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Preamble

Following the failure in 1988 to achieve a sufficient majority to implement the *Proposals for Unification of The Congregational Union of Scotland and The United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom*, the Congregational Union of Scotland sought to maintain and foster relationships with the United Reformed Church, in particular through the sharing of information and resources by means of a Joint Liaison Group, which has met regularly since 1989.

The Congregational Union of Scotland, in association with the Women's Union and the Scottish Congregational College, formed the Scottish Congregational Church in 1993. The structure adopted by the Scottish Congregational Church emphasised a greater degree of interdependence and commitment to a conciliar understanding of the Church, especially through the role of the new Area Councils. A significant number of congregations could not accept the new structure, and about 25% left the Congregational Union of Scotland, and eventually joined the Congregational Federation. The remaining 75% in the Congregational Union of Scotland include a small number which do not participate in the structures of the Scottish Congregational Church.

In 1996, on the initiative of local churches, the Assembly of the Congregational Union of Scotland resolved by 109 votes to 5 to instruct the General Committee "to initiate discussions with the United Reformed Church with a view to effecting the union of our two denominations as soon as possible". The approach of the General Committee met with a welcoming and positive response from the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom's Mission Council, which was subsequently unanimously confirmed by the General Assembly in 1997. It is with this background that the present proposals for union between the Congregational Union of Scotland and the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom are offered.

Part 1

Introduction

The proposals for the union of the Congregational Union of Scotland and the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom are offered by the Joint Negotiating Group in the context of the commitment of both denominations to seek further unions in England, Scotland and Wales. The union proposed in the following document is seen as a step on our journey towards the realization of the fullness of the unity of Christ's Church; it is intended to stimulate ecumenical progress, and not hinder our search for unity. The proposed Synod of Scotland will be in the forefront of this process.

The Congregational Union of Scotland in 1991 affirmed its commitment "to seek the fullest Christian unity possible through the Church" and its promise "to support progress towards a united and reformed Church in Britain". At its General Assembly in 1996, the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom reaffirmed its commitment to "take, wherever possible and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people", and to continue to express that commitment through, *inter alia*, "active participation in initiatives leading towards organic union". Currently both bodies are engaged with the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Methodist Church in Scotland in the **Scottish Church Initiative for Union**. It is envisaged that this Initiative will be encouraged and strengthened by the witness and contribution of the Synod of Scotland created by the union of our Churches.

Unity and mission are inseparable aspects of Christian discipleship (John 17:21). Christians are called to unity not simply for the sake of the Church, but primarily for the sake of witnessing to the loving purpose of God for the world. We believe that the proposed union may be a way of demonstrating how the rich diversity of national heritage and identity may be respected and held together for the enrichment of all in the visible unity of God's people, and so be a sign of the grace of God seeking the unity of humankind.

Part 2

The Proposal

The proposal is to unite the Congregational Union of Scotland and the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom in a single body to be known as the United Reformed Church. This will be brought into effect by an agreed uniting process and the passage of a private Parliamentary Bill.

The resulting United Reformed Church will adopt a Basis of Union which is in all essentials the same as that of the present United Reformed Church (UK). The new body will create a Synod of Scotland, made up of those local churches which constitute the Congregational Union of Scotland and the local churches of the United Reformed Church (UK) which are situated in Scotland.

Taking into account the changing constitutional arrangements within the United Kingdom, the proposal makes provision for the Synods of Scotland and of Wales to carry out certain representative functions in those countries on behalf of the whole United Reformed Church, subject to the final authority of the General Assembly. The proposal provides for future national church unions in England, Scotland and Wales.

Provision is made for a certain flexibility in terminology in the United Reformed Church in Scotland, so long as the fundamental concept of conciliar authority in the church is maintained. The proposal does not modify the understanding of eldership or the role of the district council as hitherto understood by the United Reformed Church (UK) but allows for local option in the use of the title "elder" and for the term "area council" to be used as an alternative to "district council".

The proposal protects conditions of service for ministers of the Congregational Union of Scotland and the United Reformed Church (UK) and, in some cases, improves them. There will be an exceptional expenditure in order to bring about the union but thereafter the balance of income and expenditure is forecast to be much as it is in the existing bodies.

Exceptional arrangements have been proposed for the appointment of the first moderator of the Synod of Scotland. Thereafter the current practice of the United Reformed Church (UK) will be followed.

The Joint Negotiating Group believe that the proposals set out for final determination represent an effective way of bringing about the desired union without constraining the united church for the future. Some of the provisions will be short-term but the over-riding aim of bringing the Congregational Union of Scotland and the United Reformed Church (UK) into a single body which expresses our conciliar understanding of the church will have been achieved.

Part 3

The Uniting Process

Definition

1. These Proposals
 - (a) define the procedures by means of which, and the terms and conditions upon which, the United Reformed Church (UK) and the Congregational Union of Scotland comprising the Evangelical Union and Congregational Union as existing at 1896 would be united so that the Congregational Union of Scotland might end its separate life with its functions carried forward within the one church to be known as the United Reformed Church; and
 - (b) declare the amendments (see Appendix C) which would be made to the present Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church (UK) and Structure of the United Reformed Church (UK) ("the Basis and Structure") if such union were to take place.

Procedures and Conditions for Union

2. Provided that the procedures and conditions defined and declared in paragraph 3 of these Proposals are duly performed and observed, the passing of the Unifying Declaration as therein defined shall operate on the date that such Unifying Declaration is passed ("the date of union")

- (a) to bring into immediate effect the amendments to the Basis and Structure (Appendix C)

and

- (b) to effect the immediate dissolutions, reformation and other consequences defined and declared in paragraph 4 of these Proposals

all of which taking place on the date of union are in these Proposals referred to as "the union".

3. **The union shall take effect provided that**

- (a) the Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union of Scotland ("the Annual Assembly") at its meeting in September 1998, by resolution passed by the votes of not less than three-fourths of its members present and voting approves these Proposals for union in the one church to be known as the United Reformed Church;

and

- (b) the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church (UK) ("the General Assembly") at its meeting in July 1998, by resolutions passed by the votes of not less than two-thirds of its members present and voting
 - (i) approves these Proposals for union in the one church to be known as the United Reformed Church,
 - (ii) approves the proposals for the amendment of the Basis and Structure to become effective on the date of union and refers such proposals to provincial synods and district councils of the United Reformed Church (UK) in accordance with its due procedure for amendment of the Basis and Structure;

and

- (c) resolutions to concur as hereinafter defined are passed on or before the thirty-first day of December 1998 by not less than two-thirds of the total number at that date of member churches of the Congregational Union of Scotland whose combined membership as shown in the last edition of the Congregational Union of Scotland Year Book to be published before that date is not less than three-fourths of the total membership of all member churches of the Congregational Union of Scotland as shown in the same Year Book
- (i) a resolution to concur shall mean a resolution to concur with these Proposals passed on or after the first day of October 1998 but before the thirty-first day of December 1998 by not less than three-fourths of the members present and voting at a meeting of any one of the member churches of the Congregational Union of Scotland of which due notice has been given by any person specified in the resolution addressed to the General Secretary of the Congregational Union of Scotland by the twenty-second day of January 1999
- (ii) a concurring church shall mean a member church of the Congregational Union of Scotland which has passed a resolution to concur of which such written notice has been given and a non-concurring church shall mean one which has not;

and

- (d) The General Secretary of the United Reformed Church (UK) has not on or before the thirty-first day of December 1998 received written notice from more than four provincial synods or from more than twenty-four district councils that a motion "that the proposal be not proceeded with" has been passed by a majority of members present and voting at a duly convened meeting of such body;

and

- (e) the General Assembly meeting in 1999 by resolution ratifies the amendments to the Basis and Structure (Appendix C) to become effective on the date of Union;

and

- (f) the Annual Assembly meeting in 1999 by resolution resolves to proceed with these proposals;

and

- (g) the General Assembly and the Annual Assembly resolve to meet together on a date to be specified or provided for in each such resolution as a Unifying Assembly ("the Unifying Assembly");

and

- (h) the Unifying Assembly, being satisfied that all necessary action has been taken for the giving of legal effect to such parts of these Proposals as require legal sanction, by resolution passed by the members of the General Assembly and of the Annual Assembly first voting separately and then as one body declares that the United Reformed Church (UK), the Congregational Union of Scotland and the concurring churches are thereby united in the one church (thereafter to be known as "the United Reformed Church") with the Basis and Structure amended in accordance with the scheduled amendments and with the amalgamation of membership and ministry provided for in these Proposals.

Effects of the Passing of the Unifying Declaration

4. The sanction of Parliament so far as that is necessary for the implementation of these consequences will be sought. A draft of the proposed Parliamentary Bill ("the Bill") is to be found in Appendix A.

- (a) The Unifying Declaration will effect the dissolution of the Mid-Scotland District Council of the United Reformed Church (UK) and of the bodies listed in Section 5.(2) of the Bill and the extinguishment of all offices held in connection with any of them.
- (b) Every member of a concurring church will on the date of union become a member of the United Reformed Church and the membership roll of a concurring church shall on that date be deemed to be the membership roll of a local church of the United Reformed Church (each such local church being referred to in these Proposals as "the corresponding local church").
- (c) All ordained ministers of the Word and Sacraments of the Congregational Union of Scotland who are in good standing with the Union and who have indicated in writing to the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church (UK) between 1 January 1999 and 31 March 1999 their assent to these proposals and their affirmation of the promises to be made by ministers at ordination and induction in the united church (Schedule C of the Basis) will, at the date of union, become ministers of the United Reformed Church.
- (d) All property belonging to a concurring church will belong to the corresponding local church. Such property will remain vested in existing trustees. The existing trust deeds of places of worship, manse and other property covered by Section 6.(2)(a) of the Bill will take effect as if their operative provisions were replaced by provisions contained in the appropriate part of the Schedule to the Bill.
- (e) Every non-concurring church will continue in being and retain its property.
- (f) All other property of the Congregational Union of Scotland (except that of the Scottish Congregational Ministers' Central Pension Scheme) will be held for purposes which include purposes of the United Reformed Church. Following the date of union all such property will be divided between the United Reformed Church and non-concurring churches. The proportion to which each non-concurring church shall be entitled will be that proportion which its membership (as shown in the last edition of the Congregational Union of Scotland Year Book to be published before the date of union) bears to the total membership of all member churches of the Congregational Union of Scotland as shown in the same Year Book.
- (g) The Congregational Union of Scotland Nominees Limited will remain in being but under the name of Synod of Scotland Nominees Limited subject to the following provisions:
 - (i) the company will be enabled to act as trustee of URC property including that of local churches in Scotland, but will continue to act as trustee of non-concurring churches until such time as, at the wish of those churches, other trustees are appointed;
 - (ii) membership of the company will consist solely of those persons who at the date of union are members of the Council of Management of the company and such other persons as the Synod of Scotland may appoint.

Part 4

Arrangements following Union

This section contains commitments and provisions for particular aspects of the life of the united church which will apply unless there is a further determination by the appropriate council of the church at a later date.

A. Local Churches

(i) Membership and Baptism

The united church will accept all those who are members of either denomination at the time of union, whether or not they have been baptised. From the date of union the practice of the church will be that baptism is integral to entry into the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the United Reformed Church. This is not stated as judgement of other Christian bodies which do not practise baptism, but to indicate the understanding that we have reached, within the fellowship of the universal church, of the mind of Christ. Our understanding of the practice of baptism is set out in paragraph 14 of the Basis.

(ii) Office Bearers

- a. At this point of union, different traditions regarding office bearers come together. In the Congregational Union of Scotland there is a variety of local pastoral leadership, having different titles and following different constitutions, but fulfilling very similar functions to those prescribed for elders in the United Reformed Church (UK). The United Reformed Church (UK) has developed the office of elder (Basis, para 22) and this will be the pattern of corporate pastoral leadership in the united church.
- b. However from the time of union those office bearers in Scotland who fulfil the functions of the United Reformed Church eldership will be called elders, or by local church meeting decision may retain their existing titles.

B. District Councils

- (i) In the Synod of Scotland *district councils* will be known as *area councils*. Apart from name they will be identical to *district councils* and constituted according to section 2.(3) of the Structure as the point of co-operation and shared responsibility for each group of churches. In Part 5.3 a possible listing of local churches in areas of the Synod of Scotland is provided. This can only be provisional since it is the Synod which has freedom to decide the boundaries of areas and it will not be until voting is completed that the precise number of local churches in the Synod will be known.
- (ii) The Council known as the Mid-Scotland District Council of the United Reformed Church (UK) will be dissolved at the date of union. Any assets of the council will be distributed to the newly formed area councils in proportion to the number of individual members of the churches in the Mid-Scotland District Council whose church membership is in the new areas.

C. The Synod of Scotland

- (i) The Synod will bring together all the local churches in Scotland. It will be referred to as a national synod. It will address political, educational and cultural matters of particular national significance and on such occasions will act with the delegated authority of the General Assembly. It is expected that the Synod will meet residentially once a year so as to maintain the benefits found in the Congregational Union of Scotland Assembly.
- (ii) As accepted throughout the United Reformed Church (UK) the Synod of Scotland will have a moderator. Section 2.(4) of the Structure describes the moderator's functions. The moderator will initially be appointed by the Unifying Assembly on the nomination of the Joint Negotiating Group.
- (iii) Before union takes place the Joint Negotiating Group will arrange for a Synod Preparation Working Party to gather the material needed for the first meeting of the Synod. The Working Party will be able to receive a wide range of suggestions and to place detailed proposals before the Synod. In Part 5.2 the Joint Negotiating Group provides a first sketch of how the Synod may operate so that the churches have a reasonable idea of what is involved, but this is only one suggestion and is not imposed by the acceptance of these proposals.
- (iv) The Synod Preparation Working Party, before union, will suggest names to the General Assembly's Nominations Committee for Assembly committees and representatives.

D. Ministers and Pastors

- (i) All ministers of the United Reformed Church will be eligible for service in any part of the church. The church will move as quickly as possible to common terms of ministerial service throughout the church.
- (ii) The Congregational Union of Scotland decided in 1996 that no more pastors would be appointed. Those presently serving as pastors will be authorised to continue in service. They may seek further training with a view to applying for recognition as ministers.

E. General Assembly - Scottish Representatives

The representatives of the area councils will be as detailed in Section 2.(5)(a) of the Structure. The special representation of the Synod of Scotland is covered by the addition of six persons to the usual three [2.(5)(f)]. These nine persons will be appointed by the Synod. This increased representation is to enable the national life of the United Reformed Church in Scotland to be reflected in the General Assembly.

F. Representation on Other Bodies

- (i) The Council for World Mission - the United Reformed Church Assembly Nominations Committee should ensure that for at least six years from the date of union one of its places is filled from the Synod of Scotland.
- (ii) Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland - it is proposed to seek seven places on the Assembly, that is the existing number from the two denominations.
- (iii) Scottish ecumenical bodies - it will be for the Synod of Scotland to negotiate the number of representatives appropriate to each body. The Synod will inform the Assembly Nominations Committee of its nominations of those representing the United Reformed Church as a whole on bodies in Scotland.

- (iv) Assembly Committees - where committees of the United Reformed Church have a representative from each Synod, the Synod of Scotland will place names before the Assembly Nominations Committee. The Nominations Committee will endeavour to use the opportunity of union to share the skills and experience of the Synod of Scotland.

G. Women's Work

Both the Congregational Union of Scotland and the United Reformed Church (UK) have acknowledged with thankfulness the full place taken by women in all the councils and offices of the churches. Both have some separate women's gatherings and activities. But while the United Reformed Church (UK) has these mainly at the level of the local church and district council, the Congregational Union of Scotland has a Women's Union which touches the life of all the local churches, often takes the lead in ecumenical matters and is parallel to similar movements in other churches. A statement of the aims and structure of the Women's Union forms Appendix D to this document. It is proposed that the life and work of the Women's Union in Scotland should continue in relation to the Synod of Scotland.

In the United Reformed Church (UK) the national Christian Women's Fellowship Conventions, inherited from the Churches of Christ, have continued to be held annually in England and Scotland. Attendance at these Conventions has widened considerably, and these gatherings provide a place where women can gain confidence and affirmation, enabling them to become more active in their local churches.

SPIN (Sharing People in Network) is a network of women and men within the United Reformed Church (UK) set up in response to the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. Originally it responded to the needs of a number of small groups of women who were feeling marginalised, but it has become conscious that many of the traditional women's groups no longer see a role for themselves in the mission of the Church.

There is a need for the united church to discuss the value of special organisations for women and for men as complementary to the balance of both in all the councils and committees of the church. SPIN, the Women in Ministries Network and the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee are all considering the ways forward and will need to keep Mission Council alert to these important issues within the United Reformed Church and in the ecumenical programme on the Community of Women and Men in the Church.

H. Youth Work

The Synod of Scotland will give priority to integrating its youth work with that of the whole Church. Consideration will have to be given as to the structures which would best support its youth work. In reaching these decisions the Synod will have access to the resources of the whole church.

Young people in Scotland will be given every opportunity and encouragement to participate in the activities of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth (FURY). There will be a synod youth representative to FURY Council, and there will be places available for two representatives from each area council to FURY Assembly. The FURY Information Service will be available in the Synod of Scotland, while the existing Scottish database will be updated and incorporated into that of the whole church.

Participation in existing ecumenical links for young people will be encouraged. The united church will continue to have a strong commitment to the Youth in Mission Programme of the Council for World Mission.

I. Children's Work

There is already good co-operation and collaboration between those with children's work responsibility in both denominations. Interest is shared in the areas of training, resource materials, local support, pastoral care, awareness raising and theological insight. All this has room to develop.

J. Theological Education

Both the denominations are committed to the theological education of all their members. Both have systems of committees, personnel and resources at every level for the purpose of providing education for every member, including children and young people. Both are currently reviewing aspects of the provision and organisation of education, and the united church will be continually seeking ways of improving the education offered to its members.

We believe that the united church will move to an integrated system of choosing, equipping and recognising candidates for ministries while allowing for appropriate differences among the three nations.

Both denominations are also in the process of providing for the continuing professional development of their ministers. We look forward to that provision being made more effective and comprehensive in the united church. This will be done by drawing on the insight and experience of the present two denominations in these areas.

K. Name

The name of the *United Reformed Church* will become the title of the church after union. In the union of 1972, *in England and Wales* was adopted because it was a union of Congregationalists and Presbyterians in those two nations. In 1981 when there was a further union which also involved the Churches of Christ in Scotland and, potentially, Northern Ireland, this was changed to *in the United Kingdom*. In 1988, recognising the need for a further change which reflected the church's representation only in England, Scotland and Wales, *in Great Britain* was proposed. This title did not find favour with the present negotiating group and so, after taking legal advice, it is proposed that the Unifying Assembly be asked to declare by resolution that the name of the church be the **United Reformed Church**.

Part 5

5.1 National Synods in the United Reformed Church

The United Reformed Church will be a church in three nations. It is in recognition of this fact that the United Reformed Church will have *national* synods for both Scotland and Wales.

The populations of both Scotland and Wales are much smaller than that of England. In England the synod stands between the district council and the General Assembly as a council of the church in which all local churches and ministers have a voice and a vote. Synods play a key role in representing the views of all churches to the General Assembly and in the implementation of policy. In these and other respects, the national synods of Scotland and Wales share all the characteristics and duties of English provincial synods. Unlike English synods they comprehend a whole nation within their borders. Certain considerations of size and ease of communication which are taken into account in the arrangements for English synods are set aside in order to reflect national identity and the constitutional arrangements of the United Kingdom. It therefore becomes clear that national synods must differ in some respects from English provincial synods in order to acknowledge and take account of this national dimension.

In matters relating to Scottish and Welsh ecclesiastical and public affairs the national synods will speak and act in the name of the United Reformed Church. They will play a full and active part in Scottish and Welsh ecclesiastical and public affairs in relation to organisations, institutions and activities which are indigenous to Scotland and Wales. It is through their continued participation in and commitment to the conciliar structures of the United Reformed Church that the national synods will honour the trust which has been placed in them.

So far as the present union is concerned the National Synod of Scotland will maintain, as far as possible, the existing commitments to ecclesiastical and public bodies in Scotland. It will also enter into any new relationships or commitments to such distinctively Scottish bodies on behalf of the United Reformed Church. There will be close co-operation between officers of a national synod and the General Assembly in connection with these relationships and commitments. In some instances a representative of the United Reformed Church outwith the National Synod of Scotland may be included among its representatives if those officers judge it to be necessary in order to ensure that the wider interests of the denomination are represented. In such a case the officers will refer the question to the Assembly Nominations Committee of the United Reformed Church. Experience of determining which matters are distinctively national and which involve the wider interests of the United Reformed Church already exists in Wales.

In setting out these procedures the authority of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church in the management of the affairs of the whole Church is affirmed but it is recognised that there may be situations in which the General Assembly will need to acknowledge national distinctions.

Some examples of organisations, institutions and activities which are indigenous to Scotland: the Parliament of Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, the National Trust for Scotland, the Law Society of Scotland, the Scottish Trades Union Congress, the Educational Institute of Scotland, the Children's Hearing System, the Scottish Arts Council, Action of Churches Together in Scotland, the Scottish Church Initiative for Union, the Scottish Churches Committee, the Scottish Joint Committee on Religious and Moral Education.

5.2 Synod of Scotland

1. Staffing

The Joint Negotiating Group proposes the following initial staffing arrangements in the Synod of Scotland:

- ◆ a moderator supported from the central funds of the united church, whose responsibilities are set out in the Basis and Structure. The first moderator will be nominated by the Joint Negotiating Group for appointment by the Unifying Assembly. Thereafter, moderators will be appointed according to the procedures of the united church. The Joint Negotiating Group has agreed to nominate the current General Secretary of the Congregational Union of Scotland as the first moderator;
- ◆ a synod clerk, probably half-time, will be appointed by the Synod of Scotland with responsibility for the management of the office, the servicing of synod committees, and the planning and implementation of synod business including, in co-operation with the honorary treasurer, matters relating to property and finance;
- ◆ an honorary treasurer, appointed by the Synod of Scotland, will provide oversight of the financial affairs, including the preparation and presentation of annual budgets and accounts;
- ◆ an administrative assistant and finance assistant will be employed in the office to provide assistance to the moderator, the synod clerk and the honorary treasurer. The level of service required from these employees will not be less than that currently provided in the Congregational Union of Scotland, and it is possible that increased responsibilities may lead to a redefining of these posts.

2. Structure

The Joint Negotiating Group has set up a Synod Preparation Working Party to prepare proposals for an interim structure to be decided upon by the Synod. It is not envisaged that there will be a proliferation of committees, but that individuals will be appointed with responsibility to relate to the committees of the united church and to promote their work within Scotland. The Working Party will also consider other staffing matters. The post of World Mission Secretary will not be continued. The current holder of the post will be offered an alternative position. The Principal of the Scottish Congregational College will act as the Synod's Education Officer. The post of Mission Enabler is presently funded by a grant from the Council for World Mission. Agreement has already been reached between the two denominations to create a half-time ecumenical officer. The possibility of a training officer related to youth and children's work will be considered in the light of a half salary available from central funds.

5.3 Provisional Area Council Structure in Scotland

This proposal will be available to the Synod of Scotland for its decision.

	Number of Members	Number of Adherents	Number of Churches
SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND	2140	143	12
Augustine United	95	19	
Bathgate	126	0	
Dalry	24	6	
Duke Street	158	0	
Dunfermline	167	15	
Galashiels	45	9	
Granton	52	22	
Livingston	1106		
Morningside United	114	0	
Portobello (UO)	27	10	
Saughtonhall	167	0	
Selkirk	59	62	
Tweedbank			
GLASGOW	1092	92	11
Broomhill Trinity (UO)	44	9	
Clydebank Morison	186	30	
Drumchapel	85	0	
Easterhouse	20	6	
Giffnock	265	10	
Govan	34	3	
Mosspark United	82	4	
Pollokshields	90	14	
Priesthill	36	12	
Rutherglen	176	0	
Shawlands URC	74	4	
MID SCOTLAND	1392	159	13
Airdrie Park	120	30	
Avonbridge	20	0	
Carluke	240	67	
Coatbridge	110	10	
Coatdyke	160	10	
Cumbernauld	122	3	
East Kilbride	220	12	
East Kilbride URC	43	8	
Falkirk URC	10		
Grahamston	61	1	
Hamilton	101	7	
Stonehouse	100	10	
Wishaw	85	1	

	Number of Members	Number of Adherents	Number of Churches
NORTHERN	848	756	8
Aberdeen Mastrick	29	2	
Aberdeen St Nicholas	252	26	
Avoch (UO)	38	350	
Fraserburgh	101	169	
Kirkwall	64	28	
Nairn	215	68	
Peterhead (UO)	37	60	
Thurso	112	53	
TAYFORTH	583	66	8
Broughty Ferry	50	0	
Coaltown URC	24	6	
Dundee	157	0	
Dundee URC	20	4	
Dunning	30	16	
Montrose (UO)	65	0	
Newburgh	95	37	
Tillicoultry	142	3	
WEST SCOTLAND	1363	136	10
Barrhead	224	12	
Beith	49	4	
Dumbarton	130	7	
Greenock East	162	6	
Greenock George Sq	130	12	
Greenock Nelson St	158	4	
Helensburgh	98	58	
Paisley	200	3	
Port Glasgow	128	11	
Stewarton	84	19	
SOLWAY	246	156	3
Annan	135	148	
Dumfries	75	8	
Thornhill	36	0	
TOTALS	7664	1508	65

Part 6

Financial Arrangements

1. Maintenance of the Ministry

1.1 The United Reformed Church will operate a centralised system for the remuneration of ministers in accordance with the United Reformed Church (UK)'s Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration.

1.2 The conditions of service for ministers of the united church will not be changed to their disadvantage by the union whilst they remain in their existing posts. When they move to a new post the terms of settlement will be negotiated afresh, as is the present practice.

1.3 The basic stipend, determined annually following the General Assembly, will apply throughout the church as from the date of union. Any cash allowance in lieu of expenses paid by a local church should be paid through the Maintenance of the Ministry Office, at the expense of the local church. It will be subject to deduction of income tax and national insurance contributions, and the related employer's national insurance contribution will be payable by the local church.

1.4 In order to provide adequate time for the transition, ministers of the Congregational Union of Scotland will continue to be paid by the existing methods for a period of not more than 12 months from the date of union. The date of individual transfer to the central payment system will be decided by the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee in consultation with the Synod of Scotland.

2. Pensions

2.1 Ministers of the Congregational Union of Scotland will retain their pension rights secured by past contributions to the Scottish Congregational Ministers Money Purchase Pension Scheme (SCMMPPS). Those who enter the united church will have two options with regard to their future service:

2.1.1 if they are under the age of 50* years at the date of union, to join the (contributory) United Reformed Church Ministers Pension Fund (URCMPF). Any ministers who take this option would be encouraged to investigate the possibility of transferring their pension rights from the SCMMPPS to provide a past service benefit in the URCMPF;

**A proposal to change this to 55 will be presented to the United Reformed Church (UK)'s General Assembly in 1998.*

2.1.2 to remain in the SCMMPPS. In such circumstances, a contribution of 11.75% of the basic stipend (similar to the employer's contribution payable to the URCMPF) will be paid to this Fund from the Maintenance of the Ministry account.

2.2 Present ministers of the United Reformed Church (UK) retire and commence receiving their pensions at age 65 and no change in these arrangements is envisaged. Unless already registered for service beyond the age of 65½, all United Reformed Church (UK) ministers are required to retire from full-time stipendiary service at the time that they attain the age of 65½ and this will be the rule in the united church, subject to the proposals and conditions of service shown above (see para 1.2). In exceptional circumstances a minister may remain in full time service for a maximum of three years beyond the age of 65. Permission for this may be given by the appropriate Assembly Committee, provided that the application is supported by the pastorate and the district council.

3. Retired Ministers Housing

Although no minister of the United Reformed Church (UK) has any contractual entitlement to housing at the time of retirement, the United Reformed Church (UK) regards it as a matter of its integrity that retired ministers and widows of ministers shall be adequately housed. To this end, a Retired Ministers Housing Society provides housing for ministers at a nominal rental (currently £65 per month). There are certain service requirements, and this benefit is subject to a means test. It is intended that, in the event of the union, ministers of the Congregational Union of Scotland will enjoy the same benefits after fifteen years continuous service in the united church.

4. General Finance

At 31 December 1997, the general assets of the Congregational Union of Scotland were valued at approximately:-

	£
Heritable properties	150,000
Investments	300,000
Furniture, etc	24,000
Net current assets	<u>350,000</u>
Total	<u>£824,000</u>

Some of the funds represented by these assets are restricted for specific purposes, but most are either free funds or designated funds. It is proposed that all these funds be passed to the united church, and necessary provision will be made for the funding of the Synod of Scotland. This is subject to a provision of the scheme of division under the Act of Parliament.

5. Money raising

If the union takes place, in 1997 terms the following costs will be added to the budget of the United Reformed Church (UK):

Stipend of 50 ministers @ £14,232	711,600
Employer's contributions (21.75 %)	154,773
Compensation allowance, housing of moderator, etc.	7,000
Other expenses*	<u>100,000</u>
Total say	<u>£973,000</u>

* The group cannot see that there will be major savings in running costs arising out of the proposed amalgamation, though quite clearly there will be a number of minor savings.

At the same time churches of the Congregational Union of Scotland might be expected to have the following "cost savings" which will form the basis of contributions to be paid to the Ministry & Mission Fund:-

Basic stipend: 50 ministers @ £13,897	694,850
NI contribution on above @ 10 %	69,485
Contribution to pension scheme: 50 @ £723	36,150
Contribution towards central SCC costs £10(?) per member	<u>75,000</u>
Total "saving"	<u>£875,485</u>

There will be significant non-recurring costs for the legal fees for effecting union and for the Unifying Assembly.

Part 7

The Unifying Assembly

A. Arrangements

1. The planning of the Unifying Assembly will be done by the Joint Working Party of the two denominations on which the Synod Preparation Working Party will be represented.
2. Membership of the Unifying Assembly will be the members of the Assembly of the Congregational Union of Scotland and the members of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church (UK).
3. The presiding officer for the Unifying Assembly to the point of passing the Unifying Declaration will be the Chairman of the Congregational Union of Scotland and from that point the Moderator of the United Reformed Church.
4. The costs as regards the individual members will be carried by the two denominations in their own ways and the overhead costs will be carried by them equally up to the point of union. Any costs remaining to be paid after the date of union will be met by the central budget of the united church.

B. Business

It is envisaged that the Assembly will be in two sessions. The first will be an Act of Worship celebrating the union. The passing of the Unifying Declaration and the adoption of the name the **United Reformed Church** will be the sole business. The second session will deal with all the other formal business and will conclude with the induction of the newly appointed Moderator of Synod and the officers and staff of the Synod:

1. a resolution to inform other bodies that union has taken place;
2. a resolution which provides for the setting up of the Synod of Scotland, its first meeting and the appointment of officers;
3. a resolution appointing the Moderator of the Synod;
4. a resolution affirming continued membership in the Council for World Mission, the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland and Action of Churches Together in Scotland and other ecumenical bodies;
5. a resolution from the General Assembly's Nominations Committee appointing representatives from the Synod of Scotland to wider church bodies;
6. a resolution instructing the Mission Council to consider the implications of the Community of Women and Men in the Church and whether there are consequences for the central organisation of the United Reformed Church still to be faced;
7. a resolution approving a list of theological colleges and courses as recognised for the training of ordinands.

Part 8

Provisions for Future Unions in Scotland

1. In 1988 it was the expressed hope of the Joint Negotiating Group that there would be further exploration of church unity in Scotland and that the Synod of Scotland of the United Reformed Church would be in the forefront of that process. At that time both denominations were engaged in the Scottish Multilateral Conversation and although that conversation has been brought to a conclusion, both the United Reformed Church (UK) and the Congregational Union of Scotland are members of its successor, the Scottish Church Initiative for Union (SCIFU). It is our hope that the union of the United Reformed Church (UK) and the Congregational Union of Scotland will help in the accomplishment of the greater union which that body, which includes the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the Church of Scotland, seeks to bring about.
2. The United Reformed Church is present in England, Scotland and Wales. The proposed union will create a Synod of Scotland corresponding to the already existing Synod of Wales. Both in Wales and in Scotland the United Reformed Church (UK) is engaged in unity conversations with other churches. In England it is possible that there may come a day when a wider unity becomes the subject of conversations with other churches. The willingness of the United Reformed Church to enter into negotiations for union has been confirmed on many occasions, and the General Assembly has indicated its willingness to permit the Synod in Wales to enter a Welsh churches' union should they so wish. This will also apply in relation to the Synod of Scotland, but it is recognised that it would be much less easy to agree a union that involved the eleven synods in England but excluded Scotland and Wales.
3. Proposals or schemes for union in Scotland which involve the United Reformed Church will first be agreed by the Synod of Scotland. Only if the Synod votes in favour by the required majority will the matter come before the General Assembly. It will then be for the Assembly to reach a final decision.
4. In order to facilitate future union the United Reformed Church will endeavour to hold within Scotland any funds which are transferred from the Congregational Union of Scotland in order that if and when a future union in Scotland takes place, assets and property held by the Synod's trustee body might be made available to a new united church.
5. The relationships with other reformed churches in Scotland, the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church, which currently exist, will be continued after the union.

Appendix A

(The text in this part of the Proposals is a draft of the Parliamentary Bill to be presented following the first approval of the two Assemblies. Since it is a draft, there may be later amendments (but not such as would alter the basic principles derived from the Proposals) and the terms of the Bill presented will be subject to the approval of Parliament.)

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

1. Short title
2. Interpretation
3. Validity and evidence of Unifying Declaration
4. Validity and evidence of resolutions to concur
5. Dissolution of unincorporated associations
6. Heritable property held in trust for concurring churches
7. Other property held in trust for concurring churches
8. Property held in trust for Union
9. Allocation of property to which section 8 applies
10. Gifts which are to take effect as gifts to the United Reformed Church
11. Power to make grants, etc., to the United Reformed Church
12. Powers vested in dissolved associations
13. Preservation of existing trusteeships
14. Real conditions restricting use of heritable property
15. Completing title to property
16. Pending representative actions, etc.
17. Indemnities
18. Admission of other churches
19. The Congregational Union of Scotland Nominees Limited
20. Seceding churches
21. Arbitration
22. Saving for actions of trustees
23. Marriages
24. Saving for charges etc.
25. Saving of powers in regard to charities
26. Costs of Act

SCHEDULE:

Adaptation of trusts

Part I - Trusts for places used for religious worship

Part II - Trusts for ministers' residences and other church workers' residences

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

A Bill to make provision as to property held on behalf of the Congregational Union of Scotland and its member churches, and for other purposes incidental to or consequential upon the unification of the Congregational Union of Scotland with the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom; and for connected purposes.

WHEREAS-

- 1) The Congregational Union of Scotland comprising the Evangelical Union and the Congregational Union as existing in 1896 (hereinafter called "the Union") is a voluntary association of -
 - (a) autonomous groups of persons comprising churches of the Congregational Order in Scotland
 - (b) ministers recognised by the annual assembly of the Union, and
 - (c) professors of the Scottish Congregational College,
the affairs of which are governed by an annual assembly:
- 2) The Congregational Union of Scotland Nominees Limited is a company limited by guarantee having for its main object the holding of property in trust for the Union and local member churches of the Union:
- 3) The United Reformed Church in England and Wales (hereinafter called "the United Reformed Church") was formed by a Uniting Declaration passed on 5th October 1972 in pursuance of the Scheme of Union approved by the Assembly of the then Congregational Church in England and Wales on 11th May 1971 and by the General Assembly of the then Presbyterian Church of England on the same day:
- 4) By a declaration made on 26th September 1981 by the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church and the Annual Conference of the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland whereby the said Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ became unified with the United Reformed Church, the United Reformed Church was re-named and has thenceforth been known as the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom:
- 5) Since 1997 representatives of the United Reformed Church and of the Union have held discussions which have culminated in the Proposals for Unification (hereinafter called "the Proposals") which were approved by the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church on July 1998, and by the Annual Assembly of the Union on September 1998:
- 6) The Proposals provide for the unification of the Union with the United Reformed Church if the procedures and conditions defined and declared in the Proposals are satisfied:
- 7) Such unification must involve the variation of trusts of property held for or for the purpose of the Union and local member churches of the Union:
- 8) It is expedient that the variations of trusts for which provision is made in this Act should be made if such unification takes place
- 9) It is further expedient that the other provisions of this Act (being provisions incidental to and consequential upon such unification) should be enacted:
- 10) The purposes of this Act cannot be effected without the authority of Parliament:

May it therefore please Your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted, by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:-

Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the United Reformed Church Act 1999.

Interpretation

2. In this Act, unless the subject or context otherwise requires -

“Act of 1972” means the United Reformed Church Act 1972, as amended by The United Reformed Church Act 1981;

“clerk” means the clerk of the General Assembly;

“company” means The Congregational Union of Scotland Nominees Limited;

“concurring church” means any one of the member churches of the Union which shall have passed a resolution to concur;

“date of unification” means the date on which is passed the Unifying Declaration;

“dissolved association” means an association dissolved by section 5 (Dissolution of unincorporated associations) of this Act;

“General Assembly” means the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church;

“local church” means a local church of the United Reformed Church;

“Moderator” means the Moderator of the General Assembly;

“non-concurring church” means any one of the member churches of the Union which shall not have passed a resolution to concur;

“property” means property of every description wheresoever situate and includes property held on trust and securities, rights and powers of every description;

“Proposals for Unification” means the Proposals for Unification approved by resolution of the General Assembly on [date]; and by resolution of the Annual Assembly of the Union passed on [date];

“resolution to concur” means a resolution of a member church of the Union under and in accordance with the Proposals for Unification;

“Synod of Scotland” means the national Synod for Scotland as defined in the Structure of the United Reformed Church;

“trust deed” means any deed, instrument or other writing constituting a trust or in terms of which any property is or may be held in trust and shall include any settlement, trust deed, deed of covenant, trust disposition and settlement, will or codicil; any disposition or other deed or conveyance relating to land; any private or local Act of Parliament, Royal Charter or resolution of any corporation or ecclesiastical body and any court decree or interlocutor.

“Unifying Assembly” means the General Assembly and the Annual Assembly of the Union meeting together in accordance with the Proposals for Unification;

“Unifying Declaration” means the declaration which under the Proposals for Unification effects the unification of the Union with the United Reformed Church thenceforth to be known as the United Reformed Church;

“Union” means the Congregational Union of Scotland comprising the Evangelical Union and the Congregational Union as existing in 1896;

“United Reformed Church” means the church or denomination as defined in section 2 (Interpretation) of the Act of 1972.

Validity and evidence of Unifying Declaration

- 3.(1) The declaration by the person presiding over the Unifying Assembly at that Assembly that the Unifying Declaration has been passed in accordance with the Proposals for Unification shall be final and conclusive as to that fact and as to the satisfaction of all preliminary procedures and conditions defined and declared in the Proposals for Unification and the date, validity and effectiveness of the Unifying Declaration shall not thereafter be questioned on any ground in any court or proceeding whatsoever.
- (2) (a) The person presiding over the Unifying Assembly forthwith after the passage of the Unifying Declaration shall certify his declaration of that event and the date thereof and

shall send the certificate together with a copy of the Proposals for Unification to the Keeper of the Records of Scotland for registration in the Books of Council and Session.

- (b) A copy of the certificate referred to in the preceding paragraph or of the Proposals for Unification authenticated either by the Moderator or by the clerk shall be admissible in all courts and proceedings as evidence respectively of the matters certified and of the contents of the Proposals for Unification; and a document purporting to be such a copy shall be received without proof of the position or handwriting of the person authenticating it.

Validity and evidence of resolutions to concur

- 4.(1) The declaration by the person presiding at a meeting of a member church of the Union that a resolution to concur has been passed shall be final and conclusive as to that fact and as to the satisfaction of all preliminary procedures and conditions, and the date, validity and effectiveness of such a resolution shall not thereafter be questioned on any ground in any court or proceedings whatsoever.
- (2) The person presiding over the meeting of a member church of the Union at which resolution to concur is passed or (in the event of his death or inability or unwillingness to act) a person present at the meeting shall forthwith certify his declaration of the passing of the resolution and the date thereof and send the certificate to the General Secretary of the Union.
- (3) Forthwith after the passing of this Act the General Secretary of the Union shall send all certificates of resolutions to concur received by him under the provisions of subsection (2) of this section to the Keeper of the Records of Scotland for registration in the Books of Council and Session.

Dissolution of unincorporated associations

- 5.(1) On the date of unification every association to which this section applies shall be dissolved and all offices held in, or in connection with, each such association shall be extinguished.
- (2) This section applies to
 - (a) the Union;
 - (b) the Annual Assembly of the Union;
 - (c) each concurring church; and
 - (d) every committee, council or other unincorporated association of, or exclusively subsidiary or ancillary to, any of the associations previously listed.

Heritable property held in trust for concurring churches

- 6.(1) (a) All heritable property which immediately before the date of unification is held in trust for, or for the purposes of, or in connection with, a concurring church, shall on and from that date, and in accordance with the following provisions of this section, be held in trust for or (as the case may be) for equivalent purposes of, or in connection with, the local church corresponding to the concurring church in question.
- (b) (Provision for certificates of correspondence.)
- (2) (a) The trust deed or the title deed or deeds relating to any heritable property to which subsection (1) of this section applies being either heritable property held in trust for use as a church, chapel, church hall, mission hall, preaching station, Sunday school or other place of religious worship, or heritable property held in trust for use as a manse or place of residence of a minister, lay worker or caretaker, shall on and from the date of unification have effect as if the provisions contained either in Part I or (as the case may be) in Part II of the Schedule to this Act were substituted for the operative provisions previously

contained in such deed or deeds, and the references in either Part of the said Schedule to "the trustees" and "the premises" shall be construed (notwithstanding any definition in the deed or deeds) as references to the trustee or trustees for the time being of the deed or deeds and to the heritable property and, where appropriate, the buildings to which the deed or deeds relate and references to "the local church" shall be construed as references to the local church corresponding to the concurring church to which the deed or deeds relate.

- (b) In any case where under paragraph (a) of this subsection the provisions of both Part I and Part II of the Schedule to this Act would or might (but for this paragraph) be substituted as therein provided the provisions of Part I only of that Schedule shall be so substituted.
 - (c) In any case where the property subject to any trust referred to in paragraph (a) of this subsection comprises in addition to land any capital money, investments or other property, paragraph (a) of this subsection shall apply to all the property so comprised.
 - (d) Every agreement with a minister of a concurring church or with a lay worker for, or caretaker engaged by, a concurring church which is in force at the date of unification and which relates to the occupation of a manse or place of residence of a ministers lay worker or caretaker shall on and from that date have effect as if references therein (whether express or implied) to that church and to the provisions of any trust deed or title deed were references to the corresponding local church and the provisions of that deed as affected by the preceding provisions of this subsection.
- (3) The trust deed or title deed of any heritable property to which subsection (1) of this section applies, not being a trust deed or title deed to which subsection (2) of this section applies, shall on and from the date of unification have effect as if words referring to a local church were substituted for any words therein referring to or describing a church of the Union.
 - (4) The provisions of subsection (1) of this section shall not have the effect of bringing into operation any rights of pre-emption, reduction, irritancy or forfeiture vested in any person or persons.
 - (5) The foregoing provisions of this section shall operate in relation to any scheme legally established and affecting heritable property to which subsection (1) of this section applies as if the scheme were a trust deed and as if paragraph 8 in both Parts of the Schedule to this Act were omitted.

Other property held in trust for concurring churches

- 7.(1) All property (other than property to which the preceding section of this Act applies) which immediately before the date of unification is held in trust for, or for the purposes of, or in connection with -
 - (a) a concurring church;
 - (b) the minister or ministers of a concurring church; or
 - (c) the members of or any class of members of a concurring church;shall on and from that date be held in trust for or (as the case may be) for equivalent purposes of or in connection with the local church, the minister or ministers of the local church, or the members or class of members of the local church corresponding to the concurring church for which, or for the purposes of, or in connection with which, the property was previously held but otherwise, so far as circumstances will permit, upon the same trusts and with and subject to the same powers and provisions as those upon which the property was held before the date of unification.
- (2) The provisions of subsection (1) of this section shall not have the effect of bringing into operation any rights of pre-emption, redemption, irritancy or forfeiture vested in any person or persons.
- (3) (Provision for certificates of correspondence)

Property held in trust for Union

- 8.(1) On and from the date of unification and until distribution has been made in accordance with the provisions of subsection (9) or subsection (10) of section 9 (Allocation of property to which section 8 applies) of this Act, all property to which this section applies shall be held so far as circumstances will permit upon the same trusts and with and subject to the same powers and provisions as those upon which the property was held before the date of unification but the purposes of such trusts and the powers and provisions thereof shall be hereby varied or extended so as to include purposes of the United Reformed Church corresponding to any purpose of the trust which was extant before the date of unification.
- (2) If immediately before the date of unification any property to which this section applies was (in whomsoever vested) subject to the management of any association which is dissolved by section 5 (Dissolution of unincorporated associations) of this Act, then, until distribution has been made in accordance with the provisions of subsection (9) or subsection (10) of section 9 Allocation of property to which section 8 applies) of this Act, the management of that property shall be exercised -
- (a) where the management was previously exercised by a concurring church, by the local church corresponding to that concurring church; and
 - (b) in any other case, by such persons as the Synod of Scotland shall appoint but the Synod of Scotland may delegate the exercise of its powers under this paragraph to any person or body of persons.
- (3) This section applies to all property which immediately before the date of unification is held for or on behalf of, or in trust for, or for the purposes of, or in connection with, the Union (and in particular shall include all property held by the company) other than -
- (a) property to which section 6 (Heritable property held in trust for concurring churches) or section 7 (Other property held in trust for concurring churches) of this Act applies; and
 - (b) property comprising the Scottish Congregational Ministers' Central Pension Scheme.

Allocation of property to which section 8 applies

- 9.(1) In this section the expression "property of the Union" shall mean, unless the subject or context otherwise requires, the property to which section 8 (Property held in trust for Union) applies.
- (2) (a) The General Secretary of the Union to the extent possible before the date of unification and thereafter the Moderator of the Synod of Scotland (in this section referred to as "the Synod Moderator") shall cause to be ascertained the value at the date of unification of the property of the Union (such value in this section being referred to as "the gross ascertained value").
- (b) (i) In the case of heritable property and moveables the value to be ascertained shall be the price which such property might reasonably be expected to fetch if sold in the open market by a willing seller at the date of unification.
- (ii) In the case of securities quoted on the Stock Exchange the value to be ascertained shall be the price one-quarter up from the lower to the higher of the range of prices for each such security quoted in the Stock Exchange Daily Official List for the date of unification or, if no quotations are issued for that day, then for the business day next following the date of unification.

- (3) There shall be deducted from the gross ascertained value such sum as the auditors to the Union shall certify as representing all liabilities of the Union incurred or due in respect of the period prior to the date of unification and unpaid at that date calculated in accordance with the accounting policy of the Union and generally accepted accounting principles. (The resultant net value being referred to in this section as “the net ascertained value”).
- (4) Forthwith upon the ascertainment of the net ascertained value the Synod Moderator shall cause a schedule of distribution (in this section referred to as “the schedule of distribution”) to be prepared.
- (5) The schedule of distribution shall-
 - (a) list the assets comprising the property of the Union and the value of such assets at the date of unification;
 - (b) show the liabilities of the Union as certified by the auditors to the Union in accordance with subsection (3) of this section; and
 - (c) allocate-
 - (i) to each non-concurring church a sum equal to such proportion of the net ascertained value as the membership of such non-concurring church (as recorded in the last year book of the Union to be published before the date of unification) bears to the membership (as so recorded) of all concurring and non-concurring churches; and
 - (ii) to the Synod of Scotland the balance of net ascertained value remaining after such allocation to the non-concurring churches.
- (6) Forthwith upon completion of the schedule of distribution the Synod Moderator shall cause a copy of it to be sent by prepaid post to the Secretary (as last notified to the Union) of each non-concurring church at the address of such secretary (as so notified).
- (7) Any non-concurring church may by resolution, passed by a majority of those present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose and notified in writing to the Synod Moderator within one month after the posting to the secretary of such church of the copy of the schedule of distribution, request that the valuation of any heritable property forming part of the property of the Union as shown therein be referred to arbitration.
- (8) If requests made in accordance with the provisions of subsection (7) of this section in respect of the same heritable property are received by the Synod Moderator from more than one half in number of non-concurring churches, the Synod Moderator shall refer the valuation of that property to a single arbiter appointed by the President of the Law Society of Scotland and the decision of such arbiter shall be final.
- (9) If during the period of one month from the date of posting of the last copy of the schedule of distribution to be sent to a non-concurring church requests for reference to arbitration made in accordance with the provisions of subsection (7) of this section have not been received in respect of the same heritable property from more than one half in number of the non-concurring churches, the Synod Moderator shall cause distribution to be made in accordance with the schedule of distribution (and for such purpose all trustees in whom property of the Union is vested shall act in accordance with the instructions given by the Synod Moderator).
- (10) If a reference to arbitration shall be made in accordance with subsection (8) of this section the Synod Moderator shall cause distribution to be made in accordance with the schedule of distribution revised only in accordance with the arbiter’s determination (and for such purpose all trustees in whom property of the Union is vested shall act in accordance with the instructions given by the Synod Moderator forthwith upon receipt of the arbiter’s determination).

- (11) Any sum payable to non-concurring church in pursuance of the provisions of this section shall if not so paid within three months after the date of unification carry interest at the rate of () per centum per annum from the day of the date three months after the date of unification until the date of payment.
- (12) The Synod Moderator may for the purpose of giving effect to the schedule of distribution at his discretion cause a sale to be made of any part of the property of the Union and for such purpose the trustees in whom any part of the property of the Union is vested shall act in accordance with instructions given by the Synod Moderator.
- (13) Following completion of the distribution in accordance with the schedule of distribution to the non-concurring churches any trustees (other than the company) in whom any part of the property of the Union may be vested shall if required by resolution of the Synod of Scotland transfer such property to the company and all the property of the Union then remaining shall be held by the company (or by the trustees in whom it may for the time being be vested) upon such trusts for such charitable purposes of, or in connection with, the Synod of Scotland and subject to such powers and provisions (including powers and provisions for management and administration thereof) as the Synod of Scotland may determine, and declare by Deed signed by the Synod Moderator or other officer of the Synod authorised for this purpose by resolution of the Synod of Scotland.

Gifts which are to take effect as gifts to the United Reformed Church

- 10.(1) Any provision contained in any settlement, trust deed, deed of covenant, agreement, trust disposition and settlement, will or codicil coming into operation on or after the date of unification and being a provision in favour of, or directed to be administered by any dissolved association shall, subject to the proviso next hereinafter contained, have effect as a provision in favour of or to be administered by the corresponding association of the United Reformed Church but upon, with and subject to such trusts powers and provisions as are by such settlement trust deed, deed of covenant, agreement, trust disposition and settlement, will or codicil expressed concerning the same.

Provided that so long as there shall be a separately definable Synod of Scotland within the Structure of The United Reformed Church any such provision in favour of the Union or the Annual Assembly of the Union or in favour of any committee, council or other unincorporated association of, or exclusively subsidiary or ancillary to either the Union or the Annual Assembly of the Union shall have effect as a provision in favour of and to be administered by the Synod of Scotland but upon, with and subject to such trusts, powers and provisions as are by such settlement, trust deed, deed of covenant, agreement, trust disposition and settlement, will or codicil expressed concerning the same.

Provided further that if in the case of any such provision under this Section 10.(1) a person or class of persons or a society, institution, charity or fund standing in any relation to any dissolved association is an object named in the provision, the object of such provision shall be a person or a class of persons or a Society, institution, charity or fund standing in a similar relation to the United Reformed Church generally.

- (2) In any case to which the preceding subsection applies the receipt for a gift or bequest of the treasurer of the Synod of Scotland, of the clerk or of the treasurer or secretary of the body or association nominated under that subsection shall be an effectual discharge to the trustees or personal representatives concerned and shall exonerate them from being concerned to see to the destination or application of the gift or bequest and from being answerable for the misapplication or non-application thereof.

Power to make grants, etc., to the United Reformed Church

11. The power of any person under any enactment or document to make grants to or to lend property to or to provide benefits for any dissolved association, or to or for any minister, officer, members or class of members of such an association, or to or for any child, widow or other dependent of such a minister, officer or member shall on and from the date of unification be exercisable in favour of (as the case may be) an association, minister, officer, members or class of members of the United Reformed Church or the children, widows or other dependants of such a minister, officer or member.

Powers vested in dissolved associations

- 12.(1) Where immediately before the date of unification any power with respect to any trust or any power of nomination is or is to be vested in any dissolved association, or in any minister or officer of a dissolved association, in the capacity of such minister or officer, then on and from that date any such power shall (in the case of power previously vested or to be vested in an association) vest in such person or body of persons as the Synod of Scotland shall from time to time appoint and (in the case of a power previously vested or to be vested in a minister or officer) in the holder of the corresponding ministry or office of the United Reformed Church:
Provided that this section shall not apply where the trust relates exclusively to a church other than a concurring church which immediately prior to the dissolution of the Union was a member church thereof or to the members or any class of members of such a church.
- (2) The Synod of Scotland may delegate the exercise of its powers under the foregoing subsection to any person or body of persons.
- (3) In the event of there being at any future time no separately definable Synod of Scotland within the structure of the United Reformed Church, all gifts, rights, powers and responsibilities expressed in this Act to devolve upon and to be administered and discharged by the Synod of Scotland shall during any such time devolve upon and be administered and discharged by the General Assembly.

Preservation of existing trusteeships

- 13.(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, nothing in this Act shall operate to divest any trustee (including any custodian trustee) of any property vested in him immediately before the date of unification.
- (2) Where in any document it is provided that the trustees of any trust shall be members of a dissolved association such document shall on and after the date of unification be read and have effect as if the reference to membership of that association included a reference to membership of the United Reformed Church.

Real conditions restricting use of heritable property

14. On and from the date of unification any words referring to or describing whether expressly or by implication the Union or a member church of the Union being words which immediately before that day were contained in any restriction as to the use of heritable property shall be read, construed and have effect as including a reference to or description of the United Reformed Church.

Completing title to property

15. For the purpose of completing a title, if thought fit, to any property transferred by virtue of this Act by notice of title or otherwise, or to deduce title, this Act shall be deemed to be, and may be used as, a general disposition, conveyance, or as the case may be, assignation of such property to the transferee.

Pending representative actions, etc.

- 16.(1) Any action, arbitration or proceeding which shall on the date of unification be pending by or against representatives of any dissolved association shall not abate or be discontinued or be in any way prejudicially affected by reason of the provisions of this Act or of anything empowered to be done thereunder but the same may be prosecuted and continued as if this Act had not been passed.
- (2) Any cause of action, arbitration or proceeding which shall on the date of unification be existing against or in favour of persons representative of any dissolved association shall not be prejudicially affected by reason of the provisions of this Act or of anything empowered to be done thereunder, but the same may be enforced against or by such representative persons as shall be nominated for the purpose by the Moderator as and when it might have been enforced if this Act had not been passed.

Indemnities

17. Nothing in this Act and nothing empowered to be done thereunder shall deprive any person of any right of indemnity to which he was entitled immediately before the date of unification whether as party to any action, arbitration or proceeding as trustee or in any other capacity whatsoever.

Admission of other churches

- 18.(1) Any church other than a concurring church which immediately prior to the dissolution of the Union was a member church thereof, may, if so authorised by not less than three-fourths of those present and voting at a meeting of the members thereof specially convened for the purpose, apply to be unified with the United Reformed Church and shall be admitted thereto if the General Assembly so resolves by not less than three-fourths of the members hereof present and voting.
- (2) Any admission under the preceding subsection shall occur on such day as the Moderator in consultation with the Moderator of the Synod of Scotland shall appoint.
- (3) On and from the day of admission appointed under the preceding subsection the provisions of this Act shall apply as if the day of admission was the date of unification and as if the church were a concurring church.

The Congregational Union of Scotland Nominees Limited

- 19.(1) On the date of unification the name of the company shall be changed to Synod of Scotland Nominees Limited.
- (2) On and from the date of unification the only members of the company shall be those members who immediately before that date were members of the Council of Management of the Company or who have been appointed under the provisions of subsection (3) of this section, and all other members shall be deemed to have retired from membership immediately before that date.
- (3) (a) On and from the date of unification the Synod of Scotland shall have sole power of appointing members of the Council of Management of the company.
- (b) The Synod of Scotland may delegate the power conferred on it by paragraph (a) of this subsection to such other body or person as it thinks fit.
- (4) Subject to the provisions of this Act, on and after the date of unification references in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the company to the Union and to its annual assembly and general committee shall be read and construed, unless the context otherwise

requires, as references to the Synod of Scotland and references to member churches of the Union shall be read and construed as references to churches which -

- (a) were member churches of the Union immediately prior to its dissolution or
 - (b) are local churches in Scotland of the United Reformed Church.
- (5) Where immediately before the date of unification the company is acting as nominee of a non-concurring church or as trustees of assets held in trust for or on behalf of a non-concurring church, the company shall, notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (4) of this section, continue so to act until such non-concurring church appoints another body or person to act as nominee or trustee in its place.
- (6) Forthwith after the date of unification a copy of this Act printed by the Queen's Printer shall be sent to the Registrar of Companies in Scotland who shall enter the new name of the Company on the register in place of the former name and shall issue a certificate of incorporation altered to meet the change of name.
- (7) The production of a copy of this Act printed by the Queen's Printer shall on and after the date of unification be conclusive evidence in all courts and proceedings of the matters set forth in this section.

Seceding churches

- 20.(1) In any case where the General Assembly passes a resolution permitting a concurring church to secede from the United Reformed Church then, as and from the date of such resolution, the property of any such church shall be held upon the same trusts and for the same purposes as it was held immediately before the date of unification.
- (2) For the purposes of this section "property" means, in relation to any such church as is referred to in subsection (1) of this section, property held in trust for, or for the purposes of, or in connection with, any such church.

Arbitration

21. Any question arising under this Act as to what corresponds to any association, charity, class of members, committee, court, institution, members, minister, ministry, office, officer, purpose, society, concurring church or non-concurring church, shall be determined by a single arbiter appointed by the President of The Law Society of Scotland, and the award of such arbiter shall be final:
- Provided that the said President shall not be liable for the payment of the arbiter's fee or the costs of the arbitration.

Saving for actions of trustees

22. Nothing done by a trustee in preparing or procuring, or in pursuance of, or otherwise in connection with, the Proposals for Unification or the provisions of this Act, including any act pursuant to, or in compliance with, the unifying process set forth in the Proposals for Unification shall constitute, or shall have constituted, a breach of trust by that trustee.

Marriages

23. On and after the date of unification the United Reformed Church shall be deemed to be a religious body prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State pursuant to section 8(1)(a)(ii) of the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977.

Saving for charges etc.

24. Nothing in this Act and nothing done in the exercise of powers thereby conferred shall relieve any property or any person from any liability or responsibility to which they would otherwise be subject in respect of any mortgage, charge, standard security, encumbrance, lien, bond or obligation.

Saving of Powers in regard to charities

25. Nothing in this Act shall affect any power of Her Majesty or the court to alter the trusts of any charity.

Costs of Act

26. The costs, charges and expenses preliminary to and of and incidental to the preparing, applying for, obtaining and passing of this Act shall be paid as to half by the Union and as to half by the United Reformed Church.

THE SCHEDULE

Adaptation of Trusts

PART I

TRUSTS FOR PLACES USED FOR RELIGIOUS WORSHIP

The premises shall be held upon the following trusts:-

1. The trustees shall permit the premises to be used for all or any of the following purposes and all proper ancillary purposes namely:-
- (a) The public worship of God according to the principles and usages for the time being of the United Reformed Church;
 - (b) The instruction of children or adults; or
 - (c) The promotion of other charitable purposes not inconsistent with the principles and usages aforesaid;

such use to be primarily by the members of the local church or any other church which may supersede it as a result of amalgamation or regrouping and to be directed by the Church Meeting acting with due regard for the recommendations of the Elders' Meeting and those other Councils of the United Reformed Church which exercise oversight of the local church.

2. The trustees may, if in their discretion they think fit, but not without the authority of a resolution of the Church Meeting and (except as to work on or in a building which does not substantially alter its character, appearance or value) not without the approval of the Synod (which approval shall be sufficiently evidenced by a document signed by the Chairman or the Secretary for the time being of the District Council and stating that such approval has been given), and subject to any statutory restrictions, do any of the following things from time to time: -

- (a) Permit the buildings on the premises to be altered, enlarged, improved, rebuilt, supplemented or demolished;
- (b) Raise money required for any of the last mentioned purposes by mortgage or charge of or by granting a Standard Security over the whole of the premises or by sale of part of the premises;

- (c) Sell or mortgage the whole or part of the premises and apply the money so obtained (as the Church Meeting shall direct) in or towards the acquisition of any interest in land (subject or not to encumbrances) and the erection of buildings on land so acquired such land to be held upon the like trusts or for any other charitable purposes of the United Reformed Church;
- (d) Dispose of the premises or any part thereof for development under a building lease or other arrangement including or not including provisions for the acquisition of any interest (to be held so far as may be on the trusts set forth in paragraph 1 hereof) in new church premises to be built as part of the development and apply all money arising from any such disposal and not required for new premises for such charitable purposes connected with the work of the United Reformed Church as the Synod acting with due regard for the needs of such work within the district of the District Council shall by resolution appoint (or if so directed by the Synod shall pay them to the Treasurer of the Synod or of the District Council to dealt with in either case as part of the general funds of that Synod or Council as the case may be);
- (e) Let any part (not the whole) of the premises for any period not exceeding twenty years (or such other period as shall from time to time be the maximum period by virtue of statute or otherwise for which the premises may be let for residential use) and pay the income arising from such letting to the local church as an addition to its general funds.

3. The trustees may if in their discretion they think fit with the authority of a resolution of the Church Meeting but without any approval of the Synod and without creating any lease or tenancy authorise or permit any other person or persons, organisation or other body to use temporarily or occasionally or intermittently for any reputable purpose (but only when use under paragraph 1 hereof is not expected to be required) the whole or any part of the premises:

Provided that any such authority or permission may be granted without consideration or for such consideration as the trustees think fit and that any proceeds or income arising from such authority or permission shall be paid to the local church as an addition to its general funds.

4. The trustees shall not, except to the extent of funds supplied to them for that purpose, be responsible for the repair and upkeep of the premises.

5. If the Synod on the recommendation of the District Council made to it after consultation between representatives of that Council and the Church Meeting resolve that the use of the premises as aforesaid is or if continued would be no longer useful and that the premises ought to be disposed of the trustees shall sell or let the premises under the direction of the Synod and shall apply the net proceeds of sale or letting in the manner prescribed by paragraph 2.(d) hereof.

6. Any person acquiring from the trustees in good faith and for value an interest in or charge on or security over the premises or part thereof may accept without further inquiry a statement in the document transferring, creating or evidencing such interest or charge or security to the effect that the trustees are acting in exercise of the powers conferred on them by this deed and the interest or charge or security to which such document relates shall not be capable of being impugned on the ground that it was transferred or created without authority.

7.(1) The power of appointing and removing trustees shall be vested in the Church Meeting to the exclusion of the trustees' statutory power to assume new trustees and shall be exercised by a resolution of the majority of those present and voting at a meeting convened by notice stating the purpose of the meeting given at each service held on the two Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The chairman shall have for this purpose if necessary a casting vote. If there is no Church Meeting in existence to exercise the power of appointing new trustees as aforesaid, the statutory power of assuming new trustees shall be vested in the trustees for the time being.

(2) No individual person shall be eligible for appointment who is not on the membership roll of some local church (which need not be within the district of the same District Council as the local church).

- (3) Any trustee who ceases to have the qualification last mentioned shall *ipso facto* cease to be a trustee.
- (4) Any trustee who wishes to be discharged from the trust may be discharged therefrom, without any appointment of a new trustee, by such a resolution as is mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph.
- (5) The number of trustees shall so far as practicable be kept up to four.

8. If in the opinion of the Church Meeting evidenced by a resolution passed by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the persons present and (being entitled to vote voting at a meeting specially convened for the purpose of considering such resolution, any amendment of any of the foregoing provisions with or without any amendment previously made shall be desirable and such resolution (in which the foregoing provisions with any amendment previously made may be referred to as "the statutory scheduled provisions") shall be sanctioned by the Synod and the General Assembly and a memorandum thereof and of its sanction signed by the Moderator of the General Assembly and dated shall be endorsed on or annexed to the trust deed then as from the date of the said memorandum the foregoing provisions with any previous amendment shall be read as if the amendment or amendments specified in the resolution were embodied therein:

Provided that no amendment shall be made to that part of paragraph 1 hereof which ends with the words "principles and usages aforesaid" nor shall any amendment deprive the trustees of the discretion conferred on them by paragraph 2 hereof in relation to any matter therein mentioned.

PART II

TRUSTS FOR MINISTERS' RESIDENCES AND OTHER CHURCH WORKERS' RESIDENCES

The premises shall be held upon the following trusts:-

1. The trustees shall permit the premises to be used for such charitable purposes in connection with the United Reformed Church (including their use as a residence for the minister or any caretaker or other church worker or employee of the local church and also including their use for any religious or other charitable purposes not inconsistent with the principles and usages of that church) as the Church Meeting acting with due regard for the recommendations of the Elders' Meeting and those other Councils of the United Reformed Church which exercise oversight of the local church shall from time to time direct.

2. The trustees may, if in their discretion they think fit, but not without the authority of a resolution of the Church Meeting and (except as to work on or in a building which does not substantially alter its character, appearance or value) not without the approval of the Synod (which approval shall be sufficiently evidenced by a document signed by the Chairman or the Secretary for the time being of the District Council and stating that such approval has been given), and subject to any statutory restrictions, do any of the following things from time to time:-

- (a) Permit the buildings on the premises to be altered, enlarged, improved, rebuilt, supplemented or demolished;
- (b) Raise money required for any of the last-mentioned purposes by mortgage or charge of or by granting a Standard Security over the whole of the premises or by sale of part of the premises;

- (c) Sell or mortgage the whole or part of the premises and apply the money so obtained (as the Church Meeting shall direct) in or towards the acquisition of any interest in land (subject or not to encumbrances) and the erection of buildings on land so acquired such land to be held upon the like trusts or for any other charitable purposes of the United Reformed Church.
- (d) Dispose of the premises or any part thereof for development under a building lease or other arrangement including or not including provisions for the acquisition of any interest (to be held so far as may be on the trusts set forth in paragraph 1 hereof) in new premises to be built as part of the development and apply all money arising from any such disposal and not required for new premises for such charitable purposes connected with the work of the United Reformed Church as the Synod acting with due regard for the needs of such work within the district of the District Council shall by resolution appoint (or if so directed by the Synod shall pay them to the Treasurer of the Synod or of the District Council to be dealt with in either case as part of the general funds of that Synod or Council as the case may be);
- (e) Let the premises or any part thereof for any period not exceeding twenty years (or such other period as shall from time to time be the maximum period by virtue of statute or otherwise for which the premises may be let for residential use) and pay the income arising from such letting to the local church as an addition to its general funds.

3. The trustees may, if in their discretion they think fit, with the authority of a resolution of the Church Meeting but without any approval of the Synod and without creating any lease or tenancy authorise or permit any other person or persons, Organisation or other body to use temporarily or occasionally or intermittently for any reputable purpose (but only when use under paragraph 1 hereof is not expected to be required) the whole or any part of the premises:

Provided that any such authority or permission may be granted without consideration or for such consideration as the trustees think fit and that any proceeds or income arising from such authority or permission shall be paid to the local church as an addition to its general funds.

4. The trustees shall not, except to the extent of funds supplied to them for that purpose, be responsible for the repair and upkeep of the premises.

5. If the Synod on the recommendation of the District Council made to it after consultation between representatives of that council and the Church Meeting resolves that the use of the premises as aforesaid is or if continued would be no longer useful and that the premises ought to be disposed of the trustees shall sell or let the premises under the direction of the Synod and shall apply the net proceeds of sale or letting in the manner prescribed by paragraph 2.(d) hereof.

6. Any person acquiring from the trustees in good faith and for value an interest in or charge on or security over the premises or part thereof may accept without further inquiry a statement in the document transferring, creating or evidencing such interest or charge or security to the effect that the trustees are acting in exercise of the powers conferred on them by this deed and the interest or charge or security to which such document relates shall not be capable of being impugned on the grounds that it was transferred or created without authority.

7.(1) The power of appointing and removing trustees shall be vested in the Church Meeting to the exclusion of the trustees' statutory power to assume new trustees and shall be exercised by a resolution of the majority of those present and voting at a meeting convened by notice stating the purpose of the meeting given at each service held on the two Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The chairman shall have for this purpose if necessary a casting vote. If there is no Church Meeting in existence to exercise the power of appointing new trustees as aforesaid, the statutory power of assuming new trustees shall be vested in the trustees for the time being.

- (2) No individual person shall be eligible for appointment who is not on the membership roll of some local church (which need not be within the District of the same District Council as the local church).
- (3) Any trustee who ceases to have the qualification last mentioned shall *ipso facto* cease to be a trustee.
- (4) Any trustee who wishes to be discharged from the trust may be discharged therefrom, without any appointment of a new trustee, by such a resolution as is mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph.
- (5) The number of trustees hereof shall so far as practicable be kept up to four.

8. If in the opinion of the Church Meeting evidenced by a resolution passed by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the persons present and (being entitled to vote) voting at a meeting specially convened for the purpose of considering such resolution, any amendment of any of the foregoing provisions with or without any amendment previously made shall be desirable and such resolution (in which the foregoing provisions with any amendment previously made may be referred to as “the statutory scheduled provisions”) shall be sanctioned by the Synod and the General Assembly and a memorandum thereof and of its sanction signed by the Moderator of the General Assembly and dated shall be endorsed on or annexed to the trust deed then as from the date of the said memorandum the foregoing provisions with any previous amendment shall be read as if the amendment or amendments specified in the resolution were embodied therein:

Provided that no amendment shall authorise the use of the premises for any purpose not being charitable and connected with the United Reformed Church nor shall any amendment deprive the trustees of the discretion conferred on them by paragraph 2 hereof in relation to any matter therein mentioned.

Appendix B

The Basis of Union

THE CHURCH AND THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

1. There is but one Church of the one God. He called Israel to be his people, and in fulfilment of the purpose then begun he called the Church into being through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. The one Church of the one God is holy, because he has redeemed and consecrated it through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and because there Christ dwells with his people.
3. The Church is catholic or universal because Christ calls into it all peoples and because it proclaims the fullness of Christ's Gospel to the whole world.
4. The Church is apostolic because Christ continues to entrust it with the Gospel and the commission first given to the apostles to proclaim that Gospel to all peoples.
5. The unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of the Church have been obscured by the failure and weakness which mar the life of the Church.
6. Christ's mercy in continuing his call to the Church in all its failure and weakness has taught the Church that its life must ever be renewed and reformed according to the Scriptures, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
7. The United Reformed Church humbly recognises that the failure and weakness of the Church have in particular been manifested in division which has made it impossible for Christians fully to know, experience and communicate the life of the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church.
8. The United Reformed Church has been formed in obedience to the call to repent of what has been amiss in the past and to be reconciled. It sees its formation and growth as a part of what God is doing to make his people one, and as a united church will take, wherever possible and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people.
9. The United Reformed Church testifies to its faith, and orders its life, according to this Basis of Union, believing it to embody the essential notes of the Church catholic and reformed. The United Reformed Church nevertheless reserves its right and declares its readiness at any time to alter, add to, modify or supersede this Basis so that its life may accord more nearly with the mind of Christ.
10. The United Reformed Church, believing that it is through the freedom of the Spirit that Jesus Christ holds his people in the fellowship of the one Body, shall uphold the rights of personal conviction. It shall be for the church, in safeguarding the substance of the faith and maintaining the unity of the fellowship, to determine when these rights are asserted to the injury of its unity and peace.

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH AND THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

11. Within the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church the United Reformed Church acknowledges its responsibility under God:
- to make its life a continual offering of itself and the world to God in adoration and worship through Jesus Christ;
 - to receive and express the renewing life of the Holy Spirit in each place and in its total fellowship, and there to declare the reconciling and saving power of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ;
 - to live out, in joyful and sacrificial service to all in their various physical and spiritual needs, that ministry of caring, forgiving and healing love which Jesus Christ brought to all whom he met;
 - and to bear witness to Christ's rule over the nations in all the variety of their organised life.

THE FAITH OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

12. The United Reformed Church confesses the faith of the Church catholic in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It acknowledges that the life of faith to which it is called is a gift of the Holy Spirit continually received in Word and Sacrament and in the common life of God's people. It acknowledges the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people.
13. The United Reformed Church believes that, in the ministry of the Word, through preaching and the study of the Scriptures, God makes known in each age his saving love, his will for his people and his purpose for the world.
14. The United Reformed Church observes the gospel sacrament of baptism into Christ as a gift of God to his Church, and as an appointed means of grace. Baptism is administered with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It is the sacrament of entry into the Church and is therefore administered once only to any person.

When the Church observes this sacrament it makes explicit at a particular time and place and for a particular person what God has accomplished in Christ for the whole creation and for all humankind - the forgiveness of sins, the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit and newness of life in the family of God. In this sacrament the Church affirms its faith in the action of God in Jesus Christ; and takes corporate responsibility for those receiving baptism, promising to support and nourish them as it receives them into its fellowship. Baptism may be administered in infancy or at an age of responsibility. Both forms of baptism shall be made available in the life of every worshipping congregation. In either case the sacrament of baptism is a unique part of the total process of Christian initiation. When baptism is administered at an age of responsibility, upon profession of faith, those baptised enter at once upon the full privileges and responsibilities of membership. When baptism is administered to infants, upon profession of faith by their parent(s), they are placed under the nurture of the Church that they may be led by the Holy Spirit in due time to make their own profession of faith in Christ as their Saviour and Lord, and enter upon the full privileges and responsibilities of membership. These two patterns of Christian initiation are recognised by the United Reformed Church.

The profession of faith to be made prior to baptism by a believer or at an age of responsibility by one baptised in infancy is indicated in Schedule A.* This profession, and its acceptance by the church which shares in it, is a necessary part of the process of initiation and whenever possible it should be made at a celebration of the Lord's Supper.

The United Reformed Church includes within its membership both persons whose conviction it is that baptism can only be appropriately administered to a believer and those whose conviction it is that infant baptism also is in harmony with the mind of Christ. Both convictions are honoured by the church and both forms of baptism are understood to be used by God in the upbuilding of faith. Should these differences of conviction within the one church result in personal conflict of conscience it will require to be pastorally reconciled in mutual understanding and charity, and in accordance with the Basis of Union, in the first instance by the elders' meeting of the local congregation, and if necessary by the wider councils of the church. Whether the baptism is of an infant or a believer, whether it is by pouring or immersion, it shall not be such to which a conscientious objection is taken either by the person administering baptism, or by the person seeking it, or by the parent(s) requesting it for an infant.

15. The United Reformed Church celebrates the gospel sacrament of the Lord's Supper. When in obedience to the Lord's command his people show forth his sacrifice on the cross by the bread broken and the wine outpoured for them to eat and drink, he himself, risen and ascended, is present and gives himself to them for their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. United with him and with the whole Church on earth and in heaven, his people gathered at his table present their sacrifice of thanksgiving and renew the offering of themselves, and rejoice in the promise of his coming in glory.
16. The United Reformed Church gives thanks for the common life of the Church, wherein the people of God, being made members one of another, are called to love and serve one another and all people everywhere and to grow together in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Participating in the common life of the Church within the local church, they enter into the life of the Church throughout the world. With that whole Church they also share in the life of the Church in all ages and in the communion of saints have fellowship with the Church triumphant.
17. The United Reformed Church at the date of formation confesses its faith in the words of this statement:-

We believe in the one living and true God, creator, preserver and ruler of all things in heaven and earth, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Him alone we worship, and in him we put our trust.

We believe that God, in his infinite love for men, gave his eternal Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who became man, lived on earth in perfect love and obedience, died upon the cross for our sins, rose again from the dead and lives for evermore, saviour, judge and king

We believe that, by the Holy Spirit, this glorious Gospel is made effective so that through faith we receive the forgiveness of sins, newness of life as children of God and strength in this present world to do his will.

We believe in the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church, in heaven and on earth, wherein by the same Spirit, the whole company of believers is made one Body of Christ, to worship God and serve him and all men in his kingdom of righteousness and love.

We rejoice in the gift of eternal life, and believe that, in the fullness of time, God will renew and gather in one all things in Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

* Admission to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the Church shall be in accordance with paragraphs 2(1) and 2(2)(vi) of the Structure and with Schedule A.

18. The United Reformed Church, under the authority of Holy Scripture and in corporate responsibility to Jesus Christ its everliving head, acknowledges its duty to be open at all times to the leading of the Holy Spirit and therefore affirms its 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 same Spirit.

At the same time the United Reformed Church accepts with thanksgiving the witness borne to the catholic faith by the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. It recognises as its own particular heritage the formulations and declarations of faith which have been valued by Congregationalists, Presbyterians and members of Churches of Christ as stating the Gospel and seeking to make its implications clear*.

At the General Assembly of 1997 the United Reformed Church adopted the following alternative version of the statement in paragraph 17 to be available alongside the 1972 statement:

1. We believe
in the one and only God,
Eternal Trinity,
from whom, through whom and for whom all created things exist.
God alone we worship;
in God we put our trust.
2. We worship God,
source and sustainer of creation,
whom Jesus called Father,
whose sons and daughters we are.
3. We worship God
revealed in Jesus Christ,
the eternal Word of God made flesh;
who lived our human life,
died for sinners on the cross;
who was raised from the dead,
and proclaimed by the apostles, Son of God; who lives eternally,
as saviour and sovereign,
coming in judgement and mercy,
to bring us to eternal life.
4. We worship God,
ever present in the Holy Spirit;
who brings this Gospel to fruition,
assures us of forgiveness,
strengthens us to do God's will,
and makes us sisters and brothers of Jesus,
sons and daughters of God.
5. We believe
in the one, holy catholic and apostolic Church,
united in heaven and on 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.

* e.g. Among Presbyterians: The Westminster Confession, 1647; A Statement of the Christian Faith, 1956.
Among Congregationalists: The Savoy Declaration, 1658; A Declaration of Faith, 1967.
Among Churches of Christ: Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address, 1809.

6. We believe
that, in the fullness of time,
God will renew and gather in one
all things in heaven and on earth through Christ,
and be perfectly honoured and adored.
7. We rejoice in God
who has given us being,
who shares our humanity
to bring us to glory,
our source of prayer and power of praise;
to whom be glory, praise and adoration,
now and evermore.

MINISTRY IN THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

19. The Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry in and through the Church, the whole people of God called and committed to his service and equipped by him for it. This service is given by worship, prayer, proclamation of the Gospel, and Christian witness; by mutual and outgoing care and responsibility; and by obedient discipleship in the whole of daily life, according to the gifts and opportunities given to each one. The preparation and strengthening of its members for such ministry and discipleship shall always be a major concern of the United Reformed Church.
20. For the equipment of his people for this total ministry the Lord Jesus Christ gives particular gifts for particular ministries and calls some of his servants to exercise them in offices duly recognised within his Church. The United Reformed Church recognises that Christ gives himself to his Church through Word and Sacrament and through the total caring oversight by which his people grow in faith and love, the exercise of which oversight is the special concern of elders and ministers. Those who enter on such ministries commit themselves to them for so long as God wills: the United Reformed Church having solemnly acknowledged their vocation and accepted their commitment shall appoint them to their particular ministry and give them authority to exercise it within the church, setting them apart with prayer that they shall be given all needful gifts and graces for its fulfilment, which solemn setting part shall in the case of ministers and elders be termed ordination.
21. Some are called to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. After approved preparation and training, they may be called to be ministers of local churches, or missionaries overseas, or to some special and approved ministry, and are then ordained and inducted to their office. They are commissioned to conduct public worship, to preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, and to give leadership to the church in its mission to the world. Their service may be stipendiary or non-stipendiary, and in the latter case their service is given within the area of a District Council and in a context it has approved.
22. Some are called to be elders. They share with ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the local churches, taking counsel together in the elders' meeting for the whole church and having severally groups of members particularly entrusted to their pastoral care. They shall be associated with ministers in all the councils of the church. Elders elected by the church meeting are ordained to their office and are inducted to serve for such limited period as the church which elects them shall determine. All elders are eligible for re-election, and those elected shall enter upon their office by induction. On moving to another local church an ordained elder is eligible for election by that church to the elders' meeting, and, if so elected, is inducted. The ordination and induction of elders shall be carried out in the course of public worship by a minister of the local church (or, during a pastoral vacancy, by the interim moderator) acting with the serving elders (see Schedule B).

23. All other ministries recognised by the uniting churches at the date of unification (as defined by the United Reformed Church Act 1981) shall continue to be exercised in the United Reformed Church without further commissioning, subject always to the decisions of the General Assembly. The United Reformed Church shall determine from time to time what other ministries may be required and which of them should be recognised as ministries in the whole church. It shall decide how those who are to exercise them shall be set apart.
24. The worship of the local church is an expression of the worship of the whole people of God. In order that this may be clearly seen, the United Reformed Church shall (a) take steps to ensure that so far as possible ordained ministers of the Word and Sacraments are readily available to every local church; (b) provide for the training of suitable men and women, members of the United Reformed Church, to be accredited by district councils as lay preachers; (c) make provision through district councils, in full consultation with the local churches concerned, for the recognition of certain members of the United Reformed Church, normally deaconesses, elders or accredited lay preachers, who may be invited by local churches to preside at baptismal and communion services where pastoral necessity so requires. The pastoral needs of each situation shall be reviewed periodically by the district council in consultation with the local church. Apart from ordained ministers of the United Reformed Church and of other churches, only such recognised persons may be invited.
25. The ordination and induction of ministers shall be in accord with Schedules C and D. Appropriate affirmations of faith shall also be made by those entering upon other ministries within the life of the church. In the United Reformed Church all ministries shall be open to both men and women.

The totality of ministers who fall within any of the categories defined in Schedule E, Paragraph 1 and are in good standing may be referred to as the Roll of Ministers. Ministers shall conduct their ministry according to the criteria set out in Schedule E.

SCHEDULE A (see clause 14 in the Basis of Union)

Affirmation of faith to be made at admission to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the Church

It is the responsibility of the minister and elders' meeting, before bringing the names of candidates to the church meeting, to be assured of the sincerity of their intention. After adequate preparation, and acceptance by the church meeting, candidates shall be publicly admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the Church of Jesus Christ and in particular to the membership of the local church.

This act may include the laying on of hands as a sign of the commissioning of those called by God to the service of Jesus Christ. Acceptance of the candidates, as also their acceptance of their commission, shall be signified by the giving and receiving of the right hand of fellowship.

Thereafter they shall be commended to the love and care of their fellow members. During the act of admission public profession of faith and of commitment to the Church shall be made:

VERSION I

Either:

(a) by question and answer thus:

Q: Do you confess your faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, taking the Father to be your Father, the Son to be your Saviour and Lord, the Spirit to be your helper and guide?

A: **I do.**

Q: Do you promise, in dependence on God's grace, to be faithful in private and public worship, to live in the fellowship of the Church and to share in its work, and to give and serve, as God enables you, for the advancement of his kingdom throughout the world?

A: **I do.**

Q: Do you promise, by that same grace, to follow Christ and to seek to do and to bear his will all the days of your life?

A: **I do.**

Q: And do you trust in his mercy alone to bring you into the fullness of the life of the world to come?

A: **I do.**

VERSION II

Or:

(b) in the form of a declaration such as the following:

I confess my faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
taking the Father to be my Father,
the Son to be my saviour and Lord,
the Spirit to be my helper and guide.

I promise, in dependence on God's grace,
to be faithful in private and public worship,
to live in the fellowship of the Church and to share in its work,
and to give and serve, as God enables me, for the advancement
of his kingdom throughout the world.

I promise, by that same grace, to follow Christ and to seek
to do and to bear his will all the days of my life.

And I trust in his mercy alone to bring me into the fullness of
the life of the world to come.

Or:

(c) in the forms customarily used in the uniting churches before unification.

SCHEDULE B

Affirmations to be made by elders at ordination and induction

NOTE: The service, which takes place at public worship, shall include the reading of the Statement contained in Schedule D and a statement regarding the functions of the elders taken from clauses 19, 20 and 22 in the Basis of Union.

Afterwards the presiding minister shall say to the elders elect:

In the light of this Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church and the statement concerning the functions of the eldership, the elders elect are now asked to answer the following questions:

Q: Do you confess again your faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

A: **I do.**

Q: In dependence on God's grace do you reaffirm your trust in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord and your promise to follow him and to seek to do and to bear his will all the days of your life?

A: **I do.**

Q: Do you believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people?

A: **I do.**

Q: Do you accept the office of elder of the United Reformed Church in this congregation and do you promise to perform its duties faithfully?

A: **I do.**

SCHEDULE C (see clause 21 in the Basis of Union)

Affirmations to be made by ministers at ordination and induction

NOTE: The service will also include the reading of the Statement contained in Schedule D, and provision will be made for a statement to be made concerning the circumstances of the call. Ministers may also make a personal statement about their faith and sense of calling.

After the statement has been read the presiding minister shall then ask one of the following sets of questions:

VERSION I

Either:

1. A.B., Do you confess anew your faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

I do.

2. Do you believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people?

I do.

3. Do you believe that Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, lived our common life on earth, died upon the cross, and who was raised from the dead and reigns for evermore, is the gift of God's very self to the world? Do you believe that through him God's love, justice and mercy are revealed and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life are offered to all people? And will you faithfully proclaim this Gospel?

By the grace of God this I believe and this I will proclaim.

4. Do you believe that the Church is the people gathered by God's love to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God through Jesus Christ?

I do.

5. Are zeal for the glory of God, love for the Lord Jesus Christ, obedience to the Holy Spirit and a desire for the salvation of the world, so far as you know your own heart, the chief motives which lead you to enter this ministry?

They are.

6. Do you promise to live a holy life,
and to maintain the truth of the gospel,
whatever trouble or persecution may arise?

Relying on the strength of Christ, I do.

7. Do you promise to fulfil the duties of your charge* faithfully,
to lead the church in worship,
to preach the Word and Administer the Sacraments,
to exercise pastoral care and oversight,
to take your part in the councils of the Church,
and to give leadership to the Church in its mission to the world?

By the grace of God, I do.

8. Do you promise as a minister of the United Reformed Church to seek its well-being, purity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?

By the grace of God, I do.

9. Will you undertake to exercise your ministry in accordance with the statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church?

I will, and all these things I profess and promise in the power of the Holy Spirit.

VERSION II

Or:

1. A.B., will you confess anew your faith?

I confess anew my faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people.

I believe that Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, lived our common life on earth, died upon the cross, and who was raised from the dead and reigns for evermore, is the gift of God's very self to the world.

I believe that through him God's love, justice and mercy are revealed and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life are offered to all people.

And by the grace of God I promise to proclaim this gospel faithfully.

I believe that the Church is the people gathered by God's love to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God through Jesus Christ.

2. What leads you to this ministry?

So far as I know my own heart, I believe that zeal for the glory of God, love for the Lord Jesus Christ, obedience to the Holy Spirit and a desire for the salvation of the world, are the chief motives which lead me to enter this ministry. Relying on the strength of Christ, I promise to live a holy life, and to maintain the truth of the gospel, whatever trouble or persecution may arise.

3. Will you faithfully fulfil the duties of your charge?*

By the grace of God I promise to lead the Church in worship, to preach the word and administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, to take my part in the councils of the Church, and to give leadership to the Church in mission to the world.

**As a minister of the United Reformed Church
I promise to seek its well-being, purity, and peace,
to cherish love towards all other churches,
and to endeavour always to build up the one holy, catholic
and apostolic Church.**

**I undertake to exercise my ministry in accordance with the
statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the
United Reformed Church.**

All these things I profess and promise in the power of the Holy Spirit.

* The presiding minister (after appropriate consultation) may modify the wording of question 7 or the answer to question 3 to fit the kind of ministry to which the candidate has been called.

SCHEDULE D

A statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church

(One of the following authorised versions to be read aloud at ordination and induction services.)

VERSION I

1. The United Reformed Church confesses the faith of the Church catholic in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. The United Reformed Church acknowledges that the life of faith to which it is called is a gift of the Holy Spirit continually received in Word and Sacrament and in the common life of God's people.
3. The United Reformed Church acknowledges the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people.
4. The United Reformed Church accepts with thanksgiving the witness borne to the catholic faith by the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and recognises as its own particular heritage the formulations and declarations of faith which have been valued by Congregationalists, Presbyterians and members of Churches of Christ as stating the Gospel and seeking to make its implications clear.
5. The United Reformed Church testifies to its faith, and orders its life, according to the Basis of Union, believing it to embody the essential notes of the Church catholic and reformed. The United Reformed Church nevertheless reserves its right and declares its readiness at any time to alter, add to, modify or supersede this Basis so that its life may accord more nearly with the mind of Christ.
6. The United Reformed Church, under the authority of Holy Scripture and in corporate responsibility to Jesus Christ its everliving head, acknowledges its duty to be open at all times to the leading of the Holy Spirit and therefore affirms its 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 same Spirit.
7. The United Reformed Church, believing that it is through the freedom of the Spirit that Jesus Christ holds his people in the fellowship of the one Body, upholds the rights of personal conviction. It shall be for the church, in safeguarding the substance of the faith and maintaining the unity of the fellowship, to determine when these rights are asserted to the injury of its unity and peace.
8. The United Reformed Church declares that the Lord Jesus Christ, the only ruler and head of the Church, has therein appointed a government distinct from civil government and in things spiritual not subordinate thereto, and that civil authorities, being always subject to the rule of God, ought to respect the rights of conscience and of religious belief and to serve God's will of justice and peace for all humankind.
9. The United Reformed Church declares its intention, in fellowship with all the churches, to pray and work for such visible unity of the whole Church as Christ wills and in the way he wills, in order that people and nations may be led more and more to glorify the Father in heaven.

VERSION II

With the whole Christian Church
the United Reformed Church believes in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**The living God, the only God,
ever to be praised.**

The life of faith to which we are called
is the Spirit's gift
continually received
through the Word, the Sacraments
and our Christian life together.

**We acknowledge the gift
and answer the call,
giving thanks for the means of grace.**

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

**We respond to this Word,
whose servants we are
with all God's people
through the years.**

We accept with thanksgiving to God
the witness to the catholic faith
in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.
We acknowledge the declarations
made in our own tradition
by Congregationalists, Presbyterians
and Churches of Christ
in which they stated the faith
and sought to make its implications clear.

**Faith alive and active:
gift of an eternal source,
renewed for every generation.**

We conduct our life together
according to the Basis of Union
in which we give expression to our faith
in forms which we believe contain
the essential elements of the Church's life,
both catholic and reformed;
but we affirm our right and readiness,
if the need arises,
to change the Basis of Union
and to make new statements of faith
in ever new obedience to the Living Christ.

**Our crucified and risen Lord,
who leads us in our faith
and brings it to perfection.**

Held together in the Body of Christ
through the freedom of the Spirit,
we rejoice in the diversity of the Spirit's gifts
and uphold the rights of personal conviction.
For the sake of faith and fellowship
it shall be for the church to decide
where differences of conviction
hurt our unity and peace.

**We commit ourselves
to speak the truth in love
and grow together
in the peace of Christ.**

We believe that
Christ gives his Church a government
distinct from the government of the state.
In things that affect obedience to God
the Church is not subordinate to the state,
but must serve the Lord Jesus Christ,
its only Ruler and Head.
Civil authorities are called
to serve God's will of justice and peace for all humankind,
and to respect the rights of conscience and belief.

**While we ourselves
are servants in the world
as citizens of God's eternal kingdom.**

We affirm our intention
to go on praying and working,
with all our fellow Christians,
for the visible unity of the Church
in the way Christ chooses
so that people and nations
may be led to love and serve God
and praise him more and more for ever.

**Source, Guide, and Goal
of all that is:
to God be eternal glory.**

Amen.

SCHEDULE E

1. The following constitute the categories of ministers comprising the Roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church;
 - (a) Ministers of the former Congregational Church of England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England who became ministers of the United Reformed Church at its formation in 1972.
 - (b) Ministers of the former Re-formed Association of the Churches of Christ who became ministers of the United Reformed Church in 1981.
 - (c) Ministers who have been ordained as ministers of the United Reformed Church and inducted to a local pastorate (or some other post approved by District Council and Synod) after having received a call with the concurrence of the District Council or have been appointed to a post by councils of the Church or are associate members of a District Council.
 - (d) Ministers of other churches who have been granted a Certificate of Eligibility by the General Assembly, or the committee designated by the General Assembly with the responsibility to grant Certificates of Eligibility, and who subsequently transferred to the United Reformed Church upon ordination and/or induction to a local pastorate following a call with the concurrence of the District Council.
 - (e) Ministers of other churches who, with the approval of a District Council and Synod, have been permitted by the General Assembly, or the committee delegated by the General Assembly to act on its behalf, to transfer to the United Reformed Church without receiving a call to a local pastorate or without being appointed to a post approved by District Council or Synod.
2. Ministers must conduct themselves and exercise all aspects of their ministries in a manner which is compatible with the unity and peace of the United Reformed Church and the affirmation made by ministers at ordination and induction (Schedule C) and the Statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D) in accordance with which ministers undertake to exercise their ministry.
3. Acting in due exercise of their functions as contained in the Structure of the United Reformed Church, the councils of the Church have authority in certain circumstances (without prejudice to a minister's conditions under the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration) to suspend a minister which involves a temporary ban on the exercise of ministry by the minister concerned but not his/her removal from the Roll of Ministers.
4. A minister under suspension, whether in pastoral charge or not, shall not present him/herself as a minister and shall not preside at Communion. The minister shall refrain from all activity which may lead others to believe that he/she is 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. Suspension does not remove any of the rights accorded by the process of determining the disciplinary matter which had led to the suspension.
5. A person whose name has been deleted from the Roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church and who remains a member of the United Reformed Church has the privilege and responsibilities of that membership, but not those of a minister of Word and sacraments, and should refrain from all activity which may lead others to believe that he/she is acting as a minister of religion. However, should that person be re-instated to the Roll of Ministers, he/she would, on being called to a pastorate, need to be inducted to that pastorate, but not ordained, since ordination is not repeatable.

The Structure of the United Reformed Church

- 1.(1) Members of the United Reformed Church associated in a locality for worship witness and service shall together comprise a local church. Since the proper functioning of the local church is so fundamental to the life of the United Reformed Church, where there is a number of small congregations in proximity to one another unable separately to provide leadership and resources for the work of the church, such congregations shall consult with the district council to formulate an acceptable scheme for joining together with a single membership, a common church meeting and elders' meeting, representative of all the constituent congregations, and a shared ministry.
- 1.(2) The United Reformed Church shall be divided into provinces and provinces into districts or areas of ecumenical cooperation, each such division comprising the geographical area from time to time assigned to it by the General Assembly or by a synod under Synod Function (ii).
- 1.(3) The oversight of the United Reformed Church shall be the concern both of the local church and wider representative councils. The councils of the United Reformed Church shall be:
 - (a) the church meeting and the elders' meeting of each local church;
 - (b) the council of each district to be known as a district council and of each area of ecumenical cooperation to be known as an area meeting;
 - (c) the synod of each province to be known as a provincial synod;
and
 - (d) the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church.

These four parts of the structure of the United Reformed Church shall have such consultative, legislative and executive functions as are hereinafter respectively assigned to each of them and each shall be recognised by members of the United Reformed Church as possessing such authority, under the Word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, as shall enable it to exercise its functions and thereby to minister in that sphere of the life of the United Reformed Church with which it is concerned.

THE COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCILS OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

- 2.(1) The **Church Meeting** of the local church shall consist of those persons who have been admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the United Reformed Church and whose names are included on the membership roll of such local church. The church meeting may invite other persons who regularly worship with the local church but whose names are not on the membership roll to attend and speak at its meetings on particular occasions but no such person shall have the right to vote. In the church meeting which shall meet at least once a quarter and at which the minister or one of the ministers shall normally preside, the members have opportunity through discussion, responsible decision and care for one another, to strengthen each other's faith and to foster the life, work and mission of the Church.

Functions:

Concerning the outgoing of the Church:

- (i) to further the Church's mission in the locality;
- (ii) to develop local ecumenical relationships;
- (iii) to further the Church's compassionate ministry in the locality and throughout the world;
- (iv) to consider and support the wider work of the Church at home and abroad;
- (v) to consider public questions in relation to the Christian faith;
- (vi) to bring concerns for consideration by the elders' meeting and wider councils of the church.

Concerning the nurture of the fellowship:

- (vii) to call a minister with the concurrence of the district council(s) concerned (see paragraph 2.(3)(ii));
- (viii) to elect elders and officers, determining their number and period of service, and representatives to wider councils;
- (ix) to admit and transfer members, to maintain standards of membership, and to suspend or remove names from the membership roll, always on advice from the elders' meeting;
- (x) to consider, always on advice from the elders' meeting, any application for recognition as a candidate for the ministry and to transmit it, if approved, to the district council;
- (xi) to adopt financial reports;
- (xii) to receive reports and proposals from the elders' meeting, district council, synod and General Assembly and to authorise appropriate action;
- (xiii) on the recommendation of the elders' meeting to make or provide for the making of arrangements for the proper maintenance of buildings and the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the local church.

And generally:

- (xiv) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Church.

2.(2) **The Elders' Meeting** of the local church shall consist of the minister(s) and the elders elected by the church meeting of such local church and shall exercise oversight of the spiritual life of the local church. The elders' meeting shall serve the local church and by its relation to the wider councils of the United Reformed Church represent the whole Church to the local church. The minister, or one of the ministers, or during a pastoral vacancy the interim moderator appointed as hereinafter provided, shall normally preside over the elders' meeting.

Functions:

- (i) to foster in the congregation concern for witness and service to the community, evangelism at home and abroad, Christian education, ecumenical action, local inter-church relations and the wider responsibilities of the whole Church;
- (ii) to see that public worship is regularly offered and the sacraments are duly administered, and generally to promote the welfare of the congregation;
- (iii) to ensure pastoral care of the congregation, in which the minister is joined by elders having particular responsibility for groups of members;
- (iv) to nominate from among its members a church secretary (or secretaries), to be elected by the church meeting, to serve both the church meeting and the elders' meeting;
- (v) to arrange for pulpit supply in a vacancy;
- (vi) to keep the roll of members (see paragraph 2.(1)) and (as an aid to the discharge of the congregation's pastoral and evangelistic responsibility) lists of names of adherents and children attached to the congregation, and in consultation with the church meeting to maintain standards of membership and to advise on the admission of members on profession of faith and by transfer, on the suspension of members, and on the removal of names from the roll;

- (vii) to be responsible for the institution and oversight of work among children and young people and of all organisations within the congregation;
- (viii) to call for the election of elders and advise on the number required;
- (ix) to consider the suitability of any applicant for recognition as a candidate for the ministry and to advise the church meeting about its recommendation to the district council;
- (x) to recommend to the church meeting arrangements for the proper maintenance of buildings and the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the local church;
- (xi) to act on behalf of the church meeting and bring concerns to the wider councils of the United Reformed Church;
- (xii) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Church.

2.(3) **The District Council** of each district being representative of the local churches in that district grouped together for the purpose of fellowship, support, intimate mutual oversight and united action shall consist of:

- (a) All ministers, deaconesses, registered local pastors and church-related community workers engaged directly in the service of the United Reformed Church within that district;
- (b) Such other ministers, deaconesses and local pastors and church related community workers as shall from time to time be appointed by the provincial synod as hereinafter provided;
- (c) Representatives of local churches within the district who shall normally be members of the elders' meeting of a local church and who shall be appointed by the church meeting of such local church, the number of such representatives to be decided by the provincial synod, according to the needs of each district and in consultation with the district councils, provided that the range for each church shall be from one to three;
(where a local church, whether a local ecumenical project or a local church organised according to the second sentence of para 1.(1) comprises two or more congregations worshipping in separate locations, the province synod may, on the advice of the district council, authorise that local church to appoint representatives to the district council from each constituent congregation to such numbers as would be permitted by the above rule if each congregation were a separate local church.)
- (d) The moderator of the provincial synod for the time being;
- (e) Such members of local churches, normally elders, not exceeding twelve (or such other number as the General Assembly may from time to time determine) as may be co-opted by the district council;
- (f) A retired minister, who has been appointed by the district council as an officer of the council, or as an interim moderator, for the period of the appointment shall be a full member of the district council;
- (g) All other ministers who do not fall into any of the categories (a), (b) and (f) above in that or any other district but who are resident in the district who shall be associate members of the council having the right to speak but not to vote at meetings of the council, except moderators of provincial synods, who are members of each district council in the province and responsible to the General Assembly;
- (h) Two young people, being members of the United Reformed Church, nominated by the district youth forum, committee or equivalent;
- (i) Representatives, not exceeding the number approved by the General Assembly, of other denominations in the district as the council may from time to time determine.

The district council shall elect from among its members a president, (who shall perform the functions defined as applicable to the chairman in the United Reformed Church Acts 1972 and 1981) secretary and treasurer and such other officers as the council shall from time to time think desirable and shall determine their periods of service. It may also appoint such committees and for such purposes as it from time to time may think desirable and may appoint to any such committee any members of the United Reformed Church notwithstanding that they are not members of the council.

The United Reformed Church membership of the area meeting in each Area of Ecumenical Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as the United Reformed Church Committee) shall consist of the provincial moderator, all ministers and deaconesses engaged directly in the service of the United Reformed Church within the Area, representatives of local churches within the Area, and such other persons as determined by the constitution of each area meeting as approved by resolution of the provincial synod.

Functions:

(A) The District Council is responsible for exercising the following Functions (subject to the restriction referred to in Paragraph (B) below):

- (i) to exercise oversight of all ministers falling within any of the categories 2.(3)(a), (b), (f) and (g) except moderators of provincial synods who are members of each district council in the province and are responsible to the General Assembly;
- (ii) to give (or, where deep pastoral concern for the church requires it, to withhold) concurrence in calls to ministers and, with the moderator of the synod or the moderator's deputy presiding, to conduct, in fellowship with the local church, any ordinations and/or inductions of ministers within the district;
- (iii) to appoint, or to concur in the appointment of, non-stipendiary ministers to their particular service and to review this service at stated intervals;
- (iv) to appoint, in consultation with the local church and the moderator of the synod, from among its members an interim moderator during a pastoral vacancy, such interim moderator normally being a serving minister or a retired minister. In exceptional circumstances an elder may be appointed;
- (v) to care for all the churches of the district council, and to visit them by deputies at regular intervals for consultation concerning their life and work;
- (vi) to consider on the recommendation of local churches applications for recognition as candidates for the ministry and to transmit them, if approved, to the synod for decision;
- (vii) to accredit lay preachers and, in consultation with the local churches concerned and the moderator of the synod, to give authority for appropriate lay persons to preside at the sacraments;
- (viii) to consider resignations of ministers and, in consultation with the moderator of the synod, to decide upon appropriate action (see also paragraphs 2.(4)(viii) and 2.(5)(xviii));
- (ix) 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;
- (x) to engage in study concerning the Church's mission in the region and to encourage in the local churches concern for youth work and social service and a sense of responsibility for the wider work of the Church at home and abroad;
- (xi) to promote church extension within the area and to submit proposals to the synod for the establishing of new causes and the recognition of mission projects;
- (xii) to make recommendations to the synod in consultation with the churches concerned and to act on behalf of the synod in consultation with the moderator on all matters regarding the grouping, amalgamation or dissolution of local churches;
- (xiii) to make recommendations to the synod in consultation with the churches concerned and to act on behalf of the synod on all matters regarding erection, major reconstruction or disposal of buildings;
- (xiv) to provide a forum for concerns brought forward by local churches and to advise thereon;
- (xv) to hear and make decisions upon appeals brought forward by local churches and church members;
- (xvi) to take appropriate action on matters referred to the council by the synod or General Assembly, and to initiate or transmit proposals for consideration by those bodies;
- (xvii) to maintain contact with ecumenical and missionary work in the area;
- (xviii) where following initial enquiry the District Council considers that a minister is not or may not be exercising his/her ministry in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union, to refer the case of that minister to be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church and in every such case to suspend the minister concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Process;

- (xix) to make recommendations to the synod for appointment to service on district council of:
- (I) United Reformed Church ministers/lay people serving as (a) full-time chaplains to universities, colleges, hospitals, factories, where their work is seen to be an extension of the ministry of the district concerned, (b) secretaries and other full-time officials of ecumenical bodies with which the United Reformed Church is in relationship;
 - (II) United Reformed Church ministers giving significant oversight to local churches, under the general direction of the council concerned;
 - (III) Ministers of other churches appointed to serve on behalf of the United Reformed Church in charge of a United Reformed Church or in an ecumenical group including United Reformed Church interests;
 - (IV) Ministers not in pastoral charge who perform duties within the district in respect of which the council has some direct responsibility;
- (xx) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the church.

(B) Once the case of any minister has been referred to the Assembly Commission, the District Council shall not exercise its Functions in respect of that minister (save only in the provision of such pastoral care as may be appropriate) until the decision of the Assembly Commission (or on any appeal therefrom) has been made.

(C) No Appeal shall lie against a decision by the District Council to refer any case to the Assembly Commission under Function (xviii) above.

(D) All the Functions set out in Paragraph (A) above describe also the functions of area meetings, always understanding that such functions as relate solely to the work of the United Reformed Church may be discharged by the United Reformed Church Committee of each area meeting. In this statement of the Structure of the United Reformed Church wherever the words 'district council' occur they shall be read as meaning 'area meeting' in respect of those places where an area meeting has been duly established.

2.(4) **The Provincial Synod** of each province being representative of the local churches and district councils in that province united for the purpose of dealing with matters of wider concern shall consist of:

- (a) All ministers, deaconesses, registered local pastors and church related community workers who are for the time being members of district councils within the province;
- (b) All missionaries of the United Reformed Church for the time being on furlough and for the time being resident within the province;
- (c) Representatives of local churches within the province who shall normally be members of the elders' meeting of a local church and who shall be appointed by the church meeting of such local church, the number of such representatives to be: 1-200 members, one representative; over 200 members 2 representatives;
(where a local church, whether a local ecumenical project or a local church organised according to the second sentence of para 1.(1), comprises two or more congregations worshipping in separate locations, the province synod may, on the advice of the district council, authorise that local church to appoint representatives to the district council from each constituent congregation to such numbers as would be permitted by the above rule if each congregation were a separate local church.)
- (d) The president, secretary and treasurer, for the time being, of each district council within the province;
- (e) Such members of local churches, normally elders, not exceeding twelve (or such other number as the General Assembly may from time to time determine) as may be co-opted by the synod;
- (f) Such members as shall from time to time be appointed by the General Assembly;
- (g) Such retired ministers who have been appointed by the synod as officers of the synod, for the period of their appointment;
- (h) All retired ministers not covered by clause 2.(4)(g) residing within the province, who shall be associate members of the synod having the right to speak but not to vote at meetings of the synod;

- (i) Two young people, being members of the United Reformed Church, nominated by the provincial youth forum, committee or equivalent;
- (j) Representatives, not exceeding the number approved by the General Assembly, of other denominations in the province as the synod may from time to time determine.

The provincial synod shall elect from among its members a clerk, a treasurer and such other officers as the synod shall from time to time think desirable and shall determine their periods of service. It may also appoint such committees and for such purposes as it from time to time may think desirable and may appoint to any such committee any members of the United Reformed Church notwithstanding that they are not members of the synod.

Moderators of synods 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.

The moderator shall:

- be separated from any local pastoral charge,
- stimulate and encourage the work of the United Reformed Church within the province,
- preside over the meetings of the synod and exercise a pastoral office towards the ministers and churches within the province,
- suggest names of ministers to vacant pastorates, in consultation with interim moderators of local churches,
- preside, or appoint a deputy to preside, at all ordinations and/or inductions of ministers within the province,
- participate with each district council in the province, being a member of each such council, in the discharge of its responsibilities and in particular in the oversight of local churches and ministers.

The moderators of the provincial synods shall meet together at regular intervals for the better discharge of their duties.

Functions of synod:

(A) The Provincial Synod is responsible for exercising the following Functions (subject to the restriction referred to in Paragraph (B) below):

- (i) to take such action as it deems conducive to the propagation of the Gospel at home and abroad, the welfare of the United Reformed Church, the interests of the Church of Christ as a whole, and the well-being of the community in which the Church is placed;
- (ii) to have oversight of the district councils and in consultation with the district councils and local churches concerned to determine the boundaries and number of district councils within the province. All such changes shall be reported to the General Assembly;
- (iii) to promote church extension within the province and decide upon proposals submitted by district councils for the establishment of new causes and the recognition of mission projects;
- (iv) to receive and decide upon recommendations from the district councils on all matters regarding the grouping, amalgamation or dissolution of local churches and the erection, major reconstruction or disposal of buildings;
- (v) to receive and decide upon applications for recognition as candidates for the ministry, which have been previously considered and transmitted by district councils;
- (vi) to give oversight to candidates for the ministry and to candidates for any form of full-time service in the Church at home and abroad, and, in the case of candidates for the ministry, determine their eligibility for a call;
- (vii) to receive and forward with a recommendation through the moderator of the synod to the General Assembly applications for admission into the United Reformed Church from ministers, probationers or congregations;

- (viii) to consider questions regarding inclusion on the Roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church and make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly (but excluding consideration of any matter which is being dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Process referred to in Function (xv) below);
- (ix) to deal with reports of committees of the General Assembly;
- (x) to examine matters sent to it from district councils or the General Assembly;
- (xi) to make proposals to and raise concerns for consideration by the General Assembly;
- (xii) to foster ecumenical relations and action;
- (xiii) to receive and decide upon references and appeals duly submitted;
- (xiv) to appoint at its discretion ministers, deaconesses, local pastors and church related community workers, not already members of a district council, to serve on district councils;
- (xv) In the absence of any reference to the Assembly Commission by the appropriate District Council and where following initial enquiry either on its own initiative or on a reference or appeal brought by any other party the Provincial Synod considers that a Minister is not or may not be exercising his/her ministry in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union, to refer the case of that Minister to be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church and in every such case to suspend the Minister concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Process;
- (xvi) to appoint at its discretion additional members to serve on district councils in accordance with recommendations made by such councils under the provisions of paragraph 2.(3)(xix) above;
- (xvii) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the church.

(B) Once the case of any minister has been referred to the Assembly Commission, the provincial synod shall not exercise its Functions in respect of that minister (save only in the provision of such pastoral care as may be appropriate) until the decision of the Assembly Commission (or on any appeal therefrom) has been made.

(C) No Appeal shall lie against a decision by the provincial synod to refer any case to the Assembly Commission under Function (xv) above.

2.(5) **The General Assembly** which shall embody the unity of the United Reformed Church and act as the central organ of its life and the final authority, under the Word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, in all matters of doctrine and order and in all other concerns of its common life shall consist of:

- (a) Such number of representatives of district councils (ministerial and lay in equal numbers) as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine (at present one representative per eight churches or part thereof plus one per 800 church members or part thereof, with an adjustment to add one in the case of each district if necessary to secure an even number of representatives);
- (b) The moderators of the General Assembly and of the provincial synods and such other officers of the General Assembly and of the provincial synods as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine (The Assembly has determined that Clerks of Provincial Synods, Treasurers of Synods, the Clerk of Assembly, the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary and the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee shall be members of Assembly);
- (c) The convener of each of the departments and standing committees of the General Assembly;
- (d) A staff representative and a student representative, being members of the United Reformed Church, from each of such recognised theological colleges as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine;
- (e) Up to twelve missionaries of the United Reformed Church on furlough or such other number as the Assembly shall from time to time determine;
- (f) Such other ministers and elders of the United Reformed Church as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine (the Assembly has added to its membership one serving United Reformed Church chaplain to the forces, nominated each year by the Organising Secretary of the United Board, in consultation with the three Principal Chaplains, and three representatives from each provincial synod);

- (g) All former moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church and all past chairmen of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, all past presidents of the Congregational Church, all former moderators of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, all former chairmen and presidents of the Annual Conference of the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, and all former presidents of the Annual Conference of the Reformed Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, provided that such former officers are members of the United Reformed Church;
- (h) Such number of representatives of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth, being members of the United Reformed Church, as the Assembly shall from time to time determine (at present two);
- (i) Representatives, not exceeding the number approved by the General Assembly, of other denominations in the United Kingdom as the Assembly on the advice of the Mission Council may from time to time determine;
- (j) A representative of the Council for World Mission.

In making its determination from time to time as to the number of members to be comprised in each of the categories (a) to (f) above, the General Assembly shall ensure that:

- (i) the total number of members to be drawn from all these categories shall not exceed 750, and
- (ii) the number of those in categories (b) to (f) shall not in total exceed one half of those in category (a).

The General Assembly shall elect a moderator and such other officers as it shall from time to time think desirable. (The Assembly has appointed the following to serve as officers with the moderator: the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Clerk of Assembly and the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee.) It shall also appoint a Mission Council with power to act in its name in matters of urgency between meetings of the General Assembly and to discharge such other functions as the General Assembly may from time to time direct. The General Assembly shall also appoint department or standing committees which subject to the General Assembly shall have charge of the continuing interests of the church. It may also appoint special committees which subject to the General Assembly shall have charge of such matters as the General Assembly may assign to them from time to time. The General Assembly may appoint to any such department or committee members of the United Reformed Church who are not members of the General Assembly.

Functions:

(A) General Assembly is responsible for exercising the following Functions (subject to the restriction referred to in Paragraph (B) below):

- (i) to oversee the total work of the church;
- (ii) to make decisions on reports and recommendations from its own departments and committees, issue such directions and take such actions as it deems conducive to the propagation of the gospel, the welfare of the United Reformed Church, the interests of the Church of Christ as a whole and the well-being of the community in which the Church is placed;
- (iii) to conduct and foster the ecumenical relationships of the United Reformed Church;
- (iv) to support and share in the missionary work of the Church at home and abroad;
- (v) to determine the standards and scope of an adequate ministerial education and training;
- (vi) to make regulations respecting theological colleges belonging to the United Reformed Church, to appoint the principal, professors and other members of the teaching staff, Board of Studies, and bursar, and to superintend their work;
- (vii) to recognise theological colleges previously recognised by the Congregational Church in England and Wales and such other colleges in such manner and for such purposes as the General Assembly may determine;
- (viii) to appoint moderators of synods;
- (ix) to remit questions concerning the witness and judgement of the church for general discussion in church meetings, elders' meetings, district councils and synods, and to call for reports from these councils;

- (x) to interpret all forms and expressions of the polity practice and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church including the Basis and the Structure and to determine when rights of personal conviction are asserted to the injury of the unity and peace of the United Reformed Church;
- (xi) to alter, add to, modify or supersede the Basis, Structure and any other form or expression of the polity and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church and Part 1 of the Statement of the Ministerial Disciplinary Process referred to in Function (xxiii) below;
- (xii) to make, alter or rescind rules for the conduct of its own proceedings and of those of other councils and commissions of the United Reformed Church and such other rules, bye-laws and standing orders as the General Assembly may from time to time think desirable for the performance of its functions and the carrying into effect of any of the provisions contained in the Basis and the Structure and for the conduct of the business and affairs of the General Assembly and of the other councils and commissions of the United Reformed Church;
- (xiii) to appoint at its discretion additional members to serve on synods;
- (xiv) to make such alterations in the boundaries and groupings of districts and provinces and to establish such new districts and provinces as the General Assembly may from time to time think desirable;
- (xv) to consider and decide upon references and appeals duly submitted;
- (xvi) to make, alter or rescind rules of procedure for the submission and conduct of references and appeals to and by the councils of the United Reformed Church;
- (xvii) to receive and decide upon applications for admission into the United Reformed Church from ministers, probationers and congregations, transmitted by synods through their moderators;
- (xviii) to decide upon questions regarding the inclusion on the Roll of ministers of the United Reformed Church which have been previously considered and transmitted with recommendations by provincial synods (but excluding any matter which is being dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Process referred to in Function (xxiii) below);
- (xix) to provide for the raising of funds for the work of the United Reformed Church and to determine arrangements for payment of stipends and expenses to ministers and officers of the United Reformed Church and for such other financial matters as the General Assembly may from time to time think desirable;
- (xx) to consider and decide upon issues and representations duly transmitted by other councils of the United Reformed Church;
- (xxi) to make and (if necessary) to terminate all appointments to the Commission Panel and to any administrative office under the Process for Ministerial Discipline contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church and to exercise general oversight and supervision of the operation of that Process (save only that decisions in individual cases taken in accordance with that Process are made in the name of the General Assembly and are final and binding);
- (xxii) to provide for the setting up of an Appeals Commission in accordance with Paragraph 12 of Section O, Part 1 of the Manual for any appeal brought under Paragraph 11 of Section O, Part 1 of the Manual;
- (xxiii) In the absence of any reference to the Assembly Commission by the appropriate district council or provincial synod (the case of any minister who is a provincial moderator being necessarily dealt with under this provision) and where following initial enquiry either on its own initiative or on a reference or appeal brought by any other party the General Assembly (or the Mission Council acting on its behalf) considers that a minister is not or may not be exercising his/her ministry in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union, to refer the case of that minister to be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church and in every such case to suspend the minister concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Process;
- (xxiv) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the church.

(B) Once the case of any minister has been referred to the Assembly Commission, the General Assembly shall not exercise its Functions in respect of that minister (save only in the provision of such pastoral care as may be appropriate) until the decision of the Assembly Commission (or on any appeal therefrom) has been made.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

3.(1) No exercise by the General Assembly of the function of constitutional amendment contained in 2.(5)(xi) shall have effect unless the following procedure has been followed:

- (a) The proposal for the amendment shall be made in accordance with the Standing Orders of the General Assembly.
- (b) The General Assembly shall vote on a motion to approve the proposal which shall require a majority of two-thirds of the members present and voting to pass.
- (c) The General Assembly shall, if such motion to approve the proposal is passed, refer the proposal to provincial synods and may, if it deems appropriate, refer the proposal also to district councils and in exceptional cases also to local churches.
- (d) The General Assembly shall in making any such reference set a final date for responses to be made, which shall normally be at an appropriate time before the next annual Assembly.
- (e) If by such date notice has been received by the General Secretary from more than one third of provincial synods (or, if it has been so referred, more than one third of district councils or more than one third of local churches) that a motion 'that the proposal be not proceeded with' has been passed by a majority of members present and voting at a duly convened meeting of such body, then the Assembly in its concern for the unity of the church shall not proceed to ratify the proposal.
- (f) If by such date such notice has not been received, the General Assembly shall at its next meeting vote on a motion to agree the amendment which shall require a simple majority of the members present and voting to pass.
- (g) If such a motion is passed by such a majority the amendment shall have effect.

3.(2) In the case of motions which would have the effect of terminating the separate existence of the United Reformed Church, or of a province within it, by union with other churches, the voting process to be used shall be not less stringent than in 3.(1) and that process shall be determined by a single vote of the General Assembly which shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting to pass.

CONSULTATION

4. Decisions on the part of any council shall be reached only after the fullest attempt has been made to discover the mind of the other councils or of local churches likely to be affected by the decision.

5. APPEALS

5.(1) No right of Appeal shall lie against the decision of any council of the Church (acting with due authority in the matter) to refer any case to the Assembly Commission, and once such reference has been made that case shall be resolved in accordance with Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church and not under Paragraph 5.(2) below.

Any decision reached in accordance with the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church has the status of a decision of the General Assembly and is final and binding.

5.(2) The procedure for dealing with reference and appeals falling outside paragraph 5.(1) is as follows:

A local church or any member thereof or elders' meeting may appeal to the district council upon which the local church is entitled to be represented for the resolution of any dispute or difference and may appeal from any decision of such district council to the provincial synod on which it is entitled to be represented and from any decision of such provincial synod to the General Assembly.

A district council may refer any dispute or difference, whether or not the same shall have come before it on appeal, to the provincial synod on which it is entitled to be represented and may appeal from any decision of the provincial synod by which it is affected, whether or not made on such a reference, to the General Assembly.

A provincial synod may refer any dispute or difference, whether or not the same shall have come before it on a reference or appeal, to the General Assembly.

The decision of the General Assembly on any matter which has come before it on reference or appeal shall be final and binding.

Note The procedure for appeals appears in of the Rules of Procedure for the conduct of the United Reformed Church.

Appendix C

Amendments proposed to the Basis and Structure of the United Reformed Church (UK)

THE BASIS OF UNION

- Paragraph 18
Footnote Delete present footnote and insert as follows:
*e.g. Among Presbyterians: The Westminster Confession, 1647;
A Statement of the Christian Faith, 1956.
Among Congregationalists:
in England and Wales: The Savoy Declaration, 1658; a Declaration of Faith, 1967;
in Scotland: A Statement of Faith, 1949.
Among Churches of Christ: Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address, 1809.
- Paragraph 21 In the last sentence insert "or area" after "district", and add * at the end.
- Paragraph 21
Footnote Insert new footnote as follows:
Those persons who, at the time of unification serve as Registered Pastors and are so recognised by the Congregational Union of Scotland, may continue in that service under the same conditions. Such persons shall be authorised by an area council to preside at the sacraments and to serve as members of that area council. They may seek further training with a view to applying for recognition as ministers.
- Paragraph 22 Add at the end "*".
- Paragraph 22
Footnote Insert new footnote as follows:
* Within the Synod of Scotland those office bearers who fulfil the functions of the United Reformed Church eldership will be called elders, or by local church meeting decision, may retain their existing titles. Such persons will be recognised as elders for all purposes by the wider councils of the Church.
- Paragraph 23 *The reference to the Act of Parliament will need to be updated but we do not yet have a name for the new Act.*
- Paragraph 24 In (b) (c) and the penultimate sentence insert "or area" after "district" in each case.
- Schedule E1 Insert new sub-paragraph (c) as follows, and re-number remaining sub-paragraphs (d) to (f):
(c) Ministers of the former Congregational Union of Scotland who became ministers of the United Reformed Church in 1999.

(d) Insert "or area" after "district" in each of three cases, and delete "Councils" and insert "councils".

(e) Insert "or area" after "district".

(f) Insert "or area" after "district" in each of two cases.

THE STRUCTURE

- Paragraph 1.(2) Delete present paragraph and replace with:
Paragraph 1.(2)(a) The United Reformed Church in England shall be divided into provinces, each having a synod. In Wales and in Scotland, in recognition of the different status of these nations there shall in each case be a single synod to be known as a national synod. In England and Wales each synod shall be divided into districts or areas of ecumenical co-operation; in Scotland the synod shall be divided into areas or areas of ecumenical co-operation. Each such division shall comprise the geographical area from time to time assigned to it by the General Assembly or by a synod under Synod Function (ii).
- Paragraph 1.(2)(b) Insert new paragraph as follows:
Throughout this statement of the Structure of the United Reformed Church references to district councils shall be understood to include area councils in Scotland, such area councils being in every respect identical with district councils and wherever the words 'district council' or 'district' appear they shall be read as meaning 'area council' or 'area' in respect of Scotland. References to 'Provincial Moderators' shall be read as meaning 'Moderators of Synods' in respect of Scotland and Wales.
- Paragraph 1.(3)(c) Delete and insert:
the synod of province or nation to be known as a provincial or national synod; and
- Paragraph 2.(3)(a) After "deaconesses," insert "registered pastors (in Scotland)".
- Paragraph 2.(3)(b) Delete present wording and replace with:
"Such other ministers, deaconesses, registered pastors (in Scotland), registered local pastors and church related community workers as shall from time to time be appointed by the synod as hereinafter provided."
- Paragraph 2.(3)(c) Delete "provincial" in the first sentence;
In the sentence in brackets, delete "project" and insert "partnership";
Delete "Province".
- Paragraph 2.(3)(d) Delete "provincial".
- Paragraph 2.(3)(g) Delete and insert:
All other ministers who do not fall into any of the categories (a), (b) and (f) above in that or any other district but who are resident in the district who shall be associate members of the council having the right to speak but not to vote at meetings of the council, except moderators of synods, who are members of each district council in the province or nation served by that synod and responsible to the General Assembly.
- Paragraph following 2.(3)(a) to (i) *The reference to the Acts of Parliament will need to be updated.*

Paragraph before Functions	Delete and insert: The United Reformed Church membership of the area meeting in each area of ecumenical co-operation (hereinafter referred to as the United Reformed Church Committee) shall consist of the moderator of synod, all ministers, deaconesses and registered pastors (in Scotland) engaged directly in the service of the United Reformed Church within the area, representatives of local churches within the area, and such other persons as determined by the constitution of each area meeting as approved by resolution of the synod.
Paragraph 2.(3)(i)	Delete “provincial” and after “province” insert “or nation”.
Paragraph 2.(4)	Delete first sentence and insert: The Synod being representative of the local churches and district councils in that province or nation united for the purpose of dealing with matters of wider concern shall consist of:”
Paragraph 2.(4)(a)	Delete and insert: All ministers, deaconesses, registered pastors (in Scotland), registered local pastors and church related community workers who are for the time being members of district councils within the province or nation.
Paragraph 2.(4)(b)	Add at the end: “or nation”.
Paragraph 2.(4)(c)	In the first sentence after “province” add “or nation”. Delete the sentence in brackets and insert: (where a local church, whether a local ecumenical partnership or a local church organised according to the second sentence of paragraph 1.(1), comprises two or more congregations worshipping in separate locations, the synod may, on the advice of the district council, authorise that local church to appoint representatives to the synod from each constituent congregation to such numbers as would be permitted by the above rule if each congregation were a separate local church.)
Paragraph 2.(4)(d)	Add at the end: “or nation”.
Paragraph 2.(4)(h)	After “province” add “or nation”.
Paragraph 2.(4)(i)	Delete “provincial”, insert “synod’s”.
Paragraph 2.(4)(j)	Delete “in the province”.
Paragraph following 2.(4)(a)to(j)	Delete “provincial”; delete “as the synod shall” and insert “as it shall”.
Paragraph headed Moderators of Synods	Delete “provincial”
Paragraph dealing with duties of moderators	In the second, third, fifth and sixth items after “province” add “or nation” in each case. In the final sentence, delete “the provincial”.
Paragraph 2.(4)(A)	Delete “Provincial”.

- Paragraph 2.(4)(ii) After “province” add “or nation”.
- Paragraph 2.(4)(iii) After “province” add “or nation”.
- Paragraph 2.(4)(xii) Add after “action”, “and in Scotland and Wales to undertake responsibility for national ecumenical relationships on behalf of the whole United Reformed Church, subject to the final authority of the General Assembly.”
- Paragraph 2.(4)(xiv) Delete “local pastors” and insert:
“registered pastors (in Scotland), registered local pastors”
- Paragraph 2.(4)(xv) Delete “Provincial”.
- Paragraph 2.(4)(B) Delete “Provincial”.
- Paragraph 2.(4)(C) Delete “Provincial”.
- Paragraph 2.(5)(b) Delete “provincial” in each of two cases;
Delete “Provincial”.
- Paragraph 2.(5)(f) Delete the sentence in brackets and insert:
(The Assembly has added to its membership one serving United Reformed Church chaplain to the forces, nominated each year by the Organising Secretary of the United Board, in consultation with the three Principal Chaplains, nine representatives of the Synod of Scotland and three representatives from each other synod).
- Paragraph 2.(5)(g) After “the Congregational Church” add “in England and Wales”.
- Paragraph 2.(5)(vii) After ‘Wales’ add ‘or the Congregational Union of Scotland’.
- Paragraph 2.(5)(xiv) Delete “provinces” and replace with “synods” in each of two cases.
- Paragraph 2.(5)(xviii) Delete “Provincial”.
- Paragraph 2.(5)(xxiii) Delete “Provincial”;
Delete “provincial moderator” and insert “moderator of synod”.

Constitutional Amendments

- Paragraph 3.(1)(c) Delete “provincial”.
- Paragraph 3.(1)(c) Delete “provincial”.
- Paragraph 3.(2) Delete “province” and insert “synod”;
Add at the end:
In the case of a proposed union affecting only Scotland or Wales no action will be taken by the General Assembly until a decision in favour of union has been taken by the relevant synod.

Appeals

- Paragraphs 5.(2) In each of five cases replace “provincial synod” with “synod”.

The following amendment to the Basis was approved by the United Reformed Church (UK) General Assembly in 1997 and is expected to come before the General Assembly in 1998 for ratification. Details are included here for information; this change is not part of these proposals and will be voted on separately by the United Reformed Church (UK) General Assembly.

Add the following words as a footnote to paragraph 24 of the Basis of Union:

The provisions of paragraph 24 are intended to establish the principle that worship should be led by representative persons recognised by the wider church as well as by the local church. The provisions do not prevent the congregation assembled for a baptismal or communion service from themselves appointing, as a church meeting, a suitable person to preside at the celebration of the sacrament in a case of emergency, for example if the expected president is taken ill or held up in travel. The provisions do not require such action rather than a postponement of the baptismal or communion service if that seems preferable.

There are a number of other changes which will be proposed at the United Reformed Church (UK) General Assembly in 1998. These do not affect these proposals and have not been included. These minor matters have been seen and noted by the Joint Negotiating Group. Copies are available from the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church (UK).

Appendix D

Women's Union

Scottish Congregational Church

The Women's Union was inaugurated on 27th April 1893 by a small group of minister's wives who felt there should be a Union of Christian Women to which each church would be affiliated and which would be a means of communication between the churches. The vision of the women that day founded "The Women's Christian Union in the Spirit of Fellowship, Prayer and Service". *Fellowship Prayer and Service* has remained as our motto. Since 1912 The Women's Union of the Congregational Churches Scotland has been our title.

The Women's Union have a National Committee:

President - elected biannually

Secretary and Treasurer - eligible for re-election each year.

One representative - from each area to serve three years.

The Committee meets twice yearly to discuss WU business and make arrangements for the Annual Business and Public meetings held during the Assembly. Reports are given from representatives on various Committees, e.g.,

- a) World Day of Prayer
- b) ACTS
- c) Women's National Commission
- d) NEWS (Net-work of Ecumenical Women Scotland)
- e) Project 2000

A Minute of each meeting is sent to each Area Secretary. Once a year each branch receives an annual report and balance sheet.

There are 9 Area Committees with a President Secretary, Treasurer and three delegates from each branch. Areas are encouraged to have spring and autumn rallies to enable the ladies to get to know each other and form bonds of fellowship. Since the inauguration of the Scottish Congregational Church, the WU is represented on the Education, Mission, Pastoral and General Committees.

Women's Union Badge

Designed by the late Margaret Calder in 1955. To date over 20,000 have been sold. A small oak plaque with the WU Badge and inscription is given to each retiring President as a token of thanks for her services.

Syllabus Cards

Cards with an annual "theme" are offered for monthly use in our branches.

Bible Study Conference

In 1963 the WU felt there was a need to come together in this way. Each year about 40 ladies gather together for fellowship and study at Scottish Churches House, Dunblane. Over the past five years we have been joined by our friends from the URC.

Projects

Annual projects began 28 years ago when Longyester School was bought for the Youth of our Churches, and the WU were asked to contribute. Since then many causes have benefited: e.g., Holidays for Single Parent Families; Holidays for Deprived Children; Hospices; HIV/AIDS Carers Group; and many more. To date over £50,000 has been raised.

Currently there are 63 branches affiliated to the WU The affiliation fee (£10.00 minimum) is used for administration purposes, and to make donations to CWM, Feed the Minds and the Ministers Central Pension Fund.

Appendix E

Youth Work in the URCEUK and SCE

The present URCEUK Youth policy and practice encourages synods to develop their own strategies for youth work.

FURY (Fellowship of United Reformed Youth) is a fellowship which is open to all young people between the ages of 11-25 who attend church, belong to a uniformed youth organisation, youth fellowship or engage in other youth activities.

FURY Council is the young people's decision making body and organises FURY Assembly, which generates the agenda for their year's work, focusing on issues concerning young people. There are representatives from the Scouts, Guides, Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade on the FURY. Through FURY Council representatives are sent to the Joint Churches Youth Service and the British Youth Council. The latter is an umbrella organisation for all youth organisations which provides a useful forum for youth issues.

The National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings, Northamptonshire, was established in 1992. It is a 40-bed residential centre, providing a base for training programmes, retreats and conferences. Youth participation in the United Reformed Church (UK) is supported nationally by the Secretary for Youth Work, and regionally by Youth and Children's Work Trainers.

At the present time a Review of the work of FURY is being undertaken by a Group set up by the Youth and Children's Work Committee, and this is expected to bring recommendations to the 1998 General Assembly.

At the inauguration of the Scottish Congregational Church the following provision for youth work was made:

- 1) Responsibility for organising youth events was given to the National Mission Committee.
- 2) A database was set up containing the names of young people up to the age of thirty who wished to receive information about youth events within the denomination and beyond.
- 3) Young people were given representative places on Area councils and on the four National Committees.
- 4) The Sannox Christian Centre continued as a residential centre for youth groups.
- 5) In addition to the above, young people have continued to represent the SCC on Youth Action (the youth structure of ACTS) and have played a role in the Youth in Mission Programme of CWM at regional and world levels.

Appendix F

The Joint Negotiating Group

The Group met residentially for two days on four occasions in 1997 and twice in 1998. In addition a day meeting was held in 1998. The members were joined at one meeting by the Honorary Treasurer and at another by the Moderator of the Synod of Wales of the United Reformed Church (UK).

Members

Revd John W Dyce
Revd John Arthur
Revd Dr John W S Clark
Dr James Merrilees
Mrs Sheena Paul
Revd John A Young

Co-Convenor
Co-Secretary

Revd Dr Stephen Orchard
Revd Anthony G Burnham
Revd G Mary Barr
Revd James A Breslin
Miss Felicity Harris

Observers

Revd Maxwell Craig

General Secretary of, and representing, Action of Churches Together in Scotland

Revd Sheilagh Kesting

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations in the Church of Scotland, representing the Scottish Church Initiative for Union