



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

York 2001

July 16th - 19th

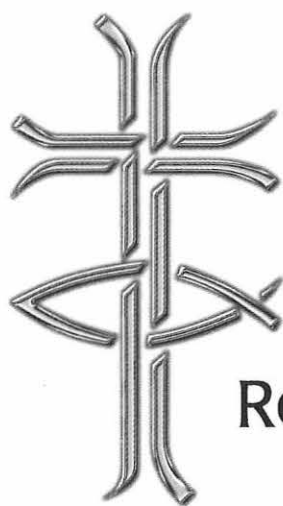
Annual Reports,
Resolutions
and Papers



The
United
Reformed
Church

General Assembly 2001

July 16th - 19th York



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

**Annual Reports,
Resolutions & Papers**

Contents

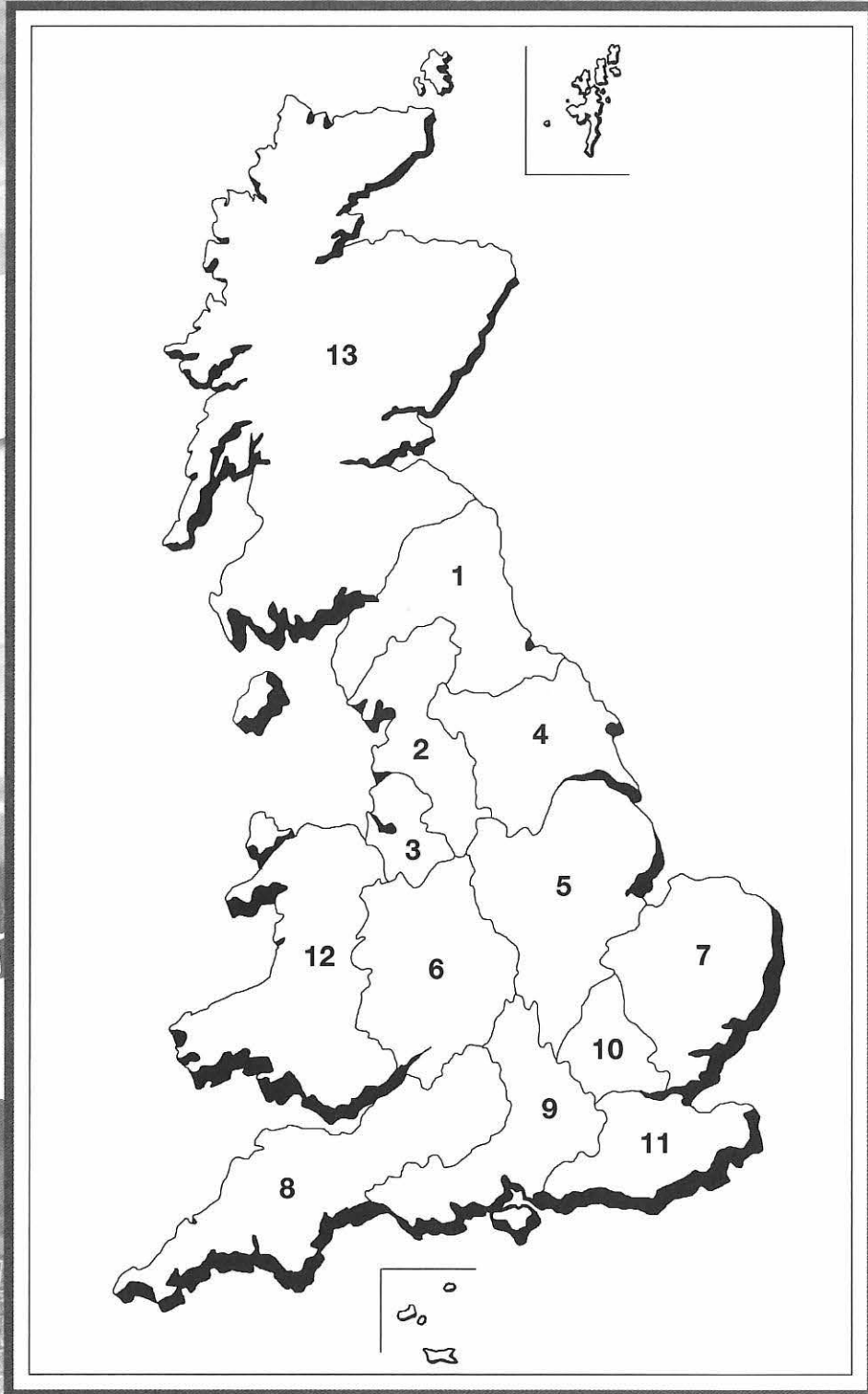
	<i>page</i>		<i>page</i>
SYNOD REPORTS	1	APPENDICES	87
Eastern	2	1 Accounts	88
East Midlands	4	Budget	110
Thames North	5	2 Commentary on the Budget	113
Yorkshire	7	3 Edmonton	119
SYNOD RESOLUTIONS	8	4 Growing Up to the	
		Ministry of Evangelists	127
CHURCHES - CHANGES	12	5 Students sent by Synods	132
SYNOD MODERATORS' REPORT	19	6 Statistics of Students	134
		7 Reports from Colleges	135
MISSION COUNCIL* REPORTS	23	INFORMATION	141
and RESOLUTIONS	28	History Society	142
		Musicians Guild	143
COMMITTEES and TASK GROUPS	39	Schools	144
REPORTS and RESOLUTIONS		Silence and Retreats	148
Assembly Arrangements *	40	Women's World Day of Prayer	149
Assembly Pastoral Reference	42		
Church and Society	44	STANDING ORDERS	151
Doctrine, Prayer and Worship	49		
Ecumenical	51		
Finance *	64		
Health and Healing	65		
Inter-Faith Relations	66		
Life and Witness	68		
Ministries Sub-Committees *	74		
Nominations *	77		

NOTE The General Assembly in 2000 decided that from 2001, committees will report in alternate years, except where for legal or administrative reasons annual reports are required. The latter are listed above with an asterisk.



The
United
Reformed
Church

Synods



- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 Northern | 5 East Midlands | 10 Thames North |
| 2 North Western | 6 West Midlands | 11 Southern |
| 3 Mersey | 7 Eastern | 12 Wales |
| 4 Yorkshire | 8 South Western | 13 Scotland |
| | 9 Wessex | |

Eastern Synod

I The Challenge

1.1 Eastern Synod – in common with the rest of the Church - has been grappling with the challenge of what it means to be Church and how to engage in God's mission in our present situation. We have received the *Growing Up* report – what happens next? There are new ways and new places that call out for us to be Church; new ways to minister; we need to be a healthy Church.

1.2 Do we need a change in mind-set or do we need to be faithful disciples? Is it the local church or the wider church that is to show the 5 Marks of Mission? The answer is probably yes to both!

2 New ways/new places to be Church

2.1 East of England regional structures require our attention, and Synod has two people who are part of the East of England Churches Network. As was said at our last Synod meeting, we ignore them at our peril! We have the convenience that our Synod is wholly within the East of England region, but there is very much a challenge to know what issues should be addressed at this level of government by the Church. Quality of Life has been and remains an area of great interest.

2.2 We are involved in the development of several new ecumenical congregations. These are at different stages.

Cloverfield at Thetford (Norfolk), a shared Anglican/United Reformed Church, now has its own purpose-built worship centre; Chafford Hundred at Grays (Essex), a multi-denominational project, is progressing towards the development of its first building, and this will involve the local Community Church in the sharing agreement with the mainstream denominations. The most recent venture is at Cambourne (Cambridgeshire), which is being welcomed as a new mission project at this Assembly. There is an ecumenical church plant at Great Notley (Essex) which has similar aspirations.

All this new work has considerable implications for the use of our resources of money and ministry.

2.3 We have also invested in major redevelopments with existing churches. Several of our historic churches have re-modelled their buildings for more effective mission. These include Leiston, Maldon, Fenstanton and Crowstone St George's. Two churches, Halstead and Newport, have moved to re-modelled health centres. And at North Avenue in Chelmsford the church has gone into partnership with the Essex Youth Trust in constructing a fine new youth hall and in employing a youth worker.

2.4 The Synod Roadshow will be hitting the road again in September. Co-ordinated by Anthea Coates, a small group also including the Moderator, members of the Training Team, and second-year students from Westminster College will spend a week working with local churches in projects that involve the local community.

2.5 The twice-yearly Synod meetings have had a make-over. A questionnaire two years ago revealed a wish for more interactivity in the Synod business, and more relevance to the local church.

2.6 The Synod web-site has been re-launched, to tell people who we are and where our local churches are. It is also useful for internal communication, such as listing finance publications and providing Continuing Ministerial Education application forms.

3 New ways to minister

3.1 Ministerial training has progressed well within the Synod. We currently have 19 ordinands and the take-up of Continuing Ministerial Education has been very encouraging. For the last two years, a two-day colloquium for all serving ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the Synod has been held in the autumn. We are studying the 5 Marks of Mission in the context of pastoral ministry. Having examined the nature of mission and the preaching and sacramental ministry in previous years, this year we shall be looking at pastoral care.

3.2 The greatly increased demand for training, lay and ministerial, together with mission development, has led to a need for extra administrative support; Linda Hack joined the office team in September.

3.3 The first part-time mission enabler was recently appointed by one of our Districts.

3.4 Our new Synod Treasurer, Clifford Patten, drew attention to the higher proportion of Synod grants for people in 2000 than for building projects.

4 To be a healthy church

4.1 The Provincial Life & Business Committee has taken a great interest in the Natural Church Development (NCD) process, and has advocated that local churches undertake an NCD survey as a 'health' check. 15 persons – mainly ministers – have recently been on a two-day training session, with a view to their being used as enablers with local churches as they seek to address their weaknesses and use the full potential of their strengths.

4.2 Following on from our unashamed plagiarism of Southern Synod's *Health & Safety Guidelines* (with Southern's permission!), we have more recently published our very own *Standards for Church Buildings*, incorporating the mission perspective of local church buildings.

4.3 The District Secretaries and Pastoral Oversight Committee Conveners have initiated *Guidelines for District Visits*. This is mainly an amalgam of best practice, but also includes a few as-yet-untested suggestions. This includes a review of any self-appraisals that the local church wishes to share (such as a review against the 5 Marks of Mission, and/or the Natural Church Development key characteristics).

4.4 No major organisational changes at Synod level have been deemed necessary. We have however, strengthened the Synod Ecumenical post by separating this function from that of Convener of the Church Development & Ecumenical Committee. We have also filled some gaps by allocating topics not specifically covered before - growth & evangelism, and international issues & World Church – to existing relevant committees.

East Midlands Synod

1.1 The most significant development in the East Midlands since our last report has been the Mission Enabler Programme which has been headed up by Revd Moiseraela Prince P Dibeela of the Botswana Synod of the United Congregational Church in Southern Africa. This programme has been the direct result of the decision of Assembly to allocate to the East Midlands a share of the Gift of Grace money which came to the United Reformed Church from the Council for World Mission. As we had been consulting and praying about the future directions for the Synod and had been led to appoint such a worker, the finance came as a real answer to prayer. Prince, as he is popularly known, came to us on a three year appointment which ends in summer 2001 and he lived with his family in Wigston just south of Leicester in a manse provided by the Oadby church. He has made a significant contribution to the life of the Synod not least by his demand that all the structures and programmes of the church both, wider and local, should clearly be seen to serve the purposes of the kingdom.

1.2 His address to the March Synod made seven points for action which we share with Assembly:

- ◆ evaluate the function of the local church as a base for mission
- ◆ be less comfortable Christians and more risk-takers for the gospel
- ◆ live good theology not only have good theology
- ◆ bring children and young people to be disciples of Christ
- ◆ create worship and programmes that increase faith not just entertainment
- ◆ recognise that in a multi-racial and multi-cultural society a mono-cultural church is unrealistic
- ◆ engage in social analysis to understand our local communities as a preliminary for mission.

The Synod will be building on his work through our LIFELINE programme which is a process of study and reflection leading to actions for mission across the whole life of the Synod.

Some things have already happened such as a Synod Youth Event, called MMM (Mission Means Me) which just happens also to be WWW inverted. This was attended by 110 people and gave the Synod youth work a whole new impetus which will be taken forward with the help of a new Youth & Children's Work Development Officer. This officer will be appointed in October to follow John Quilter who is moving on after 16 years in post. We owe John a great deal and want the whole Assembly to know how much we appreciate his work, formerly in Youth Leadership training jointly with Eastern and then taking up the Youth & Children's Work Trainer position. The Synod share of the cost of this programme takes up much of the finance made available to us through Assembly's Resource Sharing programme which is of significant benefit to the Synod.

The development of new churches continues to be an important part of our work with considerable population growth in the region not least in Peterborough where the new building for the ecumenical congregation of Christ Church in Orton Goldhay was funded jointly by the Synod and Assembly. This is a congregation that has been grown with the support of Assembly's Special Category Ministry programme which has been of significant benefit to the Synod over the years not least in Milton Keynes, in the inner city area of Nottingham, in chaplaincy to education and industry and now just about to start in Brackley where we are sponsoring a church plant in a new part of the town.

Ecumenical co-operation is an key part of our agenda and with the financial help of Assembly we are able to play our part in funding County Ecumenical Officers throughout our area. It is interesting to note that the reported growth in numbers in ecumenical congregations is in opposition to the decline in many mono-denominational churches. The reasons for the difference may be many and Assembly may wish to reflect on this, judge if it is a pattern that emerges elsewhere in the three nations, and be encouraged as we are to continue on the pilgrimage as Christians Together. We have our first Ecumenical Area in Milton Keynes which is reported elsewhere to this Assembly, an Ecumenical Area not only with Methodist Church but also with the Church of England and the Baptist Connexion. In the East Midlands the churches are responding positively to the regional agenda and we are already beginning to make an appropriate input, with other faith communities, to develop a form of regional government which is accountable and representative.

Thames North Synod

I Diversity

1.1 Of the 155 churches forming Thames North Synod, 106 are within the M25 and can therefore be considered to be in London. Of the remaining 49 churches, many are close enough to London to feel the city's proximity and influence.

1.2 London is cosmopolitan and global in nature; this is reflected in Thames North Synod where we now have congregations that consist, either exclusively or predominantly, of people who trace their origins to Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin American. Alongside this, a variety of congregations make use of United Reformed Church premises for their worship, meaning that links (however informal) exist with Chinese, Korean, African, Afro-Caribbean and South American churches.

1.3 We rejoice in such diversity and our greatest challenge is to ensure that it informs our thinking and activity.

2 Initiatives

2.1 In 1999 the Synod Executive introduced the pattern of holding the March Synod in church premises (rotating around the six districts) and the October Synod in a venue that includes a hall with decent seating, sound amplification and audio-visual capabilities, and additional rooms of sufficient number and size for small group discussions on issues vital to the life and work of the church. The **biannual meetings of Synod** now have a greater sense of participation and excitement.

2.2 One such new initiative in 2000 was **Gift of Grace** in which the Leadership Development Group invited churches to apply for grants of up to £500 to fund learning initiatives. Thirty-seven grants were distributed.

2.3 The terms of reference and membership of the **Synod Executive** were reviewed during 2000, with the result that it is now more streamlined, with membership coming both from Districts (6 members) and through Synod nominations (4 members), ensuring that this core committee reflects the Synod's diversity.

2.4 Conversations continue surrounding the **deployment** of a reduced number of stipendiary ministers throughout the Synod. Whilst these discussions have the negative effect of sapping

energy and diverting attention from key issues, we note that they have enabled some churches and districts to re-evaluate what ministry means and entails, and how better to equip churches with scarce 'resources'. One creative response has been three churches amalgamating whilst continuing to worship on three sites rationalising their structures and thereby releasing energy for mission.

2.5 During 2000 a great deal of work was carried out throughout the Synod on a paper entitled **Money for Mission** which aimed to develop mechanisms whereby local initiatives in mission would be encouraged. Accepted by Synod in October 2000, the plan will see the devolution of funds for projects costing up to £5,000 to District Councils, the appointment of two specialist workers to help with the formulation of larger projects, the streamlining of grant-making procedures by Synod standing committees, the creation of a Mission Fund, and increased contributions to the inter-synod resource sharing programme.

2.6 A twenty-four hour consultation of the Synod's **Mission Initiatives Group** in January 2001 resulted in a determination to be proactive by initiating ideas, concepts and new ways of 'being church'. The residential was facilitated by people from beyond the United Reformed Church, and helped the group's members gain a better perspective of their task, a willingness to listen to objective criticism about current modes of operation, and so develop new strategies for getting resources to where they are needed in order to help grow the churches.

2.7 Finally, an initiative that is - at the time of writing - in embryonic form is **Open All Hours**. This will involve production of a pack of materials (Bible studies, suggestions and ideas, discussion starters, sermon outlines) to be used by ministers, elders and churches to reflect on what the church has to offer to a 24/7 society (i.e. increasingly open for 24 hours a day, seven days a week). The hope is that this process will result in new and relevant ways of living the Gospel and being church in the twenty-first century. This initiative will be launched at a Synod event in June 2002.

2.8 These initiatives take different forms in different places but have in common a willingness to take risks and change mindsets.

3 Appointments

3.1 At the March 2000 Synod we said farewell to **Rachel Poolman**, who had served the Synod with creativity and determination as Director of Training. She is now the recipient of the United Reformed Church Research Fellowship, studying for a PhD at Birmingham University.

3.2 By the October 2000 Synod meeting we were able to induct **Fiona Thomas** to the post of Training Officer, the change in title reflecting the results of a review of the post.

3.3 The recognition that employment and personnel systems for the non-commercial sector are growing increasingly complex resulted in the appointment of a part-time Human Resources Co-ordinator in November 2000. **Carla Watts** has already had a positive impact on the way in which job descriptions and person specifications are written, and brings an essential professionalism to the Synod in its role as an employer. Her services are also offered in an advisory capacity to churches considering the employment of staff.

Yorkshire Synod

1.1 'A lot of our churches lack self-confidence' was how one of our ministers related comments he had picked up in discussing the *Growing Up* report with other denominations locally. We were debating in Executive just what it is we should be doing differently in response to the challenge laid down by our General Secretary. Is self-confidence missing? Someone wrote in relation to the growing child that personal criticism damages the development of self-confidence. There is a lot of self-criticism these days, and we should ask whether it helps our search for the forward drive we seek as a living, effective, missionary church of Christ in Yorkshire today, or whether it demoralises us.

1.2 Replace the word 'criticism' with 'review' and it feels better. This is not to avoid the issue but to take a more positive approach. This is right because we found, when applying the *Five Marks of Mission* test to our churches, councils and committees in the aftermath of General Assembly 1999, that some people were surprised that they **do** measure up well. Celebrate! Where we were advised by some that we do fall down is in the areas of 'telling' and 'teaching', which, I suggest, brings us back to the question of confidence. 'We are not so good at sharing our love of Jesus', said someone else, and maybe that is a clue to our condition.

1.3 As if to read our needs, one of our Synod representatives on 'Pilgrim 2000' reported to us in October 2000 the words of a Palestinian that 'Christ relies on ordinary people to understand and act', just as much today as when He first inspired the thought. Whilst that was doubtless an appeal to us to give real support to people in Palestine/Israel, it is also a universal call and was a theme of our past year's activity in Yorkshire.

1.4 What was it we needed to understand? Why our member numbers continue to decrease? The meaning of ordained ministry and how to plan for and deploy reducing numbers of ministers? Underdeveloped local church leadership? The validity of inherited district boundaries in a context of fewer churches and questions about commitment to the District Council? All of these and more. At the Moderator's prompting, the Executive Committee explored these issues in the light of the *Growing Up* report and, seeing that they were interconnected, set up a process of Strategic and Structural Review, that would be fundamental yet sharp and focussed, to report in May 2001.

1.5 The overall brief is 'To review the underlying philosophy and current structures of the Synod and to propose a new coherent strategy that will enable the churches to be more effective in their mission'. Task group work covers District Boundaries, Deployment, Synod Committees and Leadership. We rule nothing out and are fearlessly looking to make as many changes as are necessary and legally possible so that we become more effective and less consuming of time and energy. As the product emerges, we shall cross-fertilise with re-thinking at national committee level and constantly refer to the inspiration to be found in *Growing Up* and the Five Marks in particular.

1.6 In the meantime, we rejoice in signs that encourage. District officers have been commended for their hard work amongst the churches to achieve a more strategic approach to deployment. We are conscious of the need to keep the profile of the churches high and their voices heard in the Churches Regional Commission, where a vigorous start was made. A challenging *Racism Awareness Pack* is now available and highly commended for anyone concerned about their own or other's potential for discriminatory attitudes and behaviour. Equal opportunities awareness is rising up our agenda. In Church and Society Committee a networking approach to the sharing of innovative and successful experience has been adopted. Similarly, our Doctrine and Worship Committee is facilitating the use of new forms of worship. Very careful and thorough church property surveys are proving to be a very positive experience for churches. Financial policies are progressive and mission oriented.

1.7 We praise God for all He has begun in us and will complete, and look forward to extending a warm, Yorkshire welcome to General Assembly at York in July.

Resolution 1**Assembly membership**

General Assembly agrees to make the following amendment to the Structure of the United Reformed Church:

Amend paragraph 2.[5] by adding the following category to the membership of the General Assembly:

'All Ministers of Word and Sacrament and CRCWs who are to be received by Assembly at the outset of their Ministry in the United Reformed Church.'

Thames North Synod

Proposer: Revd Francis Ackroyd

Seconder: Revd Doug Gay

1.1 It is important that Ministers and Church-Related Community Workers new to the United Reformed Church see themselves as full participants in the life of the church; not just as observers on the sidelines.

1.2 It is important, too, that they are encouraged to participate in the life of the United Reformed Church at a wider level than their particular pastorate or appointment.

1.3 This resolution would allow those already invited to be part of the General Assembly in order that they may be presented, to be present for the whole of that Assembly and to speak and vote as full members.

1.4 This will increase the voting body of Assembly, but not the total number attending Assembly in any one year. The financial implications are the cost of accommodation and ancillary papers only, as transport is already met.

Resolution 2**Ethical Investment**

General Assembly:

- a) urges the URC Trust and the URC Pensions Trust to dispose of all shares held in GKN and any other companies involved with the arms trade and**
- b) instructs Mission Council to report to the Assembly on the ethical policies followed with regard to the investments of the Church.**

*Northern Synod
Wessex Synod*

*Proposer: Dr Peter Clarke
Seconder: Mr Graham Rolfe*

Before the Northern Synod met in March an article had appeared in the press concerning continuing investment in the arms trade by organisations that seek to present themselves as morally and socially responsible. A number of members had read this article, and had been dismayed to see the United Reformed Church cited alongside various Oxbridge colleges and trades unions among the offenders, and standing out as the only Church on the list.

We had believed on the basis of numerous General Assembly debates and resolutions over the years that the United Reformed Church has a commitment

to ethical investment. We recognise that those who work on our behalf in this field may be constrained in various ways, and that particular problems arise from companies like GKN where only a proportion of activity is in armaments. However, the sole listing of the United Reformed Church in that particular article suggests that other Churches have found ways of meeting these problems; and believing that we can take similar steps we present this resolution. We feel that it is timely undertake a review and for Assembly to endorse our current practice.

Resolution 3

District Children's and/or Youth Worker

In view of the catastrophic decline over the past twenty years of the number of children and young people who are part of the worshipping and learning fellowship of the Church and because of the long term consequences of this to a society with little or no knowledge of Christianity and no experience of Christian worship and because this will make evangelism increasingly difficult General Assembly requests the Youth and Children's Committee to ensure that the review into its work explores the possibility of providing every district council which requires it with a children's and/or youth worker.

East Midlands Synod

Proposer: Revd Chris White

Seconder: Mr Ray Chambers

1.1 This Resolution has its origins in the Northamptonshire District which has reflected on the decline in youth work in our churches in recent years. Peter Brierley's recent research ('Turning the Tide') has shown that for the first time in a millenium the church is in touch with proportionately fewer children and young people than adults. In other words, a smaller percentage of young people attend worship, Junior Church, Sunday School or Christian youth activities than the percentage of adults attending worship or cell groups. The Church of England report of 1991 (*All God's Children?*) produced telling evidence that the majority of adults who attend church services today were in Sunday Schools forty to sixty years ago. The post war boom in Sunday Schools attracted about 60% of the young people and provided contact and a basic understanding of Christian faith and worship which has been of enormous benefit ever since. There is no such base being created at present on which the church might draw in 2010 and after.

1.2 Northamptonshire District therefore decided to investigate the employment of a District Youth Worker to become involved in local churches, giving them vision and training and helping them with their youth work. It was even considered by some that such a worker would be more effective in forwarding the mission of the church than another minister. The Resolution also recognises that it is the voluntary agencies and youth organisations who are more in touch with todays young people than the churches and therefore calls for work in partnership with them.

Resolution 4

Gift to Reformed Church in Romania

General Assembly approves the offering of a gift of grace to the Reformed Church in Romania in the form of an annual gift of £50,000, shared between two Districts, for a period of three years and to begin as soon as possible.

West Midlands Synod

Proposer: Revd John Johansen-Berg

Seconder: Mr Ray Coombes

Acts 11. 29. 'The disciples decided that they would each send as much as they could to help their fellow-believers who lived in Judea'.

In December 1999 national celebrations were held in Temesvar (Timisoara), Romania. They were marking the ten year Anniversary of the Revolution which led to the overthrow of the oppressive President Ceausescu. The person who was the spark for the revolution is a minister of the Reformed Church there, Laszlo Tokes. At that time his courageous stand, already costly, could have cost him his liberty, even his life. Now he is one of the Bishops of the Reformed Church in Romania, his predecessor having fled the country. He stated in November 1999 that none of the hundreds of churches and schools of the Reformed Church, confiscated in the Communist era have been returned, in spite of promises made. The Hungarian population which suffered discrimination under the Communist regime continues to suffer now. The population of Hungarian nationality has declined from 1,663,000 to 1,603,000 from 1910-1992. There are about 765,000 in the Reformed community, the vast majority being in Transylvania. Faced with low wages and high inflation, with basic needs in community life and with the repair or rebuilding of churches after forty years of persecution, Laszlo Tokes has led his people with energy and courage in a programme of self-help calling for much sacrifice.

As in his District so in the neighbouring one based on Kolosvar (Cluj-Napoca) there is much planning and action. Dr Csiha Kalman, the Bishop, (recently retired) has an outline proposal for an imaginative project for Tirgu Mures which will provide education and training for community service and health work. In both Districts there is creative planning to restore the church's role in community service, worship and teaching.

As Moderator of the United Reformed Church in 1980, the Revd John Johansen-Berg visited Romania and again in 1990 to see the post-Revolution situation and

in a number of years since then. He has described the oppression suffered by the Hungarian minority in earlier days and the continuing problems faced by the Reformed Church now. Through the Community for Reconciliation he has been involved in sending aid, supporting imaginative local projects and arranging twinning of churches over a ten year period primarily through the Reformed Church but also in partnership with other churches and community groups.

The United Reformed Church has been fortunate to have our overseas financial commitment reduced considerably. It would be an act of faith and compassion to tithe our benefit by our own gift of grace to a sister church in need. Because the Council for World Mission gained extra resources from the sale of a site in Hong Kong our annual giving has been reduced by about £500,000. It would be appropriate for the United Reformed Church to make an annual gift of £50,000 to the Reformed Church in Romania (£25,000 to each of the two Districts) for a period of three years. The difference this would make to a church in need would be immense. If we shared in planning the use of these gifts we too would be given inspiration and encouragement. If it is the opinion of Assembly that it would be an appropriate and helpful project to undertake, funding could perhaps be found to implement it in the year 2001. If not it might be included in the budget for 2002 to 2004.

Many members of Assembly will have their own links with Romania and some will have visited there. The need is still evident as is the generosity of the Hungarian speaking Christians to their churches. Reformed Churches naturally have a special link with and responsibility for sister churches. This resolution proposes that we should follow the example of other Reformed Churches and give help now when it is so greatly needed. As the Jerusalem churches were greatly moved and encouraged by the help from Antioch in a time of need so now a sister church could be encouraged by a gift of grace from us.



**Churches - Changes and
Synod Moderators' Report**

General Assembly
York 2001

July 10th

Annual Reports,
Resolutions
and Papers



The
United
Reformed
Church

Churches - Changes

Resolution 5

New Churches

General Assembly receives the churches and mission project listed below as local churches and mission projects of the United Reformed Church.

New Churches

St. Mark's Church, Hallwood Ecumenical Parish, Runcorn, Cheshire

(Church of England, United Reformed Church, Methodist)

Mersey

Runcorn is an ancient town and the Widness forms the Unitary Borough of Halton. The NEW town was developed in the late 1960s for Liverpool overspill, and it has continued to expand. Hallwood parish covers five new town estates with a population of 14,000. Three of these are private housing, the others 50% rented property managed by Housing Associations. Some parts of the Parish would be classed as Urban Priority Area or 'high stress'.

Bethesda was the first church in this Parish, a replacement for the 1831 Runcorn United Reformed Church in the Old Town. A multi-purpose building,

it was opened in 1976 and fully ecumenical from the outset. St Mark's a smaller multi-purpose building, was erected by the Church of England in 1981 to supplement Bethesda in the Ecumenical Parish. Its average attendance is 51 adults and 7 children, and the whole parish is served by a Church of England vicar, shortly to be joined by a curate, a half-time United Reformed Church minister (recognised and regarded by the Methodists) and a United Reformed Church Church Related Community Worker. St Mark's is seen by the Church of England as a separate church in its own right, and wishes the United Reformed Church to recognise it in the same way.

Beechwood West Church, Hallwood Ecumenical Parish, Runcorn, Cheshire

(Church of England, United Reformed Church, Methodist)

Mersey

This began in 1991 as a church plant in another part of the Hallwood Parish, using Beechwood County Primary School buildings. At first there were monthly family services, but services have been weekly since 1996, led by parish staff and members

of St. Mark's Church. Attendance is now 25 adults and 12 children, and the fellowship feels it has grown to maturity and asks to be regarded by the United Reformed Church (as already by the Church of England) as a separate church.

Whiteley

Wessex

Whiteley was one of five 'principal growth sectors' included in the South Hampshire Structure Plan approved in 1977. At the time the area was little more than farmland with a few cottages and a farm, but as a projected 'greenfield' development site, it was proposed that some 4000 houses should be built. This was scaled down to provide for a population of about 6500 in 2600 homes. Right from the start the United Reformed Church had expressed a desire to participate in any ecumenical venture that might emerge.

In December 1993 the local vicar wrote to possible interested parties about the creation of an ecumenical church on the estate. As a result of this the first service took place on 3 September 1995. Services have been held in a home, the local hotel, the community centre and now in the primary school. The first minister was a Methodist Deaconess who was followed by a half-time Anglican Priest. Under her guidance the church has grown both physically and spiritually. A Declaration of Intent was signed in December 1996.

The church is a Local Ecumenical Partnership between the Methodist Church, the Church of England and the United Reformed Church. A manse was provided on the estate in 1998 and plans are

now under way to build a church on a site allocated by the developer, which will provide both a worship centre and rooms for church and community use.

Pontprennau, Cardiff

Wales

Situated in the north east of Cardiff (in the area to come under the oversight of the proposed Ecumenical Bishop), Pontprennau is a new estate established some six years ago when 1500 houses were projected within 15 years. The Church in Wales appointed Revd Steve Willson as Priest-in-Charge with 50% scoping.

Steve Willson was appointed full-time Priest and interest continued to grow; there is a good cross-section of people attending and the Sunday School is growing apace. Planning consent has been received for a new Community building. Over £400,000 has already been raised and the community is working hard to raise the balance of £135,000.

A Cardiff-based charity offered to fund 50% of the cost of setting up a worship centre, providing the balance was raised from other sources. It was estimated that at that time there were about 50 church members of various denominations on the estate and these were invited to a Lenten meeting at which the attendance was eight! Nevertheless it was agreed to go ahead with the formation of a Worship Group. Interest grew and it was decided to embark on the Community Church project, Revd Tom Davies, a retired Methodist Minister, working in partnership with Steve Willson.

A new curate has already been appointed by the Church in Wales following the elevation of Steve Willson to be Rector of Cyncoed under whose aegis Pontprennau comes.

New Mission Project

Churches Together in Cambourne

Eastern

In 1994, the Cambridgeshire Ecumenical Council began to plan for an ecumenical church in the new Community of Cambourne, which lies between Cambridge and St Neots. This new 'village' was begun in 1999 and will eventually be home to over 10,000 people.

The Ecumenical Council and the local church have recently appointed the Revd Peter Wood (Church of Scotland) as resident minister for an initial 5-year period. The United Reformed Church share of funding comes equally as an Assembly Mission in Ecumenical Situations grant, and from Eastern Synod funds.

The Churches jointly funded an Anglican minister, and under her leadership a congregation has formed, representative of a wide range of Christian traditions. It meets for worship in the local health centre and is exploring the possibility of using a Portacabin until such time as it is able to build a church centre on land being provided by the developers.

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

Closure of Local Churches

Durham Street, Hartlepool

Northern

The congregation was founded in 1840 at the Croft in Hartlepool – at that time a small fishing village on the headland. In its heyday the church had around 300 pupils attending Sunday School. It is well known locally for its Maypole, its banner processions and lately for the hosting of the Hartlepool Recording Studio, where the unemployed are able to play musical instruments and make recordings for sale.

The church building has some structural problems and seems to be twisting. A full survey was commissioned and the work estimated at over £200K. Clearly a massive burden on such a small

congregation. Since mid 99 the church has been looking at various strategies for the future – links with Hartlepool St Georges in Hartlepool Town and ecumenical links with other churches on the headland.

After weighing the facts, on 27 May 2000 a church meeting decided that with great sadness they had little option than to close. It has done so with its last regular Sunday Worship on 30 June. A final service of thanksgiving for the life and service of the Church Family in the Community on Sunday 9 July.

Dent, Cumbria

North Western

Zion Chapel in the Dales villages of Dent was erected largely by volunteer labour after the purchase of an attractive site at Flintergill in 1835. Prior to that the Independents had met in an upper room in the village, where a church was formed in 1809.

The chapel was built to seat 140 at a time when the membership was 35 and thriving. There were three services every Sunday and outreach to the nearby hamlet of Gawthrop.

At the turn of the century there were 30 scholars and it was thought fitting to build a Sunday School in honour of the church centenary. This building, adjoining the church, was opened in 1912. From that time the number of scholars decreased, though there was an increase during the war with the arrival

of evacuees from Bradford. Subsequently fewer children attended and the Sunday School lay unused for several years until it was leased to the Dent Meditation Centre in 1998.

Dent has been part of the synod's Dales Pastorate whose other, continuing, churches are at Sedbergh and Ravenstonedale. The actual membership of the church has declined until only one member was left, with a few adherents, to attend the monthly evening service. The Minister, having accepted a call to another Synod, presided at her final service at Dent in September 2000. The Lancaster District Council decided to close the church forthwith, giving thanks to God for the witness of the faithful members and adherents of Dent over the years.

Moulton

Mersey

Moulton Chapel will have a place in the memory of quite a number of ministers of twentieth century Congregationalism. It was for many years a test-bed of Ordinands from Lancashire Independent College, all of whom came to preach at Moulton in their first and final years. Their autographs are still there in the Visitors Book.

The Church was opened in 1833 as a plant from the Northwich Church, during the ministry at Northwich of Revd Job Wilson who also founded the churches at Winsford, Middlewich, Sandbach and Haslington. For 120 years it was entirely dependent on the Northwich congregation and only began to have its own independent Church Officers and accounts in 1953.

The worshipping congregation has always been fairly small, but until the 1960's the chapel had a significant influence in the life of the village through its Sunday School.

The Closing Thanksgiving service, held on 8 October 2000, was at Harvest Festival time and the Moderator gathered our memories of the past and guided our hopes for the future preaching from the text: 'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains a solitary grain. But if it dies, it bears a rich harvest.'

Byfield

East Midlands

1.1 The church at Byfield was started in 1827 through the efforts of the church at Daventry. A chapel was built in the same year and the title deed of 1831 states that it was to be used as 'a place of public worship for the service of God by the Society of Protestant Dissenters and maintaining the Doctrines called Calvinistic'. (Title Deed 16 August 1831)

1.2 The names of Robert Devonshire, father and son, were closely connected with the starting of this cause, the latter bequeathing £100 at his death for the liquidation of the debt. (Album of Northamptonshire Congregational Churches – T Stephens BA). From then on the wealthy Bush family seem to have kept it going until in 1862 it again sought financial help from Daventry. At this time a union between the two churches came into being with the minister preaching once a fortnight during the week and bi-monthly and Sunday. However, after three years this arrangement ceased as the distance between (7 miles) made it impracticable.

1.3 In Stephens' Album he describes Byfield as 'a small, remote village which has found it difficult at times to keep this cause going'. This could well have been written in the 1990's for little changed over the years except for a period between 1872 and 1892 when the cause seemed to flourish, the church having its own minister and actually owning a manse.

1.4 From 1892 the pulpit was filled by lay preachers from the area. In 1961 the minister at Weedon and Flore (villages some 10 & 12 miles distant) was given oversight of Byfield, preaching there once a month in the afternoon. Early on in his long ministry Byfield Council of Churches was formed which, over the years, proved to be advantageous in making the Christians of the village more united. In 1991 when the local Methodist Church became uninhabitable the congregation began worshipping with the United Reformed Church in their chapel, and in 1993 a sharing agreement for the building came into being. When the quinquennial inspection took place early in 1999 the building was thought to be unsafe and was closed for public worship, the final service held in it being the Harvest Festival in September of that same year. At this time the congregation was almost entirely Methodist and these members have since joined with the congregation worshipping in the nearby village of Baddington.

1.5 Over a period of some 170 years this small church has played its part in the life of the community, providing good non-conformist worship for those who wanted it. Latterly several of its members have applied their Christian principles more widely and have played a significant part in the planning and running of many local organisations. We pray God's blessing on the continuing Christian witness in this place.

St Paul's Reading

Wessex

Originally a mission from St Andrew's Reading in 1897, Caversham Road Presbyterian Church opened in 1902, and adopted the name St Paul's in 1915. Much good work was done in the early days, and again during and after the Second World War. Following the formation of the United Reformed Church, a partnership was established with ITEM (an industrial mission), in which a minister was shared from 1973 to 1995. By 1985 it was clear that the state of the building was deteriorating, and that large

sums of money would be needed to repair it. Plans to demolish and redevelop the site with flats and a smaller church did not materialise, so the decision was taken to close in the hope that God will provide for the mission needed in the area in a way that the church could not. The congregation left with much sadness, but at a closing District Service on 8 July 2000 it was recognised that St Paul's had been a place of vision and hope, faith and fellowship.

Pangbourne with Theale*Wessex*

In October 1999 Theale abandoned their church building and united with Pangbourne. Last November, with numbers dropping rapidly due to advancing age and to people moving away, and with the loss of income from land rental, the decision to close was made reluctantly but also with a sense of relief.

The history of these two churches reveals that their lives have been intertwined from their earliest beginnings. In July 1797 the Reading Evangelical Society sought permission for Nonconformist preaching in both villages, but the first preachers were 'hooted and pelted' out of Theale. Later the butcher, John Cumber, started to hold religious services in his shop until it became too small. In 1832 he sold part of his garden to provide a site for a church building. Succeeding generations of the Cumber family were to take a leading role in Theale church life until the 1990s. In Pangbourne the first church building was opened in 1824 with the Revd William Wooley as its first minister. He stayed for thirty-two years and in 1844 chaired the first church meeting in Theale during which the resolution was passed that John Cumber should become Deacon of the Church.

Both churches moved to other buildings. In 1913 Theale built a new church on the site of the Old Angel Inn. In Pangbourne in 1928, at a meeting

attended by William Cumber of Theale representing the County Union, those present decided to buy the Quaker Meeting Room and the one third of an acre on which it stood. In more recent years Pangbourne and Theale formed the West of Reading Group with Grange. Most of the few remaining members of the congregation have chosen to worship in future at Grange.

We cannot know what influences these churches have had either on their congregations or on the communities in which they have lived and worked. We do know, from the records that have been deposited in the Berkshire Record Office, that many men, women and children have passed through their doors. A letter from a former elder states, 'In its time, Pangbourne United Reformed Church gave great help and fellowship to a wide range of members and their families and we are grateful. It also gave a number of us the opportunity to do things we never dreamt we could have done.'

On Sunday 11 March 2001, a congregation of around seventy gathered to thank God for memories and friendships, for lives that had been touched and changed and for all who had served these churches and their communities.

Charndon*Wessex*

Charndon was a small hamlet in the rural area of North Buckinghamshire near the Oxfordshire border, inhabited mainly by agricultural workers. People met in a cottage as early as 1844, when Congregationalists from Marsh Gibbon endeavoured to provide for their spiritual needs for more than 40 years. In 1881, when the cottage became too small for the numbers attending, a Chapel was erected under the leadership of Revd David Truss. The site was purchased and the building erected at the total outlay of £180, the villagers exercising great self-denial in order to contribute to the building fund. So many people attended the opening service on 27 September that the Revd Truss conducted the service inside and the Revd Feltham of Winslow preached to the people outside.

Minutes of the early church meetings seemed to be kept to the minimum - the main business being nominations for people to become church members. It is interesting to note that records of collections

taken were for specific purposes, namely - Minister, coal and oil, sweeping and cleaning, horse hire fund, the poor etc.

In 1924 the Sunday School room was built on the back costing £192, some of which was borrowed from the National Sunday School Union.

Midweek meetings of fellowship, prayer and Bible Study were held and Sunday services were held in the morning and evening, mainly conducted by Lay Preachers. The Sunday School was well attended over the years.

As far back as 1961 concern was felt about the state of the building and various repairs were carried out over the years.

The parish has grown - the increased population are mainly commuters - and congregations have dwindled. The building was closed in September 2000 but we trust the spiritual side of the church will continue.

St Andrew's, Woolwich

Southern

The final service of worship of St Andrew's was held jointly with St Mary's Church of England on 10 September 2000. A Presbyterian church came into existence in Woolwich in 1662 when the then Rector of Woolwich was ejected and took many of his congregation with him. For most of its history it served not only the local population but a large Scottish contingent at the nearby Woolwich military garrison. During the 1960s it entered a sharing agreement with St Mary's Church of England, and

during the 1980s the now St Andrew's United Reformed Church formed an LEP with St Mary's. For some years the joint congregation flourished. Though it almost imperceptibly became more Anglican the United Reformed Church element remained identifiable and took part in District affairs. However the LEP lapsed and, in the late 1990s, the Anglican Rector refused to renew it. The elderly and declining United Reformed Church congregation decided that closure was their most dignified option.

Isle of Grain

Southern

The Isle of Grain lies at the tip of a windswept Kent peninsula where the River Medway flows into the River Thames. Thomas Castle, a coastguard living in the isolated community there, became concerned at the spiritual impoverishment of the local people, especially the children. In 1822 he began holding services in his cottage.

The next year he appealed for help to the strong Congregational Chapel on the other bank of the Medway at Sheerness. 'A special meeting of the male members of the church' agreed unanimously to select eight of their number to support the new cause and lead worship at Grain. A Meeting House was opened in 1827 and replaced by a larger Chapel in 1895.

The Grain Chapel remained under the care of the Sheerness church, who bought a rowing boat to ferry preachers across to Grain. One Sheerness

deacon served as lay pastor for over 50 years and made the crossing 3,000 times, occasionally having to stay overnight in Grain if a storm blew up during evening service.

In more recent times the public ferry and church boat both ceased to function and the isolation of Grain Chapel made the provision of ministry difficult. New arrangements made by the Medway District Council in 1997 failed to increase the membership of four and after two deaths it was decided to cease regular worship. The District Council accepted formal closure in 2000, but all who have loved the chapel and its faithful members are glad the building at the heart of the village is being used for regular weekday work by the Parish Church.

West Hill, Dartford

Southern

The origins of the former Independent Church in the centre of Dartford were in a split within the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel in the town. The date of foundation was probably 1818. Unfortunately controversy was to prove a familiar feature of much of the church's history with periods of growth and progress often cut short by disputes and division.

The ministry of the Revd Edward Hayward (1875-1908) was a high point. The church moved to a prominent corner site and erected what was meant to be the first phase of a large, confident set of premises. Chronic financial problems and the First World War intervened. Later in the century, new road schemes left the site far less attractive and the premises limiting and expensive. After abortive

attempts to move or unite elsewhere, the Church Meeting decided to close with effect from 9 December 2000 and the 27 members agreed to disperse to other nearby churches.

At the closing service, both the attendance and reminiscences were a reminder of how far the church's influence had spread. The Synod Moderator, David Helyar, explained that his Call to the ministry had been heard as a result of a service there. The Dartford ministry of the young Peter McIntosh is still remembered for several reasons; and in the same era the pulpit was sometimes filled by a promising teenager from Gravesend named David Cornick.

Tretower United Reformed Church, Powys*Wales*

In the first half of the nineteenth century, a small group of people were invited by one of the Vaughan's of Tretower Court to meet for worship in the Court. A room was adapted and a pulpit installed; this was the origin of the Congregational Church at Tretower. A Chapel was built in 1844 to accommodate the increased congregation drawn from the village and the surrounding area. The Chapel, along with the Parish Church, provided for the spiritual needs of the community. With the coming of labour-saving machinery to the farms, there was a declining need for as many workers. The

amalgamation of farms, smaller families, and the need for the young people to seek work further afield all contributed to diminishing membership and congregations.

At a Church Meeting in July 2000 the few remaining members discussed the situation and decided to close and join the Chapel at the neighbouring village of Cwmdu. A short closing service was held on Sunday 19 November 2000. We give thanks to God for the faithful witness of the congregation over 150 years.

Govan*Scotland*

The congregation in Govan was founded in 1870 and moved to its newly-built church in 1895. Set in the industrial heart of Glasgow, the Govan church maintained a Christian witness among the shipbuilding community until, in the 1960's and '70's, industrial decline began to take its toll on the community and the church.

With an ageing, dwindling congregation and a large building vulnerable to vandalsim, it became increasingly difficult for the church's mission to be sustained, and the decision to close was taken in 2000. A service of thanksgiving for the life and witness of the church over its 130 year history was held on 19 November.

Broomhill Trinity*Scotland*

The result of the coming together of Broomhill Congregational Church (founded 1898) and Trinity Congregational Church (founded 1862), Broomhill Trinity maintained the tradition of both its constituents of scholarly preaching and quality worship. The retiral of its minister, the Revd Sidney Bindemann, in early 2000 prompted a re-evaluation

of the church's work, and the small congregation decided that closure would now be appropriate. A service of thanksgiving was held on 9 July 2000.

Moderators' Report

Ministry in service of the Church's mission

1 This report begins by continuing reflection on the themes of mission and leadership which have formed the core of the last two Reports to Assembly by Synod Moderators. The heart of our task as Synod Moderators is assisting the whole Church to use, in the most faithful service of God and to its best advantage, the ministry which God raises up within it or provides from other Churches, while encouraging local congregations always to have the broadest possible view of their mission.

2 Ministerial Deployment

2.1 'Ministers are called to participate in [the church's total] ministry and to give leadership to the church in recognising it and sharing it with the world'. That sentence from last year's Synod Moderators' Report introduced a section which addressed the difficulties currently created by the gap 'between the number of posts we have available for stipendiary ministers and the number of ministers there are to fill the posts', and offered some possible strategies for countering those difficulties.

2.2 The process by which churches are helped to identify a minister to whom they wish to extend a call may appear, to those not directly involved, to be unduly protracted. It would seem that with a wide range of vacant pastorates, there would be no difficulty in making the 'right' introduction. Circumstances, however, often dictate otherwise: some stipendiary ministers for family or other reasons are very restricted in the area within which they can move; theological perspectives narrow the range of options; particular strengths or experience are necessary for some situations. When, rarely, a minister adaptable to many situations and ready to go anywhere turns up we can spend an hour trying to decide why any one of a number of possible pastorates should be given preference over the others!

2.3 But this is a scenario in which anecdotal information can give a distorted picture. Accordingly we decided to analyse our records following a scheme devised and used by one of our number, to see whether any pattern emerged and if so whether it might offer any crumb of comfort to those who feel that the system works to their disadvantage.

2.4 We looked at what had happened to ministers (43 from ten Synods) seeking a move and churches (83 from twelve Synods) seeking a minister over the previous twelve months. We were aware that we were looking at only a very small and statistically unreliable sample, that the time scale concerned was only that from when a church or minister came on our list to when a call was made and accepted (i.e. not from 'vacancy' to 'induction'), and that the data collected from the Synods had not been recorded and presented in identical ways. Even so, with all its unreliability, what emerged surprised us. We discovered that 37% of churches settled with their first introduction, with an average time on our lists of 7 months, and 35% settled with their second or third introduction, average time on our lists of 13 months. 65% of ministers settled with their first introduction and another 23% with their second, all being on our list for not more than seven months.

2.5 While those times are shorter than we expected the real lessons are to be drawn from those situations which are not included above. But it is precisely the varied nature of the features that create the delays that makes it difficult to draw lessons. Perhaps we can say no more than the obvious: that unless a pastorate appears to present opportunities for effective ministry then it can be very difficult to find a minister who wishes to be introduced. The difficulties arise when there is no clear meeting point between what a minister can offer and what churches are looking for.

3 The Church's Calling and Personal Leadership

3.1 So much for the process - or at least our part in it. There is, however, another concern engaging many of our people and this is the perceived present shortage of ministers of Word and Sacraments. In terms of the relationship between the membership of the Church and the number of ministers, there is no shortage; the 'shortage' arises from the fact that the number of congregations has not declined in the same proportion as the total membership. The remainder of this report is concerned with the way in which that perceived shortage may lead us to a broader understanding of the mission of the whole people of God and with one particular area, the world of work, in which that mission is exercised.

3.2 Personal leadership remains at the heart of the life of the Church and of each congregation in particular. That leadership has until now been most clearly identified with the ministry of Word and Sacraments, though it must be noted that congregations without 'their own minister' can flourish and grow where the personal element is represented by someone with a sensitivity to God's will and openness to the gifts of others, whether an interim moderator, an elder, or a non-ordained member.

3.3 There has been a renewed awareness in recent decades of the calling of the whole Church, constituted locally as individual congregations, to a task of mission in service of the gospel. The Church exists as a servant of the mission of God and no member of the Church is exempt from that calling. It may be that the perceived shortage of ministers referred to above, seen against a background of this renewed understanding of the call for the gifts of every member to be used in mission, may be a nudge or something stronger from the Holy Spirit to the whole Church to rethink its policy on ministry. *The Basis of Union* asserts (paragraph 24) that the Church will 'take steps to ensure that so far as is possible ordained ministers of the Word and Sacraments are readily available to every local church'. But note that the purpose of that undertaking is that 'it may be clearly seen that the worship of the local church is an expression of the worship of the whole people of God'. Worship is central to the Church's life, but what is the relation between worship and ministry? May it be that the time has come to revise our view of the ministry of Word and Sacraments as the chief focus of personal leadership within each congregation? Should we be looking anew at pastors and evangelists, trainers and enablers, with a renewed emphasis on 'the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry' (Ephesians 4. 12)? What we have looked upon as a problem may really be staring us in the face as an opportunity.

4 Looking Outwards from the Local Congregation

4.1 Such a broadening of our view of ministry would in itself help us to resist what our 1999 report, quoting Walter Brueggemann, called 'the Church's enduring domestication of vision'. Reflection upon the 'five marks of mission', usefully summarised as 'tell, teach, tend, transform and treasure', suggests that only one of them, the second, 'to teach, baptise and nurture new believers', can remotely be considered as having an inward reference to the Church's own life. The other four, taken seriously, force the Church to look beyond its own walls and help the world discern the loving and reconciling power of God in its midst. In the Industrial Mission Association's magazine *IMAgenda* (Special Edition 2000 page 10) the Bishop

of Worcester, Peter Selby, writes 'The church's identity may be affirmed and celebrated in its gathering, but it is discovered in its scattering. It is in the scattered, dispersed areas of life, where we teach in schools, treat people in hospitals, make things in factories, pursue criminals, set interest rates, bring up our children, that faithful discipleship is discovered, measured and given character.'

4.2 There are a number of particular ministries that focus this fundamental engagement of the Church with the world, among them that of Church Related Community Workers, whose number we are now actively seeking to increase. But there are also ministers of Word and Sacraments who find themselves called to give a positive lead to the Church in its response to the world by engaging in tasks beyond the pastorate, some of them on a full time basis. In this they give a firm example of those 'radical dissenters from the false worship of our society, whose dissent does not drive them (timidly or defiantly) into a ghetto, but out into the world' (paragraph 1 of 'Seven Fundamental Qualifications for the Ministry' *URC Manual 2000*, page K2). Chaplaincies in hospitals, educational institutions and the Armed Forces have long been one means of direct expression of the Christian gospel and are well understood and established among us. But there are other models often struggling to gain the same recognition and support, even though it is now some twenty years since, through the inspiration of union with the Reformed Association of the Churches of Christ, non-stipendiary ministry was introduced with this type of ministry as one of its major models, often through ministers engaged in secular employment. (*Manual 2000*, page K4.)

5 The Church's Response to the World of Work

5.1 The Church has long affirmed its calling to promote the gospel in the fields of health-care and education. But for many the end of education is a job and the atmosphere in which the job is performed can be a vital factor in fostering or hindering good health. Economic factors play a large part in shaping the life and geography of our communities. The success (or failure) of those with the task of establishing a base for employment and wealth creation is often at the heart of the 'shalom' of whole communities. It may be, as we shall note later, that the Church's interest in and support of those who venture in our name into the world of industry, business and the economy has been faltering and spasmodic. Yet because the world has been diverted from attention to the truths of the gospel and become ignorant of the love and strength implicit in it, there is an even greater need for those who can speak of the gospel's power to people in

work or seeking work or bruised in some way by their work, and can do so explicitly as representing the Church of Jesus Christ. To do so, however, requires a particular humility and willingness to learn. Not only have many people through experience or through rumour developed a negative view of the Church and its mission, but in addition rapid change in society and the kaleidoscopic nature of the forces which shape it create ever new tensions at the interface of the gospel and the world.

5.2 Part of the Church's concern for the world of work is expressed through Industrial Mission. Finding the right word is difficult. 'Industrial' still for many suggests too narrow a focus, excluding the world known as 'commerce'; 'chaplaincy to people at work' has difficulty encompassing the unemployed. Perhaps the difficulty itself indicates the breadth of the field. Certainly one word that is right is 'mission', for this part of the Church's life is a true engagement with the task to which we are impelled by the gospel, to proclaim and express the love of God for all people. Industrial Mission is concerned with the arena in which many people spend the greater part of their adult life. Despite the fact that many of our churches have in their congregation very few people actively involved in the world of work the Church has a duty to understand what happens there and how it affects those who are a part of it. Enlightened by this understanding the Church has a number of tasks - to offer support to all involved at whatever level, to provide a resource of prayer and Christian insight for those wrestling with the demands of their work or frustrated by unemployment, and to offer the values of the kingdom of God as guidelines for policies and systems that will make for fulfilling work and the recognition of each person's dignity as a human being.

5.3 In the work-place differences between denominations lose most of their relevance. Industrial Mission is a thoroughly ecumenical endeavour, uniting ordained and lay people from a variety of traditions and bringing together people of different faiths. Its means of working are similarly varied: although connections with Trade Union leaders and business managers are important, many chaplains find that visiting people in offices or on the shop-floor is still a vital part of the process of establishing one's identity, winning people's confidence and creating trust, a process out of which arise the pastoral opportunities for presenting the gospel in word or deed. A worker struggles with marriage difficulties, a manager faces a difficult decision as to whom to make redundant, a crisis in relationships develops within the work-force. Here the chaplain has a vital role in listening, supporting and mediating. Pastoral gifts of a high order are

required in helping those made redundant to retain their sense of self-worth, or in acting sensitively where there is a suspicion that racial attitudes or discrimination on religious or other grounds have influenced decisions.

5.4 But chaplains have a prophetic role as well as a pastoral one. Those questions about values and meaning that for church people are raised by worship and Bible study are encountered in the day to day experience of the world of work. Bringing Christian truths to bear on the assumptions and methods of commercial and industrial activity through conferences, seminars or workshops is a prophetic task, also exercised through the writing of articles and broadcasting.

5.5 In such ways chaplains have opportunities to influence the influences in the creation of environments and relationships that affirm the value of work and the dignity of workers. The Church's care is demonstrated for the great number of people who do not come into our buildings, and means are found of letting the Gospel be heard where doors are closed, through the growth of secular alternatives such as counselling and other professional welfare services, to more conventional Christian work.

5.6 It is not, of course, a uniform picture. Chaplains do experience rejection and hostility, though more often they receive a warm reception from people who are delighted that someone has shown an interest. But what of their involvement with and reception by the Church of whose mission they are a vital part? Does the Church listen to them, and try to understand through them the forces at work in industry and commerce, along with the strains and joys of working in that environment? Does the Church support them as they seek to encourage the adoption of Christian values in the world of work? Where members of our congregations are involved in that world do we listen enough to them for the insights into the Gospel that they glean from that world, and are we assiduous in our care for them as they revel in its joys and wrestle with its problems?

5.7 Writing in the article quoted above Maggie Pickup is hardly enthusiastic: 'It would be true to say that affirmation and support of the mission of the dispersed has been more than neglected in the great ecclesiastical scheme of things'. To that charge many of us would have to plead guilty. Again, the picture has many hues. Chaplains speak warmly of congregations where they are invited regularly to preach in services or address meetings, where people are aware of the environment in which they work and from where support is given not only personally but also through members of the

congregation becoming involved in the ecumenical bodies that have responsibility for the work. Here, information and support flow in both directions, and people explore the meaning of the gospel not only for individual lives but also for the systems and structures of our common life, of which industry and commerce are so large a part.

5.8 We are right to be concerned that the Church has sufficient trained and effective leadership for the needs of its congregations. But if we are to avoid the domestication by the Church of its vision it is essential that we release sufficient resources, especially of personnel, for what Maggie Pickup calls 'the creative sustaining mission of God [that] is the gracious gift of eternal love to and for all time'. We live in a world in which more people than ever before are in some form of paid employment. The development of regional structures is creating new centres of economic and political power in which faith communities struggle to be heard. If we are to have any clear idea of the kind of society in which we are called to speak of that gracious gift of eternal love, we have to be aware of the issues surrounding the values, aims and ethos of the organisations which create employment and the culture of ambition and success which shapes so much of our thinking about work. For that awareness, and for the Church's more effective mission, we need to listen to and wholeheartedly support those who have a particular ministry in the world of work.

6 Personalialia

6.1 At this Assembly we bid farewell to our two longest serving colleagues. David Helyar retires after 14 years service as Moderator of the Southern Synod, and John Humphreys moves to another appointment after 12 years service as Moderator of the Synod of Wales. They have been steadfast, wise and loving colleagues; we shall miss their friendship but wish them every blessing in the future. In their place we look forward to welcoming Nigel Uden (Southern) and Peter Noble (Wales). Derek Wales will retire in January after serving the greater part of one term as Moderator of the Wessex Synod. He has been an active servant of the Moderators Meetings as its secretary, and will be missed for his cheerfulness and wise friendship. It is hoped that a nomination for his successor will be brought to the Assembly.

6.2 We are delighted that one of our colleagues has been elected as Moderator of General Assembly and we wish Elizabeth Welch God's blessing during the Assembly and throughout her year in office.



Mission Council

**General Assembly
York 2001**

July 10th

**Annual Reports,
Resolutions
and Papers**



The
United
Reformed
Church

Mission Council

The purpose of the Mission Council is to enable the Church, in its General Assembly, to take a more comprehensive view of the activity and policy of the Church, to decide more carefully about priorities and to encourage the outreach of the Church to the community. Its service is directly towards the Assembly, but its concern is with the whole Church and all its members, so it will seek to be aware of the pains and joys, the adventures and hopes of the whole body.

Members: *The officers of the General Assembly, the past Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the Legal Adviser, the conveners of the Assembly standing committees (except the Pastoral Reference Committee), the synod moderators, two representatives of FURY Council, and three representatives from each synod.*

The representatives of synods in March 2001 were:

Northern	<i>Revd Pamela Ward</i>	<i>Dr Peter Clarke</i>	<i>Mrs Roberta Wood</i>
North Western	<i>Revd Geoffrey Townsend</i>	<i>Mrs Margareta Batchelor</i>	<i>Mrs Janice Cockcroft</i>
Mersey	<i>Mrs Lillian Covell</i>	<i>Dr Donald South</i>	<i>Revd Gwynfor Evans</i>
Yorkshire	<i>Revd John Jenkinson</i>	<i>Mr John Seager</i>	<i>Mrs Val Morrison</i>
East Midlands	<i>Mrs Jill Strong</i>	<i>Revd Clifford Wilton</i>	<i>Revd David Miller</i>
West Midlands	<i>Mr Simon Rowntree</i>	<i>Revd Sam Ansa Addo</i>	<i>Mrs Ann Sheldon</i>
Eastern	<i>Revd Victor Ridgewell</i>	<i>Mr Ken Woods</i>	<i>Revd Richard Mortimer</i>
South Western	<i>Revd Roy Lowes</i>	<i>Revd Paul Snell</i>	<i>Ms Angela Bebbington</i>
Wessex	<i>Mr Graham Rolfe</i>	<i>Revd Simon Thomas</i>	<i>Mrs Veronica Taylor</i>
Thames North	<i>Mr Keith Webster</i>	<i>Revd Dr Robin Pagan</i>	<i>Mr Geoffrey Duncan</i>
Southern	<i>Mrs Christine Meekison</i>	<i>Revd Dawn Mather</i>	<i>Mr Ian Chalmers</i>
Wales	<i>Revd Kristin Ofstad</i>	<i>Mrs Delyth Rees</i>	<i>Revd David Fox</i>
Scotland	<i>Revd Ken Forbes</i>	<i>Mrs Helen Mee</i>	<i>Miss Catriona Smith</i>

I Our meetings

1.1 During the year Mission Council has met residentially at Ushaw College, Durham, and All Saints Pastoral Centre, St Albans, and for a one-day meeting at the Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh. Freed from the demanding burden of guiding the human sexuality debate, it has been possible for the Council to take up issues to do with the mission and ministry of the church. In this it has been helped by the work of a number of task groups and committees.

1.2 The positive and encouraging attitude of the Moderator has helped the meetings, not least at moments of dryness or difficulty. As always the worship has sustained the meetings and in the leading of this the Moderator has been helped by his chaplain, the Revd Paul Bedford.

1.3 Theological reflection at the residential meetings was provided by the Revd Dr Christina Le Moignan and the Revd Bernard Longley. This year the Council adopted the practice of discussing the written comments of the theological reflectors at the following meeting. This was done with the hope that

the reflections would be able to have a greater effect on the minds and hearts of the members, and on their shared work.

1.4 Owing to his inability to be present at Assembly at the conclusion of his term of office, the Revd Peter McIntosh was invited to report to Mission Council on his moderatorial year. This he did with his usual passion and humour. The Council shared the pleasure felt by many others at Peter's restoration to health.

2 Responding to the Assembly

2.1 **Human sexuality pastoral group.** This group was set up by resolution 41 of the 1997 Assembly and over the years since has given some help and guidance to those in pastoral need because of the human sexuality debate. The members of the group are: Elizabeth Caswell, Malcolm Hanson, Jim Hollyman, Glyn Jenkins, Lis Mullen and John Waller. Mission Council extended the life of the group for a further year, at least until October 2001, recognising that the decisions of last year's Assembly on human sexuality did not necessarily do away with the need for pastoral support to be available.

2.2 **Occupational Health Service for Ministers.** Although some initial thinking has been done on this matter, Mission Council is not yet ready to report.

2.3 **The early appointment of committee secretaries.** It was suggested at last year's Assembly that secretaries, as well as conveners, should be appointed a year before taking up office. Mission Council considered this. Its advice is not to make a further change and that the overlap of conveners should be sufficient to ensure continuity.

2.4 **Unifying Assembly resolution on Women's Work.** This matter has been considered by the Mission Council Advisory Group and by the Life and Witness Committee. Their recommendations will be considered at the next meeting of Mission Council.

2.5 **Small churches task group.** The group appointed in response to Assembly resolution 6 of 1998 reported in March. After some discussion it was agreed to make some minor changes and to edit the report in a form that was suitable for wider circulation. It will then be published and available from the bookshop.

2.6 **Secretary for Racial Justice.** Following the passing of resolution 49 at Assembly 2000, Mission Council agreed that it needed to set up this post as a matter of urgency. A job description was agreed and an appointment group named. Because of the timing of meetings, it was agreed that the officers of General Assembly could make the appointment if the appointment group came up with a clear recommendation. Mrs Katalina Tahaafe-Williams was appointed as Secretary for Racial Justice and has taken up her duties. She will be inducted at Assembly. Mission Council is grateful particularly to Mrs Sandra Ackroyd for overseeing the work of the Racial Justice office in the time when there has not been a staff secretary in post.

3 **Actions on behalf of the General Assembly**

3.1 **Appointment of synod moderators.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council appointed the Revd Peter Clive Noble as Moderator of the Synod of Wales, and the Revd Nigel Philip Uden as Southern Synod Moderator, both for a period of seven years to 31 August 2008.

3.2 **Appointment to staff post.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council re-appointed the Revd Philip James Woods as Secretary for International Relations for a period of five years to 31 August 2006.

3.3 **Appointment of conveners-elect.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, and following its decision in 2000, Mission Council appointed these people as conveners-elect of committees with a view to their taking office as conveners at this Assembly:

Doctrine, Prayer and Worship	Revd John Young
Ecumenical	Revd John Rees
Accreditation Sub-Committee	Revd Ken Chippindale
National Assessment Board	Mrs Darryl Sinclair
Windermere Advisory Group	Mr Jim Wilkinson

3.4 **Appointment of Principal of Westminster College.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council appointed the Revd Dr Stephen Charles Orchard as Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge, for a period of six years from 1 August 2001. Mission Council asked the Cambridge District Council to induct Dr Orchard.

3.5 **Extension of convener's service.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, and recognising the particular needs of the committee concerned, Mission Council extended the period of service of the Revd Graham Long as convener of the Ministries Committee by one year to July 2002.

3.6 **Other appointments.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council made the following appointments:

Council for World Mission
Revd Kenneth Forbes, Mrs Olive Bell, Mr Neil Platt

Churches Together in England
Mrs Wilma Frew, Revd Alan Thomasson,
Mrs Val Morrison, Revd Peter Southcombe,
Revd Graham Cook, Mrs Darnett Whitby-Reid,
Mr Mark Argent, Revd Kirsty Thorpe,
Revd John Rees and Revd Sheila Maxey plus two representatives from FURY Assembly.

Methodist Conference: Revd John Rees

3.7 **Church appointments and termed contracts.** As a result of changes in employment legislation, and acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council resolved:

'that all lay staff appointed to Assembly posts should be given an open-ended contract, with a few exceptions (i.e. when the post lasts less than one year or where there is a clearly defined limited life to the task or to the funding);'

'that any change from fixed term contract to an open-ended one should occur only when the existing contract expires, with the exception of those which have been issued since October 1999, where the employee takes the opportunity to change to the new form of contract;'

'that the position of ministers in Assembly posts should be reviewed in the light of the above decisions, after the Ministries Committee has completed its work on ministerial service, noting nevertheless that ministers are holders of an office.'

Following the passing of these resolutions Mission Council resolved on its own behalf to advise the other councils of the church to review and if necessary revise their employment policies in the light of these decisions and to ensure that they comply with current legislation.

3.8 **Committee for Racial Justice.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council agreed to establish a new standing Committee for Racial Justice and asked the Nominations Committee to propose names for its officers and members. The Revd Raymond Singh was confirmed as convener of the Committee for Racial Justice.

3.9 **The Hungarian Reformed Church.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council resolved -

'to take the following actions in accordance with the authority vested in it as the successor to the Committee named in Clause 4 of a Trust Deed dated 28th January 1966 regarding the property number 17 St Dunstan's Road London W6 (the property) held for the purposes of the Hungarian Reformed Church :-

1. To resolve that the United Reformed Church shall sell the property to the Hungarian Reformed Church Foundation (the Foundation) for a nominal consideration and
2. In pursuance of such sale, to authorise and request The United Reformed Church Trust to transfer the legal title of the property to such private trustees as the Foundation shall nominate for that purpose and
3. To apply the net proceeds of such sale (if any) for the charitable purposes contained in the Trust Deed.'

3.10 **Basic ministerial stipend.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council set the basic ministerial stipend for 2001 at £16,944.

3.11 **Changes to the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund Rules.** Assembly 2000, in its resolution 32, made certain changes to the rules of the Ministers' Pension Fund. It quickly became clear that there had been flaws in the drafting of the resolution and therefore Mission Council, acting for Assembly, amended the Rules of The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund by the deletion of the words shown in square brackets and by the addition of the words in italics:

14.1.2 [If a minister serving a local church is inducted to part-time service whilst under the age of fifty five years or being a contributing member of the Fund reduces] *If a contributing member serving full-time reduces his/her commitment to that of part-time service whilst under normal pension age, the Pension Trustee may raise the Pensionable Service to the level applicable to a full-time minister having regard to the length of any previous full-time service, to the age and health of the minister, to the fraction of basic stipend being paid and to the purpose and pensionability of any other employment and shall in such cases allow full membership of the Pension Fund, contributions then being payable on the full basic stipend.*

15.3 Where part-time membership only has been granted [under Rule 14.1.2] the contributions referred to in paragraphs 15.1 and 15.2 of this Rule shall apply only in relation to the proportion of the basic stipend being paid.

18. Normal Retirement Pensions
Subject to Rules 18.3 and 18.4 all pensions are based on stipend at date of retirement or normal pension age whichever is the earlier. A member retiring in respect of whom all due contributions have been made shall be entitled to a pension based on years and months of pensionable service. [The pension will be proportionately reduced in respect of any year of part-time membership granted under Rule 14.1.2.] The amount of pension at retirement shall be:-

20.3 If a member at the time of ill-health retirement is a part-time member [under Rule 14.1.2] any uncompleted years under paragraph 20.2 above shall be reduced to the proportion that the number of pensionable years under Rule 18 bears to the number of years membership of the Fund, unless a concession granted under Rule 14.1.2 is in operation and full contributions were paid up to the date of incapacity.

3.12 **Sale of URC Insurance Company Limited**

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, resolved that:

- (i) the sale to Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc of the whole of the issued share capital of URC Insurance Company Limited on the terms outlined in Paper L be approved in principle;
- (ii) the Honorary Treasurer, the Deputy General Secretary and the Financial Secretary be authorised to conclude detailed negotiations and agree the form of contract to be entered into with Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc; and
- (iii) United Reformed Church Trust be authorised to execute the necessary documents relating to the contract and the transfer of shares to Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc.

It was subsequently reported that the sale had been completed on satisfactory terms. Thanks were extended to the former directors of the company and the Honorary Treasurer was commended for his work in effecting the sale. It was recognised that the directors of the Company had given valued service to the church and that significant income had been received from the company over many years.

4 **Other actions**

4.1 **Reports.** During the year Mission Council has been able to give time to considering reports from a number of task groups and committees. The report of the task group on local church premises, seen as an added resource to *Growing Up*, is now available through the bookshop. Discussion of this report led to a much wider discussion on mission resources. A paper was prepared and synods were asked to give account of the ways in which they are using resources to refresh the mission of the church. Some of the results of this discussion will be shared through the synod reports to Assembly. The report of an inter-committee group on diaconal ministry and the report of the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee on the responsibility and accountability of ministries were also considered. It was felt that both should be held as a resource, in particular for the committees whose remit covers the subject of the reports. The revised report on the grouping of churches was considered. As a result resolution 11 is being brought to Assembly. District or area councils wanting a copy of the final version of the report, now called *The Grouping of Churches*, should apply to the Deputy General Secretary's office.

4.2 **Deputy General Secretary.** A group was set up to review this post and the method of appointment when it falls vacant on 31 August 2002. After due consideration it was agreed that the post

should be continued with a job description very similar to that drafted when the appointment of the Revd Dr David Cornick as General Secretary was made. A nominating group chaired by the Moderator of General Assembly and representative of the synods has been set up. Details of the post have been circulated and nominations have been invited by 31 July 2001. It is hoped that the process will be completed in time for an appointment to be made by Mission Council in January 2002. The appointment will be for seven years in the first instance.

4.3 **Assembly minutes.** Mission Council appointed the Revd Kenneth Forbes to be responsible for taking the minutes at the next four General Assemblies.

4.4 **Youth and Children's Work Review.** Mission Council encouraged the Youth and Children's Work Committee in its intention to set up a review of youth and children's work in the United Reformed Church. This will include the work of the Youth and Children's Work Committee, its officers and the National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings. The Training Committee has requested that the Youth and Children's Work Trainers should be included in the review.

The review team consists of the following members:

- Revd Elizabeth Caswell - Convener
(Moderator, Eastern Synod)
- Mr Graham Stacy - Honorary Treasurer,
United Reformed Church
- Mrs Anthea Coates - Training Committee
- Revd Kathryn Price - Youth and Children's
Work Committee
- Mr Colin Ride - Training Officer, Yorkshire
District of the Methodist Church
- Mr John Marshall - Secretary,
FURY Council
- Revd Derek Lindfield - Convener, Youth
and Children's Work Committee

It is planned that the review team will make a provisional report to the February meeting of the Youth and Children's Work Committee, and then to Mission Council in March with a view to making a presentation at the General Assembly in July 2002.

4.5 **'Training for Learning & Serving' (TLS) Programme** In December 1999 the Training Committee was concerned to learn that the Scottish Churches Open College had decided to withdraw permission for the *Training for Learning and Serving* Programme to be delivered in England and Wales. It immediately conducted a review of the TLS Programme and identified key elements for any new course. Over the following six months, the Training Committee conducted a search for an alternative programme. After an extensive search, four options

Resolution 7

were put to Mission Council in October 2000. Mission Council suggested a fifth option - that the General Secretary re-negotiate the purchase of the copyright of the TLS *Foundation and Worship and Preaching* courses from the Directors of the Scottish Churches Open College. Mission Council is very grateful to Tony Burnham for successfully completing this mission. The United Reformed Church will, therefore, be able to use and develop the *Training for Learning and Serving* programme for the foreseeable future.

This resolution of a potentially very difficult situation has been sealed by the re-appointment of the Revd David A L Jenkins as National Co-ordinator for TLS in England and Wales for a further three-year period to summer 2004. This will take him to normal retirement age. Both Mission Council and the Training Committee share the general gratitude for David's vision, drive and enthusiasm in establishing and managing the course. This extension of his appointment should ensure that the new phase is established on a firm foundation.

4.6 Resolution from Yorkshire Synod A comprehensive resolution from the Synod, which arose from concern about the length of current ministerial vacancies, was considered. After discussion, many of the issues raised were referred to the review currently being carried out by the Ministries Committee (Assembly 2000, resolution 35). The Moderators' Meeting also undertook to review the movement of ministers over the ensuing months and the result of that review is included in its report to this Assembly. Other aspects of the Yorkshire Synod's resolution are still being considered.

4.7 Luther King House Educational Trust Following the setting up of this Trust, Mission Council confirmed the appointment of the Revd John M Piper

as a director and agreed that at general meetings of the Trust the United Reformed Church could be represented by its appointed director or by the General Secretary or Honorary Treasurer.

4.8 Resource Sharing Task Group This group was established in 1994 and over the subsequent years it has worked with representatives of the synods to find ways in which resources might be shared across the church. In a report to Mission Council the task group indicated that it believed that the principle of inter-synod resource sharing had been established as part of the Church's way of life. Confirmation of that is given in the expectation that in 2001 all the synods will be contributing 10% of their investment income to resource-sharing. Mission Council agreed to continue the task group in being for a further term, in order to sustain and develop the process, and re-appointed the Revd Tony Burnham as convener.

4.9 Personnel Change Mission Council expressed its gratitude to the Revd Dr Lesley Hesselbee for her service since 1992 first as the Departmental Secretary for Ministries and then as Secretary for Training. Dr Hesselbee has been appointed to the staff of Northern College from 1 September 2001.

4.10 The world beyond Inevitably much of Mission Council's time is directed towards the life of the church. However, that is not always the case. At one meeting Mission Council welcomed the formation of The Jubilee Campaign Debt Network and supported the United Reformed Church's participation in it. More recently it heard a report on the foot and mouth outbreak and its effect on rural life and economy. The church may be a sign of the Kingdom but it is in the whole world that we pray God's Kingdom will come.

Resolution 7

Inter-Faith Relations Committee

General Assembly:

- a) agrees to an extension of the life of the Inter-Faith Relations Committee for a further five years until 2006 with a review at the beginning of the fifth year and
- b) agrees to add Hinduism to the list of other faiths in the committee's remit and also to add religious discrimination to its brief.

1.1 The Inter-Faith Relations Committee was established for an initial period of five years, the work having been previously the responsibility of a task group. Mission Council asked Rosalind Goodfellow, Graham Rolfe and Brenda Willis to look into the work of the committee and make a recommendation as to the future. Their report made clear their opinion that the need for the committee was even more important now than it was five years ago, as more and more Britain develops as a plural

society. They identified two omissions from the brief of the committee and these are reflected in the resolution above. Mission Council accepted the recommendations of the review. It has also acted on the suggestion that staff support for the Inter-Faith Relations Committee should no longer be the responsibility of the Secretary for International Relations. It has been added to the job description of the Secretary for Racial Justice.

Resolution 8**Charity Trusts**

General Assembly agrees that the members of the Mission Council Advisory Group for the time being are considered to be the Charity Trustees of the United Reformed Church.

1.1 The Charities Act 1993 defines charity trustees as 'the persons having general control and management of the administration of a charity'. In a booklet produced by the Charity Commission this definition is amplified as follows: 'The charity trustees are the people responsible under the charity's governing document for controlling the management and administration of the charity regardless of what they are called. Some charities have custodian or holding trustees, whose function is simply to hold the legal title to the charity's property or investments. Custodian or holding trustees have no role as such in the charity's management.'

1.2 In the United Reformed Church it is clear that the Assembly itself has general control and management of the administration of the Church. However the law requires the identification of a

relatively small group of people, in regular touch with the life of the Church, to be identified as charity trustees. Mission Council believes that the group which can most easily take on this responsibility is the Mission Council Advisory Group. Its members are the Moderator, immediate past Moderator, Moderator-elect, General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, Treasurer; and two committee conveners and four Mission Council members appointed by Mission Council.

1.3 It should be noted that local churches also need to have people in the role of charity trustees: the Charity Commissioners have indicated that they would normally regard the elders' meeting as having this responsibility.

Resolution 9**Changes to the Structure: Grouping**

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to the Structure:

Paragraph 1(1)

Number the present paragraph from the second sentence to the end as paragraph 1(1)(a) and add the following two paragraphs:

1(1)(b) Where two or more local churches together, and in consultation with the district council, decide that their mission will be more effective if they share resources and ordained ministry, they may, on the recommendation of the district council and the decision of the synod, form an association known as a group of churches with a structured relationship and a constitution governing the way in which they relate to one another as to the sharing of both resources and the ordained ministry. Each church within the group shall retain its own identity, and its church meeting and elders' meeting shall continue to exercise all their functions in relation to that church, save that, so long as the constitution shall so declare, decisions relating to the calling of a minister (see paragraph 2(1)(vii)) may be taken by a single group church meeting at which all the members of each of the constituent churches in the group shall be eligible to attend and vote.

1(1)(c) Where two or more local churches together, and in consultation with the district council, decide that their mission will be more effective if they share ordained ministry (but not other resources), they may, on the recommendation of the district council and the decision of the synod, form an association known as a joint pastorate, with a structured relationship with respect to the provision of ordained ministry only and a statement of intent governing the way in which they relate to one another in relation to the sharing of ordained ministry. Each church within the joint pastorate shall retain its own identity, and its church meeting and elders' meeting shall continue to exercise all their functions in relation to that

church, save that, so long as the statement of intent shall so declare, decisions relating to the calling of a minister (see paragraph 2(1)(vii)) may be taken by a single joint pastorate church meeting at which all the members of each of the constituent churches in the joint pastorate shall be eligible to attend and vote.

Paragraph 2(1)(vii)

Add the following:

(Where two or more churches have formed a group or joint pastorate in accordance with paragraph 1(1)(b) or (c) above on the decision of synod under its function 2(4)(A)(iv), the church meetings of each church may, with the agreement of the synod on the advice of the district council and so long as the group constitution or the statement of intent as appropriate shall so provide, join together as a group or joint pastorate church meeting for the purpose of calling a minister, in which case this function shall be exercised by the group or joint pastorate church meeting.)

Paragraph 2(3)(c)

Change the words in brackets by amending “the second sentence of para.1(1)” so that it reads “para. 1(1)(a)”.

Paragraph 2(3)(A)(ii)

Change the second word “church” to “church(es)”.

Paragraph 2(3)(A)(iv)

Change the word “church” to “church(es)”.

Paragraph 2(4)(c)

Change the words in brackets by amending “the second sentence of para.1(1)” so that it reads “para. 1(1)(a)”.

1.1 This resolution derives from the report on the grouping of churches which was sent to all district and area councils in May 2000 and on which comments were invited by 31 December 2000. In the responses there was a general sense that it would be seen as helpful if groups and joint pastorates were recognised in the Structure of the church, since they had long been recognised in

practice, and that it should be made possible (but not mandatory) for groups and joint pastorates to call a minister at a single meeting rather than requiring each church meeting to register a separate decision. This is an enabling resolution, intended to increase the amount of flexibility with which groups and joint pastorates can operate.

Resolution 10

Changes to the Structure: Appeals

General Assembly agrees to replace the current paragraph 5(2) of the Structure with the following:

5(2) References and appeals falling outside paragraph 5(1) shall be dealt with as follows:-

(A) A local church (either through its church meeting or its elders' meeting)

(i) A local church may appeal to the district council upon which it is entitled to be represented for the resolution of any dispute or difference.

(ii) A local church may appeal to the synod against any decision of the district council by which it is affected.

(iii) A local church may appeal to the General Assembly against any decision of the synod (whether or not as the result of an appeal) by which it is affected.

(B) An individual member of a local church (expressed below as a church member)

(i) Subject to (iv) below, a church member may appeal to the district council upon which the local church of which s/he is a member is entitled to be represented for the resolution of any dispute or difference between the church member and that local church.

(ii) Subject to (iv) below, a church member may appeal to the synod against any decision of the district council (whether or not as the result of an appeal) by which s/he is affected.

(iii) Subject to (iv) below, a church member may appeal to the General Assembly against any decision of the synod (whether or not as the result of an appeal) by which s/he is affected.

(iv) In the case of a church member, no right of appeal exists under B(i), (ii) or (iii) above unless the subject matter of the appeal is such that it directly touches and concerns the church member in his/her individual relationship with the local church of which s/he is member as distinct from some other aspect of the life of the church with which the church member may disagree.

(C) District council

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

(D) Synod

A 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.

(E) 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 paragraph 8 of the Rules of Procedure for the conduct of the United Reformed Church.

1.1 These changes have the effect of making the right of appeal clearer and of avoiding the possibility of an appeal being lodged by an appellant who is not directly affected by a particular decision.

1.2 If this resolution is ratified, a resolution will be proposed at next year's Assembly making consequential changes to the Rules of Procedure.

Resolution 11

Section O Part I

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to Part I of the Section O Process for Ministerial Discipline:

Paragraph 1

Delete the existing Paragraph 1 and substitute the following :-

“1.1 Under the provisions of this Section O an Assembly Commission (as defined in Paragraph 3) shall operate under the authority of the General Assembly for the purpose of deciding (in cases properly referred to it) the questions as to whether a Minister has committed a breach of discipline and, if the Assembly Commission should so decide, whether on that account his/her name should be deleted from the Roll of Ministers or alternatively whether a written warning should be issued to him/her. Under the Section O Process the Assembly Commission is also able to make recommendations and offer guidance but only within the scope of Paragraphs 10 and 16 of this Part I.

1.2 Once the case of any Minister is being dealt with under the Section O Process, it shall be conducted and concluded entirely in accordance with that Process and not through any other procedure of the Church”

Paragraph 2

Delete the words “the Process set out in this Section O” and substitute the words “the Section O Process”.

Delete the words “of the United Reformed Church” after the word “Structure”.

Delete the words “this Section O” and substitute “the Section O Process”.

Paragraph 3

Delete Paragraph 3 and its sub-paragraphs and substitute the following :-

“3 For the purpose of this Section O, the following words and expressions carry the following meanings :-

3.1 “Appeals Commission” shall mean the Commission constituted for the hearing of each Appeal in accordance with Paragraph 12.

3.2 “Appointers” shall mean the persons responsible under Paragraph 6 for the appointment of the Assembly Commission.

3.3 “Assembly Commission” shall mean a Commission consisting of five (5) persons selected from the Commission Panel for the purpose of hearing and deciding each case dealt with under the Section O Process.

3.4 “Basis of Union” shall mean the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church.

3.5 “Commission Panel” shall mean a Panel consisting of a maximum of fifty (50) members of the United Reformed Church from whom shall be chosen the persons to form the Assembly Commission to hear each case being dealt with under the Section O Process.

3.6 “Commission Stage” shall mean that part of the Section O Process initiated in accordance with Paragraph 5.

3.7 “Council” shall mean the council of the Church whose Mandated Group issues the Referral Notice.

3.8 “Deletion” and “to delete” shall mean the removal of/to remove the name of a Minister from the Roll of Ministers other than at the request of the Minister concerned or by the acceptance of his/her resignation or by his/her death.

3.9 “District Council” shall mean that District Council which in relation to any Minister exercises oversight of that Minister in accordance with its function under Paragraph 2 (3)(i) of the Structure and references to District Council 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 as regards Scotland be read as meaning “area council” or “area”.

- 3.10 “Hearing” shall mean the Hearing conducted by the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission under Section E or Section G of the Rules of Procedure.
- 3.11 “Investigation” shall mean the process of investigation carried out by the Mandated Group as set out in Section D of the Rules of Procedure.
- 3.12 “Mandated Group” shall mean the group mandated to act in the name of a District Council under Section B of the Rules of Procedure and in any case where the Referral Notice has been issued in the name of a council other than the District Council the expression “Mandated Group” shall where the context so permits be construed as a reference to the member or members (not exceeding three) of any corresponding group of such other council.
- 3.13 “Minister” shall mean a person whose name is on the Roll of Ministers and who is under consideration within the Section O Process.
- 3.14 “Notice of Appeal” shall mean a Notice specified in the Rules of Procedure whereby either of the parties in any case indicates his/her/its intention to appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission.
- 3.15 “Notice of Reference back” shall mean a Notice from the Appeals Commission of any reference back for re-hearing by the Assembly Commission under Paragraph 14.7.
- 3.16 “Parties” shall mean (i) the Council, which for the purpose of the Section O Process shall act solely and exclusively through its Mandated Group, and (ii) the Minister.
- 3.17 “Referral Notice” shall mean a Notice specified in the Rules of Procedure whereby a case concerning Ministerial Discipline is referred into the Commission Stage and shall include any statement of reasons for such referral which may be appended to it.
- 3.18 “Roll of Ministers” shall have the meaning given to it in Paragraph 1 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union.
- 3.19 “Rules of Procedure” shall mean the Rules of Procedure governing the system of ministerial discipline commencing with the exercise by the District Council, Synod or General Assembly of its function as set out in Paragraph 2(3)(xviii), Paragraph 2(4)(xv) or Paragraph 2(5)(xxiii) of the Structure as the case may be and continuing throughout the Section O Process such Rules being contained in Part II of Section O.
- 3.20 “Secretary of the Assembly Commission” shall mean the person appointed by the General Assembly on the advice of the Nominations Committee to be responsible for all secretarial and procedural matters laid upon him/her by virtue of the Section O Process, and the period and terms of office of that person shall be such as the General Assembly shall decide.
- 3.21 “Section O Process” shall mean the whole Process set out in this Section O (subject to such variations as shall from time to time be made)
- 3.22 “Structure” shall mean the Structure of the United Reformed Church.
- 3.23 “Suspension” and “to suspend” shall have the meanings assigned to them in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union.
- 3.24 “Synod Panel” shall mean the Panel to be set up by each Synod from which the Mandated Group shall be appointed as set out in Section B of the Rules of Procedure.”

Paragraph 4

After the words "Nominations Committee" insert the words "(or such other committee as may in the future perform the functions of the existing Nominations Committee)".

Paragraph 5

Delete Paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 and substitute the following :-

"5 The Commission Stage shall be initiated in every case by the service upon the Secretary of the Assembly Commission of a Referral Notice in the name of the District Council, the Synod or the General Assembly (or Mission Council acting on its behalf) in pursuance of their respective functions as contained in the Structure and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure."

Paragraph 7

In Paragraph 7.2 delete the words "a Minister, or the council lodging the Referral Notice" and substitute the words "either of the parties".

Paragraph 10

In Paragraph 10.2.2 add the following words at the end:
"or guidance in accordance with paragraph 16.1.4".

Paragraph 11

In Paragraph 11.2 delete the opening words "The council of the Church which lodged the Referral Notice in any case may" and substitute the words: "The Mandated Group of the Council which lodged the Referral Notice in any case may in the name of that Council".

Delete the word "concerned" after the word "Minister".

Also add the following sentence at the end of Paragraph 11.2 :-

"In any case where no written warning is attached to the decision not to delete, the Notice may state, if the Mandated Group so desires, that the appeal is limited to the question of the issue of a written warning to the Minister."

Paragraph 12

In Paragraph 12 delete the first sentence and substitute the following :-

"The Appeals Commission for the Hearing of each Appeal shall consist of five (5) persons and shall include the Moderator of the General Assembly (subject to the provisions of Paragraphs 7.1.1 and 7.1.2)."

Paragraph 14

In Paragraph 14.7, after the words "of the information before it" insert the words "or of any aspect of the Section O Process itself".

Paragraph 16

In Paragraph 16.1.3, after the word "Roll" insert the words "of Ministers".

Paragraph 17

In Paragraph 17.2 add the following words at the end :-

“ , provided that, where the Mandated Group has formally signified to the Assembly Commission that it does not intend to press the case for any disciplinary action to be taken against the Minister and provided that the Assembly Commission decides not to issue a written warning, the Assembly Commission may as an appendage to its decision not to delete state that the Minister’s suspension shall terminate with immediate effect.”

Paragraphs 19 and 20

In both paragraphs, delete the word “concerned”.

Paragraph 21

In Paragraph 21 after the words “applying for training” in the final sentence insert the words “for the ministry” and delete the bracketed words “(local church, district, national assessment, synod)”.

Paragraph 22

In Paragraph 22 delete the words “of the United Reformed Church”.

1.1 In the early years of the operation of the Section O process Mission Council has a small group keeping the process under continual review. These changes are a consequence. If this resolution

is ratified, a resolution will be proposed at next year’s Assembly making consequential changes to the Rules of Procedure.

Resolution 12

Health and Healing Development Group

General Assembly agrees to continue the life of the present Health and Healing Development Group for a further year, or until the group set up by Churches Together in England is ready to take over the work.

1.1 The joint Methodist/United Reformed Church Health and Healing Development Group was set up in 1996 for an initial period of five years. More recently there has been a Churches Together in England initiative to form a wider ecumenical group based on the Methodist/United Reformed Church

one. It is likely that this initiative will be in operation very shortly, and certainly within a year. Consideration will be given to how health and healing issues will be handled in Scotland and Wales.

Resolution 13

Changes to the Structure

General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision of July 2000 to make the following changes to the Structure of the United Reformed Church:

Amend paragraph 2(5)(b) by inserting “and” before “the Deputy General Secretary” and deleting the words “and the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee”.

Add a new paragraph 3(1)(h): For the purposes of this paragraph 3(1), only synods, district councils and churches in existence on the date set for responses to be made shall be counted in the calculations.

Resolution 14

1.1 No objections have been raised to this decision (resolution 6 of 2000). The first change rectified the situation whereby the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee was made a member of Assembly in two successive clauses. The second change makes clear that when a

decision is referred to the councils of the church, and an agreed percentage has to support (or is allowed to frustrate) that decision, the total number of councils shall be of those that are in existence at the date set for responses.

Resolution 14

Basis Schedule A(I)

General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision of July 2000 to add to Schedule A of the Basis of Union outlined in Version III, as follows:

Or: (c) Addition to Schedule A: Version III

(At Baptism at an age of responsibility or at profession of faith for those baptised as infants)

**Q: Do you believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
maker of heaven and earth,
giver of life, redeemer of the world?**

A: I do.

Q: Do you repent of your sins, turn away from evil, and turn to Christ?

A: By God's grace, I do.

Q: Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?

A: I do.

(At reception into the full privileges and responsibilities of membership)

**Q: From the beginning,
believers have continued in the worship
and fellowship of the church:
N, do you commit yourself to this life?**

A: I do, with God's help.

**Q: With the whole Church, will you proclaim
by word and action
the good news of God in Christ?**

A: I will, with God's help.

1.1 No objections have been raised to this decision (resolution 23 of 2000). It offered an alternative form of words to be used at baptism or reception into the full privileges and responsibilities of membership.

Resolution 15**Basis Schedule A(2)**

General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision of July 2000 to delete from Schedule A of the Basis of Union.

“Or: (c) in the forms customarily used in the uniting churches before unification.” and to add

“Or: (d) in a form which includes the following elements:

- **a Trinitarian confession of faith**
- **repentance of sin**
- **a confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord**
- **a promise to share in the worship, fellowship and mission of the Church.”**

1.1 No objections have been raised to this decision (resolution 24 of 2000). The present clause (c) allows those admitted to the full privileges and responsibility of church membership to do so ‘in the forms customarily used in the uniting churches before unification’. This was felt to be unduly backward-looking and restrictive. The new clause

allows any locally-devised profession of faith providing it includes a trinitarian confession, repentance of sin, a confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and a promise to share in the worship, fellowship and mission of the church.

Resolution 16**Secession**

General Assembly does not agree to the secession of the local church at Edmonton (Thames North Synod) and requests the congregation, district council and synod patiently to seek ways of restoring fellowship.

1.1 The petition to secede has been dealt with according to the procedures agreed by the Assembly in 1987. Both the Lea Valley District Council and the Thames North Synod have, in turn, attempted to resolve the grievances of the church at Edmonton. Those attempts having failed, Mission Council set up a commission to investigate the petition and meet

with all parties. The commission reported to Mission Council in March and the above resolution was framed in the light of that report. All the papers relevant to the consideration of the petition are contained in Appendix 3 in the Book of Reports.

Resolution 17**Budget for the year 2002**

General Assembly accepts the budget for the year 2002 set out in Appendix 1 to the Book of Reports.

1.1 The proposed budget for 2002 is set out in Appendix 1 to the Book of Reports which also shows, for comparison, the budgets for 2001 and 2000 and the actual accounts figures for 2000 and 1999. This year we have also prepared a commentary which aims to help those interested in the budget to gain a better understanding of how the main figures are built up and/or the reasons for changes from the 2001 budget. This commentary has been printed as Appendix 2 in the Book of Reports.

2 Ministry & Mission contributions (M&M)

2.1 The M&M target included in the budget for 2002 is 3% higher than the target for 2001. However, the actual amounts promised for 2001 are about 1½% below target which means that the 2002 target is nearly 4½% up on the actual 2001 contributions.

2.2 The draft budget for 2002 was discussed at a District and Synod Treasurers consultation held at Swanwick in February. There was general

agreement that the 2002 targets for individual synods should be set at 3% up on their individual targets for 2001. In this way, synods that achieved their target for 2001 would only have to increase their current contributions by 3% but those with a shortfall in 2001 would have to increase by a higher percentage (in some cases by as much as 6%).

2.3 The treasurers were concerned at the impact of these increases, a concern increased by the recognition that, if membership continues to decline at around 3% (similar to the rate experienced over recent years), the impact of the above increases in terms of the amount per member is, of course, 3% higher.

2.4 To put this in context, each 1% increase in the M&M target represents about £2 per member per year.

3 Policy on number of stipendiary ministers

3.1 In 1999 Mission Council adopted a policy of aiming for minister numbers to track membership numbers at half the rate of membership changes. Not surprisingly, this policy gave rise to contrasting views at the Treasurers' Consultation and the Deployment Consultation which had taken place, also at Swanwick, a week earlier.

3.2 The Deployment Consultation was concerned with the problems of coping with a possible reduction in the number of stipendiary ministers over the next five years of 7½%, or nearly fifty ministers. The Treasurers' Consultation was

concerned with the financial impact of this policy which results in the cost of ministry expressed as an amount per member rising by 1½% per annum faster than the actual increase in stipends.

3.3 The Treasurers recognised that, over the first 25 years of the life of the United Reformed Church, minister numbers had changed in relation to membership broadly in line with the policy now adopted and the cost had been successfully met by M&M contributions. However, the current situation may not be the same for two reasons. First, the proportion of the United Reformed Church membership in retirement and relying on relatively fixed incomes has increased; and second, the financial burden of maintaining buildings (the number of which has not declined as fast as membership) falls on fewer members making the task of increasing M&M contributions harder.

3.4 The current policy presents challenges both to those concerned with deployment and to the United Reformed Church membership who have to increase M&M contributions at a rate per member significantly higher than the increase in the Retail Price Index.

3.5 In adopting the proposed budget for 2002 the church has to face up to both of these challenges.

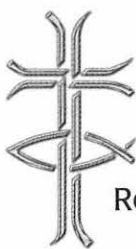


Committees and Task Groups

**General Assembly
York 2001**

July 10th

**Annual Reports,
Resolutions
and Papers**



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

Assembly Arrangements

This Committee plans and budgets for General Assembly

Committee Members

Convener: Revd D Alasdair Pratt **Secretary:** Mr Hilary Gunn
*Moderator, Moderator-elect, General Secretary, Clerk to Assembly,
Convener of Local Arrangements Committee for the relevant year*

I Assembly 2003

1.1 The committee brings a resolution that the Assembly in 2003 should be held at the Guildhall, Portsmouth, from Saturday, 5 July to Tuesday, 8 July. The facilities of Portsmouth University, halls of residence and other meeting places, are located immediately around the Guildhall in the city centre.

2 The Business of Assembly

2.1 This year sees the introduction of the format approved in 2000, whereby most committees will report in alternate years. With the agreement of the Assembly Arrangements Committee, committees who would not normally be reporting may – if urgency requires it – bring resolutions. Otherwise, the revised format allows non-reporting committees the opportunity to arrange ‘fringe meetings’ – for information, for promotion of their work and for informal discussion about policy and programmes. It is hoped that members of Assembly will welcome the flexibility now built into the programme and feel they can be more involved in current thinking and practice.

3 Future Patterns of Assembly

3.1 In 1998, at the Nottingham Assembly, the committee was asked to consider possible alternative arrangements affecting the frequency of meetings and the conduct of business at General Assembly. A full review has been carried out. Consultations involved Assembly committees, synods and districts that were asked to respond to questions about:

- i) Whether Assembly should meet annually or biannually;
- ii) The size of Assembly;
- iii) The relationship between Assembly and other councils, particularly, local churches. Initial responses helpfully identified a number of aspects in our present arrangements that cause concern. They also widened the debate, which finds its

focus not only in matters of organisation but also the extent to which the business of Assembly is relevant to congregational life.

3.2 Frequency

3.2.1 Because of the widely expressed wish for Assembly a) to have more time, b) to allow other councils longer to consider issues and, particularly, c) to enable committees more freedom to develop their work, Assembly agreed last year, as stated above, that they would report in alternate years.

3.2.2 This apparently simple change will require at least two Assemblies, possibly four, to show how the new procedures are working. The committee believes, therefore, that it would be inappropriate, at this point, to proceed with proposals about the frequency or duration of Assemblies.

3.3 Size

3.3.1 With regard to the size of Assembly, attempts have been made in the past to allow every congregation to be represented. This has never been accepted and the arguments against the proposal remain formidable. Indeed, a strong case can be made for a much more radical change that would reduce the size of Assembly significantly. However, there is a separate working party looking at the Authority of General Assembly and other councils. This is a detailed review with important theological and ecclesiological implications. Until that group has completed its work, we do not feel that it would be right to bring any proposal about the size of Assembly.

3.4 Relationships

3.4.1 As we have considered the practical issues, we have also asked what Assembly is for. The basis of our reformed polity is a theological understanding of the conciliar nature of the church and how the different parts interact. This creates and affects the ethos, the sense of community and the fellowship –

in a word, the kinonia – that gives our denomination its sense of identity and belonging. We have tried to assess the impact assembly makes on synods, districts and, particularly, on local churches. This is where issues of relationships are especially pertinent.

3.4.2 There is evidence of widespread concern at the gap between Assembly and the local church. There is also a perceived lack of relevance between the deliberations of the one and the day-to-day life of the other. It is worth noting, however, that this view from the local church is also often expressed with regard to the synod and the district council. The feeling that ‘they’ do not understand ‘our’ world is a phenomenon common in many walks of life, not just the church. To counter it, we believe that communication can be improved in various ways.

3.5 Improving Communication

3.5.1 Firstly, synods and districts may need to consider if their agenda do, in reality, relate to the concerns of local congregations. Secondly, we urge all districts and synod to review the way representatives prepare for Assembly. At least one synod offers a choice of two dates for representatives to meet to consider the Book of Reports. It is precisely to enable such preparation to happen that this book is published two months in advance of Assembly.

3.5.2 Encouragement might also be taken from FURY representatives who often appear to be the best-prepared, having studied the Book of Reports together immediately before Assembly meets.

3.5.3 At this Assembly, through the use of the Internet, way are being sought to make the business more accessible to people at home. A web-page will be regularly updated while Assembly is meeting. Fuller details will appear in *Reform*. This will give opportunity to those not at York to respond with comments and questions. It will be interesting to see how widely this opportunity is taken up.

3.6 Conclusion

General Assembly is the gathering point for the prayers, discussions and deliberations of the whole of the United Reformed Church. When, through its decision-making processes, Assembly says ‘it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us’ (Acts 15:28) such a conclusion arises out of the willingness to listen for Gods will, expressed through all the councils of the church. It is, therefore, authoritative because of its listening to God – through the life of the church, and as the council where the whole church is most fully represented. It is truly representative of the whole church as it listens and speaks to the life of the church at every level.

Resolution 18

General Assembly 2003

General Assembly agrees that General Assembly in 2003 will meet at the Guildhall, Portsmouth, from July 5th - 8th.

Assembly Pastoral Reference

The purpose of the Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee is to consider the cases of ministers which are referred to it by Mission Council, synods, district councils, or their committees or by moderators of synods. (See GA 1999 reports p.122). By a Welfare Sub-Committee, it also deals with all welfare and emergency matters including the use of welfare funds. Because of the nature of many of the cases, it is a confidential committee which reports in general terms only, directly to the General Assembly.

Committee Members

Convener: *Revd David Jenkins* **Secretary:** *Revd John Waller*
Revd Tony Burnham, Revd Pat Hall, Revd Arnold Harrison,
Dr Anthea Kaan, Mr Okeke Azu Okeke, the Honorary Treasurer,
the Convener of The Welfare Sub-Committee.

1 The Committee continues to respond to the pastoral needs of ministers and their families, to authorise payment of stipend where ministers experience situations of dis-location and the breakdown of relationships in local pastorates, through times of extended ill-health or personal crisis.

2 Through the Welfare Sub-Committee, support is brought to ministers, to widows and widowers, and to children both in times of emergency and by making grants for specific needs.

3 The Committee continues to give advice when consulted by Synod Moderators and by the councils of the church. It recommends and promotes the use of the Ministerial Counselling Service which is a confidential service available to ministers and their families. It also keeps links with

'Broken Rites', the inter-denominational support group for divorced and separated wives of ministers, and receives reports of its work.

4 The Committee continues to value the expertise brought to its work by its members. This year Dr Anthea Kaan completes her term of service and she will be missed greatly. We also record our appreciation of the work of the General Secretary, Tony Burnham, as he completes his ministry with us. He has always offered wise advice to the Committee and been an active participant in its decisions.

5 The Committee also expresses its gratitude to its secretaries, John Waller and Judy Stockings, whose work on behalf of the committees maintains their high standards of discretion and ensures their smooth and responsible running.

Resolution 19

Pastoral Reference Remit (I)

General Assembly confirms that its resolution 58 of 1999 concerning the revised terms of reference of the Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee applies to all the sections (1-6) on page 122 in the 1999 Book of Reports, and not only to section 1.

This resolution has become necessary because it has been pointed out that section 1 on page 122 is headed 'Terms of Reference' and it could be argued that the 1999 resolution only applies to that section. The way that the page is set out makes it extremely unlikely that the Assembly viewed it in that way and the minutes indicate that discussion took place on at least one other

section. However, because this committee deals with very sensitive matters, it is felt that Assembly should make the situation absolutely clear. Sections 2-6 deal with limitation on powers, confidentiality, composition, attendance and relationship to structure. Those wishing to look at the text will also find it on pages H1 and H2 of the Manual.

Resolution 20**Pastoral Reference Remit (2)**

General Assembly agrees to the following amendments to the terms of reference of the Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee:

Add to paragraph 1d: This authority may be exercised in respect of those who were on the roll of ministers but who have now left it, but only for up to three months after the date of leaving.

Delete the words "each year" from the first sentence of paragraph 6.

The first amendment recognises that those who have left the roll of ministers, whether by their own decision or that of the church, can face acute financial difficulty following the loss of stipend and manse. This can be particularly hard on their families. The amendment allows help to be given for a limited period where pastoral care for those involved makes this an appropriate response.

The second amendment will make it possible for the committee to report to Assembly every other year, as other committees are now doing.

Welfare Sub-Committee

Convener: *Revd Nelson Bainbridge*

Secretary: *Mrs Judy Stockings*

1.1 One of the main concerns of the Sub-Committee during the last year has been the assistance given to ministers facing major problems of debt. We have consulted with a debt advisor from the Citizens Advice Bureau who was able to give us helpful advice as to how ministers experiencing serious financial difficulties could be supported and guided through their problems. This is being followed up in consultation with agencies which specialise in such matters, as a result of which it is hoped to make advice and support available as necessary.

1.2 During the last year gifts amounting to £139,500 were made. Included in this figure was £9,700 given to spouses of ministers following bereavement and £48,500 by means of Christmas gifts to widows, widowers and their dependants. £53,900 was sent to ministers for assistance in the education of their families.

1.3 The Sub-Committee would remind ministers and Church Related Community Workers of the funds which are available to provide assistance for general welfare purposes and in some respects for education. Details of these were circulated in 1998 and a revised issue of this paper is being considered for later in the year; in the meantime information may be obtained from the Committee Secretary at Church House. Applications for grants of a more routine nature (e.g. on the birth of a child or for education purposes) should be made direct to the Committee Secretary. Other requests for assistance should be made in the first instance through Synod Moderators, whose advice and co-operation are of invaluable help to the Sub-Committee in its work.

Church and Society

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

Committee Members

Convener: Ms Gabrielle Cox **Secretary:** Dr Andrew Bradstock **Administrator:** Ms Wendy Cooper
Dr Sue Brisley, Revd Kenneth Cox, Mr George Morton, Revd Raymond Singh,
Mrs Helen Warrington, Ms Catriona Waterson
nominated by Youth and Children's Work Committee: Revd Kathryn Price
attending by invitation: Mrs Sandra Ackroyd (Acting Multi-Racial Multi-Cultural Development Worker),
Mr Graham Handscomb (Free Churches Council Education Committee),
Mrs Anne Martin (Commitment for Life Co-ordinator), Revd Alan Paterson (National Synod of Scotland)

I Summary

1.1 A commitment to challenging 'unjust structures' has always informed the Church and Society agenda, and this year has been no exception. The most glaring example of such structures in our own day are those which maintain the burden of unpayable debt on the poorest nations, which allow children, women and men to suffer and die for want of essential services as vast sums flow to the richest countries in interest repayments. In its short life the Jubilee 2000 coalition achieved much, but much still remains to be done in terms of debt cancellation; and facing this challenge has again been at the heart of our work.

1.2 As its name implied, Jubilee 2000 disbanded in December last year, though in its wake emerged three separate, though complementary, initiatives: the Jubilee Debt Campaign (UK), a new coalition of national and local agencies which will seek to maintain the momentum built up by that original movement; Drop the Debt, a short-term initiative with the particular aim of securing progress on debt cancellation at the G7 summit in Genoa in July 2001; and Jubilee Plus, which has a particular remit to research the origins and causes of the debt crisis. We have expressed our tangible support for all three, and will play a particular role in the new coalition, which we helped to bring into being and to whose board we have been elected.

1.3 As *Growing Up* recognized, however, removing debt is 'only one stride on the longer journey to end world poverty' (10.1). Changing the rules governing international trade would be another, as Christian Aid has recognized by launching its

'Trade for Life' campaign this year. Yet arguably only a concerted and multi-faceted effort by governments, financial institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith groups and developing countries themselves will ultimately stand any chance of combating poverty, and perhaps it was with this in mind that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Development last year launched an anti-poverty campaign with a particular focus on children, International Action Against Child Poverty. This has the aim of halving child poverty by the year 2015, and with other faith groups and NGOs the United Reformed Church has welcomed this initiative and begun to explore how we can most effectively respond to it.

1.4 Given these opportunities it would not be difficult to concentrate all our efforts on global issues and ignore the challenges confronting us nearer to home: it has been well said that churches find it less disconcerting to tackle poverty when it is out of sight than when it is on their doorstep, and we need always to be aware of this danger. The research we have been undertaking into the type and quality of work on offer to people who are unemployed, the subject of our resolution this year, is one expression of our concern for justice in our own context, as is our ongoing support for the work of Church Action on Poverty and a host of agencies working in areas such as housing, drug abuse, racial integration and prison reform. We continue also to fight for justice for refugees and asylum seekers. As in previous election years we have joined with our ecumenical partners in helping churches organise meetings with parliamentary candidates in their constituency, and in January we participated in the Christian Socialist Movement's 'Faith in Politics' programme. This set out to discover

how churches and faith groups viewed the present government's first term in office and what they would like to see result from a second term, and its findings were presented at a large gathering in London in March addressed by the Prime Minister. The many other dimensions of our work are summarised under various headings later in this report.

2 Following up 2000 Assembly

2.1 End of Life

2.1.1 Resolution 19 invited Church and Society to gather a working group to examine a range of issues associated with the end of life, and this work has now begun in earnest. A survey conducted shortly after Assembly alerted us to the issues of particular concern to the churches, and a wish to respond to these issues, to see churches and ministers better resourced to deal with a wide range of end of life matters, and to contribute to the wider debate about care for the sick and dying, will inform the work of the group. As instructed by the Resolution, the group will make a full report at Assembly 2002.

2.2 Commitment for Life

2.2.1 Resolution 20 both welcomed the growth in the number of local churches participating in Commitment for Life and urged those not yet on board to sign up. It is good to report that many have, and with 551 participating churches as at the end of March, Commitment for Life is now part of the mainstream life and mission of the Church. It is slowly becoming the norm rather than the exception to participate. *Growing Up* has helped us as a church to see our mission in terms of the Five Marks, and the Commitment for Life programme as integral to helping us fulfil that mission. The Resolution paid tribute to the Co-ordinator and the team of 50 Advocates, and the importance of their role in servicing participating churches and encouraging others to join up cannot be overstated.

2.2.2 As more churches join Commitment for Life so more income is generated for our work with our partners overseas. The income for 2000, including Millennium Gift Aid, was £445,000, up from £379,000 in 1999. Commitment for Life is the recommended way for United Reformed churches to support Christian Aid, and hence its Director has challenged us to meet a target of £500,000 this year. 'It is a significant and demanding challenge', he has said, 'but with so many more churches joining the programme, with the increased benefits of Gift Aid and with your continuing efforts I feel that it is possible.'

2.2.3 Commitment for Life continues enthusiastically to promote Fairtrade Fortnight (held every March) and ensures a 'fairtrade' presence at all Synods that month. Buying an ever widening range of products which carry the Fairtrade label remains the starting

point for practically expressing our concern for producers in poor countries. As affirmed by Resolution 20, we continue to work closely with Christian Aid and the World Development Movement, supporting both the Trade for Life campaign initiated by the former, and the latter's parallel campaign to highlight the inequities in the proposed General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). This seeks to extend trade rules to cover essential services such as water in all countries in the World Trade Organisation.

2.2.4 The news we have received from our partners, through Christian Aid, has been very disturbing. The **Palestinian** situation deteriorates significantly as the economic blockade bites and the prospect of peace diminishes. Against this background the work of the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) becomes ever harder. PARC is the largest agricultural NGO in the territories, and is trying to achieve food security for the people. The start of the Intifada coincided with the visit to the UK by two staff members from PARC last October, and several churches and three Synod meetings had the opportunity to hear first hand the struggle of the Palestinian people. There is also a real concern for the people of **Zimbabwe** and for the staff at Silveira House, who have not escaped the victimisation and violence, and the fuel and power shortages. The scale of the disaster of arsenic poisoning in the water supply in **Bangladesh** is now becoming apparent, and our partner the Christian Commission for Development (CCDB) works in coalition with others to alleviate the misery which is affecting some 85 million people in the country.

2.2.5 News from our partners in **Jamaica** is, fortunately, less dire. We are pleased that a group of Advocates visited with them in late May, and that in October two partners will come to the UK and visit Northern Synod and churches in Mersey. This exchange comes under the 'Belonging to the World Church' programme. During their time in Jamaica the Advocates visited a Council for World Mission member church in Jamaica.

2.2.6 The CforL Website has been developed as a medium for circulating information other than through regular mailing. In addition, a visual display on our partners, using songs, video, artefacts, food, smells and so on has been present at a number of Synod, District and special gatherings, notably the 1to4 FURY event.

3 Associated Groups

3.1 Environmental Issues

3.1.1 The Church and Society Committee set up a group in 1997 to look at environmental issues, particularly supporting the work of the Revd Dr David Pickering, a part-time consultant to the Committee. Dr

Pickering's principal work for the Committee resulted in the pack *Roots and Branches* which was published in 1998. After the 1999 General Assembly, the group was asked to consider the church's position on genetic modification, and to enable informed discussion a series of articles on genetic engineering was commissioned from knowledgeable writers with varied opinions. These articles appeared in *Reform* between November 2000 and February 2001. The main forum for Christian discussion of environmental issues in the UK is the Environmental Issues Network (EIN) of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, on which the United Reformed Church is represented. The work of EIN has been strengthened by the appointment of David Pickering as Churches Environmental Project Officer for the Government-sponsored environmental organisation 'Going for Green'. An important outcome of this appointment has been 'Eco-Congregation', a programme to assist local churches to consider issues and their own practices.

3.2 Peace Fellowship

3.2.1 Although the Fellowship has been in existence barely two years, membership is already over the 100 mark. Four newsletters have been produced, and a number of eminent members of the denomination have been approached to become Patrons. The Journal of the Council for World Mission noted the Fellowship's emergence by running a whole page article headed 'The birth of a peace group'. A press release on Britain's role in the US star wars shield project was issued, and the World Council of Churches' main news agency ran a sympathetic item on the topic. The Fellowship is represented on the Churches Peace Forum, and its current concern is to get peace issues into churches and equip people to take action. It also sees as urgent the need to persuade the Church's trust funds to relinquish their investments in companies involved - in however limited a way - in the production of arms. Following the success of the first Annual Conference another is planned for 2001.

3.3 HIV/AIDS

3.3.1 The HIV/Aids Working Group has worked on three parities during the year. It produced worship material for World Aids Day in December and intends to do so for this year also. Second, it has consulted in order to promote the availability of training and issues relating to HIV and Aids for ministers through Continuing Ministerial Education. Third, it has continued to value and support the work of LEAT, the London Ecumenical Aids Trust. The group recognises the need to re-evaluate its priorities. The group no longer has the responsibility of supporting the person dedicated to ministry amongst people affected by and organisations concerned with HIV and Aids. The group have asked its convener to consider how its meeting only three times a year can be useful to the Church's mission. The group also needs to re-

evaluate its role in the light of the changed context, particularly the global impact of AIDS. The group intends to produce more extensive worship material for Spring 2002 which can be used at times other than World Aids Day. The group recognises a need to develop an awareness of those who are working with people affected by HIV and Aids outside London and would be grateful to hear of such groups through the Secretary for Church and Society.

4 Updates

4.1 Education

4.1.1 This past year has seen a great deal of change in the world of education, and alongside this in the Free Churches Council Education Committee and Education Executive; the Churches Joint Education Policy Committee (CJEPC); and the Meeting of Representatives of Faith Committees who are Providers of Schools in the State System. The last group was formed as a sub group of the CJEPC which felt there was benefit to be gained by representatives of different faith communities meeting to consider a whole range of educational issues. The group has met about three times and among the issues it has discussed has been the need to network the experience of faith representatives applying for Government Voluntary Aided status for their schools. The development of faith schools which have the same status and Government support as Church of England and Roman Catholic schools is a significant development and a cause for reflection among the churches. The CJEPC itself, chaired by the Bishop of Blackburn, continues to explore many educational developments and to exercise pressure and influence on national government.

4.1.2 Major developments have taken place regarding the future of the Free Churches Council Education Committee. Following extensive consultation the Free Churches Council has entered into a series of joint working arrangements in which, for a whole range of activity, they have agreed to have a representative covering the interests of both groups. With regard to education the collaboration has resulted in an agreement to set up a new Free Churches Education Unit. The new arrangements ensure that the distinctive and effective Free Church voice and influence not only continues to be exercised but will actually increase and be made more effective. The United Reformed Church had valued the work of the Free Churches Education Committee, and will continue to have confidence in, and actively support the work of, the new Free Church Unit.

4.2 Nestlé products

4.2.1 In 1992 Assembly passed a resolution alerting Synods, District Councils and local churches to the Baby Milk Action Coalition. It encouraged them to boycott the purchase of Nescafe and other

Nestlé products and to write to the Managing Director of the Nestlé Company expressing deep concern at their policy in providing free baby food to mothers in Third World countries.

4.2.2 The case against Nestlé is basically that it contributes to the unnecessary death and suffering of infants by aggressively marketing breastmilk substitutes in ways that violate the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes* and subsequent relevant resolutions adopted by the World Health Assembly. Promoting baby milk to mothers, it is argued, undermines breastfeeding by hindering the establishment of the mother's own milk which provides the nutrients necessary for infant growth as well as unique anti-infective properties which protect the baby against common childhood illnesses. Even in wealthy countries the use of baby milk can deny babies the best start in life, but where water is unsafe an artificially-fed child is up to 25 times more likely to die as a result of diarrhoea than a breastfed child. According to UNICEF, reversing the decline in breastfeeding could save the lives of 1.5 million infants around the world every year. It is difficult not to see Nestlé's approach as a naked

'profits before health' one. There are, of course, many other companies producing and marketing breastmilk substitutes, but Nestlé is particularly targeted because it controls about 40% of the world market in these products and uses its influence to undermine controls on marketing activities.

4.2.3 Church and Society continues to support Baby Milk Action, and in fact increased significantly its donation towards its work this year. Because the boycott has been running so long – more than twenty years – it has not always attracted as much publicity as other 'one-off' campaigns (like that in 2000 on fuel), but it is in fact supported in the UK by over 100 church, health and consumer groups, more than 90 businesses, 80 student unions, and many local authorities, trade unions and individual politicians and celebrities. Thousands more organisations and individuals in 18 other countries also play a part. In the spirit of the 1992 resolution Church and Society encourages the Church to continue to express practically its feelings about Nestlé's practice of prioritising its own interests before the health and lives of babies in the developing world.

Resolution 21

Jobcentres Survey

General Assembly:

notes with concern that surveys of Jobcentres undertaken by local churches show that significant proportions of jobs available to unemployed people around the country pay below the National Insurance Lower Earnings Level, below the Income Support rate for a couple with two young children, and below the threshold for access to a Stakeholder Pension.

affirms:

- a) **the concept of social insurance as an important mechanism for providing people with security in unemployment, illness and old age and as a means of expressing the church's commitment to 'the common good';**
- b) **the view of the Churches' Enquiry on Unemployment and the Future of Work that it is possible to provide 'enough good work for all' and that government should make this a key policy aim.**

General Assembly calls upon local churches to work with the Church and Society Committee to raise these issues at local and national level.

1.1 In September and October 2000 over forty United Reformed churches participated in a survey of Jobcentre vacancies in their areas. Members of the churches visited the local Jobcentre and took down details of all the jobs registered there. This included the kind of job, the rates of pay, the hours of work, and whether the jobs were temporary or permanent. Since that time the Greater Manchester Low Pay Unit has been funded to analyse all the data and produce a report for each church which took part in the survey. As well as the report, each

church receives a list of questions to discuss and possible actions to undertake. In the autumn the Church and Society Committee will be publishing a major report giving the results of all the surveys nation-wide.

1.2 It is clear from the preliminary results that many of the jobs on offer are of very poor quality. Despite the minimum wage, the amount of weekly income produced by some jobs is extremely low. A significant proportion of jobs do not pay enough for

the worker to qualify for National Insurance benefits - such as statutory sick or maternity pay, contributory Jobseeker's Allowance, or a state pension. This means that if they fall ill or become unemployed they will have to rely on means-tested benefits. Many workers, particularly women, find they are not entitled to a state pension when they retire because they have not made the necessary National Insurance contributions. This means poverty in old age as well as poverty whilst working. The government has introduced Stakeholder Pensions for people on low incomes, but a large number of jobs in the survey paid below the threshold for these new pensions.

1.3 Income Support is usually seen as the minimum amount that a family needs to live on - although there are numerous studies which suggest that this amount is not actually enough to properly feed and clothe a family. The survey showed numerous jobs which paid less per week than a family with two young children would get in Income Support (even before taking into account housing costs). Although such a family could claim Working Families Tax Credit to top up low wages, many people feel that their inability to provide for their own families is humiliating. It is hard to discover that even working full-time you cannot earn a living wage.

1.4 Successive governments have moved away from providing support through social insurance, and increasingly concentrate on means-tested benefits. This traps people in poverty. A quarter of all people living in the UK are in poverty, compared to much lower levels in continental Europe where social insurance is more generous. Yet the concept of all of

us contributing to an insurance scheme so that those who fall on hard times can take from it is an important one: it is the basis of much of the thinking behind the welfare state, and a practical expression of the Christian notion of 'the common good'. Unless churches protest about the move to more and more means-testing and the erosion of social insurance we may well find that welfare becomes almost entirely means-tested and for the poorest, with the better off being expected to pay into private schemes.

1.5 The Churches' Enquiry on Unemployment and the Future of Work made clear that it is perfectly possible not only to provide work for all those who needed it, but also that this could be 'good work'. This means work which is worth doing, gives dignity, is not exploitative, and which pays a living wage. There is plenty of work which needs doing in communities and in society as a whole - the only question is whether we are prepared to pay for it to be done. The challenge to the churches remains - how to continue to align ourselves with those who have suffered from poverty and unemployment over the years, to ensure that they are not pushed into poor quality jobs. Unemployment may be falling, but this does not mean that everyone is now in good work.

1.6 Local churches can play an important part in bringing this debate to the attention of policy makers and opinion formers in their own area, as well as supporting the Church and Society Committee when it publishes its report in the autumn.

Doctrine, Prayer and Worship

The purpose of the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee is:

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

Committee Members

Convener: *Revd Dr Colin Thompson*

Secretary: *Revd Kirsty Thorpe* **Staff Secretary:** *Revd John Waller*

Members: *Mrs Brenda Cheer (Youth and Children's Work Committee), Mr Colin Ferguson, Revd Hugh Graham, Revd Charles Martin, Revd Glyn Millington, Revd Nadim Nassar, Revd Dr David Peel, Revd Michael Playdon (Silence and Retreats Network), Mrs Jenny Poulter, Revd Alistair Smeaton, Revd Sally Thomas (Inter-Faith Relations Committee), Revd Dr Janet Tollington, Revd John Young.*

Representatives from other Churches: *Revd Dr Peter Doble (Methodist Church), Venerable Joy Tetley (Church of England).*

I Introduction

1.1 Questions about the nature and responsibility of Ministries, about what it means to be a church member in a Local Ecumenical Partnership or in a United Reformed Church congregation, and work on the new Service Book have dominated the Committee's time in the past year. As well as these issues the Committee has reflected on the doctrinal aspects of work being done by other groups in the United Reformed Church and kept abreast of the faith and order implications of the wide range of ecumenical talks currently taking place in parts of Britain.

2 New Service Book

2.1 The Drafting Sub-committee has been making progress on the production of the new Service Book under the convenership of Revd John Reardon. It has a small but diverse membership and meets independently of the main committee. Comments have been received from United Reformed Church congregations around Britain

which were asked to try out the draft orders for baptism and holy communion, as well as from a number of others who have on their own initiative submitted their views. The Committee is grateful for all these responses. The two services are being re-considered by the Drafting Sub-committee, in the light of these responses, but there is no intention of publicising further drafts of these services in view of the constraints of time. The Committee is grateful to its retiring Convener, Colin Thompson, and to Michael Playdon for their willingness to continue in membership of the Drafting Sub-committee after they relinquish office at General Assembly.

2.2 As well as the orders for baptism and holy communion there are other services in different stages of drafting and the work involved has proved to be detailed yet important. The new book will be compared, rightly or wrongly, with recent service books from both the Methodist Church and Church of England and its language needs to both stand the test of time and bear repetition. Only careful drafting work can make this possible.

2.3 The Committee has accordingly decided that it cannot meet the original publication date for the new Service Book of summer 2002. In order to check the book text, and the content of the accompanying CD Rom, the Committee will hold an additional meeting in 2002 and publication will then take place in mid 2003. This should ensure these new liturgical resources are of good quality and is preferable to the alternative of rushing to finish the task within the original timeframe.

3 Responsibility and Accountability of Ministries

3.1 In response to a request from Mission Council in October 1998 the Committee has been considering the nature of Responsibility and Accountability of Ministries in the United Reformed Church. A first report was prepared by a small group and was then re-drafted by the Committee as a whole. Mission Council had asked that the term 'Ministries' be interpreted in its broadest sense encompassing ordained and non-ordained forms, stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministry, the work of elders and lay preachers and *diakonia*. It was decided that an inter-committee group should deal with *diakonia* (see 4).

3.2 The Committee's final response was submitted for the consideration of Mission Council in March 2001. It highlighted a number of questions such as the role of a sending synod in deciding whether a candidate for ministry is ready for ordination after training, the relationship of district councils with ministers in secular employment, the nature of accountability to district councils of CRCW's and the responsibilities and accountability of lay preachers to their district councils.

4 Diaconal Ministry and the diaconate

4.1 The Committee has been conducting an exploration of the *diakonia* aspect of ministry, through an inter-committee working party, in response to Mission Council's request. Representatives from Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee, the Ecumenical Committee, Life and Witness Committee and Ministries Committee worked jointly on a report opening up the issues surrounding 'Diaconal ministry and the diaconate'.

4.2 This gave a theological and historical overview of the diaconate in the Reformed tradition, set the issue in the wider ecumenical and contemporary scene, and offered a list of 'pros' and 'cons' for the possible establishment of a diaconate in the United Reformed Church. In the event Mission Council did not decide to take any further action on this matter but the work has been valuable, as was the experience of inter-committee working.

5 Forum at General Assembly

5.1 Last year the Committee organised a meeting at General Assembly to launch the new draft services for baptism and holy communion. This was in response to a request that it should provide a forum for doctrinal discussion within the United Reformed Church.

5.2 Ordination, particularly with respect to the eldership, has emerged as a very important issue in the recent informal trilateral conversations with the Methodist Church and Church of England. The Committee will hold a forum discussion on 'Ordination' at General Assembly this year, as an evening meeting, to which all are invited.

6 Church Membership

6.1 Responses have been received to the discussion paper the Committee issued last year, 'Celebrating Church Membership'. The Committee is grateful to all who have responded and will be summarising the results, as well as working on further suggestions to take this matter forward.

7 Rededication Sunday

7.1 This year the Rededication Sunday material offered for the first Sunday in October will be a draft of the form of service which it is hoped to include in the new Service Book. The Committee aims to have the material available in good time and would welcome feedback on the contents.

8 Silence and Retreats

8.1 The Silence and Retreats network has its own report in the appendix of this Book of Reports.

9 Thanks and farewells

9.1 The Committee is grateful for the contribution of Janet Tollington and Michael Playdon and of Peter Doble from the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church, who leave this year. They have all given valuable service to the work of the Committee.

10 Convener'ship

10.1 Colin Thompson's liturgical skills, learning and leadership have been a rich contribution to the life of the committee. The Committee and the Assembly are greatly in his debt. He is being succeeded by John Young from the Synod of Scotland.

Ecumenical

The role of the Ecumenical Committee is to foster ecumenical development in the life of the United Reformed Church:

- a) in response to the Basis of Union (para. 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.'
- b) in relation to other churches and the wider community – in these islands, across Europe, and throughout the world.

The committee will seek to ensure that wherever the United Reformed Church meets in worship, council or committee, it is working in partnership with Christians in the locality, the World Church and the whole human family.

TASKS

Among the tasks of this committee is listening to those with experience of the World Church, including other Christian traditions in Britain and Ireland, and to those with experience of current affairs and of other faiths. The Committee will maintain official United Reformed Church links with overseas churches and world and regional ecumenical organisations, in particular the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Conference of European Churches. It will guide the United Reformed Church's participation in the Council for World Mission.

Through its official contact will be made with British and Irish ecumenical bodies.

The work of selecting, training and caring for missionaries and overseeing exchange of personnel will be undertaken by the International Exchange Sub-Committee.

Committee Members

Convener: Revd Bob Andrews

Secretaries: Revd Sheila Maxey (Secretary for Ecumenical Relations)

Revd Philip Woods (Secretary for International Relations)

Ms Lesley-Anne Morgan (International Relations Programme Officer)

Members: Revd Mary Buchanan, Revd Phillip Jones, Mrs Jackie Marsh, Revd Richard Mortimer, Revd Elizabeth Nash, Mrs Darnett Whitby-Reid, Revd John Smith (Scotland), Revd Stuart Jackson (Wales)
Revd John Crocker (Convener of the International Exchange Sub-Committee)

Representatives of other committees: Revd Alistair Ellefson-Jones, Revd Carole Ellefson-Jones, Revd Hugh Graham, Revd Susan Hamnett, Revd Raymond Singh.

Representatives from other churches: Rt Revd Colin Buchanan, with Mrs Elizabeth Fisher as alternate (Church of England), Revd David Campbell (Presbyterian Church in Ireland), Revd Peter Sulston (Methodist Church)

I Introduction

1.1 The remit of the Ecumenical Committee is wide and far-ranging. Its concerns range from our relationships with ecumenical partners in England, Scotland and Wales to those with partner churches throughout the world. It is concerned with the ecumenical life of the church at the local as well as the regional, national and international levels. Its work as a committee overlaps that of other committees which seek to carry out their work ecumenically and therefore the other programme committees are represented on the Ecumenical Committee.

1.2 Because of this wide range of responsibilities, the committee has sought this year to shape an **ecumenical strategy** to enable it to give priority to the more important aspects of its work over the next five years. To this end, a strategy paper has been produced entitled **Mission and Unity - Three Ecumenical Resolutions for the United Reformed Church**. (see resolution 22) This is brought to the Assembly this year for its approval, not only as a strategy for the Ecumenical Committee, but also as a basis for a present day ecumenical commitment for the whole church.

1.3 There are several pressing reasons why such a strategy is needed.

1.3.1 **We are a church in three nations**, and the ecumenical developments and challenges are different in each one. We need to agree on the **limits to diversity** and on the extent of consistency necessary to ensure that our representatives in each nation can be recognised by our ecumenical partners as coming from the same church.

1.3.2 **The United Reformed Church is itself changing**, due, for example, to the grouping of churches, the developing role of synod moderators, the growth of local church leadership, and its increasingly multi-cultural nature in the the urban areas. Such developments raise questions about our understanding of the nature of the Church, where authority lies, and the nature of ministry.

1.3.3 The *Growing Up* report called the church to **a radical reappraisal of its attitude to mission**. An ecumenical strategy must have mission at the forefront and mission must take our changing society seriously.

1.3.5 **We are a small church which is part of a large Reformed family** of churches and which exercises an influence far beyond its size. However, we need to have realistic expectations as to how we can best make use of our valuable human resources when deciding whether to accept or reject invitations to participate in ecumenical projects, processes and conversations.

1.4 In producing this report, therefore, the same three ecumenical resolutions which are the basis of the strategy paper are used as headings, to enable us more easily to recognise and celebrate what has already been achieved as well as to show more clearly how these ecumenical resolutions relate to the work of the committee in the future.

A. To expand the range and deepen the nature of the Christian common life and witness in each local community.

2 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)

2.1 The **Building Bridges of Hope** programme, which was set up originally to monitor the mission and outreach of 40 local churches, mostly working ecumenically, in order to see what lessons could be learned from their struggles and achievements, has now entered its second phase. Some United Reformed Churches are now involved and the Life and Witness Committee continues to monitor and promote the programme.

3 Churches Together in England (CTE)

3.1 **The repositioning of the Free Churches' Council (FCC)** within Churches Together in England has now taken place, and the Revd Tony Burnham, our General Secretary, has taken an active part in this as Free Church Moderator and as one of the presidents of Churches Together in England. This step is an indication of the changed ecumenical climate since 1990, and could have positive effects on the work of local churches and chaplains in the fields of health care and education. The former General Secretary of the FCC, Revd Geoffrey Roper, is now Assistant General Secretary (Free Churches) of Churches Together in England.

3.2 The committee has welcomed **the CTE publication *Sharers, Guests and Tenants*** as both challenging and useful for United Reformed Church congregations who share their building with another congregation, usually from an ethnic minority grouping. The publication has been made available to each District Council. At the same time, the Revd Francis Amenu, the Ghanaian minister for the United Reformed Church in London, is working to build closer links between the two synods which cover London and the two Twi-speaking Presbyterian Church of Ghana congregations in London. The committee warmly **welcomes the appointment of a Racial Justice Officer** for the United Reformed Church, recognising the significant ecumenical implications of this post.

3.4 The review by Churches Together in England of the churches' role in **the Millennium celebrations** shows that there was co-operation across a much wider range of churches than before. The CTE Forum which has immediately preceded this Assembly had as its theme **Together in a Common Life**. This 'common life' process encourages the churches to seek to witness and pray and serve together locally across as wide a grouping as possible and is offering a series of leaflets with suggestions. The first of these, *Praying Together in our Common Life*, is widely available and on the web.

3.5 Two current concerns of Churches Together in England are **the effectiveness of the County (Intermediate) Bodies and the training of ecumenical officers**. The United Reformed Church both shares the concerns and is playing a full part in seeking better ways forward. Both are essential to resource the very significant ecumenical life of the churches in England.

4 Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS)

4.1 ACTS is undergoing a **major review** which covers staffing levels and the use of Scottish Churches House in Dunblane. A **major ecumenical**

Assembly will take place in September 2001 at which it is hoped a very wide range of Scottish Christians will be present.

5 Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN)

5.1 **Regional ecumenical bodies** have been set up in Wales which are deliberately linked to the regional structures of the National Assembly of Wales, thus making clear their concern with society as well as church.

5.2 **A School of Ecumenics**, based on Trinity College, Camarthen, has been founded.

5.3 There seems little enthusiasm for the proposals from the **Welsh Free Church talks** but the Baptist Union of Wales has agreed to be an active observer on the Commission of Covenanted Churches in Wales (Enfys)

6 Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEP)

6.1 Last year the Free Churches' Council produced a paper recommending ways in which members of churches within an LEP might be freely acknowledged as members of all the participating churches. The Methodist Church is making changes in its Standing Orders to enable this to happen. The Ecumenical Committee has produced an advice leaflet for local United Reformed churches explaining how the United Reformed Church can, within its current understanding of the authority of Church Meeting, **offer membership to all the members of other partner churches in a single congregation LEP** in which the United Reformed Church is a participant.

6.2 **A checklist** has also been produced, in consultation with the synod ecumenical officers, to indicate steps to be taken by United Reformed Church people who are involved in setting up a single-congregation LEP.

7 The Methodist/United Reformed Church Liaison Committee

7.1 The Liaison Committee continues to respond to the concerns of the joint churches and united areas. It has written to all sponsoring bodies and District Councils to encourage them to cooperate when carrying out **visits to united churches**. It has recommended that **the joint annual statistical form should be discontinued** as it was largely being used in addition to the Methodist form. In future the standard forms from both churches will be used. The fact that the two

churches collect statistics at a different time and for different purposes lays a great burden on the joint churches and areas. The Liaison Committee has, thus far, been unsuccessful in easing this burden. Some concern has been expressed at **the reactive nature of much of the agenda** of the Liaison Committee and its lack of authority within the churches. It is, however, the only formal meeting of the two churches.

8 Networks

8.1 The committee has continued to sustain **the network of synod and district ecumenical officers** through regular mailings of *News from the Ecumenical Committee* and *Ecumenical Filings*. The bi-annual conference of ecumenical officers plays an important part in this process, and the next will be held at the Windermere Centre in the autumn of 2001, when the Revd Flora Winfield, Local Unity Secretary for the Church of England, will be the visiting speaker.

8.2 The Secretary for Ecumenical Relations has attended meetings of synod ecumenical officers, addressed ordinands' and churches together groups, is an observer on both the Methodist and Church of England ecumenical committees, and networks informally and regularly with the ecumenical officers based in the central offices of the other churches.

B. To proclaim more clearly, in word and deed, that in Christ we are one world church family living in a world which God loves, and to celebrate the rich diversity of cultures, languages, church traditions and religious faiths within each local community and world-wide.

9 Belonging to the World Church

9.1 For a variety of reasons, the *Belonging to the World Church* programme, which was launched in 1998, has taken longer to implement than we had anticipated. The committee, at its meeting in January, considered all aspects of the programme very carefully to identify the most important elements so that arrangements for them could be put into place as early as possible. **The committee agreed to give priority to three aspects of the work.**

9.2 The **first** of the three will be the provision of **overseas training opportunities for ordinands** and Church Related Community Workers, with the first pilot programme now scheduled for 2002.

9.3 The **second** of the three will be the **global partners programme** through which each synod will be encouraged to have visiting speakers from an overseas partner church. It is envisaged that this will now be developed as an exchange programme between synods and partner churches. Further work on the details of this is being pursued in consultation with Synod World Church Advocates.

9.4 The **third** of the three priorities is the development of the *Belonging to the World Church grants system for continuing ministerial education and overseas training opportunities*.

9.5 In the cases of lay training opportunities and opportunities for young people and children, the international relations office will no longer initiate activities but will offer funding, advice and assistance with travel arrangements to Assembly committees, synods and FURY Council.

9.6 The setting up of **research fellowships** has proceeded piecemeal, although at present only one fellowship has been filled, at Northern College. A review group has been appointed, in conjunction with the Training Committee, to consider questions arising from our experience so far, such as whether these fellowships should be based in different colleges or in one; whether they should be full-time or part-time; whether they should be open to members of churches other than the United Reformed Church; and what the balance should be between research in the United Kingdom and research overseas. The review group is due to report in September.

9.7 Following a period without an International Relations Programme Officer, the Revd Dale Rominger, was appointed to the post and started work in March.

10 Council for World Mission (CWM)

10.1 The next **CWM Council meeting** will have been held just before the Assembly in Taiwan in June, where we will be represented by Mrs Olive Bell, Mr Neil Platt, Revd Ken Forbes and Revd Philip Woods. Amongst other things the meeting will be appointing **a new General Secretary and considering proposals to change the structure of CWM**. Proposals from CWM's six-yearly review group for major changes in the structure of CWM were considered by the committee, which expressed the view that structural changes should not take place without a preliminary consideration of the aims and objectives of CWM and wider consultation with the member churches. The discussion at this Council meeting will be the first part of such consultation.

10.2 **A global consultation on the Community of Women and Men** took place in India in April, at which the United Reformed Church was represented by Lyndsay Cole, with a further representative from the synod of Scotland (still to be appointed at the time of writing). Until the Council meeting in June, the Congregational Union of Scotland is still counted as a separate member church.

10.3 Much of the spirit and philosophy behind CWM can be gleaned from the excellent bi-monthly publication *Inside Out*, which is highly commended both to local churches and to individuals and can be obtained on subscription from the International Relations office.

10.4 **The CWM European Region** has developed considerably in recent years through the appointment of a part-time **Mission Enabler**. This post came to an end in November 2000, but with encouragement from CWM a new full-time post has been created to develop the work further. The United Reformed Church share of the cost of this post will be funded from the proceeds of the sale of St Andrew's Hall in line with the Assembly's decision that the money should be used for mission education and training in an international context.

10.5 Major changes are proposed to the **annual European Region Window on the World conference** after the 2000 conference made a substantial deficit. A new constitution has been agreed, and the administration has been taken over by the Congregational Federation.

10.6 **The report of the European Mission Conference**, co-sponsored by the European Region, the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the Netherlands Missionary Council and the European Evangelical Alliance, which took place in 1999, is now available and can be obtained from the International Relations office.

11 Consultation on Mission

11.1 A wide-ranging consultation is planned at the Windermere Centre in the autumn of 2001. The consultation will be by invitation and it is expected to consist of a broadly representative group of synod moderators, mission enablers, synod training officers, staff from theological colleges, and representatives from various Assembly committees. Its aim is to build on 'Growing Up' by stimulating theological reflection on the mission of the United Reformed Church with help from world church insights, under the leadership of Dr Preman Niles, General Secretary of CWM.

12 Scholarship Programme

12.1 A full account of this can be found in the report of the International Exchange Sub-Committee. However, on its own initiative the Ecumenical Committee agreed to use part of the proceeds from the sale of St Andrew's Hall to fund a new scholarship which will bear that name and will continue the tradition of working with our partner churches in sharing and developing skills and insights in mission.

13 Partner Churches around the World

13.1 Throughout the year the United Reformed Church is in many and various ways relating to partner churches around the world. Here are some examples from the past year.

13.2 Presbyterian Church of Myanmar

Because of the situation in Myanmar the United Reformed Church, at the request of the Presbyterian Church in Myanmar, continues to hold funds for them. (Where such funds have existed for other churches we have over the years transferred them to the churches concerned). This year, again at the request of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar, the Council for World Mission has given us the responsibility for managing the money due to them from the CWM Mission Programme Support and Self-Support funds. The Committee has set up an appropriate management structure and mechanism to manage the funds so that the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar has full access to them and can, when the time is right, arrange for them to be transferred fully to their care.

13.3 Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

The convener-elect, the Revd John Rees, represented the United Reformed Church at the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan International Forum. The theme of the forum was 'Taiwan in the Changing East Asian Situation and the Mission of the Presbyterian Church'. This followed an earlier visit to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan by the convener in 2000.

13.4 Uniting Church in Australia

The General Secretary, the Revd Tony Burnham, attended the General Assembly of the Uniting Church of Australia, where there was particular concern for the church in Indonesia and signs of increasingly close relationships with the churches of the Pacific region.

13.5 Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI)

The Revd David Campbell has represented the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on the committee for the past year and has kept members informed on both church and society developments in Ireland on

the difficult road to peace. David moved in February to be a minister with the Presbyterian Church of Australia and hopes to develop ecumenical links with that church. His insights and contributions to the understanding of the committee have been greatly appreciated. He will be succeeded by Revd Colin McClure who is also the voting member from the PCI at General Assembly.

13.6 Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz (EKP)

At its September meeting the committee received the report of the biennial theological consultation with the EKP which we hosted in Dunblane on the theme 'Approaches to Community, Nation and World'. The next theological consultation in 2002 will be hosted by the EKP.

14 World Council of Churches (WCC)

14.1 The World Council continues to face a **severe financial crisis**. The generosity of the German churches from the beginning has distorted expectations of what such a world body is able to achieve. Most of the work of the WCC is funded by the churches of the Northern Hemisphere, which has meant that they have had a disproportionate influence on its agenda. However, things are moving on, particularly as a result of the work of the **Special Commission addressing the concerns of the Orthodox member churches** and it is likely that there will be considerable changes to the workings of the WCC in the years ahead. Creatively it is already being seen in the development of the General Secretary, Konrad Raiser's idea of creating '**ecumenical space**' for **mutual learning and discovery**. The committee is kept informed of these developments and contributes its own thoughts on the process which are conveyed to the WCC through our representatives at various meetings and our routine contact with WCC staff.

14.2 Following the resignation of Ms Jenny Downing from the Central Committee, Revd Rowena Francis attended the meeting in Berlin in February on an interim basis. Revd Dr Donald Norwood attended as an observer in order to report for CTE and Revd Dr David Thompson attended as President of the World Convention of the Churches of Christ. Revd Tony Coates was also present, having been invited to be one of the interpreters.

15 The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)

15.1 The next meeting of the **General Council is to take place in Ghana in the summer of 2004**, and preparations are already well in hand. The theme is to be 'That they may all have life in fullness', and the committee has submitted comments on the theme on

behalf of the United Reformed Church. The committee received a report from the Revd Elizabeth Nash on the meeting of the executive committee in Bangalore in July 2000. **The financial crisis** facing the World Alliance has led to efforts to secure an endowment fund with the help of wealthy individuals.

15.2 **The Mission and Unity programme of WARC** is sponsoring a number of consultations around the world looking at relations between Reformed churches. From time to time the United Reformed Church has been asked to contribute to these by sharing its own experience on mission and unity. Currently we are involved in two consultations: (a) On the relations in Europe between Korean Presbyterians and the historic Reformed churches; and (b) On the situation of Reformed Churches in the Ukraine.

16 The Conference of European Churches (CEC)

16.1 The Presbyterian Church of Wales is the latest church to be admitted to membership of CEC. In April CEC and CCEE (the European Council of Roman Catholic Bishops' Conferences) held a European Ecumenical Encounter in Strasbourg which included the presentation of the *Charta Oecumenica* which has been the subject of much consultation with the churches of Europe. The Charta is 'a declaration of common commitments for the churches of Europe, their relationships to one another and their service and witness to European society.' The committee has contributed to this process on behalf of the United Reformed Church.

16.2 **The next CEC Assembly will be in Norway in 2003**, when the theme will be 'Jesus Christ heals and reconciles: our witness in Europe'. Gabrielle Cox, convener of the Church and Society Committee, now represents the United Reformed Church on the European Integration Working Group.

17 Leuenberg Church Fellowship (LCF)

17.1 In June **the Assembly of the Leuenberg Church Fellowship was held in Belfast**, hosted by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The United Reformed Church was represented by Derek Wales and Hillian Durell. Having its roots in the Faith and Order movement, the Leuenberg Church Fellowship has moved on and is attempting to address many of the social and political concerns of today, making it more broadly a confessional body representing its members' interests. One of the main items at this Assembly is who speaks for Protestant Churches in Europe today, with the German churches advocating a stronger role for the LCF particularly in relation to the European Union.

18 The World Convention of the Churches of Christ (WCCC)

18.1 The United Reformed Church had ten official representatives at the Convention in Brisbane in August 2000 and a similar number of others from the United Reformed Church participated in the event at their own initiative. The reason for this large delegation was to gain valuable experience in preparation for co-hosting, with the Fellowship of the Churches of Christ, the next convention in Brighton in 2004. The style of the Convention was a new experience for most of those who attended from Britain and was the subject of discussion at the first international planning meeting held in Loughborough in February, when United Reformed Church and Fellowship members shared their hopes of what the 2004 Convention might be like.

18.2 During the Brisbane Convention **Revd Dr David Thompson was inaugurated as President and Mrs Muriel Garrow as President of the World Christian Women's Fellowship.**

19 The Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC)

19.1 DECC brings together the Disciples and United churches within the WCCC family. Meeting just before the WCCC in Brisbane the Council addressed the theme "Autonomy and Unity in the Ecumenical Movement Today", received the report of the Disciples of Christ -Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue, and attended to a number of constitutional issues. In particular it addressed the anomaly whereby when a Disciples church united with another church it could only be an associate member of DECC, despite the fact that DECC exists to assist Disciples churches in the journey towards the visible unity of the Church. Further recognising the contribution of united churches DECC confirmed the Revd Dr David Thompson as its new Moderator.

20 Networks

20.1 The annual meeting of **synod European Partnership Co-ordinators** was held in Edinburgh in March. To a greater or lesser extent almost all synods are now linked with an ecumenical partner church in Europe, and each synod sustains that partnership on behalf of the whole of the United Reformed Church.

20.2 With the development of the *Belonging to the World Church* programme increasing responsibility is now being placed on **synod World Church Advocates** and their annual consultation was dominated by reflection on how to make the programme more effective.

20.3 The committee is aware of the need to give full support to those who are carrying out these important roles in each synod of the church.

C. To persevere in the search for the visible and organic unity of the Church through church-to-church conversations on matters of faith and church order so that sinful, and sometimes death-dealing, divisions may be healed and the Christian message of reconciliation be proclaimed with integrity.

21 Towards the making of an ecumenical bishop in Wales

21.1 Following the extensive and encouraging debate at last year's Assembly, the National Synod of Wales voted unanimously at its March 2001 synod to support the revised proposal for the making of an ecumenical bishop in Wales. However, at the request of the Commission of Covenanted Churches in Wales (Enfys) **the synod has agreed to delay bringing the proposal to the General Assembly until 2002**, when it will also be coming to the Methodist Conference. The Church in Wales will begin its decision-making process this Autumn. The Presbyterian Church in Wales is accompanying the process as an observer.

22 The Scottish Church Initiative for Union (SCIFU)

22.1 The second interim report of SCIFU (the Scottish Church Initiative for Union) received a positive response from the Synod of Scotland at its synod meeting in August 2000. The views of local churches and area councils are currently being sought and will be reported to the synod meeting in August 2001. It is difficult for the United Reformed Churches in Scotland to consider more union proposals so soon after the union of 2000. Reservations, some strong, are being expressed by the other churches. However, the proposals are being widely discussed, especially in the Church of Scotland and the churches in several localities are looking at their existing relationships or developing new ones in terms of the proposed 'maxi-parish' model. **It is unlikely that a Basis and Plan for Union will be ready for the planned date of May 2002.** In the extra time inevitably created, the SCIFU Group hopes to work on sharing more of the vision of the proposals – answering the 'why' as well as the 'how' questions.

22.2 SCIFU has fruitfully explored the areas of diaconal ministry and lay preachers in the four participating churches, and a group is also working on a liturgy for the making of a bishop in the united church. That group has benefited from the experience in Wales.

23 The Tri-Lateral Informal Conversations between the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.

23.1 These conversations have taken place over the past two years. They were set up in response to the United Reformed Church's desire for inclusion in the conversations between the other two churches. The United Reformed Church representatives have been the Revds John Waller, Sheila Maxey, Elizabeth Welch and Bob Andrews, while Sheila Maxey and the Revd Dr David Thompson have been ecumenical participants in the Formal Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church.

23.2 **The report of the Formal Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church is delayed until the end of the year. The report of the Informal Conversations will probably be published in booklet form in the early Autumn.** Having been in public domain for some months, both reports will come formally to Assembly 2002, the Formal report because the United Reformed Church will specifically be asked to make a considered response to it, and the Informal report because it belongs to the United Reformed Church and it too has recommendations which will need careful consideration.

23.3 A number of **emerging ecclesiological issues** have arisen from the conversations on which further work needs to be done as the three churches journey towards the goal of visible unity. They include the limits to diversity, the meaning of ordination, personal and conciliar oversight, the meaning of church membership, and different approaches to the goal of Christian unity. The background to these emerging issues is described more fully in the report.

23.4 **The report of the Informal Conversations makes certain recommendations**, suggesting that the three churches should build in practical ways on relationships which already exist, and that the United Reformed Church should be included in any initiatives at local, regional or national level in which Anglicans and Methodists already share. Such recommendations could have important implications in Scotland and Wales as well as in England.

23.5 What is clear from the report and from the whole process of these conversations is that **the United Reformed Church continues to be committed to being part of any ongoing process** which will assist the visible and organic unity of the churches, at every level, and accordingly a carefully

considered response will need to be made to the recommendations of both the Formal Conversations and the Informal Conversations when they are published.

24 The Advisory Group on Faith and Order

24.1 The Advisory Group, set up jointly by the Ecumenical Committee and the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee, has considered **the report to the Methodist Conference on 'Episkope and Episcopacy'** with the purpose of assisting the Mission Council working group set up to look at personal leadership in the United Reformed Church, with special reference to synod moderators.

24.2 The group has also considered **the document of the Leuenberg Fellowship, entitled *The Church of Jesus Christ***, in order to assist the committee in its ecclesiological thinking about the unity of the Church, and to prepare the two United Reformed Church representatives, Revd Derek Wales and Mrs Hillian Durell, for the Leuenberg Assembly in Belfast in June.

24.3 The Convener of the Advisory Group, Revd Fleur Houston, was the invited United Reformed Church observer at the Meissen Theological Commission meeting between the Church of England and the *Evangelische Kirche Deutschland* in March. She also attended the Leuenberg Assembly in Belfast as an observer.

25 United and uniting churches' seventh international consultation

25.1 This group of churches world-wide is holding its seventh consultation in September 2002 in the Netherlands. The two themes which the WCC faith and order commissioners from this group of churches have asked the consultation to address are 'mission' and 'identity'. The two major Dutch Reformed churches and the Dutch Lutheran church are in the process of uniting and asked to host this gathering in order to get encouragement and to learn lessons. The Revd Sheila Maxey represents the United Reformed Church on the planning group..

26 Consultation of British and Irish Reformed churches on 'Identity and Partnership'

26.1 This consultation, planned for March 2002 at the Windermere Centre, to bring together representatives of the Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Churches in Wales and Ireland, together with the United Reformed Church, in order to explore the experience of devolution and the nature of our different national societies, as well as how we understand our identity and mission as Reformed churches had to be postponed because of the foot and mouth epidemic. It will take place in December.

27 Consultation with younger ecumenists

27.1 A consultation is planned for 12-14 April 2002 with the purpose of bringing together a group of under-40's drawn from each synod in order to pass on the ecumenical vision and to discover what form it takes for a younger generation. The consultation is planned for a weekend because the committee recognised that the United Reformed Church's future ecumenical leadership must be both lay and ordained.

28 Welcomes and farewells

28.1 This year the committee was delighted to welcome Mrs Darnett Whitby-Reid as a new member, Mrs Doris David as Personal Assistant to the Secretary for International Relations and, more recently, to welcome Revd Dale Rominger as International Relations Programme Officer. It will greatly miss the contributions of Revd Richard Mortimer and Mrs Jackie Marsh who both come to the end of their term at this Assembly. It will also miss Ms Lesley-Ann Morgan who moved on from Church House to other work in November.

28.2 At this Assembly, Revd Bob Andrews both comes to the end of his time as Convener and retires from the ministry. The committee and the staff owe Bob an enormous debt of gratitude for his excellent and well-prepared chairing, for his willingness to attend many extra meetings where his calm wisdom was of such value, and for his personal support for the staff secretaries whenever they have needed it. Committee members past and present and all the staff would like to express their thanks and to wish Bob, Kay and the family every blessing during the coming years.

28.3 The committee looks forward with confidence as one of its members, Revd John Rees, takes over the convenership from this Assembly.

Resolution 22

Three Ecumenical Resolutions

General Assembly

- a) welcomes the following three ecumenical resolutions offered by the Ecumenical Committee as providing a framework for the United Reformed Church's ecumenical commitment locally, nationally and internationally for the coming five years; and
- b) encourages synods, district councils and local churches to consider how they might use them in practice and to that end invites the Ecumenical Committee to distribute the ecumenical resolutions and their supporting material in an attractive form throughout the Church.
- To expand the range and deepen the nature of the Christian common life and witness in each local community.
 - To proclaim more clearly, in word and deed, that in Christ we are one world church family living in a world which God loves, and to celebrate the rich diversity of cultures, languages, church traditions and religious faiths within each local community and world-wide.
 - To persevere in the search for the visible and organic unity of the Church through church-to-church conversations on matters of faith and church order so that sinful, and sometimes death-dealing, divisions may be healed and the Christian message of reconciliation be proclaimed with integrity.

Mission and Unity

Three Ecumenical Resolutions for the United Reformed Church

The background

Who we are

The United Reformed Church, as a united and uniting church, must always live with provisionality, open to new ways. As a Reformation church it must also take seriously the particular rock from which it was hewn. But it is, first of all, a church whose purpose, within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, is:

- *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.*

1972 Basis of Union, para. 11

Our commitment to Christianity – restated in 1996

That same Basis of Union, 1972, states that 'as a united church (we) will take, wherever possible and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people'

At the 1996 General Assembly, that commitment was reaffirmed and its implications for the life of the United Reformed Church at that time were then spelled out. It was agreed that the commitment would be expressed through:

- a) resource sharing of theological insights, people, buildings and money
- b) identifying and offering the rich insights of our tradition to others and being open to receive theirs
- c) active involvement in ecumenical bodies locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- d) the development of and support for Local Ecumenical Partnerships and United Areas
- e) active participation in initiatives leading towards organic union.

But ‘ecumenical’ means.....

The word ‘ecumenical’ comes from the Greek *oikumene* meaning ‘the whole inhabited earth’. *Oikumene* in turn is related to the Greek for household, *oikos*. So the ecumenical vision is of the whole human family living together in love and peace. Pursuing that vision goes far beyond inter-church relations and is the business of the whole church.

However, the Ecumenical Committee has a particular responsibility. Its remit states:

‘The committee will seek to ensure that wherever the United Reformed Church meets locally or nationally (*sic*), in worship, council or committee, it is working in partnership with Christians in the locality, the World Church and the whole human family.’

Three ecumenical resolutions for a missionary church in today’s world

A. To expand the range and deepen the nature of the Christian common life and witness in each local community.

What might this mean?

1 Developing relationships with new partners, some reflecting our increasingly multi-cultural society – e.g. house churches, the African and Caribbean churches, pentecostal and independent churches, the Orthodox churches, the Reformed groups not worshipping in English (Korean, Ghanaian, Pakistani, Hungarian, German) etc. – and including the spiritual explorers outside the Church.

2 Pressing for deeper relations with old partners, often already expressed through formal Local Ecumenical Partnerships, and shared witness and service – the Anglican churches in the three nations, the Methodists and Baptists, the Moravians, the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the Congregational Federation, the Roman Catholic Church

How might this be enabled?

3 Strengthening the support for and widening the role of the District and Synod ecumenical officers.

4 Raising this wider ecumenical profile in District visitations and in deployment and clustering discussions.

5 Listening to the concerns of local churches and Local Ecumenical Partnerships and strengthening the central church-to-church work on

obstacles to greater local shared life and witness. This work is already being done in, for example, the Methodist/United Reformed Church Liaison Committee and CTE’s Group for Local Unity.

B To proclaim more clearly, in word and deed, that in Christ we are one World Church family living in a world which God loves, and to celebrate the rich diversity of cultures, languages, church traditions and religious faiths within each local community and world-wide

What might this mean?

1 Welcoming into our local communities new immigrants, international students/workers and asylum seekers and thus receiving their God-given gifts.

2 Taking advantage of the *Belonging to the World Church* programme which offers local experience of the World Church and wider world, through visits, sabbaticals, study fellowships etc.

3 Making connections between congregational and town twinning and our existing church-to-church partnerships, which may also be a particular synod’s partnership. (e.g. the German churches of the Pfalz and of Lippe, the Reformed Church of Hungary, the Church of the Czech Brethren, the Waldensian Church)

4 Establishing special local links with groups of Christians living in this country who come from partner churches either in CWM or in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (e.g. Ghanaian, Pakistani and Taiwanese Presbyterians)

5 Being willing to enter into dialogue and common action with people of other faiths.

How might this be enabled?

6 Through a new audit of local church, synod and town links, including ecumenical links such as that between Churches Together in Derby and a diocese of the Church of North India.

7 By networking those local churches which are building relationships with Christians of other cultures and languages and those new to this country.

8 By using the programme for receiving mission partners through the Council for World Mission more flexibly.

C To persevere in the search for the visible and organic unity of the Church through church-to-church conversations on matters of faith and church order so that sinful, and sometimes death-dealing, divisions may be healed and the Christian message of reconciliation be proclaimed with integrity

What might this mean?

1 Knowing who we are, whilst recognising that in the different nations and with different partners there will be different emphases: and remembering that provisionality is part of our identity.

2 Refusing some conversations and initiating others, recognising that such conversations may need to transcend class and cultural barriers as well as doctrinal ones.

How might this be enabled?

3 Engaging ordained and lay, young and old, Assembly committees and local churches, in open and informed debate about the nature and purpose of the Church in order to articulate afresh in this generation who we are, in all our diversity, and to what new purpose God is calling us.

4 Offering criteria through, for example, synod ecumenical strategies and through the leaflet *Reformed Expectations for the United Reformed Church in LEPs*, to assist the local in deciding when to accept and when to refuse an invitation to be part of a new Local Ecumenical Partnership.

5 Persevering in ecumenical prayer and worship.

An invitation from the Ecumenical Committee

These three ecumenical resolutions for a missionary church calls on the United Reformed Church *to expand, to deepen, to persevere, to celebrate and to proclaim*. The Ecumenical Committee invites the whole church to identify with these ecumenical resolutions and then work out what they might mean in practice in the particular place or situation.

International Exchange Sub-Committee

The International Exchange Sub Committee is responsible for the selection, training and caring of mission partners for service here and overseas, and for overseeing the exchange of personnel, including the World Exchange volunteers programme.

Committee Members

Convener: Revd John Crocker **Secretary:** Revd Philip Woods

Revd Bob Andrews (Convener, Ecumenical Committee), Mr Peter Bryant, Revd Keith Riglin, Revd Gwen Collins, Revd John Humphreys, Revd Birgit Ewald and Revd Sheila Maxey (Secretary for Ecumenical Relations).

I Introduction

1.1 Much of the committee's time is taken up with attending to the details of personnel exchange. In recent years this has been significantly about receiving people from our partner churches to work with us here. However, in the past twelve months there has been a renewed interest in serving overseas and during this time the committee has journeyed with four couples (and their children) seeking to serve overseas. Alongside this, as referred to in last year's report the committee has taken time out with a special residential meeting in April to revise the guidelines that govern our practices in sending and receiving mission partners.

2 Sharing people in mission

2.1 At the time of writing the following United Reformed Church people are serving with partner churches outside the UK:

- ◆ Alison Gibbs – United Church of Zambia (CWM)
- ◆ Stephen and Hardy Wilkinson – FJKM, Madagascar (CWM)
- ◆ Revd Jane Stranz – Reformed Church of France
- ◆ Revd Elspeth and Dr Ewan Harley – Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (CWM – one year 'volunteer' placement)

2.2 In January Revd Chris and Carol Baillie returned to this country after eleven years service with the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (CWM) in Grand Cayman.

2.3 Just before Assembly Mary Thomas will be ordained and commissioned with her husband, Paul, a maths teacher, for service with the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands in

Jamaica. Together with their two children (Peter and Helen) they will be departing for Jamaica, following a period of training, this autumn.

2.4 Current CWM vacancies are advertised on its website (www.cwmission.org.uk) or are available as a printed list from the International Relations office. Most of the vacancies are for lay people and cover a wide range of occupations.

2.5 The following people from our partner churches outside the UK are currently serving the United Reformed Church here:

- ◆ Revd Francis Amenu from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana – Ghanaian Minister to the United Reformed Church in London
- ◆ Revd Moiseraela Prince Dibeela from the Botswana Synod, United Congregational Church of Southern Africa – Mission Enabler in the East Midlands synod (CWM)
- ◆ Mrs Jasmine Jebakani from the Church of South India – Tutor at the Southern Theological Education & Training Scheme (CWM)
- ◆ Ms Muleba Muleba from the United Church of Zambia – volunteer at the United Reformed Church Youth Resources Centre, Yardley Hastings (CWM)
- ◆ Kiady Raharinosy from the FJKM (Madagascar) – volunteer in Llandfair LEP, Penrhys, South Wales.

2.6 The committee has agreed that *Grassroots*, an ecumenical project which also brings partners from beyond Europe to assist the UK churches with their mission, in partnership with Bury Road URC, Luton in the St Albans District, should be offered one of the overseas special category ministry appointments for their inter-faith worker post. The purpose of this post is to help the declining churches

there to rediscover their calling in a community of people largely belonging to other faiths. At the time of writing applications are being sought from our partner churches in South Asia.

2.7 Prince and Cheryl Dibeela and their children will be returning to Botswana this summer, following Prince's appointment with the East Midlands synod, where he has contributed much to their thinking on and involvement in mission. This will leave the committee with two vacancies in the overseas special category ministry posts, which they would like to see filled so that more people can benefit from the insights and ministry of our overseas partners. We therefore encourage congregations, districts and synods to consider if they could creatively utilise such a person in their situation.

3 World Exchange

3.1 During the past year the following people have worked with, or are working with overseas partner churches through the World Exchange volunteer programme:

- ◆ Helene McLeod - Guatemala
- ◆ Allan Christie - Malawi

3.2 Helene McLeod's reports of her exploits in Guatemala, which can be found in *Reform* from time to time, remind us that the World Exchange volunteer programme is open to all people over the age of eighteen and that even at the age of 72 you might find a new and rewarding calling taking a year out to work with one of our partner churches in another corner of the world.

3.3 The development of St Colm's International House continues and the committee makes good use of it for a variety of programmes, training opportunities and meetings and commends it to anyone looking for a meeting venue in Edinburgh.

4 Scholarship programme

4.1 The English for Church Workers course last year was again much appreciated by our partner churches. Participants came from (numbers in brackets):

- ◆ Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren (3)
- ◆ Evangelical Church of the Union (Germany) (3)
- ◆ Reformed Church in Hungary (3)
- ◆ Reformed Church in Sub-Carpatho Ukraine (2)
- ◆ Presbyterian Church of Korea (1)

4.2 In addition, in conjunction with the Romans 1:11 Trust a scholarship was offered to Revd David Chiboboke from the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian to undertake an MA in pastoral studies at Westminster College, Cambridge.

4.3 This year the committee is offering two English for Church Workers courses, the first of which was held April-June with three participants (two from the Reformed Church in Hungary and one from the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren). The next course will be held September-November and in addition to the usual churches participating it is hoped to have at least one person from the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba. We will also be offering scholarships for two post-graduate students at Westminster College from this September.

5 International Ministry Exchanges

5.1 Immediately before this Assembly we are hosting the International Advisers meeting for the Clergy Exchange International Foundation, the body behind International Ministry Exchanges.

5.2 During the past year the programme has undergone some significant changes, which have not been without their problems and some inconvenience to those trying to participate. However, it now has a full-time Executive Director and is considerably better placed to deliver quality exchanges which if appropriately planned as learning opportunities may be eligible for *Belonging to the World Church* CME grants.

5.3 During the year a number of ministers have availed themselves of this programme and participated in exchanges with colleagues in other parts of the world. Following the latest International Advisers meeting we expect to see the number of opportunities available through the programme expand.

6 Members

6.1 The committee wishes to record its appreciation of the contribution made by Bob Andrews who ending his term as Convener of the Ecumenical Committee also concludes his service with this committee. During the year we have welcomed Revd Birgit Ewald, filling a vacancy left over from last year's Assembly.

Finance

The Committee is responsible for the general financial oversight of funds administered for the benefit of the United Reformed Church under the overall authority of the General Assembly, for ensuring that proper procedures are in place for the maintenance of accounting records, the safe custody of assets and the preparation of financial statements, for giving financial advice to other councils of the church as appropriate, and for taking such decisions with regard to the finances of the Church as are necessary within the policies set by General Assembly.

Committee Members

Convener: Mr Graham Stacy (Hon. Treasurer)

Secretary: Ms Avis Reaney (Financial Secretary)

*Mr Alan Duncan, Mr Gordon Latham, Revd John Piper, Miss Muriel Proven, Miss Catriona Waterson,
Dr Brian Woodhall (Convener, United Reformed Church Trust)*

Resolution 23

Accounts

General Assembly adopts the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2000.

2000 Accounts

The 2000 accounts are set out in Appendix 1 and include a report from the Finance committee commenting on the result for the year and the financial position as at 31st December 2000.

Resolution 24

Ministry and Mission Fund

General Assembly gratefully acknowledges the giving of the churches in 2000 to the Ministry & Mission Fund.

The giving of the members of the Church to central funds

The financial operation of the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration could not happen if each Church Treasurer did not make very great efforts to ensure that the money required for this part of the work is in the local bank account on 20th of each month, for collection by direct debit. That this system runs very smoothly is evidence of much hard

and devoted work, and in thanking the Church for the response to the appeal for Ministry and Mission, which once again has been met with a nearly 100% result, the committee would also wish to acknowledge that largely unthanked group, the treasurers, in local churches, and also at district and synod level.

Methodist/URC Health and Healing Development Group

Committee Members

Convener: Revd Brenda Russell

Secretary: Revd Jim Needham

Mrs Jackie Ballard, Revd Delia Bond, Revd Ward Jones, Dr Margaret Moore, Revd Malcolm White

I Introduction

1.1 Several years ago this group became ecumenical, with the Methodist and United Reformed groups coming together and seeking to develop understanding, among those of the two denominations, of this ministry which Jesus called those who follow him to carry forward. As we move into the twenty-first century, there are signs of growing interest and a desire to learn and promote the Christian ministry of healing.

2 'A Time to Heal'

2.1 From 6-9 November last year a conference was held at Willersley Castle, with the theme 'A Time to Heal' (the title being the same as the recent publication which comes from the Anglican tradition). People from both denominations travelled to share. The weather and difficulties on the trains unfortunately prevented some from coming, but those who gathered agreed it was a worthwhile and helpful time.

2.2 We were fortunate to have with us as speakers three people who had been very involved in preparing the Anglican publication. Bishop John Perry shared some thoughts on the preparation and hopes for 'A Time to Heal'. He helped us to recognise that God's healing is not just happening where services are held specifically with prayers for healing but in many other areas of our day-to-day lives.

2.3 We also heard from David McDonald who shared thoughts about Deliverance. David's emphasis was not on deliverance from evil powers but rather deliverance from burdens from the past, memories and traumas which need God's power to bring healing.

2.4 Beatrice Brandon, our third speaker, opened up the world of Complementary and Alternative Therapies. As one of the Editors of

'A Time to Heal', Beatrice has done a vast amount of research into this area. It was helpful to hear some of her conclusions and to share experiences within the group.

2.5 The worship and fellowship over the few days was helpful, encouraging and a blessing. Such a pity the number attending was small. There are plans for future gatherings so please watch out for them and be encouraged to come and share; you will not regret it!

3 Meeting of Methodist District and United Reformed Church Synod Advisers

3.1 On 13 June the Methodist District and United Reformed Church Synod Health and Healing Advisers will be meeting together for the annual time of sharing and learning. This meeting will take place in Stafford and usually brings representatives from many places.

4 Ecumenical Developments

4.1 The most exciting news is that our Joint Group has been asked to take the initiative in moving towards a new ecumenical forum under the auspices of Churches Together in England. Revd Bill Snelson, General Secretary, invited all CTE member Churches to a meeting in January. This meeting was attended by representatives from the Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Moravian, Salvation Army and United Reformed Churches. Apologies were received from others who had expressed interest in sharing but have not yet appointed a representative. A special time, and the decision is to seek ways of moving forward together in this area.

4.2 We meet again on 26 June at Tavistock Place, and hope to be able, in time, to offer resources and help to those involved in this ministry and those who would like to learn more.

Inter-Faith Relations

The task of the committee is

- to encourage and assist the churches in inter-faith situations
- to affirm and support individuals involved in inter-faith dialogue on behalf of the church
- to engage in direct contact with people of other faiths, particularly through our advisers on dialogue with Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and New religious Movements
- to develop theological understanding of inter-faith dialogue and mission
- to keep abreast with what is happening in the teaching about other faiths in schools and colleges.

Committee Members

Convener: Mrs Daphne Beale **Secretary:** Revd Sally Thomas

Mrs Linda Hopley, Revd David Taylor, Mr Matthew Bean, Revd Alistair Ellefsen-Jones

Advisers: Revd Jonathan Dean (Judaism), Revd Dr John Parry (Sikhism), Dr Elizabeth Harris (Buddhism),
Revd Peter Colwell (Islam).

Staff Link: Revd Philip Woods (Secretary for International Relations)

I Five Year Review

1.1 The Committee for Inter-Faith Relations is grateful to Mission Council for the review of the committee's work and the support this implies. We acknowledge their wisdom in suggesting a further review in five years time and commend this as a model of good practice for other committees.

2 Searching for Meaning

2.1 In this so-called post-modern world there is a great hunger for the spiritual and for healing. We know that through the church God has much to offer to people who are searching for meaning in their lives. There is a need for us to understand their longing and the religious traditions and healing therapies that are offering to satisfy their needs. Our churches have most often failed to come to terms with the new demands of our society or to appreciate the attractiveness of many new age methods of healing and spiritual fulfilment. We are looking at these issues in our committee and would welcome your responses.

3 Encouraging Local Churches

3.1 We are hoping during the next year to have in place contacts in each synod with whom we can share information and who can encourage districts and local churches in matters of inter-faith relations.

3.2 We welcome the appointment of the Revd Dale Barton as the Lancashire Inter-Faith Adviser and appreciated the opportunity of meeting with him at our January meeting and learning about this ecumenical approach to encouraging local churches in their inter-faith relations. We commend this

approach to others in multi-faith communities as a means of stimulating and sustaining dialogue and mutual understanding between local churches and their neighbours of other faith traditions.

4 Supporting Individuals

4.1 There are many people in our churches who are in touch with people of other faith traditions and we would encourage them to make the most of their contacts and deepen their understanding of other faiths through these contacts. It can be a most enjoyable journey of mutual discovery to enter into such a dialogue built on the bonds of an existing relationship, be it as friend, colleague or neighbour.

4.2 Asylum seekers and refugees, finding themselves in an alien and strange world need our care and support and would especially appreciate our understanding of their culture and faith. The committee and its advisers can help you learn more about the different faith traditions to be found in Great Britain today.

4.3 Working with other churches the committee is in the process of contributing to the production of an ecumenical inter-faith newsletter and would welcome the names of people who would like to receive it.

5 Engaging in Dialogue

5.1 The committee's advisers offer us opportunities for dialogue in a more formal setting and later this year it is proposed to have a Sikh-Christian conference for a group of young people exploring together their faith traditions and what it means to be a person of faith today.

5.2 Dialogue can take place at many levels and learning of the faith of another person can open the way to sharing our own faith and witnessing to what Christ has done for us in a non-threatening way.

6 Developing our Theological Understanding

6.1 As we engage in dialogue we find ourselves challenged to a deeper understanding of our own faith. The committee would welcome suggestions as to how theological thinking about the openness and limitations of dialogue might be more widely shared. Questions can arise as we visit the places of worship of other faith communities, or as people of other faith visit our churches. The committee would encourage you to take such opportunities and then share your experiences with us.

7 Working with Schools and Colleges

7.1 Many of us are engaged in the educational sphere as parents, teachers, governors, or members of a SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education). There is good material to share in this field, so please share more with us.

8 Liaising with Others

8.1 The committee works closely with other committees of the United Reformed Church and also with other denominational inter-faith committees, particularly through the Churches Commission for Inter-Faith Relations (CCIFR). We have also been closely involved with the London Inter-Faith Centre at Kilburn and welcome Revd Peter Colwell (Deputy Director) and Gillian Jones (Centre Manager) who will be helping to resource the work of the committee from hereon as we develop the networks and contacts referred to in this report.

9 Looking to the Future

9.1 Our hope is to get members of the United Reformed Church talking to each other, ecumenically and across faith boundaries about how we can share the gifts that God has given us for the common good of the whole of our society. Please engage with us in this work of dialogue and mutual understanding. The convener, Daphne Beale and secretary, Sally Thomas look forward to hearing from you.

Resolution 25

Holocaust Memorial Day

General Assembly urges all local churches to observe Holocaust Memorial Day on January 27 and commends the excellent material available through Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) and the Council for Christians and Jews (CCJ).

1 This year was the first celebration of Holocaust Memorial Day on January 27 and this government initiative was valued in many places.

2 Introducing the event the Home Secretary stated:

Holocaust Memorial Day will be an inclusive commemoration of all the individuals and communities who suffered as a result of the Holocaust. It will also focus on its contemporary relevance in the light of continuing genocide and other atrocities.

A key reason for establishing an annual United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Day is to offer all of us the opportunity to reflect both on the Holocaust and more recent crimes against humanity. The Day also promotes the need to build a society free from the evils of genocide, racism, antisemitism and other forms of discrimination.

3 We recognise that genocide has not been confined to one time or one place, nor is it merely an historical phenomenon, but that such things can happen today. We need therefore to reach out in friendship to others, learning to know them and understand their hopes and fears, so that we can resist all attempts to arouse hatred based on race, culture or religion. This day helps us to focus our attention on what has happened so that our remembrance can help us to recognise any signs of this happening in our own communities.

4 In 2002 Holocaust Memorial Day (January 27) falls on a Sunday and so we commend it to all congregations as an opportunity to reflect on the tragedy of genocide.

5 There is much material around to help us in this, including the excellent government website – www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk. The material commended in the resolution gives both a broad picture of the issues and a more focused look at the Holocaust itself.

Life and Witness

The purpose of the Life and Witness Committee is :

- to enable the local church to capture the vision of God's mission for itself and to plan its life accordingly;
- to encourage growth in faith among people of all ages;
- to challenge members in their stewardship and witness;
- to encourage the local church to engage with its community in evangelism, if possible ecumenically;
- to enable each church to engage with its local community in partnership and service; by gathering ideas and experience, including best practice, and advocating these to the local church; by monitoring and assessing relevant government policy and advising the local church accordingly;
- to support the work of elders and the work of the district councils in their oversight of the local church;
- to stimulate district councils and synods in the development of their own strategies for mission;
- to support the work of the Windermere Centre and of the Rural Officer/Consultant;
- to enable ongoing reflection on issues related to the Community of Women and Men in the Church.

Committee Members

Convener: Revd Frank Beattie

Secretary: Revd John Steele

Revs Peter Ball, Eddie Boon, Ken Forbes, Suzanne Hamnett, Angela Hughes, Peter McIntosh, Bob Warwicker, Mrs Jenny Carpenter, Mrs Rita Joyner, Mrs Alison Lowe, Mrs Sheila Thatcher,

Convener of Stewardship Sub-committee: Mr Keith Webster

I Personalia

1.1 Since last assembly Mrs Tina Rook and Mr David Williams have both left the committee for personal reasons. The disappointment of their departure has been tempered by the fact that we have been able to welcome the Revd Angela Hughes into our midst. The Revd Ken Forbes has been confirmed as a member of the Committee and we are delighted that he feels able to combine this work with his responsibilities within the Synod of Scotland.

1.2 The secretary of the Committee, the Revd John Steele, continues to keep the plates spinning. We are indebted to him for the way he represents us beyond the confines of the United Reformed Church, for his skill in working collaboratively within Church House and for his sense of humour. Daphne Munson, John's PA, is a vital cog in the wheel and we would wish to record our indebtedness to her.

2 To enable the local church to capture the vision of God's mission for itself and to plan its life accordingly;

2.1 Within weeks of the *Growing Up* report being launched at the 1999 General Assembly, the Committee met at the Windermere Centre and began to ask how the report could best become part of the life of each local church. We were conscious, that without a supporting programme, the initiative

could be lost. At last year's Assembly, we promised study materials to complement the report and to make its challenge more accessible to each member. We are delighted to report that the booklet will be introduced at the Assembly. We commend it to the church with the prayer that the Holy Spirit will use it to stimulate people and churches to grow up into Christ and to grow up to our responsibilities to:

tell out the Good News,

teach the faith to all believers,

tend the vulnerable,

work for the **transformation** of unjust structures and

to **treasure** the earth, which is the Lord's.

2.2 Cell Church

Church life is never static. For this reason the Committee invited a few United Reformed Church ministers, who are leading congregations to explore the meaning of cell principles for the local church, to spend some time with us. Each of those who shared their experiences with us was convinced that the cell church model could work well within our conciliar structures. What we discovered, we now offer to the whole church.

Several hundred congregations of many different denominations in this country have already followed the Cell route. Around the world some of the fastest-growing congregations are built on Cell principles.

Cell Church is a way of being the Church that harnesses the resources of the large group while exploiting the relationships that can be built up only through small groups. Its advocates describe it as the Church with two wings: the large, celebration meeting wing and the more intimate, Cell Group meeting wing.

The main interest from the point of view of conventional church structures is the small group. In these days when relationships count far more than dogma, small groups provide the opportunity for those outside the Church to meet with church members in homes. Here our Christian faith is caught rather than taught.

In a non-threatening environment believers share their Christian experience in a natural setting and show the love of God both by caring in practical ways for their neighbours and by praying for their needs. By meeting in homes these weekly Cells avoid the need for costly buildings. They can start in new neighbourhoods and respond to changing patterns of living. Meeting times can be varied according to the needs of those who are being invited.

The Cells provide the means to involve every member in ministry to their neighbours. They focus, not on intellectual ability, but on the practical application of Christian principles. These Cells also encourage gifts of leadership by training on-the-job and, as a result, allow more leaders to emerge.

The small groups follow the principle of biological cells, growing by the assimilation of new members until more leaders have been prepared and the Cell is ready to multiply.

Cell Church is a way of empowering all members of the church to play their part in growing. Each individual has the opportunity, indeed, the responsibility, to grow in discipleship and to play their part, no matter how small, in making God's love visible. It does much to redress the balance weighted unhealthily in favour of reliance on ordained professionals and puts the life of the church back where it belongs: in the hands of all the members under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, who said, '... I will build my church ...' – Matthew 16: 18

The Committee is proposing a Cell Church Consultation at Windermere 25 - 27 February 2002. There will be opportunity there to hear how the concept is working within the United Reformed Church and to engage in an exploration of the subject. Is this for you? You know the restrictions on Windermere as well as the rest of us. If you would like to be part of this 'first', you may make a provisional booking with the Windermere Centre.

3 To encourage growth in faith among people of all ages;

3.1 Church Membership In partnership with the Training Committee, we have begun an initiative to create new materials for church membership.

So far, we have reviewed many worthy treasures of the past, (some still in faithful use) sampled those from other churches and looked at some of the 'home grown' creations recommended to us.

A small team of people representing key interest groups and concerns will undertake the work and we are grateful that former moderator David Jenkins has agreed to serve as editor and co-ordinator.

The new materials will clearly need to meet a number of criteria, and be accessible in both electronic and print format. It is hoped they will be piloted in early autumn 2002 with a view to being available from Assembly 2003.

3.2 To support the work of the Windermere Centre. In 2000 the Windermere Centre once again provided a whole variety of courses, events and experiences to help many people enrich faith and life in one way or the other. Over one thousand four hundred people came through the place during that year (which is a lot of laundry!) Much prayer, worship, teaching, training, reflection, appraisal, exploration, re-affirmation, challenge, healing and renewal took place! Church secretaries, Synod Treasurers, Pastoral conveners, District secretaries, women in ministry, ministers in ministry, committees, work parties, elders, church members, adherents, whole congregations, first timers, old hands, young, middling and mature - all hopefully enjoyed and benefited from this small miracle that exists within the life of our denomination. In the first half of 2000 the Director was often elsewhere ministering as Moderator of General Assembly, and his return to the Centre was marred by illness (thankfully now healed). It is a tribute to the Centre administrative and domestic staff, its Management Committee and Advisory Group, as well as to the Revd Denise Megson who acted as locum, that the life and work of the place continued to flourish.

Revd Frank Cochrane completed his appointment as Centre Management convener and we warmly thank him for his care and service to the centre during his years of dedicated service, and wish John Willis much blessing as he takes up the role. The denomination has developed considerably since the centre opened in 1986, and the context of its life and service has therefore also changed. En-suite rooms are seen as a must (and now over one third of our rooms provide that facility). Training is done now at Synod and local level to a degree that was not the case 15 years ago, and the needs and expectations of the church have moved on.

Scotland has another place to call home since our new denomination wonderfully came into being on April 1st, 2000. Windermere is suddenly much nearer to some that it ever was before. We can be thankful for this place, for the vision of those who brought it into being, and the ways in which people's prayers and encouragements continue to sustain its life.

3.3 Holiday Forum The United Reformed Church Holiday Forum theme for 2000 was, 'Ready for Action', which looked at how the church faces the challenge of the new millennium. Paul Quilter and Rosemary Johnston ably led over 200 people for six days on a journey as pilgrim people who were living under various aspects of God's power (e.g., creative, fire, team). The final day brought the theme together, as the conference considered how Christian living could make a difference in the world. There were light-hearted and serious times, times to be creative and time for thought, time for play and time for prayer.

The theme of Holiday Forum 2001 is, 'Life for a Change', led by Stephen Thornton, and will aim to build on the *Growing Up* report and on the ways in which faith can be communicated with fun. The dates are 18-24 August. Booking forms and information can be obtained from Caroline Sturtridge, 27 Cavendish Road, Bognor Regis, PO21 2JN.

4 To challenge members in their stewardship and witness;

4.1 Many of our churches can testify to the effectiveness of the TRIO (The Responsibility Is Ours) programme. We are grateful to the members of the Stewardship sub-committee for up-dating the programme following a number of changes in the law. The new TRIO will be available by the time Assembly meets. If yours was one of the first churches to use this stewardship programme, maybe the time is right to re-visit it. Churches in the Synod of Scotland have been waiting for this revision and we commend it to them. The full account of the work of the Stewardship sub-committee appears later in this report.

5 To encourage the local church to engage with its community in evangelism, if possible ecumenically;

5.1 The report, 'Growing Up to the Ministry of Evangelists', appears as an appendix in this book of reports and is the subject of two resolutions to Assembly.

5.2 'Share Jesus' Life and Witness took a bold step on the United Reformed Church's behalf last July.

Rumour had it that Methodist evangelist Rob Frost and his team (organisers of 'Easter People' and the 'Hopes & Dreams' musical productions) were planning significant new developments in their work. The Methodist Church was to 'station' Rob to serve an ecumenical charitable company limited by share. His ministry was to be placed in an explicitly ecumenical environment for the purpose of greater effectiveness in mission. Parts of the United Reformed Church knew something of Rob's work but there had never been any formal connections. Might there now be an opportunity for us to become more closely involved?

That opportunity came exactly a year ago when the United Reformed Church was formally invited to be part of the ecumenical board to oversee the development of Rob Frost's work. We now find ourselves in partnership with 20 or so denominations and agencies on a board of management which includes 6 designated trustees. The company name is 'Share Jesus' (after the popular regional missions) and our meetings so far have given us insight into this exciting but demanding national and international evangelistic concern.

One spin-off from this is our involvement in the development of a christian response to new-age spirituality, and we look forward to other possibilities emerging in due course.

6 To enable each church to engage with its local community in partnership and service; by gathering ideas and experience, including best practice, and advocating these to the local church; by monitoring and assessing relevant government policy and advising the local church accordingly;

6.1 **Church Life Profile** The United Reformed Church responded well in recognising the potential of this national church survey as a tool for mission.

As well as coverage in *Reform*, and letters to all our churches inviting them to take part in the survey in April, the United Reformed Church invested in a random sample of over 10% of our churches across the denomination, with a positive response rate from them of 63% and a similar number of churches who were not part of the sample opted in. The organisers tell us that pro rata there were far more United Reformed Church local churches who opted in than from any other denomination.

The first results of the profile will be available in November, and it will be for us to assess their value and significance. We are in discussion with the Methodist and Anglican churches about a shared post of a researcher who will assist us in interpreting our data in terms of mission opportunities. In the meantime, denominations are considering their continued support of this work over the next five years.

6.2 To enable ongoing reflection on issues related to the Community of Women and Men in the Church

Community of Women and Men

Joint Co-ordinators: Revds Bob Day and Rowena Francis

Members: Lindsey Sanderson, Zam Walker, Gillian Yates

A small group has prepared and circulated through established women's group mailings and certain synods a resource pack on domestic violence for use within the churches. It includes ecumenically produced material. Violence is an issue high on the agenda following the World Council of Churches Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, and is ongoing as we move into the Decade to Overcome Violence. By offering resources on issues relating to the community of women and men for use in small groups, worship and church meetings, it is hoped that churches will become more aware, and gain confidence in dealing with them. The pack is available from Life and Witness.

6.3 To support the work of the Rural Officer/Consultant

Jenny Carpenter writes: The **farming crisis** has continued to be the dominant concern of the Arthur Rank Centre. The Rural Stress Action Plan, funded by the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF) is being overseen by the Rural Stress Information Network, based at the Centre. With its help and advice, many more local groups have been set up to address the needs of farmers, haulage contractors and others who are suffering from the collapse of the farming economy. The Agricultural Chaplains' Association has been formed to enable networking, training and support for those who are in the front line of support themselves.

At the time of writing this report, the foot and mouth outbreak is causing great concern to rural communities in every part of these islands. Christian people from town and country have demonstrated their solidarity with those facing the loss of their livelihoods, by giving generously to the charities whose aim is to offer financial help, along with practical advice.

Churches were again challenged to pray for the needs of the agricultural community around Rogationtide (20 May). Those who wish to declare their solidarity with the farmers and to pray for their concerns are encouraged to join the Green Ribbon Campaign. Ribbons will be available on church stands at agricultural shows and at the major regional events entitled '**Celebrating the Rural Church**' which, over the spring and summer, will mark 10 years since the 'Faith in the Countryside' Report. The exhibition to mark this will, it is hoped, be on show at General Assembly.

6.3.1 Rural Ministry Support Project. A 3 year research project funded by the Jerusalem Trust has been running since October 2000 to ascertain needs of those in rural ministry and to enable them to be met more effectively. A questionnaire was sent out to 1000 people (lay and ordained) in leadership roles in rural churches and the results collated. A seminar to present the findings and make recommendations for new resources was planned for early June.

6.3.2 Rural White Paper. The long awaited rural white paper was published in November 2000. The role of some village churches in making available their buildings for other purposes eg IT training, mother and toddler groups, counselling, clinics, police base, shop or post office, was highlighted, but there was little sense of the central role of churches in developing community and addressing people's spiritual needs. The **Churches Rural Group** made submissions in advance of the White Paper and subsequently. The opportunity was created for Rural Bishops and other Church Leaders to meet Michael Meacher, the DETR Minister for the Environment, at the end of January. He was extremely receptive, and anxious to hear Church thinking and proposals for future action.

6.3.3 Related Workbook. The summer 2001 edition of *Country Way*, Arthur Rank Centre's magazine on Life and Faith in Great Britain, is planned to include a workbook for rural churches picking up issues from the White Paper and calling local churches to study and action. This should prove an accessible resource for our rural and market town churches. The fact that it will be common to all denominations will make it possible for churches to work on it ecumenically, and with the knowledge of their parish or town council. District Councils are asked to encourage its imaginative use.

6.3.4 Rural Ministry Courses are offered in May and November for those newly appointed to Rural situations. Jenny Carpenter is available to any District Council which wants to consult her about appropriate rural strategy and to lead worship or training days with a rural focus. She is also available to the Synods.

7 To support the work of elders and the work of the district councils in their oversight of the local church;

Having been asked last year to look at Elders training material, we were pleased when the Training Committee took the initiative, with some Life and Witness involvement on the writing panel. The work is almost complete and the course is to be piloted during the coming year, with an expected launch at next year's Assembly.

8 To stimulate district councils and synods in the development of their own strategies for mission.

Over the past two years, the committee has, from time to time, asked synods to appraise us of their initiatives in mission. Whilst no-one would expect the picture to be uniform, it is encouraging to note how each synod has responded to the challenge to mission contained in the *Growing Up* report. It is probably true to say that as a church we have

become much more aware in recent years, of the benefits to the Kingdom of sharing our resources. Both the secretary and the convenor of the committee have accepted invitations to visit synods to help stimulate thinking in the formation of strategies for mission.

9.1 To challenge members in their stewardship and witness.

Stewardship Sub-Committee

Sub-Committee Members

Convenor: Mr Keith Webster

Secretary: Revd John Steele

Members: Mr Frank Dale, Mrs Sheila Yates, Mrs H Anne Mitchell

I Introduction

1.1 The Sub-Committee has a continuing aim of developing and promoting ways in which the church, at all levels, can exercise real stewardship of the gifts entrusted to it. These gifts, whether financial or individual skills must be identified, nurtured and used effectively to support the life of the church. This can range from the day to day 'housekeeping' to the high profile mission activity, not losing sight of the fact that everything that is done in some way supports the implementation of God's mission for the church as a whole.

2 TRIO (The Responsibility Is Ours)

2.1 Since there has been a continuing demand for TRIO, work was undertaken to review and update the current material to take account of the various changes that have occurred since TRIO was first launched. This work is complete and the updated version of TRIO is now available.

2.2 The work continues to develop a successor to TRIO. The aim is to produce a successor programme which will help churches as they look at their mission initiatives and their wider role within the local community. Such a programme should also be set in the context of 'Growing Up', and not only give guidance on raising resources to support mission but also help local churches use the available resources effectively and efficiently.

3 GEM (Giving Enables Mission)

3.1 GEM, which is a full stewardship programme, continues to be used by churches that have carried out a Vision Workshop or similar programme. The programme is still available from United Reformed Church Bookshop at £25, which includes copies of the necessary literature and acetates for presentation.

4 Gift Aid

4.1 Following the introduction of Gift Aid, and clarification of the tax legislation, a new leaflet has been prepared setting out the continuing benefits of both regular, planned giving, and the associated tax advantages, together with the beneficial impact of the one-off donations. In addition a model Gift Aid declaration is now available

5 Ecumenical

5.1 Through the Convenor the Church is represented on the Churches together in Britain and Ireland Stewardship Network. This provides an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and learn about developments in the approaches to stewardship in other denominations.

6 People

6.1 During the year we have had some membership changes. Sue Wilkinson resigned from the committee - and her work in the advocacy of stewardship has been greatly appreciated - and Anne Mitchell was welcomed as a new member.

Resolution 26**Commitment to Evangelism**

General Assembly, recognising the urgent missionary challenge facing the church at the beginning of the 21st century and affirming the importance of evangelism for the Church and its ministry at every level, acknowledges the need to identify those in lay and ordained ministry who have the gift of evangelism.

1.1 One of the most significant things to emerge from the Decade of Evangelism has been a refocusing on mission and evangelism/evangelisation, and this has had implications for all the national churches. The *Growing Up* proposals in 1999 put this sharply into context for the United Reformed Church in relation to the Five Marks of Mission. That same year, Assembly took the positive step of passing resolution (30) placing evangelism/evangelisation and local engagement in mission at the heart of the church's life.

1.2 Resolution 26 restates the United Reformed Church's commitment to evangelism and, believing that the Holy Spirit still calls and equips some to be evangelists, encourages the church to rejoice with those among its members who have this gift. See Appendix 4 *Growing Up to the Ministry of Evangelists*.

Resolution 27**The Ministry of Evangelists**

General Assembly directs the Life and Witness Committee to initiate discussions with other committees of the Church, so that together they might recommend ways of releasing men and women to exercise their ministry as evangelists, and suggest ways of supporting them in their ministry.

2.1 Life & Witness continues to be approached with questions about how those with evident evangelistic gifts might be recognised and employed in certain local church situations, and we are aware of a number of interesting developments in this area, mainly amongst ministers. But for the most part, the United Reformed Church remains vague and uncertain about evangelists.

2.2 Although the whole of the church is entrusted with the evangelistic task, our paper *Growing Up to the Ministry of Evangelists* and this accompanying resolution focuses on the need to release, resource and support those, both lay and ordained, who have specific gifts and graces in evangelism, for service in the church.

Ministries Accreditation Sub-Committee

Sub-Committee Members

Convener: Revd Robert Way **Secretary:** Revd Christine Craven

Mrs Julie McLaren, Mr Peter Mann, Revd Graham Robson, Revd Roberta Rominger, Mrs Frances Caldwell

Roll of Ministers

1 Admissions to the Roll (from 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001)

a) By Ordination – Stipendiary:

Mary Kay Alberg, Jason Askew, Elizabeth Blair, Edward Rawson Cox, Alistair Ellefsen-Jones, Geoffrey Felton, Malcolm Fife, Helen Louise Franklin, Klaus Gutwein, Martin Hardy, Deborah Jane Hodge, Roger Alexander Jones, Jason McCullagh, David Pattie (from Salvation Army), Helen Pope, Pauline Rate, David Salisbury, Peter Stevenson, Marta Damo Sugar, Kirstin Elizabeth Thorpe, Bruce Samuel Upperton

b) By Ordination – Non-Stipendiary:

June Rosina Colley, Christine Davies, Sandra Griffiths, Jackie Lowe (Hillier), John Mackerness, David Marshall-Jones, Lorraine Mycroft, Bridget Powell, Edward Kotey Sanniez, Hazel Starritt, Beatrice Yamoah

c) By Transfer from other Churches:

Thomas Carmichael (Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa), Ronald Garner (United Church of Christ, USA), Peter Hurter (Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa), Marc Kenton (Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa), Daniel George Meister (United Church of Christ, USA), Gerald Moule (Church of Scotland), Jaroslav Raich (Church of the Czech Brethren), John Howard Reed (Presbyterian Church, USA)

d) By Re-instatement

Nigel Appleton, John Fuller

2 Deletions from the Roll (from 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001)

a) By Resignation and/or Transfer to other Churches:

Lawrence Coutts (Uniting Church of Australia), Marina Kennard (Church in Wales), Jack Lawson, Martyn Poole, Valerie Price (Methodist Church),

b) By Deletion

Timothy London

3 Changes within the Roll (from 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001)

a) Non-Stipendiary to Stipendiary:

Brenda Moore, Alan Poolton, Peter Sharp

4 Church Related Community Workers (from 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001)

a) By Commissioning:

Susan Patricia Lincoln

b) By Transfer from other Churches:

Judith Harris (Church of Scotland)

5 Lay Preachers

The following members have successfully completed their course of study and have been Nationally Accredited.

Northern Synod:-

Elizabeth Jewitt,
Donald Owers
James Perry

North Western Synod:-

Ian Allan
Geoff Ellis

Yorkshire Synod:-

Ashley Evans
Brian Ogilvie
Ron Sweeney
Ruth Weston

East Midlands Synod:-

Debbie Ensor
John Shaw

West Midlands Synod:-

Janet Martin

South Western Synod:-

Angela Bebbington
Jacki Fox
Helen Shallow
Ruth Woodhouse

Wessex Synod:-

Janet Bousfield
Susan Brown
Edwin Rolles

Thames North Synod:-

Nan Maxwell

Southern Synod:-

David Childs

Synod of Scotland:-

Malcolm Wright
Terence Dobson

Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee

Sub-Committee Members

Convener: Mr Geoffrey Woods **Secretary:** Mrs Judy Stockings
*Miss Margaret Atkinson, Mr Victor Hughff, (Convener Pensions Executive) Revd Pauline Parkin,
Mr Graham Stacy, (Honorary Treasurer), Mrs Jill Strong, Mr Barry Swift, Revd Roger Woodall*

Pensions

1 Former Congregational Union of Scotland ministers

1.1 The rules of the URC Ministers' Pension Fund (URCMPF) restrict entry to membership to ministers who are under the age of 55 at the time of joining. This restriction was recognised and accepted at the time of the Union with the Congregational Union of Scotland (CUS) and 13 ministers who were not eligible to join the URCMPF because of the age limitation were expected to remain in the Scottish Congregational Ministers Money Purchase Pension Scheme (SCMMPPS).

1.2 However, it has been discovered that maintaining the SCMMPPS for a small number of ministers over the age of 55 is not cost effective and the ministers concerned would be adversely affected as a result. In order to treat these ministers fairly the MoM Sub-Committee has concluded that the appropriate course is to amend the rules of the URCMPF to waive the age limitation for joining for former CUS ministers.

1.3 A resolution will be brought to General Assembly in July 2001 to effect this rule change. At the time of writing this report the wording of the rule change is still being considered by the actuaries and solicitors.

2 Early retirement after 40 years service

2.1 The Report on Ministerial Remuneration presented to Assembly in 1999 recommended that normal retirement should be available at 65 years of age or after 40 years service whichever is earlier. This recommendation was concerned with removing, in the case of ministers who had completed 40 years service, the reduction in pension which normally applies on early retirement to take account of the shortfall in contributions and the longer period for which a pension would be payable. The Pension Fund rules were amended to comply with this recommendation.

2.2 Subsequently, a question was raised concerning the fact that a male minister retiring before reaching the age of 65 would have to wait for a period before becoming entitled to the State Pension. The Sub-Committee was requested to consider whether the Church should make additional payments in the pre-65 period to make up this shortfall in income. The Sub-Committee decided against doing so.

2.3 At the 2000 Assembly, following a motion under Standing Order 3b, the Sub-Committee agreed to reconsider its decision.

2.4 The Sub-Committee has considered this matter again and is not minded to change its previous decision. The changes to pension benefits and retirement housing arrangements, introduced in response to the recommendations of the Review Group on Ministerial Remuneration, give a significant advantage to ministers who have completed 40 years service by comparison with other ministers retiring early after a considerable number of years service (albeit not 40 years). Furthermore, the Review Group on Ministerial Remuneration carried out a thorough review of all aspects of remuneration and pensions and did not propose this change and the Sub-Committee considers that it is not appropriate to introduce changes not recommended by the Review Group so soon after the review.

2.5 The decision of the Sub-Committee was referred to the Ministries Committee, which has concurred with the Sub-Committee's view.

3 Surviving spouse benefit

3.1 At the 2000 Assembly, by notice under Standing Order 7a, the Sub-Committee was asked to review the following sentence in the URCMPF rule 22.2:

'The pension (of a surviving spouse) will be subject to reduction on the advice of the Actuary if the surviving spouse is more than ten years younger than the member.'

Resolution 28

By:

- (1) establishing the cost for the removal of this reduction with regard to present pensioners;
- (2) establishing the cost for the removal of this reduction with regard to future pensioners;
- (3) discussing the implications of the present rule with the Equal Opportunities Committee; and
- (4) bringing a report and proposal to the Assembly in 2001.

3.2 Advice received from the Actuary is that the costs under (1) and (2) would be £30,000 and £60,000 respectively. The Equal Opportunities Committee has not identified any legal objection to the sentence in rule 22.2.

3.3 When changes to rules are contemplated, cost is not normally a primary consideration. The first consideration is whether the change is fair and reasonable. The rule is a normal element of pension fund rules and recognises a circumstance in which a surviving spouse pension could be payable for a very long period. Members might see unfairness in providing for such a benefit for a particular beneficiary, looking at the membership as a whole. For that reason a line is drawn – and the ten year rule is the normal safeguard.

3.4 The Sub-Committee is not persuaded that there is any reason to depart from normal practice and does not propose that any change should be made to the rules of the URCMPF.

4 Pension sharing on divorce

4.1 Following a change in the law the Courts can now direct that, as at the date of a divorce, a transfer value can be calculated and split between the member and ex-spouse in specified proportions. The member's benefit is then reduced and the ex-spouse can seek to secure a pension benefit either in the fund in which the benefit originates, or elsewhere.

4.2 There are administrative difficulties in allowing the benefit to the ex-spouse of a member to be provided through the URCMPF and in accepting a transfer value which has been subject to a divorce court 'splitting' award. It is not proposed to allow this within the URCMPF rules. The rules will be amended in due course to make provision for the new regulations.

5 AVC flexibility

5.1 Following a change in Inland Revenue practice it is now possible to allow flexibility in the timing for drawing the benefit from Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs). In the light of this change the Pension Fund Trustees have agreed that the rules of the fund should be changed to allow members to defer the drawing of AVC benefits up to the age of 75 (the limit permitted by the Revenue) if they so wish.

5.2 This change has been implemented and members have been notified. The appropriate change to the rules has to be made within two years.

Resolution 28

Plan for Partnership

General Assembly amends the Plan for Partnership by the inclusion of the words in italics in Appendix B Note 2, which will then read:

Allowances specifically 'in lieu of manse accommodation'

Allowances which are currently being paid may have been calculated on various bases and for different reasons and it is expected that these will be honoured. When determining new allowances the following should be taken into consideration:

- i. rates (where payable), Council Tax
- ii. water/sewage charges
- iii. interior and exterior redecorations (estimated yearly average)
- iv. repairs (estimated yearly average)
- v. property insurance.

The allowance should be recalculated annually.

Note: *The reference in i. above will not apply to Council Tax in Scotland where Council Tax is the responsibility of the local church even if the minister owns the property.*

This minor change to the Plan for Partnership is required to recognise the fact that in Scotland, under the terms of Statutory Instrument 1992 No 1331

(S128) Council Tax Regulations, the local church is responsible for the payment of Council Tax even if the minister owns his or her own house.

Nominations

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

Committee Members

Convener: *Revd Glyn Jenkins* **Secretary:** *Mr Desmond Curry*

Synod Representatives:

<i>I Miss Janet Turner</i>	<i>II Revd Geoff Tolley</i>
<i>III Mr Donald Swift</i>	<i>IV Mr John Seager</i>
<i>V Revd Christopher White</i>	<i>VI Mr Simon Rowntree</i>
<i>VII Revd Elizabeth Caswell</i>	<i>VIII Revd Ray Adams</i>
<i>IX Mr Graham Rolfe</i>	<i>X Revd Adrian Bulley</i>
<i>XI Mrs Christine Meekison</i>	<i>XII Revd Colin Richards</i>
<i>XIII Revd John Arthur</i>	

with the Immediate Past Moderator and General Secretary.

1 ASSEMBLY STAFF APPOINTMENTS

1.1 The Review Group for Mersey Synod Moderator convened by Mr Brian Evans recommends that Revd Graham Cook be re-appointed to serve until 31 January 2004.

1.2 The Review Group for South Western Synod Moderator convened by Mrs Wilma Frew recommends that Revd Ray Adams be re-appointed for a period of five years until 31 August 2006.

1.3 The Review Group for Secretary for Ministries convened by Mrs Wilma Frew recommends the re-appointment of Revd Christine Craven for a period of five years until 31 August 2006.

1.4 The Review Group for Secretary for International Relations convened by Revd Michael Davies recommended the re-appointment of Revd Philip Woods for a period of five years until 31 August 2006.

1.5 The following groups have been appointed:

1.5.1 Appointment Group for Secretary of Racial Justice convened by Revd Peter Brain.

1.5.2 Nominating Group for Wessex Synod Moderator convened by Mrs Christine Meekison.

2 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES and Sub-COMMITTEES

Notes:

1 The Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator and the General Secretary are members ex officio of every Standing Committee.

2 Officers and members appointed since Assembly 2000 are indicated by one asterisk (*), two asterisks (**) denotes those whom Assembly 2001 is invited to appoint for the first time. (#) indicates a Convener Elect who will become Convener in 2002.

3 The date in brackets following the names indicates the date of retirement, assuming a full term.

4 Many committees have cross-representation [e.g the Ecumenical Committee has representatives from Doctrine, Prayer & Worship, Church and Society, Youth and Children's Work etc.] These are internal appointments and are not listed here.

5 In accordance with the decision of General Assembly 2000 some nominations have been made by the National Synods of Wales and Scotland.

2.1 ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

Convener: Revd Alasdair Pratt [2002]
Secretary: Office & Personnel Manager
Synod Representative for forthcoming Assembly
Synod Representative for previous Assembly who is then replaced after 'review' meeting by Synod Representative for Assembly two years hence.
Moderator, Moderator-elect, General Secretary, Clerk to Assembly
to be advised #[2006]

2.1.1 Tellers for Election of Moderator for 2003**

Mr John Seager [Convener] *to be advised* *to be advised*

2.2 CHURCH and SOCIETY

Convener: Ms Gabrielle Cox [2002]
Secretary: Secretary for Church and Society
Revd Martin Camroux **#[2006] Dr Sue Brisley [2002] Revd Ken Cox [2003]
Revd Raymond Singh [2003] Mrs Helen Warmington [2003] Mrs Marva Ward [2003]
Miss Catriona Waterson [2003] Revd Alan Paterson **[2005]

2.3 COMMUNICATIONS and EDITORIAL

Convener: Revd Graham Cook [2003]
Secretary: Secretary for Communications
Mr Richard Lathaen [2003] Mr John East [2002] Revd Peter Moth [2004]
Miss Elizabeth Bruce [2004] Mrs Melanie Frew [2004] Revd Bob Maitland **[2005]
Mr Peter Knowles **[2005] *to be advised* *to be advised*

2.4 DOCTRINE, PRAYER and WORSHIP

Convener: Revd John Young *[2005]
Secretary: Revd Kirsty Thorpe [2004]
Mr Colin Ferguson [2002] Revd Dr David Peel [2003] Revd Glyn Millington *[2004]
Revd Nadim Nassar [2003] Revd Charles Martin [2003] Mrs Jenny Poulter [2004]
Revd Hugh Graham [2003] Revd Alistair Smeaton **[2005] Dr Robert Pope **[2005]
Revd Anne Sardeson **[2005]

2.5 ECUMENICAL

Convener: Revd John Rees *[2005]
Secretary: Secretary for Ecumenical Relations
Revd Mary Buchanan [2002] Revd Philip Jones [2002] Revd Elizabeth Nash [2002]
Mrs Darnette Whitby-Reed [2004] Revd Cecil White **[2005] Revd Bryan Shirley **[2005]
to be advised Revd Stuart Jackson representing the National Synod of Wales
Revd John R Smith representing National Synod of Scotland

2.5.1 ECUMENICAL - INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd John Crocker [2003]
Secretary: Secretary for International Relations
Mr Peter Bryant [2002] Revd Keith Riglin [2002] Revd Gwenneth Collins [2003]
Revd Peter Brain **[2005] Revd Birgit Ewald **[2005]

2.6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Convener: Revd Nannette Lewis Head [2002]
Secretary: Ms Ruth Norton [2004]
Revd Wilf Bahadur **#[2006] Miss Stella Salmon [2002] Revd Derek Hopkins [2002]
Revd Susan Armitage [2003] Miss Sarah Moore [2004] Ms Gloria Bujan **[2005]

2.7 FINANCE

Convener: The Treasurer
Secretary: Financial Secretary
Mr Alan Duncan [2002] Mr Gordon Latham [2003] Revd John Piper [2003]
Miss Muriel Proven [2004] Mr John Woodman **[2005] Mr John Rowatt **[2005]
Convener of the URC Trust *to be advised* **#[2006]

2.8 INTER-FAITH RELATIONS

Convener: Mrs Daphne Beale [2003]

Secretary: Revd Sally Thomas [2004]

Revd David M Taylor [2002]

Miss Marie Williams **[2005]

Mr Matthew Bean [2003]

Revd Alistair Ellefsen-Jones [2004]

2.9 LIFE and WITNESS

Convener: Revd Frank Beattie [2003]

Secretary: Secretary for Life and Witness

Revd Peter Ball [2002]

Revd Eddie Boon [2003]

Mrs Alison Lowe *[2004]

to be advised

Revd Suzanne Hamnet [2003]

Revd Bob Warwicker [2003]

Revd Kenneth Forbes **[2005]

Mrs Sheila Thatcher [2003]

Revd Angela Hughes [2004]

to be advised

2.9.1 LIFE and WITNESS - STEWARDSHIP Sub-Committee

Convener: Mr Keith Webster [2004]

Secretary: Secretary for Life and Witness

Mrs Susan Wilkinson [2002]

Mrs Anne Mitchell [2004]

Mr Frank Dale [2003]

Mr Mick Barnes **[2005]

Mrs Sheila Yates [2003]

2.9.2 WINDERMERE ADVISORY GROUP

Convener: Mr Jim Wilkinson *[2005]

Secretary: The Director of Windermere

Revd Douglas McFarlane [2003] Mrs Christine Millward [2004]

Convener of Windermere Management Committee

Representative of Carver URC

Dr Peter Clarke **[2005]

Convener of Life and Witness Committee

2.10 MINISTRIES

Convener: Revd Graham Long [2002]

Secretary: Secretary for Ministries

Mr John Ellis **#[2006]

Revd Tjarda Murray [2003]

to be advised

Ms Sally Abbott [2002]

Revd Peter Noble [2004]

Convener of National Assessment Board

Revd Roz Harrison [2003]

Mrs Alison Biggs **[2005]

2.10.1 MINISTRIES - ACCREDITATION Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Ken Chippindale *[2005]

Secretary: Secretary for Ministries

Mrs Frances Caldwell [2002]

Revd Keith Argyle **[2005]

Mr Peter Mann [2003]

Mrs Sheila Telfer **[2005]

Revd Roberta Rominger [2003]

2.10.2 MINISTRIES - CRCW Management Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Alison Hall [2004]

Secretary: The CRCW Development Workers

Revd Peter Cruchley Jones [2002]

Mrs Diana Herbert [2003]

Revd Clifford Wilton [2002]

Mrs Adella Pritchard [2004]

2.10.3 MINISTRIES - LAY PREACHING Sub Committee

Lay Preaching Commissioner: Mrs Carol Dixon [2003]

And four members elected by the Lay Preacher Commissioners Consultation

2.10.4 MINISTRIES - MAINTENANCE OF MINISTRY Sub-Committee

Convener: Mr Geoffrey Wood [2003]

Secretary: Mrs Judy Stockings [2003]

Mrs Jill Strong [2003]

Mr Barry Swift [2004]

Revd Roger Woodall [2004]

The Treasurer

Revd Pauline Parkin [2004]

Convener of Pensions Executive

2.10.5 MINISTRIES - RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING - Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Simon Swailes [2002]

Secretary: The Secretary of the Retired Ministers Housing Society

Revd John Pugh **#[2006]

Mrs Edith Tolley **[2005]

Revd Graham Cook [2002]

Mrs Pauline Mewis **[2005]

Mr Malcolm Lindo**[2005]

The Treasurer

Note: Properties are managed by a Company viz: **RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING SOCIETY LTD** Details of the Members of the Board etc may be obtained from the Secretary at Church House

2.10.6 NATIONAL ASSESSMENT BOARD

Convener: Mrs Darryl Sinclair *[2005]

Retiring 2002

Mr Alan Small, Revd Denise Megson, Miss Margaret Compton
Revd Alison Davis, Mrs Janine Lawley, Dr Christopher Whitehead

Retiring 2003

Mr David Coaker, Mrs Elaine Patrick, Mr Monty Helmn,
Revd Lythan Nevard

Retiring 2004

Revd Marilyn Allen, Revd Craig Bowman, Revd Graham Hoslett,
Revd Kevin Watson, Revd Ray Adams

Retiring 2005

Mrs Joyce Sutcliff, Dr Jean Stevenson, Dr David Cutler,
Revd Rachel Poolman

*Retiring 2006***

Revd Thomas Heggie, Revd Michael Mewis, Revd Peter Poulter,
Revd Hilma Wilkinson, *to be advised*

2.10.7 PANEL FOR ASSESSMENT CONFERENCES - CRCW - Sub-Section

Revd Bob Day [2003]

Mr Andrew Edwards [2003]

Mr Graham Ghaleb [2003]

Mrs Kathleen Stephenson [2003]

Ms Allison Trimble [2003]

Revd Susan Armitage [2004]

2.11 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Glyn Jenkins [2002]

Secretary: Revd Hazel Martell **[2005]

Revd Dr Stephen Orchard **#[2006]

Synod Representatives: Miss Janet Turner [1], Revd Geoff Tolley [2], Mr Donald Swift [3],
Mr John Seager [4], Revd Christopher White [5], Mr Simon Rowntree [6], Revd Elizabeth Caswell [7],
Revd Ray Adams [8], Mr Graham Rolfe [9], Revd Adrian Bulley [10], Mrs Christine Meekison [11],
to be advised [12], Revd John Arthur [13], with the Immediate Past Moderator and the General Secretary

2.12 PASTORAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd David Jenkins [2003]

Secretary: Deputy General Secretary

Revd Arnold Harrison [2003]

Mr Okeke Azu Okeke [2004]

Revd Pat Hall [2004]

Mrs Irene Brunskill **[2005]

Convener of Welfare Sub-Committee

The Treasurer

The General Secretary

2.12.1 PASTORAL WELFARE -Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Nelson Bainbridge [2003]

Secretary: Mrs Judy Stockings

2.13 RACIAL JUSTICE

Convener: Revd Raymond Singh **#[2005]

Secretary: Secretary for Racial Justice

Mr Kofi Akuumani **[2005]

Revd Michael Jagessar **[2005]

Mr Shaeen Zar **[2005]

Mrs Vanessa Honeyghan **[2005]

to be advised

2.14 TRAINING

Convener: Revd John Proctor [2003]

Secretary: The Secretary for Training

Mrs Helen Brown [2002]

Revd Roy Lowes [2002]

Dr Andrew Dawson [2002]

Dr Graham Campling [2003]

Revd Carole Ellefsen-Jones [2003]

Mrs Anthea Coates [2004]

Revd Paul Ballard [2004]

Revd Principal John Dyce **#[2005]

Revd Dr John Parry [2004]

2.15 YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK

Convener: Revd Derek Lindfield [2002]

Secretary: Mrs Soo Webster [2003]

Revd Kathryn Price **#[2006]

Mrs Caroline Chettleburgh [2002]

Mrs Brenda Cheer [2003]

Mrs Rita Joyner [2003]

Mrs Kath Lonsdale [2003]

Revd Andrew Willett [2004]

Revd John Sanderson **#[2005]

Mrs Daphne Clarke **#[2005]

Ms Lorraine Downer **#[2005]

Mrs Elaine Thomas **#[2005]

FURY Chair

FURY Council Member

2.16 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS - Commission Panel

Convener: Revd Donald Hilton [2002]

Deputy Convener: Mrs Helen Brown [2002]

Secretary: Revd Alasdair Walker [2002]

Convener Elect: Mrs Helen Brown **[2005]

Secretary Elect: Mr Brian Evans **[2005]

Members:

retiring 2002

Miss Ina Barker	Ms Kate Breeze	Mr Keith Brooks	Revd K Chippindale
Revd Alison Davis	Mr R Forsyth	Mrs Wilma Frew	Mr Alan Hart
Revd R M Jones	Miss Elizabeth Lawson QC	Revd Julian Macro	Revd Ted Marley
Revd Denise Megson	Mrs Sheila Pratt	Mr Nicholas Pye	Mrs Sally Quilter
Revd Michael Rees	Revd John Slow	Revd Dr David Thompson	Miss Sheila Tweed

retiring 2004

Mr John Moore	Mr Ray Holden	Mr Mike Garnett	Mr Donald Taylor
Mr Peter Mann	Mr Peter Jolly	Dr John Kennedy	Mr Ian Lloyd Parry
Mrs Barbara Martin	Ms Rachael Greening	Mrs Vera Maskery	Mrs Ruth Clarke
Ms Elizabeth Whitten	Revd John Chisholm	Revd David Main	Revd Raymond Singh
Revd David Skitt	Revd Dr Rick Mearkle	Revd Brenda Hill	Revd Margaret Taylor
Revd Joan Winterbottom	Revd Margaret Juhasz	Revd Shelagh Pollard	Miss Janice Jeater
Mr Martin Ballard			

3 MISSION COUNCIL

Mission Council acts on behalf of General Assembly. It consists of the Officers of Assembly, the Synod Moderators and three representatives from each Synod together with the Conveners of Assembly Committees.

Northern	Revd Pamela Ward	Dr Peter Clarke	Mrs Roberta Wood
North Western	Revd Geoffrey Townsend	Mrs Margareta Batchelor	Mrs Janice Cockcroft
Mersey	Mrs Lillian Covell	Dr Donald South	Revd Gwynfor Evans
Yorkshire	Revd John Jenkinson	Mr John Seager	Mrs Val Morrison
East Midlands	Mrs Jill Strong	Revd Clifford Wilton	Revd David Miller
West Midlands	Mr Simon Rowntree	Revd Sam Ansa Addo	Mrs Ann Sheldon
Eastern	Revd Victor Ridgewell	Mr Ken Woods	Revd Richard Mortimer
South Western	Revd Roy Lowes	Revd Paul Snell	Ms Angela Bebbington
Wessex	Mr Graham Rolfe	Revd Simon Thomas	Mrs Veronica Taylor
Thames North	Mr Keith Webster	Revd Dr Robin Pagan	Mr Geoffrey Duncan
Southern	Mrs Christine Meekison	Revd Dawn Mather	Mr Ian Chalmers
Wales	Revd Kristin Ofstad	Mrs Delyth Rees	Revd David Fox
Scotland	Revd Ken Forbes	Mrs Helen Mee	Miss Catriona Smith

4 TRUST BODIES

4.1 UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST

Convener: Dr Brian Woodhall

Secretary: Mr Tony Bayley

Directors

Revd Tony Burnham	Ms Avis Reaney	Mrs Christine Meekison
Mr Graham Stacy	Dr Brian Woodhall [2004]	Mr John Squires [2004]
Ms Valerie Ham [2004]	Mr David Marshall-Jones [2004]	
Mr Peter Ward [2005]	Revd Leslie Watson [2006]	

4.2 THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION TRUST LTD - BOARD MEMBERS

Chairman: Revd Alasdair Walker

Secretary: Revd John Martin

Members of URC:

Ms Valerie Ham [2002], Mr Ray Chambers [2003],
Mr Richard Nunn [2005], Mr Philip Sheridan [2006]

Members of Fund:

Revd John Martin [2002], Revd Alasdair Walker [2003],
to be advised, Revd Kenneth Graham [2005]

[*ex officio* Financial Secretary, The Treasurer, Mr Victor Hughff, Mr Geoffrey Wood]

4.3 CONGREGATIONAL MEMORIAL HALL TRUST

Revd Dr Peter Jupp	Mrs Christine Meekison	Revd Maurice Husselbee
Mrs Mary Stacy	Mr Graham Stacy	Mr Arthur Smith
Revd David Hannen	Mr Hartley Oldham	Revd Peter Grimshaw
Revd John Taylor	Revd Geoffrey Setchell	

4.4 THE AUSTRALIAN FRONTIER SERVICES CHARITABLE TRUST

Mr Clem Frank
Mr Brian Wates - joint appointment with Uniting Church in Australia

5 Representatives of the UNITED REFORMED CHURCH to Meetings of SISTER CHURCHES

Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Revd Bill Mahood
General Synod of Church of England	Revd Murdoch McKenzie
Methodist Conference	Revd John Rees *
General Assembly of Church of Scotland [note 5]	Revd Bill Mahood,
	Revd John Arthur
	Revd John R Smith
Presbyterian Church of Wales [note 5]	Revd Stuart Jackson
Union of Welsh Independents [note 5]	Revd T Gerwin Jones
Congregational Federation	Revd Tony Burnham
Church in Wales Governing Board [note 5]	Revd Stuart Jackson
United Free Church of Scotland [note 5]	Mr Ceri Jenkins

6 Representatives of the UNITED REFORMED CHURCH on ECUMENICAL CHURCH BODIES

The following have been nominated as United Reformed Church representatives at the major gatherings of the Ecumenical Bodies listed.

Note: A list of representatives to other ecumenical bodies, commissions and committees, co-ordinating groups and agencies, who are appointed by the relevant committees, will be distributed to all members of General Assembly. Additional copies are available, on request, from the Secretary for Ecumenical Relations.

6.1 Council for World Mission

Revd Kenneth Forbes*	Mrs Olive Bell*	Mr Neill Platt*
Secretary for International Relations		

6.2 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland - Assembly 2002

General Secretary	Convener of the Ecumenical Committee
Secretary for Ecumenical Relations	Secretary for Church and Society

eight other representatives to be advised

6.2.1 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland - Church Representatives Meeting

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations	Mrs Wilma Frew
------------------------------------	----------------

6.3 Churches Together in England - Forum 2001

Mrs Wilma Frew, Revd Alan Thomasson, Mrs Val Morrison, Revd Peter Southcombe
Revd Graham Cook*, Mrs Darnett Whitby-Reid*, Mr Mark Argent*, Revd Kirsty Thorpe*,
Revd John Rees* and Secretary for Ecumenical Relations plus two representatives from FURY Assembly.

6.3.1 Churches Together in England - Enabling Group

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

6.4 ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland) see Note 5

Central Council

Revd John Arthur

6.5 CYTUN (Churches Together in Wales) see Note 5

Y Gymanfa *to be advised*

Council

The Synod Ecumenical Officer (alternate Synod Moderator)
Mrs Jackie Yeomans (alternate Mrs Eileen McIlveen)

6.6 FREE CHURCH COUNCIL for WALES see Note 5
The Synod Moderator Synod Ecumenical Officer

6.7 Assembly of Leuenberg Agreement *
Mrs Hillian Durell Revd Derek Wales

7 United Reformed Church Representatives at formal bi-lateral and multi-lateral committees.

7.1 METHODIST/URC Liason Committee
The Secretary for Ecumenical Relations together with: Revd Derek Wales, Ms Rachel Greening, Revd Alan Thomasson, Revd Geoffrey Clarke and Ms Karen Watts.

7.1.1 HEALTH and HEALING DEVELOPMENT GROUP
Revd Brenda Russell, Dr Margaret Moore, Mrs Jackie Ballard, Revd Delia Bond

7.2 Church of England - Methodist formal talks
URC Ecumenical Participants: Revd Dr David Thompson, Revd Sheila Maxey

7.2.1 Trilateral Informal talks [Church of England/Methodist/United Reformed Church]
URC Representatives: Revd Bob Andrews, Revd John Waller, Revd Elizabeth Welch with Secretary for Ecumenical Relations as Staff Member

7.3 ENFYS (The Commission of Covenanted Churches in Wales) see Note 5
Synod Moderator Synod Ecumenical Officer Mrs Ann Shillaker
Revd Henry Gordon Revd David Cassidy Revd Alan Willcocks

7.4 Council for Wales Consultation on Forming a United Church in Wales see Note 5
Synod Moderator Synod Ecumenical Officer Revd James Breslin
Revd Anne Morgan

7.5 SCOTTISH CHURCHES INITIATIVE FOR UNION [SCIFU] see Note 5
Revd John Arthur Revd Alan Paterson Revd John Smith
Revd Sheila Maxey

8 United Reformed Church Representatives on Governing Bodies of Theological Colleges etc.,

8.1 Mansfield College:
Ministerial and Educational Training Committee: Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow
Secretary for Training Convener of the Training Committee** Revd Roy Lowes

8.2 New College London Foundation Trustees
Mr John Smethers
Mr Graham Stacy
Revd John Pugh

8.3 Northern College Secretary for Training
Mrs Helen Brown**
Mr Brian Evans**
Revd David Fox**
Revd David Jenkins**
Mr Bill McLaughin**
Council of the Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester
Secretary for Training

8.4 Westminster College: Board of Governors Convener: Revd Dr David Thompson
Clerk: Mr Andrew Armour
Mr Don Taylor, Secretary for Training
Mrs Valerie Burnham
Revd Sandra Lloydlangston

8.4.1 Cheshunt Foundation Revd Jean Black**
Mr David Butler**

8.4.2	Cambridge Theological Federation	Convener Westminster College Governors Secretary for Training
	Joint Academic Committee	Secretary for Training
8.5	Homerton College Trustees	Mr John Chaplin, Lady Sally Williams, Mrs Elisabeth Jupp, Revd Dr David Thompson
8.6	Queen's College, Birmingham	Revd Elizabeth Welch, Revd Ken Chippindale, Mr Howard Bridge
8.7	Aberystwyth (Memorial College)	Secretary for Training in attendance Revd Dr Glyndwr Harris, Mr Leslie Jones

9 GOVERNORS of COLLEGES and SCHOOLS with which the United Reformed Church is associated

9.1	Caterham School	Revd Nigel Uden ** Mr John Mathias
9.2	Eltham College	Revd Clifford Charlton
	Walthamstow Hall	Miss Margaret Vokins
9.3	Milton Mount Foundation	Miss Nan Mark Revd Peter Grimshaw Revd George Thomas Mrs Clare Meachin Mr David Butler
9.4	Silcoates School,	Dr Clyde Binfield
9.5	Taunton School	Revd Ray Adams
9.6	Wentworth College	Revd Brian Rawling
9.7	Bishops Stortford College	Revd Nigel Rogers**

10 Miscellaneous:

The United Reformed Church is represented on a variety of other national organisations and committees as follows:

Retired Ministers and Widows Fund **	Mr Ken Meekison Mrs Jill Strong Mr Laurence Macro
Christian Education Movement Council Churches Main Committee	Mrs Margie Jenkins Ms Avis Reaney Mr Hartley Oldham
Congregational Fund Board	Revd Cyril Grant Revd Margaret Taylor** Revd Eric Allen Revd John Taylor
Guides' Religious Advisory Panel National Christian Education Council	Mrs Susan Walker Mrs Patricia Hubbard Mrs Rosemary Johnston
Pilots Management Committee Scouts' Religious Advisory Group United Reformed Church History Society	Mrs Rosemary Scarrow Mr D Marshall-Jones Mrs Mary Davies Revd Peter Jupp Mrs Carol Rogers Revd Eric Wollaston Revd Dr David Thompson
URC Boy's Brigade Companies Council Wharton Trust	Revd Michael Rees Mr Norman Fabb

11 PERSONALIA

The Convener and Committee wish to record our gratitude to Mr Desmond Curry for his diligent and committed service as secretary of the Nominations Committee for the past four years. The work brings with it a heavy administrative workload as well as the need for gifts of sensitivity and wisdom. We are deeply grateful to Desmond for all his hard work and his additional gift of cheerfulness.

We welcome the Revd Hazel E Martell as incoming Secretary and wish her well in this post.

Resolution 29**Nominations**

General Assembly appoints Committees and representatives of the Church as set out on pages 77 to 84 of the Book of Reports subject to the additions and corrections contained in the Supplementary Report before Assembly.

Resolution 30**Mersey Synod Moderator**

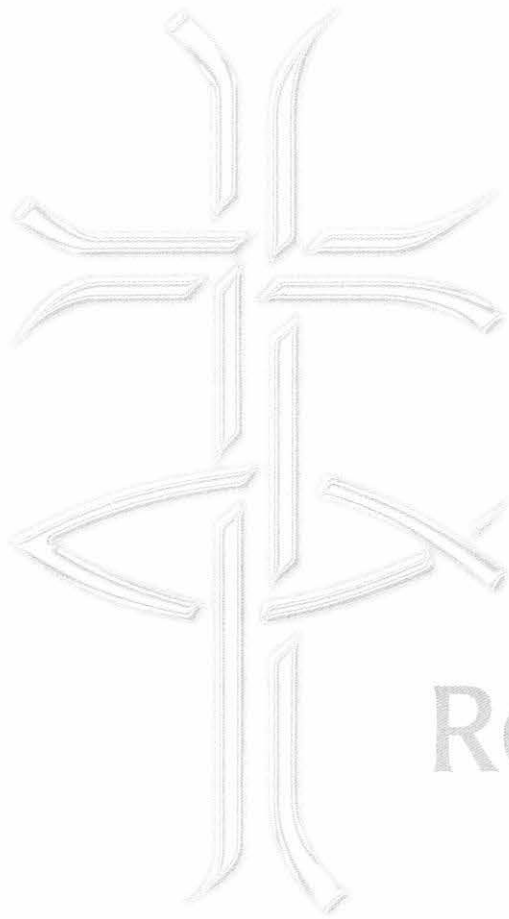
General Assembly reappoints the Revd Graham Cook to serve as Mersey Synod Moderator from 1 September 2001 to 31 January 2004.

Resolution 31**South Western Synod Moderator**

General Assembly re-appoints the Revd Ray Adams to serve as South Western Synod Moderator from 1 September 2001 to 31 August 2006.

Resolution 32**Secretary for Ministries**

General Assembly re-appoints the Revd Christine Craven to serve as Secretary for Ministries from 1 September 2001 to 31 August 2006.



The
United
Reformed
Church



Appendices

**General Assembly
York 2001**

July 10th

**Annual Reports
Resolutions
and Papers**



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

Appendix 1

Financial Report and Accounts 2000

The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9RT

Assembly Officers

Moderator of the General Assembly (2000/2001) - Revd Bill Mahood
General Secretary - Revd Anthony Burnham
Clerk of the General Assembly - Mrs Margaret Carrick Smith
Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee - Revd Alasdair Pratt
Deputy General Secretary - Revd John Waller
Honorary Treasurer - Mr Graham Stacy FCA

Other Officers

Moderator Elect – Revd Elizabeth Welch
Immediate Past Moderator – Revd Peter McIntosh

Trustee

United Reformed Church Trust
(Chairman of Board of Directors – Dr Brian Woodhall)

Bankers

HSBC Bank Plc
Holborn Branch, 31 Holborn, London EC1N 2HR

Legal Advisers

Dawson & Co
2 New Square, Lincoln's Inn, London WC2A 3RZ

Towns, Needham & Co
6/8 Albert Road, Levenshulme, Manchester M19 3PJ

Auditors

RSM Robson Rhodes
186 City Road, London EC1V 2NU

Investment Manager

HSBC Asset Management Europe Limited
6 Bevis Marks, London EC3A 7QP

Actuaries

Aon Limited
(formerly Aon Consulting Limited)
Carnegie House, Peterborough Road
Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2AJ

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

FINANCIAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2000

These accounts show the combined income, expenditure, assets and liabilities of those trusts, companies and other funds administered for the benefit of The United Reformed Church under the overall authority of the General Assembly. They do not include funds administered by or on behalf of synods, districts or local churches.

CONTENTS

	Page
Report from the Finance Committee	2
Description of funds	4
Balance Sheet	6
Statement of Financial Activities	7
Analysis of income	8
Analysis of expenditure	9
Movement on funds	10
Disposition of funds	11
Cashflow Statement	12
Notes to the accounts	13
Note 1 - Accounting policies	13
(i) Scope	13
(ii) Classification of funds	13
(iii) Income	13
(iv) Pensions	13
(v) Tangible fixed assets	13
(vi) Investments	13
(vii) Stock	13
(viii) Westminster College	13
(ix) Rounding of figures to the nearest thousand	13
Note 2 - Tangible fixed assets	14
Note 3 - Loans and advances	14
Note 4 - Debtors	14
Note 5 - Investments	15
Note 6 - Current liabilities (amounts falling due within one year)	15
Note 7 - Remuneration	15
Note 8 - Auditors' remuneration	15
Note 9 - Assets held in trust for others	16
Note 10 - The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund	16
Note 11 - Commitments	16
Note 12 - Interests in trusts	16
Note 13 - URC Insurance Company Limited	16
Note 14 - United Reformed Church Trust Investment Pool	16
United Reformed Church Trust Investment Pool	17
Statement of responsibilities in relation to the accounts	18
Approval of accounts	18
Independent auditors' report to The United Reformed Church	19
Five year summary	20
Draft budget for 2002	22
The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund	24

Note: These accounts do not include the "Review of activities" which normally forms part of a charity's annual report and accounts. The information which would be included in such a review is incorporated in the book of Annual Reports to General Assembly.

For readers unfamiliar with financial statements there is an explanatory note at the foot of most pages describing the content in simple terms.

REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Results for 2000

The results for 2000 are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 7. This shows that there was a decrease in funds in the year of £2,136,000. The breakdown of this decrease compared with the increase for the previous year is shown below:

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year on:		
Ministry and Mission Fund and other funds covered by our annual budget	32,000	202,000
Restricted funds	(827,000)	(388,000)
Capital funds	15,000	1,000
(Decrease)/increase in market value of investments	(1,356,000)	2,687,000
	<u>£(2,136,000)</u>	<u>£2,502,000</u>

Ministry and Mission Fund and other funds covered by our annual budget - £32,000 incoming resources

The 2000 actual amounts are compared with 1999 and with the 2000 budget on pages 22 and 23.

The budget for 2000 showed a deficit of £660,000, but this was after providing for an additional contribution of £750,000 to the pension fund. In fact, following the actuarial valuation of the fund as at 1st January 2000, this payment was not required so without this item the 2000 budget would have shown a surplus of £90,000. After adjusting for the pension fund contribution, the actual result of a £32,000 surplus is very close to budget. However, this small difference compared with budget is made up of a number of larger off-setting amounts. Comparisons are made difficult by the inclusion in the actual figures for 2000 of ministry costs and Ministry and Mission Fund contributions from former Congregational Union of Scotland churches; but the main improvements compared with budget were in legacies, £308,000 compared with a budget of £50,000, profit on sale of properties, £177,000, and the grant under the CWM Mission Support programme, £117,000. Against these improvements we have to set a £270,000 increase in support costs, an increase in ministry costs of some £200,000, and a shortfall of £170,000 in Ministry and Mission Fund contributions. The large increase in support costs was caused mainly by the very substantial cost of repair and refurbishment of United Reformed Church House, and the charge for depreciation of buildings which is referred to below.

The transfer of £176,000 from unrestricted funds to restricted funds shown in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 7 relates to the surplus on disposal of our interest in St Andrews Hall in 1999. In last year's accounts this was added to the Ministry and Mission Fund but it has now been concluded that it is more properly included within the World Church and Mission Funds.

Restricted funds – net outgoing of £827,000

Restricted funds are funds which can only be spent on specific purposes. The net outgoing of £827,000 for the year comprises increases and decreases on different funds. The detailed changes on each fund or group of funds are shown on pages 10 and 11, but the salient amounts are also set out on pages 4 and 5 together with comments on the more significant items.

Decrease in market value of investments - £1,356,000

Stockmarket values at the end of 1999 were at almost record levels giving rise to an increase in value for 1999 of £2,687,000. Throughout the year 2000 the stockmarket has fluctuated significantly but, overall, share prices have fallen and this decline has continued in 2001. The reduction of £1,356,000 in the market value of our investments in 2000 represented a 6% decline and should be seen in the context of total investment gains over the previous five years of £10.6 millions; so, despite this drop in value, over time our financial position has benefited greatly from our investment portfolio.

REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE CONTINUED

The change in investment values in 2000 broken down by fund is shown in the Movement on Funds summary on page 10. The decrease in investment value in the Ministry and Mission Fund was £204,000 but this was after deducting a gain of £190,000 on the disposal at the year end of our shareholding in URC Insurance Company Limited, referred to in note 13 of the accounts (on page 16).

Accounting changes

This year there has been a technical change concerned with depreciation of properties. The United Kingdom Accounting Standards Board has strengthened its guidance on the depreciation of fixed assets to require accounts to recognise the wearing out of all physical assets, including buildings, over time. In calculating depreciation of properties, buildings are required to be treated separately from the land on which they stand so that an increase in the market value of a property cannot be used to justify non-depreciation of the building itself. Most of the properties owned by the URC are retirement houses or manses where the distinction between land and buildings is of questionable significance. However, to recognise this revised accounting standard we have revised our accounting policy to charge depreciation of 2% per annum on the cost of all buildings. This results in a charge of £74,000 in the Ministry and Mission and other funds covered by our annual budget and £234,000 in restricted funds, mainly Retired Ministers Housing Funds.

It is important to note that depreciation does not involve any expenditure of cash and will not affect our assessment of the amount required in Ministry and Mission Fund contributions.

We have made one other change this year which is trivial in its effect but greatly simplifies the preparation of our accounts. It concerns the way that figures are shown to the nearest thousand pounds. This year each individual figure, including totals, is rounded to the nearest thousand. Thus, £2,600 plus £2,600 totalling £5,200 would be shown as 3 plus 3, total 5. Thus, if any column of figures in this year's accounts appears not to add up correctly, this is the result of rounding; the underlying figures and totals are, in fact, correct. In previous years one of the individual figures would have been rounded to 2 or the total would have been rounded to 6; a process that consumed a great deal of valuable time and resulted in some figures being falsely rounded.

Conclusion

The annual accounts attempt to show a picture of the finances of that part of the URC which is subject to the overall control of General Assembly. They cannot be expected to give detailed information about every fund or situation. Those wanting more information or explanations about any aspect of the URC's finances are encouraged to address their enquiries to the Treasurer or Financial Secretary at General Assembly or any other time.

Signed on behalf of the Finance Committee

GRAHAM STACY
Convener

30th March 2001

DESCRIPTION OF FUNDS

The major funds or groups of funds which are included in the URC annual accounts are shown on pages 10 and 11. Descriptions of these funds are set out below, with the total amount of each fund as at 31st December 2000 and the income and expenditure for 2000 shown in each heading.

Ministry and Mission Fund: £12,603,000	Income	£19,153,000
	Expenditure	£19,120,000

This is the general fund of the Church through which the bulk of our income and expenditure, covered by the annual budget presented to the General Assembly, is passed.

Maintenance of the Ministry Fund: £727,000
Ministerial Training Fund: £168,000

Both of these are capital funds which are invested to provide income towards the costs of Maintenance of the Ministry and Ministerial Training. Each year's income is taken up in the Ministry and Mission Fund which is responsible for meeting these costs.

Westminster College Funds: £2,505,000	Income	£136,000
	Expenditure	£117,000

About eighteen accounts make up this group of funds, all of which are associated, in some way, with Westminster College. In addition to the College general fund, there are library funds, prize funds, scholarship funds, and other funds with a more specific use.

Church Buildings Fund: £2,787,000	Income	£42,000
	Expenditure	£948,000

This fund may be used in the upkeep and repair of the buildings of the local churches of the URC and the maintenance of the services therein; in the improvement and extension of the buildings of such churches; and in the provision and erection of buildings for use for the purposes of such churches or as residences for ministers of the URC. In recent years a significant part of the fund has been used for the purchase of property for use by the Church centrally (as manses). During the year these properties were transferred to the general fund, in order to maximise the monies available to the Church Buildings Fund to provide loans to local churches for major works and also for grant-aiding certain local church developments.

The Retired Ministers' Housing Funds and the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society: £12,103,000	Income	£844,000
	Expenditure	£262,000

The whole of these funds is utilised by the Retired Ministers' Housing Committee in providing accommodation for ministers and ministers' widow/ers in their retirement. Most of the income comprises legacies and is invested in the purchase of houses.

The Welfare Fund: £543,000	Income	£47,000
	Expenditure	£77,000

This fund can be used to relieve cases of need among ministers of the URC, their spouses and other dependants. The main uses have been to provide a grant on the death of a minister to the surviving spouse, and to provide a grant at Christmas time to most of the widow/ers of URC ministers about whom we know. Medical assistance grants are now paid from this account, including counselling costs.

DESCRIPTION OF FUNDS CONTINUED

The Retired Ministers' Aid Fund: £1,071,000	Income	£47,000
	Expenditure	£70,000
The Retired Ministers' Fund: £5,629,000	Income	£191,000
	Expenditure	£566,000

These funds are used to supplement the pensions paid to ministers and ministers' widow/ers, principally by upgrading the pensions of former ministers of the Congregational Church and the Churches of Christ and the widow/ers of such ministers to a level of 95% of the pension that would have been paid if the minister's service had been to the former Presbyterian Church.

World Church and Mission Funds: £1,765,000	Income	£73,000
	Expenditure	£149,000

These funds have been building up over a number of years. The Ecumenical Committee is developing plans under the "Belonging to the World Church" programme to use the funds where the terms of the trust permit.

The Windermere Centre Fund: £346,000	Income	£ nil
	Expenditure	£ nil
The Yardley Hastings Fund: £590,000	Income	£ nil
	Expenditure	£ nil

These funds were raised to develop the Windermere and Yardley Hastings Centres and are mainly invested in those properties.

Commitment for Life Fund: £43,000	Income	£431,000
	Expenditure	£445,000

This programme involves substantial sums of money being collected through the Church and Society Office, and disbursed for various purposes. The balance held at the year end represents monies received, which had not yet been allocated.

Other Funds: £3,861,000	Income	£173,000
	Expenditure	£161,000

There are some fifty other funds in the care of United Reformed Church Trust, covering many different activities relating to the Church centrally, and some to the wider parts of The United Reformed Church. The income arising from the majority of these funds is being spent currently, but some funds are held in trust for purposes which are now difficult to implement. Progress has been made in freeing up some of these difficult-to-use funds but further work remains to be done.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2000

1999 £'000		Notes (pages 14 & 15)	2000 £'000
	FIXED ASSETS		
	Tangible assets	2	
13,928	Houses for retired ministers		14,366
3,741	Houses for serving ministers		3,959
2,208	Other properties		2,236
19,877	Total properties		20,561
431	Cars and equipment		370
20,308			20,931
25,549	Long term investments	5	23,854
758	Loans and advances	3	692
46,615			45,477
	NET CURRENT ASSETS		
	Current assets		
110	Stock		98
926	Debtors	4	1,282
2,139	Short term investments	5	147
983	Bank balances and money on call		1,533
4,158			3,060
3,898	Less: Current liabilities	6	3,798
260	Net current assets/(liabilities)		(738)
46,875	TOTAL NET ASSETS		44,739
	Representing:		
12,551	Unrestricted income funds		12,202
27,912	Restricted income funds		26,373
6,412	Capital funds		6,164
46,875	TOTAL FUNDS (see pages 10 & 11)		44,739

This page shows the combined total of assets and liabilities of all the funds administered centrally for the benefit of the whole Church. It includes, in particular, the assets and liabilities of The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2000**

1999 Total funds £'000		2000 Total funds £'000	---- Income funds ----		Capital funds £'000
			Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	
INCOME					
16,629	Ministry and Mission Fund contributions	17,363	17,363		
1,137	Investment income	978	466	512	
715	Grants receivable	660	660		
285	Legacies	982	308	674	
801	Other income	776	179	582	15
406	Profit on sale of properties	378	177	201	
19,973	Total income (see page 8)	21,136	19,153	1,968	15
EXPENDITURE					
14,942	Ministry	15,415	14,599	816	
1,491	Training	1,855	1,759	97	
2,281	Other Mission Activities	2,719	1,122	1,595	
1,444	Support Activities	1,928	1,640	287	0
20,158	Total expenditure (see page 9)	21,916	19,120	2,795	0
<hr/>					
(185)	Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before transfers	(780)	32	(827)	15
-	Transfers between funds	-	(176)	176	-
<hr/>					
(185)	Net (outgoing)/incoming resources	(780)	(144)	(651)	15
2,687	Gains/(losses) on investments	(1,356)	(204)	(888)	(263)
2,502	Net increase/(decrease) in funds in the year	(2,136)	(349)	(1,539)	(248)
44,373	Balances brought forward at 1st January	46,875	12,551	27,912	6,412
46,875	Balances carried forward at 31st December	44,739	12,202	26,373	6,164

This page shows the total of the income and expenditure accounts of all funds administered centrally on behalf of the whole Church. The total for 2000 is divided between "Unrestricted income funds" which are available for the general purposes of the Church, "Restricted income funds" which may be spent for specific purposes only, and "Capital funds" which cannot be spent. The column headed "Unrestricted" shows the income and expenditure covered by the budget shown on pages 22 and 23

ANALYSIS OF INCOME

1999 Total funds £'000		2000			Capital funds £'000
		Total funds £'000	--- Income funds --- Unrestricted Restricted £'000 £'000		
MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS					
Synods					
1,082	Northern	1,063	1,063		
1,520	North Western	1,570	1,570		
1,120	Mersey	1,135	1,135		
1,110	Yorkshire	1,146	1,146		
1,087	East Midlands	1,120	1,120		
1,260	West Midlands	1,310	1,310		
1,450	Eastern	1,493	1,493		
1,085	South Western	1,110	1,110		
1,823	Wessex	1,845	1,845		
2,000	Thames North	2,065	2,065		
2,505	Southern	2,540	2,540		
587	Wales	600	600		
	Scotland	366	366		
16,629		17,363	17,363	0	0
INVESTMENT INCOME					
826	Dividends	753	241	512	
311	Interest	225	225		
1,137		978	466	512	0
GRANTS RECEIVED					
420	Memorial Hall Trust	350	350		
262	New College London Trust	262	262		
33	URC Insurance Company Limited	48	48		
715		660	660	0	0
LEGACIES					
For					
118	Ministry and Mission Fund	308	308		
164	Housing Retired Ministers	571		571	
3	Other	103		103	
285		982	308	674	0
OTHER INCOME					
71	CWM Mission Support programme	117	117		
378	Commitment for Life programme	428		428	
111	Other donations	140	51	74	15
241	Other	91	11	80	
801		776	179	582	15
406	PROFIT ON SALE OF PROPERTIES	378	177	201	
19,973	TOTAL INCOME	21,136	19,153	1,968	15

This page shows the breakdown of the main headings of income shown in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 7.

ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE

1999 Total funds £'000		2000			Capital funds £'000
		Total funds £'000	---- Income funds ---- Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	
MINISTRY					
12,874	Local and special ministries and CRCWs	14,024	13,931	93	
414	Synod moderators - stipends & expenses	453	453		
763	Pension grants	723		723	
750	Pension Fund additional contributions	0			
141	Ministries committee	215	215		
14,942		15,415	14,599	816	0
TRAINING					
927	College training for stipendiary ministry	1,155	1,058	97	
107	Other training for stipendiary ministry	173	173		
107	Training for non-stipendiary ministry	126	126		
220	Central cost of Youth and Children's Work Trainers	229	229		
32	Lay training costs	36	36		
98	Training committee	136	136		
1,491		1,855	1,759	97	0
OTHER MISSION ACTIVITIES					
862	Grants	1,259	282	977	
404	Ecumenical committee and international	403	231	172	
94	Council for World Mission	43	43		
67	Church and Society committee	84	84		
354	Commitment for Life programme	445		445	
102	Life and Witness committee	84	84		
72	Windermere Centre	65	65		
29	Multi-racial/Multi-cultural worker	27	27		
143	Youth and children's work committee	144	144		
84	Yardley Hastings	85	85		
59	Pilots Development	63	63		
11	Other committees	17	16	1	
2,281		2,719	1,122	1,595	0
SUPPORT ACTIVITIES					
149	General Assembly and Mission Council	222	222		
243	Communication and Editorial	293	293		
277	Finance office	296	276	20	
183	Central secretariat	201	201		
78	Professional fees	100	92	8	
33	Computer network	44	44		
43	Costs of conversations and union with the CUS	9	9		
249	URC House costs	268	268		
-	Depreciation on buildings	308	74	234	
189	General church costs	187	162	25	
1,444		1,928	1,640	287	0
20,158	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	21,916	19,120	2,795	0

This page shows the breakdown of the main headings of expenditure shown in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 7.

**MOVEMENT ON FUNDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2000**

Fund	Classification (see note 1(ii))	Balance 1st Jan 2000 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Transfers £'000	Investment value change £'000	Balance 31st Dec 2000 £'000
Ministry and Mission Fund	Capital Unrestricted	401 12,551	19,153	(19,120)	(176)	(204)	401 12,202
Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	Capital Unrestricted	783 0				(56)	727 0
Ministerial Training Fund	Capital Unrestricted	181 0				(13)	168 0
Westminster College Funds	Capital Restricted	1,226 1,379	136	(117)	2	(65) (55)	1,161 1,344
Church Buildings Fund	Capital Restricted	184 3,591	42	(948)	2	(83)	184 2,603
Retired Ministers' Housing Funds	Capital Restricted	359 1,637	72	(40)	8		359 1,677
Retired Ministers' Housing Society	Capital Restricted	0 9,517	772	(222)			0 10,067
Welfare Fund	Capital Restricted	252 416	47	(77)	(50)	(18) (28)	235 308
Retired Ministers' Aid Fund	Capital Restricted	212 963	47	(70)	2	(15) (67)	197 874
Retired Ministers' Fund	Capital Restricted	16 6,430	191	(566)	16	(1) (457)	15 5,614
World Church and Mission Funds	Capital Restricted	297 1,490	73	(149)	176	(20) (104)	278 1,487
Windermere Centre Fund	Capital Restricted	0 346					0 346
Yardley Hastings Fund	Capital Restricted	0 590					0 590
Commitment for Life Fund	Capital Restricted	0 58	431	(445)			0 43
Other Funds	Capital Restricted	2,501 1,496	15 158	(161)	21	(75) (94)	2,441 1,420
Totals (see page 7)		46,875	21,136	(21,916)	0	(1,356)	44,739
Comprising:	Capital	6,412	15	0	0	(263)	6,164
	Restricted	27,912	1,968	(2,795)	176	(888)	26,373
	Unrestricted	12,551	19,153	(19,120)	(176)	(204)	12,202

This page and the following page 11 are intended to be used as reference sources rather than to be read through at one go. This page shows the breakdown of the main totals in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 7 by major fund or group of funds

**DISPOSITION OF FUNDS
AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2000**

Balance 31st Dec 2000 £'000	Property £'000	Cars and equipment £'000	Investments £'000	Loans £'000	Net current assets £'000	Inter- -fund balances £'000	Fund
401	400						Ministry and Mission Fund
12,202	3,744	290	9,122	123	(513)	(565)	
727			727				Maintenance of the Ministry Fund
0							
168			168				Ministerial Training Fund
0							
1,161	956		205				Westminster College Funds
1,344		45	1,086			214	
184	184						Church Buildings Fund
2,603	41		158	549		1,854	
359	359						Retired Ministers' Housing Funds
1,677	1,019					658	
0							Retired Ministers' Housing Society
10,067	12,987				(225)	(2,695)	
235			235				Welfare Fund
308			289	20			
197			197				Retired Ministers' Aid Fund
874			873				
15			15				Retired Ministers' Fund
5,614			5,606			8	
278			278				World Church and Mission Funds
1,487			1,326			161	
0							Windermere Centre Fund
346	309	12				24	
0							Yardley Hastings Fund
590	510	23				57	
0							Commitment for Life Fund
43						43	
2,441	50		2,391				Other Funds
1,420			1,180			240	
44,739	20,561	370	23,854	692	(738)	0	Totals (see page 6)
6,164	1,950	0	4,215	0	0	0	Capital
26,373	14,867	80	10,517	569	(225)	565	Restricted
12,202	3,744	290	9,122	123	(513)	(565)	Unrestricted

This page shows the breakdown of the assets and liabilities in the Balance Sheet on page 6 by major fund or group of funds.

**CASHFLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2000**

1999 £'000		2000 £'000
	RECONCILIATION OF NET OUTGOING RESOURCES SHOWN IN THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES TO THE ACTUAL CASH OUTFLOW FROM GENERAL ACTIVITIES	
(185)	Net outgoing resources (see page 7)	(780)
(16)	(Increase)/Decrease in stock	12
17	Decrease/(Increase) in debtors	(356)
107	Increase in creditors	191
(206)	Decrease in sums held for synods and congregations	(291)
(406)	Profit on sale of properties	(378)
157	Depreciation	459
48	Amortisation of gilts	48
(28)	Interest added to loans	(24)
(512)	Net cash outflow from general activities	(1,120)

**STATEMENT SHOWING DISPOSITION OF CASH
RESOURCES IN THE YEAR**

(512)	Net cash outflow from general activities (above)	(1,120)
	Net amount of cash (applied in)/released from investing activities	
1,194	Fixed assets sales	1,115
(1,987)	Purchases	(1,818)
1,723	Long term investments sales	2,134
(2,595)	Purchases	(1,842)
1,503	Net change in short term investments	1,992
(162)		1,581
	Cash (applied in)/released from a net (increase)/decrease in loans and advances to congregations and ministers	
(263)	Loans made	(136)
231	Loans repaid	226
(32)		90
(706)	Bank balances and money on call (Decrease)/Increase in balances	550
1,689	Balances at beginning of year	983
983	Balances at end of year	1,533

This is a somewhat "technical" statement which some may prefer to pass over quickly. Not all income or expenditure results in an immediate cash receipt or payment. This page shows the difference between net incoming resources (some cash and some not cash) and actual cashflow. It then shows how cash has been spent or invested during the year so as to increase our cash balances by £550,000

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

NOTE 1 - ACCOUNTING POLICIES

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice - "Accounting by Charities" and applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards. The particular accounting policies adopted are described below.

(i) Scope

The accounts show the combined income, expenditure, assets and liabilities of those trusts, companies and other funds administered for the benefit of The United Reformed Church under the overall authority of the General Assembly. They do not include funds administered by or on behalf of synods, districts or local churches.

(ii) Classification of funds

Unrestricted income funds may be spent generally for furthering the religious and charitable work of the Church. Restricted income funds are funds whose use is restricted to specific purposes according to the terms on which the funds were received. However, if the purpose is one that forms part of the Church's regular expenditure and the income of the funds could therefore be fully spent each year, the restriction has no practical effect and funds with such restrictions are treated as unrestricted.

Capital funds are permanent endowments which are required to be retained but the income from these funds can be spent for the benefit of the Church subject, in certain cases, to specific restrictions contained in the original endowment.

The main funds included in these accounts, and their classification, are listed on page 10. A brief description of these funds is given on pages 4 and 5.

(iii) Income

Income is brought into account as soon as it becomes receivable except for legacies which are not credited until received. When a synod remits more than its agreed contribution to the Ministry and Mission Fund in any year the excess is carried forward to the following year as a payment in advance.

(iv) Pensions

The Church operates a defined benefit pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are managed independently of the Church. Pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of an independent qualified actuary. Contributions for the regular ongoing cost of pensions are such that the regular pension cost is a substantially level percentage of the current and expected future pensionable payroll.

(v) Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at original cost less depreciation calculated at the following percentages on cost:

Buildings	2 % pa
Cars, Computers and Photocopiers	25 % pa
Other furniture and equipment	10 % pa

With effect from 1st January 2000, all buildings are depreciated at 2% pa. Prior to this, buildings having an estimated useful life of 40 years or more were not depreciated. As in previous years, the value of land is not depreciated.

(vi) Investments

Listed securities, investment properties and units in the United Reformed Church Trust Investment Pool are included at market value at the Balance Sheet date. Unlisted securities are stated at cost or, in the case of gifts, market value at the date of receipt. For gilt-edged securities purchased within ten years of maturity at a cost in excess of redemption amount, the excess is amortised over the period to maturity.

(vii) Stock

Stock, which consists mainly of books in the bookshop, is stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

(viii) Westminster College

With the exception of certain improvements and additions since 1983, the buildings of Westminster College are not included in the Balance Sheet since the College was originally a gift to the Church, the value of which cannot readily be ascertained.

(ix) Rounding of figures to the nearest thousand

Each figure in the accounts, including totals, is shown to the nearest thousand. This may result in the addition of some columns of rounded figures being slightly different from the rounded total shown.

This page contains fairly "technical" information about the way the accounts have been prepared.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS CONTINUED

NOTE 2 - TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Houses for retired ministers	Houses for serving ministers	Other properties	Cars and equipment	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost					
At 1st January 2000	13,928	3,741	2,208	1,080	20,957
Additions during year	1,170	484	60	104	1,818
Disposals during year	(514)	(208)	-	(108)	(830)
At 31st December 2000	14,584	4,017	2,268	1,076	21,945
Depreciation					
At 1st January 2000	-	-	-	649	649
Charged during year	218	58	32	151	459
Written back on disposal				(94)	(94)
At 31st December 2000	218	58	32	706	1,014
Net book value					
At 31st December 2000	14,366	3,959	2,236	370	20,931
At 31st December 1999	13,928	3,741	2,208	431	20,308

Rents for retired ministers' housing are set at levels estimated to cover maintenance costs only. Total rents received in 2000 were £231,000 (1999 - £225,000) and maintenance costs were £224,000 (1999 - £215,000). At 31st December 2000 309 (1999 - 307) houses were owned for housing retired ministers and 25 (1999 - 29) houses for serving ministers.

Other properties include United Reformed Church House, the Yardley Hastings and Windermere Centres, and building costs capitalised at Westminster College since 1983.

NOTE 3 - LOANS AND ADVANCES

	2000 £'000	1999 £'000
Loans and advances comprise:		
To churches	549	599
To ministers	143	159
	<u>692</u>	<u>758</u>

Loans to ministers are generally interest free. Loans to churches bear interest at rates between 4¼% and 7%, except for certain loans, which are interest free for an initial period of two years.

NOTE 4 - DEBTORS

	2000 £'000	1999 £'000
Debtors comprise:		
Tax recoverable	24	47
Prepayments and accrued income	742	537
Other debtors	516	342
	<u>1,282</u>	<u>926</u>

This page and the following two pages set out additional information about various aspects of the Church's finances.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS CONTINUED

NOTE 5 - INVESTMENTS

	2000 £'000	1999 £'000
Long term investments		
Investments held for the longer term comprise:		
Units in the Investment Pool at market value (see note 14)	20,833	22,357
Other listed securities at market value	2,217	2,293
URC Insurance Company Limited shares at cost (see note 13)	-	95
Other unlisted securities at cost	74	74
Investment properties at estimated market value	730	730
	<u>23,854</u>	<u>25,549</u>

All investments are in UK companies or properties.

	2000 £'000	1999 £'000
Short term investments		
Short term investments comprise:		
Money market term deposits	147	2,139
	<u>147</u>	<u>2,139</u>

NOTE 6 - CURRENT LIABILITIES - amounts falling due within one year

	2000 £'000	1999 £'000
Current liabilities comprise:		
Sums held for synods and congregations	1,526	1,817
Advance contributions to the Ministry and Mission Fund	596	648
Other creditors	1,676	1,433
	<u>3,798</u>	<u>3,898</u>

NOTE 7 - REMUNERATION

During the year the following remuneration was paid to:

		2000 £'000	1999 £'000
Ministers: 715 (1999 – 697)	Gross	11,970	11,030
	Social security costs	1,030	927
	Pension contributions	1,351	1,195
		<u>14,351</u>	<u>13,152</u>
Lay staff: 107 (1999 – 108)	Gross	1,511	1,424
	Social security costs	127	121
	Pension contributions	103	97
		<u>1,741</u>	<u>1,642</u>

The numbers shown represent the average for the year, and staff working for part of the year are included at the appropriate proportion.

Individuals acting in a trustee capacity for the various URC trusts receive no remuneration in respect of their services as trustee, other than the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses.

NOTE 8 - AUDITORS' REMUNERATION

Amounts charged for the audit of the accounts of the Church, The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited, and The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund were as follows:

	2000 £'000	1999 £'000
Auditors' remuneration	<u>31</u>	<u>33</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS CONTINUED

NOTE 9 - ASSETS HELD IN TRUST FOR OTHERS

At 31st December 2000 United Reformed Church Trust held investments with a market value of approximately £23 million (1999: £25 million) on behalf of synods, churches and trusts. The Trust also held property and other assets. All of these assets are held to the order of the synods, churches and trusts concerned and are not shown in these accounts (see notes 1(i) and 14).

NOTE 10 - THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION FUND

Pensions for most ministers are provided by The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund. The Fund is a defined benefit pension scheme and the assets are invested and managed by an independent trustee.

During 2000 the Church contributed 12.4% (1999: 11.75%) of basic stipend in respect of members. A valuation of the Pension Fund was undertaken by the consultant actuary as at 1st January 2000. The valuation indicated that there was a surplus on the long-term valuation basis of £2.4 million. At that date the funding level was 105% and the scheme assets were valued at £55 million. The valuation used the attained age method and assumed that the rate of return achieved by the Fund will exceed the rate of stipend increase by 3%.

Following the previous valuation of the Fund as at 1st January 1997, the Church was making additional annual contributions of £750,000 with a view to eliminating the deficit of £4.5 million disclosed by that valuation. In the light of the latest valuation these additional contributions have been discontinued with effect from January 2000.

The Church also operates a number of other defined benefit schemes for a relatively small number of office and other staff. These schemes showed actuarial surpluses at the time of the most recent actuarial review.

NOTE 11 - COMMITMENTS

At 31st December 2000 there were, in respect of the purchase of properties, commitments of £408,000 (1999 - £204,000), and contractual liabilities of £356,000 (1999 - £86,000). There were also commitments to make grants of £562,000 (1999 - £680,000).

NOTE 12 - INTERESTS IN TRUSTS

The Church receives income from a number of trusts. The most significant are described below.

Memorial Hall Trust - In 1999 this trust disposed of its interest in the building standing on the site of the former Memorial Hall. The proceeds of sale are now invested and the income, after meeting trust expenses, is distributed to the URC and non-uniting former Congregational churches. The URC's interest in these distributions is 70%. In addition, at 31st December 2000 the trust owned 34 houses for occupation by retired ministers. During 2001 it is expected that these houses will be transferred to the participating Churches.

New College London Trust - This trust holds assets relating to the former New College London on behalf of the URC and non-uniting Congregational churches. The URC's interest amounts to approximately 82%. In 2000 the Church received income of £262,000 (1999 - £262,000) from this trust, which has been spent on ministerial training.

The Cheshunt Foundation supports Westminster College by paying the stipend and expenses of one of the lecturers, by contributing to the college budget, and by providing financial support for ministers taking post-ordination training, and lay training.

NOTE 13 - URC INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

During 2000 the Church decided to withdraw from the activity of insurance in which it had been involved for many years through the ownership of URC Insurance Company Limited ("URCIC"). This withdrawal was effected by the sale as at 31st December 2000, of the Church's 100% shareholding in URCIC to Ecclesiastical Insurance Office Limited who had been responsible for the management and reinsurance of all of URCIC's activities. The surplus on disposal of this shareholding amounted to £190,000.

NOTE 14 - UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST INVESTMENT POOL

United Reformed Church Trust operates an Investment Pool for funds it holds as managing trustee and for funds of other trusts and churches. The financial statement of the Pool is shown on page 17. Of the total investment in the Pool, valued at £43.6 million (1999 - £47.1 million), only £20.8 million (1999 - £22.4 million) is held for central funds and is dealt with in these accounts (see note 5).

The Charity Commissioners have indicated that the Pool should be restricted to the investment of funds belonging to United Reformed Church Trust as managing trustee. Alternative investment structures have been explored with independent investment managers and the Charity Commissioners but, to date, a satisfactory solution has not been found. This matter continues to be actively pursued.

**UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST INVESTMENT POOL
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2000**

CAPITAL	2000		1999	
	1000 Units	£'000	1000 Units	£'000
Units in issue at 1st January 2000	604,949	47,113	595,583	40,572
Units issued in the year	30,272	2,214	35,950	2,635
Units cancelled in the year	(32,044)	(2,327)	(26,584)	(1,956)
Management fees		(90)		(89)
Increase in value of investments during the year		(3,302)		5,951
Units in issue to central funds	288,157	20,833	287,072	22,357
Units in issue to other funds	315,019	22,775	317,877	24,756
	603,177	43,607	604,949	47,113

REPRESENTED BY

	Cost £'000	Market value £'000	Cost £'000	Market value £'000
Investments				
British Government gilts	11,050	11,428	8,665	8,782
Other British fixed interest stock	1,060	1,054	2,775	2,666
British equities	22,783	30,379	21,281	35,280
	34,893	42,861	32,721	46,728

Cash and short term deposits 467 149

Sundry debtors 279 236

43,607 47,113

Based on the underlying market value of investments and uninvested cash, the value of each unit was 7.23 pence 7.79 pence

During the year distributions were made in respect of all income received as follows:

3 months ended	Rate per unit	£'000	Rate per unit	£'000
	pence		pence	
31st March	0.07	443	0.08	478
30th June	0.06	388	0.07	450
30th September	0.07	424	0.08	461
31st December	0.05	322	0.06	336
	0.26	1,578	0.29	1,725

The policy for accounting for income is as follows:

- Income receivable from fixed interest securities is credited to income on a daily basis.
- Credit for dividends receivable from listed equity investments is taken when the security is first quoted ex-dividend.

Investments made on behalf of United Reformed Church Trust are held by HSBC. All the holdings are designated for the Trustee in the Manager's nominee company, Global Investor Services, a division of HSBC Bank plc. The Trustee is advised of all changes in investment. Quarterly schedules of investments held are issued by HSBC and reconciled to records maintained by the URC, on behalf of the Trustee.

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE FINANCIAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

The Finance Committee is responsible for ensuring that accounts are prepared for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of those trusts, companies and other funds which are administered for the benefit of The United Reformed Church under the overall authority of the General Assembly ('the Church') and of its financial activities during the year. In preparing these financial statements, the Finance Committee has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- followed applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards and the SORP "Accounting by Charities"; and
- prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The Finance Committee is responsible for ensuring that proper accounting records are maintained which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Church and enables it to ensure that the financial statements comply with generally accepted accounting practice. The Finance Committee is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS

We confirm, on behalf of the Finance Committee, our approval of the accounts as set out on pages 6 to 17.

A G BURNHAM
General Secretary

GRAHAM STACY
Treasurer

AVIS REANEY
Financial Secretary

30th March 2001

The above statements are formal statements which are included in the accounts of all companies and major charities.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

We have audited the financial statements on pages 6 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of the Finance Committee and auditors

The responsibilities of the Finance Committee for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards are set out in the Statement of Responsibilities on page 18.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Auditing Standards.

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view. We also report to you if, in our opinion, the Report of the Finance Committee is not consistent with the financial statements, if the Church has not kept proper accounting records, or if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We read the information contained in the Financial Report and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. We consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements. Our responsibilities do not extend to any information outside the Financial Report.

Basis of audit opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with United Kingdom Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Finance Committee in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the circumstances of the Church, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Church as at 31st December 2000 and of its incoming resources and application of resources in the year then ended.

186 City Road
London EC1V 2NU, England

RSM Robson Rhodes
Chartered Accountants and
Registered Auditors

30th March 2001

The audit report by RSM Robson Rhodes set out above is in the standard form used by auditors when there is nothing exceptional which they wish to draw to the attention of readers.

FIVE YEAR SUMMARY

	1996 £'000	1997 £'000	1998 £'000	1999 £'000	2000 £'000
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS					
Income					
Ministry and Mission contributions	16,462	16,763	16,712	16,629	17,363
Investment income	1,327	1,171	1,114	1,137	978
Grants	821	922	883	715	660
Legacies	579	388	1,869	285	982
Other income	763	1,468	735	1,207	1,154
	19,952	20,712	21,313	19,973	21,136
Expenditure					
Ministry	13,469	13,445	13,749	14,192	15,415
Additional pension contributions	3,600	750	1,008	750	-
Training	1,006	1,088	1,250	1,491	1,855
Other Mission activities	1,654	2,047	1,954	2,281	2,719
Support activities	975	1,233	1,403	1,444	1,928
	20,704	18,563	19,364	20,158	21,916
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources	(752)	2,149	1,949	(185)	(780)
Investment gains/(losses)	1,112	2,497	1,913	2,687	(1,356)
Net increase/(decrease) in funds	360	4,646	3,862	2,502	(2,136)

CASH FLOW STATEMENTS
Cash required for investment in

Retired ministers' housing	568	571	673	205	455
Other properties	440	(8)	330	393	159
Cars, furniture and equipment	157	177	145	195	90
Loans to congregations and ministers	(171)	(137)	127	32	(90)
	994	603	1,275	825	614

Source of cash

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year (see above)	(752)	2,149	1,949	(185)	(780)
Adjustment for items not resulting in a cash movement	(383)	(848)	(239)	(327)	(340)
	(1,135)	1,301	1,710	(512)	(1,120)
Net decrease/(increase) in investments	1,936	(1,148)	165	631	2,284
Decrease/(increase) in bank balances	193	450	(600)	706	(550)
	994	603	1,275	825	614

FIVE YEAR SUMMARY CONTINUED

	1996 £'000	1997 £'000	1998 £'000	1999 £'000	2000 £'000
BALANCE SHEETS					
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets					
Retired ministers' housing	11,619	12,512	13,350	13,928	14,366
Housing for serving ministers	3,480	3,348	3,599	3,741	3,959
Other properties	1,729	1,846	1,924	2,208	2,236
Cars, furniture and equipment	307	380	393	431	370
	17,135	18,086	19,266	20,308	20,931
Long term investments	17,362	18,347	22,038	25,549	23,854
Loans to congregations and ministers	662	550	698	758	692
	35,159	36,983	42,002	46,615	45,477
Net current assets					
Current assets					
Debtors and stocks	1,064	1,025	1,037	1,036	1,380
Short term investments and deposits	3,038	5,633	3,642	2,139	147
Bank balances and money on call	1,539	1,089	1,689	983	1,533
	5,641	7,747	6,368	4,158	3,060
less : current liabilities	4,935	4,219	3,997	3,898	3,798
	706	3,528	2,371	260	(738)
Total net assets	35,865	40,511	44,373	46,875	44,739
Unrestricted income funds	9,131	9,951	11,919	12,551	12,202
Restricted income funds	22,312	25,241	26,594	27,912	26,373
Capital funds	4,422	5,319	5,860	6,412	6,164
Total funds	35,865	40,511	44,373	46,875	44,739
NON-FINANCIAL STATISTICS					
Members	100,000	97,000	94,000	91,000	93,000
Stipendiary ministers	741	756	730	694	723
Non-stipendiary ministers	204	193	193	176	171
Churches	1,752	1,739	1,736	1,726	1,753
Retired ministers	729	742	759	777	830
Ministry and Mission contribution per member	£165	£173	£178	£183	£187

Information on this page and the preceding page is aimed mainly at the analyst rather than at the casual reader. However, it shows some interesting trends and brings out features that do not show so clearly in a single set of accounts.

DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2002

	Actual 1999 £'000	Actual 2000 £'000	Budget 2000 £'000	Budget 2001 £'000	Budget 2002 £'000
EXPENDITURE					
MINISTRY					
Local and special ministries and CRCWs	12,775	13,931	13,397	14,225	14,716
Synod moderators - stipends & expenses	414	453	426	490	498
Pension Fund additional contributions	750	0	750	0	0
Ministries committee	139	215	177	221	232
	14,078	14,599	14,750	14,936	15,446
TRAINING					
College training for stipendiary ministry	894	1,058	1,025	1,074	1,150
Other training for stipendiary ministry	103	173	199	180	187
Training for non-stipendiary ministry	107	126	90	94	95
Central cost of Youth and Children's Work Trainers	220	229	197	249	259
Lay training costs	32	36	75	96	100
Training committee	98	136	121	122	126
	1,454	1,759	1,707	1,815	1,917
OTHER MISSION ACTIVITIES					
Grants	364	282	294	303	308
Ecumenical committee and international	261	231	357	310	307
Council for World Mission	94	43	50	50	50
Church and Society committee	67	84	91	93	96
Life and Witness committee	102	84	85	99	103
Windermere Centre	72	65	40	43	45
Racial Justice programme	29	27	25	30	61
Youth and children's work committee	143	144	134	210	181
Yardley Hastings	84	85	73	106	106
Pilots Development	59	63	78	66	70
Other committees	11	16	15	14	11
	1,286	1,122	1,242	1,324	1,338
SUPPORT ACTIVITIES					
General Assembly and Mission Council	149	222	223	199	233
Communication and Editorial	264	293	248	289	303
Finance office	258	276	290	288	295
Central secretariat	183	201	187	196	202
Professional fees	72	92	71	78	81
Computer network	33	44	39	41	48
Costs of conversations and union with the CUS	43	9	0	0	0
URC House costs	228	268	177	217	216
General church costs	148	236	134	125	136
	1,378	1,640	1,369	1,433	1,514
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	18,196	19,120	19,068	19,508	20,215

DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2002

	Actual 1999 £'000	Actual 2000 £'000	Budget 2000 £'000	Budget 2001 £'000	Budget 2002 £'000
INCOME					
MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS	16,629	17,363	17,201	18,207	18,750
INVESTMENT INCOME					
Dividends	204	241	459	269	280
Interest	286	225	350	306	260
	490	466	809	575	540
GRANTS RECEIVED					
Memorial Hall Trust	420	350	0	320	350
New College London Trust	262	262	266	273	280
URC Insurance Company Limited	33	48	78	50	0
	715	660	344	643	630
LEGACIES	118	308	0	0	0
OTHER INCOME					
CWM Mission Support programme	71	117	0	126	0
Other donations	0	51	50	50	50
Other	182	11	4	4	8
	253	179	54	180	58
PROFIT ON SALE OF PROPERTIES	193	177			
TOTAL INCOME	<u>18,398</u>	<u>19,153</u>	<u>18,408</u>	<u>19,605</u>	<u>19,978</u>
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCE	<u>202</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>(660)</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>(237)</u>

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION FUND

	2000		1999	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME				
Contributions from ministers and central funds	1,764		1,601	
Transfer values received	<u>55</u>		<u>136</u>	
		1,819		1,737
Investment income		1,657		1,790
Allocation towards Actuarial Deficit	-		768	
Donations	<u>1</u>		<u>-</u>	
		<u>1</u>		<u>768</u>
		3,476		4,295
EXPENDITURE				
Benefits paid	3,479		3,382	
Transfer values paid	<u>10</u>		<u>-</u>	
	3,489		3,382	
Management expenses	<u>225</u>		<u>176</u>	
		<u>3,714</u>		<u>3,558</u>
NORMAL (DECREASE) / INCREASE IN RESOURCES IN THE YEAR				
		(238)		737
Realised profit on sale of investments		5,162		7,009
(Decrease) / increase in unrealised surplus on investment revaluation		<u>(9,868)</u>		<u>4,240</u>
TOTAL (DECREASE) / INCREASE IN RESOURCES IN THE YEAR				
		(4,944)		11,986
Balance of resources as at 1st January		<u>78,307</u>		<u>66,321</u>
Balance of resources as at 31st December		<u>73,363</u>		<u>78,307</u>
REPRESENTED BY				
Investments		72,218		78,129
Net current assets		<u>1,145</u>		<u>179</u>
		<u>73,363</u>		<u>78,307</u>

This account, which should be read in conjunction with note 10 on page 16, is a summary of the full accounts of the Pension Fund which have been audited by RSM Robson Rhodes, who have given an unqualified audit opinion.

The trustee's report and accounts, and also the rules of the Pension Fund, may be obtained from the central office of the Church.

Appendix 2

Commentary on the 2002 Budget

This commentary is intended to help those interested in the United Reformed Church 2002 budget to understand how the main figures are built up and/or the reasons for changes from the 2001 budget. All figures are stated in thousands of pounds without a £ sign and some explanations involve broad approximations in the interest of simplicity.

THE BUDGET PROCESS

The preparation of the 2002 budget started in the autumn of 2000 when budget holders were asked to produce, usually with assistance from the chief accountant Chris Langham, their proposed budget figures for 2002. In November 2000 each budget holder (sometimes accompanied by the convener of their relevant committee) met with the convener of the Mission Council Resource Planning Advisory Group (RPAG), the treasurer, the financial secretary and the chief accountant to discuss their budget proposals. In some cases changes were made at that stage and all the separate budget proposals were then combined into the first draft budget which was presented to a full meeting of RPAG in December.

Following this meeting there were further discussions with some budget holders and a revised budget was presented to RPAG in early February 2001. The draft budget was presented for information to the meeting of District and Synod Treasurers at Swanwick at the end of February.

Before the 2002 budget had been finalised, the Youth & Children's Work Committee proposed that a review group should be set up to look at all aspects of the current Youth & Children's Work programme. The 2002 budget is based on current programmes and does not attempt to anticipate the outcome of the Review.

At its March meeting Mission Council approved the draft budget for presentation to General Assembly in July.

EXPENDITURE

MINISTRY

Local and special ministries and CRCWs

2001	14,225	
2000	14,716	increase 3.5%

The increase can be analysed as follows:

2001 budgeted amount		14,225
Stipend increase		
2001 actual (3.9%) was higher than budgeted (3.5%) by	0.4%	
2002 increase has been taken, for budget purposes, at	<u>4.0%</u>	
Making a total increase over the 2001 budget of	<u>4.4%</u>	<u>626</u>
		14,851
Minister numbers decrease		
Down from 671 to 657 (average full-time equivalent ministers)	(2.1%)	(312)
		14,539
CRCW numbers increase		
Up from 12 to 15		<u>62</u>
		14,601
Pension contribution		
Increased contribution to pay for minor benefit improvements agreed at the 2000 General Assembly		<u>92</u>
		14,693
Other changes		
Mainly resettlement and retirement removal grants, increased by		<u>23</u>
2002 budgeted amount		14,716

Synod moderators – stipends and expenses

2000	490	
2001	498	Increase 1.6%

The increase of 1.6% is a combination of stipend increase (up 4.4%) less offsetting reductions in housing and travel (for which the 2001 budget figure is now thought to be on the high side).

Ministries committee

2001	221	
2002	232	Increase 5.0%

These costs are made up as follows:

	2001	2002
Stipends & salaries of Secretary for Ministries, CRCW		
Development Worker and support staff	110	114
Conferences	24	24
CRCW development work costs	12	16
MES Grants (Ministry in Ecumenical Situations)	56	58
Other costs	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>
Total	<u>221</u>	<u>232</u>

TRAINING

College training for stipendiary ministry

2001	1,074	
2002	1,150	Increase 7.1%

The 2002 total of 1,150 is based on estimated student numbers of 72 and comprises college fees 515 and student grants 635.

The Training Committee has proposed an above inflation increase to reflect the fact that costs of higher education are rising faster than the RPI. This is due to a continuing expectation of higher standards (from both students and inspections), expansion in computing and library facilities and the need to bring buildings into compliance with current requirements.

Forecasting student numbers two years ahead is difficult but, whilst numbers attending particular institutions may vary, the number of staff required by those institutions remains relatively stable and their costs have to be passed on in their charges to us.

Other training costs

The amounts shown in the budget are generally self-explanatory. The cost of Youth & Children's Work Trainers represents about one half of the total costs, the balance being borne by Synods.

OTHER MISSION ACTIVITIES

2001	1,324	
2002	1,338	Increase 1.1%

The above total represents eleven separate items shown separately in the budget. Comments on some of the more significant items are set out below.

Grants

2001	303	
2002	308	Increase 1.7%

Grants comprise about £200,000 in ecumenical grants to some 40 organisations (the largest grant being £44,000 to the World Council of Churches) and about £100,000 in other grants administered by the Assembly Grants & Loans Group.

Ecumenical Committee and international

2001	310	
2002	307	Decrease 1.0%

These costs are made up as follows:

	2001	2002
Salaries and stipends	142	128
Programme costs, scholarships and grants	207	216
Staff travel, Committee and other costs	51	53
Less amount charged to World Church & Mission funds	<u>(90)</u>	<u>(90)</u>
	<u>310</u>	<u>307</u>

In addition to the above, the cost of the Belonging to the World Church programme is met from World Church & Mission unexpended income funds.

Racial Justice Programme

2001	30	
2002	61	Increase 103%

The costs budgeted for 2001 represented a half-time programme secretary with support costs. Following the 2000 General Assembly resolution the 2002 budget is based on a full-time appointment.

Youth & children's work committee

2001	210	
2002	181	Decrease 13.8%

These costs are made up as follows:

	2001	2002
Salaries and stipends	107	111
Fury Council costs	19	21
Social Exclusion project (less DFE grant)	49	13
Travel and other costs	<u>35</u>	<u>36</u>
Total	<u>210</u>	<u>181</u>

The Social Exclusion project is planned to finish in March 2002.

Yardley Hastings

2001	106	
2002	106	

The initial budget proposal from the Yardley Hastings management committee was for a substantial increase over the 2001 budget. Pending completion of the Youth & Children's Work Review, referred to earlier, it has been decided to include an unchanged amount for Yardley Hastings in the 2002 budget.

SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

The activities included under the heading "Support activities" are essential to the whole of the church's work. In choosing the headings "Other mission activities" and "Support activities" to describe categories of expenditure in the accounts and budget, it is not suggested that support activities are not concerned with Mission.

General Assembly and Mission Council

2001	199	
2002	233	Increase 17.1%

General Assembly in 2002 will be at St Andrews. The longer travel time for many of those attending reduces the time available for business on the first and last day and the programme therefore allows for an extra night. The increased costs budgeted for 2002 reflect the additional accommodation and travel costs.

Communication and editorial

2001	289	
2002	303	Increase 4.8%

These costs are made up as follows:

	2001	2002
REFORM	27	31
Staff costs	200	202
Postage and distribution	19	19
Stationery	21	22
Other costs	47	42
Income	(25)	(13)
Total	<u>289</u>	<u>303</u>

The budgeted cost for *Reform* represents editorial and production costs (183) less estimated revenue from subscriptions and advertising (152).

Staff costs relate to the equivalent of about 8 full-time staff in the bookshop, graphics, database updating and public relations.

Finance office

2001	288	
2002	295	Increase 2.4%

Most of these costs are salaries of the ten staff whose duties include managing a monthly payroll for some 2000 ministers, pensioners and lay staff. collecting M&M contributions from 1700 churches, administering the URC Trust and maintaining the church's accounting records.

Central secretariat

2001	196	
2002	202	Increase 3.1%

These costs are mainly salaries and stipends.

Professional fees

2001	78
2002	81

The 2002 budgeted costs comprise legal fees 50 and audit fees 31.

Computer network

2001	41	
2002	48	Increase 17.1%

The above-inflation increase reflects the increasing complexity of the computer facilities which are required to keep pace with developments in Information Technology.

URC House costs

2001	217
2002	216

These costs comprise salaries, wages, repairs, postage and the many other costs relating to the running of Church House. The 2002 budget amount for repairs is lower than for 2001 but other costs are budgeted to increase with inflation.

General church costs

2001	125	
2002	136	Increase 8.8%

These costs include travel and other expenses of the Assembly Moderator, costs of United Reformed Church representatives attending other assemblies and removal grants for Assembly appointed staff. The above average increase in total costs is due to removal grants budgeted for 2001 being on the low side.

INCOME**Ministry & Mission Contributions**

2001	18,207	
2002	18,750	Increase 3%

The targets for M&M contributions and the actual achieved amounts are shown below.

	Target in budget	Achieved amount
1999	16,700	16,627
2000 (excluding CUS)	17,200	17,020
2001 (excluding CUS)	17,717	
(including CUS)	18,207	(promises) 17,950
2002	18,750	

The targets for each year are 3% higher than the targets for the previous year. However, the amounts achieved or promised for 2000 and 2001 are about 1% and 1.4% short of the budget targets; the consequence of this is that the target for 2002 represents a 4.4% increase on the total of promises for 2001.

Dividends and interest

2001	575	
2002	540	decrease 6.3%

Forecasting the level of dividends and interest over one year ahead is a difficult task. The lower level included for 2002 reflects the fact that manses for moderators and Church House staff, currently financed from the Church Buildings Fund, will be transferred to the general funds, in order to maximise the cash available for Church Buildings Fund grants. This will have the effect of reducing the amount of general funds available to earn interest.

Grants received

2001	643
2002	630

There will be no grant from the URC Insurance Company in 2002 following the sale of the company to Ecclesiastical Insurance Company.

Sundry income

The 2001 income of 126 from the CWM Mission Support programme is the last of three annual instalments. It is not yet known whether any further grants from this source will be available in 2002.

BUDGET DEFICIT

The final line of the budget “Net incoming/(outgoing) resource” shows a net outgoing, in simple terms a “deficit”, for 2002 of 237.

Two years ago we adopted a policy of setting deficit budgets. The rationale for this policy was that by starting the year with a budget deficit we were more likely to end up with actual income and expenditure in balance than by starting with a break-even budget. This was due to the fact that over a number of years the actual result each year had been considerably better than budget due to unpredictable savings in expenditure or improvements in income.

For 2000 and 2001 we started with budget deficits of around 650. The situation became a little confused for 2001 when, about four weeks before the budget was due to be presented to General Assembly, a major unpredictable item, which we had taken into account in setting a budget deficit of 650, crystallised. This was the cancellation of the annual additional payment of 750 to the pension fund following the triennial actuarial valuation of the fund. At that stage, our best view of the remaining “unpredictable items” was that they were unlikely to produce a significant surplus so the budget was changed to cancel the 750 pension fund payment but no other changes were made leaving the budget showing a small surplus of 97.

When the policy of deficit budgets was introduced at the 1999 Assembly, it was stated that *“the appropriate level of deficit in subsequent years will continue to require careful judgement in the light of circumstances at the time”*. For 2002, there is no longer the possibility of major savings in the pension fund contribution so the level of deficit that would be prudent is considerably lower than was the case in 1999. RPAG has concluded that, in the light of current circumstances, a deficit in the region of 250 would be reasonable for 2002.

The 2002 budget deficit of 237, which falls within the range considered acceptable by RPAG, is arrived at by setting a target for Ministry & Mission contributions at 3% higher than the 2001 target amount. It is important to recognise that the budget does not have any margin to absorb under-attainment of the M&M target and the church is faced with a considerable challenge to increase M&M contributions by more than has been achieved for a number of years.

Appendix 3

Documents relating to the petition of the church at Edmonton (Thames North synod) to secede from the United Reformed Church

1. PAPERS FROM EDMONTON
 - 1.1 The Petition for Secession
 - 1.2 Notes on the Petition for Secession
 - 1.3 Resolution of Church Meeting on 7 December 2000

2. PAPERS FROM MISSION COUNCIL
 - 2.1 Report of the Mission Council commission

1.1

EDMONTON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
FAITH HOUSE
Christian Revival Centre
313-319 Fore Street, Edmonton, N9 0PD
Telephone: 020 8803 3423

PETITION FOR SECESSION
BY EDMONTON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH

The United Reformed Church has moved from its Basis of Union in passing Resolution 19 at its General Assembly of 1997 by excluding congregations of a conservative theological persuasion. In its own paper 'The Secession of local Churches from the United Reformed Church' section 2.4 it declares 'The United Reformed Church has room for a wide diversity of style and understanding.' - by the policy change of Resolution 19 allowing for the formal sanctioning of the ordination of practising homosexuals by General Assembly, we believe, this can no longer be claimed. We request the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church to allow us to secede.

BACKGROUND TO LOCAL CHURCH'S DECISION

1. As a church we discussed the matter of human sexuality and had made available to us various background papers and papers from groups on both sides of the debate. We were dismayed by the conduct (not experienced by all first hand but reported by representatives) of district and provincial debates which were so obviously 'stage managed'. The resolutions that came to Assembly in 1997 shocked us and our resolve in prayer intensified as the unthinkable seemed to be happening. Following the passing of Resolution 19 the Minister wrote to the General Secretary with copies going to the Assembly & Provincial Moderators - there were no replies Members also wrote; one member several times - no replies. Following this the church meeting of the 9th October 1997 passed various resolutions and communicated these in a letter to the General Secretary, Provincial Moderator and District Secretary there were no replies.

2. Our resolutions regarding the district council's implementation of Resolution 19 came before council on the 23rd April 1998 and were defeated. We had failed to get district council to face up to the issues.

3. Prayerful discussion continued in church and elders meetings with a growing sense of God's displeasure with the denomination and his leading of us out. Many members had to be encouraged not to

jump ship but to wait on God in prayer. It was a continuing 'matter arising' at all meetings. At the Elders Meeting of the 26 May 1998 when all elders were in attendance they were of one mind that the Lord was saying 'come out from among them' and that we should apply to secede. This was communicated in a letter to those members at church the following Sunday and to others by post. The contents of the letter contained a resolution that the Elders would bring to the next church meeting the date of which was set to allow the greatest number of members to attend.

4. The meeting showed that the elder's conclusion reflected that of the vast majority of the members and the decision to secede was agreed. This was communicated by the secretary to the District Secretary on 30th June 1998.

Copies of the letters, resolutions and minutes referred to in this section were made available to the representatives of the Lea Valley District Council and Thames North Synod, and to the Mission Council commission, when they considered the petition. With the agreement of the church at Edmonton, they have not been re-printed here in order to limit printing costs. This does not prevent their being quoted verbally in the Assembly if any parties deem that desirable.

REASONS FOR SECESSION

1. THE WORD OF GOD God has made it clear that this is the course of action we should take. We believe we have the mind of Christ. God's written word makes it quite clear that the practice that the United Reformed Church now sanctions is an abomination and we cannot be part of it and must come out from among them.

2. THE INTEGRITY OF THE GOSPEL of repentance that we proclaim is at stake if we proclaim one thing yet the denomination that we are a part of has obscured SIN by the passing of Resolution 19.

3. INTER CHURCH RELATIONS have been put under a strain by the denomination's acceptance of practising homosexuals into the ministry. Though these have been improved by declaring our intention to secede.

4. THE PROPERTY in Edmonton has been entrusted to us by generations past and we believe the faith and intentions of those who have gone before us would best be served by secession. Edmonton church was independent and evangelical as a congregation for more years than it has been United Reformed Church.

5. THE BASIS OF THE United Reformed Church has been changed in such a way that it can no longer hold within its borders a wide diversity of style and understanding because it has narrowed its basis and has made it impossible for conservative evangelical believers to feel at home.

6. THE MISSION of Edmonton church has repentance at its cutting edge and the preaching of the Gospel with this cutting edge will be at odds with the practice of ministers of the same denomination. To put it bluntly we will be calling for the fornicators to leave their life of sin and turn to Christ.

7. THE VISION of Edmonton church as a church in Spiritual Revival does not reflect the direction that the denomination is now going. The passing of Resolution 19 marked a change of direction for the United Reformed Church that we cannot accept. It has been like changing the rules half way through a match. Something that God doesn't do.

FUTURE STRATEGY

1. We ask to secede to being an independent congregation once again though we would seek to be associated with any Association of Evangelical Reformed Churches.

2. We would seek pastoral oversight from a ministry or grouping of churches that share the same vision. This may in the future lead to our becoming part of another denomination.

3. We plan to remain within the local councils of churches and work together whenever the Kingdom of God would better be served this way and we would always seek the unity of all believers in Christ.

1.2

NOTES ON THE PETITION FOR SECESSION BY EDMONTON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH IN THE LIGHT OF THE HUMAN SEXUALITY REPORT

NOTES

1. We still maintain that 'The United Reformed Church has moved from its Basis of Union in Passing Resolution 19 at its General Assembly of 1997 by excluding congregations of a conservative theological persuasion. In its own paper 'The Secession of local Churches from the United Reformed Church' section 2.4 it declares 'The United Reformed Church has room for a wide diversity of style and understanding.' - by the policy change of Resolution 19 allowing for the formal sanctioning of the ordination of practising homosexuals by General Assembly, we believe, this can no longer be claimed. **We request the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church to allow us to secede.**' Even if Resolution 19 is deemed to no longer apply by General Assembly 1999 (Resolution 38) it will have been in force for two years and during that time candidates and ordained ministers have declared themselves practising homosexuals and as stated in Resolution 36 no disciplinary action is going to be taken now or in the future for the present or subsequent ministers who are practising homosexuals.

2. We consider that the attitude of those in positions of responsibility, national, provincial and at a local level has shown a bias against conservative evangelical ministers and churches and towards the homosexual. This bias is evident in the report to Assembly 1999 where the fear of causing hurt to the homosexual community underlies most of the report. We regard homosexuals as sinners for whom Christ died and it is the cross calling them to leave their life of sin causing offence not the church.

3. The unprofessional handling of correspondence and the 'stage managed' church councils needs to be admitted and repented of for the denominational structure ever to have any credibility again.

4. The United Reformed Church seems to try and walk a tightrope and hold all sides together. We believe that this is impossible and the Church has to stand on God's side and risk the displeasure of one group even if it is as influential as the 'Gay lobby'. The report on Human Sexuality is a clever piece of work, but we fear that the only thing it may do is unite differing groups in opposition to its resolutions. Certainly we cannot say 'it is not exactly what we would like but we can live with it.'

5. It seems that if the report is accepted and the resolutions carried the United Reformed Church would not yet officially accept practising homosexuals for ordination. (Resolution 31 statement 'does not believe that there is a sufficiently clear mind within the church at this time to affirm the acceptability of

homosexual practice') This leaves the matter open for change. Surely God's mind is clear and even if 'the church' changes its mind God will not change his. Unofficially the practice can continue and nothing will be done about those who have now declared themselves or who subsequently declare themselves practising homosexuals.

6. All our reasons for secession still stand even if Resolution 19 of 1997 does not. For this not to be the case, the church, having opened the door wide to this perversion must close it firmly shut in repentance AND CLEANSE ITS HOUSE. Resolution 19 was just one symptom of a much deeper problem. Edmonton United Reformed Church's decision to secede was not a reaction to one resolution but a response to the leading of God after much heartache over the way the denomination had moved from scripture and its founding principles. The report and resolutions reveal the same Godless shift toward the world and the world's ways. The report changes little.

REASONS FOR SECESSION (RESTATED)

1. THE WORD OF GOD God has made it clear that this is the course of action we should take. We believe we have the mind of Christ. God's written word both Old and New Testaments makes it quite clear that homosexual practice is an abomination and the United Reformed Church's failure to condemn the practice and discipline ministers over the practice means it condones an abomination and we cannot be part of it and must come out from among them.

2. THE INTEGRITY OF THE GOSPEL of repentance that we proclaim is at stake if we proclaim one thing yet the denomination that we are a part of has obscured SIN by passing and upholding Resolution 19 for two years, and then still not being prepared to stand against a practice that God clearly calls SIN.

3. INTER CHURCH RELATIONS have been put under a strain by the denomination's acceptance of practising homosexuals into the ministry and will not be helped by the proposed liberal attitude to practising homosexuals. Though these have been improved by declaring our intention to secede.

4. THE PROPERTY in Edmonton has been entrusted to us by generations past and we believe the faith and intentions of those who have gone before us would best be served by secession. Edmonton church was independent and evangelical as a congregation for more years than it has been United Reformed Church.

5. THE BASIS OF THE United Reformed Church has been changed in such a way that it can no longer hold within its borders a wide diversity of style and understanding because it has narrowed its basis and has made it impossible for conservative evangelical believers to feel at home.

6. THE MISSION of Edmonton church has repentance at its cutting edge and the preaching of the Gospel with this cutting edge will be at odds with the practice of ministers of the same denomination. To put it bluntly we will be calling for the fornicators to leave their life of sin and turn to Christ.

7. THE VISION of Edmonton church as a church in Spiritual Revival doe not reflect the direction that the denomination is now going. The passing of Resolution 19 marked a change of direction for the United Reformed Church that we cannot accept, the human sexuality report and resolutions 1999 have done little to change this. It has been like changing the rules half way through a match. Something that God doesn't do.

1.3

Resolution of Church Meeting on 7 December 2000

At Assembly 2000 the United Reformed Church passed resolutions 14 & 15, indicating that it can't make its mind up at this time on the issue of practising homosexuals in the ministry, and so will not define a policy on the subject, nor even discuss it any more for at least seven years. This is not acceptable to this fellowship.

After the 1997 resolution and subsequent debate it is clear that the denomination has left the traditional understanding of the church, denies the clear biblical teaching on the subject and leaves the door

open for ministry by practising homosexuals. Its position has evidently changed from what used to be a natural christian assumption that practising homosexuality was not welcomed.

Call it 'moving with the times' - the denomination has moved, indeed it has made a fundamental change in its own basis. We state again that this fellowship does not wish to be part of any denomination that can accept practising homosexuals in ministry, if not as a matter of direct policy, then as a matter of current practise. We thus stand firm on our decision to secede from the United Reformed Church.

*I certify that this is an accurate copy of the resolution under the item 'secession' from the minutes of Edmonton URC Church Meeting on 7 December 2000.
(Signed) R A W Goddard (Minister/chairman)*

2.
**REPORT BY THE COMMISSION TO CONSIDER
 AND ADVISE MISSION COUNCIL ON THE
 PETITION OF EDMONTON UNITED REFORMED
 CHURCH TO SECEDE**

1. Background

1.1 In June 1998 the Church Meeting of Edmonton United Reformed Church passed a resolution requesting the General Assembly to allow the church to secede. After the appointment and work of commissions, first by the Lea Valley District Council and then by the Thames North Synod, and the subsequent inability of these Councils of the Church to achieve reconciliation with the Edmonton United Reformed Church, the petition to secede was referred to the Mission Council. Mission Council decided to appoint a commission to consider the petition and to advise on action to be taken.

1.2 The members of the Commission appointed by the Mission Council were Revd John Reardon (Convener), Mrs Val Morrison, Mrs Delyth Rees, Revd John Rees, and Revd John Proctor who was unable to serve because of illness.

2. The Process

2.1 The Commission met on two occasions in January and February 2001. Prior to its first meeting the papers supporting the petition from the church at Edmonton were circulated to the Commission members. At the first meeting these papers were considered and questions were formulated to provide a basis for the visit to Edmonton which took place late the same day. At that time, up to and including the visit to Edmonton, the Commission members agreed not to receive or read any papers from the District Council or the Synod. They wanted to meet the members of the church at Edmonton without being influenced in any way by those who had earlier considered the petition to secede. After the meeting with the church the members of the Commission dispersed without discussing their reactions to the meeting which, in any case, did not end until 10.20pm.

2.2 Prior to the second meeting the papers from the Synod and District Council were sent to the Commission members and at that meeting the first brief session was spent in considering questions arising from these papers to be put to the representatives of the District Council and the Synod. The second and third sessions of that meeting were devoted to two hour-long conversations with first the four representatives of the District Council (Revds Steven Faber, Dr Laurence Dixon & Dr Roger Scopes and Mr Adrian West) and then the three representatives of the

Synod (the Revds Adrian Bulley, Dr Philip Morgan & Michael Playdon). The fourth and final session of that meeting was spent in considering the petition and the Commission's response to it, including the formulation of advice to be presented to the Mission Council at its meeting in March 2001. The convener agreed to prepare a report to be circulated for comment to the other members of the Commission prior to any amendment and then submission to the Deputy General Secretary in time for the mailing to the Mission Council.

3. The Petition

3.1 At its Church Meeting on 25th June 1998 the Edmonton United Reformed Church passed the following resolution with 19 votes in favour and 4 against:

The Church Meeting of Edmonton United Reformed Church agrees to separate from the United Reformed Church and requests the General Assembly to allow this church to secede.

The 1999 Year Book of the United Reformed Church indicated that there were 34 members of the church.

3.2 In the paper setting out this petition it was explained that, following disquiet in the church about the General Assembly's Resolution 19 in 1997, an attempt was made to remove that disquiet by presenting a resolution at the District Council about the implementation of Resolution 19 but its resolution was defeated on 23rd April 1998 with 13 voting for it and 19 against, with 1 abstention.

3.3 The reasons for the petition for secession were given as:

1. conformity to the word of God, which makes clear that the practice of homosexuality is an abomination;
2. the United Reformed Church has obscured sin by passing Resolution 19;
3. inter church relations have been strained by the passing of the Resolution but improved by the decision to secede;
4. the faith and intentions of generations past concerning the property of the church are best served by secession;
5. the Basis of the United Reformed Church has been so changed that it can no longer hold a wide diversity of style and understanding, and by narrowing its base has made it impossible for conservative evangelical believers to feel at home;
6. the mission of Edmonton church has repentance at its cutting edge and the preaching of the Gospel will be at odds

- with the practice of ministers of the same denomination (fornicators must leave their life of sin and turn to Christ);
7. the vision of the church at Edmonton (a church in Spiritual Revival) is at odds with the direction of the denomination which has changed the rules in a way that God never does.

3.4 Following the debates and resolutions of General Assembly after 1997 the church observed:

All our reasons for secession will stand even if Resolution 19 of 1997 does not. For this not to be the case, the church, having opened the door wide to this perversion must close it firmly shut in repentance AND CLEANSE ITS HOUSE. Resolution 19 was just one symptom of a much deeper problem. Edmonton United Reformed Church's decision to secede was not a reaction to one resolution but a response to the leading of God after much heartache over the way the denomination had moved from scripture and its founding principles. The report (on human sexuality) and resolutions reveal the same Godless shift towards the world and the world's ways. The report changes little.

3.5 In December 2000, following the General Assembly debate and resolutions in July 2000, the Church Meeting at Edmonton unanimously (no voting figures stated) repeated its petition to secede, claiming, 'the denomination has left the traditional understanding of the church, denies the clear biblical teaching on the subject and leaves the door open for ministry by practising homosexuals'. It also observed that the United Reformed Church's 'position has evidently changed from what used to be a natural christian (*sic*) assumption that practising homosexuality was not welcomed'.

4. The Commission meeting with the Edmonton church

4.1 The meeting with the church at Edmonton was arranged by the Deputy General Secretary (who accompanied the Commission) and Mrs Sheila Goddard, the Church Secretary. The Commission members arrived at the church to find the congregation already engaged in worship. The worship continued for a further twenty minutes before any welcome was given or introduction made. Consideration of the petition then began. There followed a series of contributions, in response to the Commission's invitation and questions, from seventeen people, including the minister, the Revd Richard Goddard. In the course of the exchanges the Commission learnt that:

- a. with only one exception, everyone who spoke supported the petition to secede;
- b. change in the ethos of the church came with the arrival of the present minister and his wife;
- c. many people (possibly more than twenty) left the church because they did not agree with the direction in which it was going;
- d. by even agreeing to discuss homosexuality the United Reformed Church had shown its apostasy because there can be no discussion about matters on which the Bible is clear;
- e. the Bible is the inerrant word of God and the United Reformed Church has changed its Basis of Union in its disregard for the word of God;
- f. the Councils of the church are regarded with suspicion and hostility and are not representative of local churches;
- g. the church believes that it has received a clear word from the Lord that they should 'come out from among them' and should, like the Israelites in Egypt, be allowed to take their wealth (i.e. property) with them;
- h. the church has removed virtually all signs that refer to the United Reformed Church from its premises and is ashamed to own that it belongs to the denomination (the church sign outside the building reads 'Faith House').

5. The Commission meeting with District and Synod representatives

5.1 After reading through the documentation supplied by the District Council and the Thames North Synod, the Commission met representatives of the two separately to learn more of the background to the petition and the measures taken to try to achieve reconciliation. Both the Lea Valley District Council and subsequently the Thames North Synod appointed groups to meet with representatives of the elders and church members at Edmonton. The representatives meeting the Commission included some members of these groups and their reports were included in the documentation.

5.2 The Lea Valley District Council appointed a group of four people (two from the District and two from outside) to consider the petition, with a view to seeking reconciliation. They met with the minister and elders, then with eight past members who had left the church in recent years because of the changes in the direction of its life and finally with the Church Meeting at which there were twenty-eight members present, in February, March and April respectively, in 1999. Their report and the Commission's discussion with the representatives of

the District Council confirmed that Edmonton saw Resolution 19 as symptomatic of the United Reformed Church and that the church would want to secede even if Resolution 19 was revoked because it believed that the United Reformed Church had moved from the Bible as the basis of faith. In the view of Edmonton the United Reformed Church is 'not united, not reformed and not recognised by Jesus'. The District group sought to investigate and discuss with the church the grievances it had raised about the lack of replies to correspondence with Assembly officers and the conduct of meetings considering human sexuality.

5.3 The District Council was unable to find a way to reconcile Edmonton United Reformed Church with the denomination as a whole and referred the matter to the Thames North Synod. The Synod appointed a Commission of three persons to consider the petition to secede. The Synod Commission members, between them, met with the minister, church members and some former church members on five occasions, two of which involved sharing in Sunday worship. Included in this programme was a specially convened Church Meeting on 3rd February 2000. The call to church members and 'all who worship at faith house (*sic*)' was issued on notepaper headed Faith House, Christian Revival Centre.

5.4 The Synod Commission expressed some sympathy with the grievances of the church about correspondence not having been answered and about the conduct of the Provincial Synod meeting at which human sexuality had been debated, but 'expressed the view to the Church Meeting that their Petition was unlikely to be accepted'. The church repeated its assertion that the United Reformed Church had departed from its position on biblical authority and could only rectify this by repentance and affirmation of the absolute authority of the Bible as the inerrant word of God. The church reiterated its conviction that God required them to leave the United Reformed Church and that God had promised that they would leave with their 'property and much besides' (a promise outlined in the letter giving notice of the Church Meeting).

5.5 The Synod Commission reported to the Synod Executive that no resolution of the problem had been possible. It expressed the view that in its theology and style of worship, the Edmonton Church was within the range of belief accommodated within the United Reformed Church. It commended the zeal and commitment of the members but expressed concern about the style of leadership which it saw as extremely authoritarian. After hearing the report the Synod Executive brought the following resolution on its Synod in March 2000:

Thames North Synod, having failed to effect a reconciliation of differences with Edmonton United Reformed Church, refers the petition to secede to General Assembly through Mission Council.

That resolution was agreed.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 The Commission heard the story of Edmonton United Reformed Church through its present members, through the reports of conversations and correspondence with former members, through the work of the commissions set up by both the District Council and the Synod and through the representatives of those two Councils of the Church. It was a story of a relatively short period in the life of a church which, according to the United Reformed Church Year Book, was established in 1789. During the four years leading up to the decision to petition for secession the membership of the church changed radically with a large proportion of the members there at the beginning having left because of the change in the ethos of the church. A similar or greater number joined the church during that period, attracted by the new ethos. During that period the church began to distance itself from the United Reformed Church. The decision of the General Assembly in 1997 to agree to Resolution 19 in the debate about human sexuality and the church's subsequent failure to influence the District Council to accept its own point of view on the implementation of that Resolution led to the petition to secede.

6.2 The Commission believes that the two groups appointed by the District Council and the Synod were right to consult with past as well as present members of the church because many of them remain members of the United Reformed Church, albeit in other local churches. During the period of change within the local church at Edmonton, the United Reformed Church, through its General Assembly and through the other Councils of the Church, has wrestled with the biblical, theological, pastoral and practical questions posed by human sexuality, and, in particular, homosexuality. That process of debate over several years has revealed the breadth of theological opinion within the Church. The Edmonton church, however, is only prepared to countenance its own biblical and theological position and accuses the United Reformed Church of having moved from its Basis of Union. The Basis of Union states that the word of God in the Old and New Testaments is to be discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The mechanism for such discernment is the provision within the Structure of the United Reformed Church of the various Councils of the Church. This understanding of authority and the ways

Appendix 3

in which it can be tested and affirmed remain central to the United Reformed Church and the recent debates have all been conducted within that understanding. It is not the United Reformed Church which has changed but the Edmonton church. Because of the widely held belief about the United Reformed Church among the present membership of the church at Edmonton we have to question whether when they were received into membership they understood the nature of the United Reformed Church. There is evidence that those who disagreed with the direction the church was taking were given little option but to resign their membership or, indeed, were deleted, without consultation, from the membership roll.

6.3 The church at Edmonton has not handled divisions within its own membership with pastoral sensitivity or Christian charity but has, within a relatively short period, developed a membership which is antagonistic to the United Reformed Church and has maintained that stance in defiance of the Basis of Union through its style of leadership and its disregard for the wider Councils of the Church.

6.4 It is commonly understood that members of the church are always free to leave if they find that they no longer have sympathy with the direction the church is taking. The members at Edmonton have every opportunity to exercise that right if they so wish. However, they wish to secede as a whole church, taking property and financial resources with them out of the United Reformed Church. **The Commission unanimously advises Mission Council to resist the petition and to advise General Assembly to reject it.**

6.5 Finally, the Commission believes that the District Council and Synod will need the support of the whole Church in dealing with the aftermath of the petition, whatever decision is made.

*John Reardon
Convener*

28th February 2001

Appendix 4

Growing Up to the Ministry of Evangelists

I Introduction

1.1 Growing Up charted the serious numerical decline of our church and concluded that

there is no quick-fix, no simple human solution to reverse this downward spiral. (1.14). The report recalled the initiatives in mission that had been attempted over the years but noted that the United Reformed Church as a whole has sometimes seemed uncomfortable with the word 'evangelism': (2)

1.2 A resolution at the 1998 General Assembly called on local churches, District Councils, Synods and the Life and Witness Committee (DSW) to engage in particular activities to encourage evangelism. A year later the *Growing Up* report challenged the Life and Witness Committee to sharpen its focus to help the people to become more effective in its witness of proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom. (7.2)

1.3 The Life and Witness Committee believes that *Growing Up* challenges us to confront our church's perceived reluctance to engage in evangelism. Evangelism Enablers have begun the work of bringing evangelism within our acceptable vocabulary and have helped many to see that evangelism is not an activity best left to those on the fringe of the church in the hope that if we ignore them, they will go away. Local churches, District Councils and Synods all need help if they are to come to the place where they regard evangelism as a core activity of the Church. As ever, the Holy Spirit has anticipated our need. We believe he has always been calling and equipping men and women as evangelists. It is to our shame that we have not always known what to do with those who have been so called.

1.4 This report is offered in the hope that it will encourage us to grow up to the ministry of evangelists within the church and that it will lead us to the following actions:

- i. to recognise the evangelists in our midst,
- ii. to release them for this specific ministry,
- iii. to support them as they speak the truth of the Gospel in missionary situations and as they encourage us to become more credible witnesses where we are.

2 The wider picture

2.1 The Decade of Evangelism put the evangelistic task firmly on church agendas. If the need in earlier years was to call people back to faith, the need today is for forms of primary evangelism which start much further back and assume nothing. We have entered a new missionary era which makes the importance of discovering, developing and deploying those within the church who have evangelistic gifts a vital and urgent need.

2.2 In 1995 a working party, commissioned jointly by the Churches Together in England Group for Evangelisation and the Evangelical Alliance, published a report entitled *Evangelists and the Local Church*. At the same time the Church of England was engaged in developing a proposal for a College or Fellowship of Evangelists to give recognition and support to those working as evangelists at national level within that denomination. Other churches, including the United Reformed Church, have been involved in joint conversations about how these developments might be applied within the different Free Church contexts. This paper draws heavily on Conference 2000 report of the Methodist Church and we are grateful for their permission to use it in such an extensive form. What follows is an attempt to explore what all this might be saying to us for the life of the United Reformed Church.

3 THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 All mission is God's mission. The Methodist Conference report of 1985 entitled *Sharing in God's Mission* put it thus: 'There is only one mission to the world that matters and that is God's continuous activity of caring for and reaching out to all that he has made. The church engages in true mission when it shares in God's one mission to the world. God's love is expressed not just for the church but for the world, and our mission is not so much to draw people into the church as to initiate them into the Kingdom of God.' The report went on to say: 'By mission we mean any way in which Christians are sent to share in experiencing and expressing that love. It involves *evangelism* since God has declared his desire for all mankind to know

and love him. It includes *social caring* for God's mercy reaches out especially for the poor and needy. It incorporates the political *struggle for justice* in our society because God intends men and women to live at peace together. These three do not exhaust the missionary task, neither are they alternatives in our mission, for they belong inextricably together. They are imperatives, not options'

3.2 This understanding has been well articulated in 'The Five Marks of Mission'

1. To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and renew the life of the earth

And much work is rightly being done to encourage the whole church in understanding and applying these principles in the whole of life.

3.3 There is a breadth and flexibility about approaches to mission in the New Testament. Evangelism is not itself a biblical word at all. However, evangelists are referred to three times (Acts 21:8, Ephesians 4:11 and 2 Timothy 4:5); the verb *euaggelizein* (to evangelise) occurs frequently, especially in Luke-Acts and Ephesians; and the cognate noun *euaggelion* (gospel) is so fundamental that it crops up all over the pages of the New Testament. It is no more plausible to expect in the New Testament writings a clear role for evangelists than it is to look for definitive models for deacons or presbyters. What is beyond question, however, is that in a variety of pioneering and innovative ways the early Christian leaders (whether termed evangelists or not) and the whole Christian community (by their lifestyle and everyday witness) articulated God's good news in Jesus Christ with such conviction and commitment that many were brought to faith.

3.4 It is clear that evangelists (alongside apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and those with a variety of other gifts) were equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit for the church's mission and ministry and that their gifts were legitimately exercised both inside and outside the church. The contexts in which these gifts are described in the New Testament (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:27-30; and Ephesians 4:11-13) make it clear that they were intended to function as part of a team, the Body of Christ, and not in isolation. Furthermore, whilst the Holy Spirit clearly gave some gifts as evangelists, the New Testament leaves us in no doubt that all Christians are called to bear

witness to Christ and to share their faith with others. To argue for the recognition and use of evangelists in the contemporary church therefore in no way diminishes the calling of the whole church to be a witnessing community. On the contrary, evangelists focus, encourage and enable the vocation of all Christians to witness to God's grace and power in the gospel.

4 THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH CONTEXT

4.1 The issue of evangelism and evangelists has been debated within the United Reformed Church since its birth. Unlike some of our ecumenical partners, the United Reformed Church has never had recognised 'evangelists'.

4.2 And yet we can look to a rich heritage of missionaries and to the former Churches of Christ whose paid ministers, in earlier years, were essentially evangelists with the pastoral duties being the responsibility of the lay leaders. Something of this emphasis was lost with the wholesale ordination of these lay leaders to the Non-Stipendiary ministry of the United Reformed Church.

4.3 However the long awaited 'Patterns of Ministry' report presented to General Assembly in 1995 contained much of relevance to this discussion, including a reminder to the church that: 'It is the responsibility of district councils, in consultation with provincial synods to explore the development of other forms of ministry. Possible examples might be **evangelists** or district ministers'.

In Resolution 47 Assembly 'encouraged district councils in consultation with synods and local churches to explore the deployment of all ministry....and the development of a variety of styles of ministry in ways which will stimulate the life of the church, be ecumenically responsible and enable more effective missionary engagement'. This statement at 4.8.2 and Resolution 47a came as a clear call to the church to consider the evangelist as a form of ministry not previously recognised within the structures of the United Reformed Church.

4.4 In 1998 the General Assembly passed resolution 30 which, amongst other things, encouraged 'local churches to engage actively in evangelism and evangelisation using those with appropriate gifts'. The resolution also encouraged 'the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee (now the Life and Witness Committee) to explore ecumenically the possibility of establishing a College of Evangelists'. This exploration is continuing slowly, but it is clear that we need to recognise and identify such people before engaging

fully with other denominations on this issue. The committee did not, at that stage, recommend the recognition of the ministry of the evangelist. The present committee, however, feel strongly that the time is right for such recognition.

4.5 Then in 1999 the *Growing Up* report was prepared and presented to the General Assembly. Whilst it would be wrong to claim this to be a mission strategy for the United Reformed Church, it was certainly an analysis of our situation and a series of stimuli which, it was hoped, would enable the United Reformed Church to grow. Set in the context of the Five Marks of Mission the report, as well as proposing new initiatives, argued that every person within each congregation should be a 'credible witness'. Proclaiming the good news and bringing others to faith has therefore become the major emphasis for the work of the renamed Life and Witness Committee since the report was passed.

4.6 In recent years the church has begun to appoint people to 'mission enabling' type roles. The Southern Synod made an early appointment and other synods and districts have made more recent appointments. These enabling roles are an important step in pursuing the goals of the *Growing Up* report. An emphasis on mission and witness at significant times such as vacancy visits, oversight visits and vision workshops will be an important feature of any future growth of the United Reformed Church.

4.7 As well as needing people whose gift is to train congregations to fulfil their mission, the Life and Witness Committee suggest the church also needs examples of people working as evangelists. We need to recognise and encourage people within the church who have the gift of an evangelist, and to develop patterns of ministry that will enable them to fulfil their calling. This paper is intended to stimulate discussion as to how that might be achieved.

4.8 The United Reformed Church recognises a variety of gifts and provides for appropriate training and recognition. This report does not seek to raise the ministry of evangelist above other callings but argues that the ministry of evangelist is a valid calling within the church and as such should be recognised and resourced.

4.9 The resourcing of Lay Preachers and Youth and Children's workers has played a very important part in the life of the United Reformed Church in recent years and the Training for Learning and Serving material is only the latest in a succession of training courses to equip preachers for their task. For many years training has also been provided for workers among children (notably through *Kaleidoscope*) and theirs has been

recognised as a distinctive and important ministry. More recent years have seen the development of the *Spectrum* training course and official recognition for youth workers. All this is a welcome realisation of the fact that God gives different gifts to different people and that it is the church's responsibility to discern, develop and deploy those gifts. The recognition and training of evangelists in the life of the church is simply a logical extension of this process whose time has surely come. It has been well said that what a church truly values can be deduced from what sort of people it trains.

4.10 The calling of evangelist is an honourable one in its own right and the church needs to make room for those so called whether as lay workers (paid or unpaid), Elders or Ministers. Nor is the concept of the evangelist to be limited to working among younger people. Evangelists are needed to work among those of every age group.

4.11 Further thought needs to be given to those ordained ministers with evangelistic gifts and how they can be released to more specifically evangelistic forms of ministry without overloading them with the tasks attached to pastoral charge. Even though the deployment process means that stipendiary ministers are a 'precious commodity' the national church needs to have situations where its paid staff are working as evangelists. This could be done as some Synods have done, by including in its ministerial figures mission projects which need to be staffed by an evangelist. In addition the United Reformed Church nationally seeks to appoint 'Special Category Ministers'. It would be entirely appropriate to set aside a number of these projects as requiring an evangelist. These Special Category Ministers could take their place alongside equally necessary hospital chaplains, industrial chaplains etc.

4.12 All of this needs to be set in its ecumenical context. The Methodist Church has begun the process of recognising evangelists. The important report on Diocesan Evangelists prepared by the Board of Mission of the Church of England was unanimously approved by the House of Bishops in June 1999 and published under the title *Good News People: Recognizing Diocesan Evangelists* (Church House Publishing 1999). The Church of England has now formally established its College of Evangelists (fellowship or network rather than an institution) with the first 25 evangelists commissioned by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in October 1999. Representatives of the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches have kept in close touch with the Anglican Board of Mission over these developments which have also been the subject of discussion on more than one occasion by the Churches Together in England Group for Evangelisation. Whilst the major denominations

each have their own structures and distinctive emphases, the possibility of some form of ecumenical version of the College of Evangelists at some stage in the future could usefully be borne in mind. At the very least we need to learn from each other's experience of recognising and using evangelists in the life of our respective denominations. Nor should lessons from the World Church be overlooked: A look at the place of evangelists in our partner churches of CWM, and black majority churches in the UK, will play a part in this process and we might learn from their experience.

5 QUESTIONS TO BE EXPLORED

5.1 Mention of the word 'evangelist' unfortunately opens the flood-gates for all sorts of stereotypes, misconceptions and caricatures, some of which, indeed, have resulted from over-zealous and inappropriate approaches to evangelism by the evangelists themselves. In particular, during much of the 20th century the word was perhaps predominantly associated with big campaigns, mass evangelism and well-known names which resulted in local evangelists, especially those gifted in reaching people on a more one-to-one basis, being overlooked or marginalised. A further problem has been that evangelists, finding little opportunity for employment within the denominational structures, have often gone to para church agencies or become freelance entrepreneurs. Whilst this has continued to affirm the necessity for evangelism, we have not always known what to do with evangelists, or at least how to use them formally within our structures. Yet those called and gifted in this way represent different theological persuasions (we must resist the idea that one has to be an evangelical to be an evangelist) and a wide variety of approaches: some are preachers, others are more at home in visitation, pastoral evangelism, leading groups, personal faith sharing or working alongside young or older people. Some evangelists travel widely whereas others function within a church or group of churches and are relatively unknown beyond it.

5.2 The place of evangelists in the United Reformed Church undoubtedly raises many questions that need to be faced. We identify the following specific issues:

a. Calling

5.3 It is clear from the New Testament that some are called and gifted as evangelists. Some have argued that their role was purely temporary and limited to the formative years of the church. Yet the need for evangelists in the church remains and the fact that people are still being gifted in that way in the contemporary church cannot be denied.

5.4 We need to recognise the importance of giftedness: being an evangelist is not simply the exercise of a personal interest or enthusiasm, but a response to the calling and equipping of the Holy Spirit.

5.5 We need also to devise ways of testing those called as evangelists, perhaps in ways parallel to the testing of those called to other forms of ministry. Perhaps a distinction needs to be drawn between those who are to be formally employed within the church and those who will serve in a purely voluntary capacity. Yet for both the same criteria will need to be applied. These might include:

- i. Active membership of the local church and involvement in its life, worship and witness.
- ii. A genuine personal experience of Jesus Christ and a disciplined spiritual life.
- iii. A self-evident commitment to the work of evangelism and some understanding of the breadth of approaches and methods which might be adopted.
- iv. A mature understanding of the gospel and the way in which it relates to and interacts with individuals and contemporary society.
- v. The ability to relate naturally and easily to other people both within and beyond the church.
- vi. Proven gifts as a communicator of the gospel and the ability to express its message in a variety of imaginative ways, especially to those unused to Christian insights and vocabulary.
- vii. Evidence of some fruitfulness in terms of effectiveness and the response of others to previous evangelistic work.

5.6 The United Reformed Church recognises the right of every local congregation to have access to ordained ministry. Perhaps it is equally important for every local church to have access to an evangelist. If the decline of the church is to be reversed and the gospel is to be spread effectively this possibility certainly needs to be explored further. Yet it should not simply be the prerogative of the evangelist to announce his or her availability to the church. There is much to be said (and clear biblical precedent - see Acts 13:1-3) for the local church taking the initiative, identifying and calling out those within its membership who have evangelistic gifts.

b. Training

5.7 Just as the United Reformed Church has provided training for other forms of service so, too, adequate provision needs to be made for those called as evangelists. There is already a great deal of training on offer through various colleges and

courses. Most of it, however, is on mission understood very broadly, rather than specifically on evangelism, and is of a biblical, theological and historical nature without offering the more practical training which is also required by those serving as evangelists. In addition to any courses on evangelism being offered by our colleges, there are those on offer at ecumenical foundations.

The developing relationship between the United Reformed Church (through the Life and Witness Committee) and the national and international ministry of Methodist evangelist Rob Frost might prove useful in providing hands-on experience and training.

5.8 Since evangelists are likely to be working in different ways and at many different levels within the United Reformed Church it is probably unnecessary to insist on any one form of training although there would be great value in producing a basic training course parallel to *Kaleidoscope* and *Spectrum* or integrate it within TLS. For now, some way needs to be devised of assessing individual needs and pointing people in the direction of existing training which is appropriate to them and the work they are to do. Such training would need to include the theology and practice of evangelism, contemporary apologetics, cultural awareness (including the inter-faith perspective) and communication skills.

5.9 Training needs to be both initial and continuing. An ongoing opportunity for United Reformed Church evangelists to meet nationally can play an important part here by providing fellowship and support networks, information and training; but training should also be available more locally as with other ministries.

c. Recognition

5.10 It would be appropriate for an evangelist to be formally recognised at the level of church life (local church/District/Synod) in which he/she was to work, but there would need to be some standard form of recognition and authorization which applied to all. This might be helped by devising and authorizing a commissioning service parallel to those now available for other workers, and perhaps also a new Service of Commissioning for special periods of evangelistic outreach by the church. This would have the effect of raising awareness of the appointment and work of evangelists and affording them recognition within both the structural and liturgical life of the church.

d. Accountability

5.11 With official recognition comes the need for ensuring some form of accountability for evangelists. Since this report envisages evangelists as working within the structures of the church at local, District or Synod level rather than independently, this makes the matter of oversight rather more straightforward. It is important from the evangelist's point of view to have adequate structures for support, guidance and accountability; and it is important from the church's point of view to have a clear set of procedures for oversight and, if necessary, discipline.

5.12 Evangelists who are ordained Ministers or Elders would have the normal forms of accountability through their District Council and nationally and any other oversight and support structure which was devised in connection with their work. Those employed by the church as lay evangelists should have contracts in line with other workers.

e. Role

5.13 In arguing for the recognition of evangelists in the United Reformed Church it is important to reiterate and underline two points made earlier:

- The task of evangelism is only part of the overall mission of the church (see 1.1) and those engaged in it must see their role in that wider context.
- Evangelism is the task of the whole church (see 1.4). Every local church is called to be a missionary congregation and every Christian is called upon to be a witness to Jesus Christ. Evangelism must not simply be left to the evangelists.

5.14 The evangelist, however, is one who is especially gifted in sharing the Christian gospel with others so as to win a response of faith and has been released and authorized to exercise those gifts. In so doing he or she might act both as an evangelist and as an evangelism enabler - encouraging, training and resourcing others to engage in the churches' evangelistic task. This raises the question of whether the Evangelism or Mission Enabler comes within the purview of this report, and whether it is essential for such an Enabler also to be an Evangelist. We believe both roles to be important and complementary, and would want both to be embraced in the provisions outlined in the preceding pages.

5.15 The precise work of an evangelist will vary with the nature and requirements of the appointment. It would not be particularly helpful at this stage to list possible projects although hands-on work on a one-to-one level or with specific evangelistic projects is likely to be at the heart of the evangelist's activity.

Appendix 5

Students Sent by Synods

NORTHERN

Stipendiary

Chris Hucker (Mansfield), Jane Rowell (Northern),
David Walton (NEOC)

Non-Stipendiary

Margaret Johnson (NEOC), Yvonne Tracey (NEOC)

CRCW

Linda Granville (Northern), Helen Ogilvie (Northern),
Lesley Whiting (Northern)

NORTH-WESTERN

Stipendiary

John Bradbury (Westminster), Ruth Dillon (Northern),
Carole Gotham (Northern),
John Jarman (Westminster), Lorraine Mycroft
(Northern transfer to Stipendiary Ministry),
Peter Nunn (Northern), Michael Thomason (Northern),
Marion Tugwood (Northern), Mike Walsh (Northern),

Non-stipendiary

Ann Hufton (Northern), Lena Talbot (Northern)

MERSEY

Stipendiary

Kath Gartside (Northern), Chris Ray (Northern),

YORKSHIRE

Stipendiary

Peter Blackband (Northern); Helga Cornell
(Northern), Catherine Morrison (Northern),
Heather Pollard (Northern), Robert Sheard (Northern),

Non-stipendiary

Geoff Ellis (Northern)

CRCW

Gwen Smithies (Northern)

EAST MIDLANDS

Stipendiary

Ed Butlin (Queens), Trish Davis (Mansfield),
Lynn Fowkes (Westminster), Michael Hopkins
(Mansfield), Suzanne McDonald (Westminster),
Stuart Turner (Northern),
Heather Whyte (Westminster)

Non-stipendiary

Jane Campbell (Northern), Neil Eldridge (Northern),
Ed Rawlins (Northern); Mark Woodhouse (Northern)

WEST MIDLANDS

Stipendiary

Kay Cattell (Westminster), Jacqueline Embrey
(Queens), Vivien Randles (Northern)
Susan Walker (WMMTC)

Non-Stipendiary

Bob Ash (Queens), Peter Christie (WMMTC),
Franziska Herring (WMMTC), Colin Ofor (WMMTC)

CRCW

Maureen Thompson (Northern),

EASTERN

Stipendiary

Andrew Berry (Westminster), Connie Bonner
(Westminster), Dilys Brace (Northern), Yolande Burns
(Westminster), Susan Challis (Westminster),
Peter Clark (Westminster), David Coaker (Mansfield),
Richard Eastman (Westminster), Timothy Jackson
(Westminster), Heather Kent (Westminster),
Les Mather (Westminster), Susan McKenzie
(Westminster), Deborah McVey (Westminster),
Jon Morgan (Westminster), Paula West
(Westminster), Jenny Yule (Westminster)

Non-stipendiary

Lorna Bantock (EAMTC), Carole Pearl (EAMTC),
Trevor Williams (EAMTC), Geoffrey Wright (EAMTC),

SOUTH WESTERN

Stipendiary

Sian Collins (Westminster), Colin Phipps (Mansfield),
Angela Steele (STETS), Yvonne Stone (Synod),
Mary Thomas (Mansfield)

Non-stipendiary

Hazel Allen (Synod), Peter Scott (SWMTC)

CRCW

John Saunders (Northern)

WESSEX**Stipendiary**

Jan Adamson (Northern), Nick Adlem (Mansfield), Sarah Hall (Mansfield), Keith Morrison (Northern), Stuart Nixon (Northern), David Poulton (Northern), Jill Thornton (Northern), Christopher Tolley (Northern), Barry Welch (Westminster), Robert Weston (Northern)

Non-stipendiary

Anne Bray (STETS), Gordon Connell (STETS), Maria Hooper (STETS), Tim Meachin (STETS), Lynda Spokes (WMMTC), Alison Toplas (STETS)

THAMES NORTH**Stipendiary**

Iona Christie (Northern), Sheena Dickson (Mansfield), Ann Jack (Northern), Janet Llewellyn (Westminster), Janet Sutton (Westminster)

Non-stipendiary

Bruce Allinson (Westminster), Jayne Bazeley (Westminster), Meryl Court (Northern), Claire Davison (Westminster), Jenny Simmons (EAMTC), Erna Stevenson (Mansfield), Martin Wheadon (Northern), Mark Woodhouse (Northern), Ann Woodhurst (SEITE)

SOUTHERN**Stipendiary**

Elaine Brown (Westminster), Gordon Brown (Westminster) Andrew Coyne (Westminster), Martin Knight (Northern), Nicholas Mark (Northern), Romilly Micklem (Westminster), Sarah Moore (Westminster), Alan Seymour (Mansfield), Nigel Warner (Westminster), Kathy White (Westminster),

Non-stipendiary

Christine Jefferies (SEITE & Westminster), Leena Knowles (Northern), Sue Powell (SEITE)

WALES**Stipendiary**

Peter Gaskell (Queens), Kate Gray (Northern), Brian Norris (Northern)

SCOTLAND**Non-stipendiary**

Paul Jupp (Scottish Congregational / United Reformed Church), Linda Rice (SC/UR C), Gordon Smith (SC/UR C), Mary Taylor (SC/UR C)

Appendix 6

Statistics of Students

As at 29th February 2000

	Students in Training				Anticipated entry into URC Service			
	Feb 1998	Feb 1999	Feb 2000	Feb 2001	2001	2002	2003	2004
STIPENDIARY								
Full Time Courses								
Mansfield	18	18	10	10	3	4	1	3
Northern	26	24	28	29	7	10	8	5
Queen's	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	-
Westminster	27	28	32	31	7	8	7	9
Part Time Courses								
Synod			1	2	2			
NEOC				1		1		
Sub total	73	72	74	76	20	25	18	17
CRCW								
Northern	3	5	7	6	2	2		
NON-STIPENDIARY								
Part Time Courses								
EAMTC	3	1	6	5	-	1	3	
EMMTC	4	-	-	-	-	-		
MCI/Northern	17	19	14	10	4	2		4
NEOC	-	1	1	2	-	1		
SAOMC	6	6	2	0	0	-		
SEITE	-	-	1	3	-	-	1	2
STETS	3	5	4	6	0	3	0	3
SWMTC	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	1
WMMTC	-	3	4	5	-	3		1
SURCC	-	-	4	4	4	-	-	-
Full Time Courses								
Mansfield			2	1	1			
Queens			1	1	1			
Westminster				3	0	3		
Sub total	34	36	39	41	10	13	5	11
Total	110	113	120	123	32	40	23	28

EAMTC	East Anglian Ministerial Training Course
EMMTC	East Midlands Ministry Training Course
MCI	Manchester Christian Institute
NEOC	North East Ecumenical Course
SAOMC	St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course
SEITE	South East Institute for Theological Education
STETS	Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme
SWMTC	South West Ministry Training Course
WMMTC	West Midlands Ministry Training Course
SURCCC	Scottish United Reformed Church and Congregational College
STML	St Michael's Llandaff

Appendix 7

Reports from Colleges

Mansfield College

1.1 For Mansfield the last year has been a time of endings and of new beginnings. In May 2000 we were grieved by the death of Catherine Middleton. Her life and witness were celebrated in a well-attended funeral service in the College Chapel. In the same month the Revd Dr Walter Houston was appointed as Chaplain and Director of the Ministerial Training Course for a term of seven years, the first permanent appointment to this office since the departure of Charles Brock in 1998. This appointment has been secured by the willingness of the United Reformed Church to pay half of the post's stipend. The College is very grateful for this support, which signals the Church's commitment in the medium term to its use of Mansfield for initial ministerial training.

1.2 Walter Houston took up his duties in September 2000 at the beginning of the new academic year. Along with him, the Revd Dale Rominger has continued during this year on a half-time basis as Assistant Director, with particular responsibility for internships and placements and training in worship and preaching and spirituality. The Director confesses that without his experience and assistance he would have found it exceedingly hard to handle the numerous challenges of his new post, and takes this opportunity to express his gratitude. Dale has been again ably assisted in worship and spirituality training by the Revd Betsy Gray-King.

1.3 The new partnership between Mansfield and Regent's Park College, Oxford, also came into operation at the beginning of the 2000-2001 academic year. Under this arrangement, Mansfield and Regent's Park College share resources in ministerial training. As Regent's Park has greater resources in theology, they are providing the majority of the teaching. In return, Mansfield, in the person of its Director, provides teaching in Old Testament studies for undergraduates as well as Baptist ministerial students at Regent's Park. The partnership enables Mansfield students to benefit not only from a range of expertise in theological disciplines, but from a well-developed programme of pastoral studies calling on speakers from inside and outside Oxford.

This partnership, as we go to press, has passed the test of its first term. It has generally been seen to be valuable to both sides and working satisfactorily, though some adjustments will be needed.

1.4 We continue to be able to provide some teaching at Mansfield out of our own resources. Besides Walter Houston's Old Testament teaching and the work done by Dale Rominger and Betsy Gray-King, New Testament teaching is given by Ms Lynda Patterson, appointed George Caird Lecturer in New Testament Studies for two years, while the Rev. Dr John Muddiman acts as Chair of the Board of the Theology Faculty; and Ms Peggy Morgan continues to teach world religions. The College remains an active member of the Oxford Partnership for Theological Education and Training, which groups all the theological colleges in Oxford, and works with them on arrangements for the new form of the Bachelor of Theology degree which is taken by most of our students.

1.5 As regards the governance of the course, the Governing Body of the College is working on a revision of the College Statute governing ministerial education, to clarify its responsibility for this part of the College's work. The United Reformed Church and the Congregational Federation will be kept informed during this process, and account will be taken of their views. The new Statute must eventually be approved by the Privy Council, which is a fairly lengthy process.

1.6 Mansfield has had an intake this year of five new ministerial students – more than in most recent years – three from the United Reformed Church and two from the Congregational Federation. This brings our total numbers to thirteen, including as usual an exchange student from Bern, with three on internship and four (one part-time) in the final year of the BTh. The student body lacks a second-year group, but now that it has been given some assurance about the future, its morale has been restored. Excellent results were achieved by the group that completed their academic course in November.

1.7 Mansfield is also looking to be of service to the Church in the field of continuing ministerial education. We are involved in the development by the University and the OPTET colleges of the Master of Theology degree in Applied Theology, and would be happy to receive applications from ministers with good theology degrees for the part-time course. This is included in the partnership with Regent's Park. Staff are available and willing to speak to ministers' summer schools and conferences out of term time.

1.8 The Ministerial Training Course at Mansfield College has now put the past behind it, and looks forward under the guidance of God to an encouraging future in partnership with the College as a whole, with Regent's Park College, with OPTET and the University, with the United Reformed Church, and with the Congregational Federation.

Northern College

2.1 This has already been an exciting session of new opportunities and developments. Our enthusiastic student body has the following profile: 6 preparing for Church Related Community Work (CRCW) ministry, 11 preparing for non-stipendiary ministry (NSM) and 31 preparing for stipendiary ministry (SM). While our student numbers are healthy at the moment, with large leaving years looming, and recent Assembly decisions starting to bite, the usual concerns about viable student numbers and year groups are once again rising to the surface.

2.2 Personnel changes during the year have meant a re-assessment within both the College and the Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester (PTEM) of our staffing needs. We said farewell to the Revd Dr Walter Houston who moved from a half-time post to Mansfield College as its Chaplain Fellow in Theology and Director of Ministerial Training. We hope to replace him by appointing a full-time Tutor in Biblical Studies who will teach the Hebrew bible and thus up-grade our focus upon the Old Testament within PTEM. However, after two appointment processes, a suitably qualified person has yet to be found. Dr Peter Oakes, our half-time Tutor in Biblical Studies will leave at the end of current session after making a valuable contribution. Meanwhile, following the NW Synod's decision to accept Lis Mullen as an SM candidate, we have joined our Partners in PTEM to search for a new College Chaplain. Lis' important contribution, mostly unseen and behind the scenes, has been invaluable. We wish Walter, Peter and Lis every blessing in their new areas of Christian service.

2.3 Alison Micklem, who has had oversight of our CRCW students recently indicated her wish to concentrate on her CRCW work in Runcorn. She has helped us see the need for the CRCW programme to be given a higher staff profile. We have also been made aware of our need to advocate and develop opportunities for Continuing Ministerial

Education (CME) at Luther King House. It is a clear sign of our developing work that the Governors have decided to appoint a new tutor to take a major role in placement learning, CME and the CRCW programme from September 2001.

2.4 A charitable Trust has been set up to run Luther King House for the benefit of PTEM. It is good to see various United Reformed Church committees and groups increasingly making use of our improved facilities. A second-phase development of the House is now being planned. This will involve the creation of a new library, teaching rooms and social space. An Appeal Committee under the convenorship of the Revd Dr Leslie Green has been set up to raise the extensive funds needed for this project.

2.5 The Revd Dr John Sutcliffe retired as President of PTEM in August after providing us with enthusiastic leadership, commitment and vision. He is succeeded by Roger Bogg, an Anglican layman whose managerial and administrative skills are already being greatly valued. Meanwhile, the educational activity of PTEM is developing in many ways, but particularly in the area of lay education.

2.6 The University of Manchester has agreed with PTEM a new five-year period of validation of our undergraduate and post-graduate courses. This followed a highly favourable Institutional Review in the autumn. Meanwhile, our overall educational programme is being revised and submitted for Ecumenical Validation.

2.7 Our overseas student for this session is Sandra Spada from the Waldensian Faculty in Rome. Sandra is a Baptist who hails from Scicily.

2.8 Jan Berry has been on sabbatical for the second semester. She has been involved in a study programme which has taken her to Zambia and the USA.

2.9 We have been pleased to welcome the Revd Gwen Mattock as our temporary chaplain, while the Revd Susan Armitage has been offering valued tutorial help.

2.10 Two publications are worthy of mention. *Encircling Prayer* is a well received worship book prepared by students and staff at Luther King House. United Reformed Church contributions to the book's prayers, liturgies and hymns are well to the fore. Later this year a further book will be published made up of some of the very exciting work which has been produced by the participants on the Faith in Living Course.

2.11 At the end of the current session the form of government at Northern College comes under a new Charity Commission scheme. This will reduce the numbers of Governors and hopefully lead to a more hands-on and appropriate way of working. Among the other changes involved will be the ending of the role 'Subscribers in the College's life. We hope that the positive role played by Subscribers in the past

will be taken up and advanced by 'Friends of Northern College, a new body which is coming into being. We are of course very grateful for the dedicated work of Governors past and present, and particularly for the outstanding service of our recent College Officers, Alan Hart (Secretary) and John Jenkinson (Treasurer), who will be replaced by John Mitchell and Margaret Atkinson, respectively.

2.12 Finally, this report ends on a less than routine note. Many in the United Reformed Church will be concerned that recent appointment processes at Westminster and Northern Colleges have found it impossible to locate qualified and acceptable United Reformed Church candidates for posts in biblical studies. And, yet, we belong to the tradition of *sola scriptura*! Why is it that, during the life-time of the United Reformed Church we have not been producing biblical scholars (or, indeed, theological teachers generally) who are ready and available to serve in church-related posts? And, secondly, what should we now be doing to ensure that 'the teaching office' of the church is well maintained?

Queen's College

3.1 The Queen's College and the West Midlands Ministerial Training Course, along with our Research Centre, are now legally entitled The Queen's Foundation. A new Charitable Scheme, adopted with royal assent, came into force in 1999. This change symbolises the growing integration of our resources for theological education, training and research. We emphatically believe that training for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament (and for other ordained and public ministries in the churches) should take place in the context of the learning of the whole community of faith: our new structure enables this to happen. The Revd Elizabeth Welch (Moderator of the West Midlands Synod) and Mr Howard Bridge (nominee of the General Assembly) are both members of the new Governing Body of the Foundation. We warmly congratulate Elizabeth Welch on her appointment as Moderator of the General Assembly for 2001-2002.

3.2 An ecumenical Inspection of the College and Course is taking place during the Spring Term 2001. The preparation and adoption of a new Curriculum takes place in conjunction with this Inspection. Together these represent our five-yearly 'health check'.

3.3 Students

There are currently 143 students in the Foundation, as compared with 125 last academic year. There are 70 students in the College, 48 in the Course and 25 in the Research Centre. Forty-five students are

full-time, the remaining part-time students include some undertaking half-time study and others taking no more than one or two modules from one of our courses. Fifteen students are members of the United Reformed Church.

3.4 Staff

The Revd Dr Kenneth Wilson (Methodist) has moved from being Director of Research to become Senior Research Fellow and Consultant, having given a dynamic and successful start to the Research Centre. The Revd Dr Adam Hood (Church of Scotland) has consequently taken an additional responsibility as Dean of Research. The Revd Pat Nimmo (United Reformed Church) has accepted the call to a scoped, half-time, pastorate at Weoley Castle Community Church with the result that she will continue as a half-time staff member from January 2001. Her aim is to maintain most of her teaching and pastoral responsibilities here. The Revd Dr Neil Messer (United Reformed Church) continues as senior United Reformed Church Tutor for the Foundation.

3.5 Academic

The Academic Board of the Foundation has confirmed the results of all students completing their course in the last academic year. These results were generally satisfactory and in several cases outstanding. Simon Garwood achieved the first Distinction in our MA in Applied Theological Studies. Jacky Embrey (United Reformed Church) and Christine Polhill obtained first class BA degrees, and

Alistair Barrett and Jane Freeman obtained Distinctions in the BD. A huge effort has gone into producing a new Curriculum document. All academic staff deserve appreciation for this, but none so much as the Revd Dr David Bryan, Dean of Studies, who took the lion's share of the work.

3.6 Continuing Ministerial Education

One area of growth in the Foundation's work has been Continuing Ministerial Education. In addition to opportunities for part-time degree level and postgraduate study and research (through our BA, MA and ThD programmes and the MPhil and PhD research degrees), Dr Adam Hood has been active in developing opportunities for sabbaticals and shorter periods of study leave in the Foundation. A number of United Reformed Church ministers have already benefited from these opportunities, working in areas ranging from St Mark's Gospel to Local Ecumenism.

3.7 Dr Gordon Wakefield

The death of the Revd Dr Gordon Wakefield, on 11 September, occasioned feelings both of sadness and gratitude here at Queen's, as in so many other parts of the Church catholic. Many have said that his life's work culminated in his nine years (1979 – 1988) as the first Methodist Principal of the ecumenical College, and his widow, Beryl, has confirmed that he looked on this time as a golden era in his ministry. It is planned to honour his memory in two ways: by a special Thanksgiving Lecture on Spirituality, and by procuring a new lectern for the Chapel.

3.8 Buildings and facilities

The improvements in the Chapel, the Squash Court, gym equipment and IT resources for students and administrative staff have been greatly appreciated. The service provided by the Library continues to be a source of encouragement, support and pride to the whole institution. Audio-visual facilities have been improved by the acquisition of video-editing equipment and facilities for PC-based presentations.

3.9 Worship and Spirituality

Our Tuesday evening Foundation Services are led by a mixture of guests and 'home' staff. Guests this year include The Revd Bill Mahood (visiting as Moderator of the General Assembly, The Revd Keith Reed (Assistant Secretary of the Methodist Conference) and the Revd Murdoch MacKenzie (Ecumenical Moderator of Milton Keynes). The Ven Judith Rose was prevented from coming by the vagaries of rail transport. On Monday afternoons we have a 'Discipleship Session' for the whole college once a fortnight. Outside contributors to this range from Fr Gerard Hughes SJ to the evangelist Rob Frost.

3.10 Relations with the local and national Church

We are delighted to be able to host conferences and gatherings for TLS groups, POET weekends and national gatherings of Synod Training Officers. The facilities of the Foundation are in constant use, during so-called 'vacations' as well as term-times. Our strong links with the West Midlands Synod are enhanced by the use of our premises for Synod training events and other meetings. As a result, our Chapel and Dining Room become places where we engage with the churches we serve on a daily, and person-to-person, basis.

3.11 Assembly Gathering

There will be an opportunity for former students and all friends of the Queen's Foundation to meet informally during Assembly: details are given in the Assembly Programme.

The Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College

4.1 The College continues in a process of adaptation in the light of the unification of the Congregational Union of Scotland and the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom. Not only are there new administrative arrangements to be complied with, there are major programme developments to meet the challenges of different ministry provision within the United Reformed Church.

4.2 Students

We currently have four students, all of whom have, for some time, been pastors and are undertaking a transition course in accordance with arrangements put in place by the then Scottish Congregational Church. They undertake their studies and practical placement alongside full-time employment and church responsibilities. Two have pastoral responsibility for local congregations and one is a university chaplain.

4.3 Staffing

The Revd Principal John W Dyce is the only full-time member of staff, but he has three part-time tutor colleagues: the Revd George Sykes, John Smith and Lindsey Sanderson (George and John being ministers in Newburgh Edinburgh and and Morningside United respectively and Lindsey the synod Mission Enabler).

4.3.1 The College welcomes the new opportunity to meet with colleagues in the United Reformed Church College Staff conference and to develop a greater participation in the life of that network.

4.3.2 The Principal continues to undertake research on issues of national identity and culture in adult lay theological education in Scotland with reference to the teachings of NFS Grundtvig for the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Education at Glasgow University.

4.4 Research students

An innovation this year has been the introduction within the College of a thrice-yearly meeting for Scottish resident United Reformed Church-related postgraduate students at other institutions to network and share thinking. There are currently nine members. Although most are following research in theology or Biblical studies, there are also participants from the fields of literature and education.

4.5 Lay preachers

The College collaborates with the synod in the training and support of lay preachers in their ministry. It is good to report that, with the appointment of two synod lay preaching commissioners, two-yearly support consultations have been introduced on a structured and purposeful footing. The autumn 2000 consultation was fortunate to have as a key participant the Moderator of the General Assembly the Revd Bill Mahood and in October 2001 the national lay preaching commissioner, Carol Dixon, will be with the group.

4.5.1 Two synod students are currently on Scottish Churches' Open College foundation course with a view to recognition as lay preachers. The ending of this provision will mean that they will have to transfer either into the United Reformed Church's continuing TLS programme or SCOC's new Living Faith programme.

4.6 Vocations

The College participated in a United Reformed Church Enquirers' conference in Glasgow in 2000 and a further conference in planned for 25-26 May this year. This will be open to enquirers interested in exploring any form of service within the church,

but there will be a particular focus on non-stipendiary ministry of Word and Sacrament and Church-related community work, both of which are new to the greater part of the Synod of Scotland. It is hoped also to encourage recruitment to the ranks of nationally accredited lay preachers.

4.7 Curriculum development

There are three main areas upon which it is hoped to make further progress in the coming year.

4.7.1 For stipendiary ministry candidates: further work will be undertaken on the development of complementary modules to supplement BD studies at the Scottish universities and on the management and assessment of practical placements.

4.7.2 For non-stipendiary ministry candidates: discussions are on-going with the Scottish Churches' Open College to explore the suitability of its new BA programme as a preparation for NSM, almost certainly complemented by work in and through this College.

4.7.3 For CRCW: the College is exploring what options there might be for suitable training in Scottish institutions as an element in CRCW preparation.

4.8 Library

For some years, the main College library has been held in common with those of the Church of Scotland Board of Parish Education, the Theological Institute of the Scottish Episcopal Church and Scottish Churches' Open College on a site in Edinburgh. The library partners are currently in conversation to determine how best the library might continue to develop as a learning resource rather than simply become a repository.

4.9 College annual service

The College is delighted that the Revd Dr Stephen Orchard, who is to be Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge and was joint convener with our Principal of the negotiating group between the CUS and the URCUK, has agreed to be the speaker at this year's service in Shawlands United Reformed Church in Glasgow. We are particularly glad to be using a venue which belongs to a church which was United Reformed Church, pre-unification.

4.10 College management committee

The College is grateful to its officers and committee members who give generously of their time to the life of the College. We are sorry to lose the Revd Elspeth Harley, who is leaving us and taking up a temporary appointment at Malua Theological College in Samoa - we send our good wishes to her (and her husband, Euan, who is hoping to undertake some duties in the medical field there).

Westminster College

5.1 Life in an ecumenical Federation.

Preparing for ministry in Cambridge means living and working ecumenically. Last year we promised to report further on the steps taken by the Federation and the College in response to the Inspection which took place in 1998. As we have considered the Inspector's recommendations we have realised anew that institutions evolve and change, and that the Federation is at an exciting and demanding time in its history. We are no longer Protestants of differing hues talking to each other, for we have Catholic and Orthodox Institutes in our midst. That is a deep joy, but it also demands that we listen carefully to each other and learn a new ecumenical language. We are no longer four residential institutions, for patterns of training have altered, and that means discovering new ways of being a community. That is why we have devoted a great deal of time this year to exploring new ways of administering our shared life. It has been a year of working parties and hard work. Hopefully that will result next year in differing ways of governing ourselves and in new educational possibilities.

5.2 Life in a changing Westminster

The staple of our life is still initial ministerial training. We have, however, been conscious of the challenge of the Inspectorate to explore ways of opening up our programmes to lay people, and of the renewed emphasis in the United Reformed Church on continuing ministerial education. Whilst there is still much to be done, we are quietly pleased that a number of people engaged in lay ministries have enrolled for our MA course in pastoral theology. Those who know Westminster well will know that we have long valued the presence of ministers on sabbatical terms with us. The generosity of the Cheshunt Foundation allows us to do that, and the Director, Dr Janet Tollington, is always glad to receive applications from ministers of the United Reformed Church. However, we have now extended that provision by making more rooms available for shorter periods of study. Thus far the uptake has been encouraging. The interplay of lay people, ordinands and serving ministers is exciting and encouraging for the future work of the church, and we hope that it will become a permanent and natural part of our life.

5.3 Yet more inspection...

We sometimes feel in the Federation that as soon as one set of inspectors leave, another group arrive. We are partners with two universities - the University of Cambridge for our undergraduate programme, and Anglia Polytechnic University for our MA courses in Pastoral Theology and Christian-Jewish relations. Both institutions are rightly publicly accountable for the quality of their work. Our MA programmes fell under the eagle eye of the Quality Assurance Agency Subject Review in January, and we are delighted to report that we were awarded 23/24, a remarkable score, and that we were lauded for providing a model of the integration of pastoral practice and theological reflection. We shall

be involved in the review of Cambridge University's programmes in the autumn.

5.4 Of celebrations, car parks and settlements.

The year ended with a memorable Commemoration of Benefactors. We were honoured to have the General Secretary, the Revd Tony Burnham, as our preacher and the Revd Professor John O'Neill as our lecturer. It was a particular joy to see so many of John's former pupils with us.

5.4.1 Westminster's car park is legendary. Pot holes have long rendered it more like a battle zone than a college vista. The Governing Body decided to bite the bullet over the summer, and we now have a properly landscaped, flat car park! The leavers of the year 2000 were hopefully the last who had to negotiate that particular obstacle course.

5.4.2 They were Jason Askew to Wooler, Beatrice Buabeng to Wimbledon District (nsm) Geoffrey Felton to Canterbury, Malcolm Fife to Hassocks, Louise Franklin to Chadwell Heath and Goodmayes. Klaus Gutwein to Ely, Cardiff, Debbie Hodge to Ware, Jason McCullagh to Christ Church Morecambe, Pauline Rate to Gloucester and Brockworth, David Salisbury to Swansea, Peter Stevenson to Coventry and Bruce Upperton to the Isle of Man. We are pleased to commend them to the church and offer them our prayers and good wishes.

5.5 Principals...to be or not to be

The College congratulates the General Assembly on its choice of a new General Secretary for the Church, but with very mixed feelings. David Cornick's all too brief time as Principal since 1996 has been a time of significant development for the College, coinciding with a new pattern of governance. In a period of uncertainty about the future, his confidence has been invaluable; in a time when people have been looking for change, his understanding of the roots of the United Reformed Church has provided a firm foundation. David's gifts of communication as a teacher and preacher, and his ability to lead refreshing worship have set high standards for the College's students. The College community will miss him and his family.

5.5.1 We look forward to welcoming the Revd Dr Stephen Orchard as David's successor. Stephen is the first former Cheshunt student to become Principal of Westminster. In addition to pastoral ministry, he has served the British Council of Churches and has had long experience as General Secretary of the Christian Education Movement: he holds an honorary professorship in religious education at Brunel University. Stephen also brings with him a deep understanding of the history of the United Reformed Church and was Joint Convener of the Committee which conducted the negotiations for union with the Scottish Congregational Church.



Information

**General Assembly
York 2001**

July 10th

**Annual Reports,
Resolutions
and Papers**



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

URC History Society

1.1 The Society's Study weekend was held in Northampton from 1-3 September, with the Annual Lecture being given by Dr David Wykes, Director of Dr Williams's Library: '“A most horrid and dismal plague” - Richard Davis and the evangelical development of dissent in the 1690s'. Thanks are due to the Revd Dr Peter Jupp, who organised papers with an East Midlands theme and secured a comfortable setting in which to hear them. At the Annual Meeting the decision to raise the subscription to £12 was taken.

1.2 The Library reopened for research visits. Topics have ranged from the Amoy mission field, through Dales Congregationalism and Carlisle Presbyterianism to architectural plans that would aid the conversion of a particular church building into a Muslim educational centre in North London. Other queries have been addressed by mail, either conventionally or electronically. The Administrator, Mrs Margaret Thompson is happy to assist and can be contacted any week day, save Wednesday (mt212@cam.ac.uk). The Secretary, the Revd Elizabeth Brown, departed for a retirement trip to Australasia in the autumn, but mail for her may be sent to Westminster, as before.

1.3 The sorting of the archival material for distribution to the appropriate local Record Offices has continued, thanks to the assistance of Mr and Mrs Richard Potts and the Secretary. The Lancashire County Office agreed to take all documents relating to Manchester and Liverpool for forwarding. London records will be a priority in 2001. In addition all Synods were circulated with

details of identifiable church plate from congregations within their boundaries, and a good number of cups, flagons and trowels used at foundation laying ceremonies were claimed either by the continuing congregation or one that could be legitimately regarded as a successor. A cup and plates, dating from the 1830s, have been provided for the ecumenical Chapel set up within the Oakington Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers and staffed by ministers from the Cambridge City Centre churches.

1.4 The *Journal* for May appropriately marked the centenary of the formation of the Congregational Historical Society in 1899. The November issue was delayed, unfortunately. The Revd Dr David Cornick's appointment as General Secretary has obliged him to relinquish his responsibilities as Reviews Editor. Dr Robert Pope from the University of Bangor is to be his successor.

1.5 The Assembly to mark the uniting of the United Reformed Church and the Scottish Congregational Union was attended by several of the Society's Council members and it was a particular pleasure to welcome the Revd Alan Paterson from the new Synod to speak on Scottish Congregationalism at the General Assembly's lunch time meeting.

1.6 A number of local church histories have been received. These are always welcome. Congregational membership costs no more than an individual subscription, and all members are asked to consider recruiting a friend or acquaintance.

URC Musicians' Guild

Music: the other handmaid of piety

1 Charles Wesley spoke of poetry as the handmaid of piety. In that case, there must be another handmaid, namely music, which carries the poetry and plays such a role in our weekly worship.

1.1 The task of the URC Musicians' Guild is to support, train and represent United Reformed Church musicians, whether they be singers or instrumentalists (organists, pianists, members of music groups or any other kind) and also to advise churches of our denomination on all matters musical. We also aim to provide a group within the United Reformed Church which may be consulted by the Church on matters connected with music in worship.

1.2 There is a strong regional structure, with most of the United Reformed Church Synods being represented. Branches provide choral workshops, instrumental sessions, training days, mutual support and, perhaps most important, an opportunity for members to participate in undistracted worship at their meetings.

Currently there are branches in the following parts of the United Kingdom:

Eastern England
East Midlands
Merseyside
North-East England
North West England
South-East England and Wessex
(covering a broad area from Bournemouth to Kent, including south London)
South Western England
West Midlands
Yorkshire

We are in touch with the Clerk to the Scottish Synod regarding the position of member churches of the United Reformed Church in Scotland.

1.3 The Annual General Meeting is an occasion when all members have an opportunity to meet together, and for that reason it is set in the context of a Celebration Day which has relevance to other aspects of the work of musicians. In 2000 the Celebration Day was held at Carr's Lane Church

Centre, Birmingham on 28 October. In spite of the fact that that was the day when Railtrack closed down much of the railway system, we had a good attendance; but it was very disappointing that our new General Secretary, Juanita Watson, appointed that very day, was taken ill and not able to assume her duties for the time being. Her recovery is slower than she (or any of us) would wish, but we all wish her a complete return to health.

1.4 This year, 2001, the Celebration Day is to be held at the American Church in London, Tottenham Court Road, on Saturday 27 October, and the following year at Windermere United Reformed Church and the Windermere Centre on 19th October 2002. Any reader of this report will be welcome at either of these events.

1.5 The magazine, the *Guild Review*, is published three times a year and keeps members informed on current affairs relating to music in the United Reformed Church.

1.6 An important part of the work of the Guild is to advise local churches whose organs need overhaul or replacement. Such advice is only given when asked for, and is free to local churches, apart from out-of-pocket expenses, though churches are encouraged to make a donation to the Organ Advisory Service. A list of organs which for one reason or another are no longer needed is also maintained.

1.7 As we continue to pursue our aim of making the music of our worship more worthy and meaningful, we again ask for your support and prayers and, where appropriate, your active involvement.

Membership of the Guild remains a modest £4 per annum for individuals and £10 for corporate (church) membership. By the time this report appears in print membership forms and other information should be available from Mrs Juanita Watson, 'Quavers', 35 Arundel Crescent, Solihull, West Midlands B92 8RQ, or alternatively John L Harding, 'Rainbow's End', 105 Humber Doucy Lane, Ipswich IP4 3NU, who remains responsible for the Organ Advisory Service and Redundant Organ Register.

Schools linked to the URC

1 Representatives of the United Reformed Church Related Schools met in London on 12 June 2000 and 11 June 2001, and plans are in progress for a more extended conference to be held at the Collegio Valdese, Torre Pellice, in June 2002.

2 Each of the Schools takes seriously the commitment to educate children of ordained ministers and missionaries of the United Reformed Church, maintaining the obligation assumed by their nineteenth-century founders from the Congregational Churches, and this spirit continues to inform their ecumenical Christian witness.

3 The Schools wish to record their continued appreciation for the bursaries awarded by the Milton Mount Foundation and the Leverhulme Trade Charities Trust.

4 **Caterham School**

Caterham has had another successful year, reaching optimum numbers of boarding and day pupils, at just over 700 pupils, including 135 boarders. It has been encouraging to see a number of United Reformed Church Ministers' children who are joining the School. This is something we very much want to maintain as it is part of our foundation, making independent education available for the sons and daughters of the manse.

Academic progress has been made through the year, with our second highest 'A' level results, and twelve pupils have been offered provisional places at Oxford and Cambridge for the next academic year.

The vision of the School, which embraces high academic standards, all round ability, with interest in music, drama and sport linked to sense of values through our Christian beliefs, and the individual value of pupils and their mutual respect, involves the whole School. We are also fortunate in being able to expand our facilities. The new plan for our boarders, a new language laboratory and a most successful refurbishment of our hall, giving it real possibilities as a performing arts centre, are testimony to this continued development.

Our outreach programme and links with the community are ongoing and we are particularly pleased to have established good working relations with Tandridge Council and The Orpheus Trust.

The Revd Derek Lindfield has returned to pastoral charge after thirteen successful and committed years at Caterham and we have been very pleased to welcome Revd Dr Rick Mearkle, an American from Maidstone, who has settled in well to the life of the community.

5 **Eltham College**

The millennium year was a year of transition at Eltham College. Following the successful opening of the Mervyn Peake Library, which included the Porteous Reading Room named after a distinguished Headmaster, the College honoured the retirement of Malcolm Green and witnessed the arrival of Paul Henderson, the new Headmaster.

Before he departed, Malcolm Green accompanied the Cricket Tour to South Africa, where he was able to visit Michaelhouse School, one of his previous haunts. The Summer Term reached a climax with a most successful Millennium Reunion for the OEA masterminded by Stephen Smith, President of the Association. Over 200 Old Boys returned for a service in the college chapel, followed by a lunch and a tour of the school.

After ten years of outstanding service to the College, during which time Eltham was established as a leading academic school in South East London, Malcolm and his wife Sally retired to Dorset, near Warminster, another previous haunt. They will be remembered for their care for the whole community at Eltham: both were ever-present at Sporting, Music, Drama and Art Events, promoting the extra-curricular side of life, and were loyal supporters of the Eltham College Parent Teacher Association and the Old Elthamians' Association. The College has thrived under Malcolm's guidance.

One of the ventures promoted under Mr Green's leadership was a video recording of the events of the Millennium. This is to be distributed to all members of the College. One adventure to feature is the Expedition to Nepal. Forty-four pupils, former pupils, staff and parents took part in it. Eleven of the party succeeded in climbing Mount Pisang, and subsequently the whole group spent some time assisting three village schools in the Chitwan Province. Links have now been established to enable follow-up work with financial support to these schools and visits for GAP students.

Since October, a Charities committee has been established to prioritise support within the College for various causes. A successful week of events raised over £2,500 for Children in Need. A Children's Hospice in Kent was visited by some Sixth Formers, and a collection was made based on their recommendation. Carol singers raised £180 outside a Tesco Supermarket for the Royal Marsden Hospital, where a member of staff's son is undergoing treatment for testicular cancer. Many more fund-raising activities are planned for 2001.

Two innovations took place in the Autumn Term. To celebrate Remembrance Day, a former OE President, Norman Edwards, addressed the College in Chapel before all the pupils processed outside to witness the laying of the wreaths and the sounding of the Last Post and Reveille. It was a very moving occasion. Secondly, a candlelit Carol Service was held at the end of term for all the pupils in the Sixth Form and Year 11, with their parents and staff. To see the Chapel lit only by 400 candles was a powerful and uplifting experience.

Sixteen Sixth Formers have been offered places at Oxford and Cambridge. Eltham College is thus a hive of activity. Its students live their school lives to the full, and are rewarded by their efforts.

6 Silcoates School

We enjoyed the wit and wisdom of our guests of honour at the Senior and Junior Prize Givings. The Revd Dr David Cornick, Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge, is to succeed the Revd Tony Burnham, OS, as General Secretary of the United Reformed Church. Mrs Alison Johnson chairs the Governors' Junior School Committee.

A small scoop in the ISIS magazine: 'A Wakefield school is currently quietly celebrating a unique contribution to the cause of independent education. The election to the committee of the Governing Bodies' Association of Professor Clyde Binfield crowns a remarkable record for Silcoates School. Within little more than a decade, Silcoates has had a headmaster (John Baggaley) who was chairman both of the Society of Headmasters of Independent Schools' Bursars' Association, a chairman of governors (Peter Johnson) who led probably the most successful of all the Independent School Action Committees, and now a governor on the national GBA committee. Added to which, Old Silcoatian Guy Cliff is the current treasurer of the Association of Representatives of Old Pupils' Societies.'

We have record pupil numbers in all the schools of the Foundation. We started the academic year with 669 at Silcoates, an increase of twenty-seven over the previous September. At one end of the age

range, we had three J1 forms for the first time. At the other, the numbers in the Sixth Form exceeded 100. Sunny Hill House School continues to be full and the numbers at St Hilda's School reached a new high of 171.

Our A level candidates sat 157 examinations, passing in 142, i.e. 92%, which is one per cent short of the 1998 and 1999 pass percentages. The destinations of our Upper Sixth leavers are as follows: university degree courses: 80%; art foundation courses: 14%; HND: 2%; drama school: 2%; other training: 2%. The GCSE grades fell short of one record but gave us another. Grades A* - C were 89%, down on our best of 92%, but we have never had such a high proportion on strong grades: 67% were A*, A or B - and that bodes well for the new Lower Sixth Class of 2000, the AS/A2 guinea pigs.

The highlights of the Autumn Term were a penetrating and moving production of *The Crucible* and an infestation of fifteen inspectors for a week. They have since produced their report. It could not have been more glowing, but no modern school dare rest on its laurels.

7 Taunton School

October 1999 saw the first full HMC Inspection of the Senior School. The Inspection was a rigorous process from which the School emerged with great credit. The team based their findings upon documentation and statistics we had provided beforehand, the views of a number of parents and interviews with staff. During the five days they were with us they also had the opportunity to talk to a large number of pupils about their work and other matters. Amongst the main findings was the comment, 'Taunton is a fine school in which the excellent quality of human relationships provides the foundation on which all else is built'.

Our academic results this year were pleasing. Although the overall pass rate at A level was slightly down at 95%, the percentage of passes graded A or B went up to 48%. Seven students achieved three or more A grades and all six of our candidates entered for Oxford and Cambridge were successful. The vast majority of our other A level candidates were accepted by their first choice universities. The GCSE pass rate was similar to last year, 90%, but significantly the number of examinations graded A* or A just exceeded 50% - an indication of the quality of pupil we have coming up through the school.

Cultural activities continue to thrive and there is an increasing involvement amongst our pupils. A number of our artists had their work displayed at an Independent Schools' exhibition in the Mall. The Music Department recorded a choral CD, the

performers encompassing the whole age range of Taunton School, the Jazz Band played at EuroDisney, Paris, amongst other less exotic locations. They also performed on West Country television, and we had many concerts - both formal and informal - in the School. We were once again fortunate to have a visit from St Andrews' School Choir, Argentina and the Central Band of the RAF. Drama is going from strength to strength too. *The Cherry Orchard* was superbly acted, as was the student production of the *Marat/Sade*; we were treated to a delightful interpretation of *The Sound of Music* at the end of the Summer Term and then there was the staff pantomime.....Public speaking is vibrant and well supported. In one week in January twenty pupils represented the School in Debating and Public Speaking Competitions, the ESU Public Speaking Team won through to the National Finals and at the World Debating and Public Speaking Competition in Cyprus one of our students won the 'Impromptu Speaking' and was placed seventh overall.

We continue to produce some fine sports teams. The 1st XV had a highly successful tour in Canada winning all six of their matches; the girls' 1st XI hockey lost only one match (Millfield); the girls' U15 XI were unbeaten as were the School swimming team. Individual performances were outstanding. Two pupils represented Wales at Hockey and three represented England at Rounders. At various age groups County representation was strong across the entire sporting range.

It should not go unrecorded that once again our three Ten Tors Teams completed the event. Taunton School has the unique record of never having a walker, let alone a team, drop out at any stage.

To conclude the year we welcomed Miss Sue Lyons, Managing Director - Defence (Europe), Rolls Royce, as our guest at Commemoration. We also bade farewell to Mr Roger Priest who had served the School for thirty-three years. He joined the staff in September 1967. In his time at Taunton he was the Housemaster of a Day and Boarding House, Head of Classics, editor of *The Tauntonian*, Common Room Secretary, directed the Summer School, ran the Burke (the school debating and public speaking society) and coached cricket, rugby and hockey, latterly the Corinthians - the 3rd and 4th teams.

8 Walthamstow Hall

The start of the Two Thousands has been marked at Walthamstow Hall with great energy. This year we have achieved several targets towards which we have been working, as well as having some less-expected successes and accolades.

Our Millennium Charity was a year-long effort to raise the amount needed to pay the annual salary of a nurse at the hospice we support in South India. With many imaginative schemes - a 'slave' auction, a quiz, and Upper Sixth pantomime, staff adjuring the sending of Christmas cards and donating the money instead - we in fact raised enough for *two* nurses.

But we have not neglected our work for other good causes such as the community in Peckham, who inner-city problems were highlighted by the tragic death of little Damilola. For over a hundred years Walthamstow Hall has sent gifts to the people of Peckham and invited them down to school for a day out in the summer. We have also continued to support the school in Mozambique for which our Christian Fellowship leaders have inspired us to raise funds and collect equipment.

The three sixth-formers took what we had collected to Africa in the summer and worked in the school. We were proud that their enterprise and compassion were recognised at both a county and a national level. They were awarded a unique Millennium Travel Award by the Kent Leney Trust, and also the top three awards in the nation-wide competition run annually by the Independent Schools Travel Association trust.

Recognition has come at county level to our lacrosse-players too, of whom twenty-one were selected for Kent teams, including one captain. They have continued their busy programme of fund-raising for their Spring 2001 tour to the United States.

Trips abroad in 2000 included our regular exchange and work-experience in France, a new German exchange as a result of Sevenoak's twinning with Rheinbach, a visit to a Christmas market in Germany, history trips to Berlin and Prague and the First World War battlefields, and a geography field-trip in the Cévennes. We continue to welcome students from France, Germany and the Collegio Valdese in Italy.

With the generous help of our Old Girls, who matched the sum in our slowly mounting Piano Fund, we have at last been able to buy a piano worthy of our Ship Theatre. The magnificent new Bösendorfer was welcomed at an evening of piano music from every age group and section of the school community. The music department has been extraordinarily busy all year with recitals, concerts, and visiting groups of musicians from India and Germany, and our choir joined that of Tonbridge School for a Remembrance Sunday concert in their chapel.

The Ship Theatre has hosted drama ranging from *Oedipus Rex* to *Blackadder*. The major production was *Twelfth Night*, with real twins in the roles of Viola

and Sebastian. The Junior School's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was a modern, musical take on Shakespeare.

Examination results were good: especially notable was the 70% of A* and A grades gained in the Religious Studies GCSE taken a year early by the whole Lower Fifth, though alas, it distorts our league-table position to enter girls out of year. We were delighted that the excellent results and strength of character of one of our Advanced Level candidates were acknowledged by a Recognition of Achievement award, one of three made nationally by the OCR examination board. She had fought bone-cancer with astonishing fortitude and cheerfulness and is now reading medicine at Cambridge.

Our Guest of Honour at Prize Giving was Ann Widdecombe, Shadow Home Secretary. At the ceremony, we used for the first time our new School Prayer, in the creating of which, for the new millennium, every girl was involved.

Five daughters of missionaries and five ministers' daughters are educated at the School, from Anglican, Baptist and Overseas Missionary Fellowship backgrounds as well as from the United Reformed Church.

9 Wentworth College

Last summer our fifth form achieved our best ever GCSE results. Of the total 284 subject entries: 47.2% were graded A or A*, 93% were graded A* to C and 99.3% were graded A* to D. One girl gained A* in each of her ten subjects; and three girls each gained seven A* and three A grades. The nineteen upper sixth students entered for a total of fifty-eight Advanced levels in sixteen subjects and between them achieved an 86% pass rate. Two girls were especially successful with passes in four subjects, one of whom, with four at grade A, is now studying law at Robinson College, Cambridge.

Once again, girls at Wentworth have been busy and productive. Task Force, our whole school project linking us to the Victoria School (for the physically disabled), is in its sixth year. Friday afternoon canoeing sessions with their pupils are still popular (in our pool in winter and on the river in summer) and we all look forward to the Friday sailing expeditions in the summer term in *Challenger*. Girls have also been involved in the afternoon tea parties to entertain guests in support of 'Contact the Elderly'.

Charity Week in November saw monies raised for Rotary International, the British Heart Foundation and the BBC Children in Need Appeal. In addition, Wentworth College participated in the Millennium Christmas Tree Festival at Iford United Reformed Church in December and raised further funds for the British Heart Foundation.

The music department flourishes - currently over half the girls learn one or more instruments in school - and this year harp teaching has been added. Our most recent musical event was a very popular supper concert, *Songs from the Shows*, in November. The girls thrilled us with excerpts from *The Lion King* and other shows, and gave a splendid encore.

At the Annual Science and Technology Dinner in November the Chief Constable of Dorset entertained parents and guests with a talk on forensic science.

The outdoor education department, too, has been busy. There are sixteen girls preparing for the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Bronze (walking) and Silver (canoe) expeditions took place during the summer holidays. Most of these girls have opted to continue to Silver and Gold respectively. In October and again in March girls enjoyed caving trips to the Mendip Hills.

Also in October thirty girls departed on the *Paris 2000 - Art & Language Tour*. In January twenty girls enjoyed a skiing course in Switzerland, and another group visited Berlin in February on a combined history and German trip. School teams have been winning the majority of their matches. Seven girls have been selected for county netball teams and three girls are in the county badminton team.

The Advent Service was held at Richmond Hill United Reformed Church, led by Senior Teacher Tim Meachin (NSM candidate), and Revd Dr Donald Norwood.

Last summer Revd Frank Cochrane took over as School Chaplain. The retiring Chaplain, Revd Brian Rawling was invited to join the Board of Governors, and this January he succeeded Mrs Jennie Williams as Chairman of Governors.

Silence and Retreats Network

Core Group Members

Convener: David Bunney

Mark Argent, Nelson Bainbridge, Meriel Chippindale, Glenys Cockerell, Alan Fox, Kate McIlhagga, Peter McIntosh,

1 Most of the work of the Network is carried out in Synod and Districts, very little being done from the 'centre'. The core group seeks to promote silence and retreats throughout the Church, publishes the journal *Window*, liaises with Synod 'link persons', and provides representation on the Doctrine Prayer & Worship Committee and the ecumenical Retreat Association. Throughout the Church there are regional and local retreats, quiet days and similar events, most of them arranged by the Synod 'link persons' and their support groups, and many in co-operation with our ecumenical partners. It is good to see how these events have continued to attract those who wish to explore the deepening of spiritual life in these ways, and to make time and space in busy lives for reflection and renewal.

2 Information about what is happening around the Church is best obtained from the Synod 'links', and since there have been a number of changes over the past year or so we include a complete list:

Northern:

Jenny Young, 28 Dispensary Street, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1LS

North Western:

Gillian Heald, 32 Redbridge, Bolton, BL2 5PB

Mersey:

Ken Jones, 3 Wyncroft Close, Whitby, Ellesmere Port, CH65 6TT

Yorkshire:

Rodney Ward, The Vicarage, Swine, Hull, HU11 4JE

East Midlands:

Allen Morton, 23 Tilton Drive, Oadby, Leics., LE2 5WW

West Midlands:

Meriel & Ken Chippindale, 172 Station Road, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5LE

Eastern:

Alison Chart, 13 Nuns Gate, Thetford, IP24 3EL

South Western:

Brenda Stephenson, 33 Cranhill Road, Street, BA16 0BZ

Wessex:

Keith Green, 51 West End, Cholsey, Oxon., OX10 9LP

Thames North:

Glenys Cockerell, 51 Redbridge Lane West, Weanstead, London, E11 2JY

Southern:

Pamela Pavitt, 30 Wakefield Gardens, Upper Norwood, London, SE19 2NR

Wales:

Julie Hopkins, 10 Church Road, Roch, Haverfordwest, Pembs., SA62 6BG

Scotland:

Jack Dyce, 340 Cathedral Street, Glasgow, G1 2BQ

3 A number of changes have also taken place on the core group. Mike Playdon and Jack Thompson have completed their terms of service and have been succeeded by Meriel Chippindale and Kate McIlhagga. We are particularly grateful for the way Jack has looked after membership and subscriptions, bringing us up to date with our records, and helping to achieve a much more stable financial situation. The new convener is David Bunney, and the new editor of *Windows* Alan Fox. We wish them both well in their new responsibilities.

4 The core group and the Synod 'links' are committed to creating and making known opportunities for silence, quiet days and retreats, recognising that within the Church there is need for both celebration and contemplation; encouraging an ecumenical sharing of the resources of spirituality; deepening the spiritual life of congregations within our Church; and exciting others about silence. In these ways we believe we can make a real contribution to the life of the Church as it is, and contribute to the formation of the future Church. What the latter might be we cannot tell; but silence, waiting upon God, coming closer to God through reflection and contemplation may well enable his people to be more open to his doings among us.

5 Information about the Network may be obtained from the convener, the Revd David Bunney, 19 Abbey Road, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 1LA.

Women's World Day of Prayer

United reformed Church representative on the National Committee: Mrs Josie Owens

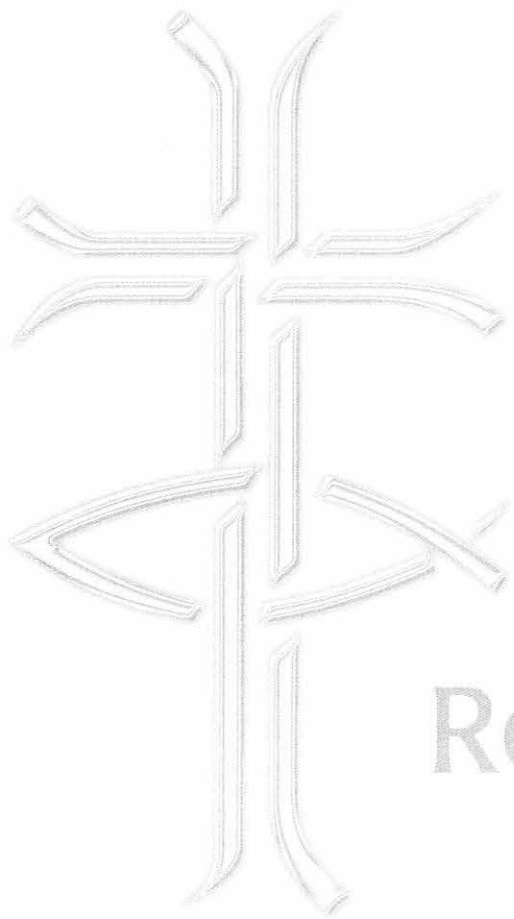
1 The service material for 2001 was prepared by the women of the lovely islands of Samoa, one of the smallest countries in the world. Samoans live simply and life centers round the family. Religion is one of the most important aspects of Samoan culture and the islands' motto 'Founded on God' was very much reflected in the service material. About 99% of Samoans are Christian. Every day at 6pm the gong sounds for 'sa', the daily prayers, when the whole community stops for 15 minutes of prayer. Sundays are strictly observed as holy days and church attendance is very high. In the service this year was the 'Cava' ceremony. This is an important part of the Samoan culture, where visitors are welcomed to the island. This is a special reception offered to guests and friends as an expression of friendship and the love the Samoan people want to share with their visitors.

2 Over 325,000 copies of the order of service have been used in over 3,000 services held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Services have been held in Churches, Cathedrals, Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Church Halls and Schools - where many teachers use the Children's material for assemblies. Day conferences and preparation days for the service have again been in demand with over 50 this year, and many already booked for 2002.

3 In July last year we held our Millennium conference at High Leigh. This proved to be a resounding success and was enjoyed by the 130 ladies, from all parts of the country. Amongst those attending were the three past and present United Reformed Church representatives, myself as present national committee member, Mrs Ruth Bowyer, my predecessor, and her predecessor, and former chairperson of the national committee, Mrs Jean Whillis.

4 The service for 2002 comes from Romania with the theme 'Challenged to Reconcile'.

5 Further information on conferences and material related to the service, Bible study notes, background information from the country preparing the service, speakers notes, children's service sheets, can all be obtained, free of charge, from the office, Women's World Day of Prayer, Commercial Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2RR.



The
United
Reformed
Church



Standing Orders

**General Assembly
York 2001**

July 10th

**Annual Reports,
Resolutions
and Papers**



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

Standing Orders of the Assembly

I. The Agenda of the Assembly

1a. At its meetings the Assembly shall consider reports and draft motions prepared by its Committees which include the Mission Council or by synods, and motions and amendments of which due notice has been given submitted by individual members of the Assembly.

1b. The Assembly Arrangements Committee shall prepare before each meeting of the Assembly a draft order of business, and submit it to the Assembly as early as convenient in the programme.

1c. Motions arising from a report which have been duly seconded and submitted by individual members of Assembly under rule 3b shall be taken at a point in the business determined by the Moderator on the advice of the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

1d. If notice has been given of two or more motions on the same subject, or two or more amendments to the same motion, these shall be taken in the order decided by the Moderator on the advice of the Clerk.

1e. The Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee may, during the meeting of the Assembly, propose that the order of business be changed.

2. Presentation of Business

2a. All reports of Committees, together with the draft motions arising therefrom, shall be delivered to the General Secretary by a date to be annually determined, so that they may be printed and circulated to members in time for consideration before the date of the Assembly meeting.

2b. A synod may deliver to the General Secretary not less than twelve weeks before the commencement of the annual meeting of the Assembly notice in writing of a motion for consideration at the Assembly. This notice shall include the names of those appointed to propose and second the motion at the Assembly.

2c. A local church or district council wishing to put forward a motion for consideration by the General Assembly shall submit the motion to its synod for consideration and, if the synod so decides, transmission to the Assembly, at such time as will

enable the synod to comply with Standing Order 2b above. In the case of a local church the motion must be submitted to the synod through the district council.

2d. A member of the Assembly may deliver to the General Secretary not less than 21 days before the date of the meeting of the Assembly a notice in writing of a motion (which notice must include the name of a seconder) to be included in the Assembly agenda. If the subject matter of such a notice of motion appears to the General Secretary to be an infringement of the rights of a synod or a district council through which the matter could properly have been raised, the General Secretary shall inform the member accordingly and bring the matter before the Assembly Arrangements Committee which shall advise the Assembly as to the procedure to be followed.

2e. Proposals for amendments to the Basis and Structure of the URC, which may be made by the Mission Council or a Committee of the General Assembly or a synod, shall be in the hands of the General Secretary not later than 12 weeks before the opening of the Assembly. The General Secretary, in addition to the normal advice to members of the Assembly, shall, as quickly as possible, inform all synod clerks of the proposed amendment.

3. Motions and Amendments

3a. A report presented to the Assembly by a Committee or synod, under rule 1, shall be received for debate, unless notice has been given under rule 2d of a motion to refer back to that Committee or synod the whole or part of the report and its attached motion(s). Such a motion for reference back shall be debated and voted upon before the relevant report is itself debated. To carry such a motion two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. When a report has been received for debate, and before any motions consequent upon it are proposed, any member may speak to a matter arising from the report which is not the subject of a motion.

3b. During the meeting of the Assembly and on the report of a Committee, notice (including the names of proposer and seconder) shall be given to the Clerk of any new motions which arise from the material of the report, and of any amendments which affect the substance of motions already presented. The Moderator shall decide whether such motion or amendment requires to be circulated in writing to

members before it is discussed by the Assembly. During the course of the debate a new motion or amendment may be stated orally without supporting speech in order to ascertain whether a member is willing to second it.

3c. No motion or amendment shall be spoken to by its proposer, debated, or put to the Assembly unless it is known that there is a seconder, except that motions presented on behalf of a Committee, of which printed notice has been given, do not need to be seconded.

3d. A seconder may second without speaking and, by declaring the intention of doing so, reserve the right of speaking until a later period in the debate.

3e. It shall not be in order to move a motion or amendment which:

- (i) contravenes any part of the Basis of Union, or
- (ii) involves the church in expenditure without prior consideration by the appropriate committee, or
- (iii) pre-empts discussion of a matter to be considered later in the agenda, or
- (iv) amends or reverses a decision reached by the Assembly at its preceding two annual meetings unless the Moderator, Clerk and General Secretary together decide that changed circumstances or new evidence justify earlier reconsideration of the matter, or
- (v) is not related to the report of a Committee and has not been the subject of 21 days' notice under 2d.

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

3f. An amendment shall be either to omit words or to insert words or to do both, but no amendment shall be in order which has the effect of introducing an irrelevant proposal or of negating the motion.

3g. If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved. If an amendment is rejected a further amendment not to the like effect may be moved.

3h. An amendment which has been moved and seconded shall be disposed of before any further amendment may be moved, but notice may be given of intention to move a further amendment should the one before the Assembly be rejected.

3i. The mover may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly, alter the motion or amendment proposed.

3j. A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly. Any such consent shall be signified without discussion. It shall not be in order for any member to speak upon it after the proposer has asked permission to withdraw unless such permission shall have been refused.

4. Timing of Speeches and of Other Business.

4a. Save by prior agreement of the officers of the Assembly, speeches made in the presentation of reports concerning past work of Assembly Committees which are to be open to question, comment or discussion shall not exceed 5 minutes.

4b. Save by the prior agreement of the officers of the Assembly, speeches made in support of the motions from any Assembly Committee, including the Mission Council, or from any synod shall not in aggregate exceed 45 minutes, nor shall speeches in support of any particular Committee or synod motion exceed 12 minutes, (e.g. a Committee with three motions may not exceed 36 minutes). The proposers of any other motion of which due notice has been given shall be allowed an aggregate of 10 minutes, unless a longer period be recommended by the officers of the Assembly or determined by the Moderator. Each subsequent speaker in any debate shall be allowed 5 minutes unless the Moderator shall determine otherwise: it shall, in particular, be open to the Moderator to determine that all speeches in a debate or from a particular point in a debate shall be of not more than 3 minutes.

4c. When a speech is made on behalf of a Committee, it shall be so stated. Otherwise a speaker shall begin by giving name and accreditation to the Assembly.

4d. Secretaries of Committees and full-time Executive Secretaries who are not members of Assembly may speak on the report of a Committee for which they have responsibility at the request of the Convener concerned. They may speak on other reports with the consent of the Moderator.

4e. In each debate, whether on a motion or on an amendment, no one shall address the Assembly more than once, except that at the close of each debate the proposer of the motion or the amendment, as the case may be, shall have the right to reply, but must strictly confine the reply to answering previous

speakers and must not introduce new matter. Such reply shall close the debate on the motion or the amendment.

4f. The foregoing Standing Order (4e) shall not prevent the asking or answering of a question which arises from the matter before the Assembly or from a speech made in the debate upon it.

5. Closure of Debate

5a. In the course of the business any member may move that the question under consideration be not put. This motion takes precedence over every motion before the Assembly. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded and the proposer of the motion or amendment under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule. Should the motion be carried the business shall immediately end and the Assembly shall proceed to the next business.

5b. In the course of any discussion, any member may move that the question be now put. This is sometimes described as “the closure motion”. If the Moderator senses that there is a wish or need to close a debate, the Moderator may ask whether any member wishes so to move; the Moderator may not simply declare a debate closed. Provided that it appears to the Moderator that the motion is a fair use of this rule, the vote shall be taken upon it immediately it has been seconded. When an amendment is under discussion, this motion shall apply only to that amendment. To carry this motion, two thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. The mover of the original motion or amendment, as the case may be, retains the right of reply before the vote is taken on the motion or amendment.

5c. During the course of a debate on a motion any member may move that decision on this motion be deferred to the next Assembly. This rule does not apply to debates on amendments since the Assembly needs to decide the final form of a motion before it can responsibly vote on deferral. The motion then takes precedence over other business. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded and the proposer of the motion under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule or that deferral would have the effect of annulling the motion. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. At the discretion of the Moderator, the General Secretary may be instructed

by a further motion, duly seconded, to refer the matter for consideration by other councils and/ or by one or more committees of the Assembly. The General Secretary shall provide for the deferred motion to be represented at the next Annual Meeting of the General Assembly.

5d. The motions described in Standing Orders 5a, 5b and 5c above are exceptions to Standing Order 3c, in that they may be moved and spoken to without the proposer having first obtained and announced the consent of a seconder. They must, however, be seconded before being put to the vote. Precedence as between motions under 5a, 5b and 5c is determined by the fact that after one of them is before the Assembly no other of them can be moved until that one has been dealt with.

6. Voting

6a. Voting on any motion whose effect is to alter, add to, modify or supersede the Basis, the Structure and any other form or expression of the polity and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church, is governed by paragraph 3(l) and (2) of the Structure.

6b. Other motions before the Assembly shall be determined by a majority of the votes of members of the Assembly present and voting as indicated by a show of voting cards, except

- (i) If the Assembly decides before the vote that a paper ballot be the method of voting or
- (ii) if, the show of cards indicating a very close vote, the Moderator decides, or a member of Assembly proposes and the Assembly agrees that a paper ballot be the method of voting.

6c. To provide for voting in the case of a paper ballot, and to assist in taking a count of votes when the Moderator decides this is necessary, the Nominations Committee shall appoint tellers for each Assembly.

7. Questions

7a. A member may, if two days' notice in writing has been given to the General Secretary, ask the Moderator or the Convener of any Committee any question on any matter relating to the business of the Assembly to which no reference is made in any report before the Assembly.

7b. A member may, when given opportunity by the Moderator, ask the presenter of any report before the Assembly a question seeking additional information or explanation relating to matters contained within the report.

7c. Questions asked under Standing Orders 7a and 7b shall be put and answered without discussion.

8. Points of Order, Personal Explanations, Dissent

8a. A member shall have the right to rise and call attention to a point of order, and immediately on this being done any other member addressing the Assembly shall cease speaking until the Moderator has determined the question of order. The decision on any point of order rests entirely with the Moderator. Any member calling to order unnecessarily is liable to censure of the Assembly.

8b. A member feeling that some material part of a former speech by such member at the same meeting has been misunderstood or is being grossly misinterpreted by a later speaker may rise and request the Moderator's permission to make a personal explanation. If the Moderator so permits, a member so rising shall be entitled to be heard forthwith.

8c. The right to record in the minutes a dissent from any decision of the Assembly shall only be granted to a member by the Moderator if the reason stated, either verbally at the time or later in writing, appears to the Moderator to fall within the provisions of paragraph 10 of the Basis of Union.

8d. The decision of the Moderator on a point of order, or on the admissibility of a personal explanation, or on the right to have a dissent recorded, shall not be open to discussion.

9. Admission of Public and Press

Members of the public and representatives of the press shall be admitted to the Assembly unless the Assembly otherwise decides, and they shall occupy such places as are assigned to them.

10. Circulation of Documents

Only documents authorised by the General Secretary in consultation with the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee may be distributed within the building in which the Assembly is meeting.

11. Records of the Assembly

11a. A record of attendance at the meetings of the Assembly shall be kept in such a manner as the Assembly Arrangements Committee may determine.

11b. The minutes of each day's proceedings, in duplicated form, shall be circulated on the following day and normally, after any necessary correction, approved at the opening of the afternoon or evening session. Concerning the minutes of the closing day of the Assembly the Clerk shall submit a motion approving their insertion in the full minutes of the Assembly after review and any necessary correction by the officers of the Assembly. Before such a motion is voted upon, any member may ask to have read out the written minute on any particular item.

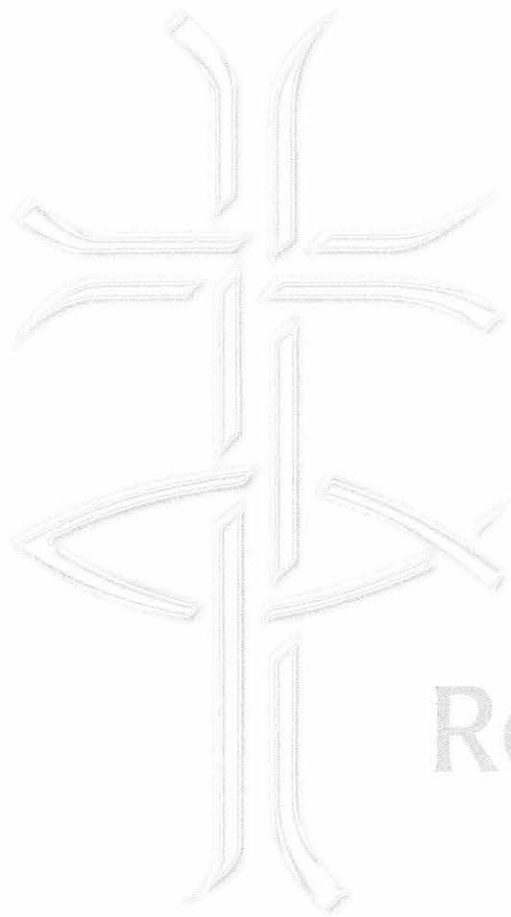
11c. A signed copy of the minutes shall be preserved in the custody of the General Secretary as the official record of the Assembly's proceedings.

11d. As soon as possible after the Assembly meeting ends, the substance of the minutes together with any other relevant papers shall be published as a "Record of Assembly" and a copy sent to every member of the Assembly, each synod, district council and local church.

12. Suspension and Amendment of Standing Orders

12a. In any case of urgency or upon motion made on a notice duly given, any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting so far as regards any particular business at such a meeting, provided that three-fourths of the members of the Assembly present and voting shall so decide.

12b. Motions to amend the Standing Orders shall be referred to the Clerk of the Assembly for report before being voted on by the Assembly (or, in case of urgency, by the Mission Council). The Clerk of the Assembly may from time to time suggest amendments to the Standing Orders, which shall be subject to decision by the Assembly.



The
United
Reformed
Church



The
United
Reformed
Church