND

INCOME	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Ministry and Mission Fund		302		270
Dividends and Interest		61		70
Allocation from				
New College, London, Trust		239		196
Memorial Hall Trust monies		125		-
Proceeds of David Thomas Scholarship Fund		-		6
Other Donations		<u>20</u>		<u>22</u>
		747		564
EXPENDITURE				
Grants to Colleges				
Westminster College				
Bursary Fund	216		182	
General Account (See Page 17)	<u>66</u>		<u>55</u>	
	282		237	
Mansfield College				
Bursary Fund	107		107	
Northern College, Manchester				
Bursary Fund	233		187	
Queens College, Birmingham				
Bursary Fund	70		55	
Other Colleges	<u>22</u>		<u>32</u>	
	714		618	
Cost of Training for the Non-Stipendiary Ministry	67		70	
Other Costs	<u>62</u>		<u>68</u>	
		843		756
NET DEFICIT IN YEAR		(96)		(192)
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Legacies		-		1
Balance at 1st January		<u>1,052</u>		<u>1,243</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>956</u>		<u>1,052</u>

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE - GENERAL ACCOUNT

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Students' Fees	180		162	
Conference Fees	21		28	
Federation Catering Receipts	<u>2</u>		<u>3</u>	
		203		193
Net Property Rents	15		14	
Donations and Sundry Income	<u>4</u>		<u>3</u>	
		19		17
Endowment Income	12		11	
Grant from Cheshunt Foundation*	<u>5</u>		<u>5</u>	
		<u>17</u>		<u>16</u>
		<u>239</u>		<u>226</u>
EXPENDITURE				
Lecturers' stipends	72		65	
Lecturers' accommodation costs	1		1	
Chair Endowments	<u>(14)</u>		<u>(13)</u>	
		59		53
Staff Salaries	94		80	
Household Expenses	32		41	
Water, light, heat and insurance	35		28	
Maintenance	11		35	
Amortisation of Major Repairs	<u>25</u>		<u>-</u>	
		197		184
University & Federation Fees, Internship Programme	26		22	
Library	<u>5</u>		<u>5</u>	
		31		27
Office costs	7		7	
Sundry expenses	<u>11</u>		<u>10</u>	
		<u>18</u>		<u>17</u>
		<u>305</u>		<u>281</u>
Deficit written from the Ministerial Training Fund		<u>(66)</u>		<u>(55)</u>

NOTE: * 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.

The deficit compares with a budgetted deficit of a similar amount.

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE FUNDS

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Other receipts		3		5
Dividends and Interest		<u>74</u>		<u>69</u>
		77		74
EXPENDITURE				
Bursary Account Grants	7		7	
Chair Endowments	14		13	
General Endowments	12		11	
Other Grants	<u>121</u>		<u>51</u>	
		<u>154</u>		<u>82</u>
NET DEFICIT IN YEAR		(77)		(8)
Surplus on sale of investments		27		-
Legacies		<u>-</u>		<u>270</u>
		(50)		262
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>661</u>		<u>399</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>611</u>		<u>661</u>

CHURCH BUILDINGS FUND

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Donations		2		7
Dividends and Interest		108		118
Income from Houses		5		5
Income from Ground Rents		<u>36</u>		<u>36</u>
		151		166
EXPENDITURE				
Grants		<u>17</u>		<u>24</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR		134		142
Legacy		12		-
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>2,173</u>		<u>2,031</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>2,319</u>		<u>2,173</u>

APPENDIX X

ACCOUNTS - PAGE 19

HOMES FOR RETIRED MINISTERS FUNDS

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Special rents	1		1	
Sundry dividend	1		-	
Income from the Harrison Longhurst Will Trust	<u>7</u>		<u>10</u>	
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR		9		11
Surplus on sale of properties		40		5
Legacy		207		-
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>818</u>		<u>802</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>1,074</u>		<u>818</u>
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT				
Rents received		25		24
Less Property Costs	21		22	
Estimated management expenses	<u>3</u>		<u>2</u>	
		<u>24</u>		<u>24</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR		1		-
Balance at 1st January		(18)		(18)
Balance at 31st December		(17)		(18)
FUND Balances at 31st December				
General Income and Expenditure Account		1,074		818
Property management account		(17)		(18)
Nidalla Account		<u>99</u>		<u>99</u>
		<u>1,156</u>		<u>899</u>

WELFARE FUND

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Donations		2		2
Dividends and Interest		19		17
Allocation from Ministry and Mission Fund		<u>20</u>		<u>20</u>
		41		39
EXPENDITURE				
Grants		<u>38</u>		<u>32</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR		3		7
Legacy		<u>8</u>		-
		11		7
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>171</u>		<u>164</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>182</u>		<u>171</u>

RETIRED MINISTERS' AID FUND

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Investment Income		42		38
Allocation from the Sir William Dunn Trust		<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>
		44		40
EXPENDITURE				
Grants Paid	41		33	
Allocation to Ministers' Pension Fund	<u>13</u>		<u>18</u>	
		54		51
NET (DEFICIT) IN YEAR		(10)		(11)
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Legacy		10		32
Balance at 1st January		<u>231</u>		<u>210</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>231</u>		<u>231</u>

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH RETIRED MINISTERS'
AND MINISTER'S WIDOWS' AND WIDOWERS' FUND (The Retired Ministers' Fund)INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for
the year to 31st December 1994

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Investment Income (net of interest paid)		210		200
Allocation from the Harrison Longhurst Will Trusts	16		23	
Income from the Clark estate	6		3	
Sundry Income	<u>11</u>		<u>4</u>	
		33		30
		243		230
EXPENDITURE				
Grants Paid		463		429
NET DEFICIT IN YEAR		(220)		(199)
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Surplus on realisation of Pool Units		-		20
Further appropriation from the H. N. Clark Will Trust, after provision for possible claims from Non-Uniting Churches		46		91
Balance at 1st January		<u>2,976</u>		<u>3,064</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>2,802</u>		<u>2,976</u>

MEMORIAL HALL TRUST GRANTS FUND

	1994 £'000	1993 £'000
INCOME		
Grants from the Memorial Hall Trust	406	385
EXPENDITURE		
Grants	<u>406</u>	<u>12</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR	-	373
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT		
Balance at 1st January	<u>1,993</u>	<u>1,620</u>
Balance at 31st December	<u>1,993</u>	<u>1,993</u>

OTHER FUNDS

	1994 £'000	1993 £'000
INCOME		
Dividends and Interest	195	210
Donations and Other Receipts	<u>147</u>	<u>54</u>
	342	264
EXPENDITURE		
Grants	<u>163</u>	<u>209</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR	179	55
Legacies	1	-
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT		
Balance at 1st January	<u>1,539</u>	<u>1,484</u>
Balance at 31st December	<u>1,719</u>	<u>1,539</u>

WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION FUNDS

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>				
INCOME				
Dividends and Interest	56		51	
Donations	<u>-</u>		<u>-</u>	
		56		51
EXPENDITURE				
Contribution to WCM expenditure	32		32	
Grants	<u>25</u>		<u>4</u>	
		<u>57</u>		<u>36</u>
NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS IN YEAR				
Legacies		(1)		15
		4		-
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		253		238
Balance at 31st December		<u>256</u>		<u>253</u>
<u>OTHER WCM FUNDS</u>				
INCOME				
Dividends and Interest		15		14
EXPENDITURE				
Grants		<u>4</u>		<u>6</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR				
		11		8
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Surplus on sale of investments		1		-
Balance at 1st January		<u>107</u>		<u>99</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>119</u>		<u>107</u>
FUND Balances at 31st December				
		<u>375</u>		<u>360</u>

ACCOUNTS - PAGE 23

WINDERMERE FUND

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Donations and Other Receipts		5		2
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Balance at 1st January		<u>327</u>		<u>325</u>
Balance at 31st December		<u>332</u>		<u>327</u>

THE WINDERMERE CENTRE GENERAL ACCOUNT

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Fees	98		110	
Budgeted appropriation towards salary costs	36		32	
Sundry receipts	<u>10</u>		<u>10</u>	
		144		152
EXPENDITURE				
Director's and Administration salary costs	38		34	
Secretarial, Office and General costs	28		26	
Centre Costs	<u>93</u>		<u>90</u>	
		<u>159</u>		<u>150</u>
NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS IN YEAR		(15)		2
Net balance brought forward		6		4
Deficit written off from the Ministry & Mission Fund (Faith & Life)		<u>(9)</u>		<u>-</u>
Balance carried forward		<u>-</u>		<u>6</u>
Total Windermere Funds		<u>332</u>		<u>333</u>

YARDLEY HASTINGS CENTRE FUND

	1994 £'000	1993 £'000
INCOME		
Donations and other receipts, less fund raising costs	-	5
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT		
Balance at 1st January	<u>544</u>	<u>539</u>
Balance at 31st December	<u>544</u>	<u>544</u>

THE YARDLEY HASTINGS CENTRE - GENERAL ACCOUNT

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Fees	97		58	
Budgeted appropriation towards salary costs	18		17	
Sundry receipts	<u>11</u>		<u>4</u>	
		126		79
EXPENDITURE				
Chaplain's and Administration salary costs	28		21	
Secretarial, Office and General costs	25		26	
Centre Costs	<u>82</u>		<u>66</u>	
		<u>135</u>		<u>113</u>
Deficit written off from the Ministry & Mission Fund (Faith & Life)		<u>(9)</u>		<u>(34)</u>

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION FUND

Changes in resources of the Fund for the year to 31st December 1994

	1994		1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Contributions from ministers and central funds	1,357		1,306	
Transfer values received	<u>30</u>	1,387	-	1,306
Investment Income	1,286		<u>1,156</u>	
Underwriting Commission	<u>5</u>	1,291	<u>4</u>	1,160
Allocation towards the actuarial deficit	928		853	
Donations	<u>3</u>	<u>931</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>857</u>
		3,609		3,323
EXPENDITURE				
Benefits Paid	2,695		2,377	
Transfer Values paid	<u>70</u>		-	
	2,765		<u>2,377</u>	
Management expenses	<u>113</u>		<u>126</u>	
		<u>2,878</u>		<u>2,503</u>
NORMAL INCREASE IN RESOURCES IN YEAR		731		820
Realised Profit on Sale of Investments		1,912		3,109
(Decrease)/Increase in Unrealised Surplus on Investment Revaluation		(5,678)		<u>3,832</u>
TOTAL (DECREASE)/INCREASE IN RESOURCES IN YEAR		(3,035)		7,761
Balance of Resources at 1st January		<u>37,953</u>		<u>30,192</u>
Balance of Resources at 31st December		<u>34,918</u>		<u>37,953</u>
Represented by				
Investments		33,533		37,247
Net Current Assets		<u>1,385</u>		<u>706</u>
		<u>34,918</u>		<u>37,953</u>

Accounting policy 9 on page 6 forms an integral part of the accounts of this fund

This account is a summarised account of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund.

The full accounts of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund have been subject to audit by Robson Rhodes, who have given an unqualified audit report.

The full audited accounts of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund 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.

BALANCE SHEET
as at 31st December 1994

	1994	1993	
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Property at cost or valuation		9,321	9,150
Loan made to secure property		7	-
Current Assets			
Cash	1,370		650
Current Liabilities	(536)		(486)
Net Current Assets		<u>834</u>	<u>164</u>
		<u>10,162</u>	<u>9,314</u>
FINANCED BY			
Loans		2,373	2,354
Revenue Reserves	7,434		6,605
Capital Reserves	<u>355</u>		<u>355</u>
		<u>7,789</u>	<u>6,960</u>
		<u>10,162</u>	<u>9,314</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 full accounts of the Homes for Retired Ministers' Funds of the United Reformed Church, with the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited have been subject to audit by Robson Rhodes, who have given an unqualified audit report.

The accounts of the Homes for Retired Ministers' Funds shown on page 19 of these accounts, and the full audited 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 1994

	1994 £'000	1993 £'000
Rents	152	146
Less Property costs	<u>121</u>	<u>129</u>
Net Surplus from property	31	17
Less Administrative costs	<u>27</u>	<u>24</u>
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) IN YEAR	4	(7)
Balance at January 1st	<u>14</u>	<u>21</u>
Balance at December 31st	<u>18</u>	<u>14</u>

GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st December 1994

	1994 £'000	1993 £'000	1994 £'000	1993 £'000
Donations, Dividends, and Sundry Income	134	164		
Interest received	20	-		
Legacies and gifts of houses	516	89		
Profit on property sold	<u>168</u>	<u>130</u>		
		838		383
Less Professional fees	8	3		
Committees	1	2		
Rents paid	4	4		
Interest on money borrowed	<u>-</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>21</u>
NET SURPLUS IN YEAR		825		362
Balance at January 1st		<u>6,591</u>		<u>6,229</u>
Balance at December 31st		<u>7,416</u>		<u>6,591</u>
<u>TOTAL REVENUE RESERVES</u>		<u>7,434</u>		<u>6,605</u>

LEGACIES

The Church acknowledges, with gratitude, the receipt of the following legacies:

	£	£
<u>Ministry and Mission Fund:</u>		
The late D. J. Morrill	500	
M. E. Leavesley	18,123	
G. H. Wells	100	
F. Alway	3,697	
E. M. Robb	12,767	
V. A. M. Higgins	500	
W. L. Wilson	12,500	
T. Hughes (MoM)	10,401	
M. M. Elmslie (MoM)	<u>1,000</u>	59,588
<u>Church Buildings Fund</u>		
The Late J. A. Gemmell (for Alex Gemmell Fund)		12,000
<u>The Homes for Retired Ministers Fund</u>		
The late J. M. Richardson	20,290	
plus a house sold for	185,480	
B. C. Blackley	<u>1,500</u>	207,270
<u>Welfare Fund</u>		
The late A. F. Lee		*8,184
<u>Retired Ministers Aid Fund</u>		
The late B. M. I. Cameron-Rose		10,000
<u>The Retired Ministers Fund</u>		
The late H. N. Clark		*48,500
<u>Other Funds - Health and Healing</u>		
The late A. D. Mills		800
<u>World Church and Mission</u>		
The late Travers Buxton		<u>3,484</u>
		349,826
<u>The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Ltd.</u>		
The late E. R. Saunter	1,398	
G. V. Clarke	66,332	
K. B. Grant	3,226	
D. Barnsley	69	
D. K. Humm	36,805	
M. V. Chedzey	66,207	
M. Fraser	51,311	
M. Busby	19	
S. M. Hawkins	204	
M. Blades	<u>83,663</u>	309,234
<u>The United Reformed Ministers' Pension Fund</u>		
The late S. Bestwick	60	
L. Scott	<u>250</u>	310
Total		<u>£659,370</u>

* Note - Certain legacies are shown after making provision for possible claims from Non-Uniting Congregational Churches.

APPENDIX XI

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION TRUST LIMITED

Chairman: Revd Dr T A Chadwick

Secretary: Mr G Lunt

1 The Company has continued to be active in carrying out its responsibility for the management of the Pension Fund and its investments.

2 The Board of Directors has continued the practice of delegating the management of the investment portfolio to HSBC Asset Management Europe Limited. It has met regularly with the Investment Managers to review investment performance and strategy.

3 In pursuit of its duty and objective to maximise the total return on the Fund, the Board refined the benchmark investment category percentages during the year, slightly in favour of UK equities. At the same time, mindful of the advice of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group, the Board revised its policy instructions to the Investment Managers, having first satisfied itself that by adopting a revised ethical stance the Pension Fund would not be disadvantaged. The Investment Managers have been instructed to avoid investments in companies whose main business (defined as approximately 30% of turnover) is in the manufacture of alcoholic drinks, the manufacture of tobacco products, the production of armaments and the provision of gambling facilities. The Board will continuously monitor the performance of the Fund and the chosen investment portfolio; to help it in this work it has established an Investment Sub-Committee.

4 Having received the Actuary's Report following the January 1994 long-term valuation of the Pension Fund, the Board has given consideration as to how the revealed deficit of £11.3m can be reduced and, ultimately, eliminated. Having received advice from the Actuary, the Board has sought and received assurances that the present level of employer contributions will be maintained and that the planned escalating subventions from the Ministry & Mission Fund will be implemented. Further information on these points is contained in the Report of the Pensions Sub-Committee.

5 The Board places on record its appreciation of the work of the staff in the Finance Office of Church House, who handle day-to-day matters in connection with the Fund and its administration.

APPENDIX XII

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST

Chairman of the Board of Directors: Mr Desmond Davies

Joint Secretaries: Mr Ian G Neilson
Mr Anthony L Lodde

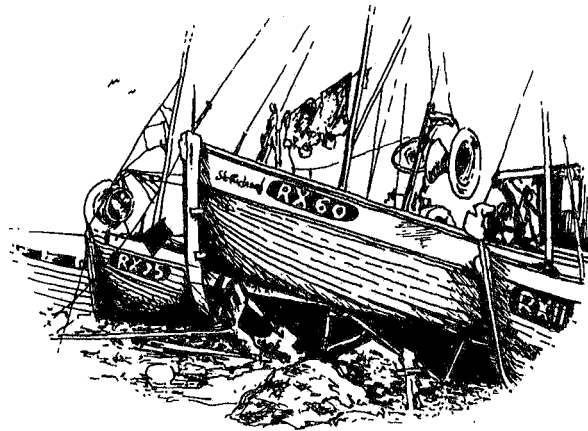
1 The day by day work of the Trust in its continuing role as Trustee for very many United Reformed Churches throughout the country has involved a regular flow of property transactions in respect of redevelopment, purchases, sales and lettings on which the Secretaries report to the Board.

2 During the Autumn of 1994 when the Joint Secretaries were both absent through illness, the Board appointed Mr Vernon F Lane of the URC (Thames North Province) Trust as Acting Secretary and invited him also to review the whole operation of the Trust. For this wide ranging Report the Board have recorded their very grateful thanks to Mr Lane. His recommendations are being considered and are, in the main, being implemented.

3 The Board have decided in particular, that the Trust should seek to divest itself of the trusteeship of all the churches still held and to retire in favour of the appropriate Provincial Trusts.

4 Supervision of the Investment Pool has been continued by the Board who have appointed an Investment Sub-Committee to hold regular meetings with the Fund Managers. The Board are conscious of the legal requirement to exercise professional skill to maximise the funds for the benefit of the various beneficiaries. They are also conscious of the ethical views of many members of the Church and consider that avoiding certain sectors of the market has not impaired the performance of the Portfolio or conflicted with the Directors' obligations.

INFORMATION



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1995

SCHOOLS LINKED WITH THE URC

1 In 1994 Heads, Governors and members of the teaching staffs of the Six Schools met for their Annual Conference which was held at Caterham School on 13 and 14 October. The theme, "Gales of Change", allowed for concentration on the Bicentenary of the London Missionary Society and the place of mission in a ceaselessly changing world. These issues were addressed by the Revd Barrie Scopes, formerly General Secretary of the Council for World Mission, Mrs Muriel Garrow, Secretary for Mission Education, and the Revd Dr John Barrett, Headmaster of The Leys School, Cambridge. The Revd Anthony G Burnham was the preacher at the Conference Service.

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 but they also contribute to the education of children of women and men preparing for ordination.

3 Acknowledgement is also made of the grant to the Six Schools by the Leverhulme Trade Charities Trust toward sixth-form scholarships.

4 The Schools 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 funds.

5 **Caterham School:** Caterham's merger with Eothen, a local girl's school, has completed its first phase. The girls are happily settled in the Preparatory School and Sixth Form whilst the Pre-Prep and the rest of the Senior School unite with Caterham from September 1995. The new astroturf pitch is now in constant use; the front of the school has been re-landscaped to provide extra parking and a better traffic flow, and the new classroom building, on the site of the original 1888 Swimming Pool, is growing daily. During demolition a "time capsule" from 1888 was discovered with a governors' report, architects' plans, Speech Day Programme and the names of many eminent Congregationalists of the day. Mottrams will be refurbished to house the Pre-Prep School, while Beech Hanger - the former home of the owner of the *Christian World* newspaper - is to become the Girls' Boarding House. Caterham can now admit ministers' daughters as well as ministers' sons throughout the school on the bursary scheme.

Speech Day 1994 was notable in that the chief guest was Lady Prior, Chairman of the Church Schools Company, which runs the group of schools that include Eothen.

The new school will be part of the Church Schools Company while remaining firmly linked with the United Reformed Church: two governors are appointed by the General Assembly and the Head should normally be a member of the URC and the chaplain should be a URC minister.

The school recently took its first URC minister's daughter into the sixth form. Amongst the present cohort of School Prefects in the Upper Sixth, a good group of URC families are represented with Mark Kingston, the head boy; Peter Crocker and Nathaniel Tapley (who follow in their father's and grandfather's footsteps respectively to Mansfield College, Oxford); Philip Lindfield, Alan Dunwoodie and Helen Charlesworth. Alan has a place at Keble College, Oxford.

Caterham continues to achieve good academic results and was again in the First Division of schools in the A Level League Tables.

Stephen Smith, the Headmaster, and his wife, Helen, made a trip to Malaysia during the year and attended the British Education Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Singapore. They had the opportunity to visit the Presbyterian Church where the Revd Derek Kingston (CWM) is minister and two Presbyterian schools whose Heads visited Britain last year and came to our six schools.

This year the school is hosting three students under the HMC Easter European Scholarship scheme. They come from the former Communist Bloc, from Latvia, Bulgaria and Mongolia. They have happily settled and bring fresh insights to the community. BBC TV filmed them in the school for a World Service programme.

The Spring Term was tinged with some sadness because the Headmaster for the past twenty-one years, Stephen Smith, retired at Easter 1995. His vision and tireless hard work have helped to make Caterham the fine school it is today. In his place the Governors have appointed Robert Davey. He is a URC elder and comes from Wells Cathedral School, where he was Deputy Head. He is the son of the Revd Dr Ray Davey, the founder of the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland.

The number of ministers' and missionaries' children in the school is nine URC/CWM, three Baptists, one Church of England.

6 **Eltham College:** One of the most significant events in the life of the College in recent years has been the installation in the Chapel of a magnificent stained glass window commemorating the recent Sesquicentenary. The window has been the gift of a parent, Mrs Hazel Parry, and was installed in June 1994. Particular significance is drawn from the fact that the five senior years of the School begin the school day in the Chapel and there is now an attractive focus. The design is simple but striking, depicting the four missionaries who give their names to the four Houses and aspects of the present life of the School surrounding the central symbol of the great plane tree which dominates the front of the historic building.

The Governors also authorised the purchase and installation of a new organ in October, just in time for the Parent Teacher Association Songs of Praise Service. Both the window and the organ were dedicated during this service. Earlier in the year Canon Michael Saward OE had preached at the Easter Service.

The Revd Robert Draycott (the School Chaplain) has begun a policy of strengthening links with local churches and has attended meetings of the Bromley District of the URC as well as responding to invitations to preach. During the year the School has welcomed a number of local ministers as visiting speakers to morning Chapel, also furthering those links.

On a more general note, the School has continued to flourish and to provide a wide range of challenges and opportunities for its pupils. One particular challenge was the HMC Inspection held in November, from which the School emerged with flying colours. The main findings included high praise for the School's academic successes, its central concern for pastoral care, its wide range of extra-curricular activities, the quality of its staff and the immaculate behaviour of its pupils.

The report commented on the range and excellence of the facilities, the next phase in improving those facilities being the building of a new Sports Complex this Spring. The Appeal Fund has closed after a magnificent response from the school community, and the work should be completed in 1995.

There are now only four boys in the School who are the sons of missionaries (or former missionaries) but they have recently been joined by the daughter of a former missionary. Although few in number, this group give a significant lead: one of them is Head Boy. The School will be represented at the bicentenary celebrations in July.

7 **Silcoates:** There are almost six hundred pupils in the school, of whom a quarter are girls. The development of full co-education, now in its third year, continues to be very encouraging, and has led to a much wider extra-curricular programme, notably in sport, drama and music.

The school's best ever GCSE results were achieved in the summer, and of the A level candidates over four-fifths have been accepted for university degree courses. GCSE PE has been introduced, and the first GCSE Spanish set will be examined in 1995.

1994 saw the completion (unlike the Channel Tunnel, within budget and nine months ahead of schedule) of the Centenary Room, which houses archives and memorabilia. The room was established in celebration of the centenary of the Old Silcoates' Association. The displays, in handsome oak cabinets, offer a fascinating journey down memory lane, but not into the nineteenth century, as the Great Fire of 1904 destroyed all the archive material preceding that date.

The school has enjoyed a busy and productive year, with many individual and collective achievements. In his first term at the school, the most expressive reader at the Junior Carol Service was the nine-year-old son of a URC minister.

8 **Taunton School:** The academic year 1993/4 presaged major change in the life of Taunton School as contractors demolished much of the Junior Boys' School around the pupils' ears, to build the new co-educational Taunton Preparatory School on the same site, rather in the way that motorways are repaired with traffic continuing to flow. The boys loved it.

The Junior Girls' School, whose site had been sold and whose buildings were to be demolished, went out with a spectacular "Sound of Music" and a thanksgiving for more than a hundred years of purposeful activity.

The Senior School may have appeared to be an oasis of peace amongst all this activity, but it continued to be as busy as ever, occasionally coming into the public eye with runners in the National Cross Country competition; two English trialists in girls' hockey, with one, Catherine Huxter; representing England on a tour of Eastern Europe; and a whole "Sky at Night" programme devoted to the School's radio-astronomy programme by Patrick Moore. Indeed, the radio-astronomers gained an international reputation when they recorded the collision of the comet Shoemaker-Levy IX with Jupiter on a wave-length used by no-one else in the U.K. Per ardua....

9 **Walthamstow Hall:** This last year has been an exceptionally busy and successful one with a decidedly international flavour. Girls have travelled abroad a great deal in connection with their studies - a field-trip to the Cevennes, a French exchange with Pontoise, a German group to the Rhineland, first-years to Bruges, work-experience in Calais for sixth-formers - and the lacrosse squad is off to tour the United States.

The first lacrosse team won the Kent Schools Championship. Thirteen girls were selected to represent the country, one as Captain, with three going on to play for Eastern Counties.

The fifth anniversary of the opening of our Ship Theatre by the late Sir Geraint Evans was celebrated with a fortnight's Festival. Events included Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas*; Peter Shaffer's *Royal Hunt of the Sun*; choral, orchestral and organ concerts and recitals; mediaeval and Tudor music, with appropriate refreshments; an evening of the poetry, music and drama connected with the Victorian romance of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett.

Book Week, shared by Junior and Senior Schools, brought in professional writers to advise on techniques and resulted in the production of some excellent children's books. The poet Alan Brownjohn read from his work and discussed it with a lively, appreciative audience.

Work for charities has been keen: fund-raising for wildlife conservation, the new Globe Theatre and the Peckham Settlement, for which we also held a gift service. Girls work hard for the Voluntary Service Unit, running groups responsible for local people in need, and gained Duke of Edinburgh awards in all categories, gold, silver and bronze.

We look forward to helping to celebrate the bicentenary of the London Missionary Society, which had such an important influence on our foundation and development as a school for missionaries' daughters. There are now three missionaries' daughters and two ministers' daughters at the school.

10 **Wentworth Milton Mount:** In June 1994, twenty-seven members of the UVI were entered for seventy-one subjects at Advanced level and between them they achieved an 85% pass rate. Especially high achievers are now reading History at York University, French and German at Aston, Civil Engineering at Imperial College and Electrical Engineering at UMIST (helped by a sponsorship from ICI). Also forty-seven girls in form V were entered for a total of 388 GCSEs and between them they obtained the top four grades in 363 of those GCSEs - one of their number gained nine grade As, five of them starred.

Many other girls experienced success of one kind or another. For example: a member of form III won first prize with her modern fairy story in the Junior Prose Section of an international competition. A member of form IV reached the regional finals of the BBC's Junior Masterchef Competition. A member of form V had her painting selected to illustrate a page in the Dorset Tourist Board's calendar. While one of the LVI won a national essay competition run by "Women in Science and Engineering" and a member of the UVI collected second prize in a national wildlife photography competition.

Cultural highlights included the senior drama production *Mystery at Greenfingers* and the junior play, *The Thwarting of Baron Bolligrew*, which was lively, colourful and prone to surprising special effects. Eight girls were each placed first in their various classes in the Bournemouth Festival, while there were many hours of preparation before the open air Creative Arts Evening - the terrace was an especially attractive setting during the summer. A group of twenty-one girls spent some time in Germany, others improved their skiing in Italy and - rather further afield - one of the LVI spent four weeks in Bangladesh, the first part of a youth exchange scheme.

As usual, we worshipped at Richmond Hill and were part of the congregation for the recording of "Songs of Praise". Members of the School have been much involved in helping other people. We continue to provide entertainment and refreshment for local MS sufferers each Christmas; some senior girls became volunteer helpers at the Bournemouth AIDS Sanctuary and younger members of the School held regular "readathons" to raise money for charity.

Like other schools, we are externally monitored and have our standards thoroughly checked. In 1993-94, we experienced three inspections: a Quality and Management Audit through the Girls' Schools Association; a Social Services Inspection (mandatory under The Children Act) and a registration visit by HMI. Evidence was gathered from such key areas as the curriculum; finance; accommodation and resources; staffing; pastoral care; teaching and learning; welfare and boarding and health and safety. The fact that we meet the high standards required by each of these bodies is verified in their reports.

Our roll of 250 girls - ninety boarders and a sixth form of sixty - had eight daughters of URC ministers. We wish we had more, for at Wentworth Milton Mount we continue to promote first and foremost the success of girls and young women. Time, intelligence and resourcefulness are the investments made by the staff to equal the investments made by our parents. Together we work for the creation of a genuinely equal society, where the talents of all are recognised and welcomed. We want our students to look forward to fulfilling lives and we expect them to be active and influential members of the community.

URC HISTORY SOCIETY

1 The Society met at Holland House, Pershore, Worcestershire for its Study Weekend 9-11 September 1994. The Annual Lecture was given by the President, Revd John Taylor, and Revd Stephen Mayor preached at a service held at Baxter URC, Kidderminster, which was led by the minister, Revd Alan Dunstone, who also assisted with the local arrangements. A Study Day is planned in Bristol on 23rd September 1995, to include the Annual Meeting and Lecture.

2 The Journal of the Society, under the editorship of Dr Clyde Binfield, continues to attract articles of the highest calibre. In addition to the text of the Annual Lecture contributions range over the entire field of URC history, including the twentieth century. This year subjects have included, Peter Sterry, Matthias Maurice, Lady Glenorchy, R F Horton, John Barrowe and Henry Greenwood, Philip Henry, the Scottish Awakening 1742, the Newport Pagnell Academy, The Presbyterian College in London 1844-1876 and the first Moderators in Congregationalism.

3 There has been a steady stream of enquiries and visitors at the Library. Further items relating to Presbyterian missions have been moved to join the collection at the School of African and Oriental Studies under the scrutiny of Revd George Hood. We have been very grateful to the various volunteers who have helped during the year, especially Mrs Mary Davies, who attends every week. The collection has been augmented by the gift of various published histories of local churches and we encourage congregations to go on writing and publishing these. We have also acquired an edited video recording of the service in Westminster Abbey in 1972 at the formation of the URC.

4 1995 is the centenary of the death of Revd Robert Dale. This will be marked by events at Carrs Lane URC, Birmingham, Mansfield College and the Windermere Centre. There will be a short meeting at lunch time on 4th July during the Assembly to mark the centenary. It is also the bi-centenary of the formation of the London Missionary Society, which will be commemorated in various events and publications, including the Society's Annual Lecture.

5 The subscription to the Society is currently £8.50 per annum and we would welcome more individual and congregational membership.

URC MUSICIANS' GUILD

'God our Father, we rejoice that you have given to men and women hearts to know you and voices to praise you' - so opens the Guild Prayer. We hope that through our activities we are able to encourage and help those who sing, play or listen.

We are therefore pleased to report that the last year has been an active and, we believe, successful one for the Guild. It has been dominated by two matters - firstly, the attempt to foster interest and create activities in those Provinces which do not at present have Branches of the Guild and secondly, the Organ Survey (which was mentioned in a preliminary way in last year's report).

In Yorkshire there has been an initial event (at Saltaire URC) and other meetings are being considered. By the time this report is read Thames North, which has been inactive for some time, will have held an afternoon of music at Palmers Green URC and there is to be a publicity/membership drive in the South-West in the summer - perhaps leading to a Branch and regional activities. These are encouraging signs and we are grateful to those who are taking these initiatives and also to those who regularly organise Branch events. The normal activities of the Guild have continued in all existing branches and in the holding of a very successful and inspiring Annual Celebration Day at Mansfield College Oxford last October.

Letters and forms about the Organ Survey were issued via Province Offices last Spring (in the case of the West Midlands, last Autumn) and there has been, to date, a 31.5% return. This can be considered very satisfactory compared to many surveys and we are grateful to the Churches who have responded. Nevertheless it would be good to hear from the other 68.5%! If you know of a Church that may not have responded please ask for a form - it is not too late, for we see this as an on-going project. The information gained from the survey has been very interesting and useful in that it has indicated where there are Organs of historical interest, where experienced and knowledgeable advice might be useful (this has been offered and sometimes accepted) and where, for various reasons, Organs are - or may become - redundant. This has led to an increase of work for the Organ Advisory Service of the Guild (we have advised some 49 churches over the last 21 months) and we are very grateful to our team of Advisors who do this work on an expenses only basis. It has also led to an updating of our Redundant Organ Register.

This year has been the introduction of a Guild Badge - a blue circle with 'URC Musicians' Guild' in silver lettering and the words 'Christ for the world! we sing' - superimposed on the music of the late Eric Thiman.

Membership of the Guild remains at just over 400 which includes 20 Corporate members (ie Churches). Non-members are of course welcome to all our meetings. Nevertheless we would like to see an increase in membership - we do not feel that our numbers are a true reflection of those who believe that Music forms an important part of our worship. Membership of the Guild demonstrates our belief in this and our concern 'to improve the quality of music in Divine Worship in our Churches' (to quote the first of the Guild Aims). Quite apart from this, members receive our excellent magazine (published three times a year) which has general articles and reviews of music and reports on the activities of the Branches. Music is alive and (mostly) well in our Churches - we ask for your prayers, your encouragement and your support. Please consider endorsing this by joining and/or encouraging others (players, singers or listeners) to join us.

SILENCE AND RETREATS GROUP

Convener: Revd Henry Gordon

Secretary: Dr Joan Holliday

The past twelve months or so have been a rather anxious time at United Reformed Church Silence & Retreats Group in that under the new emerging structure overhaul, we were not sure whether or not we would still exist, so the role has largely been a care-taking one. However, all is well. Once under the wing of the old Faith & Life Department, we are now a sub-group of the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee and pleased to receive their support and encouragement.

Unlike other similar denominational groups we tend not to arrange retreats and quiet days ourselves so much as try to service a network we are endeavouring to build within the Provinces and encourage them to promote the work, so we are very encouraged to see more and more Provinces discovering the benefits of such days. We are currently discussing plans for further training in the leadership of such days and events. *Exploring Stillness*, our publication to help churches in this field is selling well and appears on all our synod bookstands. It went to reprint in the autumn.

The Provinces which fringe London held a Quiet Day in the American Church, Tottenham Court Road, for their respective provinces jointly and this is something we would like to encourage further. Our National Training Centre in Windermere also includes Quiet Weekends and Retreats in its programme and the National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings has also conducted Quiet Days with young folk. Our Northern Province which includes a United Reformed Church on the island of Lindisfarne is establishing a Retreat/Resource centre on the island and we are looking forward to hearing how that development is coming along.

One of our committee members, Mrs Susan Cernohlavek, who majored in aspects of spirituality, including dream work, in the USA, is also involved with the National Retreat Association Conference which is planning toward its conference "Everyday God" in 1996 and we are grateful for her input to that and to our committee.

We feel that our magazine "Windows" which is delivered to all our members, has maintained a very high standard and we express our gratitude to Kate Compston who has been its editor, as she hands on that task to Susan Cernohlavek. Our deep felt thanks too, to Terry Oakley, who has encouraged us so much and helped us on our way. We look forward to further support from him in his new role and wish him well in it.

SPIN

As always, the past year has been a busy one for SPIN as it continues to address its brief in regard to the World Council of Churches International Decade of Churches in solidarity with Women. The past twelve months have shown up a variety of different issues relating to solidarity both in the United Reformed Church and beyond and in the United Kingdom and beyond.

In November we went to Cardiff for our Annual Gathering where we heard about the debate concerning the ordination of women in the Church in Wales. We were aware that the Synod in Wales had recently voted not to ordain women to the priesthood and we felt it important to show solidarity to our sisters (and brothers!) in the Anglican Communion in Wales.

During the summer two women from the URC joined a group of women from the Disciples of Christ USA on the Woman to Woman programme in Europe. This involved visiting a number of European cities, hearing the stories women had to tell and how the churches are responding to the Ecumenical Decade. SPIN was pleased to have been involved in this initiative, particularly when the group arrived in London for a day at Tavistock Place.

The issue of sexual violence in the Christian community continues to surface and refuses to go away. This ought to suggest to us that the church urgently needs to address this very difficult and painful issue. We are aware that we can often do little more than just listen and be in solidarity with those who have been victims. The Annual Gathering for 1995 will be held at the Windermere Centre when we hope to start addressing some of the issues raised by violence in the church.

We are pleased to continue our working relationship with Network, the women's network in the Methodist Church. We now send Network's publication "Magnet" with every SPIN-OFF mailing. In future each mailing will also include INSAKA, the Council for World Mission newsletter for their Community of Women and Men in Mission.

Two people left the Core Group this year. Janet Lees complete her two years as Joint Co-ordinator and we thank her for her lively and challenging contribution, which we are sure will continue in other ways. Unfortunately, we have not been able to replace Janet, but are grateful to Mrs Muriel Garrow for agreeing to be the Acting Joint Co-ordinator. Hugh Graham, SPIN-OFF editor for the past year also stood down. We thank him for the time and commitment he has given.

The URC strives to be an equal opportunities church but we are all too aware that for some people that is not their experience. We are constantly hearing stories of pain where people have felt badly dealt with because of their gender, their race, their sexual orientation, their ability or their age. We welcome the setting up of the committee to monitor equal opportunities, and we continue to urge the church to pray and to work so that we together might be a more inclusive church.

A recent venture is the SPIN PACK. The first issue contains 3 bible studies on Solidarity, Persistence, Relationships and leaflets on Confidence Building, Experiences in South Africa and Women in the URC. Price £1.50 plus p&p from URC Publications. A second pack is already in preparation.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

URC representative on the National Committee: Revd Ruth Bowyer

1 "The Earth is a House for all People" was the theme for this years service of the Women's World Day of Prayer, it was written by the Christian Women of Ghana. This service was much appreciated by men and women throughout the country even though the day opened with deep snow making attending difficult; others enjoyed beautiful sunshine.

2 Many churches had prepared well, bringing in friends from all denominations to take part, particularly the Ghanaian drama of the Prodigal Son showing the wonderful forgiving love of the Father. A very meaningful part of the service was the 'love feast', for all a time of repentance and celebration.

3 From July onwards thirty day Conferences were held in different parts of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, where many met Ghanaians who spoke of life in Ghana. The Bible Study was prepared by the Ghanaians on the theme from Isaiah 64 and Luke 15. Music and drama was enjoyed as many prepared for the Day of Prayer on March 3rd. "The Together in Prayer" is still on sale from the office: Women's World Day of Prayer, Commercial Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2RR. This is the annual book of prayers, meditations, Bible study, background and world news, with beautiful pictures of life in Ghana.

4 Please pray for the coming conferences and work leading to the Service 1996, "God calls us to respond" written by the women of Haiti.

5 The Quadrennial meeting of the International Women's World Day of Prayer was held in Melbourne, Australia on February 1-10th 1995. Navamani Peters was re-elected as chairperson.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - SCOTLAND

URC Representative on the National Committee: Mrs Molly Glen

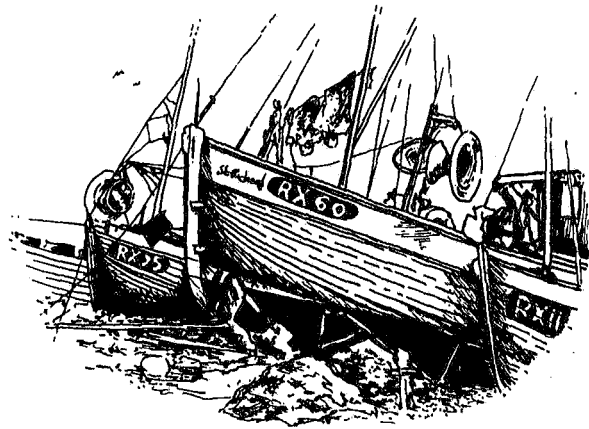
The first service of the Women's World Day of Prayer in Scotland was held, (probably in a house) in 1930. The movement crossed the border into England in 1932, Wales in 1933 and Ireland in 1934. To mark our Golden Jubilee in 1980 we in Scotland decided to drop 'Women' from our title and are now known as 'The World Day of Prayer'. Women still organise the services but we do like to involve men in taking part and attending the services.

To help as many as possible take part, extra versions of the service are prepared. It is translated into Chinese for the very active Chinese Christian Church in Scotland. We also have quite a demand for the shortened version of the service which is popular for eventide homes and for City Centre Churches as a lunch time service for local office and shopworkers and shoppers! There is a Braille service printed by the Scottish Braille Press and taped services for the housebound. The Children's service suitable for 7-10 year olds is used in Primary Schools and Sunday Schools.

Hilarious reports come in regularly about the Scottish weather and the way difficulties are ingeniously overcome - March in the Highlands and Islands is not the best time for the event, but our winter is someone else's spring, summer and autumn so we have to do our best to overcome flu bugs, heating and transport problems.

For many the highlight of the service this year was the Ghanaian dramatised version of the Prodigal Son. In one local service in Edinburgh it was performed by a young African family and the speaker was a Ghanaian minister studying here at present, adding to the great sense of togetherness.

STANDING ORDERS



**GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1995**

STANDING ORDERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

1. THE AGENDA OF THE ASSEMBLY

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

The Mission Council, through its Assembly Arrangements 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 motions arising from any report or section thereof shall be taken in the following order:

- (i) motions by the relevant Committee or Synod of which due notice has been given under rule 2a or 2b.
- (ii) motions of which due notice has been given under rule 2c, related to the report.
- (iii) duly seconded motions submitted by individual members of the Assembly under rule 2d or 3b, related to the report.

If notice has been given of two or more motions on the same subject, or two or more amendments to the same motion, these shall be taken in the order decided by the Moderator on the advice of the Clerk.

Motions under rules 2b, 2c and 2d which are not related to any report shall be taken at a point determined by the Assembly in considering the draft Order of Business, or on a motion from the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee to amend their place in the Order of Business.

2. PRESENTATION OF BUSINESS

- 2a. All reports of Committees, together with the draft motions 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 shall 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 Convener of the Assembly Arrangements 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 the Synod so decides, 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 a 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 Assembly Arrangements 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 Mission Council or a 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. MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

- 3a. A report presented to the Assembly by a Committee or Synod, under rule 1, shall be received for debate, unless notice has been duly given under rule 2d of a motion to refer back to that Committee or Synod the whole or part of the report and its attached motion(s). Such a motion for reference back shall be debated and voted upon before the relevant report is itself debated. To carry such a motion two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. When a report has been received for debate, and before any motions consequent upon it are proposed, any member may speak to a matter arising from the report which is not the subject of a motion.
- 3b. During the meeting of the Assembly and on the report of a Committee, notice (including the names of proposer and seconder) shall be given to the Clerk of any new motions which arise from the material of the report, and of any amendments which affect the substance of motions already presented. The Moderator shall decide whether such motion or amendment requires to be circulated in writing to members before it is discussed by the Assembly. During the course of the 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 motions presented on behalf of a Committee, of which printed notice has been given, do not need to be seconded.
- 3d. A seconder may second without speaking and, by declaring the intention of doing so, reserve the right of speaking until a later period in the debate.
- 3e. It shall not be in order to move a motion 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-empted discussion of a matter to be considered later in the agenda, or
 - (iv) amends or reverses a decision reached by the Assembly at its preceding two annual meetings unless the Moderator, Clerk and General Secretary together decide that changed circumstances or new evidence justify earlier reconsideration of the matter.
 - (v) is not related to the report of a Committee and has not been the subject of 21 days' notice under 2d.

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

- 3f. An amendment shall be either to omit words or to insert words or to do both, but no amendment shall be in order which has the effect of introducing an irrelevant proposal or of negating the motion.
- 3g. If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved. If an amendment is rejected a further amendment not to the like effect may be moved.
- 3h. An amendment which has been moved and seconded shall be disposed of before any further amendment may be moved, but notice may be given of intention to move a further amendment should the one before the Assembly be rejected.
- 3i. The mover may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly, alter the motion or amendment 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 in order for any member to speak upon it after the proposer has asked permission to withdraw unless such permission shall have been refused.

4. TIMING OF SPEECHES AND OF OTHER BUSINESS.

- 4a. Save by the prior agreement of the officers of the Assembly, speeches made in support of the motions from any Assembly Committee, including the Mission Council, or from any Synod shall not in aggregate exceed 45 minutes, nor shall speeches in support of any particular Committee or Synod motion exceed 12 minutes, (e.g. a Committee with three motions may not exceed 36 minutes). 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 officers of the Assembly or determined by the Moderator. Each subsequent speaker in any debate shall be allowed 5 minutes unless the Moderator shall determine otherwise: it shall, in particular, be open to the Moderator to determine that all speeches in a debate or from a particular point in a debate shall be of not more than 3 minutes.
- 4b. When a speech is made on behalf of a Committee, it shall be so stated. Otherwise a speaker shall begin by giving name and accreditation to the Assembly.
- 4c. Secretaries of Committees and full-time Executive Secretaries who are not members of Assembly may speak on the report of a Committee for which they have responsibility at the request of 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 to reply, but must strictly confine the reply 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.

- 4f. When the Order of Business includes the presentation of reports or sections of reports concerning past work of Committees or Synods which are to be open to question, comment or discussion but without introductory speeches, the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee shall propose at the beginning of such a presentation a maximum time for the consideration of the group of reports and of any particular report (e.g. 60 minutes for the group and not more than 15 minutes for any particular report). Such a motion from the Convener shall be open to amendment or to an extension of the timings by the Moderator.

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 motion takes precedence over every motion before the Assembly. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded and the proposer of the motion or amendment under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule. Should the motion be carried the business shall immediately end and the Assembly shall proceed to the next business.
- 5b. In the course of any discussion, any member may move that the question be now put. This is sometimes described as "the closure motion". If the Moderator senses that there is a wish or need to close a debate, the Moderator may ask whether any member wishes so to move; the Moderator may not simply declare a debate closed. Provided that it appears to the Moderator that the motion is a fair use of this rule, 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. This rule does not apply to debates on amendments since the Assembly needs to decide the final form of a motion before it can responsibly vote on deferral. The motion then takes precedence over other business. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded and the proposer of the motion under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule or that deferral would have the effect of annulling the motion. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. At the discretion of the Moderator, the General Secretary may be instructed by a further motion, duly seconded, to refer the matter for consideration by other councils and/ or by one or more committees of the Assembly. The General Secretary shall provide for the deferred motion to be represented at the next Annual Meeting of the General Assembly.
- 5d. The motions 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. Precedence as between motions under 5a, 5b and 5c is determined by the fact that after one of them is before the Assembly no other of them can be moved until that one has been dealt with.

6. VOTING

- 6a. Voting on any motion whose effect is to alter, add to, modify or supersede the Basis, the Structure and any other form or expression of the polity and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church, is governed by paragraph 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 the method of voting.
- 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 is necessary, the Nominations Committee shall appoint tellers for each Assembly.

7. QUESTIONS

- 7a. A member may, if two days' notice in writing has been given to the General Secretary, ask the Moderator or the Convener of any Committee any question on any matter relating to the business of the Assembly to which no reference is made in any report before the Assembly.
- 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 and call attention to a point of order, and immediately on this being done 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 censure of the Assembly.
- 8b. A member feeling that some material part of a former speech by such member at the same meeting has been misunderstood or is being grossly misinterpreted by a later speaker may rise 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 the Moderator 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 Convener of the Assembly Arrangements 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 a manner as the Assembly Arrangements 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. Concerning the minutes of the closing day of the Assembly the Clerk shall submit a motion approving their insertion in the full minutes of the Assembly after review and any necessary correction by the officers of the Assembly. Before such a motion is voted upon, any member may ask to have read out the written minute on any particular item.
- 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 particular business at such a meeting, provided that three-fourths of the members of the Assembly present and voting shall so decide.
- 12b. Motions to amend the Standing Orders shall be referred to the Clerk of the Assembly for report before being voted on by the Assembly (or, in case of urgency, by the Mission Council). The Clerk of the Assembly may from time to time suggest amendments to the Standing Orders, which shall be subject to decision by the Assembly.

