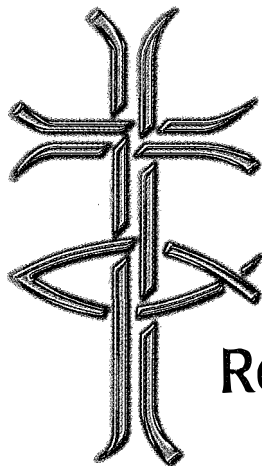


# **General Assembly 2002**

**July 4th - 8th St Andrews**



*The*  
**United  
Reformed  
Church**

**Annual Reports,  
Resolutions & Papers**



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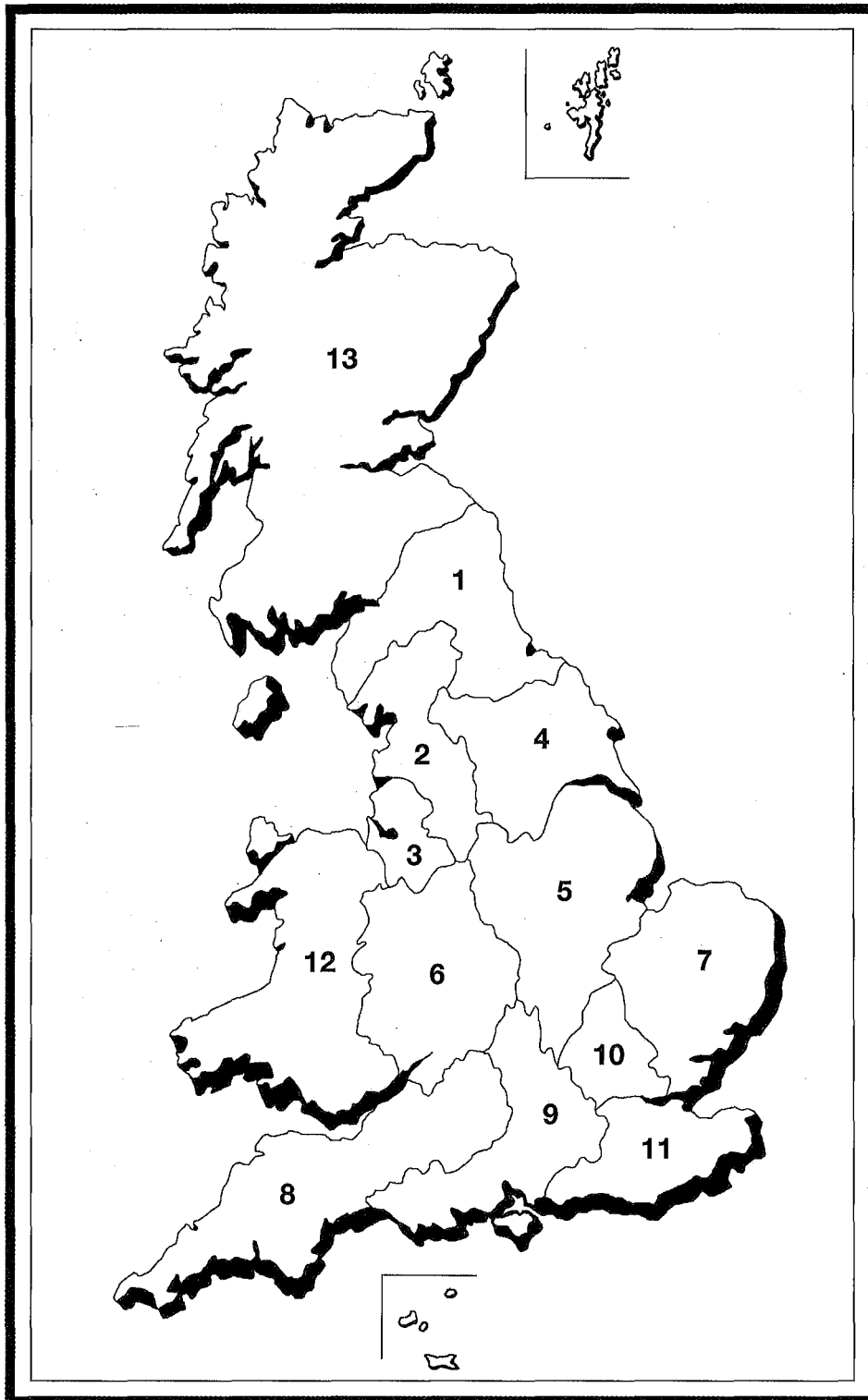
**NOTE** The General Assembly in 2000 decided that from 2001, committees will report in alternate years, except where for legal or administrative reasons annual reports are required. The latter are listed above with an asterisk.

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# Synods



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1.1 Following our last report to Assembly it was time to review the work undertaken by our Development Officer and our YCWT. Whilst initially it was proposed to write a strategy for Training it soon became obvious that what was needed was an overall strategy for Mission in the Synod.

1.2 The process of producing our Synod Strategy involved a consultation process among the churches and Districts, and it was about this time that our 6 District Synod became a 4-District Synod. Our Scotland District, small in numbers but huge in acres, formed part of the new Synod of Scotland. The other 'lost' District came about because Durham and Teesside Districts joined together because they felt that this would be a better use of stretched human resources.

1.3 The Strategy was to double the size of the Synod Development Team the majority of the funding coming from Synod resources resulting from the sale of property and from growth in the money markets. Synod took the decision that to support the mission of the local churches, this was the time for help to enable those churches to think and work through what it means to be the church in a community early in this new century.

1.4 A brief précis of our Strategy including its title, key questions and areas of work are set out below

## **On Being a Faithful Church in a demanding Age**

### **The key questions are:**

- a) What will the church look like in 2010 if we do nothing?
- b) What do we want it to look like?

### **Key Areas of Work:**

- The provision of **training** opportunities for all church leaders and officers.
- **Planning and equipping** for church growth and development, including, where appropriate, community involvement and the identification and allocation of financial and other resources.
- **Ecumenical.** To create greater understanding of the potential for ecumenical partnerships and projects in order to maximise the use of resources and impact.
- Specialist provision for working with **teenagers and young people.**
- Encouraging a greater sense of belonging to the **World Church.**

1.5 It was remarkable how this strategy fitted with the Five Marks of Mission which were produced at about the same time. The assistance of the Assembly Visitors in the initial working out of the Strategy has been invaluable, particularly as they have been able to ask penetrating questions, coming as they do with different experiences from other Synods.

1.6 The ongoing challenge is that of communication – how do we produce an effective system so that we hear what is being said? In this world of e-mail and the web is it that news travels too fast and goes straight on by....?

1.7 An equal challenge is that of structures. As with many other Synods this is a live issue for us, and what we need is a new structure that frees up ministers and the laity for work in local communities both where congregations already exist and in areas where the church is not penetrating at all.

# South Western Synod

## 1 Getting equipped

1.1 Two synod days in 2001 (one held at Central URC, Bath for churches in the north east of the Province, and one at Ivybridge in Devon for those farther into the south-west) were organised by clusters of neighbouring districts. Each provided opportunities for synod ministries and training committees to make presentations. A video, **Ministry: it could be you**, showed some familiar local faces talking informally about their own call to Christian service as ministers, lay preachers and CRCWs. The video has been sent round all the churches as a challenge to people to consider their vocation. The format provides considerable flexibility for use in worship, in small groups and by individuals watching the video at home.

1.2 Recognising that some churches need help in assessing their own potential and finding vision for the future, the synod agreed to create the part-time post of **Church Development Enabler** for a three year period. The appointment awaits a suitable pastorate becoming available to provide the other half of what will be a full-time ministry.

1.3 Under the heading **Understanding decline - going for growth**, the synod Life and Witness Committee has organised three annual conferences on church growth, which have been well-supported by people from a broad theological spectrum. The strength of these conferences has been the readiness of people to listen to and learn from those with different experiences of being Church from their own.

1.4 A paper called **Faithing the Future: towards a mission strategy**, the fruit of a consultation with members of the synod executive, was agreed by the Spring 2002 synod. It is intentionally a list of priorities which the synod itself can deliver, and involves a re-examination of resource-sharing, priorities for training support, and a commitment to help district councils promote greater trust, participation, and spiritual discernment in their meetings.

1.5 This paper also reflects the need (implied by the *Growing Up* report) for those in positions of leadership in the church to go on developing skills of theological reflection, so that congregations may in turn become better equipped to interpret faith in their own environment, initiate dialogue with secular agencies and create partnerships in areas of common concern.

## 2 Mission in Partnership

2.1 **Abbey Meads:** The Church of Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads, a local ecumenical partnership established by Baptists, Methodist, Anglican and United Reformed Churches on a planned housing development of over 10,000 homes in North Swindon, opened its new building on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2001. The building, on a prominent site in village centre 1, was funded mainly by the South Western synod. The congregation, which was established through the pioneering work of a Methodist deacon, has now inducted a Baptist minister, whose stipend is co-funded by Baptists, Methodist and United Reformed Churches.

2.2 **Avebury Chapel** stands within the world heritage site of the ancient Avebury stone circle in Wiltshire, within sight of Silbury Hill and 30 miles from Stonehenge. The small congregation supported by the North East Wilts District Council has sought to make part of the chapel building into a visitor centre for the many tourists who visit Avebury. The District has set up a management committee and has taken responsibility for leading monthly Sunday afternoon services at the chapel. The church has recently signed an agreement with the Kennet District Council (local authority) to make the renamed and refurbished **Avebury Chapel Centre** into a tourist information and worship centre. A reopening ceremony, to mark the completion of alterations by Kennet Council, will take place on July 28<sup>th</sup> 2002.

2.3 The Revd Heather Pencavel, a non-stipendiary minister in the Bristol District, was appointed in 2000 by the regional church leaders of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Greater Bristol, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Dorset, to be the South West Churches Advisor for Regional Affairs. This involves liaising with the South West Regional Development Agency, the Government Office for the South West, servicing the South West Council of Faiths and being sole representative of the faith communities on the South West Regional Assembly.

2.4 **European Link:** The synod's link with the Lippische Landeskirche has involved several formal and informal exchanges in the last two years: a group of elders from the Church of Lippe in north west Germany took part in a District Elders Training weekend in east Devon in 2000, while in February 2002, elders and ministers from the south west made a return visit to Lippe, to share their experience

of being a Reformed Church today. The most significant development in this European partnership has been the year's placement by Pastor Andreas Finnern and Vikarin Stephanie Pörtner, who, as part of their ministerial formation programme, have served in local churches in the south western synod.

2.5 **Theology South West** is a project in which the synod is at an early stage of involvement. The South Western Ministry Training Course in partnership with other theological educators in the region is seeking to provide access to theological library resources through a web page, and to establish, in partnership with Exeter University, on-line theological education courses.

2.6 The Revd Roz Harrison was appointed as synod clerk on the retirement of the Revd Sandra Lloydlangston (2001), and Mr Gordon Latham replaced Mr Geoff Lunt as synod treasurer (2001). Both the outgoing synod officers had served between 10 and 13 years. The Revd Roy Lowes took up his post as URC secretary for training on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002, and the Revd Peter Henderson has been appointed to be the new director of training from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2002.

2.7 The Revd Ray Adams was reappointed to serve for a second term as synod moderator, but within a few months was appointed to succeed the Revd John Waller as the church's deputy general secretary. The synod thanks Ray for all he has done for the life of the synod during his time as moderator: for his thoughtful leadership, his sensitive pastoral care and for his ecumenical vision. We wish him well in his new post.



# Wessex Synod

1 The Wessex Synod Strategy Committee has been developing its strategy for growth in missionary congregations and the use of resources to support that endeavour. The Synod has re-affirmed:

- that the primary purpose of the synod is helping to supply resources to the local church for worship and mission
- the synod's commitment to releasing the resource of the whole people of God
- the synod's wholehearted commitment to ecumenism at all levels of the church.

2 We work very hard to stimulate all our people to consider what God is calling them to be and to do, in the church and in the world. This has resulted in a growing number developing skills and knowledge through TLS and training for different ministries. As displayed at General Assembly 2001, we have introduced the process called the Wessex Navigator. This follows our previous document "How do you see your future?" which was used at the time of a ministerial vacancy, in assessing a major building project or within a district consultation. The new programme is intended to apply to all these situations, but it is aimed more particularly at encouraging all churches to keep their work and witness under constant review.

3 Since the last report from Wessex in 1999, we have welcomed 3 new churches into the United Reformed Church, but sadly the total number of churches has decreased by 6. Not all of these have closed – some have united with neighbouring churches. In the light of 'Growing Up' we have come to see that the closure of a church building may be a constructive move, and District Councils continue to grapple with the implications of this.

4 As a result of the closure and sale of church buildings, the synod has received significant sums of money. This income has been used in a number of ways – a New Projects Fund which was intended for major projects in buildings or personnel, but has so far mainly been used for the former; the support of two pilot projects of family workers in local churches; a thank offering of £200,000 which will be divided between Christian Aid, Sarum College, and a fund to provide grants to smaller churches for innovative mission projects. Major building projects have been carried out successfully at a number of churches including Charminster (Bournemouth), Elstead, Fleet, Henley-on-Thames and Westborough (Guildford).

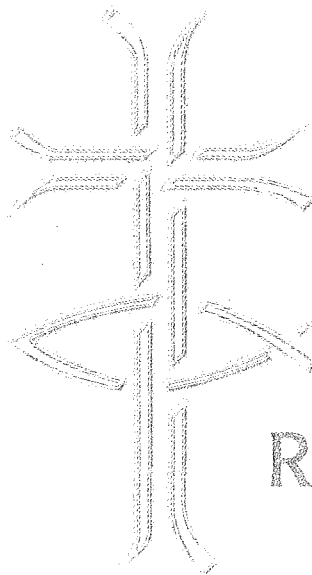
5 In addition we have introduced a Manse Policy with the aim of ensuring that all ministers have appropriate accommodation. The synod has taken responsibility for providing the manses and paying for major repairs, but to help fund this initiative redundant manses are being sold and all manse funds wound up. This process has met with some problems, but we are convinced that it is taking the housing of ministers in the right direction.

6 We have continued to develop our ecumenical policy, encouraging joint working wherever possible and looking carefully at any requests for grants towards building work in Local Ecumenical Partnerships. The local informal relationship with the Methodists has been maintained and strengthened – a liaison group of Wessex with the Southampton Methodist District meets regularly to discuss matters of common interest. The Synod and District plan joint training sessions on a variety of subjects for the whole people of God throughout the area.

7 Amongst the activities of local churches, we have been glad to participate with our ecumenical partners in the formation of Local Ecumenical Partnerships to serve large new housing developments at Whiteley (Fareham) and Elvetham Heath (Fleet). A rather unusual project has been initiated by our Parkstone church which called a half-time minister (an Anglican) who has been appointed also as half-time civic chaplain in the Borough of Poole.

8 We have said farewell to our Moderator, and wish Derek and Anne Wales a long and happy retirement in their new home in Chichester. Derek served Wessex faithfully throughout his term of office, and we are particularly grateful for the way in which he strengthened the links with our many ecumenical partners. Now we set off on a new voyage of discovery with Adrian Bulley. We have also welcomed three other new members of staff. Our Youth and Children's Work Trainer Ann Martin moved to another job in January 2001, and after much thought we delayed naming a direct successor, but instead we have made a short term appointment of a Youth and Children's Development Worker, Andrew Micklefield. The extent of our building projects programme has led to the introduction of an Assistant Synod Officer (Properties), Terry Pearce, and a new post of Trust Financial Officer has been filled by Nigel Grice. To complete the changes, we have moved the Synod Office from Chandler's Ford to refurbished premises in Southampton.

9 In July 2001 we held our first Synod Day for a number of years. It was entitled "Joppa Journey" and held at the Leisure Centre in Eastleigh. The idea for the name came from the story of Jonah, and this led to a whole range of imaginative workshops and activities, from "A hole in the boat" to "Learning to surf". Attendance was restricted by the inclement weather, but those who attended voted it a considerable success. We cannot promise exactly the same range of events when General Assembly comes to Portsmouth in 2003, but we look forward to giving you all a warm welcome.



*The*  
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1.1 In the past year the Southern Synod said farewell to Revd David Helyar who has retired after being Moderator for the last 14 years, around 800 people gathered with David and his wife Mary for an afternoon of memories, thank yous and worship at Worth Abbey in July 2001. Then in September people were delighted to gather again as Revd Nigel Uden was inducted as Moderator in a service held at Sanderstead URC.

1.2 The Synod has designated that four of the available stipends will be used for strategic ministries. A group is in place to oversee this process, guidelines have been drawn up and proposals have been received.

1.3 The Synod continues to employ a development officer and a half time ecumenical officer, as well as the equivalent of a half time mission and evangelism enabler in each district. Training for both lay and ordained has been encouraged in a variety of contexts, in order to support and develop the lives of churches and individuals.

1.4 After over a decade operating in the same space with the same number of staff hours, in spite of an ever increasing workload, the Synod office is undertaking a review. It is hoped that this will find ways of easing the administrative burdens.

1.5 A provincial consultation took place in April this year, taking the form of a Synod vision day. This set out some of the priorities for the coming years and the implications these will have on the structures currently in place.

1.6 To illustrate the breadth of the ongoing work within the life of the Synod at this time, this report will outline five areas of work.

## **2 Youth and Children's Work**

2.1 In October 2000 the Synod unanimously agreed a resolution that encouraged all churches to nominate a youth and children's work elder. In the past year all districts have been encouraged to consider how they can further support and develop youth and children's work in local churches. One district is currently seeking to raise the funds to employ a district youth and children's worker.

2.2 Whilst many churches continue to operate successful traditional methods of working with young people and children, others are trying out new

ways of working as they seek to engage with the young people and children in their communities. The trend of churches employing youth workers continues and the Synod has made funds available to support this.

2.3 In October 2001 over 100 people gathered on a Saturday morning for a seminar led by Ishmael, another such event is being planned for 2002. A FURY event is being planned to run alongside the October Synod meeting. The Canterbury district still runs their summer camp that attracts over 150 young people and children. Many local churches have devoted time to training their youth and children's leaders and considering future strategies for work with young people and children.

## **3 Asylum Seekers in the South-East of England: The response of the Church**

3.1 It was vital that the voluntary sector, and especially Christians in Dover, played a part in welcoming Asylum Seekers and supporting them against the prejudice and hostility that was very evident in the community. The Asylum Seekers Support Group, based at St Columba's United Reformed Church, Dover, created a space for recreation, counselling and care.

3.2 The volunteers are from the different denominations in the town. We have been able to provide legal help, support for prisoners, clothing and food and school uniforms as well as friendship to groups from many countries, but especially the Roma from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. These families are persecuted by skinhead gangs, and have found what is in effect an 'oasis' and a place to find friendship and trust.

3.3 This is still the only church venue open in the area for Asylum Seekers. A publication entitled 'Welcome the Stranger' is due to be released soon, showing in words and photographs the past five years working in Christ's name.

## **4 Links with India**

4.1 In 1999 the bishop of Rayalaseema Diocese, South India, asked the Southern Province of the URC to forge a partnership link. This was taken up.

4.2 With the help of the Belonging to the World Church Programme Bishop CBM Frederick and two other representatives came to Britain for five weeks. During the October 2000 Synod a partnership agreement was sealed using these words, "We belong together and wish to learn from one another's experience through fellowship, prayer and regular exchange visits in order to share our understanding of the faith we have in common and our vision for the future, and so that we can be more faithful and effective in the work of God's Kingdom."

4.3 Ten people from the Synod went to India in January 2002 for three weeks. They were overwhelmed by the warm welcome and hospitality they received and are now sharing this rich experience with others.

## **5 Regeneration Development Officer: A new appointment**

5.1 A large proportion of our churches are engaged in community outreach and development through parent and toddler groups, pensioner clubs, after school clubs etc. but more could be done. More churches could be engaged in local issues, especially in the new climate of acceptance of faith group involvement by the Government but often are not through lack of understanding on how to access funding and writing business plans and monitoring progress.

5.2 Regeneration is about re-establishing hope by re-fashioning society- it is not about cosmetic tinkering to make things *look* better; it is about employment opportunities, environmental responsibility, neighbourhood pride, active citizenship, community development. This new work takes that which is decaying, neglected and life sapping and seeks to transform it into that which is renewed, nurtured and life giving thus enabling crumbling communities to enjoy a renaissance. In short the work of regeneration is a Gospel activity, a mission opportunity which makes things new and offers hope.

5.3 The Synod has appointed Revd Peter Southcombe to spearhead this work and to establish mission opportunities through community engagement and development with churches, local, regional, national and European government officers.

## **6 Lomas House**

6.1 A new venture, a place for equipping saints, restoring lives, and discerning new ways forward! Its called Lomas House and it's in Worthing. It's a 25 bedroom Edwardian house, at present being fully refurbished and restored, originally a home for retired missionaries, a few who still remain there, acquired by the Southern Synod last year from CWM who sought to sell it.

6.2 The vision for its new life was initially caught by local people and in the end, thanks to the wider support of the Synod, came into being as a new retreat and training centre available to all. Its aim is to provide opportunities for small groups and individuals seeking time away on retreats, quiet days, and times of healing and renewal, and offering helpful courses for leaders, teams, church secretaries, elders meetings, and any who are looking for something to help them develop their gifts and skills in the life of the church and beyond. Hopefully it will also be a place that encourages and inspires churches to explore new ways forward for mission, worship, evangelism, buildings, closures, unions and prayer.

6.3 It is a place for us all, always with an open door to whoever seeks its life. It is geared for the smaller group or church so they are more able to come away and reflect in a place appropriate to their size and ethos. A place of peace and prayer from which might flow new life to the praise and the glory of God and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom.

7 In profoundly challenging days for the Church in Britain, Southern Synod is excited by these five significant areas of work, and by many others besides. We recognise gratefully that many people, much effort and untiring prayer are at the heart of it all. To God alone be the glory.

## **1 Better Together**

1.1 Following the Uniting Assembly in Glasgow on 1st April 2000, it quickly became clear that the work of creating a new synod was far from ended; it had, in fact, only just begun. Not only was a new chapter opened in the story of the United Reformed Church, but a new challenge had to be faced in the concept of the National Synod. Along with our colleagues in Wales, we were called to work out the implications of this for the URC and for national church life.

1.2 Two years on, the synod has in place the structures and procedures which allow it to serve its local churches, participate in the life of the whole URC and relate to the Scottish ecumenical scene. There have been – and still remain – obstacles to be overcome, not least of which is a constant demand on resources of people and time which we often struggle to meet. Nonetheless, we remain convinced of the wisdom of our response to the call to unite. Better together!

## **2 Development Officer**

2.1 At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2002, the Synod of Scotland inducted the Revd John Humphreys to the post of Development Officer. We rejoice that John's breadth of experience in the URC and in the wider church will help the synod in its ongoing journey of discovery. We look forward to working with John as we continue the process of being and becoming the URC in Scotland.

## **3 A National Synod**

3.1 The synod takes seriously its rôle as a National Synod and, along with the Ecumenical Secretary, represents the URC on ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland). Through its Church and Society Committee the Synod of Scotland has, on the URC's behalf, been involved in consultation with the Scottish Parliament via the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office and has, in particular, taken part in a consultation process on the drafting of a Private Member's Bill on sectarianism.

## **4 Education**

4.1 The synod's Education Committee has been hard at work over the last two years on a programme intended to develop an understanding among the local churches and Area Councils of what it means to be the URC in Scotland. The Education Committee has helped the synod explore the consequences of union and to understand and cope with the changes that have taken place.

## **5 Local Churches**

5.1 Perhaps the most visible, and most encouraging, consequence of union has been the formation of new Joint Pastorates and LEP's in Scotland. This, along with increasing use of URC resources such as Pilots, is clear local evidence that we are better together.

## **6 Scottish Ecumenical Assembly**

6.1 In September of 2001 an assembly of all major churches in Scotland was held in Edinburgh. This unique event had the purpose of formulating a series of statements, agreeable to all churches, on the subjects of Poverty; Enlightenment; Alienation; Work; Spirituality; Science and Technology; and Church. This was, to the surprise of some, successfully achieved, and the churches of Scotland were heard to speak with a single voice on matters of global importance. The URC owes its gratitude to one of its ministers, the Revd Stuart Drummond, for his key rôle in the planning and organisation of this event.

## Resolution 1 Voluntary religious service and employment

**General Assembly calls upon Her Majesty's Government to encourage employers to allow their employees working for faith communities in a voluntary capacity to be permitted paid leave on those occasions when those responsibilities fall within working time.**

*East Midlands Synod*

*Proposer: Revd Murdoch MacKenzie  
Seconder: Mrs Irene Wren*

1.1 This resolution came from a church where a review of their NSM was being undertaken. A member of the eldership had recently lost their son in a car accident and the Minister had conducted the funeral. Afterwards the elders were shocked to discover that the Minister had taken a days' annual leave for the occasion.

1.2 The elders and the church agreed that there ought to be a scheme where employees who work for faith communities could be released from employment with pay to undertake duties which

could not be carried out after working hours. The church was comparing the situation with employees in many workplaces who are allowed to have special leave to attend Territorial Army camps, undertake Magistrates duties and undertake jury service.

1.3 Such a scheme would help bring about the partnership with faith communities in social care which the Government is attempting to initiate.

## Resolution 2 Standardising the administration of LEPs

**General Assembly, concerned that, while unity at local level is enabling mission, the lack of co-ordination between denominations at national level is making it more difficult, calls upon the Ecumenical Committee to work with our ecumenical partners to establish:**

- a) a single point of contact for national approval of constitutions for new LEPs and amendments to constitutions of existing LEPs, and
- b) a single form which satisfies all denominations' needs for statistical information.

*East Midlands Synod*

*Proposer: Revd Murdoch MacKenzie  
Seconder: Mrs Irene Wren*

1.1 The Churches in Milton Keynes have converged the Anglican Deanery Synod, the Methodist Circuit and the URC District Council to enable the Churches better to carry out their mission. The lack of co-ordination of the denominations at national level is holding up that mission particularly in the area of constitutions for LEPs where it is not uncommon for there to be up to 12 drafts before a constitution is approved. Many of

the changes are often minor in character. In the area of statistical information each denomination sends out a form at different times of the year and requires different information.

1.2 If these areas could be converged it would release people to be able to carry out the mission given to us by Jesus.

**Resolution 3****Advocacy for Christian Stewardship**

**General Assembly, mindful of the United Reformed Church's need to complement spending cuts with increased giving, instructs the Life and Witness Committee to give priority to the development and promotion of stewardship, and, subject to the availability of funds additional to the 2003 Budget, to proceed as soon as possible with the appointment of one or more advocates for this work; and resolves that from 2004 onwards the post(s) shall be included in the United Reformed Church budget.**

*Southern Synod*

*Proposer: Revd Michael J Davies*

*Seconder: Mr Ian Chalmers*

1.1 In the current debate about URC finances a crucial element has been missing – Christian Stewardship. When a church or charitable organisation overspends it must first prune its costs to eliminate the immediate shortfall. Then it must review its plans and priorities to ensure that future budgets will balance. However, alongside both these steps, if it believes in the work it is doing, it must put a high priority on generating the necessary funds.

1.2 Through the first half of the 90s the URC had a deep commitment to Christian Stewardship. In local churches, which responded to TRIO, income increased significantly and met expenditure, including the work of the wider church through the Ministry and Mission Fund. Now we have no full time advocate and it shows!

1.3 The Southern Synod believes that the only way forward is to engage vigorously in advocacy again and that the appointment of a person or persons to spear-head it is a priority. Raising the resources should be a first charge on the budget. If this is not possible in the first year (2003), other funds must be sought to prime the pump – but the URC must get back on track and urgently, actively seek the resources it needs for the work and mission to which it is called.

**Resolution 4****Ecumenical Bishop in Wales**

**General Assembly endorses the resolution which has been passed by the Synod of Wales agreeing to "take steps appropriate to our polity to bring into being an Ecumenical Bishop in Wales who shall be in full communion with us as with all other parties to the scheme" and accepts fully the Proposal for the Appointment of an Ecumenical Bishop for Cardiff East (The Common Document).**

*Synod of Wales*

*Proposer: Revd Stuart Jackson*

*Seconder: Revd Alison Davis*

1.1 At a recent meeting, the National Synod of Wales carefully considered the Proposal and documentation provided by Enfys (the Covenanted Body) in "the Common Document" and the "Service for the Consecration of the Ecumenical Bishop". The text of the Common Document plus Appendices together with the Service for the Consecration of the Ecumenical Bishop can be found in this Book of Reports (Appendix 11).

**Resolution 5****Remand Prisoners**

**General Assembly asks Her Majesty's Government to ensure that all prisoners found not guilty of the charges against them or who are found to have no case to answer should receive pro-rata compensation for their period on remand regardless of any previous convictions.**

*Wessex Synod*

*Proposed by: Revd David J Williams*

*Seconded by: Revd D Michael Thomas*

1.1 People remanded on bail while awaiting trial are free to continue to earn their living while those remanded in custody are not. About forty percent of remand prisoners are eventually found not guilty. Those who have no previous conviction are entitled to compensation for their time on remand while those who have a previous conviction are not so entitled. Their only recourse is to sue for wrongful imprisonment. This is not justice. This resolution sets out to redress the balance.

**Resolution 6****Inter-Synod Sharing**

**Assembly gives thanks for the new spirit of sharing which has arisen in the life of the United Reformed Church from the consultation between the synods. It asks the Resource Sharing Task Group to initiate a consultation between the synods on the advisability and possibility of a more complete sharing of the financial resources of the synods, with a view to a more radical and equitable distribution of such resources across the whole church.**

*Wessex Synod*

*Proposed by: Revd Adrian Bulley*

*Seconded by: Mr Graham Rolfe*

1.1 Wessex Synod has strongly supported the recent development of inter-synod resource sharing. We are blessed with greater financial resources than some of the other synods, and we believe that as members of the same church we should look towards sharing more fairly.

1.2 The Convener of the Resource Sharing Task Group wrote to all synods last November, asking they consider the inclusion of money received from

the sale of redundant church property within the resource-sharing process. The meeting of Wessex Synod in March 2002 agreed to this proposal, but wished also to encourage a more radical review of the distribution of resources. We are aware that this may not be an easy task, but this should not prevent the attempt. Any progress will be made only with the participation of all the synods, and we feel that the Resource Sharing Task Group is the appropriate body to initiate the work.



**Resolution 7****CRCW Programme**

**General Assembly asks the Ministries Committee to re-examine the way in which the criteria for the issue of Certificates of Eligibility to potential CRCWs are applied, to consider whether any changes are needed and to report to the Assembly.**

*West Midlands Synod*

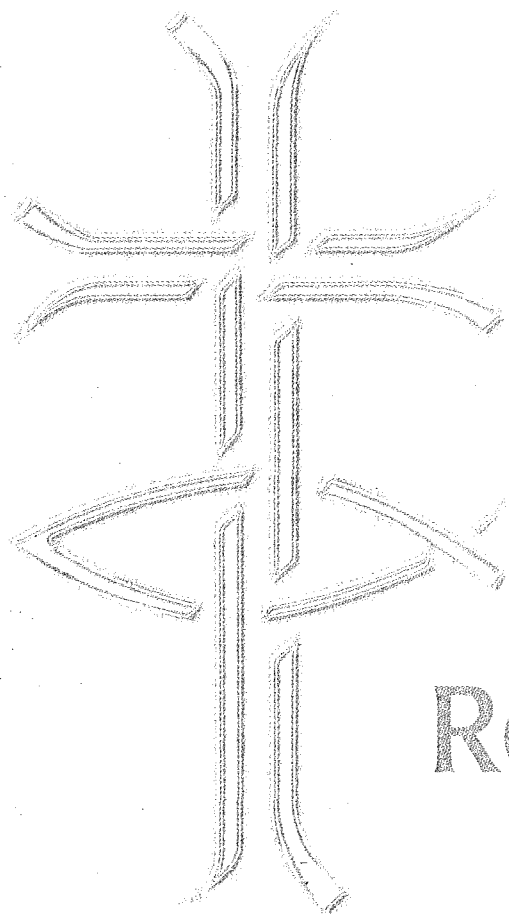
*Proposer: Revd Paul Whittle  
 Seconder: Revd Dr John Campbell*

1.1 Whilst maintaining concern for due parity of conditions and status between CRCWs and Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Synod is concerned that the realities of recruitment and periods of service are given due weight in the way the CRCW programme is administered.

- **A RECOGNISED MINISTRY** - The CRCW programme in the URC is a MINISTRY to which Christians are called by God (not just a job). Important steps have rightly been taken to ensure that this Ministry is recognised as having "PARITY" with the Ministry of Word and Sacraments (commonly called 'ministers'). This idea of a community work Ministry, equal in status to 'ministers', where the workers have a calling and a training in theology and theological reflection as well as a professional training in community work probably makes the URC's programme unique.
- **ACCREDITING POSTS AND FILLING THEM** - However, CRCW ministries are very different from pastorates. Most churches have long histories and are expected to carry on for indefinite periods. A CRCW post has a maximum life of 10 years and responds to a closely argued application made at a particular time relating to specific needs of a particular hard-pressed community. In these circumstances, an extended vacancy of indeterminate length either in the middle of the work or before it can properly begin is profoundly dispiriting. Whilst it is inevitable (and even desirable) that there should be a

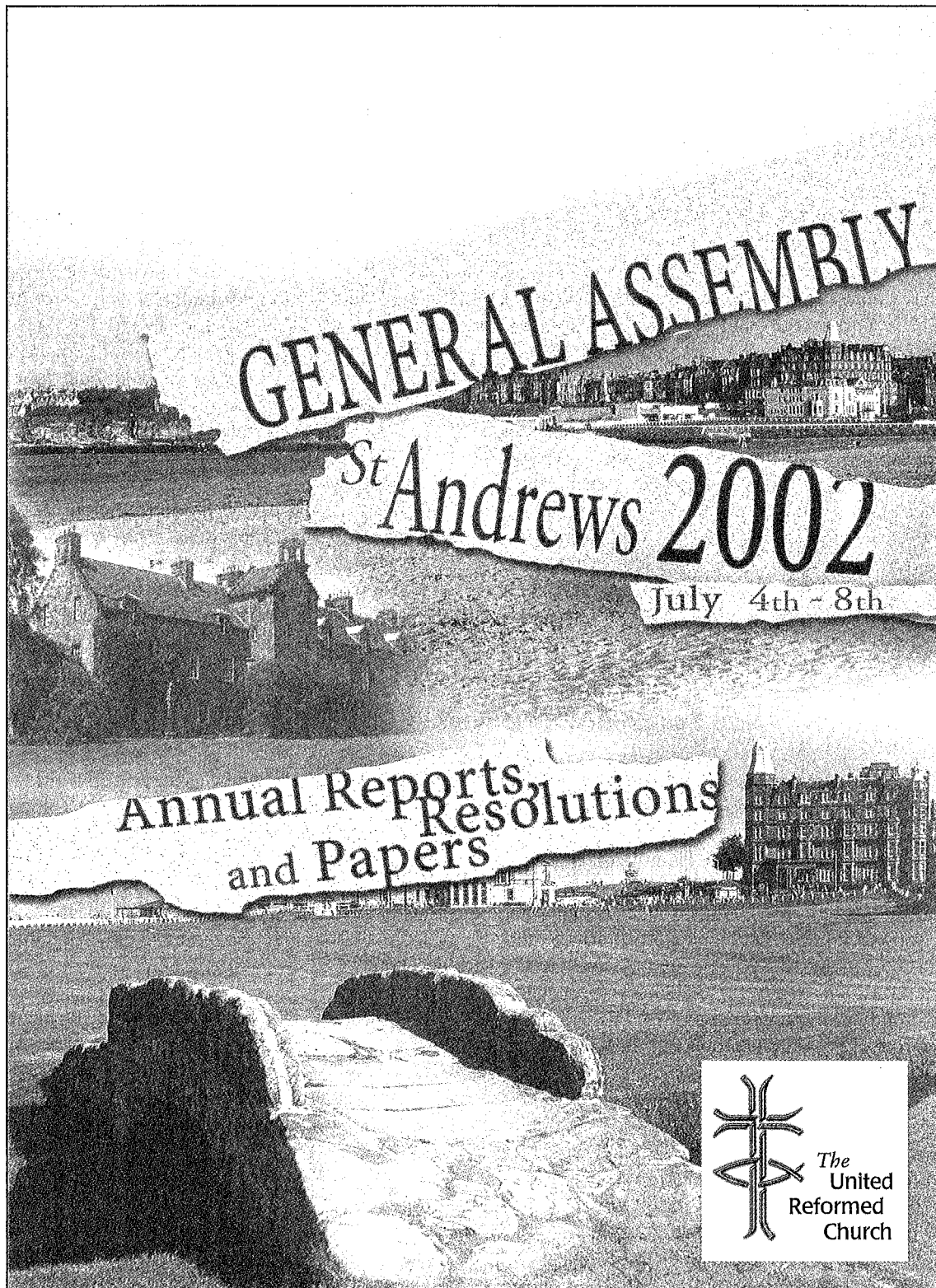
few more posts than workers, too large an excess leads to very lengthy, even indefinite vacancies and, ultimately risks the viability of the whole idea. A serious attempt to call, recruit and ensure the eligibility of appropriate people from other denominations may be necessary at this time to address urgent ministry needs and ensure the ongoing health and development of this whole programme.

- **THE PROBLEM OF "PARITY"** - We wholeheartedly accept the idea of CRCWs as a Ministry having real parity with the Ministry of Word and Sacraments. We expect there to be both professional and theological standards set and an equivalence both in terms and conditions and in status. That does not, however, mean that every procedure and approach appropriate to establishing the eligibility of 'ministers' can reasonably be re-applied to CRCWs. Indeed, the training required is itself noticeably different. There are hundreds of ministers in the URC and thousands more trained and qualified along broadly similar lines by other denominations who could apply to join the URC. There are probably fewer than fifty people who have ever completed CRCW training and no other denomination is training anyone for a directly similar post. Establishing eligibility as a CRCW for people from other denominations, if it is to be a practicable option, must require a case-by-case approach with honest pragmatism, even a willingness to require some theological training in the first year of an appointment, where appropriate.



*The*  
United  
Reformed  
Church

# Churches - Changes and Synod Moderators' Report



# Churches - Changes

## Resolution 8

## New Churches

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

## New Churches

### St John's, Fagley, Bradford

*Yorkshire*

1.1 The twenty four and elderly members of an inner-city church considered their future. They had been in a Group but that had been dissolved, retaining 20% ministry in the person of Revd Howard Jones. They expressed deep concern about their ability to cope with the up-keep of their premises and to maintain a vital presence in the local neighbourhood. A decision was taken to be ambitious and seek ways to maintain a missionary presence, to heed the imperative of Jesus to serve homeless, lonely, disabled and disadvantaged people, parents and children.

1.2 They talked to the Newlands Partnership (Single Regeneration Budget), Housing Corporation, Local Authority, District and Synod for help with funding. They negotiated the sale of some land to Habinteg Housing Association who built four life-time houses and a bungalow constructed for a person with severe disabilities. They asked the local people what they needed and wished to see developed on the site. They demolished the old building and built a new modern church, designed as a resource for multiple uses. They now work hard to provide staff presence and to realise what began as a vision, one that excited and drew support from near and far. They are at the end of a new beginning.

### Elvetham Heath Local Ecumenical Partnership

*Wessex*

1.1 The planning of the Elvetham Heath housing development led Churches Together in Fleet and Church Crookham in 1993 to begin to work towards creating 'The Church on the Heath' for the new community. Four denominations (Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, URC) signed a declaration of intent, formed a Local Ecumenical Partnership, and contributed money to buy one of the first houses built at Elvetham Heath for the church's minister. The church began meeting informally in September 2000 and was formally launched at its first service three months later.

1.2 The church is for everyone in the community and was established as a united Christian presence for the new development, blending the traditions of the partner denominations in both worship and church government. The church aims to share the

good news of Christianity, to serve and build up the community and to help people grow as Christians. It has already grown from its 25-strong seeding group to a congregation of 80+ most Sundays. Three house groups meet weekly and there is a growing range of other activities, focussed around welcoming people to the area and attracting them to the church.

1.3 Working with the developers, a site has been set aside for a church building in the heart of the village centre. Meanwhile services are being held in the Community Centre, with other meetings at the Primary School and in homes.

**St Mary's Island, Chatham Maritime***Southern*

1.1 King Henry VIII founded a Royal Naval Dockyard at Chatham in North Kent. Over four hundred years it made substantial contributions to the defence of the realm and to the local economy. With the ending of the Cold War, a defence review led to its closure and to debates about how best to use vast areas of derelict land.

1.2 A distinct area of nearly a square mile, known as St Mary's Island, was designated for residential development and cleared of all buildings. Local churches realised an opportunity would soon appear and began preparations to plant an ecumenical church. In November 1995 the first act of worship of a "Church in Waiting" was held on a boat moored alongside the deserted Island.

1.3 Numerous changes of development plans extended the wait. However, by 1998 house building was proceeding apace and the doctors' surgery hosted monthly prayer meetings. Occasional outdoor

worship and social events expressed a Christian concern for the new community. Once the Church of England primary school opened, its hall provided the one substantial community facility on the Island and in January 2000 regular Sunday morning services began there.

1.4 With oversight from clergy on the "mainland", the day-to-day leadership of St Mary's Island Church is provided by a team of three lay people: one Anglican, one URC and one Baptist. Links with the school are warm and fruitful and a typical Sunday congregation includes 25 adults and eight children, the majority of whom live on the island.

1.5 Following a full discussion at a congregational meeting in October 2001, the Church requested recognition as a local congregation of the United Reformed Church. It is hoped a formal LEP Constitution will be ratified during 2002.

**Resolution 9****Closure of Local Churches**

**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****Bucklow Hill***North Western*

1.1 About 1820, two sisters began to hold cottage services around Rostherne in Cheshire. As congregations grew, a disused stable was used, a Congregational Church established, and a chapel built in 1835. Between 1839 and 1844, the minister of Altrincham and Bowdon supplied Bucklow Hill on Sunday afternoons and Thursday evenings. The church was strong enough to call a minister between 1863 and 1882, but over much of its life had to rely on supply, shared ministry or student pastors.

1.2 The congregation became part of the URC in 1972 and enjoyed the varied services of student ministers training at the College in Manchester. The church was grouped at various times with Lymm and Knutsford until 1994 when it united with Woodlands URC to become one church in two places. With a membership of four, the decision was made to close the church building. The church lives in the community of Bucklow Hill through the witness of the members.

**Park***North Western*

1.1 In 1798, dissenters built a small chapel beside the road from Rossendale to Bury, Lancashire. A gathered congregation became established, and maintained a noble witness for two centuries although detached from local population centres. A school house was added and on the centenary in 1898 a new church was built. The church was well attended until after the Second World War, people keeping contact even when they moved from the area. For many years, a diminished congregation

maintained loyalty and commitment to its church, though the Sunday school lost attendance and its building was demolished. The church joined the Bury North Pastorate with Greenmount and Dundee church in Ramsbottom. Eventually after much consideration, the decision was made that the church should close and the nineteen members joined either Greenmount or Dundee churches. Park church closed on 17 June 2001

## **Walton Trinity, Liverpool District**

*Mersey*

1.1 The story of the Church begins in 1881, when the first services were held in the Walton Institute. In 1883 a temporary church, the Iron Church, with a corrugated iron roof, was built. It could seat 300 people. The Church Hall was opened in 1896, and the Iron Church was replaced by a permanent building, dedicated on 24 April 1898.

This completed the building scheme. The building did not survive the Second World War, but in 1965 the present church was dedicated on the foundations of the old. Due to a declining and ageing congregation, the decision was reluctantly taken to close the Church, and a final service of thanksgiving was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2001.

## **Rankin, Liverpool**

*Mersey*

1.1 The Church was formed in 1823 by five men and three women. It was originally a mission station of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Ireland. After turning to Scotland to seek a minister in 1851 the congregation became part of the Glasgow Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It became part of the Presbyterian Church of England in 1876. Its original premises were in Shaw Street in the heart of Liverpool. The Presbytery of Liverpool began their new cause on a housing estate in Norris Green in 1931. The minister (Revd Gordon MacLeod, father of Alan MacLeod, Principal of Westminster College) and the congregation were invited to transfer their work and worship to the new Church which became known as Rankin Memorial Church, after a benefactor, John Rankin.

1.2 Although twice damaged by bombs during the Second World War, the Church recovered and prospered with good membership and thriving youth work. In 1949 it became the first experiment of a 'Home Mission Board Charge'. In 1961 the Revd Ella Gordon, the first woman minister of the Presbyterian Church of England, became the minister of Rankin Memorial. Over the years the Church became more and more subject to vandalism. During the 1970's the original church was pulled down, part of the site sold, and the hall made into a church. In 1972 the congregation became part of the United Reformed Church at its formation. Although the Church maintained a faithful witness, vandalism increased, membership declined through death and members moving away. The decision to close was made in November 2001 and the closing service was on Sunday March 17<sup>th</sup> 2002 – St Patrick's Day – an apt choice for a congregation that was started by Irish Reformed Presbyterians.

## **Armitage, Staffordshire**

*West Midlands*

1.1 Congregational services commenced in a private house in 1811 at Armitage, near Stafford, but in 1820 a local Congregationalist, Thomas Birch, established the church in its present buildings. A schoolroom was added later in the century. The founder of the Armitage Pottery, the Revd Edward Johns, gave later support and continued to be involved in the church until his death in 1893.

St Paul's Church, Rugeley and Handsacre, has had care of the fellowship. The Chapel, which was recently Listed, has its own graveyard, and it was a particularly difficult decision to cease using it for worship. However, in spite of fund raising activities, including Songs of Praise services and organ recitals, the congregation had struggled for some years to meet its financial commitments and maintain the building. Following repeated outbreaks of dry rot, and with dwindling numbers, in March 2001 the congregation reluctantly decided to close. The last service was held on 27 May, and a Thanksgiving Service held on 15 June.

1.2 Over the years, a few faithful families kept this village church going and its Friendship Hour attracted members from all the churches in the vicinity, as well as some who did not attend any church. In recent years, the Methodist minister from

## **Hundon Chapel (West Suffolk Group)**

*Eastern*

1.1 Following the great spiritual revival in the beginning of the nineteenth century when most villages were self-contained there began a need for independent worship. Due to the high church practice in the parish church those who had seceded from the established church found themselves having to travel to other villages to attend non-conformist worship. It was decided, by

the villagers, to build a chapel of their own. This was done in 1846 at a cost of £450. No exact numbers are available for the membership but there are records of many baptisms and weddings. Such were the numbers attending that in 1860 a gallery and vestry were added to the chapel. From 1912 onward the old revival spirit had faded and the numbers reduced. The costs of maintenance of the building

and ministry were onerous and the chapel began to decline. The membership at this time stood at 31. During the 1930s there was a brief revival under the leadership of Revd Jubb and membership numbers rose to over 40. During World War II the chapel remained open but did not have a minister. In 1947 Revd V Sheldrick, minister Stansfield Congregational Church, took pastoral oversight and there was a thriving Sunday School with over 40 scholars under the leadership of Mrs E Pryke. Sisterhood meetings were held on a Thursday afternoon. Adult membership continued to decline and stood at 12 in 1951. During the 1970s membership was so low that worship was only held every fortnight, the Chapel joined the URC at the time of the 1972 Union. In the 1980s Revd David Deans was appointed to the 'villages' pastorate within the

### **Marldon (Chapel on the Hill) Paignton**

1.1 Although no written records have been found regarding the formation of the group that founded the chapel, it is believed that they started to meet at a local farm (Peters Farm) in 1841. In 1864 the site was "conveyed" by Mr George Mortimore to the Reverend J A Coombs. At this time the Chapel was linked to the Abbey Road Chapel in Torquay.

1.2 Lack of past records has made it difficult to plot the progress of the chapel, but it is known that at the beginning of the Second World War, the minister was called up, members left to do their war service and the Chapel was commandeered by the County Council for use as a day school. A caretaker was employed to clean daily for 2 shillings per week.

1.3 Like many small chapels it is often one or two individuals that are the mainstay of the fellowship, the late Gladys Parsons was the one in this case. She ran the Sunday School before and after she did her war service, and was still a regular attender in 1993.

### **Wylye**

1.1 The witness at Wylye was started in 1817 by a resolution of the chapel in Codford, a village some 4 miles up the Wylye valley, who agreed that 'a supply be obtained for the Lord's Day evening of the first Sabbath in the month that our minister might preach that evening at Wily'. By 1827 there were enough members 'to rent a building at Wiley and fit it up for the worship of God'. In 1854 Sunday and Weekday schools were opened, attended by about forty children. The day school ran until 1882.

1.2 After difficulties with the Lord of the Manor, a site was sought for a new chapel and this was opened on 11 October 1860. At the time of its

West Suffolk Group and this produced a short-lived revival. This ministry coincided with the appointment of Father Jeremy Cooper as Rector to the parish. Although of high church persuasion Father Jeremy was determined that the village should have an alternative to his style of churchmanship. Now there was a new air as Church and Chapel worked together in the village and combined Bible Study and Fellowship meetings took place. Anglican duties permitting Father Jeremy was regularly in worship. By 1999 the membership had declined to 7 members and taking into account the age and health of the Fellowship it was decided, with great heartache and soul searching to close the Chapel. A final service of thanksgiving was held on Sunday 25 July 1999. We give thanks to God for all that the Chapel has achieved in the 153 years of its existence.

### *South Western*

1.4 Abbey Road Chapel had been declared unsafe and Marldon was linked with Furrough Cross URC at Babbacombe.

1.5 Over the past 5 years the congregation had become smaller, the chapel was isolated at one end of the village, outreach to the new housing developments had not been fruitful and the building had a number of problems that were going to be expensive to put right. Following several visits by the district pastoral committee, the congregation recognised their situation but felt unable to pass a resolution to close, because of promises made to past members. The present minister drew up an alternative resolution that devolved responsibility for the future of the chapel to the district, which was accepted and passed by the 4 active members of the congregation. The Torbay District passed a resolution that the chapel should close. The closure service was held on December 19th 2001 in the form of a service of thanksgiving for the life and witness of the chapel coupled with Carols by Candlelight.

### *Wessex*

centenary in 1960 there were just 8 members and 2 associate members.

1.3 For the last few years the church has been part of the South Wilts pastorate, and for the two Sunday afternoon services held each month the Wylye congregation was joined by members of the other three churches in the pastorate. However the building was showing signs of its age and so a decision was taken by the three remaining members to hold the last service at Easter 2001.

## **Trinity Church, Yateley**

*Wessex*

1.1 The roots of Trinity go back to the mission programme of Camberley URC in 1984/5 under the ministry of the Revd Graham Long. There was a vision to have a committed church plant in Yateley to cater for the increasing number of URC folk living there. 'The URC Fellowship in Yateley' held its first service in September 1985 in the village hall. By the beginning of 1987 they had been joined by the Methodists with the intention of forming a united church in Yateley. On Pentecost Sunday 1987 Trinity Church Yateley (URC and Methodist) was formed. Ministerial oversight was provided from both sides.

1.2 House groups followed together with music and drama groups, Alpha courses, etc. All went well and there was significant impact on children and young people and families who came through in the early days. However, the lack of proper church

premises, and having to use an increasingly pressured village hall became a problem. Yet there was an active group of around thirty and the church acted as an ecumenical catalyst.

1.3 However, the village church scene gradually changed. The local Anglican church was very large and active with cell churches. It met the needs of people of all ages, especially newcomers with young families. Thus the need for a free church presence was no longer as critical as it had been earlier. At Trinity various problems surfaced, enthusiasm waned, and on Pentecost Sunday 2001 the church closed. Pastoral care continued, to ensure that all connected with the fellowship found a new spiritual home, a number being welcomed into nearby Sandhurst Methodist Church.

## **Maplehurst**

*Southern*

1.1 Following months of discussion, and inspired by the leadership of Revd George Oliver Frost of Horsham Congregational Church, a chapel was opened and dedicated for worship on November 16<sup>th</sup> 1893 in the village parish of Maplehurst, Sussex. The accounts show that the purchase of the land with three cottages, the building work to the chapel and the arrangement for the opening day cost the church £572.10.6. The Chapel became a centre for worship in the village and there were times when the 100 chairs that were bought for the chapel were insufficient for the congregation.

1.2 Times change, however, and few residents of Maplehurst village now work locally. During the 1960s and 1970s a devoted and committed congregation met at the chapel and regularly issued invitations to residents to join them in special Christmas and other services. In the 1980s it was becoming increasingly difficult to encourage local

people to attend the chapel and the congregation of 10 or so found, even with the help of Horsham, that they were unable to witness in the way that they felt was needed. There have been two rural missions, a special celebration in 1993 of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and many other, smaller, initiatives but eventually it was decided that the resources of Horsham and the, now small, congregation should be diverted to Slinfold which is in the centre of an expanding village. The chapel was closed with a special weekend of celebration in September 2001. Representatives from Southern Province, Croydon District, members from Horsham and Slinfold and some local people attended.

1.3 Slinfold Chapel was also opened during the time of Revd George Oliver Frost and it is our hope that, with Maplehurst chapel now closed, the work at Slinfold will become a new focus for those who have served with such commitment at Maplehurst.

## **Mount Pisgah, Parkmill, Swansea**

*Wales*

1.1 Mount Pisgah Chapel, Parkmill, was built in 1822 at the expense of Lady Diana Barham, the well known benefactress of the evangelical movement, who came to live in the area in 1813. She helped to found several religious communities in the Gower peninsular and built six chapels, four independent, of which this is one. An English Congregational Church, Mount Pisgah was one of a group of five

chapels in the Gower group of the Glamorganshire Congregational Union by 1848. The Church has a history of service to the community. Sadly, by 2000 only a few elderly members remained and found the burden of a listed building in need of costly repair work too great. The Church closed in the summer of 2001. We give thanks for the work and witness of Mount Pisgah's members over 180 years.



1.1 Before 1870, the Garw valley, north of Bridgend in South Wales, was an isolated & peaceful agricultural valley, virtually untouched by the ravages of the industrial revolution. By 1900, however, the valley was one of the busiest coal-producing areas in Wales, with five collieries employing 3000 miners. The unrelenting influx of immigrants into the valley led to an explosive rate of development; housing, schools, shops and other facilities mushroomed within a very short time. The first chapel to be built in the valley was the Tylagwyn Baptist Chapel in 1831. There were 29 Baptists in the valley. By 1904 the number had reached 1,100. This increase was similar with the other denominations, resulting in the construction of imposing, spacious chapels and churches throughout the valley. By 1888, 14 places of worship had been constructed with the colliery managers generally being the deacons of their respective chapels or churches and with the buildings themselves being erected by the congregations.

1.2 Tabernacle Chapel, Pontycymmer, was one of the largest and most influential of the valley chapels. In response to the increasing number of English nonconformists who were moving into the valley, the Welsh Congregationalists of Tabernacle decided to help create a separate English church. The new English Congregationalist Church was built in the same street, one block away, and was opened in 1893. In 1972, the 'English Cong' became Pontycymmer URC.

1.3 The gradual decline, and then death, of the coal industry in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century led to an exodus of young people from the valley. As the younger element moved out, an ageing community stayed on.

1.4 For a long time, Pontycymmer URC thrived as a bustling, active local church, deeply integrated into the community it served. Up until 1990, the Church continued to play a significant role in the valley, especially because of its ecumenical initiatives and successful work with children and young people. But as in so many other valley chapels, a declining and ageing membership, and the inability to maintain a crumbling, listed building all became too much. The Church Meeting of 17 October 2001 unanimously voted to inform the South Wales District Council that they could no longer carry the heavy responsibility of maintaining their buildings, and so with heavy hearts, felt they had no choice but to close.

1.5 We give thanks for over 100 years of worship and witness at Pontycymmer.

# Moderators' Report

## I Introduction

1.1 "Matchmaker, matchmaker, make me a match"...the words from Fiddler on the Roof may seem a world away from that of the Moderators' Monthly Meetings, yet in some ways at least they capture one important element of our work. We have little doubt that we are called many things, and that "matchmakers" may be one of the better ones. However we believe, that acting as 'matchmakers' or as 'A Dating Agency' (though to be fair we would prefer 'Introduction Agency') is a key function of the Moderators. It may also be the most easily recognised of our functions as it is the one churches most often encounter.

1.2 But there are other tasks. In what follows we will seek to reflect on just some of them.

1.3 As Moderators we are concerned that there should be a transparency to the way we operate and how we exercise our role in the wider life of the church. Whilst there are variations in the way each of us works, there is a common understanding among us of what we are and what we do. The purpose of our report this year is to try and share with the church something of our thinking and understanding. At the same time we are aware that it will be very easy for this report to appear as little more than an apologetic of our way of working. We are deeply conscious that the way we operate has evolved over many years. That is not, however, to claim that it is the only way of doing our work, let alone the best way. But it is our present way of doing things and we have confidence in the system we operate. We welcome the work that is being done elsewhere on Leadership and Authority. We have no doubt that there will be things we will need to hear from those deliberations as we seek to be as effective as we can in responding to the call of the church to serve in the role of Synod Moderators.

## 2 A pastoral role

2.1 A pastoral concern for both churches and ministers is at the core of our work. We are convinced that unless we have built up and fostered that deeper relationship then we cannot hope to be of any use to ministers or churches at times of need or crisis.

2.2 We are called to be "a pastor to the pastors", "a minister to the ministers". The task of ministry continues to be a demanding and stressful one, and our experience tells us that ministers and their families

need pastoral support and care. Fortunately the vast majority serve in churches where they are loved and cared for and upheld by both prayer and practical support. However there are times when, in addition to our regular support even they need additional help and encouragement. Sadly there are others who work much of the time in isolation and without encouragement and find that the stress and the strain is more than they can bear alone. We hope that we can be of particular help to them. As with all ministry, it is one of the great privileges we are given, of being allowed alongside people in times of need or crisis. It is one we take seriously.

2.3 But lest it be thought that our only responsibility is to ministers we are aware that we have an equal sense of pastoral care for the churches we serve, Synod by Synod.

2.4 Ministers and churches both find their pastoral care first within their Districts and we continue to be indebted to District Pastoral Committees for the work they do. It is at District Pastoral Committees that we have the greatest opportunity to share in the shaping of District decisions. It is here that personal and collective leadership are seen to work together effectively in the life of the church. Here issues are recognised, addressed and often resolved. Whilst there are times when we are called upon to help resolve a particularly difficult matter, for the most part that work is done quietly in partnership and cooperation with the other churches of the District. Moderators are full members of all the District Councils within their Synod. Such membership enables us to extend that care and leadership into the work of these Councils.

2.5 Which leads us on to say that our pastoral responsibility embraces all, lay and ordained. We are not expected to exercise much of the day-to-day pastoral care that is at the heart of local ministry, but we are expected to be available when further help is needed in particularly difficult or sensitive situations. There are times when we are called upon as 'peacemaker' or even 'trouble-shooter', but in relation to our total work, they are mercifully few. However, some at least of us detect a rising proportion of our workload in this area. But it is clearly part of our function to act in this way, when properly requested to do so by Ministers or Elders or Church Meetings. It is both time consuming and emotionally demanding.

### **3 A bridging role**

3.1 It is almost inevitable that much of our work appears as little more than “keeping the show on the road”. That is certainly not the be-all and end-all of our work, but there are times when keeping the wheels turning is a significant priority. We all benefit from sharing our collective experience, and from the collegiality of the way we work. We hope that this enables us to facilitate the church in its ministry and mission.

3.2 It is against that background that we act as a bridge between the local and the national expressions of being the church. It is a sad reflection that right across the church we still encounter an attitude of ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘us’ being the local church and ‘them’ being Church House, or General Assembly or District Council. Acting as a bridge across all those perceived chasms is a key role. Time and again we have to remind churches that District Councils and Synods, and even the seemingly remote body of General Assembly, only come into being, have a reality and take on a life of their own because ordinary church representatives turn up and meet together. Obvious? Then why does it need saying over and over again?

### **4 A leadership role**

4.1 One of the questions, which exercise us, is to what extent we give leadership to our Synods. That question is particularly relevant at a time when major questions of deployment, falling numbers, financial stringency and ecumenical possibilities force us to think through the appropriate use of our total resources for effective mission. These questions affect everything we do, particularly new ways of structuring our life for mission. Strategic questions have to be worked on collectively within and beyond Synods. Synods and Moderators place a different emphasis on these matters at different times. We spend some time at our meetings sharing these matters with each other. We constantly ask ourselves at what point any such thinking and planning should be fed into the Councils of the Church for wider consideration.

4.2 It is common enough in many situations to find yourself asking the question “Is there a hidden agenda?” We are well aware that such a question is asked, from time to time, of the Moderators. It would be wrong to suggest that Moderators, ministering within their own Synods, do not have some clear ideas of their own about a preferred direction, emphasis or purpose. Indeed we would be failing in our duty of leadership were that to be true. As we understand it, we have a responsibility to see that the structures of the church work properly, by helping Synods, Districts and Churches to do their job, but also by encouraging a wider vision and a

strategy for the future. This is not to suggest that our Individual approach is always right, (nor is it always wrong) but rather our task is to empower people to engage in that process of renewal for themselves. There are times when people almost need to be “given permission” to think in new and radical ways.

4.3 If there is a danger, it lies in those instances where radical change is needed. We are glad to be able to share with one another the challenging proposals for reform that are under consideration in a number of Synods. We hope that our sharing together of such ideas goes some way to safeguarding against the danger of developing thirteen different models in thirteen different synods. We look forward to the debate planned for Mission Council in October. In the same way we hope that much of the work that is going on now in relation to leadership will help the church develop new and more effective models, which can find acceptance across the breadth of our varied church.

4.4 In so far as we do have personal views, we would hope that they find their expression and their working out, within the councils of the church to which we belong, be that as members of local churches, District Councils or as Moderators of Synods. At the same time, we are rightly reminded that the Moderators’ Meeting is not of itself a council of the Church.

4.5 Hopefully those ideas lead to debate and discussion, for it is only there, as we engage in the quest to understand one another that we also discern God’s will and purpose for us.

4.6 But churches too have their own agenda, as do ministers. Having them is not the problem. The problem is when any of us believe that we are both right and unchallengeable. The search for God’s purposes in council together is at the heart of our church life and we neglect that at our peril.

### **5 A supportive role**

5.1 Some ministers have their suspicions about Moderators. For some we are allowed to be a confidant and friend, even a mother/father in God. On the other hand we recognise that not everyone is able to have such a confidence in a person and a system that puts both personal pastoral care and the responsibility for their next pastorate in the same hands. We are deeply aware that some ministers may not feel able to share some things with their Moderator. This is not because they do not ‘get along’ with them, or do not trust them, but because they do not want the person who will be responsible for introducing them to their next pastorate to share their weaknesses or failings, real or perceived.

5.2 We recognise that there may be a perception of a conflict of interests as we hold both a place in the structures and a pastoral responsibility. We hope that we maintain that balance in a sensitive and caring way.

5.3 It is a conflict of responsibilities we have often shared with one another. So far as assurance can ever be given, we are satisfied that confidentiality is respected, and that we do treat those who come to us with integrity and respect. If confidential matters do affect our judgement we hope that it is limited to what is good and right for minister and church, and nothing else.

5.4 We have an abiding concern for the well being of all those in our care, especially those who suffer because of over work or over demand. We see plenty of evidence of the effect that this has on individuals and on family life. At the same time the church also desires for, and from, our ministers high standards of competence. All ministers are called to act in a competent manner; not only through the quality and level of their training we give them, but also in the way they conduct themselves. The questions asked at Ordination and Induction set the standard. Of course, there are times when ministers act in a less than responsible way, but they are thankfully few. However, when it does happen we see the damage it does far beyond the immediate locality.

## **6 A representative role**

6.1 There is a clear understanding in our own denomination, in the ecumenical scene and even in the secular scene (once you have explained for the umpteenth time what a “Moderator” is) that we are called to a leadership role. Inevitably some people see that almost exclusively as that of a Bishop (as defined by the Anglican Church). Such a view is not limited exclusively to non-United Reformed Churches. Given the eclectic make up of so many of our congregations, a significant number come with a particularly Anglican view of the role of a Regional Church Leader and it is assumed that is what we are. Our protestations and reiteration of reformed theology all too often fall on deaf ears. This is exacerbated within our ecumenical responsibilities. Working alongside other Church Leaders is both a privilege and responsibility. It is a privilege for it allows us to engage in dialogue with other denominations at significant levels of their leadership. It is a responsibility because it requires that we represent the United Reformed Church and our reformed position clearly and positively. How often do we tell ecumenical colleagues that we cannot make unilateral decisions, we must consult the councils of our church?

6.2 The exercise of the representative role of the Moderator varies enormously across the Synods and even within the Synods according to circumstances. How we respond to those circumstances will depend not only upon the occasion, but also upon the individual Moderator. For some the representative role is an uncomfortable one, whilst others accept it and fulfil it with greater ease. Styles vary; after all we are individuals. If you want uniformity then maybe that would be one legitimate use of cloning! (But which one of us would you clone?)

6.3 We are the first to recognise that we belong to a conciliar structure. That conciliar approach is to be found not only in our place within the wider councils of the church – District, Synod and General Assembly – but also within our own meetings, where we seek to make decisions by consensus.

## **7 A friendship role**

7.1 Behind the formal agenda that guides our monthly meeting lies a very strong bond of friendship. Despite the fact that our membership regularly changes, and we welcome visitors to our meetings, (e.g. when colleagues are on Sabbatical or serving as Assembly Moderator) we enjoy a high level of mutual support and pastoral care. It is not always possible to reflect the depth of that care outside our fellowship. Personal support, our trust in one another, our willingness to seek and take advice from each other, all help to create bonds of friendship, which we do not take for granted. There is a strong sense of collegiality based on personal trust built up over a period of time.

7.2 We are also grateful that there are occasions when our spouses too enjoy something of that mutual support and care.

## **8 Our Agenda**

8.1 We meet eleven times a year. The usual pattern is nine overnight meetings at United Reformed Church House in London, lasting 24 hours, and two residential meetings lasting 48 hours at a suitable conference facility. These latter occasions enable us to make time for discussions around issues that we need to share, and from time to time we invite speakers to help us in our understanding of particular issues.

8.2 The meetings in London enable us to speak with many members of staff. We are grateful for all the help we receive. Doors are always open to us, and we are aware that staff give of their time to help us deal with matters that are pressing to us as individual Moderators. In particular the General and Deputy General Secretaries give us unimpeded access, and we benefit from both their advice and

pastoral support. By tradition one or other comes into our meeting when we are in London and shares with us matters of concern, seeks our collective help or tries to answer questions we need to raise.

8.3 We spend a great deal of time making judgements about introductions. Each month churches and ministers wait upon those deliberations, and in so far as assurances from us have any value, we would want to say that we strive as hard as we can to come to a collective mind about the best introductions we can make. Even ministerial moves within a synod are subject to the scrutiny of the full meeting. Of course, we do not always get it right, and we would be the first to admit it. At the same time we recognise that in any one month we can only work with the ministers who are currently seeking new pastorates and the pastorates seeking new ministers. That may be to state the obvious, but it does mean that the ideal match, or even a possible match may not be available to us some months. As we have often reflected, it is never in anyone's interest to secure an inappropriate introduction. If the relationship subsequently breaks down, then we are often the ones called upon to help salvage something from the ensuing mess.

8.4 Our introductions are only the first link in this process. The work of determining a call and seeking God's will is the responsibility of the minister, the Church and the District. It always needs to be undertaken in prayer with an openness to the leading of the spirit.

8.5 We would be the first to recognise that questions are being asked about the present pattern of introductions and that not everyone is satisfied with the system we have. The alternative suggestions vary from ministers who want to be "told where to go", to churches that want a free hand to find their own minister in their own way. It is not our task to defend the present system beyond the comment already made, that we have confidence in it. 65% of the ministers seeking pastorates settle at the first introduction and are on the Vacancy List an average of 4 months. 36% of the pastorates seeking ministers settle at the first introduction and are on the Vacancy List an average of 8 months. Of course, there are exceptions and we have to admit that some ministers and some pastorates can remain on our lists for a much longer period.

8.6 It is for the church, through General Assembly, to make its mind clear as to the system it wants us to operate. It is then our task to make that process work as best it can, to be open and transparent about our methods and ultimately accountable to General Assembly for our actions. We hope that this report goes some way in explaining what we do and

how we do it. We know that work is also being done on the church's understanding of "Call". We await the report of the Deployment Task Group, which will help us all in our thinking.

8.7 At the heart of our meetings lies our sharing of the pastoral needs of ministers and their families, and of the churches. At times we can ask for people to be remembered by name, on other occasions confidentiality must prevail. Month by month much of the work of God within the whole church is held in prayer as we take counsel together in God's name.

## **9 Influence?**

9.1 So, do we have influence? Of course we do. How do we exert it? In many ways. All who are called to roles of leadership, whether it is the local elder or the Moderator of Assembly, exert influence.

9.2 We as Moderators have the opportunity to do so in our day-to-day contacts with District Councils, Pastoral Committees, local churches, ministers and their families, ecumenical colleagues and community leaders. We do so in the advice we are asked to give, in the letters and articles we write, in our speaking and preaching, in our leadership of, or simply in our membership of, the multiplicity of committees we attend. But all of that is only as Synod allows, as the church has reason to trust us, and as we place ourselves at the disposal of the Church of Jesus Christ, whose servants we seek to be.

## **10 ...and finally**

10.1 Our hope is that this year we have given something of a glimpse into our work together. If we have lifted the veil on what is, to many, a mystery, then we will have achieved our objective. If we have made churches more willing to question us about our work, then we will be satisfied. If it encourages us to be more accountable in our ministry to the whole church, then God's purposes will be better served.

## **11 Personalia**

11.1 Following the last General Assembly we said goodbye to David Helyar who had been with us since 1987. He left, however, with a fine closing cabaret at Tony Burnham's 'farewell' and is now looking for a new retirement career in show business. Fortunately it did not stop him being appointed as an Ecumenical Canon of Honour at Rochester Cathedral; a fitting expression of appreciation for all his work in ecumenical leadership. In his place at our meetings we have welcomed Nigel Uden. John Humphreys has also left us after 12 years, during which time we have benefited from his wise counsel and enjoyed his gentle humour. We have welcomed Peter Noble who has

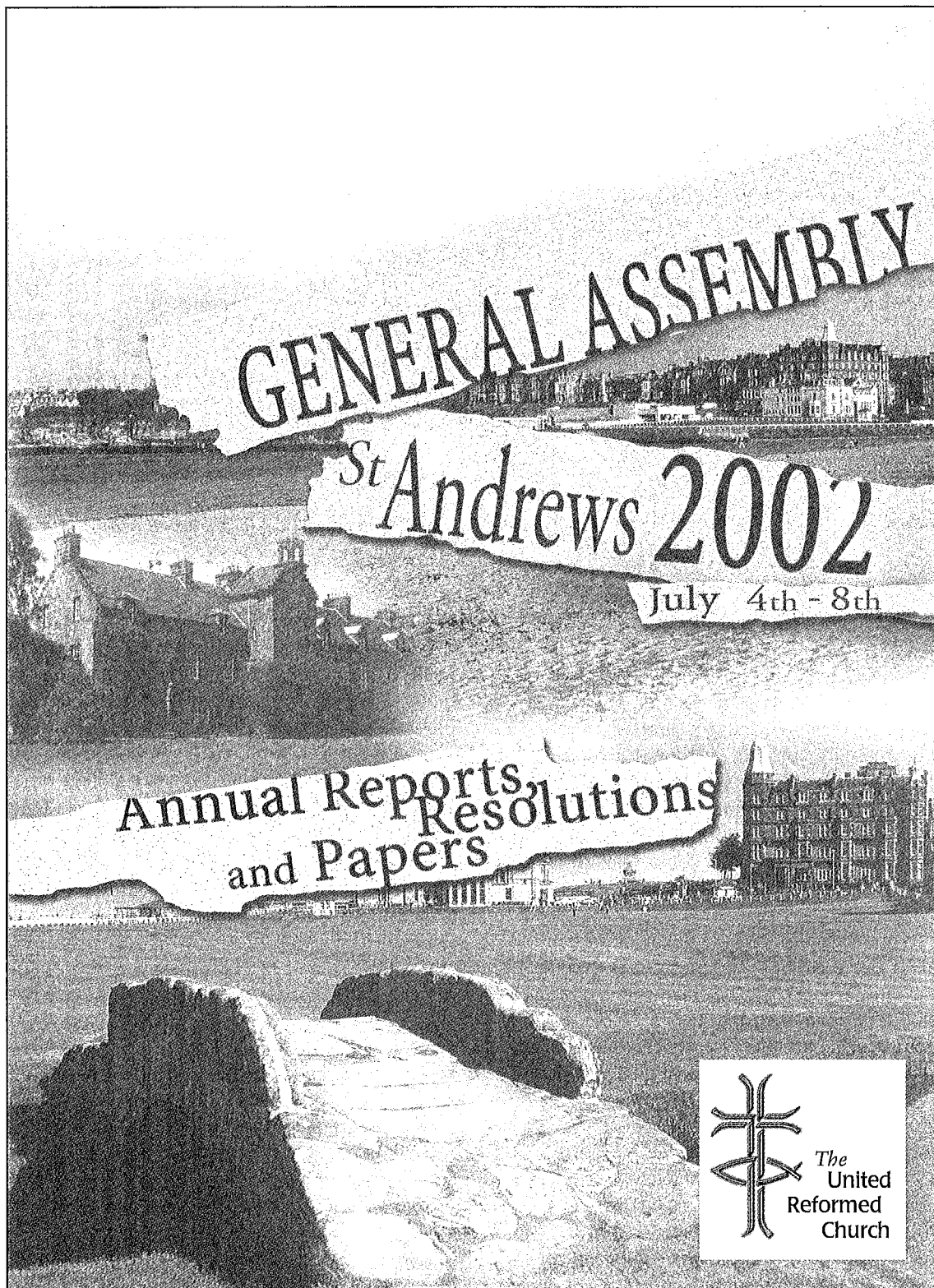
replaced him. Derek Wales left our gathering in January after seven years and we are grateful to him for his thoughtful advice and quiet leadership. We have welcomed Adrian Bulley who joined us in February.

11.2 We are delighted that one of our number, Ray Adams, has been appointed as Deputy General Secretary and will take over from John Waller as from 1<sup>st</sup> September. We wish Ray well in his new post and look forward to working with David Miller who will replace him in September.

11.3 During each year a number of our members send substitutes. This year Graham Cook and Roberta Rominger have taken Sabbaticals and Angus Duncan and Adrian Bulley have attended on their behalf. Elizabeth Welch has been away on Assembly business throughout much of the year and Glyn Jenkins has attended our meetings. Unfortunately John Arthur has been missing following surgery and a long period of recuperation. We very much hope he will have been fit enough to return early in the new year. Ken Forbes has joined us during John's absence.

11.4 We are grateful for the way in which new members bring their own gifts and insights to our work and continually enrich meetings.

# Mission Council



# 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 2002 were:*

<b>Northern</b>	<i>Revd Pamela Ward</i>	<i>Dr Peter Clarke</i>	<i>Mrs Roberta Wood</i>
<b>North Western</b>	<i>Revd Geoffrey Townsend</i>	<i>Mr Eric Chilton</i>	<i>Mrs Janice Cockcroft</i>
<b>Mersey</b>	<i>Mrs Lillian Covell</i>	<i>Dr Donald South</i>	<i>Mr Donald Swift</i>
<b>Yorkshire</b>	<i>Revd John Jenkinson</i>	<i>Mr John Seager</i>	<i>Mrs Val Morrison</i>
<b>East Midlands</b>	<i>Mrs Ann Ball</i>	<i>Mrs Barbara Turner</i>	<i>Revd David Miller</i>
<b>West Midlands</b>	<i>Mr Simon Rowntree</i>	<i>Revd Sam Ansa-Addo</i>	<i>Mrs Ann Sheldon</i>
<b>Eastern</b>	<i>Revd Victor Ridgewell</i>	<i>Mr Ken Woods</i>	<i>Revd Richard Mortimer</i>
<b>South Western</b>	<i>Revd Roz Harrison</i>	<i>Revd Paul Snell</i>	<i>Ms Angela Bebbington</i>
<b>Wessex</b>	<i>Mr Graham Rolfe</i>	<i>Revd Simon Thomas</i>	<i>Mrs Veronica Taylor</i>
<b>Thames North</b>	<i>Mr Keith Webster</i>	<i>Revd Dr Robin Pagan</i>	<i>Mrs Gill Shepherd</i>
<b>Southern</b>	<i>Mrs Marion Bayley</i>	<i>Revd Dawn Mather</i>	<i>Mr Ian Chalmers</i>
<b>Wales</b>	<i>Revd Kristin Ofstad</i>	<i>Mrs Delyth Rees</i>	<i>Revd David Fox</i>
<b>Scotland</b>	<i>Revd Ken Forbes</i>	<i>Mrs Helen Mee</i>	<i>Miss Catriona Smith</i>

## 1 Our meetings

1.1 During the year Mission Council has met residentially at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, and Ushaw College, Durham, and for a one-day meeting at the Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh. The budget has demanded attention at all three meetings, but there have been significant discussions on issues of authority and on youth and children's work in addition to some thinking about the purpose and practice of Mission Council itself.

1.2 The Moderator has played an important role in guiding the meetings and her Bible Studies at both residential meetings particularly helped Mission Council in understanding the issues before it. She and her chaplain, the Revd Flora Winfield, made sure that the Council was fed with good quality worship.

1.3 Theological reflection at the October meeting was provided by the Revd Myra Blyth. Mr Philip Mawer had been due to be the reflector at the March meeting, but he had to withdraw owing to his new appointment as Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. The practice of discussing the written reflections at the following meeting has been continued.

1.4 Inevitably the October meeting was overshadowed by the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks. Mission Council heard of the immediate responses made on behalf of the United Reformed Church by the Moderator and General Secretary, and itself agreed to send a letter to church leaders in Jerusalem. At the January meeting time was given to hearing a report on the first Scottish Ecumenical Assembly. In March it was agreed to send letters to ecumenical partners in India, Pakistan and Zimbabwe, and to the Israeli Ambassador. In these and other ways Mission Council resisted the temptation to focus only on the internal business of the Church.

## 2 Responding to the Assembly

2.1 **Human sexuality pastoral group.**  
This group was set up by resolution 41 of the 1997 Assembly to give help and guidance to those in pastoral need because of the human sexuality debate. A small number of people did consult the group but no-one has done so recently. Mission Council therefore resolved to disband the group with thanks to those who had served on it: Elizabeth Caswell, Malcolm Hanson, Jim Hollyman, Glyn Jenkins, Lis Mullen and John Waller.



**2.2 The Women's Union of the Scotland Synod and resolution 8.2 of the Unifying Assembly.**

*The General Assembly, acknowledging the great service to the church of the Women's Union of the Congregational Union of Scotland, instructs the Mission Council to consider whether there are implications for the central organisation of the church in the context of current ecumenical thinking.*

This resolution was passed by the Unifying Assembly in Glasgow on 1 April 2000. Over the following eighteen months the implications of the resolution have been discussed by the Mission Council Advisory Group, the Life and Witness Committee and by the Mission Council itself. There has been consultation with the Scotland Synod.

The Women's Union has had a long history in Scottish Congregationalism and it has been given an established place in the life of the Scotland Synod.

Through its branches and its organisation it meets the spiritual and social needs of many women in our Scottish churches. At the same time it is clear that there are other women within the Scotland Synod who do not find the ethos of the Women's Union helpful. It is too simplistic to say that the Union appeals to older women whereas younger women look for a different style of community. However, the statement may stand as a generalisation.

An informal enquiry was made as to the extent of women's organisations in England and Wales that might be similar to the Women's Union. It was known that there are many groups in local churches but it was felt that there was no particular value in seeking accurate statistics. The result of the enquiry made through the English and Welsh synods revealed the following:

**An informal summary of women's work in synods and districts other than the synod of Scotland**

<b>Northern</b>	No synod or district committees. Annual rallies in two districts. A person at synod level looks after women's issues
<b>North Western</b>	Some annual rallies in districts.
<b>Mersey</b>	No women's organisation at synod level. Cheshire district has an annual rally.
<b>Yorkshire</b>	Synod women's committee: Annual Assembly. Care of ministers' widows. Relates to Palatinate link.
<b>East Midlands</b>	No women's organisation at a synod level. Two or three districts have an annual women's rally.
<b>West Midlands</b>	Women's committees in three districts.
<b>Eastern</b>	Women's committees in two districts.
<b>South Western</b>	Synod women's committee. Annual conference.
<b>Wessex</b>	Three district councils have women's committees. Annual rallies are held.
<b>Thames North</b>	Nothing at synod or district level.
<b>Southern</b>	Annual meeting organised by Moderator's wife (it has brought resolutions to synod) Districts have meetings.
<b>Wales</b>	Annual Conference at Trefeca for all of Wales. Three district organisations: Cardiff Area Ladies' Fellowship, Pembrokeshire District Women's Forum, North Wales District Women's Fellowship. Two rallies are held each year in the East Wales district.

**NB: Involvement in the Women's World Day of Prayer is not included in this summary.**

In recent years within the United Reformed Church and elsewhere a new pattern of relationships has grown up through the Community of Women and Men in the Church. This development has been (and is) the concern of the Life and Witness Committee and its predecessors. A sub-committee has been established to be the focus of support.

It would be easy to characterise the present situation as one of competition, or even conflict, between two different ways of engaging in women's work or women's issues. Assembly is encouraged to see such a view as missing an opportunity. The opportunity is that of continuing a dual approach, encouraging people in all three nations to support one another in whatever ways they find helpful, and recognising that in the future there will be new ways to support both women and men in their spiritual and social life and growth.

If the Assembly is minded to respond in that way, then the implication for the central organisation of the church is that the Life and Witness Committee should continue to support and encourage women's work and women's issues in all their variety throughout the United Reformed Church.

**2.3 Ethical Investment Policy.** The Assembly of 2001 instructed Mission Council to review the ethical policies of the United Reformed Church with regard to the investments of the church, with particular reference to companies involved with the arms trade. This matter was referred to the Ethical Investment Advisory Group and Mission Council agreed to forward its report to Assembly as the response to the 2001 resolution. Mission Council in its discussion recognised that this subject is a complex and changing one and it therefore advises Assembly that the policy should be seen as a step forward but not as a final position.

#### **Preamble**

The Bible encourages us to use what is entrusted to us in constructive ways: in the Old Testament we learn that humankind was placed on the earth 'to till it', to use its resources productively (Gen. 2.15), and our Lord suggests that stewardship of another's money is to be undertaken in a positive and creative spirit (Matt. 25.14-30). So while in setting these guidelines we have been clear which activities we feel morally obliged to avoid, we have wanted to see that very avoidance as creating more potential for the church's resources to be used in ways that promote 'life in all its fulness'.

#### **The legal obligations of trustees**

The legal obligations of trustees are best described in the high court judgement in the often-quoted case of the Bishop of Oxford vs the Church Commissioners.

This judgement stated that charity trustees' primary duty is to choose investments 'solely on the basis of established investment criteria', aimed at obtaining 'the maximum return consistent with commercial prudence'. It repeats this principle in negative terms by stating that 'trustees must not use property held for investment purposes as a means for making moral statements at the expense of the charity.'

There is a major exception to this general rule. 'If trustees are satisfied that investing in a company engaged in a particular type of business would conflict with the very objects the charity is seeking to achieve, they should not so invest.' This applies 'even if [not investing] would be likely to result in significant financial detriment.' The most quoted example of this is cancer research charities not investing in tobacco companies.

But, the judgement makes it clear that to qualify for the 'in conflict with the objects of the charity' exception the conflict must be very clear and not a matter of individual opinion. It states that exceptions of this sort will be extremely rare. It refers specifically to armaments where individual opinions will differ within the Church. Armaments are therefore excluded from this exception.

However, the judgement goes on to state that trustees 'may accommodate the views of those who consider that on moral grounds an investment would conflict with the objects of the charity, so long as they are satisfied that course would not involve a risk of significant financial detriment'. This enables the trustees to reflect the fundamental values of the organisation. It is this approach that guides our existing ethical investment policy.

#### **Changes to the URC ethical investment guidelines**

The current URC ethical investment guidelines, reported to General Assembly in 1995, state that we should avoid investing in companies whose main business (defined as approximately 30% of turnover) is the manufacture of alcoholic drinks, tobacco products or armaments, or the provision of gambling facilities. In addition, following a decision of General Assembly in 1992, the trustees are not currently investing in Nestlé.

The EIAG has reviewed the above guidelines and proposes that they should be amended by the addition of a total exclusion of investment in (a) those companies whose business is the manufacture or supply of weapons of destruction and (b) any company that promotes pornography.

The EIAG also proposes that the explicit measure of 30% to define 'main business' should be replaced by a statement authorising the EIAG to determine what constitutes 'significant part of a company's business' in particular cases. The EIAG anticipates that, whilst in normal circumstances it would continue to use approximately 30% as the primary determinant, the omission of a specific percentage would allow it to exercise judgement, for example in the case of very large international groups clearly involved in specific activities which nevertheless do not amount to 30% of total group turnover.

The United Reformed Church does not have sufficient resources to undertake continuous research and monitoring. In exercising judgement the EIAG would therefore use its ecumenical links, in particular its membership of the Church Investors Group.

The revised policy is as follows:

**It is the policy of the United Reformed Church to recommend that trustees and all those with investment responsibilities connected with the church should avoid any investment in**

- **those companies whose business is the manufacture or supply of weapons of destruction;**
- **those companies whose business is the promotion of pornography;**
- **those companies a significant part of whose business is in the supply of alcoholic drinks, tobacco products or military equipment (other than weapons of destruction), or the provision of gambling facilities.**

**The definition of these activities, or of what constitutes a significant part of a company's business, will require judgement. The Mission Council's Ethical Investment Advisory Group will offer advice on ethical issues from time to time.**

**The above policy can only be advisory; the responsibility for specific investment decisions remains with each body of trustees.**

## **2.4 Occupational Health Scheme**

2.4.1 In July 2000 General Assembly accepted a resolution from the South Western Synod: "to explore the setting up of an Occupational Health Service for the benefit and support of all serving ministers, Church Related Community Workers and others paid from central funds".

2.4.2 The then General Secretary, the Revd Tony Burnham, carried out some work on the subject and before he retired prepared a paper for Mission Council. The paper reported that the only one of our sister churches having such a scheme was the Church of Scotland but that in Thames North Synod an Occupational Health Scheme was already in operation. It also recommended that a scheme should be set up, more modest than that described in the papers supporting the South Western Synod resolution but including those paid from synod funds. There was a suggestion that representatives of the synods should discuss the proposal.

2.4.3 Mission Council received the paper at its meeting in October 2001. It decided that the next stage should be a consultation with representatives of the synods. Invitations were sent to the synods in November, asking them to send one representative to a consultation on 13 February 2002 and in the intervening time to canvass opinion as appropriate. Eleven synods were represented at the consultation, another synod appointed a representative who sent detailed written comments on the paper but did not attend in person.

2.4.4 The consultation began from the assumption that the motivation behind the original proposal and its subsequent outworking was to ensure that proper care was given to those "employed" in the service of the church. There was total agreement that the church needs to follow good employment practice. In order to give focus to the discussion, time was given to considering the arrangements already in place within Thames North Synod.

2.4.5 Thames North Synod has a voluntary occupational health scheme allied to a physical fitness programme which is offered to ministers and lay staff. They may take advantage of the facility every 2-3 years and at present the take-up is about 70%. The cost to the synod is about £5,000-£6,000 p.a. In addition the synod employs four part-time pastoral consultants to assist the Moderator and District Councils in their duty of pastoral care. No other synod has a similar pattern but most of the synods represented at the consultation had some (largely) voluntary procedures in place. None felt they had the resource available to replicate the Thames North pattern. Discussion revealed doubt as to whether it was necessary to redirect funds in order to do so, even where it was possible.

2.4.6 Some voices at the consultation expressed the view that, even if an overall Occupational Health Scheme was felt to be necessary, this was an inopportune time to introduce it. The cost of such a scheme had been estimated at £42,000 p.a. To add such a sum to the budget at the very moment when ways were being sought to cut a much larger sum from existing expenditure did not make sense.

2.4.7 The consultation, having come to a negative response to the original proposal, wanted to draw attention to the resources of care that are available to ministers and lay workers in all places. These are outlined in the following paragraphs. In some cases they may need to be advocated, in some places there may need to be some sharpening up. The relevant councils of the church should consider these things as part of their duty of care.

2.4.8 It was noted that current changes in the Health Service are intended to make the General Practitioner the primary focus of health care. Recently it has become a requirement that GP practices must give all new patients a basic health check. Many practices offer well-woman and well-man clinics. There are other circumstances that will make it legitimate for people to have further checks, as for example when unexplained physical symptoms appear. Therefore it may be that synod financial resources could best be focused on occasions of change in work pattern when a health check might be a wise preliminary and where a fee may be required to be paid.

2.4.9 Of course this means that usually the initiative has to be taken by the minister or church worker her/himself. The consultation was of the opinion that the responsibility of each individual for self-care should be emphasised. The commandment to love our neighbour is followed by the words, "as ourselves". The majority of church members in employment have to take responsibility for their own health using the medium of the Health Service.

2.4.10 In 1987 the Assembly received a report on 'Stress in the Ministry'. This remains an important document and it reminds us that ministry imposes stresses on people which in a minority of cases leads to a breakdown in health. (As a rough indication of scale, it was discovered that of over 700 people on the URC payroll, 30 had had sickness absences of more than a month in the last tax year. By no means all those absences are stress-related.)

2.4.11 Since that report was received a number of support structures have been put in place. All ministers and members of their households have access to free and confidential counselling through the Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service. All ministers are encouraged to engage in accompanied self-appraisal on a regular basis. (The Ministries Committee is asked to consider whether this programme needs more emphasis and whether a question about the possible need for a health check should be added to it.) There is further encouragement to refreshment and renewal through Continuing Ministerial Education and the sabbatical programme. These structures, if taken seriously, should normally enable an individual minister to get balance in life and so prevent much avoidable damage to health.

2.4.12 The consultation wished to affirm the pastoral work done by synod moderators and by district pastoral committees as the bedrock of the church's healing ministry with ministers and church workers. It noted that Assembly and synod welfare funds are used to help at moments of stress and the breakdown of health. There are occasions when the pastoral care system does not deliver what is needed - sometimes it cannot - but there are many occasions when it does.

2.4.13 Having heard the report of the consultation, and having had its own discussion, Mission Council came to the following conclusions:

2.4.13.1 That the health of ministers and Church Related Community Workers is a matter both of pastoral concern and of vital importance to the Church's mission.

2.4.13.2 That ministers and Church Related Community Workers should be encouraged to take advantage of the variety of means available both to support them in their ministry and to monitor their physical and mental well-being.

2.4.13.3 That those responsible for personnel matters in Church House and in the synods should consider creating support systems for lay staff similar to those available to ministers, where these are not in place.

2.4.13.4 That Mission Council should instigate a more careful study of lengthy (more than one month in twelve) absences due to ill-health of those on the URC payroll, and consider the significance of the results.

2.4.13.5 That an Occupational Health Service should not be set up at the present time but that Mission Council should keep this matter under review.

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

3.1 **Appointment of synod moderator.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council appointed the Revd David Miller as Moderator of the South Western Synod for a period of seven years from 1 September 2002.

3.2 **Appointments to staff posts.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council appointed the Revd Roy Lowes as Secretary for Training for a period of five years from 1 January 2002; Mr Lawrence Moore as Director of the Windermere Centre for a period of five years from 1 April 2002; and the Revd Ray Adams as Deputy General Secretary for a period of seven years from 1 September 2002.

**3.3 Other appointments.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council appointed the following representatives to the Assembly of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (26 February – 1 March 2002): Wilma Frew, John Young, Lorraine Downer, Kathleen Ziffo, Jackie Yeomans, Nikki Andrews, Phil Ferdinand and Ray Adams. It also appointed the Revd Rachel Poolman and Professor Malcolm Johnson to the Ministerial and Educational Training Committee of Mansfield College, Oxford.

**3.4** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council appointed the Revd Adrian Bulley as a Trustee of the Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme.

**3.5 Honorary Treasurer.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council extended the appointment of Mr Graham Stacy to 31 December 2002.

**3.6 Basic ministerial stipend.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council set the basic ministerial stipend for 2002 at £17,508.

**3.7** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council agreed to the transfer of land now forming the site of Newtown Road Methodist Church Carlisle to trustees for the Methodist Church at a nominal consideration. This was to correct an anomaly which had existed for 50 years.

**3.8** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council agreed to establish a commission to advise on the handling of a difficult pastoral matter.

**3.9 Indemnity of Charity Trustees.** Acting on behalf of Assembly, Mission Council resolved that General Assembly having recognised the members of MCAG as trustees of the URC at its meeting in July 2001, now instructs the Church's legal advisers to draw up a Deed of Indemnity to indemnify the members of MCAG present and future, jointly and severally from and against all liability arising from the exercise of their powers and functions as trustees. The General Secretary and the Moderator of the General Assembly are duly authorised to execute the Deed on behalf of the church. Resolution 8 of the 2001 Assembly established 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. In the discussion of the resolution the General Secretary undertook that Mission Council would consider the provision of indemnity (Assembly Record p.36).

## **4 Other actions**

**4.1 Continuation of staff posts.** Mission Council accepted the advice of its Staffing Advisory Group that the posts of Secretary for Training and Director of the Windermere Centre should both be continued for a further term.

**4.2 Resolution from Thames North Synod.** A resolution seeking more encouragement of vocations to the ministry of Word and Sacrament was passed to the Ministries Committee.

**4.3 Task group on personal leadership and authority.** An interim report from this task group was considered, particularly concentrating on those aspects where there could be an overlap with the work of the task group on authority (see report below). The leadership task group is expected to bring a more substantial report in October 2002.

**4.4 Church House Reference Group.** It was agreed to set up a group to oversee questions of management and staffing at Church House. The group would exist alongside the existing advisory groups and make its reports to Mission Council.

**4.5 Churches Together for Health and Healing.** With the establishment of this ecumenical group (see resolution 12 of Assembly 2001) it was agreed that in future representatives would be appointed by and report back to the Church and Society Committee.

**4.6 Silveira House, Zimbabwe.** On receipt of information from Commitment for Life, Mission Council in January passed the following resolution: *Noting with concern the current situation in Zimbabwe and its impact on our Commitment for Life Partners at Silveira House, Mission Council instructs the Moderator to write to the Director of Silveira House assuring him and his staff of our prayerful solidarity with them at this time.*

**4.7 Payment of expenses for certain meetings.** A letter from Eastern Synod was considered, complaining at the practice of calling meetings, and then asking the synods to send representatives and also to meet the cost of their attendance. Mission Council resolved in response that *"as a matter of principle, any Assembly committee or sub-committee calling a meeting of synod representatives should meet the cost of attending that meeting out of its own budget"*. It was emphasised that this resolution did not apply, for example, to training meetings to which people could choose to come or not as they wished. It only applied to meetings of representatives. It was also noted that the resolution did not preclude committees from negotiating a different financial arrangement with synods. Mission Council hopes that this decision will set a precedent to be followed by other councils of the church.

**4.8 Grants and Loans Group.** This group continues to administer grants made to local mission projects and grants from the Church Buildings Fund. In October Mission Council agreed to revise its

policy on grant making as follows:

**Revised policy for mission project grants:**

- *Each applicant is required to demonstrate how the project links to the "Five Marks of Mission" programme adopted by the United Reformed Church.*
- *GLG continues to consider applications for Mission Projects where the financial need has been clearly identified and which cannot be met entirely from local funding and Synod funds.*
- *GLG will request a report on the progress of a Mission Project twelve months after its launch so that stories of encouragement can be shared with the wider church.*

**Revised policy for Church Building Fund grants:**

- *That for the foreseeable future only the interest of the capital available to the Church Buildings Fund (CBF) will be used for grants.*
- *GLG will offer a revised maximum grant of £5,000 for disabled facilities and £1,000 for feasibility studies until new legislation comes into force in 2004.*
- *The moratorium on loans will be extended until a review of the financial situation takes place in 2002.*
- *Synods will forward applications to GLG only for churches where the financial need has been clearly identified and which cannot be met entirely from local church and Synod funds.*
- *Applications for funds from the Church Buildings Fund will be considered at the May and December meetings in order to ensure a proper sharing of the resources available each year.*
- *Churches should be encouraged to apply to local authorities and charities for financial help with disabled facilities.*

Each synod has a representative on the Grants and Loans Group. Local churches should address enquiries and applications through their synod representative.

**4.9 Changes in personnel.** During the year Mission Council received the resignations of two Assembly Committee conveners, Ms Gabrielle Cox

(Church and Society) and the Revd Derek Lindfield (Youth and Children's Work). In each case they were replaced by those already appointed conveners-elect, the Revd Martin Camroux and the Revd Kathryn Price. Mission Council also received the resignations of the Revd Peter McIntosh as Director of the Windermere Centre and the Revd Jean Black as Secretary for Continuing Ministerial Education. All were thanked for their distinctive service to the General Assembly.

**4.10 Ministers' consultation.** Mission Council set up a small group under the convenership of the former Moderator, the Revd Bill Mahood, to consider the suggestion made previously by the Revd Peter McIntosh that there should be a consultation for all URC ministers. The intention would be one of refreshment and inspiration for leaders in the church. The group reported on how it might be arranged but did not recommend that a consultation be held. Mission Council agreed that cost (at least as much as that of a General Assembly) ruled out the idea at the present time. There was a fairly strong body of opinion that a consultation only for ministers would not be appropriate at any time. Others felt that consultation in synod areas would be more effective.

**4.11 Mission Strategy.** The General Secretary reminded Mission Council of its primary function, and he received warm support for his suggestion that during the coming Assembly year it should concentrate on developing a mission strategy which could be commended to the Assembly and to the other councils of the church.

**4.12 Youth and Children's Work Review.** At the request of the Youth and Children's Work Committee Mission Council spent considerable time discussing the review report. It also took into account resolutions that had been passed by the Northamptonshire District Council and the East Midlands Synod regarding the future of the Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings. Mission Council encouraged the Youth and Children's Work Committee to proceed with all its then proposed resolutions except that relating to the Youth and Children's Work Training programme. It was felt that more work was needed before some decisions on the future direction of the programme could be made. The resolution relating to the cessation of use of the Centre at Yardley Hastings was supported on a show of hands by 37 votes to 16.

**4.13 Review of the Windermere Centre.** The Life and Witness Committee asked Mission Council to instigate a review of the Centre, in the light of the fact that there had been no such review since the Centre opened in 1985. The following terms of reference were agreed by Mission Council in March

and a review group has been set up:

- *to review in general terms the operation of the Centre since its opening in 1984/5;*
- *to evaluate its findings against the original (and any later) statements of the Centre's purpose;*
- *to assess the needs for a URC training centre;*
- *to consider the proposals for a closer relationship between the Centre and Carver Church, Winderemere; and*
- *to make proposals for the future of the Centre.*

The review will be carried out by a group of four people, including a convener, with a report to be made to the meeting of Mission Council in March

2003. The cost of the review will be carried on the Mission Council budget. The group should consult previous Directors with regard to the first part of its remit, and representatives of the Life and Witness Committee and Carver church with regard to the fourth. There should also be consultation with representatives of the Training Committee. Otherwise it should be free to operate as it wishes within budget constraints agreed with the Deputy General Secretary.

### **Resolution 10**

### **Task Group on Authority**

General Assembly reaffirms that:

- i) **Decisions about candidates' suitability for ministry remain within the councils of the church. (3.1.2)**
- ii) **Decisions on academic and formational matters fall within the remit of colleges and courses. (3.1.3/4)**

### **Resolution 11**

### **Task Group on Authority**

General Assembly encourages the Training and Ministries Committees to continue their consideration of the procedures for the selection, training, call and ordination of ministers. (3.2.1)

### **Resolution 12**

### **Task Group on Authority**

General Assembly affirms that task groups, regardless of their purpose, should be given very clear remits and there should be equal clarity about to which council or committee of the church the group will report. (3.3)

### **Resolution 13**

### **Task Group on Authority**

General Assembly affirms the present practice (function 2(5)(A)(ix)), namely that, where it deems right, the General Assembly remits questions, with clear guidelines as to the process, to other councils of the church and, having considered the responses, makes decisions following debate. (3.4.6)

**Resolution 14****Task Group on Authority**

- i) In order to promote clearer communication and share good practice between the councils of the church, and to ensure a greater sense of relevance between the councils of the church, the General Assembly urges local churches, district/area councils and synods to consider the suggestions in 3.5A of the report and take appropriate action. (3.5A)
- ii) General Assembly asks Mission Council to issue guidelines:
  - a) to advise district/area councils on ways of appointing representatives to General Assembly which both offer continuity and respect the church's policy on equal opportunities; and
  - b) on the more effective sharing of reports and decisions with district/area councils and church meetings. (3.5A)
- iii) General Assembly agrees that the proposals for a radical review of the church's structure should be remitted to Mission Council, though consideration should not be given to this until after the Task Group on Personal and Conciliar Leadership has completed its work, so that such consideration may be given in the light of the theological work on episcopate which will be contained in its report.

**Resolution 15****Task Group on Authority**

General Assembly asks the Training Committee to evaluate training materials already available within the church, and to review them with a view to producing materials that could be more widely used to assist representatives to understand their roles within the various councils of the church. (3.6)

**Resolution 16****Task Group on Authority**

General Assembly reaffirms the use of existing function 2(5)(A)(ix) to cover contentious issues rather than the procedure suggested by the Working Group on the Authority of General Assembly and Other Councils in the Human Sexuality Report 1999. (3.8)

**Resolution 17****Task Group on Authority**

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to the Standing Orders of the Assembly:

Alter the title of Standing Orders section 5 to read:

“Motions on Status or Closure of Debate”

and add a new paragraph 5a:

“A member of 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 that the General Assembly, for the better consideration of a specified resolution and its related documents, goes into a committee of the whole Assembly. For such a motion to be carried, two thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. Committee procedure enables members to speak more than once



and exploratory votes to be taken on particular points or suggested changes. The number and length of speeches shall be at the discretion of the Moderator. After discussion in committee and decision on any proposed changes the Moderator shall declare the committee stage to be ended, and the Assembly shall proceed to hear a closing speech from the mover of the motion under discussion and proceed to a vote on the motion, subject to any further motion under Standing Order 5.”

Re-number the existing paragraphs 5a, 5b, 5c and 5d as 5b, 5c, 5d and 5e respectively, and in the new 5e, amend “5a, 5b 5c” to read: “5a, 5b, 5c and 5d”. (3.9.2a)

## Resolution 18

## Task Group on Authority

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to the Standing Orders of the Assembly:

Add the following to Standing Order 3f:

“The Moderator may rule that a proposed amendment should be treated as an alternative motion under Standing Order 3k.”

Add new Standing Order 3k:

“Alternative (but not directly negative) motions may be moved and seconded in competition with a motion before the Assembly. After any amendments duly moved under Standing Orders 3f, 3g and 3h have been dealt with and debate on the alternative motions has ended, the movers shall reply to the debate in reverse order to that in which they spoke initially. The first vote shall be a vote in favour of each of the motions, put in the order in which they were proposed, the result not being announced for one until it is announced for all. If any of them obtains a majority of those voting, it becomes the sole motion before the Assembly. If none of them does so, the motion having the fewest votes is discarded. Should the lowest two be equal, the Moderator gives a casting vote. The voting process is repeated until one motion achieves a majority of those voting. Once a sole motion remains, votes for and against that motion shall be taken in the normal way and in accordance with Standing Order 6. (3.9.2b)

1.1 One of the working groups established during the human sexuality debate considered issues around the authority of the Assembly and other Councils of the Church. It identified certain issues which, in its view, merited further consideration. In 1999 Assembly asked Mission Council to arrange for that consideration

to be given. The response to that request is to be found in Appendix 2 to this Book of Reports and in the nine resolutions above. The numerical references in the resolutions relate to the appropriate paragraphs in Appendix 2.

## Resolution 19

## Changes to the Structure: Grouping

General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision of July 2001 to make the following changes to the Structure of the United Reformed Church;

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 No objections have been raised to this decision. It brings the creation of groups of churches and joint pastorates within the structure of the Church and allows the option of ministers being called by a single meeting rather than by separate Church Meetings.

**Resolution 20****Visit to the Northern Synod**

**Assembly notes that the visit to the Northern Synod, agreed in 1998, has been completed; thanks the visitors for their work; commends the report to the continuing attention of the Synod; but resolves not to initiate further synod visits at the present time.**

**1.1 Origin of visit.** In 1998, General Assembly passed the following resolution: "Assembly agrees that in 2001 a visit to the Northern Province (Synod) will be made on its behalf by a team of three people." The three people subsequently appointed by Assembly to carry out the visit were:

Revd Sandra Dears (at the time Training Officer, Mersey Synod)  
 Revd Keith Forecast (at the time, North Western Synod Moderator)  
 Mr Brian Evans (Convener; at the time, Yorkshire Synod Clerk)

This resolution was Assembly's response to an invitation from Northern Synod to carry out such a visit.

**1.2 Objective of visit.** The objective of the visit, as described in the 1998 Assembly papers, was "encouraging the Northern Synod to consider its life and work, goals and methods; to enable affirmation and critique of the Synod's structures and patterns of work; and to promote reflection on the continuous operation of the Synod in relation to other councils of the Church, ecumenical partners, and community organisations".

The original proposal from Northern Synod had been that each Synod should be visited in this way at regular intervals. The decision of Assembly, however, was that this initial visit should serve as a pilot, which would make it possible to decide whether such visits should become part of the life of Assembly.

**1.3 Process of the visit.** The visit began in the autumn of 2000 and was completed in the summer of 2001. In that time many meetings were held with individuals and committees and the visitors attended two meetings of the Synod itself. The visit coincided with the synod's adoption of a new Strategy for Mission, contained in a document entitled "On Being a Faithful Church in a Demanding Age". The visitors therefore found themselves involved in a rapidly changing scene and much of their report was commenting on work the synod was doing itself or suggesting how that work might be taken further.

**1.4 Of wider interest.** The visitors commended the Northern Synod's Strategy for Mission to other synods, especially to any not already engaged in forward planning for mission. The visitors suggested that other synods might consider the Northern Synod practice of holding one meeting each year over two days. However, the visitors also suggested that Northern Synod should come into line with general practice and transfer funds currently held by District Councils to the Synod. This was not said in the interests of conformity but as a means to a more equitable sharing of financial resources across the Synod. The visitors were concerned that the Synod had withdrawn from the Assembly's Youth and Children's Work Training programme and urged it to give high priority to this aspect of the church's mission. Finally the visitors asked the Northern and North Western Synods to consider a change of boundaries so that Cumbria was no longer split between two synods. The present arrangement makes ecumenical and other developments in the county very difficult.

**1.5 Conclusions.** Mission Council learned that the visit had been particularly appreciated by the officers and leaders of the Northern Synod and had been enjoyed by the visitors themselves. However it had been expensive in terms of the visitors' time and to some extent financially. Mission Council plans to look in October at the proposed restructuring for mission being worked on in the Mersey and Yorkshire Synods. It believes that for the present time at least such discussion is a more effective way of sharing good practice and stimulating wider thought.

## Resolution 21

## Ratification of Section O changes

General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision of July 2001 to make the changes to Part I of the Section O Process for Ministerial Discipline which are contained in Part I of Appendix 3 to these Reports.

## Resolution 22

## Changes to Part II of Section O

General Assembly agrees to make the changes to Part II of the Section O Process which are contained in Part II of Appendix 3 to these Reports.

1.1 During the past three years, the Section O Advisory Group has carried out a detailed review of the whole of the Section O Process. The first part of this review was completed last year when General Assembly approved a number of amendments to Part I of Section O. No objections have been raised from Synods. Resolution 21 now seeks Assembly's ratification of those changes.

1.2 To conclude the review, the Advisory Group is putting forward a series of amendments to the Rules of Procedure at Part II, and these are all set out in the Appendix referred to in Resolution 22. Amendments to Part II do not need to be ratified by a subsequent Assembly, so if these two resolutions are passed the changes to both Parts I and II will take effect immediately. As part of its ongoing task the Advisory Group continues to monitor Section O and will advise Mission Council on any future changes to the Process.

1.3 In its original form Section O included an Introduction which gave some guidance on the operative parts of the Process. Last year's Assembly was advised that this Introduction was being withdrawn as it was out of date. The first part of the Introduction, however, had nothing to do with the fine print of the Process itself, but it provided a valuable statement on the significance of Christian discipline in the life of the Church. This initial part of the Introduction will therefore be restored when the Manual is reprinted.

1.4 The Advisory Group is also currently working on a series of Guidelines for the assistance of those involved in the Section O Process and these will shortly be ready for circulation.

## Resolution 23

## Section O oversight

Assembly agrees that responsibility for the continued oversight of the Section O process shall be given to Mission Council, working through a Section O oversight group.

1.1 The Assembly in 1998 authorised the General Secretary, the Clerk of Assembly and the Convener of the Ministries Committee to oversee the Section O process on its behalf. This was seen as a temporary arrangement and by this resolution Mission Council hopes to establish something more permanent.

1.2 The remit would be to oversee the Section O process, monitoring how it works and being responsible for presenting to Mission Council any changes that the group believes should be taken to Assembly for decision. The group would have the status of an Advisory Group to Mission Council. It would not consider any specific cases in the Section O process.

1.3 Mission Council has agreed that the Section O oversight group if set up, would have a membership of a convener, a secretary, the General Secretary and the Clerk for the time being. The Secretary for Ministries, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission and the Legal Adviser would attend to give advice and support. Mission Council has in mind that the first Convener of the Section O oversight group would be the Revd Tony Burnham and the first Secretary Mr Hartley Oldham.

1.4 Making the oversight of Section O a Mission Council responsibility would mean that it rested with a body that is annually accountable to General Assembly and which is widely representative of the experience of the church.

## Resolution 24 Ending of full-time stipendiary service

Assembly agrees that full-time stipendiary service for ministers and CRCWs will cease at the end of the month in which a person reaches her/his 65th birthday unless

- a) a commitment to extend had been agreed through current procedures before 4 July 2002;
- or b) a case has been accepted by the Accreditation Sub-Committee that there are exceptional reasons why the particular piece of stipendiary service should be extended for a limited time.

1.1 At the present time a minister is able to continue in full-time stipendiary service for up to six months following her/his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday (1997 Assembly resolution 33(a)); to the 31<sup>st</sup> August following her/his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday in the case of ministers serving in joint URC/Methodist pastorates (1994 resolution 30); or for a maximum of three years beyond the age of 65 in exceptional circumstances which are supported by the pastorate, have the concurrence of the District Council, and the agreement of the Accreditation Sub-Committee (1997 resolution 33 (b)). The Accreditation Sub-Committee already has certain categories which are used to determine what is "exceptional" in the last case.

1.2 This resolution is brought as one of the measures proposed to reduce the projected budget deficit in 2003 to an acceptable level. It is expected to reduce expenditure in that year by about £100,000.

1.3 Experience has shown that very few ministers avail themselves of the extensions allowed in 1994 resolution 30 and 1997 resolution 33(b). A number, however, do avail themselves of the six-month maximum extension provided in 1997 resolution 33(a). On average this works out at an extra three months per minister who applies, not a large contribution to the ministry of a local pastorate but a significant cost to the Ministry and Mission Fund. That is the rationale for bringing this particular resolution which, if passed, will supersede the other resolutions referred to above.

## Resolution 25 Budget for the year 2003

General Assembly accepts the budget for the year 2003 set out in Appendix 1 to the Book of Reports

1.1 The proposed budget for 2003 is set out in Appendix 1 to the Book of Reports which also shows, for comparison, the budgets for 2002 and 2001 and the actual accounts figures for 2001 and 2000.

1.2 The preparation of the 2003 budget has been unusually difficult. When the process started in September 2001 there were three significant issues apparent from the accounts for the six months ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2001 which had a potential impact on later years:

- (i) the number of stipendiary ministers being paid was higher than the number implied by our policy that minister numbers should change (in practice decline) at half the rate of change in the number of members;
- (ii) due to falling interest rates and reduced amounts invested, interest income was substantially lower than the amount included in the budget for 2001;

(iii) there was a shortfall in Ministry & Mission contributions compared with budget.

1.3 A preliminary draft budget for 2003 taking account of these items showed a potential deficit in excess of £650,000. In the months that followed there was much anxious discussion about ways of reducing the deficit to an acceptable level. All budget holders responded positively to the requirement to exercise very tight control over expenditure but the outcome is a budget that has involved some hard decisions.

### 2 Level of budget deficit

2.1 In recent years we have been prepared to adopt budgets showing a deficit in the expectation that the outturn will be better as a result of legacies and budget savings. Generally the expectation has been realised. The view taken for 2003 is that £250,000 is the maximum acceptable budget deficit

## **Resolution 26**

in current circumstances. As explained in paragraph 5.1 below, this has been increased by a further £100,000 to cover possible non-recurring expenditure at Yardley Hastings.

2.2 It must be pointed out that the tighter budgeting adopted this year may result in smaller budget savings overall. In particular, the Training Committee has accepted an additional £25,000 reduction in its budget but have warned that it may not be possible to achieve the whole of this saving.

### **3 Number of stipendiary ministers**

3.1 The initial projections of stipendiary minister numbers for 2003 were some 20 higher than the number implied by our policy. The 2003 budget assumes that this excess of 20 in minister numbers will be more than halved. This will involve (a) restricting the number of transfers from overseas and other denominations and (b) withdrawing the provision which allows ministers to stay on full stipend after reaching 65. (See resolution 24 above)

### **4 Stipend increase**

4.1 The allowance for the 2003 stipend increase has been set at 2.5%. This is about 1% lower than the amount that might have been included if there had been no budget constraints. The decision as to the level of stipend increase which could be afforded was based on the view taken as to the realistic increase in the target for Ministry & Mission contributions which is referred to below.

### **5 National Youth Resource Centre, Yardley Hastings**

5.1 The Youth and Children's Work Review Report recommends that the URC should cease to use the buildings at Yardley Hastings as a Resource Centre for youth work. The 2003 budget has been

prepared on the assumption that this recommendation will be accepted. There will still be costs in 2003 but the budget deficit has been increased by £100,000 to allow for this on the basis that there would be no further costs in later years and this amount could therefore be met from reserves.

### **6 Ministry & Mission contributions**

6.1 The draft 2003 budget was discussed at a District and Synod Treasurers consultation held at Swanwick in February. It was recognised that any variation in the M&M target would have to be matched by a corresponding variation in the stipend. The general view was that an increase of 5% or more was unrealistic and that we should aim for a minimum increase in M&M contributions of 4.5% over the pledges for 2002. That view has been supported by the Mission Council Meeting in March.

6.2 Since the February consultation the pledges for 2002 have improved slightly so that the amount for Ministry & Mission contributions included in this budget is 3.9% higher than the total pledges for 2002. However, to allow for the possibility that not every Synod will be able to achieve the target figure, the overall target for all Synods is being set at 4.5%. This will be a major challenge for all our churches.

6.3 Questions were raised at the 2001 Assembly concerning the allocation of the M&M total among Synods. A working group set up by the District and Synod Treasurers Consultation reported to the meeting in February 2002 that a variety of formulae resulted in an allocation broadly similar to the present distribution. The working group's conclusion, which was accepted by the Treasurers, was that the present sharing among Synods is reasonable and that no formula would achieve a fairer result.

## **Resolution 26**

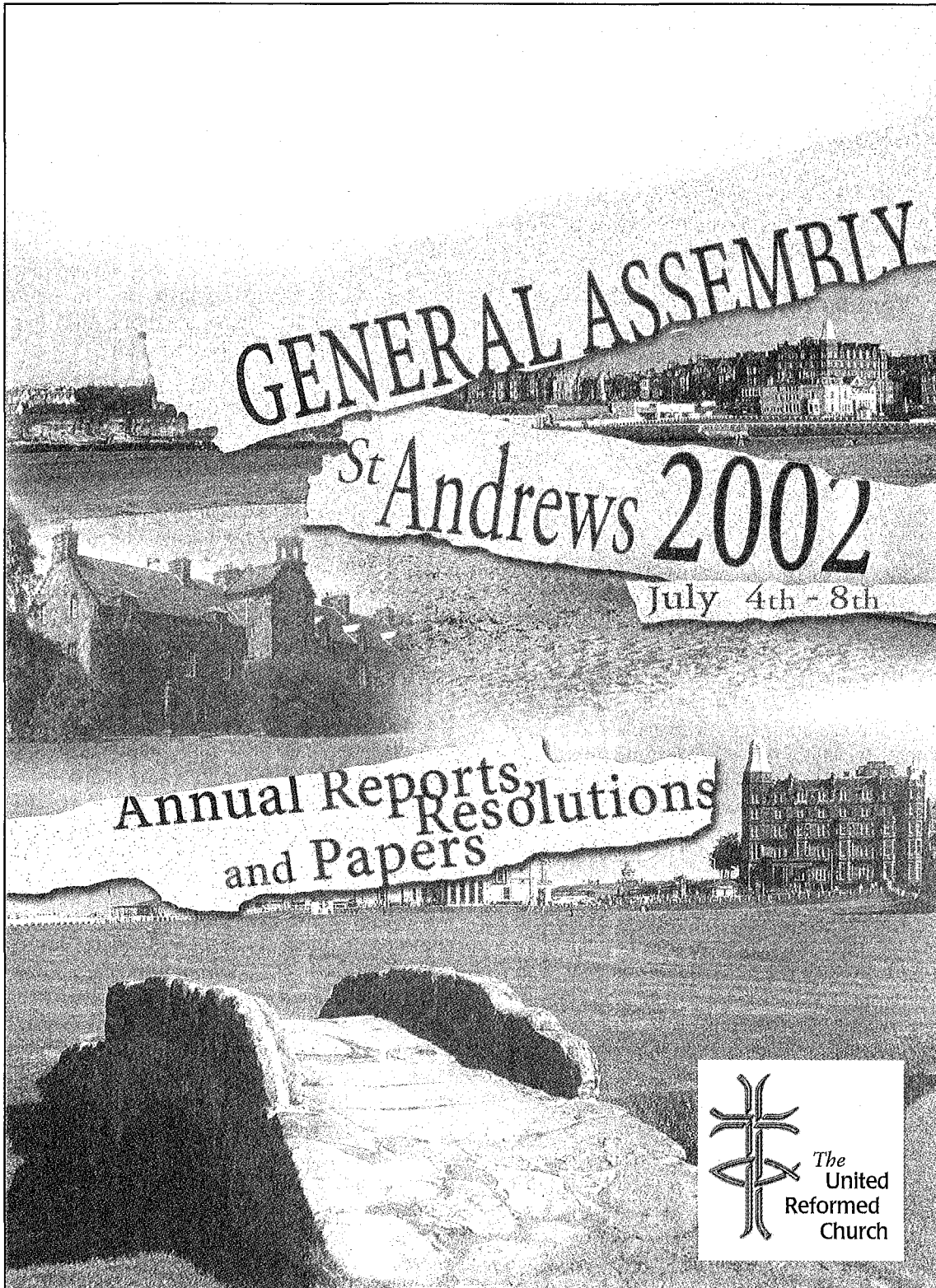
## **Secession**

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

1.1 The request to secede has been dealt with according to the procedures agreed by the Assembly in 1987. Both the Staffordshire District Council and the West Midlands Synod have, in turn, attempted to resolve the grievances of the church at Ruiton. Those attempts having failed, Mission Council set up a commission to investigate the

request and meet with all parties. The commission reported to Mission Council in October and the above resolution was framed in the light of that report. All the papers relevant to the consideration of the request are contained in Appendix 4 to the Book of Reports.

# Committees



# 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*

## **1 Assembly 2004**

1.1 The committee brings a resolution that the Assembly of 2004 should be held at the University of Glamorgan from July 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>.

## **2 Venues for General Assembly**

2.1 The choice of Glamorgan reflects the importance of visibly affirming that we are a church in three nations. As this year we are privileged to visit Scotland, thus underlining the place of the Synod of Scotland within the URC, so the same applies to Wales, which we have not, in fact, visited since 1987. Our return is overdue.

2.2 Ideally, we would like to be able to hold Assembly in successive years in different parts of the British Isles. There are, however, relatively few venues in the three countries that can accommodate the numbers and provide the facilities we need. Factors that have to be taken into account include the size of the assembly hall, accessibility to halls of residence, facilities for disabled members and rooms for exhibitions as well as fringe meetings. So far no site has been found without some limitations.

## **3 Fringe Meetings**

3.1 Following the very successful introduction last year of informal gatherings and presentations, the opportunity has been extended this year, when we will be making available two evenings. This will allow for repeat presentations so that people have the opportunity of attending more than one event.

## **4 Remaindered business**

4.1 Those attending York in 2001 were aware that business on the last day was overloaded and too much had to be taken 'at a canter'. The committee recognises that the purpose of Assembly is to allow representatives sufficient time to consider

thoroughly issues before the church. In order to be fair, committee business should begin at the scheduled times. This means that sometimes the completion of the previous business has to be deferred. To avoid a build-up of remaindered business on the last day, this year we are planning for time at the end of each day to return to uncompleted business in the hope that this will prevent problems in the final session.

## **5 Alternate year reporting**

5.1 The policy of committees reporting only to alternate Assemblies completes its first cycle this year. It will need another two years before the committee can fully assess its effectiveness. The system was adopted to allow greater time for committees to do their work, to share their priorities and to set out their overall objectives to the wider church. If urgent business requires a decision in the year a committee is not due to report, then the committee can ask for time to bring a resolution. Normally, however, in that year the fringe meetings and display areas allow more informal opportunity for concerns and information to be shared.

## **6 An inter-active Assembly**

6.1 The introduction last year of a more sophisticated and extensive Assembly Hotline website was a great success, with many favourable comments received – both at the time of Assembly and later. For users at home it meant that information about Assembly proceedings was available – complete with pictures – shortly after each session. Those at home who wished to follow the business almost as it happened could do so, and many did. Picture diaries and longer items completed the flavour for those who wished to look back on the day. An interactive forum allowed users to post comments and questions on Assembly business and to receive responses.



6.2 The statistics for the web-site indicate that usage increased by more than 80% during the course of Assembly and remained high during the following days. A similar service will be available this year which, it is hoped, will be widely advertised in the period leading up to Assembly.

## **7 Preparation for Assembly**

7.1 Once again we would urge Synods and Districts to ensure that their representatives, especially those attending Assembly for the first time, are adequately briefed about procedures and given an opportunity to discuss the reports together prior to travelling.

## **8 Convener'ship**

8.1 The Committee wishes to thank Alasdair Pratt for his caring and thoughtful convener'ship upon retiring from that role at this Assembly. The officers of Assembly have greatly valued his wisdom and expertise. We welcome William McVey from Eastern Synod in his place.

## **Resolution 27**

## **General Assembly 2004**

**General Assembly agrees that General Assembly in 2004 will meet at the University of Glamorgan from July 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>.**

# Communications and Editorial

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

## Committee Members

**Convener:** Revd Graham Cook     **Secretary:** Mrs Carol Rogers

Miss Elizabeth Bruce, Mr John East, Ms Eleri Evans, Mrs Melanie Frew, Mr Peter Knowles, Mr Richard Lathaen, Revd Bob Maitland, Revd Peter Moth, Revd Martin Truscott.

## I Communicate or Die

1.1 This was the title of a book published by the United Reformed Church in the 1980's. Its message is just as true some 20 years later. Communication is the word that is probably the most frequently used at all levels of the church, and yet still is ignored by many. The Committee again emphasise that the phrase "how is this work to be communicated" should be added to the remit of each committee and be part of the initial planning of any piece of work. Among the committee and the communications staff there is widespread expertise and if any gaps are found, the reply, to almost quote a rather old advertisement, is: "I may not be able to help, but I know someone who can".

1.2 The first stage of the rolling Communications Strategy resulted in the leaflet **Get Smart** which highlighted the importance of the appearance of buildings and notice boards. This leaflet has been used in local churches and copies are still available. The second stage has produced a leaflet **Get Talking** which is available at this General Assembly and will be circulated to all local congregations. Following a meeting at General Assembly 2001 it was agreed that this process will be most effective if taken forward by people in each synod who have attended a workshop, giving help in communicating decisions made at every level of the Church in a 'hearer friendly' way. The committee is now working on the third stage **Get known**. This stage concentrates on getting the name of the United Reformed Church recognised, locally, regionally and nationally to make the fullest possible use of the opportunities available in the media especially at a local level. **Get Known** will be the subject of a possible fringe meeting at General Assembly 2003 (when this committee will not report) and the final material will be launched in time for General Assembly 2004.

## 2 Publishing and Publications

2.1 The annual publication of the United Reformed Church Year Book, Diary and Prayer Handbook continues, together with new promotional material. During the past two years there have been several new publications. In 2001 there were several leaflets and pamphlets produced as well as **All Change**. New titles for this Assembly and the autumn are **Reforming Theology** by David Peel which explores the whole subject of theology in the Reformed tradition, **Somewhere to Start** a book of prayers by Harry Undy, a new anthology on creation and the environment compiled by Geoffrey Duncan featuring the work of Pamela Pavitt, provisionally titled at the time of the writing of this report **What a World! Springs of Living Water, five bible studies** by John Campbell and based on the much appreciated worship from General Assembly 2001 are also available. New material for elders training has been piloted and will be launched this summer. Other planned new titles include **Take, Bless, Break** liturgies for communion, and in the series exploring our reformed tradition the next book will concentrate on being biblically reformed. The production of all the material for the TLS programme now takes place 'in house' and the work load of the graphic artist and her assistant who deals with all the in house printing has grown considerably. There are still difficulties in the finishing processes mainly due to lack of space!

2.2 The United Reformed Church Bookshop continues to thrive. The mail order operation is managed efficiently and orders are seldom held up at Church House for longer than two days although some unfortunate experiences with Consignia have led to an alternative carrier being used. There are outposts of the URC Bookshop in seven other locations - an attempt to fulfil our missionary challenge! A new service for local churches offering logo goods on a sale or return basis and also selections of books for special events was launched in January 2002 and is now beginning to be well used. Material is supplied to

all Synod meetings. The Books-on-Line facility continues to be popular and has recently been redesigned to be hopefully more user-friendly. The staff welcome all visitors to the shop at Tavistock Place and to the Assembly Bookshop.

### **3 Reform**

3.1 The percentage take-up of *Reform* amongst the membership of the United Reformed Church has continued to increase over recent years. In the context of declining membership that means in effect that circulation has remained relatively static but even so the continued success of *Reform* in attracting the highest proportion of readers of any major denominational periodical is nevertheless something to be celebrated.

3.2 Though *Reform* continues to change and adapt, and still attracts a regular stream of favourable comments, much of its strength in terms of circulation is attributable to the success of the special offer which provides new members of the church with three months copies of the magazine free, without obligation. The high success rate in converting those readers into subscribers means that among newer members of the Church the percentage reading *Reform* is even higher than amongst congregations at large.

3.3 Since our last report, the importance of *Reform* as by far the most cost-effective means of communication with the wider membership of the Church has become more widely recognised. The combination of low printing costs and wide circulation allow material to reach members in ways which would be financially and practically impossible in other ways. The Committee were particularly glad to be able to co-operate with FURY in giving a wide circulation to the f2 supplement. While it is still too early to assess the success of this method, it represents a willingness to experiment with forms of communication which is refreshing.

### **4 Christian Resources Exhibition**

4.1 Thanks to the generosity of local synods the United Reformed Church has been able to be present at the exhibitions in Esher (2001 and 2002), Manchester, Torquay and will also be at the Scottish Christian Resources Exhibition in Edinburgh 29 September - 1 October 2002.

### **5 Web Site**

5.1 The URC's website continues to develop within the constraints of the resources available. Usage has increased significantly since we last reported in 2000 and a range of technical innovations, including the first use of database-

driven material, has been introduced, allowing users anywhere in the country to search the entire list of our churches according to a variety of criteria. The Books Online section of the site has also been rewritten to allow a substantial part of the maintenance of the section to be carried out in the Bookshop itself, freeing resources for other projects. At the time of writing the site is undergoing a technical redesign in order to reduce the time required for maintenance and to enable the many requests for a site search facility to be fulfilled.

5.2 The usefulness of the site was exemplified in the days following the tragedy of 11 September, when it enabled the Church to make a rapid public response in the form of both formal statements and appropriate worship material, reaching audiences both here and in the United States.

5.3 The undoubted success of 2001, however, was the enhanced Assembly Hotline, made possible by a small grant from the Assembly Arrangements committee. The site had its busiest day of the year on 18 July, the third day of Assembly, when over 3300 page requests were made, and numerous positive comments were received over the days and weeks following to the effect that the enhanced coverage had allowed visitors to the site to feel involved in the proceedings of Assembly. In future years it is hoped to be able to include audio clips as technical resources allow. It is also worth noting that 2001's record day has nearly been equalled in both January and February 2002 during normal daily usage.

5.4 As the site develops, it is gratifying to note a growing awareness on the part of other Assembly committees of the possibilities of making material available in this way both to the casual visitor and to those who need instant access to specific material in the course of their work for the church. The policy of the site is to retain material once it has been posted, so that the collection develops over time into an archive of increasing value to the Church.

### **6 Press and PR**

6.1 It is customary for the report on the activities under this heading to lament the studied lack of attention in the national media to any matter related to the United Reformed Church. On occasion this has worked to the distinct advantage of the Church but it also leads to frustration when important initiatives go unnoticed. A prime example of the latter category was the publication of the report *Worth Working For?*: the results of the major study of the quality of work available through the nation's jobcentres. While excellent coverage was obtained in a number of regions through the creation of tailored local press releases highlighting problems particular to the areas in question, no mention was

## Resolution 28

made of the report in the national media, despite extensive work publicising the report and a successful launch in the House of Commons. In the opinion of the Committee this relative invisibility will continue unless and until the Church is prepared to devote appropriate resources to raising the profile of the URC and to dispelling the widely-held twin impressions, largely based on the unfamiliarity of our name, that we are numerically insignificant and/or not an indigenous church.

6.2 While this relative anonymity often protects the Church from negative publicity, it does not always do so. It bears repetition that the services of the Press Officer are always available to those who find the attention of the press focussed on them or believe that may do so in the future. Early consultation can often ensure that the Church's position is put in such a way that it influences the tone of coverage. Experience shows that where advice and support either is not or cannot be sought at the earliest stage the Church, both nationally and locally, is the loser as a result of negative, biased or merely ignorant coverage of stories.

## 7 Ecumenical Work

7.1 The United Reformed Church through the Revd Peter Moth continues to support the work of the Churches' Media Council (formerly the Churches Advisory Council for Local Broadcasting).

7.2 Ecumenical News International. The Church has long valued the work of Ecumenical News International (ENI), the ecumenical news agency based in Geneva, which serves not only to inform individuals within the Church but as an important source of material for Reform and, as importantly, one of the few remaining sources of religious news available to the secular media. With ENI's establishment as an independent association, rather an aspect of the work of the World Council of Churches, the Committee has recommended that a small annual grant be made to ENI to support its work.

7.3 Church Publishers Network. The Secretary continues to serve as Convener of the Church Publishers Network.

## Resolution 28

## ROOTS

**General Assembly commends ROOTS, the new lectionary-based resource programme to support the worship and learning of the whole church community, to all local churches.**

1.1 The Church Publishers Network, a group under the auspices of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland have met regularly for several years and have been keen to find a project that could be undertaken ecumenically.

1.2 With the news that Partners in Learning would not be continued beyond 2002, but realising there was a need for such a publication for the whole church, the Network began to explore the possibility of this being their first project. As a result ROOTS, an ecumenical venture supported by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland along with representatives of the Church Publishers has been launched.

1.3 As a result of lengthy discussions Church House Publishing, the Methodist Publishing House, the United Reformed Church, the Council for Sunday Schools and Christian Education in Wales, and Christian Education have financed the setting up of the Roots project. The sum invested by each body will eventually be repaid. A limited company, Roots Ltd, has been formed and the United Reformed Church is represented on the Board.

1.4 A project manager, editors for each of the magazines and the web site have been appointed, and writing groups formed. The United Reformed Church is represented on the management group by the Secretary for Communications, on the editorial group by Revd Tim Lowe and has many among the groups of writers commissioned for the project.

# Equal Opportunities

The Equal Opportunities Committee was formed in 1994 to:

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

## Committee Members

**Convener:** Revd Nanette Head      **Secretary:** Miss Ruth Norton  
Revd Susan Armitage, Revd Wilf Bahadur (Convener-Elect), Mr Hilary Gunn (staff link),  
Revd Derek Hopkins, Ms Gloria Bujan, Miss Sarah Moore, Miss Stella Salmon

## **I 'WE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST'**

1.1 Is everyone welcome in your local church? What a strange question you may say? Think about it. It's not a difficult task for anyone to picture for a moment your Church building. You are familiar with the layout, you've been so many times you know there is a welcome there for you. Hold the image of your building. Can you climb all the steps? Can you hear clearly from every part of the building? Are there wide aisles for wheelchairs and maybe pushchairs? Do young parents feel welcomed? Are all people encouraged to take an active part in the life of the church? Are the young listened to or are decisions made for them? Just think about all the different people who use the building, and those who maybe could use the building if some changes were made. But wait! This isn't an Equal Opportunities issue is it? Or are these questions for Mission?

## **2 Monitoring church and General Assembly composition:**

2.1 As a group, this committee believes that it is relevant for us to think about your buildings and the openness of your church community to change. The Equal Opportunities policy makes it the duty and responsibility of us all not to discriminate on grounds of race, gender, age or disability. In order to do this we need to monitor to establish and encourage the implementation of the policy.

2.2 In 1996 we asked churches for various information and the replies were reported in 1997. Last year these questions were asked again so that we could compare them both with the 1996 information and the information we gleaned from the similar exercise done for members of Assembly in 1999. Unfortunately there is resistance from some people. But how are we to find out whether the Church is working within the lines of the policy? We

appreciate that people feel bogged down by questions, but we cannot just assume that the policy is being carried out regarding representation. We hope and pray that it is for we have no intention of proposing quotas, but want to ensure that we really have the best people for the jobs. Details of the responses, compared, where possible with 1996, were available at the 2001 Assembly. Further copies can be obtained from the committee.

## **3 Monitoring at Synod level**

3.1 In 2000 we wrote to all the Synods, asking them what was happening regarding equal opportunities and what help this committee could be. We had swift responses from seven Synods and an acknowledgement from one other from which we gained a picture of Synods actively involved with the policy and tackling the issues of gender, age, disability and race. Some Synods were providing their own training but all would welcome assistance, acknowledging the difficulties and time involved in calling people together to train, whether at Synod or District level.

3.2 The committee is grateful for this positive response and would welcome information from the Synods who have not yet replied. We have also offered to make presentations at Synods and/or District Councils

## **4 Disability at District Council level**

4.1 By now we hope that all churches are aware of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Last year the committee wrote to District Councils suggesting questions which could be asked during pastoral visitations, covering, among other things, access of buildings, facilities for the disabled such as loop systems, large print books,

handrails. They were intended to raise people's awareness of the Act. But also of how necessary it is for us to be an inclusive church and not to bar people from worship. If we are to take "Growing Up" seriously then these are questions we have to ask ourselves. We were again grateful to the Districts who responded, thanking us. In some cases we had validated what they were doing already, in others we had given them useful food for thought and action.

4.2 Useful information can be found in the Property Handbook and in the booklet Circular 1999/4 produced by The Churches Main Committee which is available either from Fielden House, 13 Little College Street, London SW1P 3SH or URC Church House, 86 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9RT. Another useful document which has recently been published is *Including Disabled People – Are Your Events Accessible?* This can be obtained from CTE, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH, telephone 020 7529 8141.

4.3 However, we note with concern the shortage of funds available for churches to make an application for grants for alteration and provision of facilities for the disabled due to applications outweighing the money set aside.

## **5 Racial Justice**

5.1 We welcome the appointment of Katalina Tahaafe Williams as the new Secretary for Racial Justice. We are grateful that funds have been made possible for this post and wish her well in this work as we continue to work with her.

## **6 Unconscious attitudes and assumptions**

6.1 We are making progress. However there are still many areas of unspoken attitudes and assumptions, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously. For example:

"We can't call her to be an Elder – she can't hear"

"His learning difficulties won't let him be a church member"

"She is too young to be responsible"

"He can't drive so he can't get to meetings"

"She will feel uncomfortable being a woman and black in that position of leadership in the church"

## **7 Equal Opportunities and Mission**

7.1 There is no way we can measure attitude to people, but from listening and observing we still have a long way to go. Equal opportunities is about valuing, encouraging and enabling EVERYONE to recognise the gifts God gives and the right to use those gifts. So we continue to encourage the Church to go on hearing and listening for God's word. Stories are reaching us of people released to respond to the call to serve in the life of the Church because they are valued and appreciated.

7.2 The leaflet, originally written for new ministers, has been updated for more general use. Enough copies have been sent to each Synod for every church.

7.3 We still need to know what is happening within Synods and District Councils so that we can share the good and exciting news and help the whole church to be the people of God.

8 At this General Assembly we say thank you to three members of the committee on completion of their term of office. Stella Salmon and Derek Hopkins have been tireless in their support and enthusiasm to promote awareness of equal opportunity issues. We look forward to working with Wilf Bahadur as he becomes our new Convener and we thank Nanette Head for her leadership and inspiration over the last three years.

# 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, Mr John Rowatt,  
 Dr Brian Woodhall (Convener, United Reformed Church Trust) and Mr John Woodman

## Resolution 29

## Accounts

General Assembly adopts the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2001.

## 2001 Accounts

1.1 The 2001 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 31 December 2001.

## Resolution 30

## Ministry and Mission Fund

General Assembly gratefully acknowledges the giving of the churches in 2001 to the Ministry and Mission Fund.

## The giving of the members of the Church to central funds

1.1 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 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, for collection by direct debit.

1.2 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, the committee would also wish to acknowledge that largely unthanked group, the treasurers, in local churches, and also at district and synod level.

# Ministries

The Committee is responsible for the ministry of word and sacraments, church related community work and lay preaching. It is concerned with central care and conditions of service, chaplaincies in industry, higher and further education and in the armed forces and 'special category' ministry. It has concern for the pastoral support of ministers, church related community workers and lay preachers, including supervision, appraisal, self-evaluation and counselling. It oversees the work of the National Assessment Board. It is assisted by five sub-committees.

## **Accreditation Sub-Committee**

Maintaining the roll of ministers, this sub-committee accredits those applying for inclusion after training and those coming from other denominations. It is concerned with numbers and recruitment.

## **Church Related Community Work Central Management Sub-Committee**

It is responsible for managing the Church Related Community Work Programme under the terms agreed in the Church Related Community Work Covenant.

## **Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee**

It is responsible for the advocacy of lay preaching and support of lay preachers in the United Reformed Church.

## **Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee**

Advises on the level of stipend and ministers' conditions of service through the Plan for Partnership. It is also concerned for pensions through its associated Pensions Sub-Committee.

## **Retired Ministers Housing Sub-Committee**

Works in association with the United Reformed Church Ministers Housing Society Ltd.

## **Committee Members**

**Convener:** *Revd Graham Long*      **Secretary:** *Revd Christine Craven*

*Mrs Sally Abbott, Mrs Alison Biggs, Mrs Darryl Sinclair, Revds Roz Harrison, Tjarda Murray, Peter Noble, Stuart Brock*

## **I Personalia**

1.1 There have been a considerable number of changes since the committee last reported to General Assembly. The Revd Robert Way has been succeeded by the Revd Ken Chippindale as convener of the Accreditations Sub Committee. Mr Brian Evans has been succeeded as convener of the National Assessment Board by Mrs Darryl Sinclair, and the Revd Susan Flynn as convener of the Church Related Community Work Central Management Committee by the Revd Alison Hall. We are most grateful to Robert, Brian and Susan for the service they have given.

1.2 On the main committee we have said farewell to the Revds Brian Jolly and Martha McInnes, and Miss Margery King, and we have welcomed the Revd Peter Noble, and Mrs Alison Biggs. Mr John Ellis has also joined the committee as convener elect.

1.3 Particular mention must be made of two committee secretaries who have retired since our last report: Mr John Boddy acted as secretary to the CRCW Central Management Committee for many years, and Mr Clive Willis served as secretary to the Retired Ministers Housing sub committee. In their separate ways both have given exemplary service to the national church.

1.4 Ministries is served by a number of paid staff members, and by a much greater number of people who give their service to the church. The many and various matters the committee is bringing to General Assembly this year could easily mask the extensive ongoing work done by our committees and staff. We are indeed most grateful for the valued contribution they have made to the Ministries Committee and to our wider life together. General Assembly owes them all a great a debt of gratitude.



## 2 A massive agenda

2.1 The greater part of our report to General Assembly this year is carried in the many papers and resolutions the committee is bringing to General Assembly on its own behalf and on behalf of the sub committees. These include

- the strategy for lay preacher recruitment in response to the needs identified in the countrywide survey conducted at the end of 2000;
- provision for the fuller inclusion of church related community workers within the revised plan for partnership with associated pension provision and access to retired ministers' housing;
- provision for the issue of a new category of certificates of limited eligibility for ministry in certain circumstances;
- the presentation of ministers and church related community workers from other churches recently inducted into the ministry of the United Reformed Church to General Assembly in the same way that our own ordinands and missionaries serving amongst us are presented;
- a new structure for dealing with retired ministers' housing;
- and the interim but major report from the working party on future patterns of ministries.

## 3 Working Party on Deployment Issues

3.1 The working party was formed to examine and evaluate the current practice of calling and deploying ministers of word and sacraments, and other deployment related matters, and to offer recommendations for future policy, in response to general concerns within the Ministries Committee and issues raised in Mission Council by the Yorkshire synod.

3.2 The working party presented a progress report to the February meeting of the Committee and was encouraged to press on with its work. It aims to present an interim report to Mission Council in October and to report to General Assembly in 2003.

## 4 Minister numbers

4.1 Among the responsibilities included in the remit of the Ministries Committee is oversight of minister numbers and recruitment. In order for the Ministries Committee to fulfil that responsibility the first task has been to establish an up to date and accurate record of the ministerial roll of the United Reformed Church and the minister's status and form of service.

4.2 In 1995 General Assembly instructed the Ministries Committee to maintain relevant records on a database. The database was developed in Microsoft Access by an outside consultant and all known details of Ministers and Church Related Community Workers have been entered onto it. Mrs Judith Johnson has carried out this latter task meticulously and admirably since 1996. She receives updated information on the movement and service of the ministers from the Synods every two months.

4.3 In addition information relevant to minister numbers arrives in Church House through the Communications and payroll offices. An accurate record of minister numbers and the forms of service they exercise at any one time results from co-ordination of information between the Ministries, Communications and Finance offices. We are indebted not only to Judith but to Stephanie Honey, Mary Williams and Alison Peberdy who crosscheck their information and thereby maintain the current accuracy of the records.

## 5 Minister statistics

5.1 From this account of the process of data collation we can turn to the frequently asked question "How many URC ministers are there?" The answer is not so straightforward as people might expect. A further question needs first to be answered. "To which category of minister do you refer?"

5.2 If the question is about the total number of ministers listed in the Year Book the answer is 1868. If the question is about those in full time stipendiary service in the United Reformed Church the answer is 643. In addition there are several other categories of service and status between those two figures. The full picture is shown in the following table.

### 5.3 Minister Numbers as at the end February 2002

Non-Stipendiary Service	Active	Not Retired	160
	Active	Retired	11
	Non-active		25
	Retired		121
Stipendiary Service	Full-Stipend		643
	Part-Stipend*		88
	Active	not paid by MoM	44
	Non-active		77
	Retired		699
Total on Roll			1868

(\* 66 under 65, 22 over 65)

## **6 Minister numbers, deployment and the stipend budget**

6.1 Paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3 provide the facts about the way information about numbers is processed. The purposes for gathering that information are threefold.

- a) With the information about present and predicted numbers of ministers who will be in stipendiary service the Ministries Committee contributes to the production of the budget for stipends in the United Reformed Church.
- b) The figures are also used as the basis for the deployment quota for each synod. The Ministries office is responsible for applying the deployment formula in order to divide the number of full time equivalent posts between the Synods. Knowledge of the pastoral needs and mission requirements of individual churches lies with the local churches and the Districts and so that part of the deployment exercise belongs within the conversations between the Synods, District and Area Councils and the local churches.
- c) So far this account has made no mention of the management or control of the future number of ministers. Over the last thirty years various reports to General Assembly have acknowledged the difficulty in managing and controlling minister numbers. General Assembly has never stated how many ministers in stipendiary service the United Reformed Church can or should deploy at any one time. Discussions in the past have centred on the actual number at any time, the perceived lack of ministry and the various forms of ministerial service rather than what the number of ministers should or might be.

6.2 However within the Growing Up report of 1999 was the recommendation that minister numbers should track the overall rate of increase or decrease in membership number by half the rate. Monitoring and predicting the relationship between minister and membership numbers has become part of the oversight of minister numbers carried out by the Ministries Committee.

6.3 This is no easy task since every year brings a certain number of unpredictable changes to the predicted numbers of ministers based on retirements and ordinations. Nevertheless the Ministries Committee is monitoring current trends and seeking a clearer understanding of some of the categories of change previously recorded as unpredictable.

6.4 However during 2001 minister numbers did not track membership numbers as recommended and the result was a higher number of ministers on the payroll than had been predicted for the budget. The Committee is working closely with the Finance Committee to address this situation. It believes that measured use of the current procedures, strengthened by the Mission Council proposals relating to the age of retirement which will remove an area of considerable uncertainty, should prove sufficient means to deal with the situation.

6.5 This account of this aspect of the work of the Ministries Committee is presented in the context of the interim report of the Future Pattern of Ministries Working Party and anticipated report of the Deployment Working Party. It will provide some of the background information General Assembly will need when making decisions in the future.

## **7 Chaplaincies**

7.1 General Assembly last year asked Ministries to conduct a review of the support given to chaplaincies. Because of the considerable weight of business carried by the committee during the past year this piece of work is only now commencing. The committee aims to report to General Assembly in 2004.

# Accreditation Sub-Committee

## Sub-Committee Members

**Convener:** Revd Ken Chippindale    **Secretary:** Revd Christine Craven  
Mrs Frances Caldwell, Mrs Sheila Telfer, Mr Peter Mann, Revds Roberta Rominger, Keith Argyle

1 During this year the Sub-Committee met three times as usual. The major part of its time was spent carefully considering the applications received from ministers of other denominations, both in this country and from overseas, who wish to serve in the URC and be admitted to the roll of ministers and list of Church Related Community Workers. Each application is considered according to the criteria agreed by General Assembly in 1991

2 The Accreditation Sub-Committee felt that it would be helpful if members of Assembly received an overview of the work of the committee in granting Certificates of Eligibility in the last four years. During that time, up to the end of January 2002, we received 85 applications for Certificates of Eligibility of which 62 were granted. 33 ministers and 3 CRCWs were transferred onto our Roll. Two of the ministers were non-stipendiary, one is working for a synod rather than in pastoral charge and one is a retired minister. This means that an average of 7.25 ministers a year have gone into stipendiary service in pastorates from other denominations.

3 In order to help ministers from other churches in the UK and from overseas have the necessary and appropriate information when considering serving in the United Reformed Church, a paper entitled *All about moving into Ministry in the United Reformed Church* has been prepared. This is available from the Ministries Office. This paper is also necessary reading for a church thinking of calling a minister from overseas

4 The Sub-Committee has sought to clarify the procedures in relation to ministers of other churches who serve in local United Reformed Church pastorates and posts and to this end brings a resolution regarding certificates of limited eligibility for the approval of the Assembly

5 Admissions to the Roll of Ministers (from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2002

a) **By Ordination – Stipendiary:**  
Janet Adamson, Nicholas Adlem, Andrew Berry, Yolande Burns, Susan Chapman, Sian Collins, Patricia Davis, Carole Gotham,

Gary Gotham, Ann Jack, Leslie Mather, Jonathan Morgan, Stuart Nixon, Peter Nunn, Helen Pattie (from Salvation Army), Robert Pope, Christopher Ray, Jane Rowell, Yvonne Stone, Mary Thomas, Jill Thornton, Nigel Warner, Katherine White

b) **By Ordination – Non-Stipendiary:**  
Hazel Allen, Bruce Allinson, Robert Ash, Neil Eldridge, Leena Knowles, Martin Wheadon, Trevor Williams

c) **By Transfer from other Churches:**  
Paul Andrianatos (Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa), Ian Croft (Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand), John Fielding (Methodist Church), Naison Hove (Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa), Robert Jennings (Congregational Federation), Denis Simons (Anglican Church of Southern Africa); Terence Sparks (Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa), Alan Spence (Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa), Diana Townsend (Church of Scotland - Non-Stipendiary Service), Ian Wiseman (Church of Scotland), Rodney Woods (Presbyterian Church of USA)

d) **By Re-instatement**  
Alan Sell

6 Deletions from the Roll of Ministers (from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2002)

a) **By Resignation and/or Transfer to other Churches:**  
Hartmut Eder (returned to Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz), Martyn Evans (transferred to Presbyterian Church of Wales)

7 Changes within the Roll of Ministers (from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2001 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2002

a) **Non-Stipendiary to Stipendiary:**  
Peter Gaskell, Tjarda Murray, Lorraine Mycroft

8 Admissions to the List of CRCW's (from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2002)

- a) **By Commissioning:**  
Linda Granville, Gwen Smithies, Maureen Thompson
- b) **By Transfer from other Churches:**  
Christopher Miller (Church of England),  
Emmanuel Nkusi (Anglican Church of Rwanda)

9 Lay Preachers

The following members have successfully completed their course of study and have been Nationally Accredited between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2002.

Northern Synod:-  
Stuart Armstrong, Jean Howarth

North Western Synod:-  
Simon Baker, Kathryn Bradshaw, Doreen Goodship,  
Judith Haughton, Yvonne Hawkins, Susan Jackson,

Mersey Synod:-  
Bernard Bentley, Ruth Sawyer, Gerald Till, Sybil Ventham, Brian Woodhouse

West Midlands Synod:-  
Pamela Dent, Maisie Parker

Wessex Synod:-  
Gillian Bailey, Bridget Banks, Dorothy Wayer

Thames North Synod:-  
Mary Arthur, Seth Boafo, Catherine Edmonds,  
Andrew Mills, Clifford Perry, Christine Warren

Southern Synod:-  
Heather Coutts, Paul Cross, Jennifer Snashall

Synod of Wales:-  
Alun Jones, Christine Roberts

# National Assessment Board

## **Sub-Committee Members**

**Convener:** Mrs Darryl Sinclair      **Secretary:** The Revd Christine Craven

Miss Margaret Compton, Dr David Cutler, Ms Elaine Gentles, Mrs Janine Lawley, Mr Monty Helmn, Mr Alan Small, Dr Jean Stevenson, Mrs Joyce Sutcliffe, Dr Chris Whitehead, Revds Ray Adams, Craig Bowman, Marilyn Allen, Alison Davies, Thomas Heggie, Graham Hoslett, Denise Megson, Michael Mewis, Lythan Nevard, Rachel Poolman, Peter Poulter, Kevin Watson and Hilma Wilkinson

**CRCW Assessment Panel:** Mrs Kathleen Stephenson, Ms Allison Trimble, Mr Andrew Edwards, Mr Graham Ghaleb, Revds Susan Armitage and Bob Day

1 Since the report to General Assembly 2000 there have been several changes in the membership of the National Assessment Board. The change of Convener has been noted in the main Ministries Committee section of this report but in addition the Ministries Committee wishes to record appreciation of the commitment of all who serve on the Assessment Board and the CRCW Assessment panel.

2 6 Assessment Conferences and 4 Reassessment days were held during 2000 and 2001

2.1 48 candidates attended the National Assessment Conferences in 1999/2000;

- 22 for stipendiary service
- 16 for non-stipendiary service
- 2 Church Related Community Workers
- 8 Re-Assessment (transfer from non-stipendiary to stipendiary service)

2.2 40 were finally accepted for training or transfer as a result of Assessment Conference recommendations and Synod decision;

- 19 stipendiary service
- 13 non-stipendiary service
- 1 Church Related Community Workers
- 7 Re-Assessment

2.3 39 candidates attended the National Assessment Conferences in 2000/2001;

- 17 for stipendiary service
- 16 for non-stipendiary service
- 2 Church Related Community Workers
- 4 Re-Assessment (transfer from non-stipendiary to stipendiary service)

2.4 29 were finally accepted for training or transfer as a result of Assessment Conference recommendations and Synod decision;

- 12 stipendiary service
- 12 non-stipendiary service
- 2 Church Related Community Workers
- 3 Re-Assessment

3.1 A pastoral concern for candidates formed the major part of the thinking behind the 'Criteria for Assessment' agreed by General Assembly in 1997. Previously many candidates went through the whole range of interviews even though there were doubts at an early stage about their calling to the ministry of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work amongst those who interviewed them. The eventual decision by the Synod not to recommend an individual for training was often unexpected as far as the candidate was concerned and so the disappointment was even more intense.

3.2 The Criteria for Assessment has meant that a greater number of candidates are not sent by District Council to the National Assessment Conferences and candidates can therefore reassess their sense of calling and the form of their service at an earlier stage. This can also lead to a significant reduction in the number of candidates sent forward for training and this was particularly apparent during the academic year 2000/2001 which produced the smallest number of candidates accepted for training by the Synods for some years.

4 The annual November consultation at Windermere continues both to provide valuable training for those involved in the training of candidates and to develop co-operation between the Board and the Synod committees. All those concerned with the assessment process continue to share a concern that those not accepted for training should receive not only continuing pastoral support within their Districts and Synods but also guidance in order to discern the form of ministry they can exercise as part of the mission of the whole people of God in the world.

# Church Related Community Work Central Management Sub-Committee

## Sub Committee Members

**Convener:** Revd Alison Hall      **Secretary:** Not filled

Revd Peter Cruchley-Jones, Mrs Diana Herbert, Chris Lawrence (CRCW), Adella Pritchard (CRCW), Revd Clifford Wilton

## **1 CRCW Programme**

1.1 The main focus for both the Central Management Sub-Committee and the Development Workers has been the working out of the implications for the CRCW Programme of the 15 recommendations contained in the 1998 Report to Mission Council. 'Church Related Community Work in the United Reformed Church', four of which were incorporated into the Assembly publication 'Growing Up'. Our conclusions and recommendations are set out in our report to Mission Council 'The Development of the Church Related Community Work Programme'.

1.2 One of the recommendations was that we aim to increase the total number of CRCWs to 30 by 2008. Assuming a steady annual increase, we should have had 16 active CRCWs by the end of 2001. We actually had 15 by January 2002 with 5 CRCWs in training, 2 of whom are due to complete their training this academic year.

## **2 Consultation Day**

2.1 This is the annual gathering (formerly known as the Strategy Conference) of all those responsible for CRCW ministries in the URC – CRCWs, CRCWs in training, representatives of all the Churches-in-Community and the Central Management Sub-Committee. A well attended and successful Consultation Day was held at Shiregreen URC, Sheffield in 2001.

## **3 CRCW Residential**

3.1 With most CRCWs working some distance from each other, it is important that opportunities are given for them to meet and reflect together. Successful residentials were held in Hollowford Centre, Sheffield in 2000 and at Hope Valley, Derbyshire in 2001.

## **4 Personalia**

4.1 We said goodbye to convener Susan Flynn and secretary John Boddy. We thank them both for their valued contribution. John gave many years of valued service contributing greatly to the work of the Committee during a period of considerable change and upheaval. We were pleased to welcome as new members Adella Pritchard and Chris Lawrence.

# Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee

## Sub-Committee Members

**Convener:** Mrs Carol Dixon (National Lay Preaching Commissioner)

**Secretary:** Mrs Judith Johnson

Mr Hugh Barlow, Dr Berta Doodson, Mr Les Phillips, Mr Phil Theaker

## 1 Lay Preaching Strategy

1.1 The major piece of work undertaken by the Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee during the past year has been the Lay Preaching Strategy document which is appended to Resolution 35.

1.2 The Strategy has come out of the results of the Lay Preaching Survey in 2001. There was an excellent response to the questionnaire and almost 80% of districts responded. The data was processed by Camilla Dixon, a PhD student at St Andrews University and the Support Sub-Committee was most grateful to her for her thorough evaluation and to Mrs Judith Johnson, the Administrator for Ministries Committee for assisting with the extra work.

## 2 Annual Consultations

2.1 The residential Lay Preaching Commissioners' Consultation took place on 16-18 June 2001 at Hinsley Hall, Leeds. The Revd Bill Mahood, Assembly Moderator, addressed the issues of lifelong learning and integrated ministry (ministers and lay preachers working in partnership). Throughout his moderatorial year Bill supported and affirmed the work of lay preachers, meeting lay preachers' groups in many districts and the Sub-Committee expressed their gratitude for his encouragement.

2.2 The main subject under discussion during the weekend was the delivery of *'Affirming Gifts and Encouraging Growth – Self Reflection for lay preachers'* which has been compiled to help lay preachers reflect on their current ministry and identify areas where they might benefit from further development or training. As a result Guidelines were produced and sent to the Commissioners for comment at this year's Consultation. It is hoped that the Self Reflection will be implemented as widely as possible in the coming year.

2.3 The speaker at the Consultation held in London on 15 June 2002 was the Revd Dr David Cornick, General Secretary who took as his theme 'Poetry, prophecy and preaching: the task of the preacher' and led a Bible study entitled 'Jeremiah, the spirituality of the preacher.'

2.4 A further residential consultation is planned for 2003, when it is expected that some of the Synod Moderators will share in leading the conference.

## 3 Publications

3.1 Various booklets were published during 2000 and 2001:

3.2 The District Commissioners Job Description 'Lay Preaching Commissioner... Who? Me?!!!' was circulated to District/Area Secretaries and Commissioners to help District /Area Councils when finding a new commissioner.

3.3 'Towards best practice – guidelines for when visitors conduct worship' was sent out to each church secretary and copies are available from Ministries or the bookshop at Church House.

3.4 'Guidelines for District Recognition of Lay Preachers' was compiled to 'tidy up' existing procedures and suggest good practice for the future. It was sent to District Commissioners, District Secretaries and Synod Ministries Committees, asking for their support in compiling lists of lay preachers who are not Nationally Accredited but whose ministry is recognised within a particular District.

3.5 The Lay Preaching Recruitment pack – in the 'Could this be You?' series – was launched at FURY Assembly 2001 by the Assembly Moderator and the National Lay Preaching Commissioner and a copy sent to each church. They are available from Ministries or the bookshop at Church House

## 4 Committee representation

4.1 The Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of Ministries Committee and over the past four years has included representatives from Training Committee, TLS Management, and Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committees. The four Lay Preachers who have served on the Support Committee are from South Western Synod, East Midlands Synod, Mersey Synod and the Synod of Scotland and the other members are drawn from Northern, Eastern, Wessex, West Midlands and Southern Synods.

4.2 Two of our members serve ecumenically, representing the United Reformed Church at the Joint Readers and Lay Preachers Committee and the College of Preachers Executive Committee.

# Retired Ministers Housing Sub-Committee

## Sub-Committee Members

**Convener:** Revd Simon Swalles      **Secretary:** Mr Tony Bayley

Mrs Edlith Tolley, Mrs Pauline Mewis, Revd Graham Cook, Revd John Pugh, Mr Graham Stacy, Mr Malcolm Lindo

1 This Sub-Committee continues to be responsible for policy in matters of the provision of retirement housing for ministers and their spouses. It uses the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited as its agent for the implementation of policy and the practical steps associated with the provision of housing.

2 Although the number of purchases and sales in 2001 was comparable with 2000 overall numbers of properties have continued to rise gently and this has been boosted by the transfer of properties from Northern Synod.

### NUMBER OF PROPERTIES

As at 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2001	325
Purchased in 2001	16
Transferred from Northern Synod	<u>12</u>
	353
<b>LESS</b> Properties sold in 2001	<u>9</u>
Number of properties as at 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec. 2001	344
Of which:	
Unoccupied	NIL
For Sale	4
Occupied by - Retired Ministers	223
- Widows	112
- non-URC tenants	3
Freehold Ground Rents	<u>2</u>
	344

At the year end 5 properties were in the process of purchase and 3 applicants were seeking a property for purchase.

3 Properties are purchased in the name of either United Reformed Church Trust or the Society but in all cases are managed by the officers of the Society. Where tenants have a financial stake in the property this is recognised by means of a Declaration of Trust.

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

4.1 Where applicants have the financial resources to do so, they may put in their own funds so as to permit the county maximum amounts to be exceeded by up to 50%. This is known as the joint ceiling figure.

4.2 Applicants wishing to have a retirement property costing in excess of the joint ceiling figure should consult with the Secretary.

4.3 These figures relate to total purchase cost, which includes not only the agreed purchase price, but also the cost of any repairs or improvements identified as being necessary at the time when the property is surveyed.

4.4 The maximum amount of contribution is not provided as of right to each applicant; the determining factor in deciding the amount is how much capital is owned by the applicant and spouse.

5.1 In 2001 the standard rent was £71 per calendar month. This sum is the rent payable by those who are provided with the maximum contribution when acquiring their property. If less than the maximum contribution is provided, the rent payable is reduced proportionately.

5.2 For 2002 the standard rent has been set at £75 per calendar month.

6 Rental income for 2001 was £258,000 (as compared with £231,000 for 2000). This sum was credited to the Property Management Account, from which all costs relating to maintenance, repair, insurance and administration are taken. In 2001 these costs totalled £332,000, thus giving a shortfall for the year of £74,000 on Property Management Account. However, the General Revenue Account, which includes grants, donations, legacies and profits on sale of properties, showed a surplus of £1,569,000, thus enabling our Reserves to increase by £1,495,000 from these sources.

7 The Sub-Committee is particularly grateful for the donations and legacies received during the year. These amounted to £1,589,000. The figure for donations includes £1,154,000 made available for general use by the officers of the Northern Synod from their housing funds. The donation was largely in the form of the transfer of properties into the name of the Society.



	2001 £	2000 £
During the year we spent on 16 new properties (2000 – 13)	1,720,000	1,170,000
We sold 9 properties (2000 – 11) for	<u>529,000</u>	<u>715,000</u>
Thus net investment in property was	1,191,000	455,000
We received cash legacies, donations, net rents etc. of	<u>484,000</u>	607,000
and thus we had to borrow, in order to balance the books, a further	<u>707,000</u>	
Whereas in 2000, we were able to reduce borrowings by		<u>152,000</u>

9 It is expected that during 2002 assistance will be required for 16 retiring ministers. After allowing for possible need for widows or for rehousing it would be prudent to anticipate up to 24 applicants in all. This could involve a net outlay of up to £1.5 million and thus the importance of a continued high level of receipts from donations and legacies cannot be over-emphasised.

10 During 2001 visits were made by the officers of the Society to approximately 68 applicants, tenants and other properties. In addition, we continue to rely heavily upon, and are grateful for, the commitment of those members of local congregations who generously give oversight to our retirement properties and who assist those who live in them. We would like to hear from anyone who would be prepared to volunteer their assistance in this respect.

11 Retirement Housing continues to figure prominently in the Pre-Retirement Courses run at the Windermere Centre under the auspices of Ministries. In 2001 three courses were run – in May, October and November and two more are planned for this year. The housing sessions are designed to be of benefit to all, regardless of whether or not financial assistance with housing will be needed. In addition, private discussions on individual needs are provided.

12.1 Steps are being taken to streamline the working relationship between the Sub-Committee and the Board of the Society and to reduce the total number of people involved. There are at present 24 people belonging to either the Assembly appointed sub-committee or the Board of the Retired Ministers Housing Society, appointed by the sub-committee, or both.

12.2 In future the members of the Board will be reduced to seven, all of whom will be drawn from the membership of the Sub-Committee and the business of the Board will be kept to a formal minimum. All decisions will be taken by the sub-committee. These plans have been approved by the sub-committee and the Society Board and will be implemented during 2002.

12.3 Appointments to the Board have been made up till now with a view to maintaining continuity and experience in order to discharge responsibility for a complex operation involving nearly 350 houses with a value of around £30 million.

12.4 The Sub-Committee is anxious that this ability to maintain continuity and experience is not lost to the Board of the Society when all members are drawn from an Assembly appointed committee and has asked the Nominations Committee to take account of this concern.

# Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee

## **Sub-Committee Members**

**Convener:** Mr Geoffrey Woods    **Secretary:** Mrs Judy Stockings  
**Convener, Pensions Executive:** Mr Victor Hughff    **Honorary Treasurer:** Mr Graham Stacy  
Mrs Jill Strong, Revd Pauline Loosemore, Mr Barry Swift, Revd Roger Woodhall

## **I Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration - Car Allowances**

1.1 Each year the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee issues recommended mileage rates for use where a minister/CRCW drives a privately owned car on the business of the Church. Those rates are not to be exceeded.

1.2 It has been recognised for some years that an additional sum may be required to cover the shortfall between the reimbursement allowed by the mileage rates and the real cost incurred including, in particular, the annual costs of depreciation, insurance etc. Any such additional payment must be made through the central payroll system in the form of a Fixed Car Allowance. Recommended levels of that allowance are issued by the MoM Sub-Committee.

1.3 There is widespread concern about the operation of the allowances – some ministers are paid allowances in full, some in part and some not at all. The MoM Sub-Committee takes the view that, having in mind the large number of ministers who use their own cars and the level of reimbursement, the recommended mileage rates should be applied in all cases: and that the Fixed Car Allowance **should** be paid at the recommended rate. This is now included in the Plan, para. 6.3.4.2.

## **2 Pensions - Stakeholder Pensions**

2.1 This provision is required for ministers who are ineligible for membership of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund. Acting on the advice of the Church's Independent Financial Advisors, an arrangement has been made with Friends Provident to act as Stakeholder Pension provider for the Church. Notices have been issued to all those for whom this arrangement is required.

## **Resolution 31      Assembly Welcome for Ministerial Transfers**

**Assembly agrees that from General Assembly 2003 it will receive and welcome alongside all newly ordained ministers of Word and Sacraments and newly commissioned church related community workers all those ministers from other churches who have been received onto the roll of ministers of the United Reformed Church.**

1.1 For many years the United Reformed Church has been enriched by the varied experiences and different perspectives of ministers of other churches who serve our churches.

1.2 Some remain within their own denominational oversight and discipline whilst serving, for a period, in local ecumenical partnerships.

1.3 Others transfer on to the roll of ministers of the Word and Sacraments or the list of church related community workers after being given certificates of eligibility and subsequently receiving a call to a local church or post. Once on the roll or list they are within the oversight and discipline of the United Reformed Church. Some of them will serve this church for an agreed limited period. Others seek to serve for an unspecified length of time or are making a permanent transfer to the United Reformed Church for doctrinal and ecclesiological reasons.

1.4 The number of ministers who are admitted onto the roll of the United Reformed Church varies from year to year.

1.5 Mainly in the context of discussions about non stipendiary ministry General Assembly has stated on a number of occasions that we have only one order of ministers of Word and Sacraments. That should be true also of the way in which ministers are received amongst us, irrespective of route of entry.

1.6 The Ministries Committee believes that the commitment to the United Reformed Church by ministers from other churches should be fully acknowledged in the same way that we recognise men and women who are newly ordained and commissioned. Recognition is, of course, given within the Districts and Synods where ministers are serving but there should also be the opportunity for them to receive the welcome accorded by General Assembly to other new ministers and church related community workers. The committee strongly urges General Assembly as a matter of good practice to offer such a welcome.

## **Resolution 32**

## **Future Patterns of Ministries**

### **General Assembly**

- 1 welcomes the interim report of the Future Patterns of Ministries Working Party of Ministries Committee (Appendix 6)**
- 2 remits it to local churches, districts and synods for consideration and response by the end of April 2003**
- 3 requests Ministries Committee to present a further report to General Assembly in 2004 in the light of the responses received and the additional work to be done on outstanding issues.**

Appendix 6 appears on page 172.

**Resolution 33****Certificates of Limited Eligibility**

**General Assembly authorises the Ministries Committee, through the Accreditation Sub-Committee, to grant Certificates of Limited Eligibility to ministers of other churches in order that they might serve local pastorates and posts in the United Reformed Church and receive a stipend from the Maintenance of the Ministry fund, on the following terms:**

- a) Before granting a Certificate of Limited Eligibility the Accreditation Sub-Committee must be satisfied that the minister:**
- **is from a member church of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, or a church overseas which is a member church of the Council for World Mission or the World Alliance of Reformed Churches**
  - **will subscribe to the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church**
  - **is in good standing with their own denomination.**
  - **has the appropriate training and experience or gifts to enable them to serve the United Reformed Church.**
- b) Such Certificates shall relate to a particular appointment and be valid for a limited period not exceeding twelve months.**
- c) A Certificate of Limited Eligibility will be endorsed with the name of the pastorate or post to which an appointment has been made as soon as it is known. It is valid for no other appointment. It also bears the date when the Certificate ceases to be valid.**

1 There are ministers of other churches who serve the United Reformed Church in addition to those who transfer onto the Roll of Ministers by way of certificates of eligibility.

2 Some serve in local ecumenical partnerships and remain with and are funded by their own church that takes full responsibility for their oversight. No action is required by the United Reformed Church in relation to such ministers' status or support.

3 Others are willing to serve the United Reformed Church but for various reasons do not wish to transfer to our Roll of Ministers. These are some of the circumstances when this might arise;

- a) Where a minister of another denomination is near retirement age and is willing to serve in a short term appointment of not more than 12 months.

If the minister is granted a Certificate of Limited Eligibility s/he may receive a call, and after induction receive a stipend from the Maintenance of Ministry Fund. S/he will on the appointment of the synod be a member of the District Council and his/her name will be added to the List of Ministers of other Churches serving the United Reformed Church.

Upon completion of the period of service, or earlier resignation from it, his/her name will be removed from the List.

- b) Where there is a need for interim ministry in a local United Reformed Church and the local church and District wish to call a minister from another denomination for a period of not more than twelve months.

In such circumstances a request for a Certificate of Limited Eligibility will be made by the minister and supported by the District Council at the request of the local church. This follows the procedure already in place.

- c) Where a minister of another denomination is in pastoral charge within their own denomination, or is in an ecumenical appointment, or is seconded by their denomination to a United Reformed Church sponsored appointment, and is willing to extend their ministry to give pastoral oversight to a local United Reformed Church.

The Accreditation Sub-Committee will need to establish that the applicant's denomination is willing to allow them to extend their ministry beyond that work in which they are already engaged, and is prepared to hold them under its own disciplinary procedures for that part of their work which is carried out in the United Reformed Church.

Thereafter, provided that the minister receives a valid call, he/she may be inducted, and his/her name added to the List of Ministers of other Churches serving the United Reformed Church. Upon completion of the period of service or earlier retirement from it, his/her name will be removed from the List.

If the original appointment with the parent denomination, or other body, comes to an end, the minister's service in the local United Reformed Church also terminates. If it is desired that this service should continue, an application for a Certificate of Eligibility should be made, as appropriate to the new situation.

- d) Where a minister of another denomination is employed outside the structures of their own denomination, and is willing to give oversight to a local United Reformed Church on a non-stipendiary basis. In this case, a minister should apply for a Certificate of Eligibility in the usual way. If it were necessary (and not merely desired on the applicant's part) for the original denominational link to be maintained, then the minister should apply as for 3c above.

4 In relation to the circumstances detailed above, it is necessary for the Accreditation Subcommittee to have granted a Certificate of Limited Eligibility before any formal agreement concerning ministry is entered into by the local church. The affirmations set out in Schedule C of the Basis of Union will be made by those to be inducted.

5 In no case shall the inclusion of a person's name in the List of Ministers of other Churches serving in the United Reformed Church confer a right to receive a call from any local United Reformed Church save that for which the Certificate of Limited Eligibility is granted.

6 If the minister wishes to extend his/her service in the United Reformed Church s/he will need to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility and transfer onto the Roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church.

## Resolution 34

## Church Related Community Workers

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to the Basis of Union:

- a) Add to the sentence at the end of paragraph 20:

"and in the case of church related community workers be termed commissioning."

- b) Insert the following paragraph after paragraph 21 and renumber the existing paragraphs 22-25 as 23-26:

**22.** Some are called to the ministry of church related community work. After approved preparation and training, they may be called to be church related community workers in a post approved by the United Reformed Church, and are then commissioned and inducted to their office to serve for a designated period. This commissioning and induction shall be in accord with Schedules D & F. Church related community workers are commissioned to care for, to challenge and to pray for the community, to discern with others God's will for the well-being of the community, and to enable the church to live out its calling to proclaim the love and mercy of God through working with others in both church and community for peace and justice in the world.

- c) In the footnote to the paragraph currently numbered 24, which will become paragraph 25, replace "*The provisions of paragraph 24*" with "*The provisions of paragraph 25*".
- d) In the note at the start of Schedule B, replace "22" with "23".
- e) Add a new Schedule F as follows:

**SCHEDULE F** (see clause 22 in the Basis of Union)

Affirmations to be made by church related community workers at commissioning and induction.

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

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

Either: **VERSION I**

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

**I do.**

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

**I do.**

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

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

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

**I do.**

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

**They are.**

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

**Relying on the strength of Christ, I do.**

7. Do you promise to care for, to challenge and to pray for the community, to discern with others God's will for the wellbeing of the community? Do you promise to take your part in the councils of the Church and to enable the church to live out its calling to proclaim the love and mercy of God through working with others in both church and community for peace and justice in the world?

**By the grace of God, I do.**

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

**By the grace of God, I do.**

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

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

Or: **VERSION II**

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

**I confess anew my faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

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

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

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

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

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

2. What leads you to this ministry?

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

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

**By the grace of God I promise to care for, to challenge and to pray for the community,  
to discern with others God's will for the wellbeing of the community.  
I promise to take my part in the councils of the Church and to enable the church to live out its calling to proclaim the love and mercy of God through working with others in both church and community for peace and justice in the world.**

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

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

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

1. The ministry of Church Related Community Workers was recognised by the following resolution of the General Assembly in 1987:

*"The Assembly acknowledges that in Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) properly trained and appropriately employed, the Lord Jesus Christ is giving particular gifts for a particular ministry and is calling such individuals to exercise them in an office which is duly recognised in His Church"*

2. Since then, Church Related Community Work ministry in the United Reformed Church has been supported and financed, and those called to it have been appropriately trained.

3. However, the decision taken by Assembly in 1987 has never been incorporated in the Basis of Union, where the "particular ministries" recognised by the United Reformed Church are described. The above resolution therefore seeks to put the seal on the decision taken 15 years ago and followed in practice ever since.

4. At the same time it is proposed that the affirmations to be made by Church Related Community Workers should be put in a schedule to the Basis of Union, alongside those made by church members, elders and ministers of Word and Sacraments.

## **Resolution 35**

## **Lay Preaching Strategy Proposal**

**General Assembly commends the Strategy Proposal of the Lay Preaching Support Committee to District and Area Councils and local churches and urges them to implement the strategy proposal as soon as may be practicable.**

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 There can be no doubt that many people are finding great benefit from the *Training for Learning and Serving* courses, and that these are standing the Church in good stead for the future. However, the report on TLS given to Mission Council in the autumn of 2000 raised some important questions. Not least, is TLS delivering the number of new lay preachers the Church requires?

1.2 As no one seemed to know the answer to that question and a number of those present had a feeling that the United Reformed Church is about to fall into a black hole, Ministries asked the Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee to commission an urgent survey into lay preacher numbers and future needs. An analysis of the results shows that there is a shortfall but that it varies from synod to synod and district to district. The figures indicate the need to recruit, train and have in active ministry about 850 new lay preachers by the end of the decade. This is a formidable challenge to our churches, and Ministries asked the Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee to prepare a strategy to be brought to General Assembly in 2002.

1.3 The success of any strategy will depend on the ability of every district and synod to identify, train and support new lay preachers from within their local churches. The Church needs to develop a culture in which churches, ministers and lay preachers work closely together. Lay preachers are a valuable resource and it is important that ministers and churches recognise their value. Equally lay preachers should demonstrate that their ministry is important by not over-committing themselves in the life of their own church, and the churches should support them in this. In this way full encouragement will be given to the ministry of Word and worship exercised by lay people, and the hope that the considerable number of lay preachers needed will be raised up from within our local churches may be realised.

### **2 Strategy**

2.1 Alongside the ministry of Word and Sacraments, the Church recognises the importance of the lay ministry of Word and worship, where some are called to be lay preachers, some to be worship leaders and some to be members of worship teams. It is important to recognise the current resources in the district for leading worship and for equipping others.



**The Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee therefore recommends that each district appoint a group to identify the needs of their district in order to support and maintain this ministry.**

2.2 These resources will include Nationally Accredited and District Recognised lay preachers, as well as others with gifts and training in leading worship, and ministers of Word and Sacraments. It is essential to explore new ways of developing people's gifts by encouraging existing worship groups to include young people and to use the groups as 'seed beds' for growing worship leaders.

2.3 In response to the needs identified the Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee **strongly recommends** that districts:-

**2.3.1 Encourage local churches to challenge people of all ages to recognise and respond to the call to be involved in the ministry of Word and worship.**

**2.3.2 Encourage the setting up of worship teams in individual churches, groups of churches or the district as a whole, including young people wherever possible.**

**2.3.3 Identify training programmes appropriate to different people at different stages of experience and development, which could be delivered by district or in co-operation with synod training officers or ecumenical partners.**

**2.3.4 Support and encourage all those involved in this ministry by putting a support system in place and, where possible, encouraging churches to release those in training from other church tasks.**

**2.3.5 Identify and encourage the ongoing development of gifts as worship leaders or lay preachers through regular training opportunities.**

**2.3.6 Accept responsibility for testing and affirming the calling of those coming forward for the lay ministry of Word and worship.**

### **3 Method**

3.1 The strategy could be implemented through such things as:-

A district enquirers day covering all aspects of the Lay Ministry of Word and Worship

A 'roadshow' visiting churches and encouraging questions and discussion

A 'taster' day led by enthusiastic advocates.

3.2 The pattern of worship teams in a district would vary depending on a number of different factors such as number and size of churches, geography, availability of people able to train and lead teams but sharing between congregations would be seen as an important element to avoid a sense of isolation. In some situations sharing across

district and synod boundaries should also be considered as many lay preachers already cross these boundaries in the course of their ministry.

3.3 A number of training programmes already exist at various levels and the Training Committee and Studies Panel are considering these with a view to validating them with an indication of the level both at the start and on completion. These programmes include such things as 'Starting to lead worship', 'Step-up', the Wimbledon district programme and others. The Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee is **not** suggesting that districts or synods should all devise their own programmes. In certain areas ecumenical schemes may be appropriate. The Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee will continue to work with the Training Committee in developing training opportunities for lay preachers. (Information about courses may be obtained from Training or Ministries at Church House)

3.4 Various forms of support might be used, e.g. mentoring - pairing an 'apprentice' with an experienced leader of worship, feedback sessions after leading worship, group support. Districts and synods will need to recognise that support will also involve ongoing in-service training and the consequent financial implications. The Lay Preaching Support Committee recognises with pleasure that some districts already provide their lay preachers with financial support and would encourage other districts and synods to adopt this practice.

3.5 Appropriate training is the route to obtaining District Recognition and/or National Accreditation as a lay preacher. In some synods the training officer could assist with this. People will be ready at different times for different types of training and recognition depending on circumstances. Ways of affirming and developing gifts also need to be found.

3.6.1 The Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee will develop guidelines to help districts test and affirm the calling to lay preaching.

3.6.2 In order to achieve these aims the Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee envisage the district will need a co-ordinator to liaise between churches, worship teams, lay preachers, the lay preaching commissioner, synod training/development officer, and the TLS regional organiser. This could be the existing commissioner.

3.6.3 The Lay Preaching Support Sub-Committee will continue to work in every way it can to encourage and support lay preachers, districts and synods and will produce as quickly as possible information about running Enquirers/Taster Days or Roadshows.

### **4 Conclusion**

4.1 These proposals are all offered in the belief that God continues to call people to worship and praise. It will be an ongoing challenge and needs to be undergirded by prayer.

## Resolution 36 Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration

General Assembly approves and adopts the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration as set out in Appendix 5.

- 1.1 The Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration (Plan) was first approved by General Assembly in 1980 and has been revised from time to time. The Plan has now been updated and is presented to Assembly for approval. Some amendments are merely to rearrange paragraphs for ease of understanding or to amend wording for clarity. Some revisions are more fundamental and need to be highlighted.
1. The objects remain the same (Plan para.1).
  2. The principles do not change but the practicalities of operation e.g. the change to the Ministry and Mission Fund and the budget procedure, are more clearly defined (Plan para.2).
  3. The administration of the Plan is clarified (para.3 & 6) to confirm the responsibilities of Ministries Committee.
  4. Throughout, the Plan has been amended to give full recognition of the ministry undertaken by CRCWs.
  5. Allowances previously incorporated within the body of the Plan are shown in Appendix A, to enable annual rate changes to be made more easily.
  6. A significant change is made to equate the treatment of part-time ministers in manse accommodation with that of part-time ministers in their own property. This relates to churches meeting a proportion of the charges in respect of manses occupied by part-time ministers and part-time CRCWs (Plan para. 6.3.2.2).
  7. Following the recommendations made in the Report, the Fixed Car Allowance **should** be paid at the rate shown in Appendix A.
  8. Holiday provision, previously in Note 2, has been included in the body of the Plan (para. 7)
  9. The calculation for the retirement resettlement grant – the ten year rule, not previously set out in the Plan, is now included (para. 9.1.2).
  10. The upper limit applied to the retirement removal grant has been removed (Plan para. 9.3).

## Resolution 37

## Ministers' Pension Fund

General Assembly amends the definitions of the Rules and the Rules of the URC Ministers' Pension Fund by the deletion of the words in square brackets and the addition of the words in italics in the Rules shown, and adds an Appendix to the Rules:

### Amend Definition 11 to read

#### 11. Participating Bodies

means such United Reformed Churches or any other body admitted to membership of the Fund, and the participating body in relation to any [minister] *member* means that participating body he/she is serving.

### Add a new Definition 27 to read

#### 27. **CRCW**

*means any commissioned Church Related Community Worker.*

### Add a new rule 12.6 to read

12.6 *Commissioned Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs).*

**Add a new rule 14.1.1.4 to read**

14.1.1.4 *From 1 August 2002 any CRCW under the age of fifty five years at the date of commissioning to stipendiary service remunerated under the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration, may become a contributing member of the Fund. His/her contribution shall commence from the first day of the month following such commissioning.*

**Amend Rule 14.1.2 to read**

14.1.2 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 or CRCW having regard to the length of any previous full-time service, to the age and health of the [minister] member, 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.

14.2 Every [minister] member who has ceased to be a contributing member under Rule 13.3 and who whilst under normal pension age is re-admitted to full-time or part-time service in the URC may become a contributory member of the Fund as is provided in the previous Rule. At the time of re-admission the Pension Trustee shall have discretion to aggregate for the purposes of Rules 18-23 that [minister's] member's previous period or periods of membership with the [minister's] member's latest period of membership PROVIDED that the [minister] member waives his/her right to any deferred pension and surviving spouses pension under Rule 29 in respect of such previous period or periods of membership and repays to the Fund an amount equal to the sum of

**Add a new Rule 17.4 to read**

17.4 *Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Fund documentation the options in Parts I, II and III of Appendix XII dated 08/2001 of the Inland Revenue document IR 12 (2001) may be applied to the benefits of Fund members with the consent of the Pension Trustee.*

**Amend the first paragraph of Rule 20 to read****20. Ill-health Retirement**

In the event that a member retires before normal pension age on account of incapacity to undertake the duties of a stipendiary minister or CRCW due to ill-health duly certified to the satisfaction of the Pension Trustee, he/she shall be entitled to an immediate pension which shall be calculated as provided in Rule 18 but with the substitution of the date of retirement for the attainment of normal pension age provided always that when the period of pensionable service completed up to the date of retirement is less than twenty years, the amount of pension will be calculated on the basis of:

**Add a new Rule 30.4 to read**

30.4 *Following receipt of a Pension Sharing Order pursuant to the Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999 the Pension Trustee will transfer the defined proportion of the value of a member's pension benefit to an appropriate policy with an insurer of the Ex-spouse's choosing. If not chosen by the Ex-spouse within the specified period, the default option of the Pension Trustee arranging an appropriate policy with an insurer will operate. Appendix 1 hereto contains provisions relating to Pension Sharing under the said Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999.*

**Add an Appendix to the Rules to read****Appendix 1 - Pension Sharing On Divorce****Rule 1****Definitions**

**"Ex-Spouse"** means an individual to whom Pension Credit Rights have been or are to be allocated following a Pension Sharing Order, agreement or equivalent provision.

**"Insurance Company"** is as defined in Section 659B of the 1988 Act.

**"Negative Deferred Pension"** means the amount by which the member's pension or deferred pension under the Fund which arose/arises from service with the URC is reduced at the Relevant Date by s.31 of the Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999 following a Pension Sharing Order, agreement or equivalent provision. For this purpose, service with the URC includes all periods of service with other employers which have been treated as if they were service with the URC where a transfer payment has been made to the Fund in respect of that other service.

**"Pension Credit"** means a credit under s.29(1)(b), Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999.

**"Pension Credit Benefit"** in relation to a Fund, means the benefits payable under the Fund to or in respect of a person by virtue of rights under the Fund attributable (directly or indirectly) to a Pension Credit.

**"Pension Credit Rights"** means right to future benefits under a Fund which are attributable (directly or indirectly) to a Pension Credit.

**"Pension Debit"** means a debit under s.29(1)(a) of the Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999.

**"Pension Debit member"** means a member whose benefits have been permanently reduced by a Pension Debit. Such a member will either be:-

- (i) a member who is a Controlling Director of a company which is his/her employer if he/she is a director of the company to whom paragraph (b) of Section 417(5) of the 1988 Act applies either at the date on which the marriage was dissolved or annulled, or at any time within the period of 10 years before that date, or
- (ii) a member whose earnings at the date at which his/her marriage was dissolved or annulled exceeded  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the Permitted Maximum for the year of assessment in which the dissolution or annulment occurred. Earnings for these purposes shall be taken to be the total emoluments -
  - (a) which were paid to the member in consequence of Pensionable Service to which the Fund relates during the year of assessment before the year of assessment in which the marriage was dissolved or annulled, and
  - (b) from which tax was deducted in accordance with the Income Tax (Employments) Regulations 1993.

**"Pension Sharing Order"** means any order or provision as is mentioned in s.28(1) of the Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999.

## **Rule 2 Assignment**

Rule 30 is amended by the insertion of Rule 30.4, to permit the assignment as therein provided of part or all of the member's retirement benefits or rights to benefits under the Fund to his/her Ex-spouse to the extent necessary to comply with a Pension Sharing Order, agreement or equivalent provision.

## **Rule 3**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of the Rules, the benefits for a Pension Debit member are additionally subject to the following limits, subject to compliance with Social Security legislation:

- (i) The pension shall not exceed the Aggregate Retirement Benefit in Part 1 of the Schedule less the Negative Deferred Pension in this Fund and the Negative Deferred Pension in any Associated Scheme and, furthermore in the case of a Class A member the Negative Deferred Pension in any Connected Scheme.

- (ii) The lump sum from this and any Associated Scheme shall not exceed:
- (a) for Pension Debit members who are Class A members or Class B members, an amount determined by 2.25 x the initial annual pension payable;
  - (b) for Pension Debit members who are Class C members, an amount of the greater of:
    - (i) 2.25 x the initial annual pension payable or,
    - (ii) an amount determined in accordance with Part I of the Schedule as if there had been no Pension Debit, less 2.25 x the Negative Deferred Pension.

For the purposes of this Rule, the initial annual pension should be calculated on the following bases:

- (aa) if the pension payable for the year changes, the initial pension payable should be taken;
  - (bb) it should be assumed that the Pension Debit member will survive for a year;
  - (cc) the effect of commutation should be ignored.
- (iii) On the death of the Pension Debit member, any pension for a Dependant shall not exceed  $\frac{2}{3}$  x an amount determined in accordance with Part 4 of the Schedule as if there had been no Pension Debit, less the Negative Deferred Pension and the Negative Deferred Pension in any Associated Scheme and, furthermore in the case of a Class A member the Negative Deferred Pension in any Connected Scheme. Where more than one pension is to be paid the total of all the pensions cannot exceed 100% of an amount determined in accordance with Part 4 of the Schedule as if there had been no Pension Debit, less the Negative Deferred Pension and the Negative Deferred Pension in any Associated Scheme and, furthermore in the case of a Class A member the Negative Deferred Pension in any Connected Scheme.

#### Rule 4

The Pension Trustee must give full details of the Pension Debit and a lump sum certificate specifying the maximum permissible lump sum, to the receiving scheme/arrangement where the fund underlying the benefits for a Pension Debit member is transferred to another retirement benefits scheme approved under Chapter I Part XIV of the 1988 Act or a scheme approved under Chapter IV Part XIV of the 1988 Act.

#### Rule 5

Where the Pension Trustee accepts a transfer payment and is informed by the transferor of the details of a Pension Debit relating to the transfer payment, the Pension Trustee must take account of the Pension Debit, if appropriate, in the calculation of any limit on benefits for that member. If a transfer of the fund underlying the benefits for the member is made to a scheme approved under Chapter I Part XIV of the 1988 Act or a scheme approved under Chapter IV Part XIV of the 1988 Act, the Pension Trustee must give full details of the Pension Debit to the receiving scheme/arrangement.

#### Rule 6

If the Ex-spouse dies after a Pension Sharing Order, agreement or equivalent provision is made but before it is acted upon by the Pension Trustee, the following benefits may be paid:

A lump sum death benefit may be paid to any person at the discretion of the Pension Trustee.

The lump sum is limited to 25% of what would have been the cash equivalent of the fund which would have provided the Pension Credit Rights for the Ex-Spouse. The balance of the fund may be used to provide a non-commutable pension to a Dependant of the Ex-Spouse.

The amount of pension payable to a Dependant is limited to a maximum of 2/3rds of the amount of pension that could have been paid to the Ex-Spouse at the date of death if the whole of what would have been the cash equivalent of the fund which would have provided the Pension Credit Rights had been used to purchase an annuity at an available market rate. Where more than one pension is to be paid the total of the pensions cannot exceed the amount of pension that could have been paid to the Ex-Spouse.

Such pensions must be payable for life, except that any pension paid to children must cease on the attainment of age 18 or, if later on the cessation of full time education. Such pensions may be fully commuted, however, for a lump sum on the grounds of triviality at the time such a pension becomes payable.

1.1 Church Related Community Workers - in 1987 the General Assembly decided that CRCWs should be as fully integrated as possible. The development of the CRCW programme now requires further movement to achieve this. The Resolution provides for the inclusion of CRCWs as members of the URC Ministers' Pension Fund.

1.2 Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) - last year's Report drew attention to the change in Inland Revenue practice making it possible to have flexibility in the timing for drawing the benefit from AVCs. The Pension Fund Trustees indicated their intention to change the rules of the fund to accommodate this, allowing members to defer the drawing of AVC benefits up to the age of 75 (the limit permitted by the Revenue) if they so wish. The Resolution seeks to add this provision as Rule 17.4 following advice from the Actuary and Legal Advisers.

1.3 Pension Sharing on Divorce - again this issue was included in last year's Report. Following a change in the law the courts can now direct, as at the date of a divorce, that a transfer value be calculated and split between the member and ex-spouse in specified proportions. The member's benefit is then reduced and the ex-spouse must secure a pension benefit elsewhere. There are administrative difficulties in allowing the benefit to the ex-spouse of a member to be provided through the URCMPF and it is not proposed to allow this.

For this provision to be incorporated into the Rules of the URCMPF there is a minimum wording requirement for the purposes of obtaining Revenue approval. The relevant wording, as slightly amended, is set out in Rule 30.4 and Appendix 1 of the Rules of the URCMPF.

**Resolution 38**

**Ministers' Pension Fund**

**General Assembly gives its consent for the additional pensions of members of the URC Ministers' Pension Fund to be augmented under Rule 44, on condition that there are no adverse funding implications.**

1.1 Augmentation and Provision of Further Benefits - under Rule 44 of the URC Ministers' Pension Fund, the augmentation & provision of further benefits may be considered by the Pension Trustee, after having taken the advice of the Actuary and having obtained the consent of the Assembly.

1.2 It is **not** usual to augment members' pensions. However, on occasion, the local church or participating body may wish to pay an additional contribution towards the provision of extra pension

for the member. This extra pension is secured on a money purchase basis through the Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) scheme. The Fund Actuary has confirmed that the provision of benefits in this way does not have any adverse funding implications.

1.3 The Assembly is asked to give this consent for the augmentation of members' additional pension in situations as outlined above.

# Nominations

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

## Committee Members

**Convener:** Revd Glyn Jenkins [2002]      **Convener elect:** Revd Dr Stephen Orchard [2006]

**Secretary:** Revd Hazel Martell [2005]

## Synod Representatives:

I Miss Janet Turner

II Revd Ruth Wollaston

III Mr Donald Swift

IV Mr John Seager

V Mrs Irene Wren

VI Mr Simon Rowntree

VII Revd Elizabeth Caswell

VIII Revd Ray Adams

IX Mr Graham Rolfe

X Revd Roberta Rominger

XI Mrs Christine Meekison

XII Dr Jean Sylvan Evans

XIII Revd John Arthur

with the Immediate Past Moderator and General Secretary.

## I ASSEMBLY STAFF APPOINTMENTS

1.1 The Nominating Group for Secretary for Training convened by Dr Anthony Jeans recommended the appointment of Revd Roy Lowes, for a period of five years, until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006.

1.2 The Nominating Group for Director of the Windermere Centre convened by Revd Peter Brain recommended the appointment of Mr Lawrence Moore for a period of five years until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007.

1.3 The Nominating Group for Moderator of South Western Synod convened by Revd Keith Forecast recommend the appointment of Revd David Miller for a period of seven years until 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2009.

1.4 The following groups have been appointed:  
Nominating Group for Secretary for Ecumenical Relations convened by Revd Elizabeth Welch.  
Review Group for Secretary for Life and Witness convened by Revd Elizabeth Nash  
Nominating Group for East Midlands Synod Moderator convened by Revd Dr John Sutcliffe  
Review Group for West Midlands Synod Moderator convened by Mrs Ruth Clarke

## 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 2001 are indicated by one asterisk (\*), two asterisks (\*\*) denotes those whom Assembly 2002 is invited to appoint for the first time. (#) indicates a **Convener Elect** who will become Convener in 2003.

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: Mr William McVey [2006]

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

### 2.1.1 Tellers for Election of Moderator for 2004\*\*

Revd Roz Harrison [Convener]                      Mr Donald Swift                      A N Other

### 2.2 CHURCH and SOCIETY

Convener: Revd Martin Camroux [2006]

Secretary: Secretary for Church and Society

Mrs Helen Warmington [2003]                      Mrs Catriona Tair [2003]                      Revd Alan Paterson [2005]

Revd Owiny Laber [2005]                      Mr Geoffrey Duncan \*\*[2006]                      Revd Pat Nimmo \*\*[2006]

Mr Simon Loveitt \*\*[2006]

### 2.3 COMMUNICATIONS and EDITORIAL

Convener: Revd Graham Cook [2003]

Secretary: Secretary for Communications

Mr Richard Lathen [2003]                      Revd Peter Moth [2004]                      Miss Elizabeth Bruce [2004]

Mrs Melanie Frew [2004]                      Revd Bob Maitland [2005]                      Mr Peter Knowles [2005]

Revd Martin Truscott [2005]                      Ms Eleri Evans [2005]                      Revd Phillip George \*\*[2006]

vacancy \*\*# [2007]

### 2.4 DOCTRINE, PRAYER and WORSHIP

Convener: Revd John Young [2005]

Secretary: Revd Kirsty Thorpe [2004]

Revd Dr David Peel [2003]                      Revd Charles Martin [2003]                      Revd Nadim Nassar [2003]

Revd Hugh Graham [2003]                      Revd Glyn Millington [2004]                      Mrs Jenny Poulter [2004]

Dr Robert Pope [2005]                      Revd Anne Sardeson [2005]                      Revd Alistair Smeaton [2005]

Mr Lawrence Moore \*\*[2006]

### 2.5 ECUMENICAL

Convener: Revd John Rees [2005]

Secretary: Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

Mrs Darnette Whitby-Reed [2004]                      Revd Bryan Shirley [2005]                      Revd Cecil White [2005]

Revd Rowena Francis \*\*[2006]                      Mr Malcolm Porter \*\*[2006]                      Revd Lindsey Sanderson \*\*[2006]

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

Revd Gwenneth Collins [2003]                      Revd Peter Brain [2005]                      Revd Birgit Ewald [2005]

Mrs Heather Barnes \*\*[2006]                      Ms Sylvia Combs \*\*[2006]                      Revd Chris Baillie \*\*# [2007]

### 2.6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Convener: Revd Wilf Bahadur [2006]

Secretary: Ms Ruth Norton [2004]

Revd Susan Armitage [2003]                      Miss Sarah Moore [2004]                      Ms Gloria Bujan [2005]

Mr Derek Estill \*\*[2006]                      Mr Alan Hart \*\*[2006]

### 2.7 FINANCE

Convener: The Treasurer

Secretary: The Secretary for Finance

Mr Gordon Latham [2003]                      Revd John Piper [2003]                      Miss Muriel Proven [2004]

Mr John Woodman [2005]                      Mr John Rowatt [2005]                      Ms Alison Holt \*\*[2006]

Convener of the URC Trust                      *to be advised* \*\*#[2006]

### 2.8 INTER-FAITH RELATIONS

Convener: Mrs Daphne Beale [2003]

Secretary: Revd Sally Thomas [2004]

Mr Matthew Bean [2003]                      Revd Alistair Ellefsen-Jones [2004]                      Miss Marie Williams [2005]

Revd Peter Colwell \*\*[2006]                      Revd Dr John Parry \*\*#[2007]



## 2.9 LIFE and WITNESS

Convener: Revd Brian Jolly [2005]

Secretary: Secretary for Life and Witness

Revd Suzanne Hamnett [2003]

Mrs Sheila Thatcher [2003]

Revd Eddie Boon [2003]

Revd Bob Warwicker [2003]

Revd Angela Hughes [2004]

Mrs Alison Lowe [2004]

Revd Kenneth Forbes [2005]

Revd Peter Hurter [2005]

Revd Linda Elliott \*\*[2006]

### 2.9.1 LIFE and WITNESS - STEWARDSHIP Sub-Committee

Convener: Mr Keith Webster [2004]

Secretary: Secretary for Life and Witness

Mr Frank Dale [2003]

Mrs Sheila Yates [2003]

Mrs Anne Mitchell [2004]

Mr Mick Barnes [2005]

vacancy \*\*[2006]

### 2.9.2 WINDERMERE ADVISORY GROUP

Convener: Mr Jim Wilkinson [2005]

Secretary: The Director of Windermere

Revd Douglas McFarlane [2003]

Mrs Christine Millward [2004]

Dr Peter Clarke [2005]

Convener of Windermere Management Committee

Convener of Life and Witness Committee

Representative of Carver URC

## 2.10 MINISTRIES

Convener: Mr John Ellis [2006]

Secretary: Secretary for Ministries

Revd Roz Harrison [2003]

Revd Tjarda Murray [2003]

Revd Peter Noble [2004]

Mrs Alison Biggs [2005]

Revd Stuart Brock [2005]

Revd Pauline Barnes \*\*[2006]

Convener of National Assessment Board

### 2.10.1 MINISTRIES - ACCREDITATION Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Ken Chippindale [2005]

Secretary: Secretary for Ministries

Mr Peter Mann [2003]

Revd Roberta Rominger [2003]

Revd Keith Argyle [2005]

Mrs Sheila Telfer [2005]

Mrs Judith Booth \*\*[2006]

### 2.10.2 MINISTRIES - CRCW Management Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd Alison Hall [2004]

Secretary: The CRCW Development Workers

Mrs Diana Herbert [2003]

Mrs Adella Pritchard [2004]

Mr Chris Lawrence [2005]

Revd John Burgess \*\*[2006]

Mrs Janet Holden \*\*[2006]

### 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

Dr Philip Theaker \*\*#[2007]

### 2.10.4 MINISTRIES - MAINTENANCE OF MINISTRY Sub-Committee

Convener: Mr Geoffrey Wood [2003]

Secretary: Mrs Judy Stockings [2003]

Revd Pauline Parkin [2004]

Mrs Jill Strong [2003]

Mr Barry Swift [2004]

Revd Roger Woodall [2004]

vacancy \*\*#[2007]

The Treasurer

Convener of Pensions Executive

### 2.10.5 MINISTRIES - RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING - Sub-Committee

Convener: Revd John Pugh [2006]

Secretary: Mr Tony Bayley [2003]

Mr Malcolm Lindo [2005]

Mrs Edith Tolley [2005]

Mrs Pauline Mewis [2005]

Revd Elizabeth Caswell\*\*[2006]

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: Mr Tony Bayley at Church House

### 2.10.6 NATIONAL ASSESSMENT BOARD

Convener: Mrs Darryl Sinclair [2005]

Retiring 2003	Mr Monty Helmn, Revd Lythan Nevard, Mrs Elaine Patrick,
Retiring 2004	Revd Marilyn Allen, Revd Craig Bowman, Revd Graham Hoslett, Revd Kevin Watson,
Retiring 2005	Dr David Cutler, Revd Rachel Poolman, Dr Jean Stevenson, Mrs Joyce Sutcliff,
Retiring 2006	Revd Thomas Heggie, Revd Michael Mewis, Revd Peter Poulter, Revd Hilma Wilkinson
Retiring 2007**	Revd Diana Cullum-Hall, Miss Sarah Dodds, Revd Roy Fowler, Mrs Wilma Frew, Mrs Pat Poinen, Revd Nigel Uden, Revd Simon Walking

### 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 Dr Stephen Orchard [2006]

Secretary: Revd Hazel Martell [2005]

Synod Representatives: Miss Janet Turner [1], Revd Ruth Wollaston [2], Mr Donald Swift [3], Mr John Seager [4], Mrs Irene Wren [5], Mr Simon Rowntree [6], Revd Elizabeth Caswell [7], Revd David Miller [8], Mr Graham Rolfe [9], *to be advised* [10], Mrs Christine Meekison [11], Dr Jean Silvan Evans [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]	Revd Keith Forecast **#[2007]	
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

Revd Alan Wharton \*\*#[2007]

[*ex officio* Financial Secretary, The Treasurer, Convener Pastoral Reference Committee]

### 2.13 RACIAL JUSTICE

Convener: Revd Raymond Singh [2005]

Secretary: Secretary for Racial Justice

Mr Kofi Akuumani	Revd John Campbell	Mrs Vanessa Honeyghan
Revd Julie Martin	Mrs Helen Renner	Mr Shaheen Zar

### 2.14 TRAINING

Convener: Revd John Proctor [2003]

Secretary: The Secretary for Training

Dr Graham Campling [2003]	Revd Carole Ellefsen-Jones [2003]	Revd Paul Ballard [2004]
Mrs Anthea Coates [2004]	Revd Dr John Parry [2004]	Revd Principal John Dyce [2005]
Mrs Susan Brown **#[2006]	Revd Sue Henderson**#[2006]	Revd Malachie Munyaneza **#[2006]
Revd John Humphreys **#[2007]		

### 2.15 YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK

Convener: Revd Kathryn Price [2006]

Secretary: Mrs Soo Webster [2003]

Mrs Brenda Cheer [2003]	Mrs Rita Joyner [2003]	Mrs Kath Lonsdale [2003]
Revd Andrew Willett [2004]	Mrs Daphne Clarke [2005]	Ms Lorraine Downer [2005]
Revd John Sanderson [2005]	Mrs Elaine Thomas [2005]	Mr Huw Morrison **#[2006]
FURY Chair	FURY Council Member	

## 2.16 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS - Commission Panel

**Convener:** Mrs Helen Brown [2005]

**Deputy Convener:** Revd David Helyar\*\*[2007]

**Secretary:** Mr Brian Evans [2005]

### Members:

retiring 2004

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

retiring 2007\*\*

Miss Ina Barker	Mrs Kate Breeze	Mr Keith Brookes	Revd K Chippindale
Revd Jessie Clare	Mrs Janice Cockcroft	Revd Alison Davis	Revd John Du Bois
Mr R Forsyth	Mrs Wilma Frew	Mr Alan Hart	Revd Rhona Jones
Revd Peter Killick	Revd Julian Macro	Revd Ted Marley	Revd Denise Megson
Mrs Sheila Pratt	Mr Nicholas Pye	Mrs Sally Quilter	Revd Michael Rees
Revd Dr David Thompson	Miss Sheila Tweed		

## 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 Synod	Dr Peter Clarke, Revd Pamela Ward, Mrs Roberta Wood
North-Western Synod	Revd Geoffrey Townsend, Mr Eric Chilton, Mrs Janet Eccles
Mersey Synod	Revd Martin Hardy, Revd John Kingsley, Mr Donald Swift
Yorkshire Synod	Revd John Jenkinson, Mr John Seager, Mrs Val Morrison
East Midlands Synod	Mrs Anne Ball, Mrs Barbara Turner, Revd David Miller
West Midlands Synod	Mr Simon Rowntree, Revd S F Ansa-Addo, Mrs Ann Sheldon
Eastern Synod	Revd Richard Mortimer, Revd Victor Ridgewell, Mr Ken Woods
South Western Synod	Revd Roz Harrison, Revd Paul Snell, Miss Angela Bebbington
Wessex Synod	Revd David Bedford, Miss Veronica Taylor, Revd Simon Thomas
Thames North Synod	Revd Dr Robin Pagan, Miss Gill Shepherd, Revd Jane Wade
Southern Synod	Mr Ian Chalmers, Revd Lesley Charlton, Mrs Marion Bayley
National Synod of Wales	Revd David Fox, Mr Stuart Jones, Revd Kristin Ofstad
National Synod of Scotland	Revd Ken Forbes, Mrs Helen M Mee, Miss Catriona Smith

## 4 TRUST BODIES

### 4.1 UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST

Convener: Dr Brian Woodhall

Secretary: Mr Tony Bayley

Directors

Mrs Christine Meekison [2003]	Ms Valerie Ham [2004]	Mr David Marshall-Jones [2004]
Mr John Squires [2004]	Dr Brian Woodhall [2004]	Mr Peter Ward [2005]
Revd Leslie Watson [2006]	Revd Paul Bedford **[2008]	Mrs Fiona Smith**[2008]

[ex officio Financial Secretary, General Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Secretary-Retired Ministers' Housing Society]

### 4.2 THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION TRUST LTD

#### - BOARD MEMBERS

Chairman: Revd Alasdair Walker

Secretary: to be advised

Members of URC:	Mr Ray Chambers [2003]	Mr Richard Nunn [2005]
Mr Philip Sheridan [2006]	Mr Brian Moere [2007]	
Members of Fund:	Revd Alasdair Walker [2003]	Revd Kenneth Graham [2005]
Revd Gwen Thomas [2007]	Revd Michael Davies [2008]	

[ex officio Financial Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Convener MoM sub-committee, Convener MoM Pensions Executive]

#### 4.3 CONGREGATIONAL MEMORIAL HALL TRUST

Revd Peter Grimshaw  
Mr Hartley Oldham

Mr Victor Fox  
The Treasurer

Revd David Hannen    Revd Dr Peter Jupp

#### 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  
General Synod of Church of England  
Methodist Conference  
General Assembly of Church of Scotland [note5]

Presbyterian Church of Wales [note5]  
Union of Welsh Independents [note 5]  
Congregational Federation  
Church in Wales Governing Board [note 5]  
United Free Church of Scotland [note5]  
Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church

Revd Elizabeth Welch  
Revd Fleur Houston  
Revd John Rees  
Revd Elizabeth Welch, Revd John Arthur,  
Revd Ross McLaren  
Revd Elizabeth Welch  
Revd Shem Morgan  
Revd Dr David Cornick  
Revd Stuart Jackson  
Revd Ken Forbes  
Revd David Tatem

### 6 Representatives of the UNITED REFORMED CHURCH on ECUMENICAL CHURCH BODIES

The following have been nominated as URC 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\*  
Secretary for International Relations

Mrs Olive Bell\*

Mr Neill Platt\*

#### 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,  
Katelina Tahaafe-Williams\*, Wilma Frew, John Young\*, Nikki Andrews\*, Jackie Yeomans, Lorraine Downer\*,  
Ray Adams\*, Ruth Clarke.

#### 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 Graham Cook\*, Mrs Darnett Whitby-Reid\*,  
Mr Mark Argent\*, Revd Kirsty Thorpe\*, Revd Bernie Collins, Convener of the Ecumenical Committee and  
Secretary for Ecumenical Relations.

#### 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

**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 Durrell Revd Derek Wales

## **7 URC Representatives at formal bi-lateral and multi-lateral committees**

### **7.1 METHODIST/URC Liason Committee**

The Secretary for Ecumenical Relations together with: Ms Rachel Greening, Revds Peter Poulter, Peter Foster, Harry Lanham and Ms Karen Watts.

#### **7.1.1 HEALTH and HEALING DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

Revd Brenda Russell Dr Margaret Moore Mrs Jackie Ballard Revd Della Bond

### **7.2 Anglian - Moravian Contact Groups**

Revd David Tatem

### **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 David 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 URC Representatives on Governing Bodies of Theological Colleges etc.**

### **8.1 Mansfield College:**

Ministerial and Educational Training Committee: Professor Malcolm Johnson\*\*  
Revd Rachel Poolman\*\*  
Convener of the Training Committee  
Secretary for Training

### **8.2 New College London**

Foundation Trustees:  
Mr Graham Stacy [2003]  
Revd John Pugh [2005]  
Mr John Smethers [2006]

### **8.3 Northern College**

Secretary for Training,  
Mrs Helen Brown  
Mr Brian Evans  
Revd David Fox  
Revd David Jenkins  
Mr Bill McLaughlin

Council of the Partnership for  
Theological Education, Manchester:

Secretary for Training

### **8.4 Westminster College: Board of Governors** Convener: Revd Dr David Thompson [2002] Clerk: Revd Clifford Wilton [2006]

Mrs Sally Abbott [2006]  
Revd Sandra Lloydlangston [2006]  
Mr Don Taylor [2006]  
Secretary for Training

#### **8.4.1 Cheshunt Foundation**

Revd Jean Black, Mr David Butler

#### **8.4.2 Cambridge Theological Federation**

Convener Westminster College Governors  
Secretary for Training  
Secretary for Training

Joint Academic Committee

- |     |                                |  |
|-----|--------------------------------|--|
| 8.5 | Homerton College Trustees      | Lady Sally Williams [2003]<br>Revd Dr David Thompson[2004]<br>Mr John Chaplin [2005]<br>Mrs Elisabeth Jupp[2006] |
| 8.6 | Queen's College, Birmingham    | Revd Elizabeth Welch<br>Revd Ken Chippindale<br>Mr Howard Bridge<br>Secretary for Training (in attendance)       |
| 8.7 | Aberystwyth (Memorial College) | Mr Leslie Jones  |

## **9 GOVERNORS of COLLEGES and SCHOOLS with which the URC is associated**

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 9.1 | Caterham School                          | Revd Nigel Uden<br>Mr John Mathias   |
| 9.2 | Eltham College                           | Revd Clifford Charlton   |
| 9.3 | Walthamstow Hall                         | Miss Margaret Vokins   |
| 9.4 | Milton Mount Foundation                  | Miss Nan Mark<br>Revd Peter Grimshaw<br>Revd George Thomas<br>Mrs Clare Meachin<br>Mr David Butler                                     |
| 9.5 | Silcoates School                         | Dr Clyde Binfield [2003]<br>David Figures [2003]<br>Dr Peter Clarke [2005]<br>Revd Arnold Harrison [2005]<br>Revd Brenda Hill [2006]** |
| 9.6 | Taunton School: Churches' Advisory Panel | Revd David Miller**  |
| 9.7 | Wentworth College                        | Revd Brian Rawling   |
| 9.8 | Bishops Stortford College                | Revd Nigel Rogers  |

## **10 Miscellaneous:**

The URC is represented on a variety of other national organisations and committees as follows:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Retired Ministers and Widows Fund   | Mr Ken Meekison, Mrs Jill Strong<br>Mr Laurence Macro   |
| Christian Education Movement Council<br>Churches Main Committee   | Mrs Margi Jenkins<br>Ms Avis Reaney, Mr Hartley Oldham<br>Mr Tegid Peregrine  |
| Congregational Fund Board   | Revd Margaret Taylor, Revd Eric Allen<br>Revd John Taylor, Mr Tony Bayley   |
| Guides' Religious Advisory Panel<br>National Christian Education Council                                  | Mrs Susan Walker<br>Mrs Patricia Hubbard<br>Mrs Rosemary Johnston   |
| Pilots Management Committee<br>Scouts' Religious Advisory Group<br>United Reformed Church History Society | Mrs Rosemary Scarrow<br>Revd D Marshall-Jones<br>Mrs Mary Davies, Revd Dr Peter Jupp<br>Mrs Carol Rogers<br>Revd Eric Wollaston<br>Revd Dr David Thompson |
| URC Boy's Brigade Companies Council<br>Wharton Trust  | Revd Michael Rees<br>Mr Norman Fabb   |

**Resolution 39****Nominations**

**General Assembly appoints Committees and representatives of the Church as set out on pages 73 to 80 of the Book of Reports subject to the additions and corrections contained in the Supplementary Report before Assembly.**

**Resolution 40****Retired Ministers' Housing Sub-Committee**

**General Assembly agrees that those appointed to serve on the Retired Ministers' Housing Sub-Committee shall be appointed for an initial four-year period, with the option of serving for a further two years without the need to refer back to Assembly.**

1. For some years policy in regard to housing for retired ministers has been the responsibility of the Assembly-appointed Retired Ministers' Housing Sub-Committee, while the application of policy has been the responsibility of the Board of the URC Retired Ministers' Housing Society Ltd. Recent practice has been for the two bodies to meet together, doing the Sub-Committee's business first and the Society's thereafter. This meant that some were able to vote in the first part of the meeting, some in the second, and a few in both parts.

2. It has been recognised for a while that this was a clumsy way of doing business. The Society is therefore taking steps to reduce the number of its Directors and to appoint to the Board those who, for the time being, are members of the Sub-Committee. This means that basically the two bodies will have the same membership and all those present at a meeting will be able to take part in all the business.

3. The disadvantage of this change is that, in an operation that is necessarily long-term, the long experience of several of the present Board members will be lost. Further, unless this resolution is passed, it will not be possible for anyone with responsibility in the future to have more than four years' experience of the issues. It is felt by those who have knowledge of this area of work that extension to a six year term would achieve the right balance between experience and new ideas.

# Racial Justice

**It is the responsibility of the Committee for Racial Justice:\***

- To enable and encourage the United Reformed Church to make manifest in its congregations and councils the multi-racial/multi-cultural nature of the church and society;
- To explore the task of mission in our culturally diverse society;
- To assist the Assembly and Mission Council to understand and reflect on racial justice issues and to address such issues in the policies of the United Reformed Church;
- To identify strategies for overcoming racism in all its forms and work closely with other Assembly Committees to eradicate racial prejudice and discrimination from our church and society;
- To assist the Assembly to ensure that minority ethnic members are appropriately empowered to participate meaningfully at all levels of church life.

## **Committee Members**

**Convener:** Revd Raymond Singh

**Secretary:** Mrs Katalina Tahaafe-Williams

Mr Kofi Akumanyi, Revd John Campbell, Mrs Vanessa Honeyghan, Revd Julie Martin, Mrs Helen Renner, Mr Shaheen Zar

*\* This is a temporary draft of the Racial Justice Committee remit, based on the previous programme. The final text will be agreed at Mission Council October 2002.*

## **I Introduction**

1.1 The Committee for Racial Justice takes great pleasure in making its first report to the General Assembly this year.

- It affirms strongly the significance with which the Assembly has placed Racial Justice Ministry on the United Reformed Church's agenda;
- It rejoices in the Assembly's unwavering resolve to equip all the people of the United Reformed Church to challenge all forms of racism within themselves, within the church and society, and for devoting resources to this task.

1.2 The Committee for Racial Justice had its inaugural meeting in early December 2001. The Committee prayerfully considered its work priorities for the future. Knowing that it is charged with heavy responsibilities amidst an environment of very limited resources, the Committee resolved to be realistic about its achievable goals in the immediate future and about its approaches to achieving those goals. For the purposes of this report, the Committee remit serves as the framework within which to highlight and affirm what has been done, and celebrate the vision of what is yet to be achieved.

1.3 The events of **September 11, 2001** and their aftermath have forced many of us in the West to acknowledge the reality that injustices rooted in racism are far more pervasive than we like to admit. The Committee's keen awareness of this reality is a determining factor in its resolve to be resolute in the pursuit of justice, as it strives to build a **foundation** for its work that is deeply rooted in **God's Word** and in the **ways of Christ**. As the Revd Wilf Bahadur who led our worship urged: *'Your agenda must be God's, your examples must follow Jesus', and your manifesto must be Christ's!*

## **Embracing the multi-racial/multi-cultural nature of our church and society**

### **2 Raising Awareness**

2.1 **Racial justice awareness training programmes** are crucial to helping the United Reformed Church in its congregations and councils to understand and welcome more readily, the racial and cultural diversity that exists in our church and society. The Revd Marjorie-Lewis Cooper, in her three years as the Multi-racial/Multi-cultural Programme Development Officer, helped the URC to begin to engage more deeply with some of the issues involved. However, the Committee is under no illusion as to the work that remains to be done in this area.

2.2 Many members of the URC continue to grapple with the question of **why racism should be an issue** for them when there are **no 'Blacks'** and/or **'Asians'** in their neighbourhood! Disturbing events of 2001 (i.e. **the summer riots and September 11<sup>th</sup>**) have helped many to gain some understanding. The Committee recognizes, however, that it is not easy to move beyond abstract and intellectual conversion.

2.3 **Perception and understanding** are key concepts to address. For the immediate future the Committee aims to focus on two central themes: a) **Institutional Racism** - *Helping people to see that racism also exists in invisible systems which confer dominance on one group;* and, b) **Preserving Difference** - *Finding ways to see difference as enriching rather than threatening.* The Committee plans to have **training packs** under these headings available to the wider church by the end of 2002. In addition, it will enable further training of the Racial Justice Advocates to support the Secretary in carrying out effective racial awareness training across the church.



2.4 In the long term, the Committee is committed to encouraging the councils, committees, and other structures of the URC to make use of available racial awareness training resources from the Racial Justice office. The former URC General Secretary and the present Deputy General Secretary, who early last year called all staff at Church House to attend a one day racial awareness training, set an example that the Committee would wish to encourage for **Synods, District Councils and Assembly Committees.**

2.5 The Committee looks forward to using the services offered by **Reform** and the *internet* to promote anti-racism workshops and writings. Updating the Racial Justice *website* is urgent, and the Committee is excited about the creative possibilities presented here for raising awareness and reaching a wider audience.

### **Mission in our Multi-cultural society**

#### **3 Relevant Mission**

3.1 The Committee subscribes to the view that mission thinking must be relevant to current social realities. It believes that a church's mission must not only be connected to the struggles of humanity, but also encourage the creation and fostering of a culture of mutual equipping within the church and society. The Committee is **inspired** by the **Assembly's continuing solidarity** with those in our church and society who struggle to overcome racial injustices. The Committee is committed to supporting those for whom **racism is an obstacle to their faith journeys**, and offering appropriate help to those for whom **racial consciousness appears irrelevant to their lives.**

3.2 The Committee is concerned that the URC is **equipped** to cope with the fact that as societies grow more diverse, churches become more multicultural. A key feature of mission thinking in the last decade has been the growing concern for what is now known as **multicultural ministry.** This term is no longer confined to mission in relation to new migrants and the presence of ethnic minorities in a church congregation. It is mission in relation to the nurturing of a whole church community where members respect and welcome their diverse histories and origins.

3.3 The **multicultural experience** for many is synonymous with the negative realities of racial oppression, violence and fear. Thinking multi-culturally, then, involves embracing the richness of diverse cultural expressions of faith, as well as an awareness of our own preconceived (and misconceived) notions and need for self-preservation.

3.4 The Racial Justice Committee looks forward to working with the Ecumenical Committee in seeking ways forward on this issue. The Committee affirms that this is a key area of growth in the mission of our church, and it is therefore keen to bring to the discussions on multicultural ministry sensitivity to the often hidden power-plays and arrogance that can dominate people's behaviour. The Committee urges the Assembly to encourage relationships based on a common belonging to Christ, and rooted in true acceptance of one another.

3.5 The Committee hopes to produce a paper on *'Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry'* this year as an added resource to existing training materials on racial justice issues. It will also be made available to the Ecumenical and Training Committees to assist in the ongoing dialogues, and as a resource for those in training for ministry.

#### **4 Priorities**

4.1 The Committee draws attention to Racial Justice issues on the *'domestic front'* which demand urgent consideration. These include: **Refugee and Asylum Seekers; Deaths in Custody; Racism towards Travellers and Roma People; Anti-Semitism; Ethnocentricity; White Ethnicities and Privilege Awareness; Religious & Racial Prejudice.** The Committee's agenda for the immediate future shall give urgent attention to these issues.

4.2 Racial Justice issues on the *'world stage'* include: **Globalisation & Economic Racism; Israel-Palestine; Indigenous Peoples and Human Rights; The Dalits; Slavery, Colonialism & the Debate on Reparation and Compensation,** to name a few.

4.3 The **2001 UN World Conference against Racism (WCAR)** in Durban, South Africa, was attended by more than sixty different UK organisations. The Secretary was part of the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ) delegation. The non-governmental (NGO) part of the conference was especially informative. WCAR put racism on the **top of the international agenda** and highlighted the urgent need to overcome the evil of racism in all its forms - in the local, national and global setting. Within its human rights agenda, the conference affirmed that racism is among the root causes of many domestic and international conflicts, and that it prevents friendly and peaceful relations among peoples and nations. (Declaration, para.24) The world conference against racism in **post-apartheid South Africa** brought sharply (and distressingly so) into focus the utter deprivation caused by racism.

## **Racial Justice and Policy**

### **5 Connections**

5.1 The Committee looks forward to making its contribution to the thinking and policy on racial justice issues within the URC and ecumenically. It appreciates Mission Council's initiative in encouraging Secretaries at Church House actively to seek out the connections and overlapping areas in their work. This would not only foster effective teamwork, but should also inform and inspire thinking and policy in the URC in ways that are dynamic, insightful and relevant. In addition, many synods have boldly launched strategy documents outlining policies and practices to help their members engage with racial justice issues. The Committee looks forward to producing a full account of such initiatives to help inspire and empower the rest of the church to follow these examples.

## **Strategies for Overcoming Racism**

### **6 Advocacy**

6.1 A key strategy for overcoming racism in the URC has been the development of the racial justice advocacy work in the synods. Currently, we have over eighty volunteer Advocates throughout the UK. The Advocates involve themselves in various initiatives for racial justice. These range from:

- assisting whole congregations to offer friendship and hospitality to asylum seekers;
- empowering Roma people to claim their human rights with dignity;
- developing closer inter-faith relations with people of other World Faiths; to
- leading racial awareness training with local elders' groups, and so on.

The Advocates meet twice annually - one residential meeting, in addition to a one-day forum. Since the inception of the advocacy scheme in 1999, the Advocates have had six successful meetings. These meetings underlined the urgent need for Advocates to have better support systems established within the synods. Advocates commonly articulate a sense of disconnection from their own synods. The Secretary has made it a priority to visit synods, and begin dialogues with the synod Moderators and other key leaders on how to address this issue. In addition to setting up synod task groups to explore strategies for Racial Justice, synods may also enable their own Advocates to form Synod Racial Justice Groups to consider work strategies, to devise a synod advocate profile, and to offer moral support to each other. The Committee encourages the synods' continuing active ownership and support of the advocacy work.

6.2 The Committee is committed to supporting the Advocates, and to the development and maintenance of the advocacy network. Further, it is keen to help co-ordinate the work of the Advocates so that the scheme may operate more effectively. A national Racial Justice Advocate profile is also on the agenda.

### **7 Racial Justice Sunday**

7.1 Observing Racial Justice Sunday (**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday September**) raises awareness and also deepens understanding and respect for one another, whatever our cultural and racial background. It is an opportunity to end misunderstanding and challenge racial injustice. It is a day to focus (prayerfully) on racial justice and give thanks for human diversity.

7.2 The **Churches' Commission for Racial Justice** produces a **pack** as a resource for congregations on this particular Sunday. These packs are available from both the Racial Justice office and CCRJ. Further inquiries may be directed to the Racial Justice office. The Committee urges all URC congregations to observe this special Sunday. In the past year, participation in the URC was rather patchy. This year the Committee intends to promote Racial Justice Sunday widely.

### **8 Ecumenical & Other Networks**

8.1 Working together with ecumenical partners and colleagues is important. The Secretary is a Commissioner on CCRJ, and she works very closely with her counterparts in the ecumenical network. The Committee affirms the continuing development and maintenance of this network to inform and challenge the work of Racial Justice in the URC. Further, governmental bodies like the **Commission for Racial Equality** (CRE) are resources that the Committee needs. Such bodies keep the Committee abreast of developments in the law, in addition to giving relevant updates on key reports like the **Stephen Lawrence (McPherson) Report**. The Committee is committed to maintaining this network.

## **Empowerment for Minority Ethnic Members**

### **9 Black & Asian Annual Conference**

9.1 Representation and participation at all levels of the life of the URC continue to be an issue. Crucial to any empowerment strategy are the concepts of **identity** and **belonging**. The purpose of this annual event is to affirm identity and to provide a sense of belonging. It is to encourage minority ethnic members to take responsibility for making a difference in their own lives, their congregations and communities. With belonging comes the confidence to stand up and be heard. This year will be the third conference and the Committee looks forward to a most inspiring and energy-filled forum.

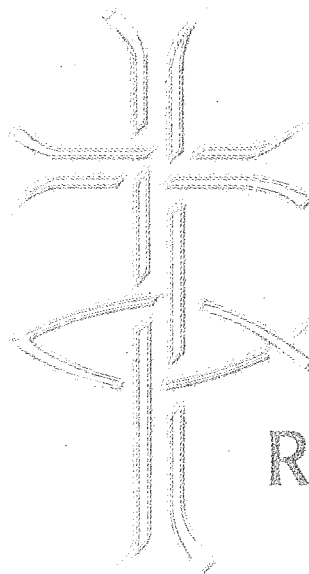
9.2 The Committee needs to develop further initiatives in this area of its work. Experiences of alienation may be alleviated by finding creative approaches to sharing and accessing information. The Committee is keen to develop strategies not only for empowering the growing numbers of **multi-cultural/multi-ethnic congregations**, but also for supporting the mission and vision of vibrant and **growing black-majority** churches.

9.3 Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds need appropriate attention in terms of coping with conflicting cultural values and world outlook. Last year saw the first URC National Black Youth Forum. The Committee aims to develop its work in this area urgently and appropriately in consultation with the relevant Committees.

## **Appreciation**

### **10 Thank you!**

10.1 The Committee wishes to thank the Deputy General Secretary, Revd John Waller, to whom it owes a great debt for his tireless commitment to the work of Racial Justice. John convened the Management Committee for the Multi-racial/Multi-cultural Development Programme. He continues to inform and guide, with great patience, the work of the new Committee.



*The*  
United  
Reformed  
Church

# Training

The remit of the Training Committee is as follows, given by Assembly when the Committee took its present form in 1994. 'The Committee will encourage and enable the integration of the training of the whole people of God and to this end will seek to influence the philosophy and methodology of learning; the core content of courses; and the development of resources. It gives direct support to, and acts in partnership with Doctrine, Prayer and Worship; Life and Witness; Church and Society, and Youth and Children's Work Committees and synods and districts, as they respond to the needs of local churches in training matters. It collaborates with Ministries Committee in the training of ministers of word and sacraments, CRCWs and Lay Preachers. It also supports all other committees and task groups, in particular the Ecumenical Committee. It also gives oversight to the YLTO and YCWT programmes.'

## Committee Members

**Convener:** Revd John Proctor      **Secretary:** Revd Roy Lowes

*Mrs Helen Brown, Dr Andrew Dawson, Dr Graham Campling, Revd Carole Ellefsen-Jones,  
Mrs Anthea Coates, Revd Paul Ballard, Revd Principal John Dyce, Revd Dr John Parry*

## I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sections 3-10 of this report outline what we are doing in fulfilment of that remit. We introduce each main section with a short list of aims and duties, entitled 'The Task'. Were anyone to gather all these short lists into one, it would show - more concretely than the remit above - our view of our job description: what we reckon we do.

1.2 But first we indicate our approach to this remit, with a statement on the nature of training in the church.

## 2 THE NATURE OF TRAINING IN THE CHURCH

2.1 The following statement on the nature of training was written in 1994 on behalf of the Trainers' Network of the URC in the UK. No short statement of this kind could be complete. But we believe that this expresses some important values, that match in many ways our present approach to the task Assembly has given us.

### 2.2 Mission Statement about Training in the United Reformed Church

To share with people in the continuous discovery of what it means to be the People of God in the world and the church - by liberating each other to use our different gifts in response to the love of God in Christ and the call of the Spirit.'

## 2.3 Commentary on this mission statement

### 2.3.1 To share

The statement puts forward a collaborative view of training: not of knowledge being loaded by a trainer into trainees; but rather of people learning together, so that the insights of each contribute to the training experience that others gain.

### 2.3.2 with people

The model of training proposed sits comfortably within the conciliar polity of the URC. We believe - and we find - that truth, guidance and wisdom are often best discerned when Christians meet and speak together, seeking together the mind of the Holy Spirit.

### 2.3.3 continuous

Christians should always be ready to learn and to grow. Our training is never complete. It must be continuous. Yesterday's discovery may not be adequate to meet tomorrow's need and opportunity.

### 2.3.4 discovery

To large extent training is open-ended. God may have new things to teach us, again and again. We discover our potential, and God's path, a step at a time.

### 2.3.5 the People of God

Training in the Church is corporate in its vision. We belong together as one body in Christ. We serve, even when we serve separately, as part of the Church's whole life and witness. Good training fosters that awareness, and rejoices in the strength it provides. So we shall want to learn and grow as a

people; training is never an individual hobby or trip. This corporate aspect implies - among other things - an ecumenical breadth to our vision and, where possible, to our training.

### 2.3.6 in the world

Our outlook is missionary. We are a people sent: to serve and show Christ. Effective training takes seriously that Christians live for Christ in the world, in a host of varied activities and situations, revealing and encountering Christ in many different places and ways.

### 2.3.7 liberating each other

Training is intended to liberate: to release gifts; to expand horizons; to free people to live as God intends; to open people to a wider vision of God and a deeper joy in service.

### 2.3.8 our different gifts

Training is not cloning. We are diverse, in creation, in Christ, and in the wide spectrum of the Spirit's gifting grace. We start from different places in our pilgrimage, and discover different gifts as we grow in Christ, appropriate to the varied opportunities that open to us in God's world.

### 2.3.9 in response to the love of God

All true Christian faith and service is responsive. We are a people loved, by God in Jesus Christ. We love because he first loved us. We want to give because we have received much. We live in a holy relationship - with God and with each other. Training values that understanding and works to strengthen it, so that as faith grows, a deepening Christian commitment may be natural and unforced.

### 2.3.10 love of God in Christ and the call of the Spirit

Our statement is Trinitarian. We stand within the mystery, confidence and expectancy of the Church's ancient faith, serving a God who made and loves us, who lived, died and rose as one of us, and who continues to stir, prompt and lead us.

## 3 LAY TRAINING, THROUGH THE TLS PROGRAMME

### The Task

- to run a good foundation course in Christian studies and service, open to all in the URC
- to run appropriate specialist courses, including one for trainee lay preachers

3.1 The Training for Learning and Serving programme continues to be a major success story in the URC. Mission Council's decision in October 2000 to purchase copyright from the Scottish Churches' Open College and develop the URC's principal route for Lay Training 'in house' was a brave step, but one that has proved its worth. In the

time since our last report we have set up Editorial Boards, taken the opportunity of re-writing the two-year Foundation Course to fit our requirements even more closely, and have developed a portfolio of one-year courses in response to student demand and requests from other Assembly committees. Validation for the programme is being sought through the University of Wales, Bangor.

3.2 As from September 2002 the following courses will be available:

#### 3.2.1 FOUNDATION: two years - rewritten for 2002-2003

The core of TLS is designed for those who want to grow and develop their faith, to increase confidence in those giving Christian service or facing pressure in church or community, and for those wanting to discern their future Christian service.

#### 3.2.2 GATEWAYS INTO WORSHIP: one year - rewritten for 2002-2003

The preferred formal training route for Assembly Lay Preaching recognition and also for those wishing to be more involved in and informed about worship.

#### 3.2.3 GATEWAYS INTO CARE: one year - newly written for September 2001-2002

Designed to equip Christians to be more effective in pastoral care through a deeper understanding of themselves, others and the gospel.

#### 3.2.4 GATEWAYS INTO PRAYER: one year - newly written for 2002-2003

A new course written to enable people to energise and develop their own prayer life and that of their Christian community.

#### 3.2.5 EXPERIENCING FAITH: one year - newly written for 2002-2003

Co-sponsored by the URC Interfaith Relations Committee. Aims to equip people to come to a position of dialogue and understanding with their local other faith groupings.

#### 3.2.6 GOD'S JESTERS: one year - first delivered 2000-2001

A course about using the performing arts in Christian outreach and worship. A catalyst for people who want to use performing arts but do not yet know how to start.

3.2.7 All these courses use home study, local study groups and residential weekends and include many opportunities for practical work.

3.3 In response to demand from Lay Preaching Commissioners and others, we are looking at the possibility of expanding TLS into new areas of course provision, involving vocational training for

Locally Recognised Lay Preachers and others within the church. We aim to offer a more flexible approach for those unable to commit to weekend learning.

3.4 A strengthened Management Group, responsible through Training Committee to Assembly, meets regularly. It seeks to monitor the growth of the learning programme, to encourage diversity and depth in course development, and to meet the needs of an ever widening constituency of URC people as they strive to live the life of the Kingdom. From a student point of view the programme's transition into the full control of the TLS Management Group has been remarkably smooth. The show has gone on. But behind this smoothness lies an enormous amount of hard and detailed work. The Church is immensely indebted to the high-quality and energetic leadership offered by Revd David A L Jenkins as Programme Coordinator and by Revd Carole Ellefsen-Jones who convenes the Management Group. Yet they would be quick to salute the commitment and capability of a host of co-ordinators, administrators, regional organisers, writers, local and weekend tutors, and support group members. This is truly a programme of the people and for the people.

3.5 We also acknowledge with warm gratitude the creativity and vision of the Scottish Churches Open College in developing TLS, and the College's support for our use of its material from 1995 to 2001. Although no longer linked with our delivery of TLS, the College continues to advance its own work in innovative ways, and our own Synod of Scotland both contributes to that advance and gains from it. Indeed SCOC's 'Living Theology' programme is likely to be the main structured lay training used by the Synod in the coming years.

## **4 TRAINING FOR LAY PREACHERS**

### **The Task**

- to run a good initial training course, through TLS
- to validate (and supplement as appropriate) individuals' training from other sources and courses
- to explore and advocate suitable training for District accreditation of Lay Preachers
- to ensure and publicise the supply of appropriate in-service opportunities

4.1 The Foundation (normally 2 years) and Worship and Preaching (normally 1 year) components of TLS form a structured and effective programme for initial Lay Preacher training, leading to Assembly accreditation. At the moment this produces about 20 Lay Preachers a year.

4.2 The Studies Panel of the Training Committee scrutinises applications for accreditation from any candidates who have taken other training courses (e.g. Methodist, or Milton Keynes). About 10 per year come by this route. Sometimes the Panel asks for some supplementary study; often this can be provided through parts of TLS.

4.3 In-service opportunities. Some districts and synods run events for their Lay Preachers. Some Lay Preachers take specialist elements of TLS (e.g. God's Jesters, Gateways into Care) to supplement their competence and understanding. Westminster College, Cambridge runs a well-subscribed annual in-service weekend. The Committee intends to take an overview of this area in the coming year, in consultation with the Lay Preaching Support Subcommittee of the Ministries Committee.

4.4 The Ministries Committee would like to see a much fuller supply of new Lay Preachers. We hear of 800 being needed within a decade, to bring the church up to strength. Yet there is at present no clear statement of what training is expected for District accreditation. Colleagues in Ministries have consulted us about this, and we are responding first by surveying what is already available, for example packages that have been written and used in synods: if there is good material, we wish to encourage its spread and uptake in new places. Beyond that we hope to adapt portions of the TLS programme for this purpose, as indicated in paragraph 3.3 above.

## **5 LAY TRAINING (APART FROM TLS AND LAY PREACHING)**

### **The Task**

- to produce, monitor and review Elders' training material (in consultation with Life & Witness Committee)
- to produce, monitor and review new members' learning material (with Life & Witness Committee)
- to monitor and support training initiatives for Local Leaders

5.1 A course for Elders' training has been written, by a group drawn from Training and Life and Witness Committees, headed by Revd Sandra Dears. In the last year, this material has been tested and revised, under the oversight of Revd Keith Forecast. We shall publish it in the summer of 2002, and expect to introduce and advocate the material at the Assembly.

5.2 New membership material is being prepared by a working group chaired by Revd David Jenkins (Manchester). Life and Witness is acting as the lead committee, although we too have been involved from the outset.

5.3 Mersey Synod wrote and produced a course for Local Church Leaders about 1997. This has been made available to other synods and has been useful in some places. TLS is also helpful and appropriate for some Local Leaders. However, policy and practice on Local Church Leadership are not uniform across the church, and it may turn out that synods' training needs will best be tackled individually. Indeed Yorkshire Synod has recently produced a course, which both adopts and adapts Mersey material, to meet Yorkshire need. Mersey Synod is convening a review in spring 2002 of how Local Leadership is operating in a number of northern-English synods; we hope to respond to any general training concerns the review raises.

## 6 YCWT PROGRAMME

The task

- oversight and support of the Assembly's Youth and Children's Work Training team
- to maintain and operate a staff development policy

6.1 Assembly policy authorises every synod to have a full-time Youth and Children's Work Training Officer, employed by Assembly and line-managed within the synod. Half the costs of the officer are borne by Assembly funds, and half by the synod. Our committee maintains an oversight of these officers on behalf of the Assembly, through the Secretary for Training. In addition to individual work in the synods, these officers meet together four times a year, and function as a team to offer certain services to the whole URC.

6.2 Currently nine synods have officers, while four - for various reasons - do not.

6.3 We record our thanks and good wishes to a number of team members who have moved on since we last reported to Assembly: Janet Turner from her post as Northern YCWT; John Quilter from East Midlands; Ann Martin from Wessex; Colin Capewell from the Synod of Wales. We welcome Colin Udall to the post of East Midlands YCWT.

6.4 A detailed Staff Development Policy for these officers is the responsibility of this committee. It was last revised in February 2000, and is now due for another overhaul, to take account of current legislation on termed appointments, and perhaps also of the Church's review of youth and children's work.

## 7 INITIAL TRAINING

The Tasks

- to recommend educational policy to Assembly
- to maintain and review lists of approved institutions and of criteria for approval

- to advise applicants re training possibilities
- to organise training boards at assessment conferences, and make recommendations to synods about candidates' training
- to give advice about difficulties in training brought to our attention
- to oversee support structures for candidates in training
- help to training institutions: service of the Training Secretary on boards of governors etc; appointment of governors and trustees; involvement in interviews for teaching posts
- active participation in validations and inspections of training institutions

## Church-Related Community Workers

7.1 The arrangements for training Church-Related Community Workers have recently required major reconsideration, for three reasons:

7.1.1 the prominence given in 'Growing Up' to community involvement, and the resulting wish to increase the number of serving CRCWs;

7.1.2 a concern arising from several points, not least from the Church's CRCW Review (1998), that CRCW training should be available to candidates, wherever they happen to live;

7.1.3 difficulties in the Accreditation Unit of the Greater Manchester Community Work Training Group (which had for some years validated the professional community work aspect of our training).

7.2 Following review by the Training Committee in September 2001, the Church continues its commitment to the training of its CRCWs through Northern College, Manchester. A three- or four-year foundation course is provided, which includes an integrated programme of theological and professional studies. For most students this training involves extensive practical placement work near the student's home, and six extended weekends a year at Northern College, plus home study in pursuance of the issues introduced at weekends. Northern College is responsible for arranging, monitoring and supporting the placement work, and for overseeing progress in every part of the study programme.

7.3 Our withdrawal from using the Manchester Accreditation Unit was necessarily abrupt, and a few students were adversely affected. We may still offer church posts to leavers who do not have a public community work qualification; they can be called, commissioned and employed, on the basis of a leaving certificate from Northern College. But it is better if they can get a public qualification too. Northern College has therefore worked towards securing a community work accreditation path with

another agency. Once this has been secured, we shall propose revisions to the paragraphs in the Manual on CRCW training, in order to state formally what we are doing; we hope to bring these proposals in 2003.

7.4 We are also drafting, through a small working group, and in consultation with colleagues from Ministries, learning criteria for readiness for service as a CRCW. This will help us to appraise objectively the learning of people who candidate with relevant prior qualifications.

7.5 There are not at present any CRCWs serving in our Synod of Scotland. Indeed, the practice of community work in Scotland, and the training that leads to it, have developed in ways distinct from those that apply in England and Wales. We have therefore begun to consider the needs of the Scottish situation, and have asked that colleagues in Scotland conduct further research on what might constitute appropriate CRCW training for Scotland. We may then need to consider whether and how our CRCWs will be able to move during their career from one nation to another.

## **Ministers of Word and Sacraments**

7.6 The Training Committee is responsible for operating Training Boards at Assessment Conferences. These boards listen to candidates and read their application papers, consider candidates' educational backgrounds, circumstances and training needs, and recommend to synods what might be the best pattern and venue for training. The power of decision on training venue currently lies with the sending synod; in practice a synod committee often decides.

7.6.1 This work has recently given rise to a question. Should more power be given to the Training Boards, rather than to diverse synods, in order to consider the needs of institutions alongside those of candidates? This was the burden of a resolution at Assembly 2001, which was eventually 'not put'. The Training Committee has therefore considered this issue within the last year, but has at the moment no resolution to present.

7.7 Much publicity attended the issue in February 2002 of a Church of England interim report on 'The Structure and Funding of Ordination Training'. We were not represented on the group that produced this report. However, the Secretary for Training has since been invited to join the ongoing work of the group, and has indicated there that we are glad to be constructively involved in discussions, so that any new patterns of training that emerge will take due account of our contribution and needs. The Training Committee has arranged a small reference group to advise its Secretary, as he engages in this work.

7.7.1 If the need should arise in due course for the URC to review the list of training institutions we use, the matter could only proceed through resolution of Assembly. Experience shows that preparation for this would need time, care, and patient consultation. The Training Committee does not expect - indeed it has neither right nor power - to act in haste.

7.8 We are responsible for overseeing the structures by which ministers-in-training are supported. This matter has recently been considered with care, most recently at a meeting of Synod Moderators and college and course staff and students in October 2001. We are seeking to draft a statement of good practice, in consultation with synods. The delay in completing this arises because we wish to link to it a statement about synod responsibilities in reviewing students' progress, and this is presently under discussion.

7.9 Our resolution to Assembly in 1997 required a year's placement work (of up to 800 hours) of every ordinand. Colleges have provided this since 1985, through an internship year or equivalent. But this was new for students who train on courses, for whom this further placement is a synod responsibility. A number of synods have overseen their own students' placement experience, working to guidelines provided by our Committee, while others have remitted this task to a college or course. We monitor this placement process through annual meetings of the synod officers involved, and judge that it is working increasingly well.

## **8 CONTINUING MINISTERIAL EDUCATION**

### **The Tasks**

- to recommend policy to Assembly for POET (Post-Ordination Education and Training) and ONET (Ongoing Education and Training).
- to sustain Assembly's policy, and encourage its take-up throughout the URC
- to liaise with synods and districts and support them in implementing Assembly policy
- run some central CME events as appropriate
- to attend particularly to training concerns that arise when a minister changes post

8.1 The last two years have seen rapid development in the CME field, which is still a relatively new programme in the life of the denomination. Take-up of ONET and sabbatical opportunities has continued to increase, as the Assembly had hoped and planned.

Comparing figures from the period 1995-97 with those from 2000 (the last complete year available):



Sabbatical take-up has risen	from 50% of those eligible	to 70%
ONET involvement has risen	from 180 ministers	to 360
Expenditure has risen	to three times its former level	

8.2 The POET programme for ministers in their first three years of service has also taken shape and is becoming part of the Church's regular pattern of ministerial support. This is true of all three aspects of the POET programme: pastoral advisers; synod training days; Assembly-sponsored weekends.

8.3 The CME Sub-Committee has published a number of helpful documents.

8.3.1 Folios for ministers have been produced with the strong support of synod training officers, to help ministers organise their CME. These have now been widely, though not yet comprehensively, delivered to ministers.

8.3.2 The *CME Opportunities Journal* has been regularly issued, offering information about resources, and testimony from those who have undertaken CME in various ways.

8.3.3 Booklets offering guidance for the CME processes have also been distributed: *Learning for Life*; *Financial Guidelines*; and *Pastoral Advisers' Guidelines*.

8.4 The CME Sub-Committee is very conscious of the fact that a new programme is likely to have teething troubles, and that proper questions have been raised about aspects of the programme. There is also a need to develop the programme further in the light of experience so far. To that end:

8.4.1 A full review of the whole POET programme has been instigated, under the leadership of Revd Margaret Jackson, sometime CME Officer in the Church of England. We hope to receive a report by early 2003, and will consider this carefully as soon as it is to hand.

8.4.2 A working group is preparing a companion booklet to *Learning for Life*, which will offer detailed guidance to ministers on how to manage their CME, so that it becomes a process in which they are continually engaged. This will be designed for use in conjunction with the Folio.

8.4.3 We are moving towards compiling a database of CME resources and uptake, and intend to develop the CME pages on the URC website.

8.5 All of this development has happened amid quite rapid changes of personnel. We record our appreciation for the work of Revd Chris Warner as first Convener of the CME Sub-Committee, of his successor Revd Roy Lowes, and of Revd Jean Black, who was our Secretary for CME for some two and a half years. Now that Roy Lowes has become Secretary for Training, and covers at the moment the duties of CME Secretary too, we are delighted that Revd Principal Jack Dyce has been appointed to convene the CME Sub-Committee - to which he brings wide-ranging and relevant experience and knowledge.

## 9 TRAINING TRAINERS

### The Tasks

- to create opportunities for ministers to take higher degrees that will be of value to the URC
- to encourage the development of training gifts within the URC, through appropriate programmes

9.1 The Committee awards two scholarships to allow ministers to undertake research degrees. One comes out of our budget and is presently held by Revd Rachel Poolman, who is reading for a PhD at Birmingham. Her subject is worship, and she hopes to finish in summer 2003. The previous holder of this award, Revd Julian Templeton, has recently been appointed to a teaching post at Mansfield College, Oxford. The second scholarship is a gift to the URC from the Congregational & General Charitable Trust, their 'Millennium Bursary', and we act as agent in making the award. The first holder will be Revd Douglas Gay, who is taking up doctoral research on preaching at Edinburgh University.

9.2 There is evidently wide interest among our ministers in pursuing part-time graduate work alongside pastoral ministry, and we mean to consider whether we should, and how we could, do more to enable this.

9.3 Members of the URC have been involved for some years in delivering the 'Trainers' Diploma'. This is primarily a Methodist venture and has recently moved - with much of the Methodist Open Learning Centre - to Cliff College, where a Postgraduate Diploma/MA in Training & Theological Reflection in Church and Community is now offered. There is no current structural URC involvement in controlling this award.

9.4 We have recognised the widespread need for tutors in a variety of training programmes around the Church - particularly but not exclusively for TLS. We believe there is a large amount of untapped talent, most of it among lay people. We therefore plan to advertise and advocate this need, and to arrange appropriate tutor training, under the auspices of the TLS Management Group.

## 10 INFORMING AND INFLUENCING

### The Tasks

- to devise and implement ways of passing on good practice from place to place within the URC
- to publish information about training opportunities throughout the URC
- to help the church to value and emphasise learning
- to lead in developing appropriate attitudes and approaches to education
- to stimulate training activity throughout the church

10.1 There is no single information exchange, whereby the material that is being produced in synods is circulated more widely. However, the Trainers' Network, an informal annual gathering, allows and enables this sharing. The meetings of the YCWT team have an important role. And officers of the synods with various training responsibilities have met from time to time with the secretaries of CME and Training; one of these gatherings also included college and course staff. All of these meetings are helpful in the cross-fertilisation of ideas, the facilitation of better coordination between synod and Assembly officers, and the development of mutual support.

10.2 As ever, more could be done. A major event at Assembly, significant spots in synod meetings, and a training resources webpage are dreams towards which we mean to work.

## 11 PERSONNEL

11.1 We depend constantly on the gifts and service of many hundreds of teachers, tutors and trainers, in numerous venues. We could not identify them all - the task would be too great. But we acknowledge and thank them here.

11.2 We record our particular thanks to a number of people who have contributed significantly to our committee work in recent years:

11.2.1 In the last twelve months Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee and Revd Jean Black have moved on to fresh service from staff posts in Tavistock Place. Both have left with our appreciation, gratitude and cordial good wishes. Revd Roy Lowes has come into a demanding job, as our new Secretary for Training, and brings gifts and experience that equip him admirably for this service.

11.2.2 Revd Ruth Ball completed her term of committee service in 2001, as do Mrs Helen Brown and Dr Andrew Dawson in 2002. Each of these people has brought distinctive and important gifts to our work, and we thank them sincerely.

11.2.3 We value very much the support and service given in our office at Tavistock Place by Geetha Srinivasan and Jennifer Speakman.

# Youth and Children's Work

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

## **Committee Members**

**Convener:** Revd Derek Lindfield (to February 2002), Revd Kathryn Price (from February 2002)

**Secretary:** Mrs Soo Webster

Mrs Brenda Cheer, Mrs Caroline Chettleburgh, Mrs Daphne Clark (from July 2001), Ms Lorraine Downer (from July 2001), Revd Margaret Collins (to July 2001), Mr Gareth Curl (to July 2001), Miss Lucy Hartwell (FURY Chair 2001), Mrs Rita Joyner, Mrs Kath Lonsdale, Mr Lewis McKenzie (to July 2001), Mr John Marshall (FURY Council, to July 2001), Mr Huw Morrison (FURY Chair 2000), Mr Jonathan Price (FURY Council, from July 2001), Miss Emma Pugh (FURY Chair 2002), Revd John Sanderson, Mrs Elaine Thomas (from July 2001), Revd Andrew Willett

**Pilots Development Officer:** Mrs Karen Bulley

**Centre Minister, National Youth Resource Centre:** Revd Liz Byrne

**Secretary for Youth Work:** Ms Lesley Anne Di Marco

**Children's Advocate:** Mrs Rosemary Johnston

## **1 To begin at the beginning . . .**

1.1 Much of the work of the Youth and Children's Work Committee has been extensively explored in the Review (see Appendix 10, much discussed around the church these past few months, which leaves this report with little to add. We are instructed, in the Committee's rubric, to support, encourage and promote and so this report will highlight ongoing, often unseen, work, point to innovative work and whet the appetite for work to come.

## **2 Keeping children, young people and workers safe**

2.1 Ongoing work we hope, but the Children's Advocate and Secretary for Youth Work have been particularly busy these two years revising Good Practice and developing the protocols necessary for us to work with the Criminal Records Bureau. High profile court cases have made it quite clear that the Church, contrary to expectations, is not immune from child abuse and it is essential that all elders are familiar with the guidelines. Rosemary and Lesley Anne are to be congratulated for the clarity of *Good Practice*.

## **3 Working with children**

3.1 *URCHIN* continues to be an essential source of information and ideas, which, coupled with the opportunities to meet and work with the Children's Advocate at gatherings and residential training events, must make the work of local, district and synod children's workers less fraught.

3.2 Rosemary is also to be found – along with the Pilots' Development Officer – on the Consultative Group for Children's Ministry, the main ecumenical body and a number of us discovered more about their work at a major conference in Durham last year. General Assembly agreed to support the *Children are Unbeatable* campaign and new materials are about to be published to move this forward.

## **4 Crossing the age gaps**

4.1 Pilots is, without doubt, one of the success stories of the past two years and presents its own report this year. As an organisation it provides opportunities for both children and young people to have fun and learn in a Christian environment.

4.2 Uniformed organisations – Boys and Girls Brigades, Scout groups and Guides and Brownies – also cover the whole range and are in many churches the main activity offered. The Committee hopes to find ways of working closer with these bodies than has been the case in the past.

## **5 Training matters**

5.1 Youth and Children's Work Trainers, whatever their title, also cover all the bases. The Committee is always amazed by their breadth of knowledge and range of activity, which is impressive. See what you think –

- training: Good Practice, exploring worship, drug awareness, Time for God volunteers, disability awareness, CME and POET,

Kaleidoscope and Spectrum courses, Pilots Officers, Yardley Hastings community team, elders, social inclusion project volunteers

- supervision and support: church-based youth and children's workers, district youth and children's work secretaries, synod and district events and youth forums, youth exchanges, Pilots at Cadbury World
- development: local church consultations, new materials, Good Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)
- links: Scottish Synod, CRCWs, National Youth Resource Centre and Windermere, Time for God, Spectrum, Kaleidoscope, Christian Institute for Training and Development
- even: helping to set up a puppet theatre!

## 6 Developing youth work

6.1 The youth work of the United Reformed Church is very disparate and often more honoured in the breach – 'I'm afraid we don't have any young people'. Where it happens it is still the lively scene it ever was. The Committee was impressed by the ambitious Mission Means Me event held by East Midlands Synod and also glad to know that more traditional events, such as the Wessex youth camp, are still going strong.

6.2 The National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings gives its own report, as does FURY and both reflect in different ways the problems associated with falling numbers of young people in the local churches.

6.3 The Secretary for Youth Work has been very active in the Time for God organisation, currently as Chair of the Executive Committee and the Y&CW committee recommended the URC continue as a sponsoring body of TFG and make the opportunities it offers more widely known.

6.4 Lesley Anne has also been central to the Social Inclusion Project, partly funded by the Department for Education and Skills (formerly the Department for Education and Employment). Local churches could learn a lot from the exciting outreach work that was carried out by other local churches with only a little funding. The Review and the URC website give further details and a handbook for churches wishing to move beyond their boundaries will be available soon.

6.5 The Committee recognises that the URC is now, more than ever, a church in three nations and regrets that because CTE has such an active Youth Forum and the DfES money was only available to English synods, Wales and Scotland often seem to be ignored. It is watching with interest the work done in the two National Synods to develop support structures for youth and children's work.

## 7 Working with others

7.1 Not content with its own agenda and meetings, committee members and staff have also been busy with other committees:

- *ROOTS* worship material (Communications & Editorial, Life & Witness, Doctrine, Prayer & Worship)
- new leaflets for new parents (Doctrine, Prayer & Worship)
- theology for youth work (Doctrine, Prayer & Worship)
- international programme to combat child poverty (Church & Society)
- issues across the whole life of the church (Training)
- international and interdenominational relationships (Ecumenical)

The Committee fully intends to continue working collaboratively, but is exploring ways of making this less of a strain on individuals.

## 8 Looking ahead

8.1 Coming up in the next years will be opportunities to enrich children's ministry and new ways for young people to get involved in as many senses of that word as you wish. Look out also for the Committee coming to your synod – we are here to listen to your plans, problems and prototypes, as well as to pass on information, instructions and ideas.

## 9 Do not go gently . . .

9.1 The Committee says goodbye to committee members every year and welcomes new ones. Their individual contributions are all valued, but to list them all would turn this report into something resembling a chapter of the Old Testament. However, special mention and sincere thanks should be given to one or two. We have been enriched by the presence of two FURY Chairs – Huw Morrison and Lucy Hartwell. Pilots Management Committee is similarly grateful to Revd Stephen Haward, who has finished his term as convener. Finally, thanks are due to Revd Derek Lindfield whose term as convener of the Youth & Children's Work Committee has proved pivotal in many ways. The Committee is sure they will all continue to contribute to the life of their churches in different ways for some time to come.



*FURY Chair 2001: Miss Lucy Hartwell*

*FURY Chair 2002: Miss Emma Pugh*

*FURY Chair Elect: Miss Rosemary Simmons & Mr Gareth Marshall-Jones*

## **I FURY Assembly outcomes**

1.1 FURY Assembly continues to be a focal point for FURY. The last two years have seen a variety of motions brought for consideration, ranging from issues of world trade and justice to youth-led worship. FURY's involvement with the British Youth Council, a secular forum respected and acknowledged by the government has been the subject of much debate. FURY Assembly overthrew the motion that FURY's involvement be withdrawn, reasoning that a Christian voice within this forum is vital. Currently, the FURY representatives are working alongside those from the Methodist Church to increase their effectiveness.

## **2 New FURY Mission Statement**

2.1 A considerable time has been spent continuing to address the outstanding issues raised by the FURY Review, most notably the FURY Mission Statement. After consultation with a cross section of FURY people, common themes were brought together as a draft. In accordance with the working method compiled by a previous FURY Chair, the draft working was offered for comment and criticism. The responses received allowed a wording to be prepared and offered at FURY Assembly 2002:

*Our mission is to discover God, to help each other grow in the Christian faith and, through our lives, reflect God's love to all.*

The Mission Statement was overwhelmingly accepted. The task now is to publicise it in order to foster some sense of identity and belong to FURY.

## **3 Elder for children and young people**

3.1 Also arising from the FURY Review, the provision for elders with responsibility for children and young people was advocated. Although included as a recommendation in the URC Manual, in response to a FURY Assembly motion requesting that such roles be

promoted, FURY Council Synod representative have been active in offering this as a motion for Synod consideration. This has happened in over half of the Synods to date. FURY Council is currently investigating how best to monitor the progress of the roles developing in local churches, often distant from the Synod meeting where decisions are made.

## **4 Communications**

4.1 The past two years have seen the development of the *Reform* supplement f2 as a replacement for *FURY National*. Thoughtful passing on of this supplement by subscribers helps to bridge the communications gap identified by the FURY review. Increased submissions from church groups will help further with this. The recently launched [www.furyonline.org.uk](http://www.furyonline.org.uk) website is also aimed at information sharing. The role of district representative at FURY Assembly and FURY Council Synod representatives continues to be one of communicating. Some Districts and Synods use these reps at two-way communicators: is now the time to share examples of what is and is not successful?

## **5 Wider involvement**

5.1 In 2000 FURY took an active part in an event called *Breakout*, which was an ecumenical version of the *MAYC Breakout*, held around the London Docklands area. The main partners were CTE members and the event attracted numbers of most of the main denominations. FURY continues to take a full part in the CTE Youth Forum and other ecumenical discussions and groups.

# National Youth Resource Centre Management Committee



## Committee Members

**Convener:** Mr Bryan Thomas

*Mr Tim Banks, Miss Ruth East, Mr Alan Gilby, Revd Kathryn Price, Ms Lesley Anne Di Marco,*

*Mr John Payne, Miss Emma Pugh, Revd Wynn Young*

**Centre Ministers:** Revds Liz Byrne and Ian Smith

## **I New Direction**

1.1 The beginning of 2001 brought with it a new direction, exploring the possibility and reality of developing the Centre as a Christian community with a greater depth of spirituality. This organic development gave us a real sense of being drawn on by the Spirit. Work still goes on in discovering what it means to be a Community of God's People, and the development of a weekly Community Meal, regular Spiritual Development for the Community Team, Bible Study for the whole community and ideas for the grounds continue to enhance the way forward. At the heart of all we do are the greatest commandments: Love God, and love all God's people.

## **2 Jigsaws**

2.1 Jigsaws continue to be a success story. Over the last 2 years over 500 people from over 40 churches have attended Jigsaws. These events are an opportunity for groups to experience what it means to live in community, to explore their faith and spirituality and to build up relationships with one another. Themes such as 'Journeys', 'The Lord's Prayer' and 'Who is God?' have been explored using different focuses including creativity and activity. During the spring of this year the Centre has been working with Commitment for Life to create a new Jigsaw. In the autumn of 2000 a successful exchange with Windermere took place, and we were able to run a Jigsaw for groups from Scotland and the North East. In the summer of 2001 Wessex Synod held an 'at home' Jigsaw, using material that had been prepared, tried and tested at the Centre. Our hope is that there will be more opportunities for us to 'go out' with Jigsaws in the near future.

## **3 Programme**

3.1 The success of Jigsaws has compensated for the lack of response for some programme events, which led to the setting up of the Programme Advisory Group in 2001. Made up of representatives from many areas of youth and children's work in the URC the

group has enabled us to look objectively at the learning experiences of the past few years. We hope that the 2002 programme is more relevant to young people and those who minister to children and young people in local churches. We have seen a number of successful events in the last 2 years, including Junior Theatre Week, which began in '98 and continues to grow in number, having staged a number of musicals including 'Bugsy Malone' and 'Oliver'.

## **4 Community Team**

4.1 During 2000 and 2001 there have been 23 Community Team members from all over Britain and the world, each bringing their own skills and experiences and creating a constantly changing and refreshingly dynamic community. We are developing a partnership with the United Church of Zambia, with a young adult from the UCZ joining the CT each year for the next 3 years. CT members come and go throughout the year, staying from a few weeks to a year. A new induction/training policy has been put in place to ensure that all CT members are as fully prepared for life at the Centre as possible. We have seen many young people grow in confidence, develop in their faith and discover new skills during their time on the CT, enabling them to enrich their local church on their return home – there are many young people who have been CT members who are now making a difference in the local and wider church.

## **5 Relationship with Yardley Hastings URC**

5.1 We enjoy a close and supportive relationship with Yardley Hastings URC, the two communities worshipping together every Sunday morning. A 'Sharing Agreement' has been prepared to further recognise and firm up our relationship with one another. At the heart of the lives of the two communities is the recognition that we are 'two communities – together as one'.

## **6 Good Practice**

6.1 As a regularly changing community we are constantly having to look at our practices. The continuing development and implementation of many new policies goes to ensure that the Centre remains a safe and secure place for children and young people. When the Centre Minibus needed renewal, we decided that hiring transport was less hassle and more cost effective than owning our own vehicle.

## **7 Centre Management Committee**

7.1 The CMC continues to support the work of the Centre. The setting up of a Health and Safety/Grounds and Property Sub-Committee has greatly helped in the upkeep of the Centre, not least as the recent quinquennial structural survey revealed a few surprises – the roof has now been repaired!

## **8 Marketing**

8.1 We are constantly looking at new approaches to marketing including using Reform, youth and children's work networks, the Internet and personal advocacy.

## **9 People**

9.1 2002 began with the Centre Minister taking maternity leave. The work and development of the Centre continues under the direction of the Acting Centre Minister and with the hard work and support of the Centre Staff and the Community Team. The Centre is also supported by YCWT's bringing their skills and experience to the life of the Centre.

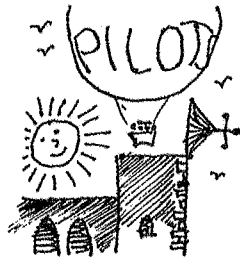
9.2 We are indebted to all those in the wider church who have supported the Centre in many different ways.



## Committee Members

**Convener:** Revd Neil Thorogood **Treasurer:** Revd Martin Truscott  
Mrs Karen Bulley, Mrs Marilyn Armstrong, Mr John Hornby, Mr Gareth Jones, Mr Huw Morrison, Mrs Soo Webster,  
Revd Stephen Haward, Revd Sandra Turner

**PROVEN  
PERFORMANCE!  
POWERFUL  
POTENTIAL!**



## 1 Pilots Growing Fast!

- In 1998 we had 92 Pilots companies. By 2001 this grew to 146 with over 2,800 children and young people. Our 70-year-old organisation is 60% new! More companies are being launched all the time
- The energetic recruitment of officers locally and regionally is reinforcing Pilots as a strong national organisation
- Pilots is revitalising work with children and young people in our churches

## 2 Bursting with Life and Hope!

- The Pilots' day at Cadbury World (30<sup>th</sup> June 2001) was a massive success and sign of life as 2,987 Pilots and friends gathered for fun and worship. What a glorious day! What a symbol of hope for our churches!
- A higher profile nationally (with staff and funding) is leading to deepening commitment locally as companies feel well supported and resourced
- Pilots is increasingly seen as a dynamic, relevant and exciting organisation with real potential to make a difference to the lives of people and congregations
- Pilots companies can take root in any context. Pilots can be a particularly powerful form of ministry in some of our more deprived communities
- Pilots companies are creating opportunities across the country for the love and challenge of God to become real in fresh and exciting ways

## 3 Saving the Church from Sunday?

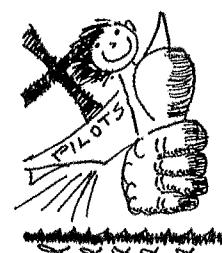
- As many churches struggle to attract children and young people to Sunday worship, Pilots is increasingly providing powerful children's and youth worship mid-week. Pilots' sessions are becoming **the preferred focus** of worship and Christian encounter for children and young people in local churches with dramatic results
- **Do you wonder how to break out of the Sunday slot and engage with your community at a better time and day for them? Look no further than Pilots! We're challenging the fallacy that if it isn't on Sunday it isn't really Church!**

## 4 Building Exciting Bridges!

- Large numbers of non-Church children and their families are being reached through Pilots
- Wonderful interfaith bridges are being built – some Pilots companies include Sikh and Muslim children
- Ecumenical connections are growing – the Congregational Federation are a sponsor (with 24 companies), and Pilots runs in the Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church of Wales and the Church of England

## 5 An Organisation Reborn!

- Pilots' administration has been dramatically improved
- A new affiliation scheme has been introduced providing a much more coherent picture of Pilots
- Good Practice is advocated widely
- Resources for local companies continue to improve and are greatly welcomed
- High quality training for those working within Pilots is increasingly available, relevant and enjoyed





**Resolution 41****Policy for youth and children's work****General Assembly**

- a) recognises that the prime venue for work with children and young people is the local church, and
- b) encourages the Youth and Children's Work Committee to work with the recommendations in the review report, developing them as a coherent policy for youth and children's work in the United Reformed Church.

1 The Youth and Children's Work Committee was grateful for the thorough work done by the Review Group and broadly accepted their recommendations. Underlying these recommendations is a strategy aimed at focussing support on the work of the local church and the Committee asks General Assembly to support

this policy. Work on implementation has already been commenced by the Committee. The remaining resolutions seek to engage other Councils and Committees of the United Reformed Church to work with them in their own fields.

**Resolution 42****Training for ministers**

**General Assembly asks the Training Committee to consider and implement the recommendations in the review report which relate to initial ministerial training and the need to provide ongoing CME training opportunities in all aspects of work with children and young people, including contemporary youth culture.**

1 Ministers are not the sole agents of youth and children's work, but their interest and support is essential. The Youth and Children's Work Committee agrees with the Review Group that the core curriculum

for initial ministerial training should include work with these age groups. Ministers should be encouraged to seek out further opportunities to explore this field as part of CME.

**Resolution 43****District/Area Councils and Synods**

**General Assembly asks Synods and District/Area Councils to consider and, as necessary, to implement the recommendation in the review report regarding their work and to report back to Mission Council in March 2003.**

1 Districts/Areas and Synods are recommended to give priority to the building up of local church work. This might include offering help with implementing Good Practice, providing information on the employment and funding of paid youth and children's

workers, encouraging young people, and particularly the 18-25 age group, to take an active part in the life of the District/Area and Synod as adults in their own right. The development of networks within and between Synods will facilitate communication.

**Resolution 44****Committee structure**

**General Assembly agrees to change part of the committee structure agreed in 1994 so that Youth and Children's Work Committee is no longer required to send representatives to the Church & Society, Doctrine, Prayer & Worship and Life & Witness Committees.**

1 Members of the Youth and Children's Work Committee are not seeking to isolate themselves from the work of the other committees. They have, however, found the 1994 requirement unnecessarily burdensome. New ways of sharing information,

concerns and ideas as well as asking for and offering opportunities for consultation can be explored, that would increase the integration necessary for a coherent application of the Youth and Children's Work strategy.

**Resolution 45 National Youth Resource Centre, Yardley Hastings**

**General Assembly asks the Youth and Children's Work Committee to work with the Centre Management Committee, the local church and the Northamptonshire District Council to implement the recommendations in the review report regarding Yardley Hastings, seeking help as necessary from Mission Council.**

1 The National Youth Resource Centre was opened a decade ago with great excitement and since that time it has entertained and inspired numbers of young people. Many of our younger ministers cite membership of the Community Team as a significant factor in their spiritual journeys and others, now in many different fields of employment, also consider their time at Yardley Hastings life-changing. However the Centre has also experienced difficulties and the range

of resources proposed in the New FURY document has not been achieved. Changing life-styles and the fall in numbers of young people in the church have contributed to the decreased use of the Centre. The Youth and Children's Committee is committed to the ideals implicit in the New FURY Project, but is not convinced that a residential centre is the best way of supporting local church work.

**Resolutions 46****Pilots**

**General Assembly celebrates the success of the relaunch of Pilots and commends the programme to those churches not yet on board.**

1 Pilots is a success. The growth in new companies, revamped materials, new training programme, not least last year's gathering at Cadbury World, all contribute to the excitement surrounding the

whole programme. The Youth and Children's Work Committee is proud of its achievements and recognises that there is much to be learnt from its ways of working with children and young people.

**Resolution 47****FURY**

**General Assembly asks the Youth and Children's Work Committee to work with FURY Council to implement the recommendations in the review report regarding FURY, in particular the proposal to build an effective network through District/Area Councils and Synods.**

1 FURY too is successful in giving young people in the United Reformed Church an opportunity to contribute to the whole life of the church and FURY Council in particular has been an excellent learning experience for many. However, the aim of including all youth activity under one name has not worked out in practice. The recommendation to make FURY an

organisation that can be signed up to – either by groups or individuals – is intended to give the organisation more focus and FURY Council a recognised constituency. The resulting network will complement the work to be done by Districts/Areas and Synods.

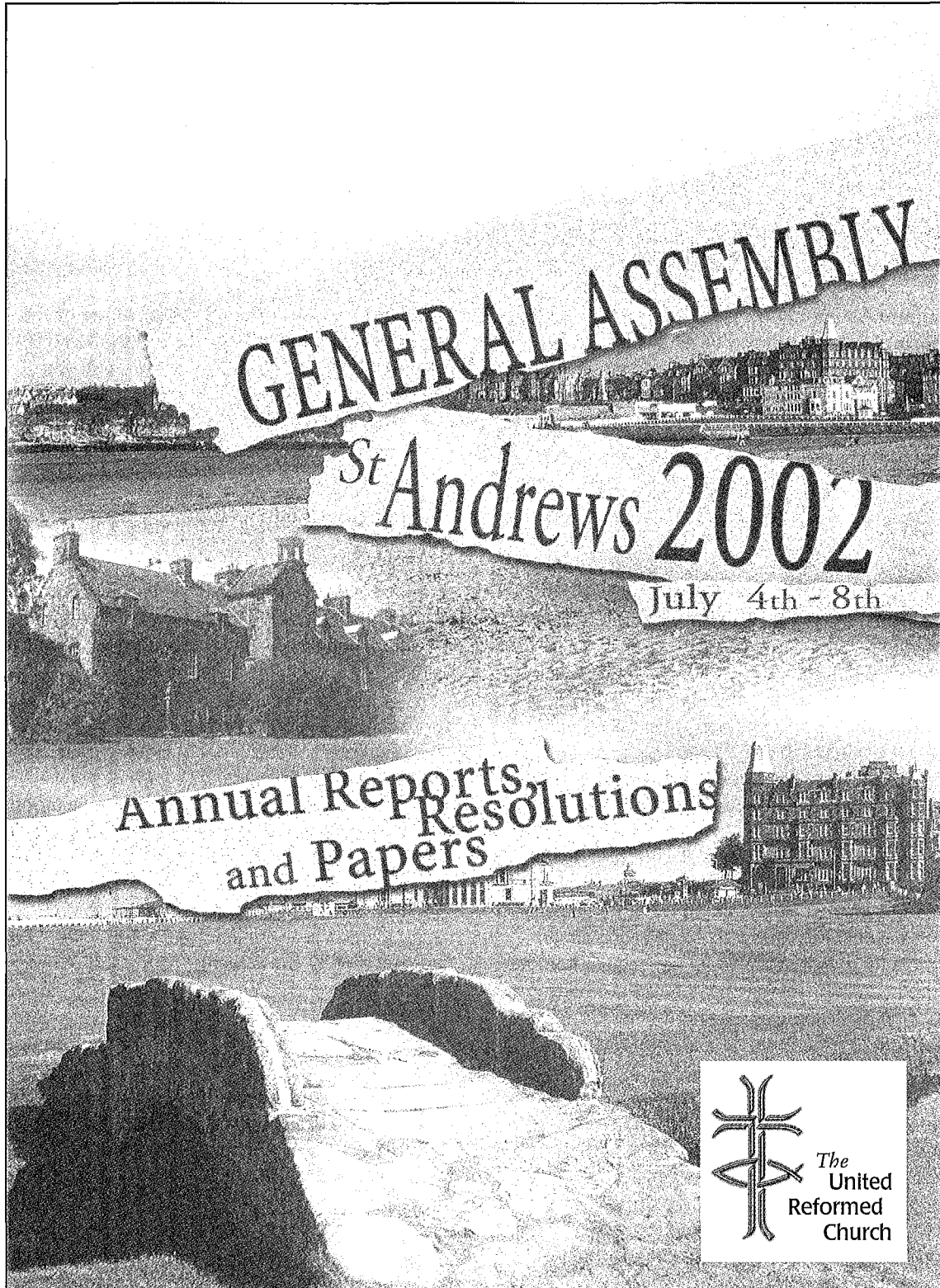
**Resolution 48 Youth and Children's Work Training Programme**

**General Assembly affirms the continuation of the Youth and Children's Work Training programme, with an increasing emphasis on development.**

1 The YCWT programme has been a prime factor in the support offered to local churches. Development is already in the job description and the support offered. Discussions are taking place between the Youth and Children's Work Committee and the

Training Committee to determine the best way of managing the programme and of ensuring that the support it offers is available in equivalent ways in those Synods no longer participating.

# Resolutions from Committees not reporting in 2002



**Resolution 49****End of Life Issues**

**General Assembly, noting that the work of the group set up to look at issues relating to the end of life in response to the resolution of Assembly 2000 has completed its work, and welcomes the material it has produced for use in the churches.**

*Church and Society Committee*

1.1 Resolution 19 passed by Assembly 2000 invited Church and Society to gather a working group to examine a range of issues associated with the end of life and to report in 2002. The resolution was intended to alert the Church to a rising tide of concern, identify key issues, and enable further work to be done. In responding to this the Church and

Society Committee duly convened a working group which, following a process of consultation with Churches, has produced a pack containing information, resource material and practical ideas. The Committee commends this to the Churches and hopes it will be widely used.

**Resolution 50****Conversations on the Way to Unity**

**General Assembly receives with gratitude *Conversations on the Way to Unity*, the report of the informal conversations between the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church and commends it for study throughout the Church in conjunction with the study of *an Anglican-Methodist Covenant*. General Assembly invites synods, district councils and local congregations to send comments to the Secretary for Ecumenical Relations by 31 March 2003.**

*Ecumenical Committee*

1.1 In July 1996 the Church of England and the Methodist Church published *Commitment to Mission and Unity*, the report of two years of informal conversations. It proposed that, given that the two churches believed they shared a common understanding of the goal of visible unity, they should enter into Formal Conversations while taking account of the wider ecumenical relationships of the two churches. Every member church of Churches Together in England was asked for comment.

1.2 The United Reformed Church, at its General Assembly in July 1997, responded: "...we hereby express our interest in becoming a full participant in the process of *Commitment to Mission and Unity*..... Our particular contribution would be insights from the Reformed tradition, notably the conciliar expression of the apostolicity of the Church and the shared ministry of the Elders."

1.3 The proposal to enter Formal Conversations, which was accepted at both the November 1997 General Synod of the Church of England and the 1998 Methodist Conference, was, however, a bi-lateral one, with ecumenical participants invited to play a full part in the process: two from the United Reformed Church and one each from the Baptist Union, the Roman

Catholic Church and the Moravian Church. The proposal also included the hope that trilateral informal conversations which included the United Reformed Church might be set up to work alongside the Formal Conversations.

1.4 The reports of both sets of conversations are now published. The report of the trilateral informal conversations, *Conversations on the Way to Unity*, (see Appendix 12) is a United Reformed Church report and therefore requires us to receive it and respond to it. *An Anglican-Methodist Covenant* is not our report, but its third recommendation states: "We recommend that in the light of the Trilateral Informal Conversations that took place in conjunction with the Formal Conversations, the United Reformed Church be specifically invited to study and respond to the report and that its response be received by both our churches as part of a continuing three-way conversation." Such an invitation to respond is, therefore, expected from the Methodist Conference and the General Synod of the Church of England if the report is accepted for study and response by these two churches.

**Resolution 51****International Situation**

A resolution on the international situation, based on the following wording, will be tabled at the Assembly taking account of events at the time.

**General Assembly**

- Welcomes the actions taken by Mission Council and others in responding to world events since 11th September 2001.
- Affirms the United Reformed Church's solidarity with partner churches around the world and our commitment to work with people of other faith communities for peace and justice in the world.
- Condemns the use of the 'axis of evil' and similar rhetoric by all political, religious and community leaders as inflammatory and unhelpful.
- Such other matters as current events require

*Ecumenical Committee*

## **I International Relations since September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001**

At the September 2001 Ecumenical Committee meeting a large part of the committee's time was given over to reflecting on the United Reformed Church's international involvement and our response to international situations. This was prompted by two papers:

- Emerging Patterns in International Relations, and
- The Middle East (responding to the report of the CTBI delegation).

All this happened before the horrendous events in the USA on the 11<sup>th</sup> September, of which we received news just after the meeting closed.

The time then was well spent providing the basis for our responses to events on the 11<sup>th</sup> September and subsequently, including the massacre of a Church of Pakistan congregation, the worsening events in Israel/Palestine, the tension between India and Pakistan and the inter-communal violence in India.

## **2 Responses and Actions**

In our response to events the following actions have been taken:

- Messages of support were emailed to our three partner churches in the USA on the 11<sup>th</sup> September
- On the following day a pastoral letter was sent to all known ministers from the USA serving with the United Reformed Church
- On the same day a letter was also sent to the Prime Minister urging 'very careful reflection on the responses which are rightly called for, but which need to be measured and just, in order to ensure that more suffering is not inflicted on the innocent.'

- This and other material was placed on the URC website
- As events continued to unfold a pastoral letter was sent to our Urdu-speaking congregations
- Participating in a meeting of Reformed Church leaders in Hungary we contributed to a statement from that meeting
- The Committee for Inter-Faith Relations issued a statement *The shared grief of Christians and Muslims*
- Mission Council in October adopted a statement on the situation in Israel/Palestine (see paragraph 4) which was sent to the Jerusalem church leaders
- Mission Council in October also considered a paper prepared for them on the international situation and arising from this the General Secretary sent a pastoral letter to all congregations
- Following the massacre of a congregation in Pakistan messages of support were immediately sent to the Church of Pakistan and the Presbyterian Church in Pakistan, indicating also our interest in exploring a partnership with them
- At the same time a further pastoral letter was sent to the URC Urdu-speaking congregations
- Mission Council in March encouraged the Assembly Moderator to write a letter to the Ambassador of Israel conveying our condemnation of the actions of Palestinian suicide bombers and our concern about the disproportionate response of the Israeli Defence Forces
- The same Mission Council also agreed that she send letters of support to our partner churches in India and Pakistan in response to the inter-communal violence in India and a further fatal attack on a church in Pakistan.

At the same time people across the church have also been involved in many local discussions and actions responding to the situation expressing very practically our belonging to the world and our commitment to work with all God's people for peace and justice.

### **3 Ongoing and Future Work**

There are continuing discussions going on between representatives of the Committee for Inter-Faith Relations, the Secretaries for Church & Society, International Relations and Racial Justice, the Commitment for Life coordinator, our representatives on the CTBI Middle East and Asia Forums and the Deputy General Secretary to consider in more depth the issues and connections raised in the CTBI Middle East report, the current international situation and how the URC might continue to respond to them.

Throughout our formal responses to ongoing events have been shaped by the following framework, which formed part of the debate in Mission Council:

- 3.1 Our condemnation of terrorism.
- 3.2 Our concern and support for all people who become victims through bereavement, becoming refugees, being denied emergency relief aid, etc.
- 3.3 Our belief that there is no peace without justice.
- 3.4 That there is no inherent enmity between people of different faith and that as Christians we are called to love our neighbour regardless of faith, creed, race, nationality and so on.
- 3.5 We are committed to resisting racism and xenophobia and more positively to building harmonious community relations.
- 3.6 That fundamentalism is found in all faith communities and as such represents a broader challenge to us as a faith community ourselves.
- 3.7 That the issues are complex and interrelated and that we cannot only address the issues on the surface (acts of terrorism) without also considering the injustices that have created the conditions which have nurtured such enmity and hatred.

If it can be arranged and if it is safe to proceed we hope to send a small delegation to Pakistan as soon as possible, and in May we expect to join with the Church of Scotland in a visit to Syria and Lebanon. Discussions are also in hand as to how we might engage more directly with various faith communities in Israel/Palestine over and above our ongoing involvement with PARC, through the *Commitment for Life* programme.

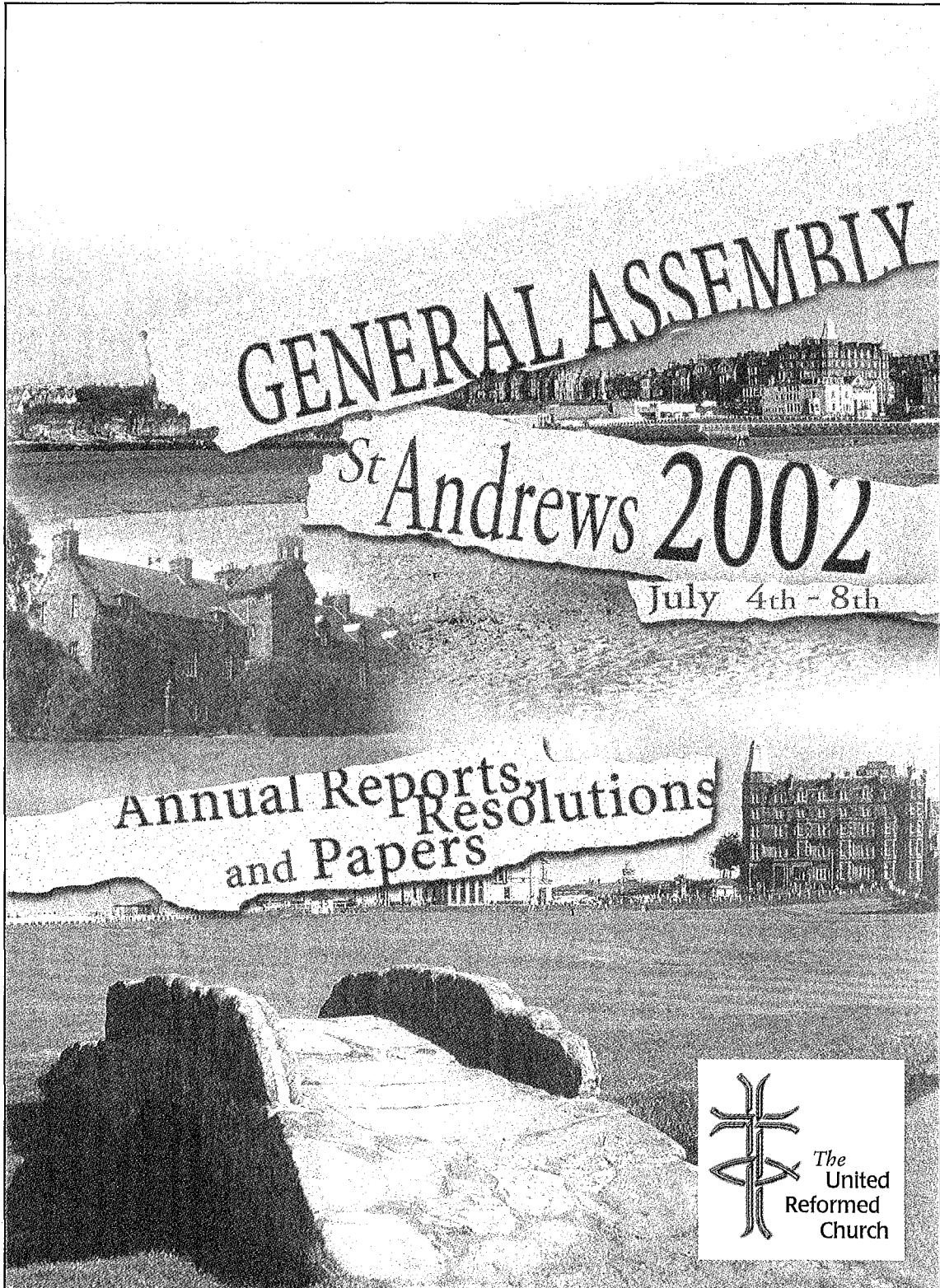
We are also in continuous contact with partner churches around the world and international ecumenical agencies sharing information and reflections on events as they unfold. Following a decision of the World Council of Churches Assembly in Harare in 1998, member churches have entered into a programme to proclaim and work for this as the Decade to Overcome Violence. In the light of events this appears as timely as it seems difficult.

### **4 Mission Council Statement to the Jerusalem Church Leaders**

Last year a hundred pilgrims from the United Reformed Church (representing every synod of the church and including the Moderator of the General Assembly) were profoundly affected as they shared in the hopes and fears of Christians, Jews and Muslims in Israel/Palestine. They came home to tell the story conveying to many more people the experience they had gained. In the light of this and watching with increasing horror at the way in which the situation has deteriorated over recent months we wish to state to the Church leaders in Jerusalem:

- our continuing solidarity with you and your people in these troubled times, assuring you of our prayers and concern
- our commitment to work with partner churches in the UK to press our government for an effective internationally supported solution to the present crisis based on the Mitchell Report
- our endorsement of your call for the Israeli government to negotiate steps which will 'End the Occupation' in the interests of security for Israel, peace for the Palestinians, and the transformation of relationships in the region.

# Appendices







## THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

### FINANCIAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2001

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.

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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 the 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 2001

The results for 2001 are more than usually complex to explain. They are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 7, which shows that there was, overall, a decrease in funds in the year of £982,000. The breakdown of this decrease compared with the decrease for the previous year is as follows:

	2001	2000
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year on:		
Ministry and Mission Fund and other funds covered		
by our annual budget	289,000	32,000
Restricted funds	651,000	(827,000)
Capital funds	474,000	15,000
(Decrease) in market value of investments	<u>(2,397,000)</u>	<u>(1,356,000)</u>
	<u>£(982,000)</u>	<u>£(2,136,000)</u>

Comments on each of the amounts making up the total decrease are set out below.

#### Ministry & Mission Fund and other funds covered by our annual budget - £289,000 incoming resources

The 2001 actual amounts are compared with 2000 and also with the 2001 budget on pages 24 and 25.

The total of £289,000 net incoming resources for 2001 was nearly £200,000 better than the amount of £97,000 shown in the 2001 budget. However, this difference comprises five major items, all of which are of a very different character and significance.

- Ministry cost at £15,205,000, was £269,000 higher than budget. This excess was made up of a £95,000 increase in the pension fund contribution to pay for the minor improvements in benefits agreed at the 2000 Assembly, £60,000 caused by the stipend increase of 3.9% being higher than the budgeted 3.5% increase, about £100,000 caused by smaller decreases, compared with budget, in the overall number of full-time and part-time ministers and CRCWs and about £25,000 in respect of resettlement and other grants.
- Ministry & Mission contributions at £17,928,000 were £279,000 below the budgeted target figure. The targets for Ministry & Mission contributions were increased by 3% each year for 2000 and 2001 but in 2000 actual contributions fell short of target by around 1% and for 2001 they slipped back a further half percent to come out at just over 1.5% short. It is encouraging to note that for 2002 pledged contributions are closer to the target figure.
- Interest income at £86,000 was £220,000 down compared with budget. A part of this reduction is due to interest rates being down by nearly half the rate assumed in the budget. The largest part of the reduction was due to the reduced amount available for investment caused by the purchase of manses from the Church Buildings Fund and the need to finance operating cash deficits, neither of which were foreseen at the time the 2001 budget was prepared in March 2000.
- Legacies amounted to £232,000. We do not include anything for legacies in the budget as in recent years they have fluctuated from between less than £50,000 to over £1million. However, we rely on income from this source to help to compensate, over time, for budget deficits and other adverse events.
- Profit on sale of properties amounted to £743,000. This is potentially the most confusing figure in the accounts. £684,000 of this profit arose from the sale of five manses vacated by former moderators or central staff. However, the net proceeds of sale of about £1.2 million had to be wholly reinvested in manses for incoming moderators or staff so that there was no cash benefit from these transactions. Thus most of the profit on sale of properties was not available to meet normal outgoings so a more meaningful figure for the result of our general operations for 2001 would be obtained by excluding £684,000.

If the profit of £684,000 from the sale of manses referred to above is excluded, the out-turn for 2001 on the Ministry & Mission Fund and the other funds covered by our annual budget would be net outgoings of £395,000. This is not a good result and some of the causes will continue to affect following years putting pressure on our budgets for 2002 and 2003.

**REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE CONTINUED****Restricted funds – net incoming resources £651,000**

Restricted funds are funds which can only be spent on specific purposes. The net incoming resources of £651,000 for the year comprise 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.

**Capital funds – increase in resources £474,000**

This increase is entirely due to a legacy received in favour of one of the “other funds” which makes grants to ministers to assist with school fees and the purchase of school uniforms and equipment. It should be noted that this is a capital amount, which has to be invested, with the income from the investment being available for making grants.

**Decrease in market value of investments - £2,397,000**

A large proportion of our investments is represented by units in the URC Trust Investment Pool which, during 2001, held approximately 70% of its funds in UK equities. Over the year the Pool's holdings in UK equities declined in value by about 14% compared to a decline in the FTSE all share index of 12.9%. The poorer performance of the Pool is largely the result of the strong relative performance of stocks in the alcoholic beverages and tobacco sectors in which, following the URC's ethical investment policy, the Pool does not normally invest.

The total decrease in value of our investments over the two years 2000 and 2001 has amounted to £3,753,000, but this should be viewed in the context of rises in value of £7,097,000 during the three preceding years. These investment gains and losses are shown in the five year summary on page 22. The change in investment values in 2001 broken down by fund is shown in the Movement on Funds summary on page 10.

**RESERVES**

The statement on page 11 shows the disposition of the various URC funds totalling £43,757,000 as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001.

The only unrestricted funds were held in the Ministry & Mission Fund and amounted to £11,581,000, of which nearly £5 million was invested in fixed assets. The Finance Committee considers that the balance of unrestricted funds amounting to approximately £6.5 million is adequate to support the church's ongoing activities, representing about four months of unrestricted fund expenditure.

A description of restricted and capital funds is set out on pages 4 and 5.

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Mission Council Advisory Group has assessed the major risks which The United Reformed Church faces and has confirmed that systems have been established to enable regular reports to be produced so that the necessary steps can be taken to manage these risks.

**CONCLUSION**

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 the General Assembly or at any other time.

Signed on behalf of the Finance Committee

GRAHAM STACY  
Convener

27<sup>th</sup> March 2002

**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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001 and the income and expenditure for 2001 shown in each heading.

<b>Ministry and Mission Fund: £11,982,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£20,066,000</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£19,776,000</b>

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.

<b>Maintenance of the Ministry Fund: £636,000</b>
<b>Ministerial Training Fund: £147,000</b>

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.

<b>Westminster College Funds: £2,206,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£61,000</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£171,000</b>

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.

<b>Church Buildings Fund: £2,571,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£102,000</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£300,000</b>

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 1997 a scheme was introduced to make grants to assist churches in the provision of facilities for the disabled. With the passing of the Disability Discrimination Act applications for grants under this scheme increased to such an extent that severe restrictions have had to be imposed on new applications.

<b>The Retired Ministers' Housing Funds and the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society: £13,599,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£1,814,000</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£329,000</b>

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. Income in 2001 included the transfer of 12 retirement houses from Northern Synod. Most of the remaining income comprises legacies and is invested in the purchase of houses.

<b>The Welfare Fund: £443,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£34,000</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£70,000</b>

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**

<b>The Retired Ministers' Aid Fund: £919,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£36,000</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£56,000</b>
<b>The Retired Ministers' Fund: £4,770,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£187,000</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£552,000</b>

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.

<b>World Church and Mission Funds: £1,462,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£62,000</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£167,000</b>

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.

<b>The Windermere Centre Fund: £346,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£ nil</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£ nil</b>
<b>The Yardley Hastings Fund: £590,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£ nil</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£ nil</b>

These funds were raised to develop the Windermere and Yardley Hastings Centres and are mainly invested in those properties.

<b>Commitment for Life Fund: £48,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£493,000</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£488,000</b>

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.

<b>Other Funds: £4,038,000</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£170,000</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£175,000</b>

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.

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2001**

2000 £'000		Notes (pages 13 - 18)	2001 £'000
	<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
	Tangible assets	2	
14,366	Houses for retired ministers		16,568
3,959	Houses for serving ministers		4,706
2,236	Other properties		2,300
20,561	Total properties		23,574
370	Cars and equipment		377
20,931			23,951
23,854	Long term investments	5	20,334
692	Loans and advances	3	685
45,477			44,970
	<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
	Current assets		
98	Stock		80
1,282	Debtors	4	1,539
147	Short term investments	5	154
1,533	Bank balances and money on call		1,088
3,060			2,861
3,798	Less: Current liabilities	6	4,074
(738)	Net current liabilities		(1,213)
44,739	<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>		43,757
	<b>Representing:</b>		
12,202	Unrestricted income funds		11,581
26,373	Restricted income funds		25,934
6,164	Capital funds		6,241
44,739	<b>TOTAL FUNDS (see pages 10 &amp; 11)</b>		43,757

*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 2001**

2000 Total funds £'000		2001 Total funds £'000	— Income funds —		Capital funds £'000
		£'000	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	£'000
<b>INCOME</b>					
17,363	Ministry and Mission Fund contributions	17,928	17,928		
978	Investment income	913	359	554	
660	Grants receivable	612	612		
982	Legacies	1,141	232	434	475
776	Other income	1,931	191	1,726	15
378	Profit on sale of properties	988	743	245	
21,136	<b>Total income (see page 8)</b>	23,514	20,066	2,959	490
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
15,415	Ministry	15,985	15,205	780	
1,855	Training	2,003	1,849	155	
2,719	Other Mission Activities	2,244	1,224	1,020	
1,928	Support Activities	1,867	1,498	353	15
21,916	<b>Total expenditure (see page 9)</b>	22,099	19,776	2,307	15
(780)	Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before transfers	1,415	289	651	474
-	Transfers between funds	-	10	(10)	-
(780)	Net (outgoing)/incoming resources	1,415	299	641	474
(1,356)	Net realised and unrealised losses on investments	(2,397)	(920)	(1,080)	(398)
(2,136)	Net (decrease)/increase in funds in the year	(982)	(620)	(439)	77
46,875	Balances brought forward at 1st January	44,739	12,202	26,373	6,164
44,739	<b>Balances carried forward at 31st December</b>	43,757	11,581	25,934	6,241

*This page shows the total of the income and expenditure accounts of all funds administered centrally on behalf of the whole Church to advance its religious and charitable work. The total for 2001 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 24 and 25*

ANALYSIS OF INCOME

2000 Total funds £'000		2001 Total funds £'000	--- Income funds ---		Capital funds £'000
			Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	
<b>MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS</b>					
<b>Synods</b>					
1,063	Northern	1,075	1,075		
1,570	North Western	1,620	1,620		
1,135	Mersey	1,135	1,135		
1,146	Yorkshire	1,192	1,192		
1,120	East Midlands	1,159	1,159		
1,310	West Midlands	1,362	1,362		
1,493	Eastern	1,538	1,538		
1,110	South Western	1,155	1,155		
1,845	Wessex	1,882	1,882		
2,065	Thames North	2,040	2,040		
2,540	Southern	2,611	2,611		
600	Wales	624	624		
366	Scotland	536	536		
17,363		17,928	17,928	0	0
<b>INVESTMENT INCOME</b>					
753	Dividends	723	273	450	
225	Interest	190	86	104	
978		913	359	554	0
<b>GRANTS RECEIVED</b>					
350	Memorial Hall Trust	350	350		
262	New College London Trust	262	262		
48	URC Insurance Company Limited	0			
660		612	612	0	0
<b>LEGACIES</b>					
<b>For</b>					
308	Ministry and Mission Fund	222	222		
571	Housing Retired Ministers	420		420	
103	Other	499	10	14	475
982		1,141	232	434	475
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>					
117	CWM Mission Support programme	126	126		
428	Commitment for Life programme	490		490	
0	Transfer of retired ministers' housing funds from Northern Synod	1,154		1,154	
140	Other donations	82	50	18	15
91	Other	79	15	64	
776		1,931	191	1,726	15
378	<b>PROFIT ON SALE OF PROPERTIES</b>	988	743	245	
<b>21,136</b>	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>23,514</b>	<b>20,066</b>	<b>2,959</b>	<b>490</b>

*This page shows the breakdown of the main headings of income shown in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 7.*



## ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE

2000 Total funds £'000		2001			Capital funds £'000
		Total funds £'000	--- Income funds --- Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	
<b>MINISTRY</b>					
14,024	Local and special ministries and CRCWs	14,585	14,495	90	
453	Synod moderators - stipends & expenses	468	468		
723	Pension grants	690		690	
0	Pension Fund additional contributions	0			
215	Ministries committee	242	242		
15,415		15,985	15,205	780	0
<b>TRAINING</b>					
1,155	College training for stipendiary ministry	1,235	1,081	155	
173	Other training for stipendiary ministry	204	204		
126	Training for non-stipendiary ministry	166	166		
229	Central cost of Youth and Children's Work Trainers	188	188		
36	Lay training costs	83	83		
136	Training committee	127	127		
1,855		2,003	1,849	155	0
<b>OTHER MISSION ACTIVITIES</b>					
1,259	Grants	630	300	330	
403	Ecumenical committee and international	448	248	200	
43	Council for World Mission	45	45		
84	Church and Society committee	78	78		
445	Commitment for Life programme	488		488	
84	Life and Witness committee	88	88		
65	Windermere Centre	47	47		
27	Multi-racial/Multi-cultural worker	48	48		
144	Youth and Children's Work committee	159	159		
85	Yardley Hastings	128	128		
63	Pilots Development	63	63		
17	Other committees	22	21	1	
2,719		2,244	1,224	1,020	0
<b>SUPPORT ACTIVITIES</b>					
222	General Assembly and Mission Council	219	219		
293	Communication and Editorial	257	257		
296	Finance office	270	235	35	
201	Central secretariat	219	219		
100	Professional fees	69	63	5	
44	Computer network	48	48		
268	URC House costs	238	238		
308	Depreciation on buildings	356	88	269	
196	General church costs	191	131	44	15
1,928		1,867	1,498	353	15
21,916	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	22,099	19,776	2,307	15

*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 2001**

Fund	Classification (see note 1(ii))	Balance 1st Jan 2001 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Transfers £'000	Investment value change £'000	Balance 31st Dec 2001 £'000
Ministry and Mission Fund	Capital Unrestricted	401 12,202	20,066	(19,776)	10	(920)	401 11,581
Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	Capital Unrestricted	727 0				(90)	636 0
Ministerial Training Fund	Capital Unrestricted	168 0				(21)	147 0
Westminster College Funds	Capital Restricted	1,161 1,344	61	(171)	2	(104) (88)	1,058 1,148
Church Buildings Fund	Capital Restricted	184 2,603	102	(300)	2	(20)	184 2,387
Retired Ministers' Housing Funds	Capital Restricted	359 1,677	(3)	(48)	10		359 1,636
Retired Ministers' Housing Society	Capital Restricted	0 10,067	1,817	(281)			0 11,604
Welfare Fund	Capital Restricted	235 308	34	(70)	35 (32)	(29) (36)	240 203
Retired Ministers' Aid Fund	Capital Restricted	197 874	36	(56)	2	(24) (108)	172 747
Retired Ministers' Fund	Capital Restricted	15 5,614	187	(552)	17	(2) (509)	13 4,757
World Church and Mission Funds	Capital Restricted	278 1,487	62	(167)		(32) (167)	247 1,215
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 43	493	(488)			0 48
Other Funds	Capital Restricted	2,441 1,420	490 171	(15) (175)	(35) (9)	(96) (152)	2,784 1,254
<b>Totals (see page 7)</b>		<b>44,739</b>	<b>23,514</b>	<b>(22,099)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(2,397)</b>	<b>43,757</b>
<b>Comprising:</b>	<b>Capital</b>	<b>6,164</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>(15)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(398)</b>	<b>6,241</b>
	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>26,373</b>	<b>2,959</b>	<b>(2,307)</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>(1,080)</b>	<b>25,934</b>
	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>12,202</b>	<b>20,066</b>	<b>(19,776)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>(920)</b>	<b>11,581</b>

*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 2001**

Balance 31st Dec 2001 £'000	Property £'000	Cars and equipment £'000	Investments £'000	Loans £'000	Net current liabilities £'000	Inter- -fund balances £'000	Fund
401	401						Ministry and Mission Fund
11,581	4,584	291	7,169	132	(575)	(19)	
636			636				Maintenance of the Ministry Fund
0							
147			147				Ministerial Training Fund
0							
1,058	942		115				Westminster College Funds
1,148		51	1,243			(146)	
184	184						Church Buildings Fund
2,387	38		139	534		1,676	
359	359						Retired Ministers' Housing Funds
1,636	948					689	
0							Retired Ministers' Housing Society
11,604	15,261				(638)	(3,020)	
240			240				Welfare Fund
203			177	19		7	
172			172				Retired Ministers' Aid Fund
747			747				
13			13				Retired Ministers' Fund
4,757			4,757			1	
247			247				World Church and Mission Funds
1,215			1,162			52	
0							Windermere Centre Fund
346	305	15				26	
0							Yardley Hastings Fund
590	503	20				67	
0							Commitment for Life Fund
48						48	
2,784	49		2,735				Other Funds
1,254			634			620	
<b>43,757</b>	<b>23,574</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>20,334</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>(1,213)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Totals (see page 6)</b>
<b>6,241</b>	<b>1,935</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,306</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Capital</b>
<b>25,934</b>	<b>17,055</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>8,859</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>(638)</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Restricted</b>
<b>11,581</b>	<b>4,584</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>7,169</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>(575)</b>	<b>(19)</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>

*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**

2000 £'000		2001 £'000
<b>Reconciliation of net (outgoing)/incoming resources shown in the Statement of Financial Activities to the actual cash (out)/inflow from general activities</b>		
(780)	Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before revaluations and investment asset disposals (see page 7)	1,415
12	Decrease in stock	18
(356)	Increase in debtors	(257)
191	Increase in creditors	747
(291)	Decrease in sums held for synods and congregations	(471)
(378)	Profit on sale of properties	(988)
459	Depreciation	488
48	Amortisation of gilts	45
(24)	Interest added to loans	(26)
(15)	Cash endowment received	(490)
-	Cash payments from endowment	15
(1,135)	Net cash (outflow)/inflow from general activities	497

**CASHFLOW STATEMENT**

(1,135)	Net cash (outflow)/inflow from general activities (above)	497
<b>Capital expenditure</b>		
(1,818)	Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets	(4,324)
1,115	Receipts from sales of tangible fixed assets	1,804
(1,842)	Payments to acquire long term investments	(351)
2,134	Receipts from sales of long term investments	1,428
(136)	Loans and advances made to congregations and ministers	(193)
226	Loans repaid by congregations and ministers	226
(322)		(1,409)
1,992	Management of liquid resources	(7)
<b>Financing</b>		
15	Addition to capital endowment	490
-	Payments from capital endowment	(15)
15		474
550	Increase/(Decrease) in Cash	(446)

**Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net cash funds**

550	Increase/(Decrease) in cash and net cash funds in the period	(446)
983	Bank balances and money on call at 1 <sup>st</sup> January	1,533
1,533	Bank balances and money on call at 31 <sup>st</sup> December	1,088

*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 decrease our cash balances by £446,000*

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

### NOTE 1 - ACCOUNTING POLICIES

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the inclusion of listed investments and investment properties at market value. With the exception of some format descriptions in the Statement of Financial Activities and Cashflow Statement where the Finance Committee considers those used to be more helpful, the accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice - "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (Revised SORP 2000) issued in October 2000, and with applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards. Financial Reporting Standard 17 "Retirement Benefits" will not apply in full until the accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003; in the meantime the standard requires disclosure of specific financial information which is set out in notes 9 and 10. Financial Reporting Standard 18 "Accounting Policies" has also been adopted. It did not cause any changes in policy, as after careful review, the Finance Committee is satisfied that the current accounting policies are the most appropriate for the Church. The particular accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

#### (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. Gifts in kind are included within income at market value at the date of the gift.

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

*This page contains fairly "technical" information about the way the accounts have been prepared.*

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS CONTINUED**

**NOTE 1 (continued)**

**(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.

**NOTE 2 - TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS**

	Houses for retired ministers	Houses for serving ministers	Other properties	Cars and equipment	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Cost</b>					
At 1st January 2001	14,584	4,017	2,268	1,076	21,945
Additions during year	2,740	1,328	97	158	4,324
Disposals during year	(284)	(512)	-	(101)	(897)
At 31st December 2001	17,039	4,833	2,365	1,133	25,371
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1st January 2001	218	58	32	706	1,014
Charged during year	253	69	34	131	488
Written back on disposal	-	-	-	(81)	(81)
At 31st December 2001	471	127	66	756	1,420
<b>Net book value</b>					
At 31st December 2001	16,568	4,706	2,300	377	23,951
At 31st December 2000	14,366	3,959	2,236	370	20,931

Rents for retired ministers' housing are set at levels estimated to cover maintenance costs only. Total rents received in 2001 were £258,000 (2000 - £231,000) and maintenance costs were £285,000 (2000 - £224,000).

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001 328 (2000 - 309) houses were owned for housing retired ministers and 25 (2000 - 25) 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**

	2001 £'000	2000 £'000
Loans and advances comprise:		
To churches	534	549
To ministers	151	143
	<u>685</u>	<u>692</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.

*This page and the following four pages set out additional information about various aspects of the Church's finances. The new notes 9 and 10 on pension funds are particularly 'technical' and detailed as required by Financial Reporting Standard 17.*

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS CONTINUED

## NOTE 4 - DEBTORS

	2001 £'000	2000 £'000
Debtors comprise:		
Tax recoverable	55	24
Prepayments and accrued income	1,012	742
Other debtors	472	516
	<u>1,539</u>	<u>1,282</u>

## NOTE 5 - INVESTMENTS

	2001 £'000	2000 £'000
Long term investments		
Investments held for the longer term comprise:		
Units in the Investment Pool at market value (see note 14)	17,605	20,833
Other listed securities at market value	1,636	2,217
Other unlisted securities at cost	74	74
Investment properties at estimated market value	1,019	730
	<u>20,334</u>	<u>23,854</u>

All investments are in UK companies or properties. The investment properties were professionally valued at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001 by DN Williamson (FRICS, MCI Arb), RH Cobb (FRICS), and SG Archer (FRICS).

	2001 £'000	2000 £'000
Short term investments		
Short term investments comprise:		
Money market term deposits	154	147
	<u>154</u>	<u>147</u>

## NOTE 6 - CURRENT LIABILITIES - amounts falling due within one year

	2001 £'000	2000 £'000
Current liabilities comprise:		
Sums held for synods and congregations	1,055	1,526
Advance contributions to the Ministry and Mission Fund	471	596
Other creditors	2,548	1,676
	<u>4,074</u>	<u>3,798</u>

## NOTE 7 - 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:

	2001 £'000	2000 £'000
Auditors' remuneration	<u>33</u>	<u>31</u>

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS CONTINUED**

**NOTE 8 - REMUNERATION**

During the year the following remuneration was paid to:

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2000</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Ministers and Church Related Community Workers: 716 (2000 – 715)		
Gross	12,354	11,970
Social security costs	1,081	1,030
Pension contributions	<u>1,797</u>	<u>1,351</u>
	<u>15,231</u>	<u>14,351</u>
Lay staff: 98 (2000 – 107)		
Gross	1,514	1,511
Social security costs	127	127
Pension contributions	<u>101</u>	<u>103</u>
	<u>1,742</u>	<u>1,741</u>

The numbers shown represent the average for the year, and staff working for part of the year are included at the appropriate proportion. No-one received emoluments of more than £50,000.

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 9 - 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 2001 the Church contributed 12.4% (2000: 12.4%) of basic stipend in respect of members. Triennial actuarial valuations of the pension scheme are performed by a qualified actuary. The most recent formal actuarial review of the defined benefit pension scheme was at 1<sup>st</sup> 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%.

The additional disclosures which follow are given in preparation for Financial Reporting Standard 17 "Retirement Benefits", being adopted. The figures have been calculated by projecting to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001 the surpluses determined in the actuarial valuation as at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000. The projection allows for the different financial assumptions which apply under Financial Reporting Standard 17, the actual investment returns that have applied since the date of the last valuation, the contributions that have been paid and the actual rates of stipend increases. The disclosures relate only to the defined benefit scheme and omit comparative figures in accordance with the transitional rules of FRS 17.

**Supplementary pensions disclosures under FRS 17**

a) Contributions

The defined benefit scheme is funded and is not contracted-out of the state scheme. The employer's contribution rate has been fixed as 12.4% of pensionable pay until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003. Members have contributed at the rate of 3.25% of pensionable pay throughout the accounting period.

b) FRS 17 balance sheet information

	<b>Value as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001 £'000</b>
Equities	38,091
Government bonds	25,804
Cash	<u>1,254</u>
Market value of assets	65,149
Present value of scheme liabilities	<u>(64,796)</u>
Actuarial surplus in the scheme fund	<u>353</u>

All of the £353,000 would have been shown as an asset had the Church's balance sheet been prepared under Financial Reporting Standard 17.



## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS CONTINUED

## NOTE 9 (continued)

## c) Income and expenditure funds

	2001 £'000
As reported	43,757
FRS 17 pension asset	353
On FRS 17 basis	<u>44,110</u>

## d) Assumptions

The major assumptions used by the actuary in assessing scheme liabilities on a FRS 17 basis were:

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001

	% pa
Rate of increase in pensionable salaries	4.1
Rate of increase in Limited RPI pensions in payment (capped at 5%)	2.6
Discount rate	6.0
RPI inflation assumption	2.6

## NOTE 10 - THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (HOME STAFF) PENSION SCHEME

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. The details of the final salary scheme of the "United Reformed Church (Home Staff) Scheme" ("Home Staff") are given below:

During 2001 the Church contributed 10% (2000: 10%) of basic salary in respect of members of the "Home Staff" scheme. Triennial actuarial valuations of the Home Staff pension scheme are performed by a qualified actuary. The most recent formal actuarial review of the defined benefit pension scheme was at 30<sup>th</sup> September 1998. The valuation indicated that there was a surplus on the long term valuation basis of £554,000.

The additional disclosures which follow are given in preparation for Financial Reporting Standard 17 "Retirement Benefits", being adopted. The figures have been calculated by projecting to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001 the surpluses determined in the actuarial valuation as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 1998. The projection allows for the different financial assumptions which apply under Financial Reporting Standard 17, the actual investment returns that have applied since the date of the last valuation, the contributions that have been paid and the actual rates of salary increases. The disclosures relate only to the defined benefit scheme for lay staff and omit comparative figures in accordance with the transitional rules of FRS 17.

## Supplementary pensions disclosures under FRS 17

## a) Contributions

The defined benefit pension scheme for "Home Staff" is funded and is not contracted-out of the state scheme. Employer's contributions to the pension scheme have been paid at the rate of 10% of pensionable salaries over the accounting period. Members have contributed at the rate of 5% of pensionable salaries throughout the accounting period.

## b) FRS 17 balance sheet information

	As at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2001	
	Value	Long term rate of return expected
	£'000	% pa
Equities	3,538	7.8
Government bonds	972	5.0
Cash	252	4.0
Market value of assets	<u>4,762</u>	7.0
Present value of scheme liabilities	<u>(4,817)</u>	
Actuarial deficit in the scheme fund	<u>(55)</u>	

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS CONTINUED**

**NOTE 10 (continued)**

a) Assumptions

The major assumptions used by the actuary in assessing scheme liabilities on a FRS 17 basis were:

	<b>At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001</b>
	<b>% pa</b>
Rate of increase in pensionable salaries	4.5
Rate of increase for pensions in payment	2.5
Rate of increase for deferred pensions (fixed 5% pa)	5.0
Discount rate	5.8
RPI inflation assumption	2.5

**NOTE 11 - ASSETS HELD IN TRUST FOR OTHERS**

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001 United Reformed Church Trust held investments with a market value of approximately £19 million (2000: £23 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 12 - COMMITMENTS**

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001 there were, in respect of the purchase of properties, commitments of £758,000 (2000 - £408,000), and contractual liabilities of £Nil (2000 - £356,000). There were also commitments to make grants of £270,000 (2000 - £562,000).

**NOTE 13 - 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 Congregational churches. The URC's interest in these distributions is 70%. In addition, at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001 the trust owned 32 houses for occupation by retired ministers. During 2002 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 2001 the Church received income of £262,000 (2000 - £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 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 19. Of the total investment in the Pool, valued at £36.4 million (2000 - £43.6 million), only £17.6 million (2000 - £20.8 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. Further discussions with the Charity Commissioners are taking place.

**UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST INVESTMENT POOL  
SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2001**

CAPITAL	2001		2000	
	1000 Units	£'000	1000 Units	£'000
Units in issue at 1st January 2001	603,177	43,607	604,949	47,113
Units issued in the year	19,671	1,354	30,272	2,214
Units cancelled in the year	(48,320)	(3,088)	(32,044)	(2,327)
Management fees		(79)		(90)
Decrease in value of investments during the year		(5,408)		(3,302)
Units in issue at 31st December 2001:				
to central funds	277,982	17,605	288,157	20,833
to other funds	296,546	18,781	315,019	22,775
	<u>574,527</u>	<u>36,386</u>	<u>603,177</u>	<u>43,607</u>

## REPRESENTED BY

	2001		2000	
	Cost £'000	Market value £'000	Cost £'000	Market value £'000
Investments				
British Government gilts	8,117	8,133	11,050	11,428
Other British fixed interest stock	843	846	1,060	1,054
British equities	22,524	25,497	22,783	30,379
	<u>31,484</u>	<u>34,476</u>	<u>34,893</u>	<u>42,861</u>
Cash and short term deposits		1,075		467
Sundry debtors		835		279
		<u>36,386</u>		<u>43,607</u>
Net asset value per unit		<u>6.33 pence</u>		<u>7.23 pence</u>

During the year distributions were made in respect of all income received as follows:

3 months ended	2001		2000	
	Rate per unit pence	£'000	Rate per unit pence	£'000
31st March	0.08	459	0.07	443
30th June	0.06	348	0.06	388
30th September	0.07	427	0.07	424
31st December	0.04	239	0.05	322
	<u>0.25</u>	<u>1,473</u>	<u>0.26</u>	<u>1,578</u>

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 Asset Management Europe Limited. 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 and Reporting by Charities" with the exception of some format descriptions in the Statement of Financial Activities and Cashflow Statement where the Finance Committee considers those used to be more helpful; 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 enable 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 19.

**D G CORNICK**  
General Secretary

**GRAHAM STACY**  
Treasurer

**AVIS REANEY**  
Financial Secretary

27<sup>th</sup> March 2002

*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 19.

### **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 20.

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 2001 and of its incoming resources and application of resources in the year then ended.

**FIVE YEAR SUMMARY**

1997      1998      1999      2000      2001  
 £'000    £'000    £'000    £'000    £'000

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS**

**Income**

Ministry and Mission contributions	16,763	16,712	16,629	17,363	17,928
Investment income	1,171	1,114	1,137	978	913
Grants	922	883	715	660	612
Legacies	388	1,869	285	982	1,141
Other income	1,468	735	1,207	1,154	2,919
	20,712	21,313	19,973	21,136	23,514

**Expenditure**

Ministry	13,445	13,749	14,192	15,415	15,985
Additional pension contributions	750	1,008	750	-	-
Training	1,088	1,250	1,491	1,855	2,003
Other Mission activities	2,047	1,954	2,281	2,719	2,244
Support activities	1,233	1,403	1,444	1,928	1,867
	18,563	19,364	20,158	21,916	22,099

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources	2,149	1,949	(185)	(780)	1,415
Investment gains/(losses)	2,497	1,913	2,687	(1,356)	(2,397)
Net increase/(decrease) in funds	4,646	3,862	2,502	(2,136)	(982)

**CASH FLOW STATEMENTS**

**Cash required for investment in**

Retired ministers' housing	571	673	205	455	2,152
Other properties	(8)	330	393	159	229
Cars, furniture and equipment	177	145	195	90	138
Loans to congregations and ministers	(137)	127	32	(90)	(33)
	603	1,275	825	614	2,486

**Source of cash**

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year (see above)	2,149	1,949	(185)	(780)	1,415
Adjustment for items not resulting in a cash movement and for endowments	(947)	(329)	(328)	(355)	(919)
	1,202	1,620	(513)	(1,135)	497
Net increase in capital endowment	99	90	1	15	474
Net decrease/(increase) in investments	(1,148)	165	631	2,284	1,070
Decrease/(increase) in bank balances	450	(600)	706	(550)	446
	603	1,275	825	614	2,486

## FIVE YEAR SUMMARY CONTINUED

	1997 £'000	1998 £'000	1999 £'000	2000 £'000	2001 £'000
<b>BALANCE SHEETS</b>					
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets					
Retired ministers' housing	12,512	13,350	13,928	14,366	16,568
Housing for serving ministers	3,348	3,599	3,741	3,959	4,706
Other properties	1,846	1,924	2,208	2,236	2,300
Cars, furniture and equipment	380	393	431	370	377
	18,086	19,266	20,308	20,931	23,951
Long term investments	18,347	22,038	25,549	23,854	20,334
Loans to congregations and ministers	550	698	758	692	685
	36,983	42,002	46,615	45,477	44,970
<b>Net current assets</b>					
Current assets					
Debtors and stocks	1,025	1,037	1,036	1,380	1,619
Short term investments and deposits	5,633	3,642	2,139	147	154
Bank balances and money on call	1,089	1,689	983	1,533	1,088
	7,747	6,368	4,158	3,060	2,861
less : current liabilities	4,219	3,997	3,898	3,798	4,074
	3,528	2,371	260	(738)	(1,213)
<b>Total net assets</b>	40,511	44,373	46,875	44,739	43,757
Unrestricted income funds	9,951	11,919	12,551	12,202	11,581
Restricted income funds	25,241	26,594	27,912	26,373	25,934
Capital funds	5,319	5,860	6,412	6,164	6,241
<b>Total funds</b>	40,511	44,373	46,875	44,739	43,757

**NON-FINANCIAL STATISTICS**

Members	97,000	94,000	91,000	93,000	90,000
Stipendiary ministers	756	730	694	723	725
Non-stipendiary ministers	193	193	176	171	159
Churches	1,739	1,736	1,726	1,753	1,745
Retired ministers	742	759	777	830	857
Ministry and Mission contribution per member	£173	£178	£183	£187	£199

*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.*

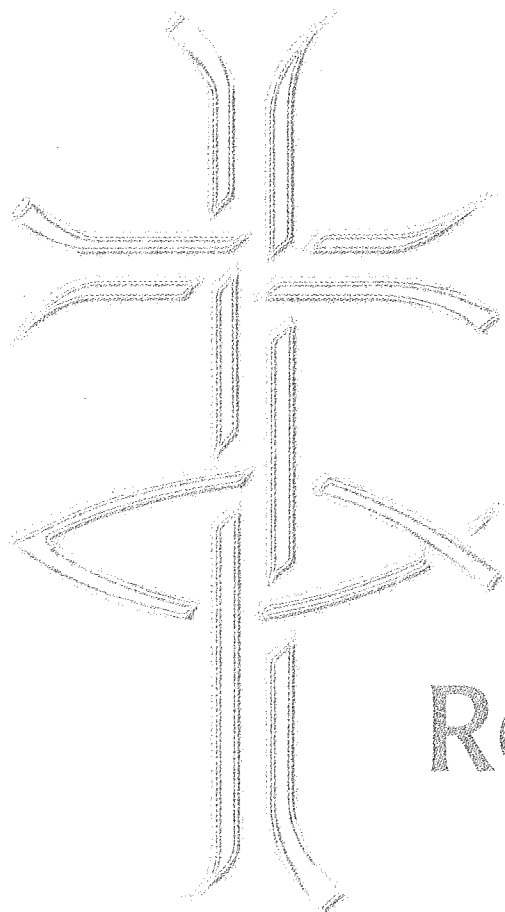
**DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2003**

	Actual 2000	Actual 2001	Budget 2001	Budget 2002	Draft Budget 2003
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
<b>MINISTRY</b>					
Local and special ministries and CRCWs	13,931	14,495	14,225	14,716	15,097
Synod moderators - stipends and expenses	453	468	490	498	513
Ministries committee	215	242	221	232	239
	14,599	15,205	14,936	15,446	15,849
<b>TRAINING</b>					
College training for stipendiary ministers	1,058	1,081	1,074	1,150	1,115
Other training for stipendiary ministry	173	204	180	187	201
Training for non-stipendiary ministry	126	166	94	95	140
Central cost of Youth and Children's Work trainers	229	188	249	259	259
Lay training costs	36	83	96	100	98
Training committee	136	127	122	126	137
	1,759	1,849	1,815	1,917	1,950
<b>OTHER MISSION ACTIVITIES</b>					
Grants	282	300	303	308	317
Ecumenical committee and international	231	248	310	307	295
Council for World mission	43	45	50	50	50
Church and Society Committee	84	78	93	96	81
Racial Justice programme	27	48	30	61	83
Life and Witness committee	84	88	99	103	100
Windermere Centre	65	47	43	45	40
Youth and children's work committee	144	159	210	181	192
Yardley Hastings	85	128	106	106	100
Pilots Development	63	63	66	70	72
Other committees	16	21	14	11	15
	1,122	1,224	1,324	1,338	1,346
<b>SUPPORT ACTIVITIES</b>					
General Assembly and Mission Council	222	219	199	233	204
Communication and Editorial	293	257	289	303	310
Finance office	276	235	288	295	323
Central secretariat	201	219	196	202	220
Professional fees	92	63	78	81	92
Computer network	44	48	41	48	55
URC House costs	268	238	217	216	217
Depreciation on buildings	74	88			75
General church costs	171	131	125	136	112
	1,640	1,498	1,433	1,514	1,607
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>19,120</b>	<b>19,776</b>	<b>19,508</b>	<b>20,215</b>	<b>20,751</b>



## DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2003

	Actual 2000	Actual 2001	Budget 2001	Budget 2002	Draft Budget 2003
<b>INCOME</b>					
<b>MINISTRY AND MISSION</b>					
FUND CONTRIBUTIONS	17,363	17,928	18,207	18,750	19,454
<b>INVESTMENT INCOME</b>					
Dividends	241	273	269	280	257
Interest	225	86	306	260	50
	466	359	575	540	307
<b>GRANTS RECEIVED</b>					
Memorial Hall Trust	350	350	320	350	280
New College Trust	262	262	273	280	300
URC Insurance Company Limited	48		50		
	660	612	643	630	580
<b>LEGACIES</b>					
	308	232			
<b>SUNDRY INCOME</b>					
CWM Mission Support programme	117	126	126	0	0
Donations	51	50	50	50	50
Other	11	15	4	8	10
	179	191	180	58	60
<b>PROFIT ON SALE OF PROPERTIES</b>					
	177	743			
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>					
	19,153	20,066	19,605	19,978	20,401
<b>NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCE</b>					
	32	289	97	(237)	(350)



*The*  
United  
Reformed  
Church

# Appendix 2

## Authority in the United Reformed Church

### 1. PREAMBLE

1.1 In 1997 General Assembly, in response to the report of the Task Group on Human Sexuality, passed a resolution (1997:18) asking the Mission Council to arrange for further work to be done in four areas which included (b) 'the relationship between the authority of General Assembly and the other Councils of the Church'.

1.2 In October 1997 the Mission Council responded to this request by establishing Working Groups to be responsible for each of the areas mentioned in Resolution 1997:18.

1.3 The Working Group on the Authority of General Assembly and Other Councils (*hereafter referred to as the 1999 Group*) reported to General Assembly in 1999 as part of the Human Sexuality Report 1999 (*hereafter referred to as the 1999 Report*). The Working Group made nine recommendations arising from their deliberations (section 3.3 of their report):

- i) The United Reformed Church needs to clarify whether its recognised colleges have the right (and if so, under what circumstances) to refuse particular recognised United Reformed Church candidates on any ground other than the academic suitability of their courses for the candidate. (3.3.1)
- ii) The United Reformed Church needs through the appropriate committees (Training and Ministries) to continue its consideration of the rôles of the colleges, the synods, the district/area councils and the local churches in the selection, training, call and ordination of ministers). (3.3.2)
- iii) The United Reformed Church needs to establish rules for the appointment of Task Groups to deal with matters of a serious and controversial nature. (3.3.3)
- iv) The United Reformed Church needs to develop a general policy on how to conduct and evaluate surveys of opinion. (3.3.4)
- v) The United Reformed Church needs to review its conciliar structure with the aim of improving the sense of relevance of one council to another and to enhance reception of decisions by other councils of the church. (3.3.5)
- vi) The United Reformed Church needs to assess and explore ways of improving training for representatives in the councils of the church. Such training in the areas of the United Reformed

Church's understanding of church and polity, consultation, decision-making and implementation, should enrich the life of all its councils. (3.3.6)

- vii) The United Reformed Church needs further to develop reflection, based on the considerations set out in 3.1.6, concerning a theology and process of what it is right to do when radical disagreement harms the peace and unity of the church. (3.3.7)
- viii) The United Reformed Church needs to agree a process, such as that suggested above, for dealing with contentious issues. (3.3.8)
- ix) The United Reformed Church may wish to consider amendments to Standing Orders and the Structure, such as those discussed in paragraphs B2.3.1, B2.3.2 and B3.2.1d. (3.3.9)

1.4 General Assembly 1999 (Resolution 39b) requested the Mission Council to consider the recommendations of the 1999 Group and to report to a future Assembly.

1.5 In October 1999 the Mission Council responded to this request by asking the Nominations Committee to appoint on its behalf a Task Group of seven people with a view to a report being made in 2001, first to Mission Council in March and then to Assembly in July.

1.6 In December 1999 the Nominations Committee made the following appointments: the Revd Ray Adams (Secretary), the Revd Adrian Bulley (Convener), Mrs Margaret Carrick Smith, Mr Eric Chilton, the Revd Jack Dyce, the Revd Pat Nimmo and Mrs Irene Wren. Because of pressure of work, the Revd Pat Nimmo was unable to participate beyond the first two meetings, and subsequently resigned from the Task Group, though the contribution she made to early discussions was much appreciated.

1.7 The Task Group met on 8 occasions during 2000 and 2001.

1.8 Difficulties with gathering the group together during the autumn of 2000, caused by a combination of ill health and rail problems, led the group to request an extension to the original timescale to enable first reporting to Mission Council in October 2001. This request was granted.

1.9 Mission Council considered the report of the Task Group in October 2001. Some changes were made by Mission Council, and the Task Group was asked to produce for the March 2002 meeting of Mission Council a further report which would take the form of a draft of the Mission Council's report to General Assembly. The Task Group met in January 2002 to carry out this work, and their report formed the basis for this report, which comes from Mission Council.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 Mission Council affirms the theological principles set out in the 1999 Report (Section 1: Groundwork – Authority in the Church: pages 59ff), and quoted below (1.1 and 1.2) as background to the present discussion:

**1.1 Doctrine**

1.1.1 For all Christians of whatever denomination and living in whatever church polity the source of authority in their individual and corporate lives is God who calls them. The response to this call is a longing to live in loving and willing obedience to God, a response expressed in baptism and in the life of faith in which disciples of Jesus Christ seek to proclaim and serve him, in the Church and in the world. Church life therefore must be rooted in obedience to God and a desire to acknowledge freely a commitment to God and God's authority over us.

1.1.2 Such love of God and longing to be obedient to God lead the Church to proclaim its submission to God's authority; the acceptance of that authority is an integral part of Church life as Christians seek God's forgiveness, worship God in adoration and ask for renewal. How that authority is discerned and expressed, however, is understood in various ways within the universal Church; this leads to great difficulty in the search for unity.

1.1.3 It is fundamental to the life of the United Reformed Church that it "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 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" (Basis of Union 8). "Believing that it is through the freedom of the Spirit that Jesus Christ holds his people in the fellowship of the one Body", the United Reformed Church acknowledges two equal responsibilities, namely to "uphold the rights of personal conviction" and "safeguarding the substance of the faith and maintaining the unity of the fellowship" (Basis of Union 10). These responsibilities have always to be kept in balance with one another; in contentious issues (i.e. issues which arouse strife and controversy) they often pull against one another. The first ten paragraphs of the Basis of Union express a strong theology of unity, which has formed the groundwork of United Reformed Church policy, even when there is difficulty and pain in its shared life.

1.1.4 The United Reformed Church "acknowledges the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people" (Basis of Union 12). It acknowledges, too, "its duty to be open at all times to the leading of the Holy Spirit" "accepts with thanksgiving the witness borne to the catholic faith by the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds" and "recognises ... its own particular heritage". It has shown in its reception of both Scripture and tradition an awareness that through them the Church can be called to "make ... new declarations of its faith" and to have "its life ... renewed and reformed according to the Scriptures, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit" (Basis of Union 18 and 6). In contentious issues disagreement can arise over the meaning of the Scriptures and over what the Spirit is guiding the Church to do in changing circumstances and in face of new knowledge.

1.1.5 These doctrinal principles led to the creation of a Basis and Structure for the United Reformed Church in 1972 and again in 1981 which seek to be open to fresh developments, responding to disagreement and even to contention by affirming both freedom and responsibility. This has meant that no prior limits have been set to diversity (freedom) while the General Assembly has sought to prescribe rules when, and only when, it has become plain that a common practice is needed in order to safeguard the peace and unity of the United Reformed Church (responsibility). It is inevitable that there are occasions when some in the church plead for freedom while others are seeking a prescriptive ruling. The stress, which this sometimes produces, is to be preferred, in the opinion of this group, to the development of a detailed "canon law"; we believe that such sustaining of stress affirms the doctrinal principles which are foundational for the United Reformed Church.

**1.2 Structure**

1.2.1 The United Reformed Church is a conciliar church. Its Basis of Union establishes a balance of oversight between its councils: the Basis gives authority, all the councils of the church participate in the exercise of it, and the General Assembly has as one of its tasks the guardianship of the distributed responsibilities.

1.2.2 The Structure of the United Reformed Church is based on the affirmation that church meeting/elders' meeting, district councils, synods and General Assembly shall each be recognised "by members of the United Reformed Church as possessing such authority... as shall enable it to exercise its functions and thereby to minister in that sphere of the life of the United Reformed Church with which it is concerned." (Structure 1.3). This fundamental paragraph of the Structure (embodying what some call the principle of subsidiarity) affirms that wider councils should recognise that more local councils make decisions appropriate to their sphere, while the wider councils exercise an oversight which maintains unity and peace; it is the need for unity and peace that requires a structure that sets limits to local liberty and to conciliar decisions and actions. District council and synod each exercise oversight in their own particular sphere and the General Assembly "shall embody the unity of the United Reformed Church and act as the central organ of its life and the final authority, under the Word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, in all matters of doctrine and order and in all other concerns of its common life ..." (Structure 2.5). Local churches, district councils and synods are expected to receive and to apply reports and decisions from the wider councils; they also have access to the wider councils on any matter by reference or by appeal.

1.2.3 It must always be remembered that a free church is a voluntary society; authority can offer precept but can only enforce practice by an ultimate sanction of depriving a person of membership - and even that does not compel the person to follow the precept.

1.2.4 The members of the United Reformed Church are "publicly admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the Church of Jesus Christ and in particular to the membership of the local church" (Basis of Union, Schedule A). They are encouraged both to develop their personal convictions and to learn from one another in

the councils of the church. Ideally such learning from one another leads to consensus but where disagreement persists the United Reformed Church recognises that it can be right to move to a decision by majority vote, always in the setting of prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, careful consideration of the witness of the Scriptures and open discussion.

1.2.5 Such is the constitutional understanding of authority within the United Reformed Church, regularly reaffirmed in acts of worship and in particular at ordinations and inductions of ministers of the Word and Sacraments.

### 3. THE TASK

Mission Council was asked to give further consideration to the recommendations contained in the 1999 Report:

**3.1 The United Reformed Church needs to clarify whether its recognised colleges have the right (and if so under what circumstances) to refuse particular recognised United Reformed Church candidates on any ground other than the academic suitability of their courses for the candidate (3.3.1)**

3.1.1 The United Reformed Church recognises for ministerial training Westminster College, Cambridge, which is under the direct authority of the General Assembly, and other colleges and courses which have a formally independent status.

3.1.2 The United Reformed Church has an agreed procedure for the selection of candidates. Mission Council wishes to affirm the importance of the partnership between the councils of the Church and the recognised colleges and courses throughout the entire process of candidating and ministerial formation, yet believes that decisions about candidates' suitability for ministry should remain within the sole jurisdiction of the councils of the Church.

3.1.3 The United Reformed Church recognises that all colleges and courses may occasionally decline to receive individuals for purely academic reasons when a person appears unlikely to benefit from the learning programme in a particular place.

3.1.4 In exceptional circumstances, a college or approved course may consider that a candidate's beliefs or conduct may cause serious disruption to the life of the learning community. Decisions on such matters of a formational nature (which are broader than solely academic suitability) also rightly fall within the remit of colleges and courses, recognising the importance of close liaison between them, the Training and Ministries Committees and synods at all stages of training.

3.1.5 While Westminster College is the only college under the direct authority of the General Assembly, Mission Council believes that on this issue the Church should not treat it differently from other recognised colleges and courses. It could be argued that because the Assembly has the authority, it could insist that the College takes whomever the church accepts for training, but Westminster College should have the same capability as other colleges to use discretion in exceptional cases as outlined above.

**3.2 The United Reformed Church needs, through the appropriate committees (Training and Ministries) to continue its consideration of the roles of the colleges, the synods, the district councils and the local churches in the selection, training, call and ordination of ministers (3.3.2)**

3.2.1 Mission Council recognises the importance of the National Assessment process for providing a standard of assessment that is consistent across the whole church. The General Assembly has placed the final decision for the selection of candidates with synods. The Training and Ministries Committees have given an assurance that these matters remain on their agenda and Mission Council believes it to be important that they do so.

**3.3 The United Reformed Church needs to establish rules for the appointment of Task Groups to deal with matters of a serious and controversial nature (3.3.3.)**

3.3.1 Task groups can be a valuable method of undertaking detailed or complicated work to ease the burden of the agenda of councils of the church or to progress difficult issues. If there are to be rules, they should apply to all cases and not only to those which are deemed to be of a serious and controversial nature at the beginning. The following are offered as guiding principles for the appointment of task groups:

- i) The remit of the group must be clear and unambiguous.
- ii) A group cannot enjoy greater authority than the council appointing it and it is answerable to that body alone.
- iii) If the work of the group involves, or the results are taken forward to, other councils of the church, it is done in the name of the appointing council, under its authority and in the terms it specifies.
- iv) Its work and reporting should be transparent.

3.3.2 If the General Assembly appoints a task group, that group is responsible to General Assembly and must report to it. This holds even though the Mission Council may well need to clarify the remit and monitor the work of the task group. If the draft report is first considered by Mission Council, it may only be amended by agreement with the task group. It would then be presented as a report which is supported by Mission Council. If there is disagreement, the original report should be presented to General Assembly by the Convener of the group with the amendments proposed separately on behalf of Mission Council.

3.3.3 If a task group is appointed by Mission Council either at the suggestion of General Assembly or under its own initiative, it will be responsible for the work of the task group.

3.3.4 The General Assembly needs to be clear under which category the appointment is made, and to whom a task group will ultimately report.

## Appendix 2

3.3.5 It is a mistake to assume that task groups appointed by General Assembly are necessarily more representative than those appointed by Mission Council. The Council has more synod representatives present to consider names than the Assembly Nominations Committee, which is the normal mechanism for making General Assembly appointments.

### **3.4 The United Reformed Church needs to develop a general policy on how to conduct and evaluate surveys of opinion (3.3.4)**

3.4.1 Misunderstandings arose over the conduct of and interpretation of the responses to the canvassing of opinion which took place in the period immediately before the 1997 General Assembly. The task group which had been appointed “to work out a process whereby the United Reformed Church can be enabled to hold an informed debate on the matter of human sexuality and come to a decision on the implications for ministry within the church” had invited the councils of the church to discuss the issues, and had set out certain questions as starting points for those discussions. There was insufficient clarity in the councils where those discussions took place as to whether or not votes should be taken, the form of the response which should be made, and the use to which those responses would be put. Furthermore, when the report was presented to the Assembly, some accorded the analysis of the responses more authority than they deserved, given the differences of interpretation among the respondents and the self-nominating nature of those respondents. If, therefore, a “survey of opinion” were to be carried out in the future, it would be important that it be done in a more rigorous way, with due regard to proper sampling methods, including caution when respondents effectively self select.

3.4.2 However, the Task Group questioned whether it is appropriate for the United Reformed Church to be undertaking such surveys. If, a survey having been carried out, the Assembly is nevertheless free to make a decision which is perceived to be contrary to the majority view expressed by one or more of the sets of councils canvassed, people could say: “You asked us what we thought then ignored what we said.”

3.4.3 The conciliar structure of the United Reformed Church is specifically designed to operate in a very different manner. The function of Assembly at 2(5)(A)(ix) of the Structure “to remit questions concerning the witness and judgement of the church for general discussion in church meetings, elders’ meetings, district councils and synods and to call for reports from these councils.” is not about conducting surveys of opinion. It says nothing about counting votes. It does not suggest a referendum. It isn’t about asking for all the councils to vote, then adding them up and using the result as the answer. It is about the General Assembly gathering information before reaching a decision. The Assembly will probably have received reports from committees and/or task groups. It remits the questions to the other councils, receives their reports, and then, taking all that into account, together with the debate at the meeting of the Assembly itself, will seek, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to reach a view as to the way forward.

3.4.4 The Task Group considered the possibility of including provision in the Structure for the Assembly to decide, in exceptional cases (perhaps those of great sensitivity, or which it judges could be divisive) to adopt

another method whereby all councils are asked to vote, and then the Assembly would be bound by the result. But, if that were deemed to be the correct way to handle such important issues, why wouldn’t it be right for all matters? The value of listening to one another and the Holy Spirit in Assembly would seem to have been discarded. Ultimately the church could have a paper ballot and there would be no need for Assembly to meet at all! If this were deemed to be the best way to deal with the important decisions, then why not extend it to the other councils? Some members of the Task Group thought that if we were to provide for a special, different way of handling these exceptional issues, they would be so rare that it would be better to determine in each case the appropriate procedure to use.

3.4.5 In summary, then, the Task Group considered three options:

- i) The General Assembly having, where it deems it right, remitted questions to other councils of the church and considered the responses, makes decisions following debate. (See paragraph 3.4.3 above.)
- ii) The General Assembly carries out a proper, statistically valid survey to determine the views of other councils, and then, having considered the results, makes decisions following debate. (See paragraph 3.4.2 above.)
- iii) The General Assembly may decide, in exceptional circumstances, to conduct a survey of opinion within the other councils or to hold a referendum of all members (again in a statistically valid way) and then to take the result as binding. (See paragraph 3.4.4 above.)

3.4.6 In the end both the Task Group and Mission Council were persuaded that the means provided for in Function (ix) was by far the best option (Option i): the Assembly listens to the views of the other councils, encourages wide discussion, and then reaches an informed and inspired decision. What is needed is education and communication so that all understand the process, including what will be done with the reports of the discussions in the various councils when they are returned to the Assembly. The views expressed in response to the remitting of questions under Function (ix) need to be seen as of great value, and as a vital element which enables the Assembly to make its decisions properly. To attempt to devise a “hybrid” which seeks to combine a survey of opinion with the ultimate responsibility of the General Assembly to act only causes confusion, and can lead to resentment.

### **3.5 The United Reformed Church needs to review its conciliar structure with the aim of improving the sense of relevance of one council to another and to enhance reception of decisions by other councils of the church (3.3.5)**

3.5.1 Reflecting on a wide range of experience of councils and committees working within the United Reformed Church, the Task Group was divided between those who believe present structures can be made to work, and those who feel that it is time for radical restructuring.

3.5.2 In support of the first view, though people may be frustrated with slow and cumbersome church structures, and can feel that they are irrelevant and their decisions unacceptable, nevertheless there is sufficient flexibility within the present structures to enable them to work. Structures work best when people take responsibility for them, take initiatives and act creatively to make them function better. There is no perfect structure, only the attitude and competence of those who operate within it. The history of the wider Church also shows that no structure copes with individuals who fundamentally disagree with the majority. However, it is important to affirm that the pain of the struggle for justice and truth must be borne. The United Reformed Church feels this most keenly, existing as it does to encourage the unity of the whole Church, in order to bear witness to the one God.

3.5.3 The alternative view is that the existing arrangements do not work well for many reasons. Of significance would appear to be the changing pattern of life in society with its different perceptions of authority and decision making; its impatience with bureaucracy or delay; its scepticism of government and remote management. This has heightened the critical awareness of church members who are influenced by these trends and generally do not understand the conciliar structure or its relevance to local mission. Additionally, membership of the wider councils tends to come from a generation when society was different and it is difficult to see how this will change quickly to be more truly representative because of the pressures on younger generations with family and work commitments. They would also need to be persuaded that it was an effective use of their time. It would be preferable to make the functions and workings of the conciliar structure more relevant to the present church.

3.5.4 The Task Group considered the implications of these two views as set out in 3.5A and 3.5B below:

**3.5A Areas for improvement within existing structures**

3.5A.i) Greater clarity and effectiveness

Work needs to be done by those responsible for the agenda of General Assembly, synods, district/area councils, church meetings and elders' meetings to ensure that people understand the relevance of their meeting for the ministry and mission of the whole church. Consideration needs to be given to how representatives of local churches may be helped to understand the importance and rôle of the council on which they serve.

Meetings should be organised in such a way that a balance is created between work delegated to committees and sub-groups, and issues in which representatives may share in real decision-making, rather than function as a rubber-stamp. Representatives should be helped to communicate to the council which they are representing, and be encouraged also to share local concerns with the wider councils of the church. Greater use could be made of the United Reformed Church website and *Reform* to get information directly from councils to individuals within local churches, and to equip representatives in their task of reporting back to

those who appointed them. District/area councils could ensure, for example, that their representatives to General Assembly are allocated a certain number of churches to which to report on their return. This emphasizes that being a representative is a two-way task.

The Group notes how the contribution of FURY representatives to General Assembly is made effective by preparation together beforehand. Other representatives could learn from their good practice.

3.5A.ii) Shared good practice

From members' own experience, and from what has been written in recent Reports to Assembly (including several references in the reports from Moderators of Synod in 1997 and 1999) and other documents, the Group is aware that much is being done in the church to help to make the present Structure work more effectively. Training material is produced for those who are charged with being representatives to district/area council, synod and General Assembly. Imaginative ways of conducting meetings are being tried so that all present feel involved and able to contribute. Help is being given to those who are responsible for reporting back to the sending council on the business of a meeting.

In some places innovative ways are being explored of using the flexibility which is already there in the Structure to change significantly the way district/area councils and synods operate. Some of this thinking has been stimulated by the recent work of Tony Burnham, former General Secretary, and further exciting ideas are already emerging.

The Group suggests that each synod be asked to enquire of each of its district/area councils what good practice is being used and developed, and then to share this within that synod and with all other synods. It is envisaged that this exercise could be undertaken by means of the normal contact between officers (district/area secretaries' and synod clerks' meetings) and should therefore not place an untoward burden on already busy people. The rewards to be gained from sharing good practice and innovation could be great. Of course the Group acknowledges that what works in one place may be inappropriate for universal application. Nevertheless good ideas are always worth considering.

3.5A.iii) Transparency and precision

In order to ensure good practice and greater confidence in our conciliar structure, care should be taken to ensure that councils do not exceed the limits of the authority given to them. Mission Council has a pivotal rôle shaping the agenda of General Assembly through monitoring the resolutions of Assembly committees, and taking necessary decisions between meetings of the Assembly. However, it is central to the life of the United Reformed Church to recognise that the final

authority rests with General Assembly 'under the word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, in all matters of doctrine and order and in all other concerns of its common life' (Structure 2.(5)). When exercising that authority, and in the light of past experience, particular care must be taken when policy is being created or clarified.

3.5A.iv) Mutual Accountability and Support

The church has a duty of care and support for those who are entrusted with authority within its councils.

Some synods have carried out pastoral consultations with district/area councils to ensure they fulfil their functions as set out in the Structure and to offer support and encouragement. Such practice could be extended within the life of the church.

District/areas might consider how they could report regularly to local churches on their work and vision, and invite feedback.

Appropriate accompanied self-appraisal for synod and district/area officers could help identify areas where help can be offered, and good practice encouraged.

3.5A.v) Understanding the nature of the United Reformed Church

The United Reformed Church lives with the creative tension between clarity of order and a commitment to be a church on a journey. As already established, any particular process of relating and working together must be under the authority of the Word of God, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. That discernment is for the building up of the church in its obedience and effectiveness in participating in the mission of God. We need to renew our understanding of the church as a theocratic rather than democratic organisation. Our conciliar system requires a mutuality of trust, support and empowerment, so that the church in all its gatherings may be life enhancing and life giving.

**3.5B Suggestions and reasons for a more radical approach**

3.5B.i) The local situation

The present structure was set up in 1972 when our church was very different. Since then the membership of the church has declined by half and the number of stipendiary ministers has reduced by a third. However, the number of churches has only decreased by a sixth which has had a considerable effect on the pattern of ministry. There has been a marked decline in single church pastorates which historically had been the prominent feature. The foreseeable trend is towards a greater number of groups, clusters and local ecumenical partnerships

(LEP). This is already placing added strain on our existing structures with additional meetings. As a result the authority of the local church is changing.

This alternative view suggests that a more appropriate designation of the local situation is the pastorate, emphasising the people rather than the buildings. This should encourage the unity of its ministry and mission, help create clearer leadership and focus the need for team working and co-operation by the elders and amongst the members of all the constituent churches. Whilst the authority of the individual church may still need to be recognised on specific issues, this should be seen within the mission of the whole pastorate. Thus the concept of group pastorate councils, complementing the single church pastorate model, should be evolved further so that combined elders' and church meetings or their equivalent in LEP's are normal, with individual church meetings being held exceptionally. Mission Council draws attention to the report on the Grouping of Churches which was sent to all district/area councils in May 2001.

3.5B.ii) Synods and districts/areas

The Structure of the United Reformed Church clearly delineates the functions of synods and district/area councils. In our increasingly diverse practice, however, there may be need for more interchangeability of these functions.

The working practices in synods and district/areas vary considerably and there could be much to be learnt from this. Some synods and district/areas appear to function much better than others perhaps solely because of the resources available to them at the time. Where district/areas are deficient, especially where geography and the small number of churches make it difficult for them to fulfil their role adequately, some synods attempt to make good.

Some question the need for both the synod and district/area council and would like to get rid of one or the other. It is not easy, without considerable research, to see how either option could be effected, particularly in the cases of the two national synods. Synods may be too remote from the local pastorate adequately to fulfil some functions, e.g. the oversight of all ministers and the care for all the churches. Equally district/areas might find it difficult with busy agendas to take on additional functions. Perhaps the rôles of synod and district/areas ought to be seen as essentially complementary and a single entity.

The alternative view suggests, therefore, that the rôles of the synod and district/area council should be examined rigorously to identify the scope for rationalising their functions, avoiding duplication and streamlining their operations to reduce the burden of meetings and to improve decision making. Such an examination is taking place in Mersey and Yorkshire synods.



3.5B.iii) Conclusion

All organisations, including the church, need to change because of moving trends in society. After almost 30 years of the United Reformed Church there are already a number of inconsistencies in practice and difficulties in operating the full structure in certain situations. This diversity is likely to increase. It is considered that the conciliar structure of the United Reformed Church should be thoroughly reviewed to improve its effectiveness and to help in the recognition of the authority of the various councils of the church.

3.5.5 Mission Council accepts the suggestions made in 3.5A, but considers that consideration of the radical review proposed in 3.5B should await the report of the Task Group on Personal and Conciliar Leadership. This Task Group was set up by Mission Council in January 2000 with the following remit:

- i) to examine from the perspective of our Reformed theology and ecclesiology, and with a concern for mission, the proper relationship between personal and conciliar leadership and authority, with special reference to the work of synod moderators;
- ii) to draw on previous URC reports, the experience of partner churches and existing ecumenical reports that relate to the subject; and
- iii) to report to Mission Council in March 2002 the result of the examination and any proposals that come from it.

The Task Group is expected to report to Mission Council prior to General Assembly 2003.

**3.6 The United Reformed Church needs to assess and explore ways of improving training for representatives in the councils of the church. Such training in the areas of the United Reformed Church's understanding of church and polity, consultation, decision making and implementation, should enrich the life of all its councils (3.3.6)**

3.6.1 Mission Council concurs with the view that more opportunities for training would create a better-informed church, but recognises that training itself will not prevent conflict and pain when matters of profound disagreement divide the church.

3.6.2 Mission Council is aware of several documents prepared by district/area councils and synods to help new representatives understand their rôle and the nature of the council on which they have been appointed to serve. General Assembly may wish to ask Training Committee to consider the value of such materials as a training aid for representatives on every council of the United Reformed Church, and instigate a review of these with a view to producing training materials that could be used throughout the church.

**3.7 The United Reformed Church needs further to develop reflection, based on the considerations set out in 3.1.6, concerning a theology and process of what is right to do when a radical disagreement harms the peace and unity of the church (3.3.7)**

3.7.1 The 1999 Report (section 3.1.6 c, page 68) took the view that *"the questions surrounding separation between majority and minority (or equal) groups of local churches are distinct from those of secession by a particular local church and we recommend that these questions be discussed by the Mission Council as a theological/constitutional matter apart from the particular issues of the human sexuality debate."*

3.7.2 Mission Council reaffirms the theological principles quoted at section 2.1, in particular paragraph 8 of the Basis of Union: *"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."* The church which values unity with other churches so highly must seek as a fundamental principle to affirm and strengthen unity within the fellowship.

3.7.3 Mission Council recognises that unity is a gift of grace which needs to find expression in the continuing life of God's people. This will involve at times bearing the pain of division and conflict, but there is also a creative value in 'difference'. Experience has shown that where individuals who hold directly opposing views engage in dialogue in mutual love and respect they can reach a place of understanding where disagreement can be faced together with integrity.

3.7.4 Mission Council concludes that, while the church should continue at all levels to reflect on the meaning of our unity, it does not think it appropriate to develop a policy dealing with potential schism at the present time.

**3.8 The United Reformed Church needs to agree a process, such as that suggested above (para 3.2.1), for dealing with contentious issues (3.3.8)**

3.8.1 *The procedure suggested by the 1999 Group entailed a five stage process:*

- i) Pre-conciliar discernment  
*Committees of the United Reformed Church and the officers of the General Assembly and Mission Council need to identify those potentially contentious issues that are likely to arise in the near future.*
- ii) Pre-conciliar consultation  
*An initial paper exploring the issue and underlying matters is prepared in consultation with councils of the church, ecumenical bodies and other relevant agencies/groups.*

## Appendix 2

- iii) First General Assembly meeting  
*The issue is identified and the initial paper discussed, revised (if necessary) and accepted as a consultative view to be offered in the name of the church.*
- iv) Second General Assembly meeting (not necessarily in the year following iii) above)  
*When responses from the other councils are received they must be seen to be taken on board in framing resolutions to be brought to Assembly. Synods which have expressed strong views should have the opportunity to put those views to Assembly. Some issues may be finalised at this stage. Issues regarded by Mission Council as divisive or contentious should be dealt with under the constitutional amendment provision [Structure 3.(1)].*
- v) Third General Assembly (normally in the year following iv) above):  
*The resolutions return to Assembly for ratification or for further amendment [amendment would involve a further year of consultation under Structure 3.(1)].*

3.8.2 The 1999 Group, working in the ferment of the aftermath of the passing by the Assembly of Resolution 19 of 1997, felt it appropriate to recommend that a special procedure be created to deal with "contentious issues". In the calmer atmosphere provided by the distance of time, Mission Council considers that the adoption of such a prescriptive mechanism would not be helpful for the following reasons:

- i) Initially, it could be difficult to be sure that it was right to identify an issue as contentious. Of course, certain matters might be readily discerned to be such, but there might be other areas where controversy arose after a process of debate on an apparently non-contentious issue was under way. Alternatively, a matter might be thought at first to be potentially difficult, only to reveal itself subsequently to be easily resolved.
- ii) If a special procedure existed for contentious issues, there would be the danger that attempts might be made to initiate that simply as a way to delay resolution of a debate. It would be frustrating for the Assembly if trivial calls were made to invoke the special procedure.
- iii) Such a prescriptive procedure could not be generally applicable. For example, it is possible that an issue might be contentious, but also urgent, which would mean that a three or four year process would be unhelpful.
- iv) With respect to the 1999 Group, who rightly wished to help the church to learn from mistakes made during the long period of the debate on human sexuality, Mission Council considers that because of the polarity of views strongly held within the church on this issue (as in most other main-stream churches) the use of a process such as that described in the 1999 Report would not have prevented the painful division caused by the specific issue of the debate on human sexuality.

3.8.3 However, there are lessons to be learnt:

One of the functions of the General Assembly (2(5)(A)(ix)) is: *to remit questions concerning the witness and judgement of the church for general discussion in church meetings, elders' meetings, district councils and synods, and to call for reports from these councils.* If the Assembly sees the need to remit a matter to other councils, there must be clear agreement about the process and the timescale, both of which might vary between issues. When reports are called for it is important that all concerned are clear about the form they should take, and how they will be interpreted and assessed. It should not be the intention of such a discussion and reporting stage to close down debate, but rather to open it up. The exercise of this function is to enable the Assembly to gather information to help it to come to a decision; the reports themselves are not binding on the Assembly. (See also the commentary in section 3.4 above.)

### **3.9 The United Reformed Church may wish to consider amendments to Standing Orders and the Structure, such as those discussed in paragraphs B2.3.1, B2.3.2 and B3.2.1d (3.3.9)**

3.9.1 This recommendation refers to three paragraphs in the 1999 Report: 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 3.2.1.d.

#### 3.9.2 Paragraph 2.3.1

This paragraph suggests three possible changes to the Standing Orders of the General Assembly to provide for (a) going into a committee of the whole Assembly, (b) alternative motions which could be voted on as an act of choice between the alternatives, and (c) a means of seeking a vote to discover whether the General Assembly concurs with the Moderator's judgement on a point of order.

- a) This would be a useful provision for those occasions when a document is attached to a resolution. At present only the resolution can be amended, which means that the presented document must be accepted in total, as it stands, or rejected. It has been useful, for example when considering a proposed revision to Schedule C to the Basis, for the Assembly to have the flexibility of working on the document in committee.

If the Assembly were to work in this way certain practical arrangements would need to be made (e.g. sufficient time must be allowed and consideration might be given to asking someone other than the Moderator to chair the debate in committee). Therefore, it would be advisable to require 21 days' notice to be given of the intention to move that the Assembly go into committee. Any document which might need to be considered in this way would be included in the Book of Reports which is sent to members of Assembly well in advance of the meeting, so the requirement for notice should not present difficulties.

At present if a document is to be debated in this flexible manner it requires that the Standing Orders be suspended. A motion to achieve this must be supported by three quarters of members in order to

be passed. It would be excessive to require such a level of support for a motion that the Assembly should go into committee. It is, however, of sufficient significance to require a two thirds majority. Mission Council brings a resolution to effect this change.

b) It could be helpful to the Assembly to be able to consider alternative motions together. The introduction of alternative motions would not change the rules about amendments. This would mean that if a member wished to move that one of the motions before the Assembly be amended, that amendment should be debated and decided before any further debate could be allowed on any other amendment or on any of the other alternative motions. It might be that when a motion is before the Assembly an amendment is moved which would be better taken in the form of an alternative motion. The Moderator should be able to rule that this be done.

Resolutions would be moved in the normal way, but with an indication that the new resolution represented an alternative to a resolution already before the Assembly. The proposer and seconder of each of the alternatives would speak, then debate would take place on all the resolutions together. If an amendment was proposed to one of the alternative motions, then the debate and decision on that amendment would be completed before any further debate or amendment could be heard. Once the debate was over, the proposers would reply in reverse order to that in which they originally spoke. Votes in favour of each of the motions would be taken. Members of Assembly would vote only for their preferred option. The votes would need to be counted, and the result announced only after all the votes had been taken. If one motion achieved an absolute majority, then it would become the only motion before the Assembly. If not, the motion receiving the fewest votes would be eliminated. The same voting procedure would be repeated until one motion achieves an absolute majority. The Assembly would then be invited to vote for and against that motion in the normal way.

Mission Council brings a resolution which would effect this change.

This provision would be a new experience for the Assembly, and some might be apprehensive about how it would work. It would be quite reasonable to review the practice in the light of experience, and remove the provision from Standing Orders after a few years if it was found to be unhelpful.

c) Mission Council, while understanding the concerns expressed by the 1999 Group, considers that it would be inadvisable to allow the Assembly to question the Moderator's judgement. Far from being a protection for the Moderator, as the 1999 Group suggested, Mission Council considers that a decision to overrule the Moderator could drastically

undermine his/her position. In order for the Assembly to function it is necessary that the Moderator enjoys the confidence of its members. While unwise judgements might occasionally be made, the Moderator, advised by the Clerk and the General Secretary, must be trusted to guide the Assembly. Accordingly, no proposals for change are presented.

### 3.9.3 Paragraph 2.3.2

This paragraph asked for further consideration of the relation between interpretation of the United Reformed Church's constitution and alteration of it. Mission Council agrees that there needs to be a clear distinction, understood by all concerned, between change (under Function 2(5)(xi)) and interpretation (under Function 2(5)(x)). Given that clear distinction, the Assembly might wish to take the view that certain interpretation(s) should be taken under a process similar to paragraph 3.(1) of the Structure. However, there is no need for a change to the Standing Orders or the Structure to achieve this. It is at present open for a member of Assembly to move that the Assembly, under its function 2(5)(A)(ix), remit a question for wider discussion and report. Alternatively a motion might be brought under Standing Order 5c that decision be deferred to the next Assembly. Under the same Standing Order, at the discretion of the Moderator, the motion might be referred for consideration by other councils and/or committees. Further, it is also open for a member to move that a resolution be considered in a specified way which may be similar to the process set out in paragraph 3.(1). (Resolution 35 of 1999 was of this type.) Any of these routes could be used to test interpretations under Function 2(5)(A)(x).

If a member of Assembly believes that a motion before the Assembly represents a change under Function 2(5)(xi), then s/he could raise a point of order to the effect that it should be dealt with under the provisions of paragraph 3.(1).

No proposals for change are presented.

### 3.9.4 Paragraph 3.2.1.d

Most of the suggestions contained in this paragraph have been commented upon above, but the final part of 3.2.1.d raises a different point. It reads: *"A process calling for positive acceptance of a resolution by a council, rather than the present system allowing a motion that the proposal be not proceeded with, might encourage and promote reception of the decision, though the present system, where a negative vote of more than one third of the relevant councils is needed to halt a proposal, protects the rights of significant minorities without being unduly weighted in a conservative direction."*

Paragraph 3.(1) of the Structure which sets out the way in which constitutional amendments under the function of General Assembly 2(5)(xi) are to be made provides, in subparagraph (e), for the 'blocking' of a proposed change if more than one third of the councils consulted vote that it shall not be proceeded with. This provision is there, as the 1999 Group commented, to protect the rights of significant minorities without being unduly weighted in a conservative direction.

## Appendix 2

It is worth reflecting here on what happened when the Assembly invited the councils of the church to consider the proposed Statement on Human Sexuality by means of Resolution 35 of 1999. Prompted by the suggestions incorporated in the 1999 Report as to how sensitive issues might be handled in future the Assembly decided to use (in a modified form) the mechanism from Paragraph 3.(1) of the Structure. It was made clear at the time that this did not imply that a constitutional change was involved.

In the event, there was considerable misunderstanding throughout the church about the process, with many voices complaining that negative votes, not positive ones, were being counted. In places the General Assembly was ridiculed because people did not understand what was being done or why.

In the light of this, two differing views could be taken:

- i) the "negative" approach, while appropriate in the context of proposed constitutional changes, is inappropriate for use when sensitive statements are being assessed.
- ii) in cases where a sensitive matter is to be decided, even though there is no constitutional change proposed, the "negative" approach should be used in order to protect the minority, without making the barrier to a decision so high that it can rarely be jumped.

The latter approach would suggest that should a similar situation arise in the future the "negative" model might be used again, but with much better communication as to what it means. Mission Council, in line with its belief expressed above that a flexible approach needs to be taken whereby the appropriate process is determined individually for any major, sensitive matters, would not seek to prescribe whether negative or positive responses should be sought. No proposals for change are presented.

## 4. GENERAL COMMENTS

4.1 This report is confined to commenting on the specific recommendations of the 1999 Group.

4.2 Mission Council wishes to pay tribute to the work of the 1999 Group, whose report merits further careful reading. Where Mission Council has concluded that the 1999 Group's proposals should not be implemented, it is not a criticism of their work, but reflects the fact that Mission Council considered the matter at a different time, and with more information to hand than was available to the 1999 Group (e.g. the reports of the other 1997 Resolution 18 groups).

4.3 Where strong beliefs and opposing views are held, as was the case in the debate in the United Reformed Church on human sexuality, no structure or process will be able to prevent pain.

4.4 It is most important that any decision-making process is understood and accepted by all before it begins. There may be those who remain troubled and dissatisfied by the ultimate decision, but if there is contention over technicalities it is worse.

# Appendix 3

## PART I – Changes to Part I of the Section O Process (see Resolution 21)

### 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.

### Appendix 3

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 contain the statement of reasons for such referral.

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)(xiv) 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'.

## PART II – Changes to Part II of the Section O Process (see Resolution 22)

In the brackets immediately below the Heading delete 'of the United Reformed Church'.

A.1 'Paragraph 3.2' becomes 'Paragraph 3'.

A.2 Delete this Paragraph

A.3 Delete this Paragraph

A.4 Delete this Paragraph

A.5 This becomes Paragraph A.2

A.6 This becomes Paragraph A.3

'Section O Process' becomes 'Commission Stage'.

A.7 This becomes Paragraph A.4.

'The Ministerial Disciplinary Process' and 'the Disciplinary Process' both become 'the Section O Process'.

A.8 This becomes Paragraph A.5

A.6 Add a new Paragraph as follows:

**'In any case where the Secretary of the Assembly Commission is unable for any reason to carry out the duties of that office, his/her place shall be taken by a deputy duly authorised by or in the name of General Assembly.'**

B.1 This becomes Paragraph B.1.1.

After 'Structure' delete 'of the United Reformed Church'.

After 'District Council shall act' insert 'solely'.

'on behalf of' becomes 'in the name of'.

B.1.2 Add a new Paragraph as follows:

**'The Mandated Group called in to deal with any particular case under Paragraph B.6.1, Paragraph B.9.2 or Paragraph B.9.3 has no pastoral role to fulfil and its precise functions are described in Paragraphs B.7 and B.8.'**

B.2 'the Mandated Group' becomes 'the Standing Mandated Group for each District Council under Paragraph B.3'.

B.5.1 After 'Moderator of the Synod' delete 'or his/her duly appointed deputy'.

Replace the final sentence with the following two sentences:

**'If only one member of the Standing Mandated Group is disqualified or otherwise unable to act, then, until any such further appointment is made, the mandate shall continue to be held by the remaining two members of the Standing Mandated Group. If two members of the Standing Mandated Group are disqualified or otherwise unable to act, there is no mandate for the remaining member to act alone.'**

B.5.2 Replace this paragraph with:

**'No person shall serve as a member of or as the spokesperson for a Mandated Group in connection with any case where s/he would fall within any of the restrictions contained in Paragraphs 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 of Part I.'**

B.6. This becomes Paragraph B.6.1.

In the expression 's/he may forthwith' 'may' becomes 'shall'.

Before 'Mandated Group' remove 'Standing'.

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At the end of the paragraph, remove the full-stop and continue:

‘, at the same time informing the Minister that this step has been taken.’

B.6.2 Add a new Paragraph as follows:

‘In cases of extreme emergency, the Moderator or other person entitled to call in the Mandated Group under the Rules of Procedure may, if s/he considers that there are strong and urgent reasons for so doing and only so long as s/he forthwith calls in the Mandated Group under Paragraph B.6.1, suspend the Minister with immediate effect either orally or in writing. Suspension imposed orally shall be immediately confirmed in writing to the Minister and written notice shall also be given to the Secretary of the District Council (see also Paragraph B.8.2).’

B.6.3 Add a new Paragraph as follows:

‘Suspension imposed under Paragraph B.6.2 shall continue during the Mandated Group’s initial enquiry period referred to in Paragraph B.7.1. If at the end of that period the Mandated Group serves a Referral Notice on the Minister, it must also serve on him/her a Notice confirming the continuance of the suspension during the Commission Stage.’

B.6.4 Add a new Paragraph as follows:

‘In the event that the initial enquiry period terminates without the issue of a Referral Notice, the Minister’s suspension under Paragraph B.6.2 shall automatically cease on the issue of a Notice of Non-Continuance under Paragraph B.7.2, whereupon the Moderator or other person imposing the suspension under Paragraph B.6.2 shall give written notice of the cessation of the suspension both to the Minister and to the Secretary of the District Council.’

B.7 Replace the whole of Paragraphs B.7, B.7.1 and B.7.2 with:

**B.7 The functions of the Mandated Group called in by the person authorised for that purpose under Paragraph B.6 in any particular case are described in this Paragraph B.7 (as regards the initial enquiry) and in Paragraph B.8 (as regards its role during the Commission Stage):**

**B.7.1 The Mandated Group shall carry out its own initial enquiry with all due expedition in consultation (where practical and appropriate) with the Moderator of the Synod for the sole purpose of ascertaining whether the Commission Stage should be initiated. Having done so, it must bring its initial enquiry to a conclusion in accordance with Paragraphs B.7.2 and B.7.3.**

**B.7.2 If the Mandated Group decides as a result of its initial enquiry not to proceed any further with the matter, it shall serve on the Moderator or other person calling it in a notice to that effect (a Notice of Non-Continuance), which shall have the effect of discharging from further involvement in that case the Mandated Group itself and the Council in whose name it conducted the initial enquiry.**

**B.7.3 On receipt of a Notice of Non-Continuance the Moderator or other person calling in the Mandated Group shall forthwith notify the Minister and the Secretary of the District Council that the Mandated Group is not proceeding any further and if the Moderator or other person calling in the Mandated Group has already suspended the Minister under Paragraph B.6.2 s/he must notify the Minister and the Secretary of the District Council of the immediate cessation of the suspension.**

**B.7.4 If on the other hand the Mandated Group decides as a result of its initial enquiry to initiate the Commission Stage, it shall follow the procedure laid down in Paragraphs B.8.1 and B.8.3 whereupon the Commission Stage will be initiated.**

**B.8.1 After the words ‘suspend the Minister’ insert the words ‘(unless s/he has already been suspended under Paragraph B.6.2, in which case the Mandated Group shall serve on the Minister a notice that his/her suspension shall continue during the Commission Stage)’.**

**‘the Section O Process’ becomes ‘the Commission Stage’.**

After the word **‘Suspension’** at the beginning of the penultimate sentence insert **‘under this Paragraph’** and after the word **‘Suspension’** at the beginning of the final sentence replace **‘given’** with **‘imposed’**.

**B.8.2 After ‘Suspension’ at the beginning of this Paragraph insert ‘,whether imposed under Paragraph B.6.2 or Paragraph B.8.1,’.**

**B.8.4 Add a new Paragraph as follows:**

**‘During the Commission Stage it is the responsibility of the Mandated Group to conduct the Investigation in accordance with Section D of these Rules of Procedure, to comply with all procedural matters under the Rules of Procedure and to present the case against the Minister at the Hearing under Section E and at the Hearing of any Appeal under Section G.’**

**B.9.1 ‘Paragraph 2.(4)(xv)’ becomes ‘ Paragraph 2.(4)(xiv)’.**

After **‘Structure’** delete **‘of the United Reformed Church’**.



- After **'the General Assembly shall act'** add **'solely'**.
- 'on behalf of'** becomes **'in the name of'**.
- B.9.2 In the expression **'s/he may forthwith'** **'may'** becomes **'shall'**.
- After **'Synod Panel for that Synod'** delete **'and'** and continue **' , at the same time informing the Minister that this step has been taken.'** Then the text continues with a new sentence **'The Mandated Group so appointed .....**'.
- At the end of the Paragraph, **'Paragraph B.6'** becomes **'Paragraph B.6.1'**.
- B.9.3 In the expression **'s/he may forthwith'** **'may'** becomes **'shall'**.
- 'from a Synod Panel'** becomes **'drawn from the Panels of Synods'**.
- After **'out of which the case arises'** delete **'and'** and continue **' , at the same time informing the Minister that this step has been taken'**. Then the text continues with a new sentence **'The Mandated Group so appointed .....**'.
- At the end of the Paragraph **'Paragraph B.6'** becomes **'Paragraph B.6.1'**.
- B.9.4 **'Paragraphs B.2, B.4, B.5, B.7 and B.8'** becomes **'Paragraphs B.2, B.4, B.5, B.6.2, B.6.3, B.6.4, B.7, B.8, B.10 and B.11'**.
- In the first sub-paragraph **'Paragraph B.5'** becomes **'Paragraph B.5.1'**.
- In the second sub-paragraph, after **'in consultation'** insert **'(where practical and appropriate)'**.
- B.9.5 Add a new Paragraph as follows:
- 'On any occasion throughout the Section O Process where notices and papers are required to be sent to the Moderator of the Synod and/or the Secretary of the District Council, then in a case proceeding under Paragraph B.9.3 they shall also be sent to the Deputy General Secretary.'**
- B.10 Replace Paragraphs B.10, B.10.1 and B.10.2 with new Paragraphs B.10, B.10.1 and B.10.2 as follows:
- B.10 To initiate the Commission Stage pursuant to Paragraph B.8.1, the Mandated Group in the name of the Council shall take the following steps:
- B.10.1 Serve on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission a duly completed Referral Notice which should clearly state the reasons why the Mandated Group believes that a breach of Ministerial Discipline has or may have occurred and which should also include where possible a summary of the supporting information on the basis of which the Mandated Group has issued the Referral Notice and
- B.10.2 Serve on the Minister notice of the issue of the Referral Notice and of his/her suspension (or of the continuance of his/her suspension if Paragraph B.6.2 applies).
- C.1.3 **'from the Minister and the Council to the Notice'** becomes **'from the Parties regarding the Notice'**.
- 'Paragraph G.9.2'** becomes **'Paragraph G.12.1'**.
- C.1.5 Replace with a new Paragraph as follows:
- 'Inform the General Secretary, the Moderator of the Synod and the Secretary of the District Council of the receipt of the Referral Notice but not of the contents thereof, apart from the name of the Minister.'**
- C.3.1 **'together with a copy of the Referral Notice and of any response from the Minister.'** becomes **'stating the name of the Minister but containing no further details of the case'**.
- 'Such'** becomes **'The'**.
- C.4.1 **'the Minister and the Council'** becomes **'the Parties'**.
- C.4.3 **'Section O Process'** becomes **'Commission Stage'**.
- C.4.7 **'those concerned'** becomes **' the Parties'**.
- C.6.1 **'Section O Process'** becomes **'Commission Stage'**.
- C.6.2 **'less'** becomes **'fewer'**.
- D.1 **'on behalf of'** becomes **'in the name of'**.
- D.2 **'it'** becomes **'the Mandated Group'**.
- D.4 Replace the existing paragraph with a new paragraph as follows:
- 'In cases where Paragraph E.7.1 applies, the Mandated Group may itself monitor the criminal proceedings, but shall otherwise for the period specified in that Paragraph suspend its own investigation of any matter under the Section O Process which might also be related to the criminal proceedings.'**
- E.2 **'Paragraph E.5.1'** becomes **'Paragraph E.5'**.
- E.3.2 **'the Minister and the Mandated Group'** becomes **'each of the Parties'**.
- E.3.2.3 **'invite'** becomes **'call upon'**.

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- E.3.2.4 **'invite'** (when the expression first appears) becomes **'call upon'**.
- E.3.2.5 **'invite the Council'** becomes **'call upon the Mandated Group'**.
- After **'member of the Mandated Group'** delete **'or the Council'** and after **'the general presentation of the case'** delete **'for the Council'**.
- E.3.2.6 Replace the existing paragraph with a new paragraph as follows:
- 'call upon the Minister to state whether s/he wishes to have a person present with him /her at the Hearing pursuant to Paragraph E.10.1 and, if so, call upon the Minister to indicate the name and status of such person and whether s/he will be present to give the Minister support and advice under Paragraph E.10.1.1 or to present the Minister's case under Paragraph E.10.1.2.'**
- E.4.1 After **'Paragraph E.3'** delete **'of these Rules'**.
- E.5.1.1 At the end of the Paragraph, delete the full stop and add **'and'**.
- E.5.2 Replace the existing paragraph with a new paragraph as follows:
- 'Having notified the Parties prior to the Hearing, the Assembly Commission may invite any person with expert or specialist knowledge in any particular field to attend the Hearing with a view to that person giving evidence at the Hearing and may issue such requests and directions in that connection as it considers appropriate.'**
- E.7.1 **'Paragraph E.9'** becomes **'Paragraph E.9.1'**.
- E.7.2.3 The existing E.7.2.3 becomes E.7.2.4 and a new E.7.2.3 shall be inserted as follows:
- 'criminal offences relating to stalking and/or sexual harassment.'**
- E.7.3 The existing Paragraph E.7.3 becomes new Paragraph E.7.5 (see below).
- E.7.4 The existing Paragraph E.7.4 becomes Paragraph E.7.3 and there shall be a new Paragraph E.7.4 as follows:
- 'It shall be the responsibility of the Mandated Group to procure a duly certified Court record or memorandum of the decision of the criminal or civil court in connection with any such case and to lodge it with the Secretary of the Assembly Commission, whereupon the Section O Process shall be re-activated and the case brought to a Hearing as soon as possible.'**
- E.7.5 The existing Paragraph E.7.3 becomes Paragraph E.7.5 with the following change:
- 'being so found guilty of any such offence(s)' becomes 'being convicted of any criminal offence whether or not within the categories listed in Paragraph E.7.2'.**
- E.8.3 At the end of the Paragraph, delete the full stop and add **'and/or'**.
- E.8.4 Add a new E.8.4 as follows:
- 'Any conduct on the part of the Minister during his/her suspension under the Section O Process which breaches or contravenes Paragraph 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union.'**
- E.9 The existing Paragraph E.9 becomes Paragraph E.9.1.
- E.9.2 Add a new Paragraph as follows:
- 'If as a result of its investigation during the Commission Stage, the Mandated Group unanimously comes to the view that no breach of discipline on the part of the Minister has occurred or at least that no breach can be established to the standard of proof required, it may give written notice to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission before the Hearing date that as a consequence it does not intend to press the case against the Minister. Thereupon the members of the Assembly Commission shall consult together to decide whether they still require the Parties to attend a formal Hearing before them or whether in the circumstances their attendance can be dispensed with. If they elect for the former, the Hearing will take place as planned. If they elect for the latter, they may in consultation together dispense with the formal Hearing and come to the decision to allow the name of the Minister to remain on the Roll of Ministers under Paragraph 10.1 of Part I. If this procedure is adopted, the said consultation shall constitute the Hearing and its decision shall be effective for all purposes as though a formal Hearing had taken place.'**
- E.9.3 Add a new Paragraph as follows:
- 'Paragraph E.9.2 shall not apply where the Mandated Group, whilst not pressing the case for deletion, requests the Assembly Commission to issue a written warning under Part I Paragraph 10.2.1. In such a case a formal Hearing shall take place.'**
- E.10.1.1 **'his/her own case'** becomes **'his/her response'** and **'the Minister's case'** becomes **'the Minister's response'**.
- E.10.1.2 **'case'** becomes **'response'** twice.

E.10.2 Replace the existing Paragraph with the following:

**'Neither the spokesperson nominated by the Mandated Group in accordance with Paragraph E.3.2.5 nor the Minister's accompanying person invited to present his/her response under Paragraph E.10.1.2 shall be permitted to give evidence in the case or personal testimony as to the Minister's character, either by written statement or orally at the Hearing. Where the Minister has invited a person to be present at the Hearing to give support and advice only under Paragraph E.10.1.1, the Assembly Commission may, in its absolute discretion if it sees fit, consider a written statement received from such person prior to the Hearing strictly limited to personal testimony as to the character of the Minister, but shall not permit him/her to give evidence in the case or oral testimony as to character at the Hearing.'**

E.11 'less' becomes 'fewer'.

E.12.1 '(see Paragraph E.12.3)' becomes '(see Paragraphs A.6 and E.12.3)'.

**'The spokesperson for the Council' becomes 'the spokesperson for the Mandated Group'.**

**'The representative of the Church's legal advisers (if invited by the Assembly Commission to be present)' becomes 'A representative of the Church's legal advisers'.**

Add a further category of persons permitted to attend the Hearing:

**'Any persons responsible for operating the recording equipment or otherwise preparing the verbatim record of the proceedings referred to in Paragraph E.12.4.'**

E.12.2 'keeping a formal record of the Hearing' becomes 'ensuring compliance with Paragraph E.12.4'.

E.12.3 After 'Assembly Commission' (the second time these words appear) 'may' becomes 'shall'.

**'the Secretary' (the second time these words appear) becomes 'him/her'.**

Add the following sentence at the end of the paragraph:

**'Such person shall carry out the duties set out in Paragraph E.12.2 but shall not be present when the Assembly Commission deliberates and decides upon the case.'**

E.12.4 Add a new paragraph as follows:

**'The Secretary of the Assembly Commission or his/her deputy shall prepare a summary**

**minute of the proceeds at the Hearing (the Secretary's minute). Where possible, a verbatim record of the proceedings shall also be made by electronic recording or by such other means as shall be directed by the Convener of the Assembly Commission. The Record of the Hearing shall consist of the Secretary's minute together with any such verbatim record, which shall be transcribed in the event of an appeal.'**

E.13.2 (twice), E.13.3, E.13.4 and E.13.6

**'Council' becomes 'Mandated Group'.**

E.14.3 'may, at the invitation of the Assembly Commission, be present at the Hearing to advise' becomes 'shall normally be present at the Hearing (unless his/her attendance has been expressly dispensed with by the Assembly Commission) in order to advise and address'.

E.15 The existing Paragraphs E.15.1 and E.15.2 are deleted, to be replaced by the following Paragraph E.15:

**'At the Hearing the Parties shall be allowed to question any such person as attends the Hearing under Paragraph E.5.2 and to comment on any evidence, information, opinion or advice offered by him/her.'**

E.16.1.1 'Council' becomes 'Mandated Group'.

E.16.2 At the beginning of the paragraph, insert **'During the Commission Stage of any case brought against a Minister,'**

**'considered in the course of any previous referral into the Section O Process in respect of the Minister unless (i) the decision taken as a result of such previous referral' becomes 'part of the body of evidence laid before any Assembly Commission or Appeals Commission during the Commission Stage of any previous case brought against that Minister unless (i) the decision reached in the previous case'.**

After 'in the opinion of the' insert 'current'.

Add the following sentence at the end:

**'The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall have authority to inspect the papers of that earlier case for the sole purpose of ensuring compliance with this Paragraph.'**

E.16.3 'occurring after the inception of the Section O Process' becomes 'arising during the Commission Stage'.

**'the Minister and the Council' becomes 'each of the Parties'.**

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- E.17 After **'Hearing'** (when it first appears) insert **'(as distinct from those serving the Assembly Commission in compliance with Paragraph E.12.4).'**
- E.18 **'Council'** becomes **'Mandated Group'**.
- At the end of the paragraph **'the Assembly Commission shall conclude the Hearing'** becomes **'the Convener of the Assembly Commission shall announce to the Parties that the members of the Assembly Commission would at that point retire to consider their decision which would not be announced that day but would be notified to the Parties in accordance with Paragraph F.3. The Hearing is thus concluded.'**
- F.2 Insert a new paragraph as follows:
- 'The decision so taken shall conclude the involvement of the Assembly Commission in the Section O Process, except as to the discharge of its responsibilities under Paragraph J.2, and shall have the effect provided for in Paragraph 17 of Part I.'**
- F.3 The existing Paragraphs F.2, F.2.1 and F.2.2 are now renumbered F.3, F.3.1 and F.3.2.
- F.3.1 **'within 7 days'** becomes **'within 10 days of the date of the decision'**.
- 'Council'** becomes **'Mandated Group'** twice.
- Delete **'and the General Secretary and the Moderator of the Synod'**.
- 'Paragraph G.1'** becomes **'Paragraph G.1.1'**.
- F.3.2 Replace the existing paragraph with the following new paragraph:
- 'If Paragraph 10.2 of Part I applies, s/he shall at the same time (i) serve on the Minister any written warning referred to in that Paragraph, (ii) send a copy thereof to the Mandated Group and (iii) send to the Minister and the Mandated Group copies of any recommendations or guidance appended to the decision of the Assembly Commission under Paragraph 16.1.3 or Paragraph 16.1.4 of Part I as the case may be.'**
- F.3 and F.4 The original Paragraphs F.3 and F.4 are deleted, being replaced with some changes by Paragraphs F.2 and J.1.
- F.4 Add new Paragraphs F.4, F.4.1, F.4.2 and F.4.3 as follows:
- F.4 **F.4.1 At the same time as s/he serves on the Minister and the Mandated Group the documents referred to in Paragraphs F.3.1 and F.3.2, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall send to the General Secretary, the Moderator of the Synod and the Secretary of the District Council a Notice to the effect that a decision has been reached by the Assembly Commission, simply stating whether the decision of the Assembly Commission has been to delete or to retain the name of the Minister on the Roll of Ministers, and, if the latter, whether or not a decision to issue a written warning was also made. Such notice shall not contain any further information other than that the decision is still subject to the possibility of an appeal being lodged and that a further Notice will be sent under Paragraph F.4.3 (if there is no Appeal) or under Paragraph G.1.2.1 or Paragraph G.1.2.2 (if there is an Appeal).**
- F.4.2 If an appeal is lodged by either Party, the procedure contained in Section G of these Rules of Procedure shall apply.
- F.4.3 If within the time specified in Paragraph G.1.1 (or such further time as may be appropriate if the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall receive from either Party an application under Paragraph G.1.3 for permission to lodge an appeal out of time) no appeal is lodged by either Party, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall notify the General Secretary, the Moderator of the Synod and the Secretary of the District Council of that fact within 10 days of the expiration of such period (or within 10 days of the decision itself if the proviso to Paragraph 17.2 of Part I applies) and at the same time shall send to those persons copies of the documents sent to the Minister and the Mandated Group in accordance with Paragraphs F.3.1 and F.3.2.
- G.1.2 Replace this Paragraph with the following Paragraphs:
- G.1.2 **G.1.2.1 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall forthwith notify the General Secretary that an Appeal has been lodged, at the same time passing on to the General Secretary the Notice of Appeal together with the body of papers laid before the Assembly Commission in hearing the case and the Record of the Hearing as defined in Paragraph E.12.4. The General Secretary shall thereupon act in a secretarial and administrative capacity in all matters relating to the Appeal.**
- G.1.2.2 **At the same time the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall also notify the Moderator of the Synod and the Secretary of the District Council that an Appeal has been lodged against the decision of the Assembly Commission.**
- G.1.4 **'content'** becomes **'context'**.
- G.2.1 After **'Notice of Appeal'** remove the full stop and add **','** send to the Appellant a copy of the Record of the Hearing (see Paragraph E.12.4) and follow the procedure set out in either Paragraph G.2.2 or Paragraph G.2.3.'

- G.2.2 **'Council'** becomes **'Mandated Group'** three times.
- 'Paragraph G.1'** becomes **'Paragraph G.1.1'**.
- After **'statement of reasons'** insert **'and a copy of the Record of the Hearing (see Paragraph E.12.4)'**.
- 'invite'** becomes **'call upon'**.
- Remove the full stop at the end and add **'or'**.
- G.2.3 **'Council'** becomes **'Mandated Group'**.
- 'Paragraph G.1'** becomes **'Paragraph G.1.1'**.
- After **'statement of reasons'** insert **'and a copy of the Record of the Hearing (see Paragraph E.12.4)'**.
- 'invite'** becomes **'call upon'**.
- G.3** **'Paragraph G.1'** becomes **'Paragraph G.1.1'**.
- G.4.1 Replace the existing Paragraph G.4.1 (including its sub-paragraphs) with the following Paragraph:
- 'The General Secretary shall send to each of the proposed appointees for the Appeals Commission an invitation to serve on the Appeals Commission for the hearing of the Appeal in that case, naming the Minister concerned but supplying no further information about the case.'**
- G.5.1 **'the Minister and the Council'** becomes **'the Parties'**.
- G.5.7 **'those concerned'** becomes **'the Parties'**.
- G.7.2 **'less'** becomes **'fewer'**.
- G.7.5 Before **'the Moderator of the General Assembly'** delete **'either'** and after those words delete **'or the Clerk to the General Assembly'**.
- G.8 Insert new Paragraphs G.8 and G.8.1/G.8.8 as follows:
- G.8** Each member of the Appeals Commission when appointed shall receive from the General Secretary copies of the following:
- G.8.1** Notice of the Assembly Commission's decision.
- G.8.2** Any statement of reasons given by the Assembly Commission.
- G.8.3** Any written warning issued
- G.8.4** Any recommendations or guidance appended to the decision in accordance with Paragraph 16.1.3 or Paragraph 16.1.4 of Part I as the case may be.
- G.8.5** The Notice of Appeal, containing the grounds for the appeal.
- G.8.6** Any counter-statement received under Paragraph G.2.2 or Paragraph G.2.3.
- G.8.7** The body of papers laid before the Assembly Commission in hearing the case.
- G.8.8** The Record of the Hearing (see Paragraph E.12.4).
- G.8.1 The original Paragraph G.8.1 becomes Paragraph G.9 and the original Paragraphs G.8.1.1, G.8.1.2 and G.8.1.3 become Paragraphs G.9.1, G.9.2 and G.9.3.
- G.9.3 In this Paragraph as re-numbered **'of the information before it by the Assembly Commission'** becomes **'by the Assembly Commission of the information before it or of any aspect of the Section O Process itself'**.
- G.8.2 The original Paragraph G.8.2 becomes Paragraph G.10 and the original Paragraphs G.8.2.1, G.8.2.2, G.8.2.3, G.8.2.4, G.8.2.5 and G.8.2.6 become Paragraphs G.10.1, G.10.2, G.10.3, G.10.8, G.10.9 and G.10.10 (additional Paragraphs G.10.4, G.10.5, G.10.6 and G.10.7 being inserted as stated below).
- G.10.4. Insert a new Paragraph as follows:
- 'The General Secretary shall (unless excluded for the reasons specified in Paragraph 7.1.1 or Paragraph 7.1.2 of Part I) attend the Hearing for the purpose of giving such procedural advice to the Appeals Commission as may be appropriate and of keeping a formal record of the Hearing: S/he shall not be present when the Appeals Commission deliberates and decides on the case.'**
- G.10.5 Insert a new Paragraph as follows:
- 'If the General Secretary cannot for any reason be present at the Hearing, the Appeals Commission shall itself appoint such person as it considers appropriate to deputise for him/her for that purpose, ascertaining beforehand that such person is not excluded for reasons specified in Paragraph 7.1.1 or Paragraph 7.1.2 of Part I. Such person will carry out the duties set out in Paragraph G.10.4 but shall not be present when the Appeals Commission deliberates and decides on the case.'**
- G.10.6 Insert a new Paragraph as follows:
- 'The General Secretary or his/her deputy appointed under Paragraph G.10.5 shall prepare a summary minute of the proceedings at the Hearing (the Secretary's minute). Where possible, a verbatim record of the proceedings shall also be made by electronic**

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recording or by such other means as shall be directed by the Convener of the Appeals Commission. The Record of the Hearing shall consist of the Secretary's minute together with any such verbatim record.'

- G.10.7 Insert a new Paragraph as follows:
- 'A representative of the Church's legal advisers shall normally be present at the Hearing in order to advise and address the Appeals Commission on matters referred to in Paragraph 18 of Part I, but s/he shall not take any part in the decision reached by the Appeals Commission, nor shall s/he be present when the Appeals Commission deliberates and decides upon the case.'
- G.11 The original Paragraph G.11 is deleted, re-appearing as part of new Paragraph J.1.
- G.9.1 The original Paragraph G.9.1 becomes Paragraph G.11.
- After 'the Parties' insert 'and of the General Secretary and of the legal adviser'.
- G.12 and G.13 The original Paragraphs G.9.2, G.10.1, G.10.2 and G.10.3 are deleted, to be replaced with some amendments by new Paragraphs G.12 and G.13 as follows:
- G.12 'As regards the notification of the decision, the General Secretary shall comply with the following:
- G.12.1 S/he shall within 10 days of the date of the decision serve on the Minister and the Mandated Group notice of the decision and of the written Statement of Reasons given under Paragraph 16.1 of Part I.
- G.12.2 If the decision is taken in accordance with either Paragraphs 14.3 or 14.6 of Part I, the General Secretary shall at the same time serve on the Minister the written warning referred to in those Paragraphs and shall send a copy thereof to the Mandated Group.
- G.12.3 If the decision is taken in accordance with Paragraph 14.4 of Part I, the General Secretary shall at the same time serve on the Minister and on the Mandated Group notice that the written warning issued following the decision of the Assembly Commission is withdrawn.
- G.12.4 If Paragraph 10.2.2 of Part I applies, s/he shall at the same time send to the Minister and the Mandated Group notice of any recommendations or guidance appended to the decision of the Appeals Commission under Paragraph 16.1.3 or Paragraph 16.1.4 of Part I as the case may be.
- G.12.5 S/he shall at the same time send to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission, the Moderator of the Synod and the Secretary of the District Council copies of the documents served on the Minister and the Mandated Group under Paragraphs G.12.1 to G.12.4.
- G.13 If the decision is taken in accordance with Paragraph 14.7 of Part I, the Notice served by the General Secretary under Paragraph G.12.1 shall constitute a Notice of Reference Back. The Assembly Commission appointed for the re-hearing of the case shall not be given any information relating to the conduct of the previous Hearing but may have sight of the documents, statements and information delivered to the Assembly Commission under the provisions contained in Section E.'
- G.14 Add a new Paragraph as follows:
- 'The decision so taken shall conclude the involvement of the Appeals Commission in the Section O Process except as to the discharge of its responsibilities under Paragraph J.2 and shall have the effect provided for in Paragraph 17 of Part I.'
- H.1 Delete the sentence: 'Copies of these forms can be obtained from the Secretary of the Assembly Commission.'
- H.2.2 'Council' becomes 'Mandated Group'.
- H.2.2.1 Replace this with the following Paragraph:
- 'By delivering the document personally to that member of the Mandated Group who has been nominated in the Referral Notice to accept service or in the absence of such nomination to the person who signed the Referral Notice, provided that in either case such person is still a member of the Mandated Group when such service is required to be effected.'
- H.2.2.2 'such nominated person' becomes 'the person referred to in Paragraph H.2.2.1'.
- 'to the spokesperson for the Mandated Group' becomes 'at the address given in the Referral Notice'.
- H.2.5 'pre-paid first class' becomes 'first class pre-paid' (for consistency with the earlier references in Paragraph H.2).
- H.4 and H.5 These are deleted to reappear, slightly reworded, as Paragraphs J.2 and J.3.

After Section H add the following words in italics:

*For the avoidance of confusion, there is no Section I, the Rules of Procedure moving directly from Section H to Section J.*

J. Add a new Section J as follows:

**J REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY, COSTS AND RETENTION OF RECORDS AND PAPERS**

**J.1** The General Secretary shall report to the General Assembly all decisions reached by the Assembly Commission and the Appeals Commission in the following manner:

**J.1.1** If a decision of the Assembly Commission is subject to appeal, the Report shall simply state that a decision has been reached in a case which is subject to appeal and shall not name the Minister.

**J.1.2** If a decision of the Assembly Commission is not subject to appeal and is to delete under Paragraph 10.1 of Part I or to issue a written warning under Paragraph 10.2.1 of Part I, the Report shall so state and name the Minister.

**J.1.3** If a decision of the Assembly Commission is not subject to appeal and is to allow the name of the Minister to remain on the Roll of Ministers under Paragraph 10.1 of Part I without the issue of a written warning under Paragraph 10.2.1 of Part I the Report shall so state without naming the Minister.

**J.1.4** In any case which goes before the Appeals Commission, if the decision is to delete or to issue a written warning, the report shall accord with Paragraph J.1.2 above but if the decision is to allow the Minister's name to remain on the Roll of Ministers without the issue of a written warning, the report shall accord with Paragraph J.1.3 above.

**J.2** The cost of operating the Section O Process and the reasonable and proper expenses of persons attending a Hearing and the costs of any reports obtained by or on the authority of the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission or any other costs and expenses which the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission deem to have been reasonably and properly incurred in the course of such process (but excluding any costs of representation) shall be charged to the general funds of the Church, and the Report of each case to the General Assembly shall state the total cost incurred in that case.

**J.3** The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall be responsible for the keeping of the record of decisions taken by the Assembly Commission and by the Appeals Commission, and for the custody of all papers relating to concluded cases, which shall be kept in a locked cabinet at Church House.

## *Appendix 4*

### **Documents relating to the petition of the church at Ruiton (West Midlands Synod) to secede from the United Reformed Church**

1. Request for the secession from the church at Ruiton
2. Report of the Mission Council Commission
3. Ruiton's response to the report



Ruiton United Reformed Church  
Hermit Street  
Upper Gornal  
DUDLEY  
West Midlands

## REQUEST FOR SECESSION JULY 2001

At a special church meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1995 the members at Ruiton voted unanimously in favour of making an application to secede from the United Reformed Church. Following discussions with members of the Staffordshire District, Ruiton presented its case to secede to the District on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1996. Wishing to continue the process of secession Ruiton church members met with members of the West Midlands Synod and presented its case to Synod in March 2000. A special meeting was again called on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2001 to enable members to reaffirm the decision that was taken in 1995 - this they did. So that anyone who could not attend the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June the whole church was once again given the opportunity to express their feelings after the evening service on Sunday June 24<sup>th</sup>. There was not one person who registered a change of heart. The church wishes to remain on friendly terms with the U.R.C. and also the local U.R.C. churches, but unlike many churches who benefit from the organisation - it hasn't worked for us for the following reasons:

### MINISTRY

As a Congregational Church, Ruiton was blessed with excellent ministry up to 1973. When we joined the U.R.C. in 1972 our minister was Revd Ray Welch. Ray died suddenly in 1973. The ministry since that time has been a mixture of short-term ministry or no ministry at all. Ruiton members feel that they have been denied basic ministry of the Word and Sacraments that is assured in the Basis of Union. We would also seriously question whether basic pastoral care has been provided on a long term basis.

Ruiton joined the U.R.C. in 1972. Listed below is the ministry we have received covering the period 1972 - 2001.

1973 - 1976	No ministry
1976 - 1982	Revd Thomas Watson (retired 1982)
1982 - 1984	No ministry
1984 - 1985	Revd Peter Hartley - (Peter was ill at the time he was sent to Ruiton, he left in 1985 due to ill health).
1985 - 1988	No ministry
1988 - 1990	Revd John Hewitt
1990 - 1992	No ministry
1992 - 1994	Revd John Rammell (Part-time ministry, John retired in 1994).
1994 - 2001	No ministry

Since 1972 Ruiton has had 8 years of full time ministry, 2 years part time ministry, one year with a minister who was ill, and 19 years without ministry. We have explained this situation at both District and Provincial level on a number of occasions and finally when we presented our reasons for secession again we stressed the lack of ministry during the last 29 years. The facts are that there has been a shortfall of adequate effective ministry at Ruiton provided by the U.R.C. . Ruiton welcomed the interim

ministry provided by the U.R.C. but the Church felt during those years that long term interim ministry was no substitute for permanent ministry. In 1995 Ruiton decided that it would have to make its own provision for ministry and pastoral care on a permanent long term basis. Since 1995 we have been blessed spiritually and numerically. The gospel is being preached and Ruiton is indeed indebted to a wonderful group of lay preachers who have led our morning and evening services on a Sunday, and also our Bible Study / Devotional mid-week services. The U.R.C. have suggested the possibility of shared ministry - which we welcomed in the past - but the suggestion was only ever a "possibility" so we have continued successfully to produce a full calendar of visiting preachers ourselves.

As far back as 1991 Ruiton discussed many possibilities with regard to securing ministry for the church. The Church had been informed then that it would probably be able to have only a part-time minister, to quote from the minutes of June 19<sup>th</sup> 1991, "Ruiton is desperate for a minister, the young are falling away". During the same meeting Mr Bill Hunt asked why it was that some churches had vacancies filled quickly whilst others had to wait a long time. The church was told it would need to ask the Moderator. It was stressed by church members that Ruiton needed ministry urgently and every possibility needed to be explored.

### TRUST DEEDS

Conflicting advice from the U.R.C.

When Ruiton joined the U.R.C. in 1972 the trust body for holding the deeds to church land remained the same as when the church was a Congregational Church, namely the Staffordshire Congregational Union Incorporated. For at least twenty five years that trust body remained the same, until the U.R.C. set up a new trust body - The West Midlands Provincial Trust.

At a special meeting for all the Staffordshire District U.R.C. churches regarding Trust Deeds the Provincial Clerk - Mr Ron Webb explained that churches had three options regarding the safe keeping of their trust deeds:

- a) To transfer them to the newly formed West Midland Provincial Trust.
- b) To find an alternative trust body e.g. Congregational Federation or Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches.
- c) To elect their own trustees.

Mr Ron Webb encouraged the churches to opt for choice a.. Ruiton chose choice b. and entered into negotiations with the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches. They agreed to hold Ruiton's trust Deeds. However, the Staffordshire District Union Incorporated informed the E.F.C.C. that if they did in fact act as custodian of Ruiton's deeds they would have to ensure that the Church was run as a United Reformed Church. We believe that because our constitution says that the Church meeting alone has the final say in such matters, and that the Church having made the decision to lodge its trust deeds with the E.F.C.C. no one should have imposed additional conditions. No further progress has been made.

## Appendix 4

### FAILURE TO REGISTER RUITON'S LAND

The S.C.U.I. failed to register the Church, graveyard, Sunday School, manse and bottom graveyard belonging to Ruiton during the compulsory registration of land by the Land Registry in 1967. The S.C.U.I. recently offered to register two of these parcels of land provided we kept the deeds with the U.R.C. Trust Body. Ruiton declined the offer.

### RANSOM STRIP

In 1991 part of the manse garden was sold to a builder. The solicitor acting for the S.C.U.I. failed to discover the existence of a ransom strip on the Church's land. It was only after business had been completed that Ruiton was called upon by the S.C.U.I. to pay an additional £7000 for the ransom strip.

### CONFLICTING ADVICE ON OWNERSHIP OF CHURCH BUILDINGS/MAINTENANCE

Ruiton members had been told early in discussions that the Church would be able to keep its premises if it reverted back to being a Congregational Church. However, on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1995 the minutes record that a U.R.C. representative said that in the unlikely event of Ruiton being allowed to secede the buildings would remain the property of the U.R.C. and members would have to find alternative premises. In the meantime however Ruiton was responsible for the maintenance of the buildings. This was the time when Ruiton fellowship questioned paying its contribution to the maintenance of the ministry when we were receiving no ministry and little prospect of receiving ministry in the near future. The Church had received the quinquennial report and was faced with restoration work totalling £150,000. Ruiton members had been told that the U.R.C. would probably be able to make a loan of £2000 towards the costs. It was decided at a Church meeting that Ruiton would not contribute any more to the maintenance of the ministry. The majority of the renovation work both to Chapel and Sunday School Building is now completed, each stage being paid for before moving on to the next phase.

### RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

It is not our intention to devalue the contribution made to Ruiton by the U.R.C.. It appears also to work very successfully for many churches. However, for Ruiton that has not been the case.

Ruiton has been grateful for the interim ministry given to the Church by Peter Christie and lately by Revd Geoffrey Tate - they have taken Church services and successfully chaired church meetings. But the day to day running of the Church has had a continuity due solely to the love and commitment of members and friends of the Church.

After District representatives referred Ruiton's request to the Synod Pastoral Committee members again repeated their dissatisfaction with the U.R.C. for the reasons listed above. The Synod Pastoral Committee said that with regard to ministry it could make no definite promises but there was a possibility of shared ministry. A share being one third of ministry. With regard to the District - it was suggested that Ruiton move from the Staffordshire District to the Hereford and Worcester District. Ruiton decided to take its application to secede to Provincial Synod. The request was denied at Synod by 92 to 46.

We noted with interest in the report from the Synod meeting at Walsall in March 2000, Ruiton is described as being, "in an area with a strong local pride, and powerful self-reliance. Its view of the Church was essentially local and congregational. Its plans have been to keep the cause active and vibrant, with a strong Sunday School, and a firm Bible based pattern of worship". We agree with those observations made by the Synod Committee, and do not make any apology for them. We would add the following however, it has been taken from the writings of one of Ruiton's past ministers.

"The glory of the Church of Jesus Christ is her enduring ministry under all circumstances and conditions, her power to withstand all the changes of time and proclaim the unchanging love of God to men. Such a ministry belongs to every church which bears the name of Christ, and Ruiton is one, with that great company whose faithfulness to such a ministry had extended over 220 years.

It is impossible to assess the influence of a 220 year ministry in the service of Jesus Christ, but it is certain that a great host of people are touched by it in numerous ways. The number of men, women and children who have felt the influence of Ruiton on their lives during the past 220 years no one can say, but it would be true to say that the community round about are better and richer because the Church has witnessed, in both good and bad times, to the saving grace of Jesus Christ and proclaimed the Gospel in season and out of season with a sense of urgency and faith in its power to promote a better world". For us personally this has never been more so than during the last six years. We would request that the General Assembly grants secession to Ruiton, and allows us to go back to our Congregational roots.

## Report of the Mission Council Commission

Commission to enquire into the petition of the Ruiton Church, Gornal, Staffs, to be given permission to secede from the United Reformed Church.

### 1 Preamble

1.1 At a special Church Meeting at Ruiton on November 16 1995 a proposal to petition to secede from the United Reformed Church was carried unanimously. This petition was duly passed to the Staffordshire District Council.

1.2 The District Council set up a commission comprising The Revd John Francis, Mrs Jo Baker and Dr Bernard Thomas to visit the Church to discuss the matter. The Church, however, remained firm in its adherence to the resolution it had passed.

1.3 The Church's case was therefore presented to the Staffordshire District Council on July 18 1996. On the recommendation of the commission the Council agreed by a majority of 22 to 8, with one abstention, to support the petition and to pass it to the West Midlands Synod.

1.4 Upon receipt of the petition the West Midlands Synod set up a commission comprising Mrs Wilma Frew, the Revd Glyn Jenkins and Mr Simon Rowntree (Synod Clerk). This commission met the recently retired District Council secretary, the Interim Moderator, the Secretary and Treasurers of the Church, the Staffordshire District Council Pastoral Committee and, on three occasions, the Church Meeting at Ruiton over a period of over two years.

1.5 Despite all these efforts, however, the Church remained adamant that it wished to pursue its petition and the matter came before the meeting of the West Midlands Synod on March 11 2000. Members of the Church presented their case and discussion took place. When put to the vote, a motion not to support the petition was carried by 92 votes to 46.

1.6 Wishing to pursue the matter, the Church Meeting on June 19 2001 reaffirmed its previous decision to seek secession and a further opportunity was offered to members after evening worship on June 24 2001 to indicate their mind. There was not one person who registered a change of heart.

1.7 Accordingly, the matter was passed to General Assembly. A Commission of Assembly, consisting of The Revd Angus Duncan, Mr Michael Gould, Mrs Margareta Batchelor and The Revd Keith Forecast (Convener) met with 33 members and adherents on July 11 2001 to listen to the church's case. Four members presented the case and other members also made comments and asked questions.

1.8 The Commission then met the Revd John Francis and Mrs Jo Baker, representing the Staffordshire District Council, and, later, The Revd Glyn Jenkins and Mr Simon Rowntree representing the West Midlands Synod, to listen to their respective points of view.

1.9 The Assembly Commission then met to formulate its report and to draw up its recommendation to Mission Council and the General Assembly.

### 2. The Church

2.1. Ruiton Church presents itself as an open, hospitable community. The Assembly Commission was most warmly welcomed and lavishly entertained. The atmosphere throughout the hearing was calm and reflective. The case was well and clearly presented. Our questions were answered thoughtfully and carefully. A friendly spirit remained throughout our visit.

2.2 The Church did have an unfortunate period of tension in the mid 1990s. It seems that trouble had been brewing for some time and it came to a head with the resignation of three or four elders and a similar number of other church members. The problem was not connected with the subsequent petition to secede, though it may have contributed to it indirectly. Since that time, however, new life has been manifest and the Church claims now to be a united, loving, supportive fellowship. We have no reason to doubt this: indeed, the evidence for the claim was all around us. There is much that is good about the Church and this the Commission wishes to affirm most strongly.

2.3 Largely because of the afore-mentioned troubles, and because members had become deeply suspicious of the Elders and the way they were perceived to have exercised their leadership, the Church has had no Elders' Meeting since 1995. All business is brought to the monthly Church Meeting. Individual members do, however, have significant leadership roles: there is a Church Secretary and a Treasurer; one member coordinates pastoral care; another acts as minutes secretary; another is the leader of the Sunday School; another arranges a rota of worship leaders. It was evident at the meeting we attended that certain members are looked to for leadership even though this is not regularised by electing them as Elders.

2.4 Attendance at Sunday worship is approximately 25 at the 10.45 service and 40 at 6.15. Membership figures are not easy to establish as the Church no longer makes returns to the Year Book, and though a number of worshippers have joined the fellowship in recent years they have not been received as members. The last known figure (1996) is 46. There is a 219-year-old afternoon Sunday School, with classes for adults as well as for children. The current membership of this School, after a period of decline, has risen from about 6 to (currently) 26 children and 10 adults. This School appears to offer a regular experience of all-age worship with subsequent division into groups according to age. There is a Ladies Class on Monday afternoons, a Devotional Service on Tuesday evenings and a form of literary society meeting on Thursday evenings.

2.5 The buildings are extensive, old and listed. The Church has recently raised many thousands of pounds for urgent major repairs to the chapel. More work is required and the Church has a will to tackle it. Inside the premises are pleasant, light and well cared for. There are two graveyards, one surrounding the chapel, and these also are well maintained.

2.6 The theological stance is evangelical and conservative, as it is with a number of United Reformed Churches. The ecclesiology is congregational rather than connexional or conciliar. Their perception is that the wider

Church is a free association of like-minded local Churches rather than a churchly body. Thus they cannot see why the wider Church has been so persistent in seeking to retain them as part of the body.

2.7 Outreach in service or evangelism does not appear to feature largely among their priorities. They warmly welcome people who come among them, but there is little sustained mission to the community. Nor is deep ecumenical involvement seen to be very important. Their commitment is at the level of sharing occasional united worship and "supporting one another where we can". They do, however, have a relationship with local Churches of the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches.

2.8 In ethos this Church is not at all unlike many congregations within the United Reformed Church and would, we believe, have a good deal to gain and to give by developing a real relationship with the wider body of the Church.

### 3. Reasons for the petition to secede

The Church gives three reasons:

#### 3.1. *Ministry*

Prior to joining the United Reformed Church, the Church enjoyed three long and fruitful ministries. It was then a single pastorate. Since 1972, however, for various reasons, this tradition has not been maintained. One ministry lasted for six years, others for anything between eighteen months and three years. There have been periods of up to three years without ministry. While it is appropriate to ask whether some attitudes within the Church might have contributed towards the shortness of the ministries and the length of the vacancies, it does seem that blame cannot wholly, or even substantially, be attached to the Church. Attempts have been made to link the Church with others in a joint pastorate. For a short period in the early 1990s this worked, but the minister then retired. A further attempt proved abortive when a minister was introduced to a joint pastorate including Ruiton, Ruiton voted to call the minister but the other Church failed to do so. This incident has left a negative mark. The District Council has provided an Interim Moderator continuously since 1995 and two people have served in this capacity. The present occupant of the post, The Revd Geoffrey Tate, is a retired Moravian minister with long experience of the United Reformed Church. He lives in another District and offers both pulpit and pastoral assistance and chairs Church Meetings. The Church is very grateful for this help, as they were for the support of his predecessor, but does not see it as Ministry: certainly not as meeting what they perceive to be their needs in this regard. Meanwhile there is some evidence of a neighbouring Evangelical Congregational minister exercising some oversight, and probably influence. Most of the services are led by local people of unspecified denominational allegiance and the Church is, at one level, well content with this. It does, however, see the need for more permanent pastoral oversight, expresses itself as being "deeply disappointed" at the lack of it and feels that the United Reformed Church has let them down badly in this matter.

#### 3.2. *Trust Deeds and related matters*

There is a complicated set of issues here which we do not pretend to understand. The Church's trustees are the Staffordshire Congregational Union Incorporated – indeed, they are the one remaining Church whose trust is vested in this body which is seeking to be wound up. There is reluctance to transfer the trust to the United Reformed Church West Midlands Trust body, lest this should be seen to delay their secession, though they have been reassured that, in itself, it would not. There are also issues concerning the registration of land and payment for a ransom strip of land. Furthermore, the Church was affronted when a quinquennial survey revealed the need for the expenditure of approximately £150,000 and it was said that the Synod would offer them only £2000. They have never made a formal application for Synod assistance, however, and, had they done so, they might have found the Synod more accommodating than had expected. There are evident misunderstandings in this whole area, coupled with allegations of conflicting advice, and the whole situation compounds the Church's sense of frustration and disappointment.

#### 3.3. *Relationship with the United Reformed Church*

Over a long period relationships with the wider Church, particularly with the Staffordshire District Council, have become increasingly strained, exacerbated by the matters mentioned above. The Church no longer sends representatives to District Council or Synod meetings. Since 1995 they have paid no contribution to the Ministry and Mission Fund (though they did so assiduously until then). When discussions now take place about ministerial deployment they are no longer taken into account. District Council and Synod have found them difficult to do business with, while they, for their part, no longer trust these wider councils of the Church. One of the elders who left in 1995 is now the Secretary of the District Council, and this may be another element in the deterioration of relationships. The Church seems to have given up trying to relate to the wider body and the District Council seems to have given up trying to provide support.

For these three reasons the Church argues thus: "The United Reformed Church has done nothing for us. It has evidently worked for others, but not for Ruiton. Now we want to return to our Congregational roots and ask the General Assembly to allow us to do so".

### 4. Examination of the given reasons for secession

The Commission has looked carefully at what the Church perceives to be grounds for secession and makes the following comments:

4.1 The matter of failure to supply effective ministry is more complicated than the Church perceives it to be. In these days when ministers are fewer than they were, and the expense of paying them reasonable stipends has increased, there is rarely any likelihood of Churches of the size of Ruiton having a full-time minister to themselves. The District Council Pastoral Committee, we are sure, will have spent time in earlier years looking at options,

including the possibility of forming shared or group pastorates with Ruiton as a member Church. From time to time a viable vacancy will have been declared and the Synod Moderators, meeting monthly, will have looked for potential ministers. The sad fact is that, sometimes, it is not possible to find a suitable minister for particular vacant pastorates, through nobody's fault except the availability of the kind of minister a pastorate may be seeking. Ruiton Church may have felt that nothing was happening, but the matter will certainly have been considered from time to time. The abortive introduction referred to above is evidence of this concern, albeit it had unfortunate consequences. Ruiton is not the only Church to experience problems of this nature. We can appreciate the disappointment the members are expressing. Nevertheless, we do not judge that this situation, in itself, is a reason for a local Church to secede from the United Reformed Church.

4.2 The vexed matter of Trust Deeds, registration of land and ransom strips is certainly a point of grievance for the Church. It is also frustrating for the Synod, not least because it cannot proceed to wind up the affairs of the Staffordshire Congregational Union Incorporated until the matter is resolved. We do not presume to judge on the rights and wrongs of the case. We do believe, however, from our own experience that, with good will on all sides, and with patience and perseverance, such matters can be resolved. That this has not proved possible in this case is not, we believe, a ground for secession.

4.3 It is saddening to read and hear of the breakdown of relationships between the Church and the Staffordshire District Council. This is no recent development but it has grown steadily worse over many years. Once again, it is not our task to apportion blame, though we can see where faults lie on both sides. Within a Christian context, however, the aim should always be to restore relationships, not to turn away from them. If, in the end of the day, and after every possible effort has been made, reconciliation proves to be impossible there must be other ways of relating this Church to the wider body of the United Reformed Church. The Synod has itself suggested that the Church might be moved from the Staffordshire to the Worcester and Hereford District Council. This is not so extreme a suggestion as may at first appear. Ruiton is on the very edge of the Staffordshire District. A couple of miles down the road is the Church at Dudley, part of the Black Country Group of Churches within the Worcester and Hereford District, where there is currently

a ministerial vacancy. The postal address of Ruiton is Dudley. The Church might, perhaps, find a more congenial home in that District and a rearranged grouping of Churches might be possible to enable it to have effective ministerial oversight. The suggestion has already been made to the Church and rejected, probably because the Church has been intent upon seceding. We believe it should be considered again. In any case, serious breakdown of relationships with the wider body of the Church is not a reason to allow a Church to secede. Rather, it is a challenge to be addressed and overcome.

4.4 The fundamental problem at Ruiton appears to be a difference in understanding the nature of the Church. Ruiton Church comes from the Congregational tradition. Moreover, it derives its understanding of the nature of the Church from the strongly Independent strand within that tradition, at the same time reflecting the rugged independency of the culture of the Black Country. At most it sees the wider Church as a free association of like-minded congregations: a body which a local Church may join or leave at will. Despite voting to enter the United Reformed Church in 1972 (by what majority we find it difficult to ascertain, but it must have achieved the required majority of two thirds of the members present and voting at the time) it has not grasped the conciliar nature of the United Reformed Church which exists to declare that "Church" exists at more than one level and that consequently to belong to the Church locally means that one is committed organically to the Church regionally and nationally, Nor, for that matter, has Ruiton Church understood the fundamental ecumenical stance of the United Reformed Church - brought into being as it was to be a sign and agent of visible, organic Christian unity - and that for a local Church to propose to leave it and thus demonstrate disunity is a very serious matter indeed. It is this fundamental misunderstanding of the Church to which it belongs which colours Ruiton Church's thinking about the three issues upon which it bases its case for secession. We hear what they say and understand what they are seeking to do. For the very reasons described concerning the nature of the Church, however, we do not believe the General Assembly can or should accede to their petition. Rather we look for sustained attempts, on all sides, to care for this fellowship, to repair broken relationships, to address the Church's specific needs, and to ensure that the Church takes its rightful place within the wider Councils of the Church.

## Appendix 4

Ruiton United Reformed Church  
Hermit Street  
Upper Gornal  
DUDLEY  
West Midlands

7<sup>th</sup> March 2002

### **Ruiton's response to Mission Council's Report**

Ruiton thanks the commission for its visit and for producing the report for Mission Council. Our wish in writing this response is to provide delegates with supportive factual information to accompany sections of the Report where we feel unfair judgements have been made.

#### MINISTRY

Mission Council's report regarding Ministry:

- suggests the possibility of Ruiton's attitude contributing towards the lack of ministry.
- speculates on the District's attempt to find suitable ministry.
- describes how Ruiton is not the only church to experience lack of ministry but offers no solutions to the problem.

Ruiton's Request For Secession Paper states that since 1972 Ruiton has received

- 8 years full time ministry.
- 2 years part time ministry.
- 2 years when Ruiton cared for a minister with ill health.
- 19 years without a permanent minister.

#### TRUST DEEDS

Mission Council's report regarding Trust Deeds:

- states they do not presume to judge on the rights and wrongs of the case.
- with goodwill on both sides the matters can be resolved.

Ruiton's Request For Secession paper states that:

- The S.C.U.I. have failed to register Ruiton's land
- At a district meeting Mr Ron Webb explained three ways to register trust deeds. Having chosen one of the options Ruiton had further additional conditions imposed by District, making it impossible for us to register. No progress to date.
- When Church land was sold the solicitors acting for the S.C.U.I. failed to identify a ransom strip at the time of sale. As a consequence the S.C.U.I. demanded £7000 from the sale of the land to purchase the ransom strip.

#### RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STAFFORDSHIRE DISTRICT

Mission Council's report regarding Ruiton's relationship with the Staffordshire District Council:

- reports a breakdown in relationships between the Church and the District
- considers there to be faults on both sides.
- suggests Ruiton moves to the Hereford and Worcester District.

Since the District are directly involved in administration of the Trust Deeds, the problems relating to Trust Deeds have been a contributing factor in the breakdown of the relationship. Disregarding all other past issues, even now Ruiton is trying to resolve a problem with the district regarding a legacy.

- Abbis Legacy - In 1994 Ruiton received in the form of a legacy a £10,000 cheque made out to Ruiton for maintaining the Abbis grave and the graveyard. The cheque was then forwarded to S.C.U.I and invested on behalf of the Church. When Ruiton recently requested the money, that request was denied. At the present time we are still trying to secure its release.

The members of Ruiton have felt for many years neglected by the U.R.C. through its lack of provision of ministry. They have experienced difficulties regarding Trust Deeds which are still unresolved, and other issues managed by the District. This has contributed to a breakdown in relationships. It was the combination of all three, and the lack of intervention by of the U.R.C. that prompted members resolve to request secession. The members decided to do this officially by voting to secede on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1995.

The Mission Council report does not embrace the cumulative nature of the problem, instead it deals with each problem separately recommending that each problem in isolation is insufficient grounds for secession. Ruiton feels weighed down by the problems like a shopper burdened down by shopping, you can divide the shopping into three bags and deal with each separately but it doesn't lighten the overall load.

#### PARAGRAPH 4.4 (of Mission Council's Report)

The last paragraph in the report gives Mission Council's opinions on the problem at Ruiton, blaming them on Ruiton's ignorance in Ecumenical matters. We would ask Mission Council how having a clearer picture of Ecumenical Matters would have helped Ruiton to overcome the problems listed above for example the lack of ministry supplied by the U.R.C. or its failure to register Ruiton's land.

Since Ruiton applied for secession, we have had visits from members of the District, the Synod and the committee from Mission Council. These various groups have listened, there has been a lot of rhetoric about "getting together to resolve things". The U.R.C. has still failed to act on "getting together". Ruiton started on the path to secede due to the lack of support from the U.R.C. and up until today nobody has offered any promises of help with the exception of Synod suggesting we move to the Hereford and Worcester District. Again, we would request that the General Assembly grants secession to Ruiton, and allows us to go back to our Congregational roots.

# Appendix 5

## Plan for Partnership

### THE PLAN FOR PARTNERSHIP IN MINISTERIAL REMUNERATION

The Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration was first approved by the General Assembly in 1980 and has been revised by Assembly from time to time. This edition was approved by Assembly 2002.

#### Abbreviations used in this Plan

URC	United Reformed Church
MoM	Maintenance of the Ministry
URCMPF	United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund
CRCW	Church Related Community Worker
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions

**PART I - GENERAL**

**1. OBJECTS OF THE PLAN**

To provide a unified scheme for the remuneration of stipendiary ministers of the Word and Sacraments (ministers) and church related community workers (CRCWs) in the service of the Kingdom of God within the United Reformed Church.

**2. PRINCIPLES OF THE PLAN**

2.1 The whole ministry of the URC is to be made available to the whole of the Church, and the financial responsibility for this ministry is to be shared throughout the whole of the Church. It is recognised that the extent and type of ministry will vary in different situations.

2.2 Payment to ministers/CRCWs of a basic stipend and other payments provided for by the Plan will be charged to the Ministry and Mission Fund, which will be funded from local church contributions.

**3. ADMINISTRATION AND CONSULTATION**

3.1 The Ministries Committee recommends to the General Assembly any changes to the Plan.

3.2 The MoM Sub-Committee whose members are appointed by the General Assembly administers the Plan.

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**PART II - SCOPE OF THE PLAN**

**4. CHURCHES TO BE INCLUDED**

Each local church of the URC, and each ecumenical church involving the URC.

**5. MINISTERS, CRCWS AND STUDENTS**

**5.1 Ministers to be included:-**

5.1.1 Ministers of the URC serving in churches as defined in para 4 above.

5.1.2 Ministers of the URC holding a special appointment within a Synod.

5.1.3 Ministers of the URC holding appointments approved as special category ministries by the Ministries Committee.

5.1.4 Ministers of the URC holding Assembly appointed posts of the Church.

5.1.5 Ministers of other denominations serving the URC, as the Ministries Committee shall, from time to time, determine.

**5.2 Others to be included:-**

5.2.1 Accredited CRCWs serving in posts recognised and designated by the Ministries Committee.

5.2.2 Ministers for whom remuneration for specific periods has been authorised by the Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee and such other special cases approved by the Ministries Committee.

5.2.3 Students who have already commenced training for the stipendiary ministry of the URC, giving ministry during their vacations, with District Council approval, to URC pastorates which are in vacancy.

**5.3 Lay workers to be included:-**

Lay missionaries serving in posts recognised and designated by the Ecumenical Committee.



- 5.4 **Exclusions:-**
- 5.4.1 Those in full-time service over the age of 65 years and 6 months, except those approved by the Ministries Committee (para 5.2.2).
- 5.4.2 Those in part-time service who are already in, or enter into, full-time remunerated employment.
- 5.4.3 Non-stipendiary ministers.

### PART III - ENTITLEMENTS

#### 6. **REMUNERATION OF MINISTERS AND CRCWS**

The remuneration of each minister/CRCW included in the Plan consists of a basic stipend together with other entitlements and allowances as set out below. The level of allowances shown in Appendix A will be set by the Ministries Committee and reviewed annually.

##### 6.1 **Amounts paid from and at the expense of the Ministry and Mission Fund**

- 6.1.1 Basic stipend: changes to the basic stipend will be determined by the Mission Council having considered the advice of the Ministries Committee. In the case of part-time posts the level of stipend will be the proportion of full-time basic stipend corresponding to the scoping of the pastorate.
- 6.1.2 Payment during sickness: remuneration shall be paid during sickness for such periods and in such sums as shall be determined from time to time by the MoM Sub-Committee, which will take into account the regulations and benefit schemes of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 6.1.2.1 Ministers/CRCWs who are unable to work because of sickness or accident shall be paid full stipend (less any Incapacity Benefit Long-term or Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit received) for a period of six months. However, any sickness arising in the twelve months prior to the first day of a new period of illness will be taken into account in the calculation of those six months. At the appropriate times after the beginning of any illness, the MoM Sub-Committee shall take steps to determine, in consultation with the Synod Moderator, what further help, if any, should be given when the entitlement to full stipend comes to an end. Ministers/CRCWs who are unable to work for more than three days are required to advise the MoM Office as soon as possible during their illness in order that the necessary records can be maintained.
- 6.1.2.2 Ministers/CRCWs who are sick for periods in excess of twenty eight weeks will claim Incapacity Benefit Long-term from the DWP and should notify the MoM Office of the amount of benefit received in order that the next available stipend payment may be reduced.
- 6.1.3 Maternity/Paternity provisions: details of arrangements for maternity pay and parental leave can be obtained from the MoM office.
- 6.1.4 Pulpit supply fees: when the MoM Office has been advised that a minister remunerated under the Plan is unable to work due to ill-health or is on maternity leave or is absent on a sabbatical term which lasts for a period of more than four weeks, or is the Moderator of the General Assembly, the actual pulpit supply costs incurred by the church arising because of the absence will be reimbursed to the limit shown in Appendix A. In group pastorates and part-time pastorates, reimbursement will only be in respect of services which would have been conducted by the absent minister. Claim forms for the reimbursement of pulpit supply costs can be obtained from the MoM Office.
- 6.1.5 Pension Fund: ministers/CRCWs who have not attained the age of 55 years at the date of initial induction to stipendiary service under the Plan may join the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund (URCMPF).

- 6.1.5.1 A minister/CRCW aged 55 years or over at the date of initial induction to stipendiary service under the Plan may not join the URCMPF. Only in these circumstances will an amount agreed by the General Assembly be paid, at the minister/CRCW's request, to any personal pension arrangement chosen by that minister/CRCW. This will be the same percentage of basic stipend as that payable as an employer's contribution to the URCMPF in the terms of para 15.1 of the Rules of the URCMPF.
- 6.1.5.2 If a minister/CRCW who is entitled to join the URCMPF elects not to do so, no contributions will be paid to any alternative personal pension arrangement. If the minister is already a member of the pension fund of another denomination at the time of qualification for stipend payment under the Plan, a contribution may be paid at the discretion of the MoM Sub-Committee to the minister's denominational fund.
- 6.1.6 Children's allowances: Where a minister/CRCW has one or more financially dependent children below the age of 24 years, an annual non-pensionable allowance will be paid at rates set by the Ministries Committee, provided that the minister/CRCW certifies that the total annual income of the family, excluding disregarded income, is expected to be less than the agreed limit (see Appendix A)
- 6.1.6.1 The allowance will be paid in accordance with the circumstances pertaining at the date that the certificate is signed. Any subsequent change, e.g. when the family income changes, will be disregarded in the current year; pro rata allowances may be claimed in the year a child is born, and in the year in which a child ceases to be dependent, or attains the age of 24.
- 6.2 Amounts paid through the central payroll system to be recovered from the local church**
- 6.2.1 In order to comply with Income Tax and National Insurance regulations any additional emoluments must be paid through the central payroll system, the costs (including employer's National Insurance contributions) being recovered monthly from the local church by direct debit. Such emoluments include:
- 6.2.1.1 Housing allowances paid to a minister/CRCW who does not occupy a church owned manse.
- 6.2.1.2 Stipend Supplements: the payment of stipend supplements is discouraged by the General Assembly. However where the local church continues this practice the supplement must be paid centrally
- 6.2.1.3 Fixed car allowances (see para 6.3.4.2).
- 6.3 Financial responsibilities of the local church**
- 6.3.1 District Councils (taking advice from Synod where required) should take note of the condition and facilities of the manse or, if alternative housing arrangements are to be made, should approve the details of the arrangements before concurring in calls and regularly thereafter.
- 6.3.2 Manse Accommodation: for the purposes of the Plan a manse means a home for the minister/CRCW and their immediate family (spouse and children), owned or leased by the church, provided and maintained in good repair and decoration, free of rent, ground rent, council tax, all rates (where payable), water/sewage charges and property insurance.
- 6.3.2.1 If the accommodation is owned or rented by the minister/CRCW, a housing allowance, agreed by the pastorate and the minister/CRCW, and approved by the District Council, shall be payable. Guidelines for calculating allowances will be issued by the MoM Sub-Committee (see Appendix B).
- 6.3.2.2 In the case of part-time ministers/CRCWs the church should meet a proportion of the standing charges of the manse, or pay a pro rata housing allowance, based on the proportion of stipend paid.
- 6.3.3 Removal costs shall be met by the receiving local church (see Appendix D).
- 6.3.4 Travel: the costs of travel on church business shall be met as follows:

- 6.3.4.1 Car: where a minister/CRCW provides a car, the financial arrangements shall be agreed with the District Council, the local church and the minister/CRCW. The MoM Sub-Committee shall distribute annually the rates of reimbursement for mileage undertaken on church business, **which must not be exceeded** (see Appendix A).
- 6.3.4.2 As the rates of reimbursement of mileage do not adequately reimburse the costs incurred, a fixed car allowance should be paid. The rate of fixed car allowance will be advised by the MoM Sub-Committee (see Appendix A).
- 6.3.4.3 Where a minister/ CRCW does not provide a car but the regular use of a car is considered necessary, it is the responsibility of the local church to provide a suitable vehicle. The costs of private motoring shall be borne by the minister/CRCW under locally agreed arrangements.
- 6.3.4.4 Other Travel: the cost of travel on church business by public transport shall be reimbursed by the local church or other appropriate body.
- 6.3.4.5 Where, following an introduction by a Synod Moderator, a minister/CRCW visits a church in vacancy other than in connection with a preaching engagement, the cost of travel shall be paid by the church visited. The church will be reimbursed from the Ministry and Mission Fund an amount not exceeding the cost of travel of the minister/CRCW and spouse within the UK, for a maximum of two visits.
- 6.3.5 Expenses: the local church or other appropriate body shall reimburse the minister/CRCW for the cost of postage, telephone, stationery and any other expenses necessarily incurred on church business. This may well include expenses relating to the use of a computer and in some instances the provision of a computer. The reimbursement of expenses will be on the basis of actual cost incurred, and not by a predetermined lump sum.

## 7. HOLIDAY PROVISION

Ministers/CRCWs are entitled to 5 weeks holiday in each calendar year and one further Sunday away from the pastorate. When a minister/CRCW only serves for part of a year the holiday provision should be pro rata. One week of holiday may be carried forward to the following year. Holiday entitlement is not affected by sick leave, in-service training courses or sabbatical leave.

## 8. ADDITIONAL PAID WORK

Stipends and other allowances paid to full-time ministers/CRCWs shall normally be on the basis that these represent the main earned remuneration. It is recognised that a minister/CRCW will from time to time accept other paid work (e.g. hospital chaplaincies or teaching). Where this work, in the view of the District Council and Synod Moderator, can be performed without detriment to the pastoral care of church, congregation and local church witness, the additional remuneration may be retained by the minister/CRCW involved, provided the work does not exceed the equivalent of one working day per week. Where more than one day per week is involved, the District Council or Synod Moderator should consult with the MoM Sub-Committee who may decide to reduce the stipend by an appropriate amount.

## 9. GRANTS AND LOANS PAID FROM THE MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND

The level of grants and loans paid to ministers/CRCWs, shown in Appendix A, will be set by the Ministries Committee and reviewed annually.

### 9.1 Resettlement grant

- 9.1.1 Every stipendiary minister/CRCW, whether full-time or part-time, shall be entitled to a full resettlement grant (see Appendix A) upon settling into their first pastorate and each subsequent pastorate or into an appointment paid under the terms of the Plan and upon final retirement; always provided that the settlement involves a change in the place of residence and that the grant shall not be payable more than once in any period of three years.

- 9.1.2 Except at the time of a minister/CRCW's initial induction (when a full resettlement grant is payable) where the pastorate is part-time the grant shall be pro rata according to the scoping of the pastorate to be served. Upon retirement the resettlement grant shall be calculated based on the last ten years of service up to the normal retirement age of 65 years. The grant will be reduced where the minister/CRCW has not been in the stipendiary service of the Church for those years, or the years of service have not all been full-time.
- 9.1.3 In the case of a minister/CRCW who dies before retirement (whether or not they have already passed retirement age) the spouse shall be entitled to the equivalent of a resettlement grant upon the first change of residence. If the death occurs after final retirement but before the first change of residence then the spouse shall be entitled to the equivalent of a resettlement grant.
- 9.1.4 If a minister/CRCW does not receive a resettlement grant upon removal into a property which, at a later date, becomes the retirement home, a retirement resettlement grant will be made available. This will be a taxable emolument.
- 9.1.5 Where a minister/CRCW has not received a retirement resettlement grant at the time of retirement, they shall be entitled to a resettlement grant upon the first change of residence (subject to the three years' restriction in para 9.1.1).
- 9.2 Ordination/Commissioning loan**
- 9.2.1 An interest free loan is available to ordinands for the stipendiary ministry, former non-stipendiary ministers at the time they take up the stipendiary ministry, and to CRCWs upon commissioning (see Appendix A).
- 9.2.2 This loan shall be re-payable by deduction from stipend over a period of not more than five years or such other period as the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the MoM Sub-Committee, shall from time to time determine.
- 9.3 Retirement removal grant**
- Reasonable removal costs within the United Kingdom shall be paid on the first removal of a minister/CRCW following final retirement from a pastoral charge or from an appointment paid under the terms of the Plan (or to the spouse of a minister/CRCW who dies before retirement) provided that at least two estimates have been obtained. Normally the cost of the lowest estimate will be met.
- 9.4 Supplementary provisions**
- 9.4.1 Notwithstanding what is written above in paras 9.1 and 9.3, in the case of a husband and wife being ministers/CRCWs, their combined entitlement to a resettlement grant and retirement removal grant shall not exceed that of one full-time minister/CRCW.
- 9.4.2 In any situation other than those outlined above the MoM Sub-Committee shall have discretion to make available, in full or in part, a resettlement grant, ordination/commissioning loan and retirement removal grant.
- 9.4.3 The resettlement grant, ordination/commissioning loan and retirement removal grant shall be payable whether or not the property is church owned.
- 9.4.4 Where the minister/CRCW has attained the age of 60 and, with the approval of the pastorate and the District Council, moves into property designated as the retirement home, retirement resettlement and removal grants shall be paid. Retirement removal and resettlement grants shall only be paid once during the ministry of a minister/CRCW, or ministerial married couple.

10. **REMUNERATION OF STUDENTS**

Students working in pastorates to which para 5.2.1 applies will be paid an amount determined by the MoM Sub-Committee. Housing and all out of pocket expenses (including the cost of travel to and from the pastorate) shall be borne by the local church (see Appendix A).

11. **GRANTS**

The Ministry and Mission Fund shall bear the cost of grants in support of ministry in ecumenical situations (see Appendix C).

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PART IV - PAYMENTS

12. **PAYMENT OF STIPENDS**

The payment of the basic stipend, together with any allowances, shall be made monthly on or before the 26th day of each month.

**APPENDIX A – APPROVED RATES UNDER THE PLAN**

		From 1.1.2002
para. 6.1.1	Basic stipend, full-time Maximum part-time stipend	£17,508 pa. 75% of full-time
para. 6.1.4	Pulpit Supply costs maximum refund per service	£30 plus appropriate travelling expenses
para. 6.1.6	Children's allowances First child Subsequent children Income limit – the basic stipend plus £2,066	£ 827 pa. £ 414 pa. £19,574 pa.

Any casual earnings of, or educational grants for, dependent children or housing or fixed car allowances paid by the church may be disregarded as family income.

If the expected income is above the specified limit the allowance will be paid less 50p for every £1 that the income exceeds the limit.

para. 6.3.4.1	Mileage rates (6April 2002 – 5April 2003)		
	For the first 10,000 business miles in the year		Over 10,000 business miles in the year
	Size of engine	pence per mile	pence per mile
	up to 1500cc	40	25
	over 1500cc	45	25

para. 6.3.4.2	Recommended rate of Fixed Car Allowance	£ 1,200 pa.
para. 9.1	Resettlement grant	£ 2,500
para. 9.2	Ordination/Commissioning loan (one off payment)	£ 2,500
para. 10.	Maximum weekly payments to students Maximum of 10 weeks paid.	£89

## **APPENDIX B - GUIDELINES FOR HOUSING ALLOWANCES**

The provision of housing for the minister/CRCW is part of the normal conditions of service and the General Assembly has acknowledged the wish of some ministers/CRCWs to live in their own property.

### 1. **Basic understanding**

In most cases ministers/CRCWs who live in their own properties are entitled to expect that the local pastorate will pay, in lieu of manse accommodation, an allowance to cover the standing charges on the property, consisting of the same elements that the local church would expect to meet had the minister/CRCW been living in the manse.

### 2. **Allowance specifically 'in lieu of manse accommodation'**

When calculating housing allowances the following should be taken into consideration:

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

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

The allowance should be re-calculated annually and, when paid, should be grossed up to take account of Income Tax and National Insurance. It should be noted that the allowance will be subject to employer's National Insurance, which will be added to the total cost to be recovered from the local church.

## **APPENDIX C - ECUMENICAL SUPPORT GRANTS**

Ecumenical support grants may be made when a church is faced with the responsibility of contributing towards the cost of ministry of another denomination after the Ministry and Mission Fund contribution for a particular year has already been agreed. For example, in a UR/Methodist church, where a URC minister is replaced by a Methodist minister, the Ministry and Mission Fund contribution would normally continue at the same level for the remainder of the Ministry and Mission Fund financial year, but the church would probably have to contribute extra to the Methodist Circuit and an Ecumenical Support Grant from the Ministry and Mission Fund would enable it to do this.

## **APPENDIX D - REMOVAL COSTS**

The receiving local church is responsible for paying the costs of removal (see para 6.3.3). Where the removal is within the United Kingdom reimbursement of up to 50% of the cost incurred (subject to a maximum reimbursement of £1,000) is available from the Ministry and Mission Fund and application should be made via the MoM Office. Where a minister/CRCW is called from abroad reimbursement from that Fund to the local church will be based on the removal costs from the port of entry.

For ministers/CRCWs called to the URC under the Overseas Recruitment programme in conjunction with the Ministries Committee, 75% of the cost of removal of themselves, their families, and their baggage from abroad to the pastorate in the UK, up to a maximum of £2,000, will be reimbursed from the Ministry and Mission Fund. A similar reimbursement will be made for their return on termination provided that the period of service has continued for more than three years.

# Appendix 6

## Future Patterns of Ministries

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Do we need to Get Real? Some reflections on our current situation
- 3.0 What is the Church for? The United Reformed Church and mission
- 4.0 How should we respond to *Growing Up*? A challenge for everyone
- 5.0 Who does what the Church is for? The ministry of the whole people of God
- 6.0 What is the Church in Community? Reaching the parts that others can't
- 7.0 What is the purpose of our recognised ministries? A case of the many and the few
- 8.0 Some questions for early response from churches, districts or areas, and synods
- 9.0 Issues requiring further work
- 10.0 Other matters

### I Introduction

1.1 In 1997 Ministries Committee commissioned a review into Non Stipendiary ministry which was presented to General Assembly in 2000. The report expressed the conviction that since the inception of the non-stipendiary ministry of Word and Sacraments

*'God has been steering us in a direction which would eventually lead us to outgrow the present limited and limiting pattern of ministry which we inherited with our Reformed patrimony.'*

It indicated such developments as local church leaders and church related community workers together with the expanding role of the synod moderators and the many questions surrounding the ministry of the elders as the basis for this conviction. All of these leave unresolved issues. The review group therefore asked that these be addressed. Assembly agreed in the following resolution

***General Assembly instructs the Ministries Committee, in consultation with others, to continue the discussion of present and future patterns of ministries, building on ecumenical insights and designed to enable the church to respond more effectively to the challenge of the mission strategy outlined in *Growing Up*.***

This report is the next stage of the process. The working party notes that the resolution accepting *Growing Up* was itself time dated and committed the churches to accept it as the mission strategy for the years 1999 to 2001.

1.2 The current working party has proceeded with considerable humility. Concerns about the adequacy and effectiveness of the ministry of Word and Sacraments in our traditions have been around for a long time. Most recently General Assembly in 1992 commissioned work which led to

the Patterns of Ministry Report in 1995. There is a widespread misconception that this report and its recommendations were rejected by General Assembly.

In fact, General Assembly accepted many of the recommendations. It agreed to some reshaping of non-stipendiary ministry and made clear that we have but one order of ministers of Word and Sacraments which embraces both stipendiary and non-stipendiary. It clarified some aspects of the authorisation of lay people to preside at the sacraments. It encouraged further work on the deployment of all ministry with a view to stimulating more effective missionary engagement. It asked for work on a number of administrative matters, a review of our present understanding and practice of oversight, and requested a further statement on the theology of ministry.

However, General Assembly did not support some key proposals. It rejected the concept of Moderating Elders who would act as catalysts to enable the whole congregation to function more effectively. It also rejected the development of local ministers and declined to rename lay preachers. In consequence significant change did not follow. The issues, however, did not go away.

1.3 Ecumenical contributions have made it clear that comparable discussions are taking place in other churches in this country and across the world. The working party is grateful for the insights arising from those discussions and also brought by our ecumenical representatives. It cannot proceed in isolation from what is happening in the wider family of Christian churches but it has not felt constrained by what others are doing. Nor can it proceed as though the church exists in a vacuum, isolated from the spirit of the age. God's call to mission is always to the church of today set in the world of today. The working party has therefore given some consideration to trends in contemporary society. In doing so it has sought to hold together the mission imperative to see the needs of society, and so to allow the world to set the agenda, and the church's responsibility to respond in faith that ever seeks the renewed vision and empowerment which is to be received as the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1.4 In addressing its remit the working party has found a tension. On the one hand there is a strong feeling that events on the ground are moving at a pace which the working party, and indeed General Assembly, is unable to match. Our churches are looking for answers and both districts and synods are developing their own strategies involving such concepts as fellowship groups, clusters and district ministers, and local leadership. We are aware too that a number of synods are considering the appropriateness of our constitutional structures for enabling the mission of the church in their areas. On the other hand, the working party has noted a tendency in the United Reformed Church to set



deadlines by which working parties must report to General Assembly. Meeting the deadline sometimes seems to have become more important than proper consideration of the issues involved.

1.5 In addition, the working party has noted the word 'ministries' in its remit. Much of the conversation in our churches locally focuses on the need for congregations to receive ministry. Of necessity the working party has focused more on ministers of Word and Sacraments but notes that these are only one aspect, albeit seen by many people to be the key aspect, of the current range of ministries within the United Reformed Church.

1.6 Language is a challenge. Many of the terms commonly in use amongst us are subject to a wide variety of interpretations and implied meanings. This includes terms such as minister, ministries, ministry, discipleship, mission, priesthood of all believers, etc., The working party has considered the issue of language at some length but has concluded that at this stage the task before it will not significantly be assisted by attempting a more formal definition of terms and concepts used. The working party is aware of the breadth of the discussion currently concerned with the use of the terms minister and ministry, and that some are arguing for a restricted use of both. However, it considers that the way in which these terms are used in this report is consistent with the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church. For clarity of meaning it has limited the use of the word minister within this report to denote those ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacraments. It believes that the meaning of the words ministry and ministries will be clear from the contexts in which they are employed.

1.7 The current range of recognised ministries within the United Reformed Church is extensive and varied. It includes ministers, elders, pastoral visitors, local church leaders, lay preachers, church related community workers, training officers, mission enablers, district ministers, chaplains, and moderators. Some of these are ordained and some commissioned, some are stipendiary and some not, some are the preserve of ministers and some open to lay appointment. The common feature is that they are all set-apart ministries, some being recognised only within the local church, others by the wider United Reformed Church. Given this range of ministries the question 'why seek for more?' would seem to be legitimate. Does the United Reformed Church really need a broader range of ministries? Or might it be the case that we simply need to employ to greater effect those we already have?

Proper consideration of the remit given by General Assembly must include examination of the effectiveness of our existing range of ministries, particularly those which have been somewhat neglected. This may in fact in the long term be **more important than devising new patterns** to meet identified needs which may prove transient. The working party does, however, acknowledge the levels of unease in both church and society, and the genuine desire of many people in our churches to have new forms and patterns of ministry to equip the church in the 21st century.

1.8 The working party senses therefore that there is need for further discussion at all levels of the church before General Assembly will be ready to take radical decisions about the future nature of ministry in the United Reformed

Church. This report is therefore offered to General Assembly as stage one of a necessary discussion amongst us. The working party hopes that it will help to move the discussion forward so that a future General Assembly may make appropriate changes confident that they will carry forward the mission of the church.

## 2 Do we need to Get Real ? Some reflections on our current situation

2.1 The Revd Peter McIntosh used his address to General Assembly in 1999 to challenge our churches to get real. The working party has no doubt that this is a message that the whole church needs to accept if decisions about future patterns of ministry are to effect significant change or even to contribute to an improvement in the situation.

2.2 The working party has been made aware that false memory syndrome is widespread through our congregations. This deeply affects attitudes and expectations and is a major contributor to the unease amongst us about the necessary number and deployment of ministers.

2.3 The oft repeated suggestion that churches should get back to the situation where every congregation had its own minister full time is both historically inaccurate and practically unhelpful. In fact there has probably never been a time in any of our constituent traditions when this was the case.

Churches within the Congregational tradition had a range of local leadership. Many did have a minister but many were led by lay pastors and not a few by good church secretaries who were effective local leaders. Churches within the Presbyterian Church in England were not allowed to have a minister of their own until membership had risen to a specified level. Until comparatively recent times the Churches of Christ had peripatetic ministers.

2.4 The frequent assertion that the United Reformed Church needs to increase the number of stipendiary ministers is unrealistic and, arguably, irresponsible. The ratio of ministers to church members is higher in the United Reformed Church than in any other major denomination in Britain. The ratio not only leaves ministers coming into our Church from other parts of the world breathless with its extravagance but is also significantly higher than it was in 1972. Then the accepted supportable ratio was thought to be 1:176, now the actual ratio is approximately 1:130, and this within an overall membership which is half what it was in 1972.

The question therefore is real. **Does the United Reformed Church really need more ministers?** The working party suggests that there is a pattern in the history of the Churches of Christ which merits re-examination. This included peripatetic ministers who were primarily teachers and elders who exercised a sacramental ministry. The working party does not believe that it is realistic and appropriate for the United Reformed Church to have more stipendiary ministers.

2.5 One real cause for concern is the feeling of many ministers and churches that their task is impossible. This in part arises from the continuing use of an old pattern of deployment when circumstances have considerably changed. Some of the significant factors are:

- the number of ministers and members which has declined in disproportion to the closure of church buildings. Figures given in Growing Up indicate that in 1972 on average ministers cared for 1.9 churches, while in 1997 the average was 2.4. This increase of half a church per minister on average has had a dramatic and disproportionate effect on the ability of churches to feel that they have their own locally based minister.
  - because most ministers now have the care of more than one congregation stress levels have increased. Not all ministers are equipped for the multi-role leadership style required which may involve being the minister in very different situations and within a group of churches whose theology and worship styles may also vary considerably. For some ministers and churches such factors create a lack of satisfaction that arises from a sense that the job is not being done either in the way or as well as it should be.
  - the ageing of many congregations means that there is a growing need for pastoral care for elderly members with fewer young folk either to undertake this or to carry administrative responsibility within the local church. This despite the fact that in many churches the most active members are those already well into retirement. Nonetheless many who have carried considerable responsibility in the past have no option now but with much regret to leave it to others. The problem will only grow worse unless churches reconnect with the younger generations. (see also section 5)
  - the life style of many church members has changed considerably in the past forty years. Many communities are far from settled. Employment may be miles away from residence, hours far from 9 to 5. The number of folk willing or able to accept extensive responsibility has diminished greatly. Research published in 1999 by the Institute of Management makes clear that British workers work longer hours than any others in the European Union. Its survey also revealed that in five key lifestyle measures the level of satisfaction was markedly less than two years previously. The overwhelming majority of workers said that long hours
    - leave no time for other interests (1997 – 77%; 1999 – 87%)
    - are damaging their health (1997 – 59%; 1999 – 71%)
    - adversely affect their relationship
      - with their partners (1997 – 73%; 1999 – 86%)
      - and their children (1997 – 72%; 1999 – 79%)
    - reduce their productivity with a corresponding lack of satisfaction in their day by day employment (1997 – 55%; 1999 – 68%)
 They do not want evenings and weekends cluttered with committee meetings, etc., which simply add to the pressures of their employment. Not surprisingly there are some who are happy to leave it to others, including the minister, to lead and largely run the local church.
  - the recruitment base even to make possible the replacement of ministers who transfer out, take early release through ill health, retire, or die in service is but a fraction of the base from which most of the older generation of ministers was drawn. Inevitably, and even allowing for the growing number of those who candidate in their mid years, recruitment to the same level will become progressively more difficult.
  - fewer members are supporting a larger number of ministers and premises, while at the same time the need to give better financial support to our ministers has been widely accepted and considerably achieved and the radical and costly improvement of church premises has become an urgent necessity.
  - our churches are finding increasing difficulty in funding the level of ministry we have currently. Some have said that the money is there – we have only to encourage increased giving and that, indeed, if everyone were to tithe the problem would disappear. There may be some truth in this. The very high level of giving in our churches needs to be acknowledged and affirmed. Our churches have risen splendidly to the challenge placed before them year on year.
- Even so, our churches are finding increasing difficulty in funding the current number of ministers. This raises obvious questions about whether more income can be generated and whether the burden is being fairly shared. However, it also raises the question of whether it would be right to invest more resources in paid ministry even if the financial and human resources can be found.
- 2.6 The working party is of the view that what some refer to as the 'current crisis in ministry' is neither a crisis nor is it new. Research made available to the working party reveals that many of the problems facing us now were also being addressed by the moderators of the Congregational Union in England and Wales in the 1920's. The record also reveals that the moderators felt unable to deal decisively with them because the answers they would need to give to the churches would be unacceptable.
- The challenges the church faces today are not new but their context *is* new. It remains to be seen whether there is a mind in the churches that will allow them to be tackled or whether they will in turn simply be remitted to a future generation. One thing is certain. As a live church the United Reformed Church will always face challenges about ministry. Today's solutions are not once for all. The ongoing task is to make the church's ministry as effective as it can be.

**3 What is the Church for? – the United Reformed Church and mission**

3.1 The resolution of General Assembly makes it clear that the United Reformed Church sees its mission in the terms set out in the report Growing Up. The consideration of future patterns of ministries is to a large extent to enable the church to carry out its mission. It is important that this is understood. Ministry is for mission.

3.2 Within the context of the statement of purpose for the United Reformed Church set out in paragraph 11 of the Basis of Union, *Growing Up* accepts the Five Marks of Mission which were endorsed by the 1997 Forum of Churches Together in England as a suitable definition. These two statements taken together provide an answer to the underlying question 'what is the United Reformed Church for?'

3.3 The Basis of Union states that the purpose of the United Reformed 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.*

3.4 The Five Marks of Mission are

- to proclaim the good news of the kingdom
- to teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- to respond to human need by loving service
- to seek to transform unjust structures of society
- to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

3.5 The working party emphasises the importance of holding these two statements together. Taken together they remind us that not only is ministry for mission, but so is the whole life of the people of God: the church itself exists for mission. It does so because its God is a God with a mission. The story which Scripture tells can be summarised quite briefly:

- God's mission is focused first in the revelation of God to the people of God and then more sharply in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. God further pursues mission through those people who put their faith in Jesus and are equipped for this purpose by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- The call to which God's people respond therefore is not just a call to discipleship, to listen to and to learn of Jesus; those who respond to that call and who are baptised are also recipients of a (com)mission. Together they constitute the church, a new humanity, nourished and sustained through fellowship in the Word of God and in sacramental worship, a sign and foretaste of God's future reign.

- Every member has their own particular and irreplaceable ministry. To fulfil their ministry the people of God are endowed with a great variety of spiritual gifts that enable all the members of the church to make their individual contributions to its common life and to bear their witness in the course of their daily living. All these gifts are to be valued equally. It is as church members act together with mutual respect in the fellowship, the communion of the Holy Spirit, that they become a royal priesthood, representatives of Christ and his body in the world.

It is this story which is leading the working party to see the ministry to which every member of the people of God is called as the starting point for its thinking about future patterns of ministries. Before we address that directly, however, it is necessary to take a further look at *Growing Up*.

## 4 How should we respond to *Growing Up*? – a challenge to everyone

4.1 *Growing Up* is not merely a call to the church to engage in mission; it is also a strategy for mission. This urges every local church to develop the concept of 'church in community'. Precisely because every church is in a local community no overall blueprint is offered about how this should be done. Every local church is asked to re-examine its situation and the ways in which it engages with its local community. *Growing Up* stresses that there is a theological imperative to engage in community work as mission and **notes that what was suitable expression of this twenty or more years ago is probably not suitable today.** It looks to continually developing patterns of ministries that can respond quickly to the emerging needs of both church and society. *Growing Up* was an important statement that helped to focus the Church on its mission. But it was not a final statement, just the next stage on a journey.

4.2 It is clear that *Growing Up* has led to some misunderstanding. It needs to be stressed that it is unhelpful to interpret *Growing Up* as though it were saying that the answer is for every local church to have a church related community worker. In a few cases, the ministry of a church related community worker may be a way forward but the programme of mission indicated in *Growing Up* will be severely damaged if this is the general interpretation given to it.

4.3 The 2001 General Assembly also asked for a new emphasis on evangelism. In particular it requested the Life and Witness Committee to initiate discussions which would lead to recommendations about ways in which men and women might be released to exercise their ministry as evangelists. Some have seen this as a preliminary step towards the creation of an order of evangelists. The working party affirms the importance of evangelism in the life of the church but cannot at this stage anticipate the outcome of the further work that is being done on this.

4.4 *Growing Up* identifies three physical resources for mission: people, funds and premises. It then focuses on ministers, church related community workers, people with professional training and skills, and those with time in today's

world. This suggests that these four categories provide the answer to the question, crudely put, 'who does what the church is for?' The working party believes this analysis of the people resource is misconceived and is actually damaging to the mission and ministry of the church. It would be a great pity if, in setting out the categories in the way it does, *Growing Up* were to perpetuate a damaging misconception which robs the church of the majority of its primary people resource and encourage the church to opt out of its many opportunities for mission through the varied daily lives of its members.

## **5 Who does what the Church is for? – the ministry of the whole people of God**

The Basis of Union states that *'the Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry in and through the Church, the whole people of God called and committed to his service and equipped by him for it'*.

5.2 In the lifetime of the United Reformed Church very little has come to General Assembly which has sought to clarify our understanding of the ministry of the whole people of God. The reports of the Moderators have dealt with it from time to time but specific references elsewhere are sparse and there appears to have been no deliberate attempt to work out what exactly we as a church mean by the ministry of the whole people of God. Yet it is immediately clear to the working party that our understanding of this is inseparable from the answer to the question 'who does what the church is for'. There is only one possible answer. The whole people of God do what the church is for. No one is excluded.

5.3 It is the understanding of the working party that the place and role of ministers is to be defined within the context of the ministry of the whole people of God. In this the working party strongly affirms the emphasis in the 1982 report *Preparing today for tomorrow's ministry*.

*'It would be disastrous if focusing attention (on the ordained ministry of Word and Sacraments) should lead anyone to forget that it is the whole Church which is called to ministry. All our thinking about the ordained ministry, its recruitment, training and service must be governed by the fact that the ordained ministry is called to equip and enable the whole Church for ministry.'*

5.4 It is clear that the understanding of the United Reformed Church about the place and role of ministers arises not from a sense of hierarchy but from a sense of function within the ministry of the whole people of God. What seems to be missing is any consideration of the underlying question. 'What precisely is the ministry of the whole people of God, and how do they exercise it?' It seems to have been the case that the answer to this question has been assumed.

From time to time there have been voices questioning whether the ordained ministry does understand and relate to the needs and concerns of church members. Perhaps this has been most vigorously expressed by those in the world of work who complain that this aspect of life is largely missed within the teaching and intercession of their local church. Or, more damagingly, it is counted as inferior to 'real discipleship' seen as a willingness to accept church responsibility.

5.5 It is clear that for some in our churches any mention of the word 'ministry' directs thought to an in-church activity of some kind. The wide ranging reflection on his personal experience of the church recounted in the article by Dr Ross Clark in the March 2002 issue of *Reform* entitled *Thank you for listening* provides graphic evidence of the problem which the working party believes to be commonplace within the churches. In the face of this much work still needs to be done on the concept of the ministry of the whole people of God.

5.6 The current experience of many church members is that of increasingly complex lives where the local church and its buildings are but one of many foci. It must be emphasised that to acknowledge this is no way to suggest that their commitment to Christ is any less than that of previous generations.

## **6 What is the Church in Community? – reaching the parts that others can't**

### **The Challenge to Churches**

6.1 There is no doubt that as used in *Growing Up* the concept of church in community has a particular emphasis. *'We must reaffirm that to fulfil the church's calling requires a deliberate engagement with the local community.'* (Appendix 1 paragraph 9.1) This is expressed primarily in terms of the local church as a Christian congregation identifying and serving the needs of its local community through schemes, programmes and partnerships, and the input of people with time and gifts to contribute.

6.2 It is very significant that the Gospel accounts of the ministry of Jesus include a number of works that are messianic in nature. That is, they achieve things that no other healers or miracle workers were able to achieve. In the healing of the deaf and dumb man Jesus deals with the impenetrable [Mark 9.14.29]. In other works of power he brings release to people long trapped in a variety of conditions. It isn't too much to say that in the Gospel stories Jesus reaches and transforms the parts of society that others either cannot or will not.

6.3 With such outreach in mind, church agendas and programmes must include stimulating a lively awareness of what is going on in the local community. Part of this will be an ongoing exploration to identify areas of need which the church might meet in a way that reflects the Kingdom of God and assist the working out of God's plan. Church leadership needs to be closely in touch with the local community and able to inspire the response of the congregation through preaching and teaching, prayer and sacrament, and pastoral support.

6.4 A transformation of attitude is needed in many of our churches. The change needed was well put by the Revd Dr David Peel in his address at the induction of the Revd Peter Poulter as Moderator of the Northern Synod.

*'We must turn our church cultures around so that we no longer are content simply with satisfying the needs of those inside our own circle, but are thoroughly committed to addressing the tough questions of our age, and to constructing worship that brings God's world into the church and propels the church into God's world.'*

## The Challenge to Church Members

6.5 The working party found helpful insights in the report *Christifideles Laici* published by the Roman Catholic Church in 1988. This deals at length with the vocation and mission of the lay faithful in the church and in the world. The report stemmed from the conviction that there needs to be a definition of the lay faithful's vocation and mission in positive terms. In United Reformed Church terms it is a report about the vocation and mission of church members. The following quotations give something of its flavour.

*'The lay faithful have "the unique character of their vocation, which is in a special way to 'seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to the plan of God'".'*

*'It is no exaggeration to say that the entire existence of the lay faithful has as its purpose to lead a person to a knowledge of the radical newness of the Christian life that comes from Baptism ... so that this knowledge can help that person live the responsibilities which arise from that vocation received from God.'*

6.6 Each member of the church belongs to a number of distinct communities in which the common currency is that of personal relationships. These include home and family, neighbourhood, civic, employment, recreation and, of course, the church itself.

- home and family: arena for that most searching test of our characters
- neighbourhood: filled with many people just like us and with needs just like ours, and some who aren't
- civic: in which not every need can be met by a grand scheme or programme, but even where it can the contribution and attitude of individuals can make a world of difference
- employment: often where the competition is the greatest and the everyday can seem like a fight for survival but hopefully where stress is creative and there is real satisfaction in a job done honourably and well
- recreation: not to be thought of as an 'off-duty' time but sometimes the opportunity for a deeper witness as relaxation opens the way to a more intimate sharing
- church: which does require leadership and care to be provided by some but should never be the exclusive area in which the ministry of church members is exercised.

6.7 To judge by the evidence of surveys taken among working people within churches in Britain the task before us is formidable. Workers say that church communities do not support them to any significant degree in their work whether through preaching, teaching, worship, or pastoral care.

Figures published by Admiralty in *Supporting Christian at Work* show that 47% of respondents say that the teaching and preaching they get is irrelevant to their daily lives. It is

least relevant where they spend most of their lives – at work and in the home. Those questioned acknowledged that preaching and teaching was quite helpful in personal spiritual issues but decreasingly helpful in other areas of life as shown in the following levels of helpfulness on a 0 to 4 scale.

Personal	2.57
Church	2.12
Home	1.83
Work	1.68

The report concludes that contemporary Christians are simply not being equipped for life where they spend two-thirds of their waking time.

The working party emphasises that it is within the ordinary everyday waking time of every church member that the ministry of the whole people of God is primarily to be worked out.

## 7 What is the purpose of our recognised ministries? – a case of the many and the few

7.1 The working party would be disturbed if this report was read as critical or unappreciative of the ministry currently being exercised within the United Reformed Church. On the contrary, we would want to affirm all those serving in recognised ministries within the United Reformed Church and to support and encourage the costly discipleship being practised by our people in their daily lives. The challenge for all of us is not necessarily to be different but to be more effective and more open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

7.2 The church does require those with particular gifts who will assist it to know and to be what God calls it to be. The role of ministers fits into that requirement. Along with elders and others with particular gifts, their task is to equip and enable church members for their distinctive ministry, to identify and foster the other specific enabling and nurturing ministries that are required for this, and to be a talent scout intent on releasing the widest breadth of ministry into the world.

7.3 In language that for today is somewhat dated the 1979 interim report of the Priorities and Resources Group summarised the role of ministers in this way. *'The Minister's job in the local church is to inspire, train, nurture and care for the church members, enabling them to go out and by their example to win people for Christ. The Minister should be a pastor, leader and spiritual adviser, and should spot and harness the talents of his congregation. Although he should organise and train members for outreach into the community, it is the laity who must primarily operate that outreach.'*

7.4 The ministry of the whole people of God is constituted when ministers and people work together in such a way that by leadership and example the minister enables the release of the people into their own proper and personal ministries within the range of their communities in the secular world. Success or otherwise is to be judged by the extent to which this is happening.

However, as the United Reformed Church's 1975 Commission on the Ministry stated, *'We do not favour the idea that the minister looks after the Church while lay people witness in the outside ... Rather the minister should share in*

*leading the congregation in its corporate witness in society and experiment with his own role as a missionary in community.*' The ministry of the whole people of God requires all the people including the minister to live as a Christian community, exercising ministry in the world both individually and corporately, and supporting and enabling each other in that ministry.

7.5 If we believe our own theology about the ministry of the whole people of God, the United Reformed Church actually has over 90,000 members engaged in this ministry, with many more growing up amongst us. We need patterns of church life that will release their full potential for ministry.

## **8 Some questions for early response**

8.1 The working party believes that the issues set out in Section 9 must be addressed before the church will be ready to make far reaching decisions about future patterns of ministries. However, running through this report is the conviction that the United Reformed Church must decide on its understanding of the ministry of the whole people of God and how crucial it considers this to be for the effective development of transforming mission through the concept of the church in community. It therefore asks churches, districts or areas, and synods to consider the following questions with a view both to checking on their local priorities and to helping the working party in its further work.

8.2 Assuming you agree that the 90,000 members of the United Reformed Church should all be engaged in its ministry, what key messages for the working party do you have on sections 2 to 7 in this interim report?

8.3 In your experience to what extent are our existing ministries of elders and ministers geared to equip your members to exercise their ministry? In what ways do they hold them back?

8.4 From your recent or fresh discussions, what are the main changes to your activities and structures which you believe will develop and support your members' ministries in their daily lives?

8.5 From your local ideas and experience, please describe any innovations in leadership patterns which you feel the working party would find it helpful to consider for adoption more widely.

8.6 As you look at your needs and consider those of other churches you know, what would be the most useful changes that could be made by the United Reformed Church as a whole?

8.7 **The working party asks for replies from churches, districts or areas and synods by the end of April 2003.** Responses should preferably be of less than 1,000 words, selecting what seems to you to be most important, and should be sent to The Future Ministries Working Party, c/o Ministries, The United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT. The working party will also welcome responses on the range of issues outlined in section 9.

## **9 Issues requiring further work**

9.1 Running through this report is the working party's conviction that a much fuller understanding and development of the ministry of the whole people of God is of primary importance if the United Reformed Church is to become more effective in mission.

9.2 If this conviction is shared by the wider United Reformed Church it could have significant implications for the structures of the church and its patterns of ministries. The paragraphs below set out some of the issues that would need to be considered.

9.3 The role of the minister as the representative of Christ within the church, the representative of the church within the community, and the representative of the wider church to the local congregation.

9.4 The tensions involved in being true to our own tradition and meeting the expectations of our ecumenical partners – in particular the issue of lay presidency at the sacraments.

9.5 The complex needs of our churches for effective leadership which provides sacramental ministry, inspiration, training, community development and pastoral support.

9.6 The need to release the full potential of our existing recognised ministries.

9.7 The increasing complexity of collaborative ministry involving ministers, elders, church related community workers, local church leaders and many others.

9.8 The need for an ordered church which nonetheless allows considerable room for diversity and flexibility within its patterns of ministries.

9.9 The working party is conscious that there are other issues which bear on questions relating to patterns of ministries involving such aspects as church structures, finance, deployment, ecumenical commitments, etc., but has attempted to focus the issues indicated in 9.3 to 9.8 on those falling within its remit.

## **10 Other Matters**

**Supplementary information** The working party knows that some will seek more detail of the thinking behind this interim report. It is therefore preparing supplementary material which will provide this and also assist consideration of the report.

### **10.2 Working party membership**

Members  
 Revd Dr Peter Cruchley-Jones  
 Mrs Wilma Frew  
 Revd Graham Long – convener  
 Revd John Piper  
 Revd Rachel Poolman  
 Revd Bill Sewell  
 Revd Dr Sandy McDonald – Church of Scotland  
 Revd Bill Snelson – Churches Together in England  
 Revd Kirsty Thorpe – Theological Reflector  
 Revd Christine Craven – Executive Secretary

# Appendix 7

## Students sent by Synods

### NORTHERN

#### Stipendiary

Chris Hucker (Mansfield), David Walton (NEOC)

#### Non-Stipendiary

Margaret Johnson (NEOC), Janet Maxwell (NEOC),  
Yvonne Tracey (NEOC),

#### CRCW

Helen Stephenson (Northern), Lesley Whiting (Northern)

### NORTH WESTERN

#### Stipendiary

Leoni Betts (Mansfield), John Bradbury (Westminster),  
Richard Bradley (Westminster), Ruth Dillon (Northern),  
Gillian Heald (Northern), John Jarmany (Westminster),  
Michael Thomason (Northern), Marion Tugwood  
(Northern), Mike Walsh (Northern)

#### Non-Stipendiary

Ann Hufton (Northern), Lena Talbot (Northern)

#### CRCW

Alison Dalton (Northern),

### MERSEY

#### Stipendiary

Kath Gartside (Northern), Peter Lyth (Queens),

### YORKSHIRE

#### Stipendiary

Peter Blackband (Northern), Helga Cornell (Northern),  
Murray George (Northern), Cat Morrison (Northern),  
Heather Pollard (Northern), Robert Sheard (Northern)

#### Non-Stipendiary

Geoff Ellis (Northern),

### EAST MIDLANDS

#### Stipendiary

Ed Butlin (Queens), Lynn Fowkes (Westminster), Stella  
Hayton (Westminster), Michael Hopkins (Mansfield),  
Suzanne McDonald (Westminster), Stuart Turner  
(Northern), Heather Whyte (Westminster)

#### Non-Stipendiary

Jane Campbell (Northern), Jenny Morgan (EMMTC),  
Alison Termie (EMMTC)

### WEST MIDLANDS

#### Stipendiary

Kay Cattell (Westminster), Jacqueline Embrey (Queens),  
Colin Ofor (Queens), Viv Randles (Northern), Liz Shaw  
(Northern), Susan Walker (Queens)

#### Non-Stipendiary

Franziska Herring (WMMTC),

#### CRCW

Dennis Neville (Northern)

### EASTERN

#### Stipendiary

Connie Bonner (Westminster), Dilys Brace (Northern),  
Susan Challis (Westminster), Peter Clark (Westminster),  
David Coaker (Mansfield), John Cook (Westminster),  
Richard Eastman (Westminster), Tim Jackson  
(Westminster), Heather Kent (Westminster),  
Susan McKenzie (Westminster), Deborah McVey  
(Westminster), Paula West (Westminster),  
Jenny Yule (Westminster)

#### Non-Stipendiary

Lorna Bantock (EAMTC), Carole Pearl (EAMTC), Sam  
White (Westminster), Geoffrey Wright (EAMTC)

### SOUTH WESTERN

#### Stipendiary

Ruth Browning (Northern), Colin Phipps (Mansfield),  
Angela Steele (Mansfield)

#### Non-Stipendiary

Peter Scott (SWMTC), Susan Way (SWMTC)

#### CRCW

John Saunders (Northern)

### WESSEX

#### Stipendiary

Sarah Hall (SC&URC), Keith Morrison (Northern), Phillip  
Osborn (STETS), David Poulton (Northern), Christopher  
Tolley (Northern), Barry Welch (Westminster),  
Robert Weston (Northern)

#### Non-Stipendiary

Anne Bray (STETS), Clare Callanan (STETS), Gordon  
Connell (STETS), Colin Harley (Westminster), Maria  
Hooper (STETS), David Moss (STETS),  
Alison Toplas (STETS)

## **THAMES NORTH**

### **Stipendiary**

Sheena Dickson (Mansfield), Janet Llewellyn (Westminster), Janet Sutton Westminster),

### **Non-Stipendiary**

Jayne Bazeley (Westminster), Meryl Court (Northern), Clare Davison (EAMTC), Anne Gray (Synod), Jenny Simmons (EAMTC), Mark Woodhouse (Northern), Ann Woodhurst (SEITE)

## **SOUTHERN**

### **Stipendiary**

Gordon Brown (Westminster), Elaine Brown (Westminster), Andrew Coyne (Westminster), Martin Knight (Northern), Nicholas Mark (Northern), Romilly Micklem (Westminster), Sarah Moore (Westminster), David Morgan (Mansfield), Alan Seymour (Mansfield)

### **Non-Stipendiary**

Christine Jefferies (SEITE), Sue Powell (SEITE), Roger Wood (STETS), Ernest Yu (Westminster)

## **WALES**

### **Stipendiary**

Kate Gray (Northern), Brian Norris (Northern),

### **Non-Stipendiary**

Elizabeth Lowder (SMCL),

## **SCOTLAND**

### **Stipendiary**

Paul Jupp (SC&URC), Susan Kirkbride (SC&URC)



# Appendix 8

## Statistics of Students in Training

As at February 2002

	Students in Training				Anticipated entry into URC Service			
	Feb 1999	Feb 2000	Feb 2001	Feb 2002	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>STIPENDIARY</b>								
<b>Full Time Courses</b>								
Mansfield	18	10	10	9	3	1	3	2
Northern	24	28	29	25	6	9	7	3
Queen's	2	3	3	5	3	1		1
Westminster	28	32	31	27	9	8	7	3
<b>Part Time Courses</b>								
Synod		1	2	1	1			
NEOC			1	1	1			
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CRCW</b>								
Northern	5	7	6	5	2	1	1	1
<b>NON-STIPENDIARY</b>								
<b>Part Time Courses</b>								
EAMTC	1	6	5	5	5			
EMMTC				2			2	
MCI/Northern	19	14	10	6	3		3	
NEOC	1	1	2	3		3		
SAOMC	6	2						
SEITE		1	3	3	1	2		
STETS	5	4	6	8	2	3	3	
SMCL				1			1	
SWMTC	1		1	2		1	1	
WMMTC	3	4	5	1	1			
SURCCC		4	4	3	2	1		
<b>Full Time Courses</b>								
Mansfield		2	1					
Queens		1	1					
Westminster			3	4	1		1	2
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>12</b>

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
SMCL	St Michael's College, Llandaff
SWMTC	South West Ministry Training Course
WMMTC	West Midlands Ministry Training Course
SURCCC	Scottish United Reformed Church and Congregational College

# Appendix 9

## Reports from Colleges

### MANSFIELD COLLEGE

1.1 As if the Ministerial Education and Training Course at Mansfield College had not suffered enough change already, we had to cope with further changes in 2001. The Revd Dale Rominger, the Assistant Director, was appointed to a full-time post at Church House in March, and left us after the end of the spring term. We were not able to make a new appointment before the following term, so for a term Tony Tucker returned to help us out, but took his last bow at the end of that term. We are very much in his debt. From September the Assistant Director's post has been filled by the Revd Julian Templeton. Julian is the minister of Highgate URC, and divides his time equally between Mansfield and Highgate. He is responsible for placements and internships and for the teaching of preaching and worship, and is also working with Regent's Park College in pastoral training.

1.2 Regent's Park has had its own changes. In September, the Revd Dr John Weaver took up the post of Principal of the South Wales Baptist College in Cardiff, and was replaced as Director of Pastoral Training by the Revd Robert Ellis from Bristol. These two major changes in personnel have enabled us to press ahead with a thorough revision of the programme of pastoral training, in which Mansfield and Regent's Park staff have both been closely involved, and proposals are being discussed with the student bodies in both Colleges. The objects are to make the programme more structured and coherent, and more definitely owned by both Colleges on equal terms. At the time of writing this revision is far from complete, but we are hoping that it will be in place from this coming September.

1.3 One change we have already implemented is to enable a greater integration of academic and practical training by asking students, from next year, to start their internships in the third year, moving to the part-time mode of the Bachelor of Theology courses and studying modules of the B. Th. alongside their internship work.

1.4 There has been no change in the staff at Mansfield teaching B. Th. courses. The Revd Dr Walter Houston teaches Old Testament studies as well as being course Director, New Testament teaching is given by the Revd Dr John Muddiman and Ms Lynda Patterson, and Ms Peggy Morgan continues to teach world religions. The College remains an active member of the Oxford Partnership for Theological Education and Training.

1.5 The Governing Body of the College has produced proposals for a revision of the College Statute governing ministerial education. The United Reformed Church and the Congregational Federation have produced a joint response to these proposals, in the case of the URC through its Training Committee, but the College has yet to consider this response formally.

1.6 In the summer, however, we shall say goodbye to the Principal, Professor David Marquand, as he comes to the age of retirement. He is to be replaced by Dr Diana Walford, at present the Director of the Public Health Laboratories for England and Wales. She is the first woman and the first scientist to be appointed Principal. She has already expressed warm interest in Mansfield's work of ministerial education and training.

1.7 New students for the course in 2001 were few, in common with all our training institutions: two, both from the URC, beginning their training, and one moving from STETS, where she had trained for the non-stipendiary ministry, to complement this with an internship in order to complete her training for the URC stipendiary ministry. This brings our total numbers to twelve, including as usual an exchange student from Bern, with two others on internship, five (three from the URC) in the second year and one completing the B. Th.. Final B. Th. results for our students in November were very satisfactory. At the time of writing we are not able to say how many new entries there might be in 2002.

1.8 It is good to report that we now have two full-time ministers and one other part-time student working for in-service qualifications in Applied Theology. We would be happy to receive further applications from ministers with good theology degrees for this part-time course. This is included in the partnership with Regent's Park, where most of the teaching is done. We would also like to repeat that staff are available and willing to speak to ministers' summer schools and conferences out of term time. The strength of our staff is mainly in biblical studies.

1.9 Please pray for Mansfield and its staff and students as they negotiate this difficult period of its life.

## NORTHERN COLLEGE

2.1 Student Numbers for the 2001-2 session reveal a considerable reduction on the previous year due to the general down-turn in URC candidates for designated ministries. Nevertheless, our 28 stipendiary, 6 non-stipendiary and 5 CRCW students keep us very busy. In addition, Northern College staff are playing an active role in Luther King House provision for CME and lay education. It is particularly heartening to have several URC ministers enrolled on our taught Master's programme.

2.2 We welcomed the Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee to the staff-team at the start of the session. Her brief involves being Director of the CRCW programme, as well as having a major role in the provision of CME and placement learning. Equally pleasing is the fact that we have appointed the Revd Dr Mary Cotes as Tutor in Biblical Studies. Starting next September, she will provide a focus for teaching in Old Testament. Mary is no stranger to Luther King House, since she prepared for ordination at the Northern Baptist College, and at present she serves the Baptist-URC congregation in Pontypridd. A third 'newcomer' is Irene Cooper, a Methodist Church and Community Worker, who has become the chaplain to the Faith in Living course.

2.3 Our new and much smaller Board of Governors has started its work under the leadership of Professor Clyde Binfield. Now that so much of our educational involvement centres upon the Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester, and, hence, is delivered ecumenically, the major work of the Governors is carried out in the activities of the Luther King House Trust and the Partnership Council. Issues about the best ways to collaborate and work together inevitably are being raised as the ecumenical journey proceeds.

2.4 A major appeal has been launched to provide funding for the development of Luther King House, including the creation of a new learning resource centre and some much needed 'social space'. Roger Bogg's leadership during his term as President of the Partnership has been significant and the search for his replacement has started. Meanwhile, our validation agreement with the University of Manchester has been renewed, with very favourable comments being made about our educational programme, which now covers the whole range from undergraduate certificate to PhD.

2.5 The College has been grateful over the years for the generous contribution of our 'subscribers', both individuals and churches. The new Scheme of Governance

has no provision for subscribers, but in their place we have created 'Friends of Northern College', with all former subscribers automatically becoming Friends. A Friends' committee convened by the Revd Geoff Tolley is arranging for a newsletter to be produced twice a year and it is planning reunions and events up and down the country.

2.6 While the inner city and rural dimensions of our School of Mission project have been difficult to get off the ground, the suburban arm of it has gone from strength to strength under the leadership of Chris Vermeulen. A second major conference has been planned, a wide cross-section of churches are involved and there is a great deal of interesting thinking to be found on the website ([Chris@vermeulen.freemove.co.uk](mailto:Chris@vermeulen.freemove.co.uk)).

2.7 The Revd Dr John Ponter, one-time Director of the Manchester Christian Institute, was the preacher at the Faith in Living Valedictory Service. The following 'settlements' of SM, NSM and CRCW students took place during the year: Carole and Gary Gotham (Stockport East), Stuart Nixon (Chatteris), Chris Ray (Louth), Jill Thornton (Cricklade, Highworth and Wootton Bassett), Ann Jack (Duston and Creaton), Jan Adamson (Dunfermilline), Sue Chapman (Luton and Dunstable), Neil Eldridge (Watling Valley), Linda Granville (South Wallesey), Leena Knowles (Upper Norwood, South Norwood and East Croydon), Peter Nunn (Wrexham), Jane Rowell (Sheffield South), Maureen Thompson (Belsall Heath), Martin Wheadon (Romford) and Gwen Smithies (Sheffield).

2.8 We are Pleased to be involved in discussions with the Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College aimed at improving and extending links between our two colleges.

2.9 Over the years, the College has seen a great deal of change as our role has expanded to take up a responsibility for NSM and CRCW training and CME alongside established commitments to the preparation of stipendiary ministers and lay education. These developments could not have been made without enthusiastic staff, far-sighted governors and the support of the churches. We have much for which to give thanks, therefore, but there is yet more to be achieved if we are to respond faithfully to what God has in store for us!

## QUEEN'S COLLEGE

3.1 The Queen's College and the West Midlands Ministerial Training Course (WMMTC), along with our Research Centre continue to operate a unified centre for theological education and ministerial training. The inspection report from last year affirmed that we produce a 'good product' and that we have an exceptional staff. We have been challenged to explore patterns of leadership and governance and to clarify our vision as well as our distinctives. We are in the process of implementing an overhaul of our curriculum which puts greater emphasis on practical experience, theological reflection and personal formation. In addition, last year we implemented a unitary staffing plan which allocates staff workloads across the College, Course and Research Centre, meaning we have one joint staff which serves the whole Foundation. This enables us to utilise staff expertise efficiently and it ensures that good practice is established for the whole Foundation.

3.2 Three significant grants (from USPG, the Saltley Trust and the Churches Commission for Racial Justice) are enabling Dr Mukti Barton to develop our work with Black and Asian theology, encouraging wider access to our programmes and offering grants to students.

3.3 Following on the retirement of Bishop Mark Santer as President of the Governors of Queen's, Professor Frances Young has been elected as President for the coming year. Professor Young, - widely known and read as a theologian - is Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Birmingham. David Ritchie, CB and Bishop Michael Bourke are also joining the Governors. David Ritchie is chaired the Government's Independent Review into the race disturbances in Oldham. In the autumn we welcome The Revd Elizabeth Welch as President of the Governors

3.4 **Students** - This year we have approximately 145 students studying at the Foundation. There are 64 students at the Queen's College with 41 full-time students, 53 students on the WMMTC, and 20 studying with the Research Centre. Of these, 12 are affiliated with the URC, with 7 specifically training for ordained ministry, 4 as clergy doing in-service studies, and 1 lay person.

3.5 Ordinands from Queens have been exploring world-wide mission; Becky Roberts in Uganda, Jane Mason and Janet Waterfield in Soweto, S Africa; Paul Gallucci in the USA, Franziska Herring (URC) in Germany. During the academic year Ian Mead and Rosemary Reynolds travelled to South India. Meanwhile, the Research Centre brings students from ten different nationalities to study at Queen's.

3.6 **Staff** - This year we welcomed two new staff members. Dr Peter Kevern joined as Director of Studies for the Foundation. He is lay and specialises in modern theology. Previously he served in a similar capacity for WEMTC and for the Reader and OLM training in the Gloucester Diocese. The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar was

appointed as URC Tutor for the Foundation following Neil Messer's departure to the University of Lampeter. Michael comes from local church ministry in the West Midlands and brings expertise in Ecumenical studies and international ministry experience. His energy and enthusiasm has enlivened our staff already. The Revd Pat Nimmo (URC) continues as a half-time tutor in missions.

3.7 Recent publications by staff include Dr Anthony Reddie's Book *Faith, stories and the Experience of Black Elders*, published by Jessica Kingsley and Dr Paul Collins' *Trinitarian Theology East and West*, published by OUP; Dr Collins has recently moved to Chichester University.

3.8 **Continuing Ministerial Education** - This continues to be an area of growth. This year our MAVPDATS programme introduces two new areas of speciality, Christian Education and Mission. These new programmes of study may especially appeal to those who wish to continue their professional development. Opportunities for sabbaticals and shorter periods of study leave in the Foundation continue to be popular with a number of URC ministers benefiting from these opportunities.

3.9 **Buildings and facilities** - This year refurbishment of the flats updated and upgraded living facilities. We continue to improve our ICT facilities. A health and safety audit has provided a number of important improvements across the campus. Presently we are developing a business plan which includes a substantial investment in upgrading our infrastructure and teaching facilities.

3.10 **Worship and Spirituality** - Foundation Worship on Tuesday evening has included a number of guests. This January there was a fascinating ecumenical expression, a Methodist Covenant service in which our new URC Link tutor, the Revd Dr Michael Jagessar was formally inducted into his two roles, tutor and W. Midlands Synod training officer. At the end of January, the President of Methodist Conference, the Revd Dr Christian Le Moignan, led our worship and bravely answered questions in an open session. The Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, the Revd Elizabeth Welch lead worship on 26<sup>th</sup> February and delivered a challenging lecture on 'The Future of the Church'. Recent guests to the College Community Meeting included a stimulating session by The Very Revd Gordon Mursell, Provost of Birmingham Cathedral, on spirituality and community. The Revd Marjorie Lewis-Cooper led two sessions discussing our Equal Opportunities Policy. At another session, Ian Mead, a third year Methodist student, shared his experience studying in South India and Ramaz Paresashvili, a student from the Baptist Church in Georgia, shared about life and the church in Georgia.

**3.11 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 and other URC 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.

3.12 In addition, we ran an ecumenical vocations day, Saturday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, with approximately 25 persons attending. The morning began with a stimulating talk on 'calling'. Ministry officers from the URC, Methodist Church and the CofE were available for seminars to discuss vocation pathways. Worship featured large in the day allowing quiet and reflection. Afternoon seminars included a bible study on 'calling' and an exploration of women in ministry. Staff and students were available for one to one interviews. A highlight of the day was the teamwork of staff and students to create a very good programme.

3.13 **Conclusion** - We are delighted with our ongoing links with the United Reformed Church. We look forward to exploring additional ways we can resource regionally and nationally the work and ministry of the United Reformed Church. We would be delighted to receive a visit from interested persons who would like to know more about our work and ministry.

## SCOTTISH UNITED REFORMED AND CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGE

4.1 **Students** - The current student body remains small, but remarkably diverse: a (former Scottish Congregational Church) pastor; a NSM transferring to stipendiary ministry on an MTh programme; two ordinands with or about to complete PhD degrees. The principal associated university currently is Edinburgh. In many ways, this variety of learner vindicates the flexible partnership model used by the college, which enables it to tailor provision to the particular needs of each student in a cost-effective way.

4.2 **Personnel** - The full-time member of staff remains the Revd Principal John Dyce with the Revd John Smith and the Revd George Sykes as college tutors. During the year, the Revd George Sykes will undertake a sabbatical visit to Kiribati and the Revd John Smith will attend a consultation on theological education at Bossey as part of his sabbatical arrangements. The provision from the new year will be enhanced by the services of Mrs Jean Holloway BA MA as personal development adviser to the students on a contracted sessional basis. After many years as college Treasurer, Mr James Maguire has resigned and we are glad to welcome Mr Mark Kirkbride to the post from the world of banking. We are much indebted to Jim Maguire who has combined the offices of Union/synod treasurer with the treasurership of the college. Mrs Rita Barr has been appointed college Secretary in the place of the Revd John Arthur.

4.3 **Curriculum development - Three main areas are being developed at present**

- a framework for the development and assessment of role competence
- a handbook to support students in becoming reflective practitioners
- modules to complement the Living Faith programme of Scottish Churches' Open College.

4.4 **Quality assurance** - The college is progressing work to extend the quality assurance dimension of its life. It believes that this has to draw on internal self-evaluating and external review processes. For the first, a set of performance indicators are in preparation. For the second, the synod of Scotland is approaching potential partners to explore the possibility of shared inspection processes. A further stage in this work will be the development of more systematic arrangements for the review of collaborative arrangements and service level agreements with partner provider organisations.

4.5 **Support to learning** - The appointment of a personal development adviser is part of a commitment of the college to take a holistic view of the needs of students and to recognise the emotional and the faith development aspects of ministerial formation. The college has collated and revised materials relating to guidance and support and these are now set out in a college student handbook. The college library has for a number of years been contained within the united/ Scottish Churches' Open College library in Edinburgh. Discussions are ongoing amongst the partners to ensure that the library develops as a learning resource and maximises the potential for e-learning and information technology based access to resources.

4.6 **College retreat** - While a residential element has been involved in most course provision, this has been extended to include a college retreat to which ministerial and lay preaching students, staff and research network members are invited. This year's theme was *Creative Imagination*.

4.7 **Ministries** - The Training committee of General Assembly has been conscious of the need to recognise the distinctive nature of the Scottish context, including in the field of ministerial formation. Provision has therefore been made for plans for NSM and CRCW training to reflect both wider and national dimensions. Discussions continue with partners in Scotland to explore collaborative working arrangements to respond to this need.

4.8 **Research network** - The network is a lively part of the college's life, welcoming participants within the synod's life who are registered at one of the Scottish universities (including the Open University in Scotland) for postgraduate research or taught degrees or other advanced studies.

4.9 **Pastoral links** - The Scottish universities remain a naturally popular location for research students from wider than Scotland and the college is happy to act as a pastoral/ educational link agency for the URC.

4.10 **Wider educational work** - The college continues to support the broader educational work of the URC synod of Scotland, including the college Principal acting as synod Education Secretary, in terms of the reciprocal services agreement between the two bodies.

4.11 **Northern College, Manchester** - Our college management committee is glad to be involved in discussions with Northern College aimed at improving and extending links between our two colleges.

4.12 **Website** - Work on the development of a college website nears completion and we would hope to have this up and running by the time of General Assembly.

4.13 **Disability Discrimination** - The college has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and access and acknowledges its obligations under the new statutory provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 and is in the process of reviewing its procedures, facilities and arrangements to ensure that it complies with the acts.

4.14 **Continuing Ministerial Education** - The college notes with satisfaction the appointment of the Principal as convener of the CME subcommittee of the Training committee. It is keen to explore how it might best contribute to the range of CME provision available to ministers.

## WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

5.1 A learning community - The college is a place where people meet to learn. They come from all over the world, with different backgrounds and a wide age range. Some are ordained, some seeking ordination, some with different vocations, all on the journey of faith. We meet to learn how to be Christians in the places to which we are called. This means we need to multiply our talents and build one another up. The role of teacher and learner moves between us. Those with a long personal history of faith are enlivened with new insights; those feeling their way towards greater Christian maturity are encouraged by the experience of those who have travelled the road before.

5.2 The impact of Continuing Ministerial Education has been positive in Westminster. We have been glad to provide hospitality for ministers over a short period and our community has benefited from their experience. Ministers also spend their sabbatical time with us, usually aided by a grant from the Cheshunt Foundation. International ministerial exchange programmes bring us students and ordinands of other churches. All these people tell us it is an encouraging experience for them. With the support of our fellowship in college they can launch into the larger world of the Theological Federation and the two universities to which we have immediate access. In addition to all the learning programmes you might expect in our college we have much more to offer, such as hands-on computer courses for those new to technology, specialist work in Jewish-Christian relations, worship in many traditions and a range of cultural activities in the city.

5.3 Much the largest single group of people is those preparing for ministry in the URC. In recent years our membership of the Cambridge Theological Federation, has enabled us to crack a long-term problem in ministerial training – how to offer an appropriate course for all our entrants. By appropriate we mean tailored to the needs of both the individual and the Church. All these courses demand pastoral development as well as extending thinking skills. Every student going forward for ordination in the URC must satisfactorily complete a year of pastoral placement, with weekly reflection in college on their experience. We are immensely grateful to the local churches who support our students in their placements. The work of the Federation and Cambridge University Divinity Faculty was subject to QAA inspection in November 2001. The Federation teaching and pastoral support for the Bachelor of Theology degree was found satisfactory in every respect and the standing of the Federation in the university enhanced.

5.4 A place to meet - The college is a distinguished building, even by Cambridge standards. It has not always been a comfortable one and is subject to the same processes of obsolescence as many a church building which has served its first hundred years. We want it to be

a place where we enjoy modest comforts and share them with the wider church, who come to us for meetings and conferences. The college belongs to the whole Church and we want it to be accessible for those who perhaps have never thought of it as a place for them. Perhaps a local church might like to use us as a base for a visit to Cambridge, have tea with us and tour the college. The URC History Society Library, which used to be available at Tavistock Place, is now open at the college. We can sometimes offer a room for a few nights for an individual who wants to carry out research with us, or elsewhere. With all these kinds of uses in mind we have been steadily improving the residential and communal areas. Plans for housing our much increased Library have begun to be considered. Meanwhile we have regular maintenance commitments and a rolling programme of works.

5.5 A reference point - With the URC History Society Library a great many other archives and artefacts found their way to Cambridge and much time has been spent in the last year coming to grips with the problems this created. The staff and volunteers have been carrying through the Resolution of Assembly which called for the distribution of local church holdings to appropriate Record Offices. We are all in the debt of Revd Elizabeth Brown, Richard and Jean Potts, who volunteered to help in this demanding task. The Church should be under no illusions about the magnitude of the work which has been done, nor the continuing tasks of indexing and cataloguing which remain for the college to do. On the positive side this large addition to the already large college library makes Westminster the primary reference resource for the whole Church. It has collections of international significance. Bringing all the URC owned libraries to Cambridge also means that they are joining the on-line catalogue of Cambridge University Library. Scholars, including those in partner churches around the world will find it much easier to know what we hold which could be of assistance to them.

5.6 A place of thanksgiving - At our Commemoration of Benefactors this year we not only recalled the honoured names of the past but gave thanks for the service which David Cornick has given to the college, both as Director of the Cheshunt Foundation and then Principal. Our preacher was Revd Dr Lesley Hesselbee and the lecture was given by Professor Alan Sell. We gave thanks also for the gifts of our leavers, who were:  
Andrew Berry to Melton Mowbray, Yolande Burns to Wisbech, Sian Collins to Kenton and Kingston Park, Les Mather to Eastbourne, Jon Morgan to Blundellsands, Nigel Warner to Braintree and Kathy White to East Grinstead.

# Appendix 10

## Review of Youth & Children's Work in the United Reformed Church

2002

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### Background

During 2000 the Youth and Children's Work Committee of the United Reformed Church instigated a review of the youth and children's work within the denomination. In order that this review could cover the whole scene the Training Committee agreed that the YCWT programme should be included in it.

#### Areas of Concern

Whilst celebrating everything that is being achieved in work with children and young people the committee was concerned about falling numbers in our churches. At the same time it is important to make sure that our resources – in people, money and time – are used to their greatest effect. Everything associated with youth and children's work in the United Reformed Church is within the remit of this strategic review. However, it was decided that particular attention should be given to the key elements of the present programmes. The review should consider how this work is connected to synods, district councils and local churches. It should build on work already done (notably in the FURY review), and at present in process at Yardley Hastings and elsewhere.

#### Terms of Reference

##### Generally:

- To review the strategy of youth and children's work in the URC and the ways in which it is implemented, at Assembly, synod, district and local church level, with recommendations of any changes felt to be necessary in the light of changing needs and opportunities.

##### In particular:

- To review the role and operation of the Youth and Children's Work Committee, and its staff secretaries, and to make any recommendations for change.
- To review the role and operation of the National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings, its relationship to the whole work with children and young people, and to make any recommendations for change.

- To review the Pilots' organisation, its relationship to the whole work with children and young people, and to make any recommendations for change.
- To review the nature and operation of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth (FURY), its relationship to the whole work with children and young people, and to make any recommendations for change.
- To review the relationship between youth and children's work in the United Reformed Church and the Department for Education and Employment, and to make any recommendations for change.
- To review the YCWT programme, its synodical management and relationship to the national church, its relationship to the whole work with children and young people, and to make any recommendations for change.

### COMPOSITION OF REVIEW GROUP

The committee invited the following people to serve on the Review Group:

Revd Elizabeth Caswell – Convener  
 Revd Derek Lindfield – Convener, Y&CWC  
 Revd Kathryn Price – Convener elect, Y&CWC  
 Mr John Marshall – FURY Council  
 Mr Graham Stacy – URC Treasurer  
 Mrs Anthea Coates – Training Committee  
 Mr Colin Ride – Methodist Church

Revd John Waller, Deputy General Secretary, has been in attendance at three meetings.

Mrs Sue Eason, Eastern Synod Moderator's PA, has acted as the Group's secretary.

### PROCESS

The Group has met seven times between April 2001 and January 2002, once residentially. Through *Reform* and *f2* it has invited submissions from individuals. It has also:

- Examined papers describing the history of this area of work in the United Reformed Church
- Conducted a telephone survey of 73 local churches
- Invited comments from all Synods
- Invited comments from all District and Synod Children's Work and Youth Work Secretaries, and Regional Pilots Officers



- Invited comments from URC Scout and Guide Fellowship; Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade
- Invited comments from under-26 representatives at 2001 General Assembly
- Representatives of the Group have conducted personal interviews with:
  - The Secretary for Youth Work
  - The Children's Advocate
  - The Pilots' Development Officer
  - The Centre Minister for the National Youth Resource Centre, Yardley Hastings; and received written submissions from them concerning their job descriptions, current work and vision for the future.
- Held face-to-face or telephone conversations with all Youth and Children's Work Training Officers or Youth Leadership Training Officers
- Met with the former Secretary for Training
- Attended two meetings concerning the DfES Social Inclusion Project, one being the Stakeholders Conference
- Attended a meeting of the Synod Managers for YCWT/YLTOs
- Attended a meeting of YCWT/YLTOs
- Attended FURY Council
- Attended FURY Assembly
- Met with FURY Chair 2001 and FURY Chair 2002
- Visited NYR Centre at Yardley Hastings twice, residentially
- Met with Yardley Hastings staff
- Met with Yardley Hastings Centre Manager
- Met with Yardley Hastings Community Team
- Met with members of Yardley Hastings United Reformed Church
- Held conversations with, or read correspondence from, others working in the field and other interested individuals

The Group wishes to record its sincere thanks to all those who have helped in its work, particularly Mrs Sue Eason for her secretarial work, Mrs Judith Johnson for supplying a list of churches for the random survey, and the Revd Colin Baxter for analysing the responses to the telephone survey, District and Synod responses and under-26 responses. We wish also to thank the Methodist Church for allowing Mr Colin Ride to serve on the Review Group and Colin himself for the contribution he made to the work.

We believe that although this process has been lengthy it has enabled us to gain an overview of youth and children's work in the United Reformed Church. It is simply not possible to examine every local situation or to acquire complete knowledge of a complex and diffuse area of work. But a blend of interviews, written submissions, random and targeted conversations and relevant documentation has enabled us to discern some issues which the Church needs to address.

Evidence comes in different forms: it can be anecdotal, statistical, historical. The church in general is not accustomed to evaluating its work, and struggles with finding suitable means of measuring the value of particular pieces of work. It is never as simple as numbers and categories, although they cannot be ignored.

At a meeting of Mission Council in 1996 the Revd Flora Winfield, the theological reflector, commented that every time youth and children's work was mentioned Mission Council came alive. She asked us to reflect on the possible reasons for this. Does a predominantly ageing and declining institution seek re-assurance by focussing on the young? In 2000 the General Assembly spent some £520,000 on its youth and children's work, which was matched by a further £200,000 of Synod funding. The 2002 agreed budget figures are £615,000 and £230,000 respectively. We need to reflect on what we are doing, why we are doing it, and how effective it is. Spending money is not in itself a sign of effectiveness; on the other hand reducing expenditure is not necessarily better stewardship. We cannot afford to evade those critical questions

- What are we doing?
- Why are we doing it?
- How effective is it?

## HISTORY

An outline story of youth and children's work in the URC

### **In 1974 and 1975 the main foundations of a youth and children's strategy were agreed by Assembly:**

- District & Synod Youth Committees to be set up
- Local churches to set up Youth Councils (wherever practicable) and to make efforts to include the uniformed organisations
- All Provinces be asked to appoint a Provincial Youth Leadership Training Officer
- The invitation by the Baptist Youth Movement to participate in 'Time for God' be accepted
- Each District Council urged to include at least one young person in its Assembly representation
- District Councils encouraged to commend "Equipped to Teach" to the churches
- Publication of new "Partners in Learning" welcomed
- Support for the Christian Education Movement affirmed

### **Among significant developments in the following years were:**

- 1979
  - Following a study on "Decline and Growth" it was recognised that the church is a worshipping and learning community of all ages, and agreed that a programme in support should be prepared
  - Appointment of 6 regional YLTOs agreed, subject to financial provision
- 1981
  - Zambia/India project for young people agreed ('Together' project developed)
- 1982
  - 1979 resolution on 6 YLTOs repeated, with implementation by 1984
  - Agreed that the major service in every URC on 27 February 1983 should be conducted by young people, building on the Worship Project
- 1983
  - Churches asked to review ministry to children in the light of the Children and Worship project

## Appendix 10

- Boys Brigade congratulated on its centenary
- Churches with uniformed organisations asked to examine the relationship between them and the organisations

1984

- Publication of "How can a child choose Faith?" noted and churches urged to consider how children and adults can be nurtured in the Christian faith

**Up to about this point the Children's Work Committee seems to have worked largely in tandem with the Christian Education Committee.**

**Changes of emphasis can be seen in some of the following years:**

1986

- The work of Pilots commended in the light of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations
- Creation of National Youth Training Officer post agreed, subject to funding

1987

- Districts and Provinces urged to appoint a Children's Work Secretary if they have not already done so
- Owing to success of two Ginger Groups, a 3 year extension of programme encouraged

**These bore fruit in a number of further changes and appointments:**

1988

- New short term staff post directed to work especially with 11-14s
- National Youth Training Officer appointed
- Goal of one YLTO per Province agreed

1989

- Discussion of "Children in Communion" encouraged
- Time for God silver jubilee celebrated
- 12% increase in Pilots companies noted and modernisation of the movement encouraged
- Change from YLTO to Youth and Children's Work Training Officers agreed in principle, where they are employed full-time by one Province
- New FURY Project adopted and a national appeal authorised
- *Charter for Children* launched

1991

- Appointment of ? time Master Pilot for 5 years from 1 September 1992 agreed
- Report of 11-14 working party received, including recommendation for closer integration of children's and youth work
- Post of Children's Advocate promoted
- Jamaica Exchange project began

1992

- Training for those beginning to work with children or young people encouraged
- Post of Children's Advocate approved subject to finance
- The National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings opened
- Youth Committee reconstituted and FURY Council created

(In 1994 a restructuring of Assembly committees was agreed. Youth and Children's Work Committee created bringing two previously separate pieces of work together. YCWTs placed under the oversight of Training Committee)

1995

- Children's Advocate appointed
- Good Practice pack well received
- Local churches encouraged to receive FURY Information Service

**The next period was marked by more development and reflection:**

1996

- Mission Council agreed extra funds for Yardley Hastings for 1996 and 1997
- In the light of 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pilots, churches urged to see formation of companies as a means of growth in their work with children and young people
- Plans made to celebrate 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of FURY in May 1997

1997

- Mission Council decided to end post of National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer and to devolve management of YCWTs to synods over a period
- Agreement reached for the post of Pilots' Development Officer
- Jamaica exchange project completed

1999

- Recommendations of FURY review reported to Assembly

## WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD

### A. Local Churches

Observation and surveys tell the same story: most of our local Sunday congregations contain a small number of children and young people. Numbers printed in the annual returns tend to be inflated. When numbers in each age band are low this can create difficulties in delivering appropriate Christian education. Children who attend church regularly tend (like adult congregants) to attend less frequently than people did a few years ago.

However, there are interesting developments: a minority of churches is experimenting with mid-week worship and education, for children and adults. These parallel congregations are usually targeted – pre-school children and carers, "shoppers", teenagers etc.

Some churches are also changing what they offer on Sundays: more all-age worship, more 'club' format children's activities on Sunday mornings, more acknowledgement that some rudimentary provision needs to be made for the unexpected child visitor (a 'children's corner'). However, there is a significant number of churches with no children present on a Sunday and some whose pattern of worship has changed little in the last fifty years.

Separated families and the changing use of Sunday for shopping and sport has made a major impact on churches. The quality of what we do 'as church' on Sunday morning matters; so does our willingness to be imaginative in responding to people's spiritual needs at a time and in a form that is relevant. Service times that fit a bus timetable that is years out of date, or milking times in a congregation with no farmers, are ludicrous. We also need to learn how to acknowledge mid-week outreach, worship and education as legitimate expressions of 'church'.

A minority of churches use *Partners in Learning* (to be discontinued and replaced by *Roots* after July 2002). Scripture Union 'SALT' material is used more widely; but there is a range of published material being used, as well as churches producing their own.

There is a growing use of rotas for Sunday children's work, enabling adults to join in the main worship service on a regular basis. However, there is some reluctance to engage in training. It is hard to recruit URC people onto *Kaleidoscope* and *Spectrum* courses, even when URC trainers are providing them. Other denominations tend to insist on proper training before people begin working with children. The word insist is not in the URC vocabulary.

*The Good Practice Guide* (now updated) has encouraged higher standards; but a minority of churches have seen its advice as threatening and have felt unable to initiate or even maintain work because of staffing levels and other requirements.

Youth and Children's Work Training Officers have done valuable work in the Synods in advocating good practice and in helping churches to implement change. The responsibility for good practice does, however, rest with each local church.

Local churches are in contact with much larger numbers of young people who participate in mid-week activities – Pilots, clubs, uniformed groups, playgroups. In theory all those in the right age category (11-25) are members of FURY. In practice this is not always communicated to the young people. Churches in contact with large numbers of young people may have little to do with FURY. However, there is much to celebrate in the work of church based youth groups. Young people from within and beyond the church meet on Sunday evenings or mid-week for a variety of activities. Sometimes these groups are described as FURY, more often they are given a locally chosen name. Many churches offer groups and clubs which encourage young people in their personal development and give them opportunities for spiritual growth. At a time when statutory authorities have been reducing their provision for young people churches should not underestimate the importance of what they do in this area. The Review Group was impressed by the commitment of churches to this work, involving as it does a willingness to give time and money to work with children and young people whether or not they have church connections. Although it was not specifically mentioned by the local churches contacted in the phone survey the Review Group is aware that one valuable aspect of such local youth work is time spent away together: at Yardley Hastings, at other youth centres or simply using facilities at local churches, as individual youth groups or as part of District or Synod events.

Churches which have European partners may also involve their young people in group exchange opportunities.

There are currently 30% of our local churches which have Scout or Guide companies associated with them (including the appropriate groups for younger children). In 2001, after consultation between the URC and the Scout Association, a URC Scout Chaplain was appointed who is attempting to create a network of Synod Chaplains. A major internal review of Scouting has led to a greater emphasis on the spiritual dimension of their work; after the launch of their new programme in 2002 it is anticipated that local churches with sponsored groups will have greater opportunities to work with Scouts/Cubs etc on the spiritual aspects of their activities.

There is also a good number of churches which have Boys and Girls Brigade Companies. These are specifically church based, with the local minister usually acting as chaplain. They provide a Christian approach to faith issues, and can provide an effective evangelistic setting.

Most uniformed groups still have parade services on a regular basis. These are often held less frequently than they were, but continue to be the main focus of all-age worship in many of our churches. They have the potential for sowing seeds of faith, and attracting families to the life of the church. They can also, of course, at their worst give credence to the idea that church services are boring and irrelevant. Many of the most committed children's and youth workers in the church are serving as Scout Leaders, Guiders or Brigade Officers. These organisations provide good quality programmes with national affiliation, and levels of local and regional organisation which aim to achieve consistency in training, accreditation and standards.

It is a matter of disappointment that some churches say they have no children when they do have uniformed groups meeting regularly on church premises. Promoting this work as a real partnership for the good of the children and young people should be a priority for the churches concerned.

Not all children wish to belong to single-gender, uniformed groups. Pilots is the United Reformed Church's non-uniformed youth and children's work organisation. It is church run and church owned, and is currently enjoying considerable growth (see separate section).

Some local and county authorities have made significant cut-backs in youth work provision; this has led to an increased importance for church-run detached or open youth and children's work. Many churches run Holiday Clubs, often in co-operation with schools, building on the valuable contacts made by ministers (and others) who regularly lead school Assemblies. This in itself is a valuable aspect of open work and forms a critical part of the ministry of local churches to their communities.

Across the country there is a growing number of Christian Schools workers, usually employed and funded ecumenically. There is also a burgeoning of locally employed church-based children's and youth workers developing the provision which churches can make, often because of a dearth of volunteers. Levels of training and competence are not consistent, and an emerging role of Synod YCWTs is in giving advice on such employment; the

YCWTs frequently play an active role in supporting the ongoing work of such employees.

The role of volunteers should not be minimised. Enthusiastic individuals who give generously of their time can motivate others to share in responding to local needs. Churches should not underestimate the worth of what they do.

Increasingly churches will be working ecumenically, both with committed young people and in open work. Such work may result from, or be creative of, real mutual commitment among local churches; it will certainly involve theological debate and an openness to a variety of spiritualities. Ecumenical developments can cause tensions when Districts seek to involve young people in FURY events across a much wider geographical area. In some places this is overcome by making all members of a youth group, whatever their church origin, into FURY members.

Young people make use of summer holidays and 'gap' years to participate in a variety of programmes: some join the Community Team at Yardley Hastings, others participate in overseas visits which broaden their experience and give them opportunities for learning and serving. The 'Belonging to the World Church' programme of the URC can help with advice and funds, as will the World Exchange programme. Churches often have their own overseas links so that individuals or whole groups can make (and receive) visits. EU funding can be accessed regionally for such exchanges in some instances. It was good that the Pilgrim 2000 visit to the Holy Land deliberately included young people. A group of six young people also visited Bangladesh in 1998 under the auspices of Christian Aid/Commitment for Life.

Issues that emerge from considering local church work with children and young people are:

- The desire of most churches to pass on their faith in Jesus Christ to the next generation, in order that young people may live fulfilled lives, and be enabled to make informed spiritual and moral choices.
- The need for churches to develop imaginative new ways of doing things appropriate to today's children and young people, and to a particular church's available gifts.
- The key role of ministers in encouraging helpful change in the light of contemporary culture and in enabling churches to find the resources they need.
- The need for a change of mind-set, so that training is seen as a gift, not a threat or burden.
- The necessity for appropriate training designed to meet the needs of children's and youth workers.

#### **B. District/Area Councils**

Work among children and young people at District level is patchy. In one Synod every District has children's and youth secretaries who create a network of mutual encouragement among the churches, and organise District events and training. Elsewhere, few Districts will have such postholders and it falls to the District Secretary to pass on relevant information to the churches, or not.

The churches which have participated and benefited most from District and Synod events are those with small numbers of children and young people. It is important for them to join in activities with people from other churches, and realise that they are part of something bigger. Larger churches could play a key role in sharing leadership and resources for such special events. The greatest problem mentioned by local churches, Districts and Synods is the difficulty of finding volunteers. The fact that most voluntary groups and charities report the same thing is of small comfort.

At each level of church life the key factor is committed, enthusiastic leadership. Current patterns of working life militate against the involvement of working-age adults in evening children's and youth groups. The development of teams is essential if there is to be consistency of provision, yet many places struggle to find one person to help.

District initiatives may be unrealistic in scattered areas; we have to ask whether or not the attempt to maintain a uniform pattern across the Church is necessary. Tailor-made approaches, responding to the reality in each District have proved to be successful.

The ecumenical factor will often be the key to effective youth work locally, as churches pool their resources. The role of the District may then be to share stories of such developments and to maintain a network for mutual encouragement rather than to organise an extra layer of activity with all the demands which that places on people (including the young people themselves). However, we should not lose sight of the fact that in some Districts there is effective work being done which should be encouraged.

Issues that emerge from considering District work with children and young people:

- What is the role of District Council in encouraging and supporting children's and youth work given the great variety of circumstances?
- How can that role best be carried out?
- How can the meetings of District Councils foster helpful story telling and sharing of good practice?
- What local support is offered to District children's and youth work secretaries?
- Is District the level where paid training/development posts would be most effective?
- Are there other models of support that should be explored?
- Should we be encouraging young people to participate in District Councils?

#### **C. Synods**

Nine Synods made written comments; they included three which have been or are currently reviewing their development and training provision, including youth and children's work. Two other Synods of those which did not reply are similarly engaged in internal review of posts and structures. That five out of thirteen Synods are considering re-structuring is in itself highly significant: we are becoming less centralised. Many synods have the funding to determine their own priorities and programmes. This has been helped by the inter-synod resource sharing programme. The exception to this is the Youth and Children's Work Training programme

which was set up (initially as Youth Leadership Training) in the very early years of the United Reformed Church, funded by money from the then Department for Education and Science.

National posts were deployed in Synods, with two Synods usually sharing one officer. Over time this sharing has ended, with each Synod having its own officer and paying half the costs. The Assembly now bears the other half of the cost directly, which in 2001 amounted to £259,000

It is increasingly difficult to find volunteers to fill District and Synod Youth and Children's Secretary posts. Where people are in post some report lack of support and lack of clarity about what they should be doing.

The picture across the Synods is bafflingly varied. In one Synod every District has both children's and youth secretaries as does the Synod itself; in other places there are none. One has abandoned the YCWT programme because of "a lack of young people and children in the churches." Two Synods are running successful, well-attended events; others have had to cancel events, even after lengthy and careful preparation.

Some Synods organise regular or occasional youth or children's gatherings alongside their Synod meetings: adults are asked to bring one or two young people with them so that transport costs are minimised, and Synod and FURY can appreciate each others' presence. Some find the pressures of Saturday jobs make this impractical, and have developed the practice of 24 hour gatherings which begin early evening Saturday, combined with occasional weekends or even week-long camps. Some Synods also organise youth journeys e.g. to Taizé or Iona or to overseas partner churches.

The key to success appears to be enthusiastic and hard-working leadership, effective networking and communication, flexibility and teamwork. The Synods which are seeing success in organising events are those which match a vision for what they are doing with organisational flair and commitment of funds and leadership.

- What are the issues which emerge?
- The tension between the variety of Synod practice and maintaining a common identity
- The need for development work at local level
- The importance of team-work
- A growing need for expertise in employment and management
- An expressed desire for more paid workers at local and District level
- The value of good large-scale youth events in encouraging young people and their leaders
- The importance of good communication
- The importance of lateral thinking
- The need for enthusiasm and inspired leadership

**D. Youth & Children's Work Committee**

*Committee Remit*

This committee supports, encourages and promotes work among children and young people, including the policy for the YLTO and YCWT Programme, giving oversight to Pilots, the National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley

Hastings, and relates to FURY Council. It also ensures that its concerns are fully taken into account in the 'Doctrine, Prayer & Worship', 'Church & Society' and 'Life & Witness' committees, facilitating the involvement of young people in all the councils of the Church.

*Membership*

The committee comprises a convener, a secretary and 12 other members, two of whom represent FURY. The four staff members are in attendance.

The committee meets residentially three times a year at weekends, normally at Yardley Hastings. The residential format is intended to enable committee members and staff to get to know each other and therefore work together more effectively. Unfortunately it has not been uncommon for some members to be absent and others to arrive late or leave early.

At this stage in its life the committee is clearly wrestling with the issues which caused it to set up a comprehensive review. The committee finds it difficult to distinguish between the tasks of: a) carrying out the General Assembly's vision for Youth and Children's Work and b) furnishing General Assembly with such a vision. The committee meetings have been heavily dominated by a business agenda which reflects the work carried out on behalf of Assembly but which gives scant attention to supporting Youth and Children's Work locally. The special contribution of the committee members is that they are able to bring particular knowledge and experience of such work from churches, Districts/Areas and Synods across the country, enabling the committee to identify pressing issues of concern. An agenda which is biased towards specific programmes can leave committee members frustrated and can also frustrate staff who perceive an ignorance in the committee about the broader range of their work. The committee is unusual in having four members of staff attached to it. The relationship between the staff and the committee members needs to be clarified, including issues of accountability, staff roles in servicing the committee and the convener and committee secretary's roles in management and agenda setting. It was unfortunate that the change of Convener, in 1998, overlapped with the appointment of three new staff members. The committee as a whole is unsure as to whether it is meant to serve as a sounding board for staff or to be directing their work. The staff would like to be able to look to the committee for strategy and identification of the big issues.

The Deputy General Secretary acts as line manager for the four members of staff but the role is supervisory and pastoral and there seems to be no provision for professional management.

Members of the committee represent its concerns for children and young people on other Assembly committees. This significantly increases the time commitment required of them. It is not clear that the Nominations Committee alerts potential committee members to this heavy workload. Committee members serve for a single term of four years; this gives little time for becoming familiar with the many areas of work and can lead to a feeling of impotence. This has led to some members feeling deskilled. This is beginning to be addressed.

## Appendix 10

The committee has specific responsibilities with regard to policy and programme. These are exercised in different ways. The YLTO/YCWT Programme is overseen by the Training Committee, managed by Synods, with the practicalities of employment being dealt with by the Personnel office, and the Youth and Children's Work Committee being responsible for policy. This division of responsibility is unnecessarily confusing. Both the National Youth Resource Centre and Pilots have their own management committees on which the Youth & Children's work Committee is represented. The Chair of FURY and one other FURY council member are members of the committee, but there is no reciprocal membership; support for FURY officers and FURY Council is given by the presence of the Secretary for Youth Work.

It should be noted that the Review was advocated by the Committee in order to address issues of concern and frustration. The fact of conducting it has facilitated some improvement but substantial issues remain to be tackled.

Issues that emerge from considering the role and the work of the Committee are:

- Do we require a new vision for Youth and Children's Work?
- Is the present committee structure an appropriate way to manage Youth and Children's work?
- How is the agenda formed and carried forward?
- How can the working relationships between committee and staff continue to be improved?
- What is the appropriate oversight and support required for different areas of work?
- Is there a need for clearer delineation of roles, particularly with regard to management?

### E. Role and Operation of Staff Secretaries

*Centre Minister for the National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings*

The Centre Minister, the Revd Liz Byrne, was appointed in 1998. Over the last three and a half years this ministry has provided leadership to the centre.

Achievements of this post include:

- Renewed energy and confidence
- Better advocacy and promotion
- High standards of provision of worship
- Development of popular courses e.g. Jigsaw weekends despite overall drop in bookings
- Improvement in numbers of Community Team members and their support and length of stay, reversing a period of decline.
- Collaborative working with YCWTs.

This post is due for Review during 2002/3

*Children's Advocate*

The post of Children's Advocate was created by General Assembly in 1995 and Mrs Rosemary Johnston was appointed. The post was reviewed after five years and Assembly renewed the post and Rosemary's appointment.

Achievements of this post include:

- Encouragement of inclusion of children in every part of the local church's life.
- Promotion of good materials for Christian education
- Production and promotion of inclusive worship materials
- Theological reflection on children and the church
- Creation and maintenance of an effective database and network of District and Synod Children's secretaries
- Production of an information network (URCHIN)
- Creation of website and resources
- Major revision of *Good Practice Guide* (with Secretary for Youth Work)
- Collaborative working with YCWTs

This post is due for review during 2004/5

*Pilots Development Officer*

The full-time post of Pilots Development Officer commenced in October 1998 originally funded by the CWM 'Gift of Grace'. It is now fully funded by the URC with an annual contribution from the Congregational Federation towards expenses. Mrs Karen Bulley is in her fourth year in post.

Achievements of this post include:

- Development of the affiliation scheme
- Agreement of a new constitution
- Writing and production of new programme materials and regular editions of *Bridge*
- Improved publicity, image and advocacy
- Recruitment and support of Regional Pilots Officers
- Development of training programme
- Collaborative working with YCWTs
- Ecumenical networking

This post is due for Review during 2002/3.

*Secretary for Youth Work*

Ms Lesley-Anne di Marco was appointed in 1998.

Achievements of this post include:

- Successful application for URC involvement in DfEE Social Inclusion project
- Support and monitoring of this project
- Collaborative working with YCWTs
- Support of FURY Assembly and Council
- Interaction with National Youth Resource Centre
- Major revision of *Good Practice Guide* (with Children's Advocate)
- Encouragement of high standards of health and safety and child protection compliance
- Participation in ecumenical and professional networks

This post is due for Review in 2002/3

### General Staffing Issues

The four staff members are often referred to as a team; however team work is not part of the job descriptions. The staff quite properly keep largely to their own areas of work except when specific tasks e.g. revision of *Good Practice Guide* or events e.g. FURY Assembly require team-work. If a greater sense of 'team' were thought to be beneficial to the work then there would need to be discussion of which model of team it would be appropriate to operate.

There has been some clarification of budget responsibility recently; some further clarification of which office handles particular matters would be welcome. It would be helpful if some level of administrative support could be agreed for the officers of FURY.

Line management and appropriate induction of new post-holders deserve attention. The current round of staff Reviews gives a useful opportunity to harmonise job descriptions and clarify reporting and accounting systems.

### F. National Youth Resource Centre, Yardley Hastings

The National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings was launched in 1991 as part of the New FURY Project as a development from the Ginger Groups which had lived together in community and travelled to local churches to lead worship and youth-orientated events. The centre was intended to resource the life of FURY, offering a place of focused learning and equipping for a Community Team who would work with the chaplain and paid staff to welcome groups of young people and work with them for a weekend, or longer period. It was also to be a venue for FURY Council and other URC committees, and possibly be seen as the base for Assembly youth and children's work.

From its inception the Resource Centre has shared the time of a stipendiary minister with Yardley Hastings United Reformed Church, with whom they also share the building. The ratio of time spent on the two parts of the job has been adjusted as the membership of the church has increased. It now stands at 75% centre: 25% church. The post-holder is now known as the Centre Minister. It was a matter of concern that there had been no formal agreement for the sharing of the building.

The Centre is overseen by a management committee on which the Youth & Children's Work Committee, FURY Council, the local church and District Council are all represented.

On a day to day basis the centre is run by a loyal and dedicated staff, including a Centre Manager. The post of full-time Administrator has been vacant for over a year, with the duties being fulfilled by two part time staff. There has been some confusion of roles between staff members, including the minister; communication at the centre has been poor, and lines of decision-making and responsibility not always sufficiently clear. Both community team members and visitors making bookings have sometimes perceived administration to be unsatisfactory. The members of the church are highly committed to the centre, but can feel short-changed in terms of the minister's time. There have been issues around providing training for new community team

members, and in providing them with appropriate support and pastoral care. This highlights the difficulty of fulfilling split roles: "boss"/chaplain, centre/church.

Over the last few years bookings at the centre have decreased markedly. Events have had to be cancelled, and the level of contribution from Assembly funds has increased. It is inevitably difficult to attract visitors during the week, but there is a welcome take-up by schools; however, the centre is not financially viable unless it sustains a healthy number of bookings at weekends.

Young people find travelling to the centre expensive and awkward. The cost of staying at the centre makes it an expensive choice for young adults. This is before the increase in charges proposed for 2003.

It has become increasingly difficult to recruit FURY members to the Community Team. The pattern of serving for one year, beginning in September, has given way to a more flexible approach, with Team members staying for variable lengths of time, and commencing at any time of the year. This has helped provide a wider scope of opportunity, but it has also made induction and training for Team members more difficult. None of the staff at Yardley Hastings is professionally trained in youth work. There have been issues around the management of the centre, including health and safety procedures and protocols. These have largely been dealt with, but still need to be properly documented.

The most popular sessions at the Centre are the Jigsaw weekends (successor to Pick 'n Mix). Local churches or District groups spend a weekend of varied activities and worship. Some of the specialist holiday weeks e.g. Theatre week have also remained popular. Visitors comment on the excellent quality of the food; the accommodation is adequate, although ten years from its opening the centre does need a planned programme of re-decoration and refurbishment.

This is a critical phase in the life of the centre. The management has worked hard to reduce the projected Assembly contribution for 2001 by 35% over the first nine months of that year. Nevertheless the anticipated contribution from Assembly required for 2003 (excluding stipend) is £125,000.

Over the last six months there has been a marked improvement in the atmosphere and spirit at Yardley Hastings. The sense of vision has been re-captured, and community team numbers have increased, with team members asking to stay longer. The centre minister, together with staff and team, are to be congratulated on continuing to seek out God's vision despite the difficulties and disappointments of recent years.

Issues which have emerged:

- What is the purpose of the centre within the URC's provision for Youth and Children's work?
- Level of use of Centre by URC young people
- How effective is the present management structure?
- How can internal communication be improved?
- Training and support for Community Team
- Refurbishments

**G. Pilots**

Pilots is an area of particular growth within the children's work of the United Reformed Church. The original concept was a sharing between LMS/CWM and the Congregational Union/Church which initiated a themed children's programme around the missionary journeys in the South Pacific of the John Williams ships.

With the inception of the United Reformed Church in 1972 Pilots came under its ownership, though close partnership with the Congregational Federation has continued. A Master Pilot used to co-ordinate the work, and printed programme material and magazines have resourced local companies. The concept of mission journey gives a framework for the programme, as does nautical terminology: its core values are respect for children and young people and encouragement for them to value themselves as they participate in worship, learning and service. The non-uniformed groups are for boys and girls, and attract youngsters from a wide range of backgrounds into a church-based, world focussed programme through which they are helped to grow in the Christian faith and given the opportunity to respond to God. In many companies up to two thirds of the children have no other contact with church.

In 1998, following the retirement of the Master Pilot, the United Reformed Church undertook to employ a full-time Pilots Development Officer. Since that time there has been a major relaunch of the organisation: high production values for programme material and advertising, coupled with good organisation, have revitalised Pilots. There is now an affiliation system for all companies which helps to fund the production of materials, and more importantly, gives greater consistency of values and standards, including Good Practice. A network of volunteer Regional Pilots Officers is being strengthened and developed to offer support and advice to new companies. The work continues to be in collaboration with the Congregational Federation, who contribute £2-3,000 annually towards the expenses of the development officer post. A new constitution has been agreed which offers places on the management committee to each sponsoring denomination which has companies, on a pro-rata basis according to the percentage of companies belonging to each denomination. The Methodist Church and the Church of Scotland are both exploring the benefits of Pilots.

By 2001 the number of Pilots companies had increased to 145, 60% of companies having been formed in the last three years. The summer of 2001 saw a suitably exuberant and well-attended celebration, when nearly 3,000 Pilots met at Cadbury World.

What issues emerge from this:

- The need to learn from success
- The importance of good organisation
- The value of affiliation
- Good support for volunteers and local groups
- Good record-keeping and communication
- Managing growth

**H. FURY**

The Fellowship of United Reformed Youth notionally comprises all the young people aged 11-25 in The United Reformed Church. It has an annual Assembly at which each District/Area is entitled to have two voting members and one observer. There is a largely representative Council, which meets residentially three times a year. FURY is represented at General Assembly and on Mission Council and elects representatives to serve on other bodies e.g. the Churches Together in England Youth Forum. 'New' FURY was launched in 1991 as an attempt to make this layer of church life more inclusive and involving of young people. The National Youth Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings was to be the focus of its life. It adopted a mission statement and a structure.

As there is no formal membership it is hard to ascertain how many members there are. The local churches' annual returns give the only information we have as to how many people in the FURY age range belong to our denomination. But to use 'belong' begs the question: the young person who is a baptised and confirmed church member worshipping regularly and sharing fully in church life, is counted in exactly the same way as is the young person who comes to Guides once a week but is actually a worshipping member of another denomination, or the young person who attends a youth club sporadically. Even when we look at the total figure (80,000) we do not know what we are seeing: some church officers will have worked hard to avoid counting the same person more than once... others will have simply added up the totals from each organisation ignoring the fact that one young person may belong to several groups.

If there are 80,000 members of FURY why do Districts/Areas struggle to find people who wish to attend FURY Assembly? Those who come along usually enjoy it, but District/Area and Synod networks are virtually non-existent in many parts of the country. There were just 66 voting members at this year's FURY Assembly; plus a further 35 observers (one allowed per District/Area). Because the representatives are not actually representing anyone, or meeting each other regularly, there are few resolutions brought for debate except by FURY Council itself. Those resolutions which emerge during the event have had to be drafted at the last minute.

There is now no Assembly sponsored FURY programme apart from events run at Yardley Hastings and support events for FURY and General Assemblies. The international dimension has not been particularly evident over the last few years, but there are specific plans to remedy this. The development of the FURY website ([www.furyonline.org.uk](http://www.furyonline.org.uk)) should help to provide a forum for a more effective sharing of news and ideas between Synods and Districts/Areas. The introduction of *f2* as a supplement to *Reform* on an approximately quarterly basis in place of *FURY National* is difficult to assess. There is no separate subscription list, and its availability to young people is dependent on the action of those who subscribe to *Reform*.

The ability of young people in the URC to participate in General Assembly and to run their own FURY Assembly is much admired by other denominations, and is to be cherished and affirmed. The heart of FURY in the recent



past has been FURY Council. In the absence of Synod FURY groups, however, the Council is operating in something of a vacuum.

FURY Council has a difficult-to-understand relationship with the Church. It is accountable to the Youth & Children's work Committee of the Church (not General Assembly) but the two groups meet together only in alternate years. The relationship that FURY Council has with the Youth Office appears to be misunderstood by many. Historically, DfEE funding for FURY Council led to it being set up as young-person run, servicing itself with such posts as Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. However, in recent years, since the United Reformed Church has funded the activities of FURY Council, the roles of Secretary and Treasurer are not so clear. FURY Treasurer appears to have little or no financial authority or control; the balance of secretarial workload between the FURY Council Secretary and the Youth Office is unclear.

Each Synod has a representative on FURY Council, to share information. However, it is not uncommon for several Synods' representatives to be absent from a FURY Council meeting. The role of Synod reps is summed up in the FURY Council guidelines thus "...the main activity is communicating... this communication should not be exclusively one way..." The difficulties encountered by some Synod reps in negotiating Synod and District communication pathways goes some way to explaining problems with sharing information. Synod reps gain personally from their experiences through FURY Council, but the benefit to Synods of these roles varies considerably.

Many young people are distanced from FURY and what it stands for. FURY Council is often seen as detached from young people of FURY age in the churches. There are many active young people in the United Reformed Church who have no explicit involvement with FURY, no sense of belonging to it, and who would not notice if it ceased to exist.

Issues that emerge from considering the role of FURY:

- Realistic membership
- Communication
- Identity
- District/Area and Synod networks
- Leadership
- New mission statement

#### **I. Department for Education and Skills (DfES)** *Formerly Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)*

##### *History*

The youth office has a history of being involved in government funded projects almost from the formation of the URC. The relationship with what was then the Department for Education and Science (DES) enabled the development of the YLTO/YCWT programme. Different programmes and projects have been funded over the years, as the nature of funding changed, including FURY Council.

In 1998, the URC made a successful application to develop a national project focusing on social exclusion and young people. The funding, requiring 50% match funding from the URC, was for a feasibility study in the first year followed by local church projects during the next two years, in England only.

The purpose was to enable local congregations to take part in projects which address the social exclusion of young people in their community, setting up 11 pilot programmes each year (notionally one per Synod) in each of 2 years, to undertake new initiatives with the disadvantaged, the disaffected, minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities. In addition one national project, The Black And Dynamic Conference, with black young people was included to address issues identified by the FURY Review and the Racial Justice Office and meets the DfES criteria.

The project was named 'Mission Possible'.

##### *Mission Possible*

As a result of difficulties in meeting the very tight time scales set by the DfEE, a successful request was made to the DfEE to allow the URC to use the proposed allocated funding for year 3 of the project to consolidate the work done in year 2.

The nine projects included: an alcohol-free bar, outreach youth work, a night drop-in for those at risk of offending, a video project.

Monitoring has been carried out by a Group accountable to the Youth and Children's Work Committee, which was set up after the feasibility study and meets regularly about every two months. It has six members including the Secretary for Youth Work and the external consultant.

Tim Barnes, the Consultant and Lesley Anne di Marco, the Secretary for Youth Work produced a critique in September 2001 (from which many of these facts have been taken). It concluded that there were clearly distinct advantages to continued involvement in the DfES Scheme of Grants for National Voluntary Youth Organisations (NYVO), with the proviso that any criteria set by the government resonate with the Church's mission.

All of the projects were invited to come together in November 2002 at a Stakeholders Conference, along with the Monitoring Group and a representative from the DfES as part of the evaluation process. It presented an excellent opportunity for workers on the projects to share their experiences (both personal and as part of their local church) of setting up a project, of process, of recognising achievement; of forming networks; of learning from one another; of the effect on local churches and communities; and very importantly how lessons learned can be shared with the wider church.

A Handbook to encompass stories and encourage further projects is in the process of being compiled by the consultant. It will include funding guides, a directory of Social Change, Good Practice Guidelines and countless other ideas. This Handbook is in the process of being compiled by the consultant.

*The next step*

The next step is to apply for the new programme of the DfES if the relationship is to continue. The Youth and Children's Work committee, meeting in November 2001, recognised the value of the projects to the communities and churches concerned, but felt that, in the light of the current financial situation, it could not support a request for match-funding (a possible £20,000) for such a small constituency a second time. Time was needed to evaluate fully the Mission Possible projects and to share the experience through the wider church. There was also concern that work in Wales and Scotland would be further neglected.

However, criteria have changed again and an application for funding a broader-based, though of necessity still England-only, programme, not requiring match-funding, has been submitted.

The objectives of this new programme are:

- To enable appropriate and relevant representation by young people involving the diverse youth work programme of the United Reformed Church
- To enable participation in management within the structures of the United Reformed Church of young people from the representative groups
- Develop the programme and young people's networks (FURY) on a regional basis
- Liaise with Synods in accordance with their local operation to facilitate the objectives
- Facilitate learning for young people and their workers with regard to participation, race and disability awareness and other associated issues, including those matters relating to poverty, rural isolation and crime in the context of both church and society
- To integrate the recommendations made by the United Reformed Church's review of youth and children's work (likely timescale for the review report July 2002)

The intended outcomes are for young people involved in local churches and projects to have equal access to the councils of the church at local, district, synod and national level; for a fairer representation of these people to participate more fully in these councils.

Issues which have emerged:

- Is it good to tie people in to the Government's agenda, with such tight time scales and with so few churches/people directly benefiting? Is it not a very expensive model of good practice?
- Is the church separate from secular life or integral?
- Should we, as a church, be forming society, not following it?
- Does being part of a Government Scheme like this take the Youth Work Secretary and colleagues away from their core tasks?
- Should the church consider ways of providing the money it has invested in this project without the need for it to be driven by external criteria e.g. will the *Black and Dynamic* (BAD) weekend continue without the funding?

- How do we ensure that the projects inform our youth work policy so that the nature of our programmes reflect the different backgrounds of the young people we are working with?
- Is it reasonable that a disproportionate amount of the URC's Youth & Children's Work budget should be spent on the English churches?

**J. Youth and Children's Work Training Programme**

Half the funding for this programme comes from the General Assembly which is the employer. One Synod has already forfeited Assembly funding in order to re-shape their training provision. Since 1994, the programme has come under the oversight of the Training Committee as the office holders are trainers and adult educators, coming from a variety of backgrounds.

When in 1997 the National Youth and Children's Training Officer post was ended, the management of the YCWTs and one remaining YLTO passed to their Synods. The managers are invited to regular meetings organised by the Training Committee, which has oversight of the programme. All YCWTs and the YLTO continue to be employees of the URC and are subject to its Staff Development Policy. They assume personal responsibility for professional development.

Synods, for the most part, continue to value what is done by these workers. However, the Synod of Scotland and Northern Synod do not have such posts, and two other Synods are considering change. YCWT work involves running training courses and events, working directly with local churches seeking to develop their work and supporting Synod and District Youth and Children's Secretaries (where they exist). Training offered is often organised ecumenically. Whilst the job title continues to emphasise the role of training church people to engage in youth and children's work, in reality an increasing amount of time is spent in developmental work, advising on new projects and on the setting up of paid posts, as well as contributing to the maintenance of effective networks and the organisation of events. They will almost certainly be part of a Synod Training and Development Team, and will continue to be expected, under current job descriptions, to offer some of their time to Assembly initiatives.

The YCWTs meet four times a year with the Secretary for Training who is currently the staff member responsible for the oversight and evolution of the programme. Management in the Synods is not always adequate – some YCWTs have had to train their own managers! Nor is there consistency in the provision of strategy or support structures. One area of concern is in the handling of personnel issues.

The size of Synods results in some YCWTs spending half their working hours driving to and from appointments. The housing of YCWTs can be a problem for a variety of reasons: like ministers they are expected (for the most part) to work from home. Housing costs vary widely across the country, which leaves some YCWTs having to live on the edge of their Synods in order to find suitable affordable housing; this in turn leads to more time spent travelling. This is a complex issue with no easy answers.

The majority of YCWTs come from non-URC backgrounds. This brings a welcome cross-fertilisation of ideas; but it is puzzling that a church which lays such an emphasis on youth and children's work has few people within its ranks who can give a professional lead.

The YCWT programme expects a contribution of time from each post-holder towards Assembly activities. The amount of time involved varies considerably. Much of what is offered is directed towards FURY. Some YCWTs are also involved in contributing to initial ministerial training, or to training courses run at Yardley Hastings, Windermere, or to particular events, e.g. the Pilots celebration at Cadbury World. The Secretary for Training normally attends the residential YCWT gatherings, together with some or all of the staff members of the Youth & Children's Work committee. It is not clear where responsibility and authority lie within the total group.

What issues emerge from a consideration of the YCWT programme?

- With limited financial resources where do we need paid workers most: locally, at District level or at Synod level?
- What should be the emphasis of the YCWT programme: training or development?
- Can this work satisfactorily be shared by two committees?
- How can consistency in management and personnel work be achieved?
- How does this programme serve any strategy for Youth and Children's work?
- How can this programme be best advocated to local Churches?

## THEOLOGY

The following paper on the theology of youth work was agreed by the Youth & Children's Work Committee in 2001.

### Introduction

The desire to think through a theology of youth work comes from three different directions: firstly, there is the constant agonising in local churches about 'how do we get young people into the church', born either of an indeterminate feeling that a church is not complete, or is even failing in some way, without young people in worship, or of a fear for the future demise of the church without a new generation to take up the baton. Then, there is the experience of those young people who are there and their sense of being a kind of 'church in waiting' – they enjoy their fellowship together, but feel alienated from the life of the local church they go back to. Finally there is the work going on outside the local church in schools, colleges, community projects, anywhere young people are found, which is often indistinguishable from 'secular' youth work.

Any attempt to address these issues needs to go back to first principles – not 'what do we do?', but 'why do we do it?' We have used the grand title 'theology' of youth work, because that is what it is: an examination of the work of God that takes place in ministry and our part in it. Only when we know why we are doing something, is it possible to take the next step and work out the what and how and where and when.

This is one way of looking at the issue – there are bound to be others. It is our hope that it will start a conversation, many conversations, that will go on and on, because there is no end to God's involvement with us.

### Working with God

Loving relationships are at the heart of all Christian ministry – our relationships with God, with other people and with ourselves.

The prime model for relationships that we are using comes from our understanding of the Trinity as God in community – as Creator, self-giving brother/friend, bound together by the inspiring Spirit. But the community of the Trinity is not a closed community: it offers an invitation of welcome into an inclusive relationship to all God's children, where we can all share in the work of God.

Jesus calls all who will follow to share in the work of discovering, proclaiming and extending God's rule of justice, peace, healing and new life. The work of ministry is to nurture people, purely for their own sake, within a Christian community or reaching out from it, as a response to that call. This ministry is shared responsibility within the whole church of God.

Elements of this ministry include:

- Making oneself vulnerable and available (*At once they left their nets and went with him. Mark 1.18*)
- Working 'with' not 'for' people; receiving as well as giving; being loved and loving (*You, then, should wash one another's feet. John 13.14*)
- Always striving to 'become' good news (... *that the world may know that you sent me and that you love them as you love me. John 17.23*)
- Being ready to offer and receive forgiveness and acceptance (*Do for others what you want them to do for you. Matthew 7.12*)
- Sharing journeys and stories (*Come and see the man who told me everything I have ever done. John 4.29*)
- Being prepared to challenge and be challenged by individuals, community and culture (*Who is my neighbour? Luke 10.29*)
- Enriching life for all (*I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness. John 10.10*)
- Responding to issues of justice (*He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away with empty hands. Luke 1.53*)
- Persisting in prayer and care in the face of resistance or hostility or indifference (*How many times I wanted to put my arms round all your people, just as a hen gathers her chicks under wings, but you would not let me! Matthew 23.37*)

This theology of ministry encompasses ministry with young people, ministry with children, ministry with people of all ages. However we know the Church is painfully discovering that there are special aspects of care involved when we work with children and young people, hence our policies on Good Practice and vetting of volunteers, etc. Adolescents and younger children can be particularly impressionable under the influence of strong older personalities. The safeguarding aspect of ministry should not be overlooked.

Nor should we be afraid of the ministries of leadership and teaching and confuse them with infallibility or a refusal to be vulnerable. Some young people who are searching for their own identity may need to encounter Christians who embody a degree of clarity and certainty at first, even if later on these individuals emerge as fully-rounded people with doubts and problems too.

Neither of these factors, though, should override the basic principles, but be aspects of the myriad ways ministry is carried out in so many different contexts.

#### *An Invitation*

The original work done by a very small group has been revised by the Youth & Children's Work committee, FURY Council and the secretary of Doctrine, Prayer and Worship committee, but it is not suggested that this is the final version, but more of a conversation starter for local churches, districts, synods. It is proposed, not so that church meetings can congratulate themselves or feel discouraged, but to encourage a new way of looking at the way we operate as church. It can be rewritten in a more local context, set alongside Biblical stories (the initial group were particularly inspired by the parable of the prodigal son), rejected and replaced with a different approach, used to develop a more specific theology of ministry with a different group of people. Responses would be welcomed and should be sent to the Youth & Children's Work committee and/or the Editor of *Reform*.

God's work of ministry goes on and on and changes and adapts to meet the needs and circumstances and contexts of the people involved. It is in that spirit of flexibility that this paper is offered to the church.

*Charter for Children in the Church* has been widely used both in the United Reformed Church and in many partner denominations.

#### *Towards a Charter for Children in the Church*

1. *Children are equal partners with adults in the life of the church.*
2. *The full diet of Christian worship is for children as well as adults.*
3. *Learning is for the whole church, adults and children.*
4. *Fellowship is for all – each belonging meaningfully to the rest.*
5. *Service is for children to give, as well as adults.*
6. *The call to evangelism comes to all God's people of whatever age.*
7. *The Holy Spirit speaks powerfully through children as well as adults.*
8. *The discovery and development of gifts in children and adults is a key function of the church.*

9. *As a church community we must learn to do only those things in separate age groups which we cannot in all conscience do together.*
10. *The concept of the 'Priesthood of all Believers' includes children.*

## **CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS**

### *Affirmation*

In the light of this theology of youth work accepted by the Youth and Children's Work Committee in 2001, and the Charter for Children, we affirm the following:

Children and young people are an integral part of the life and work of the whole United Reformed Church.

The URC values being an organisation in which different generations from all backgrounds meet with affection and respect and people's needs for acceptance and friendship are recognised, whatever their age.

The URC responds to its calling to share faith in Jesus Christ with people of all ages.

The URC affirms its responsibility to accept, nurture and care for children and young people, so that they may develop to their full spiritual potential, having the confidence to make their own life decisions and find their place in the local church and community.

The URC recognises that children and young people bring their own spiritual wisdom and experience to the life of the church.

The URC takes responsibility for enabling the whole church at its different levels to respond positively to the challenges in this statement, by seeking to take seriously the needs of local churches in the light of contemporary influences and events, and to promote excellence and best practice in all its work.

Most youth and children's work takes place in the local church, in Sunday worship, Junior Church, Pilots, uniformed organisations, after-school clubs, playgroups, open youth clubs, school assemblies, through ecumenical relationships...

The role of Districts and Synods is to support this work in practical ways: acting as a channel of communication, organising occasional large-scale activities, offering training and guidance on a range of topics.

The Youth and Children's Work Committee and its programmes and staff further and develop this work across the church, by providing theological reflection, training, up-to-date information, advice, resource materials, information exchange, support structures and wider perspectives and contacts.

In conducting this review and in reaching conclusions for the future, we have used this understanding of youth and children's work in the URC as a way of measuring the need for and the effectiveness of current work and practice.

*Recommendations*

The Review Group, having reflected on the evidence it has gathered, makes the following recommendations.

**A. Local Churches**

We recommend that:

1. All colleges and courses used by the URC for initial ministerial training and education should be urged to include in their core curriculum learning related to
  - Human development (intellectual, emotional and spiritual)
  - Appropriate models of Christian education and worship in relation to such development
  - An understanding of youth culture(s)
2. Synods ensure that serving ministers and other church members are offered opportunities to understand contemporary youth culture(s) and the development of appropriate models of worship and discipleship.
3. The URC explores with its partner denominations the production of a new generation of training materials for local youth work.
4. Local churches continue to explore partnerships in the local community in order to meet the needs of children and young people.

Ministers have a key role as theological educators and enablers of change. It is critically important that they bring understanding and enthusiasm to the area of local children's and youth work. If they are to help local congregations to understand and relate to the world of children and young people, and keep their own knowledge of continuing change up to date, then their initial and continuing education should include relevant courses. That such understanding should be available to all those who work with children and young people is self-evident. It is probably time for a new course to succeed *Spectrum*; there is also a need for continuing education: top up courses/programmes for those working locally.

At a time when the vast majority of children and young people have no regular church connection the role of the local churches in engaging with them in accessible ways is a major mission task. The experience of some churches is that by working ecumenically they are able to offer a wider range of activities and opportunities, and sometimes fund professional support. Working with others is in itself a sign of what the gospel means.

**B. District/Area Councils**

We recommend that:

1. Councils continue to find ways to support the ongoing youth and children's work of the local churches in ways appropriate to their own particular context.
2. Councils be reminded of their responsibility to send young people as representatives to General Assembly.

In some parts of the country the traditional pattern of youth and children's work secretaries at District level continues to work well. In other places the system has collapsed. We urge Districts to develop ways of encouraging local youth and children's work which fit their own situation. In some places this will mean combining the two areas of work, in others it may mean having a small committee, in others it may mean having a correspondent who is part of a national network transmitting information.

Making personal contact with young people and with local youth and children's workers is important. Such personal contact avoids the bottle necks which can afflict official means of communication and also provides the network of friendships which fuel an appetite for joint activity.

We do not believe that the employment of paid youth and children's workers at District level would be a good use of the church's resources. Few Districts have the ability to fund such work anyway. The role of Districts is to encourage the work that is happening locally and to provide the occasional opportunities for combined activity or training which give encouragement, particularly to the smaller churches.

**C. Synods**

We recommend that:

1. Synods prioritise the resourcing of youth and children's work.
2. Synods co-operate with the Youth & Children's Work Committee in developing and maintaining an effective network of young people, FURY members and those who work with young people and children across the Districts.
3. Synods be reminded of their responsibility to ensure that they have two young people as voting members.

Some Synods have already decided not to continue within the YCWT programme. The Review Group would like to encourage all Synods, whether or not they are participating in that programme, to continue to support, encourage and resource local youth and children's work through training, developmental work and the occasional provision of large scale events, where appropriate.

The development of a youth network comparable to the existing network of children's workers would, we believe, enhance the involvement of young people in the life of the wider church.

**D. Youth & Children's Work Committee**

We recommend that:

1. The Youth & Children's Work Committee and staff are asked to prioritise the creation and effective use of a youth-work network offering regular information and ideas.
2. Each committee member should have a portfolio of special interest. Some of the time at each committee meeting could be spent in relevant interest groups.

## Appendix 10

3. The committee continues to explore further developments in the ways it carries out its responsibilities.
4. The General Assembly should be asked to remove the requirement that the Youth & Children's Work Committee sends representatives to sit on other Assembly committees.
5. The Youth & Children's Work Committee should assume responsibility for the evolution and management of the YCWT programme.
6. The Secretary for Training be invited to participate in the regular meetings of the YCWT team.

The Review Group was impressed by the existence of a children's work network and felt that it was important to develop something comparable for youth work. It was mindful that the agenda of the Youth & Children's Work Committee covers an enormous range of work and in order to benefit from the experience and skill of individual committee members they should be encouraged to develop expertise in particular areas.

The Group became aware of the burden that has been placed on the Youth & Children's Work Committee by the General Assembly requirement that it should send representatives to serve on other Assembly committees. We do however see the need for cross fertilisation of ideas between all the committees and hope for the development of improved co-ordination and communication.

The main responsibilities of YCWTs fall within the remit of the Youth & Children's Work Committee. It therefore seems sensible to place the YCWT programme within the framework of this committee. If this proposal is accepted it would be important to retain contact with the Training Committee. The Secretary for Training should be expected to give support and advice and participate in team meetings.

### E. Staffing Arrangements

We recommend that:

1. There should continue to be a Secretary for Youth Work. The priorities of this post should be:
  - To create, maintain and support a network of District/Area and Synod Youth Work contacts;
  - To oversee the YCWT programme in place of the Secretary for Training, working co-operatively and supportively with managers in the Synods;
  - To work closely with the YCWTs and other professionals working at local, District and Synod levels, to produce and advocate high quality training and programme materials;
  - To co-ordinate the contribution of YCWTs to the national youth work of the URC, including FURY, initial ministerial training, production of training and programme materials, ecumenical collaboration and special events;
  - To support and facilitate the life of FURY including the creation and maintenance of a network of individual and group members;
  - To act as budget holder for the Youth & Children's Work Committee;
  - To foster ecumenical youth work.
  - To work collaboratively with the other Youth and Children's Work staff members;

2. There should be a Secretary for Children's Work (currently known as the Children's Advocate). The priorities of this post should be:

- To enhance, maintain and support the network of District/Area and Synod Children's Work contacts;
  - To ensure the availability and advocacy of high quality resources for Children's Work;
  - To act as co-ordinator of the three Youth and Children's Work staff at Church House;
  - To act as secretary to the Youth & Children's Work Committee;
  - To work closely with the YCWTs and other Children's Work professionals at local, District/Area and Synod levels in resourcing and encouraging work with children, including appropriate training;
  - To work collaboratively and ecumenically on issues relating to inclusive worship and church life, faith development and child protection;
  - To work collaboratively with the other Youth and Children's Work staff members.
3. There should continue to be a Pilots Development Officer who will:
    - Work within the existing job description and management structure;
    - Encourage the integration of Pilots into the total URC provision for Youth and Children's Work;
    - Work collaboratively with the other Youth and Children's Work staff members.

The Review Group believes that each distinct area of work benefits from having a staff member dedicated to that particular task. However some of the work does overlap and staff should work collaboratively with each other and with those serving at intermediate levels of church life. In fostering a collaborative working style it is suggested that one of them acts as Team Co-ordinator.

The major task for the Youth & Children's Work Committee and all its staff members is to resource local work and the structures at District/Area, Synod and Assembly level which support that work.

### F. National Youth Resource Centre, Yardley Hastings

We recommend that:

1. The URC should cease to use the buildings at Yardley Hastings as a Resource Centre for youth work.
2. The URC seriously considers potential future use of the resources at Yardley Hastings.
3. The Youth & Children's Work Committee should work with the Centre Management Committee and the officers of General Assembly to effect this change recognising the rights and needs of employees and customers.
4. The officers of the URC work with the East Midlands Synod and the Northamptonshire District to negotiate the changed use of the building in such a way that the rights and needs of Yardley Hastings United Reformed Church are respected.

The Centre was set up with the intention that it would be the heart of the URC's Youth Work. Whilst in the early years considerable numbers of URC young people went to, and were associated with, Yardley Hastings it has always been a centre for the minority. It was with hindsight unrealistic to expect it to have been anything else. However there can be no dispute that Yardley Hastings has been for some young people a spiritual power house, often changing the course of their lives. It remains so, but for a notably declining number. The Review Group believes that, however painful the change, limited resources of personnel and finance should be targeted at a level where they may affect a greater number of our young people.

It is not for the Review Group to comment on other uses for the building, or its disposal, or how to honour the needs of the local congregation. We do urge the URC to give good support and advice to those who will bear the brunt of this decision, if it is taken.

**G. Pilots**

We recommend that:

1. The Youth & Children's Work Committee invites the Pilots Management Committee to reflect on the recent growth of Pilots' companies, and to think through how it would manage continuing growth.
2. The Youth & Children's Work Committee should monitor the relationship of the URC to other denominations having Pilots Companies, including policy, representation and funding.

It is good to see a piece of work with a long history that continues to thrive, and has enjoyed real growth over the last few years. It would be easy to be complacent. It would be better to reflect on the reasons for such vitality, with the hope that other programmes could learn from it. The exclusive use of one staff member's time is probably one factor, as is that person's level of commitment and enthusiasm. The willingness to implement changes that invite greater ownership (affiliation, new constitution) is also significant. Are there other factors to do with policy, programme or development that should be analysed?

The Review Group would like to encourage an attempt to learn from success. Should the growth in companies continue then other management issues would emerge; levels of staffing might need to be considered, and shared funding with partner denominations. It is better to think about such possibilities before they become reality.

**H. FURY**

We recommend that:

1. There should be a membership of the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth open to all young people aged 11 – 25, and all URC youth groups, who are willing to accept the (new) FURY mission statement:

*Our mission is to discover God, to help each other grow in the Christian Faith, and through our lives reflect God's love to all.*

2. District Councils and Synods should be asked to work with the Secretary for Youth Work to maintain an accurate database of such individual and group members and to encourage an effective network of young people and those who work with them.
3. Membership cards and regular mailings should be offered to FURY members.
4. The management and resourcing of the database and network of members should be included in the job description of the Secretary for Youth Work.
5. The budget of the Youth & Children's Work Committee should include the resourcing of FURY network and gatherings.

Participation in FURY Assembly is patchy. District/Areas may send two voting representatives and one observer; they may find them in any way they choose. In practice many are unsuccessful in their search for young people who wish to attend this annual gathering. We need to discover an effective way of connecting the young people with each other and with the wider church (if they so wish). Some form of membership and some form of managed network would seem to be the answer. It is important to encourage the active involvement of young people in decisions affecting youth work.

The Group feels that it is inappropriate for adults up to 26 years of age to be regarded as 'young people'. A post-FURY network for the 21-30 age group could be maintained if so desired, bringing the experience and energy of this group into mainstream church life. The Review Group invites FURY Council and the Youth & Children's Work Committee to discuss this and propose any appropriate action.

**I. Department for Education and Skills (DfES)**

We recommend that:

1. YCWTs be encouraged to build on the work begun in *Mission Possible* using the handbook to challenge local churches to identify and respond to the needs of the communities in which they are set.
2. The Secretary for Youth Work investigates any similar funding opportunities in Scotland and in Wales.
3. Synods should explore other sources of funding available in their area.
4. The URC proceeds with the current application for funding.

The Review Group affirms the value of working in partnership with government and other voluntary agencies when that is seen as being in accord with the mission of the Church. However it would like to sound a note of caution; the Church must not be seen to be dancing to the tune of others in order to obtain funding. We are assured that the work proposed under the current application meets this criterion. The Review Group affirms the need

for monitoring to be done in close co-operation with the relevant Assembly or Synod committee. The Group noted that central government funding is only available to English churches.

#### **J. Youth and Children's Work Training Programme**

We recommend that:

1. The YCWT programme is continued with its present funding arrangements.
2. Synods encourage the developmental aspect of the role; the word Development could be added to the job title where this has not already happened.
3. Responsibility for the programme, its professional management and co-ordination and its contribution to Assembly programmes should be transferred from the Training Committee to the Youth & Children's Work Committee, and in particular to the job description of the Secretary for Youth Work.
4. The Secretary for Training be invited to participate in the regular meetings of the YCWT team.
5. Synods should continue to manage the local work of YCWTs within an overall strategy for training and for the development of youth and children's work in the Synod.
6. Volunteer managers working with YCWTs in Synods should receive initial training and continue to be advised and resourced by the Secretary for Youth Work.
7. Synods work with the YCWTs to improve advocacy of their role with Districts/Areas and local churches.
8. There should be a full review of the YCWT programme in four years' time.

The Review Group has heard the plea for paid Youth and Children's Workers at district level. There is already an increase in the number of local churches funding paid workers. We also reflected on the desire of some Synods to absorb this area of work into an overall training provision in which all trainers would be involved in the full range of church life. We understood the desire, on the other hand, to focus less on training and more on hands-on development of local work.

We do not believe that the redistribution of the funding of the YCWT programme would significantly affect the ability of the URC to provide development workers at district level; nor are we convinced that such resources are needed at that level. It is local work, increasingly conducted ecumenically, which should be our main mission focus.

Such local work does deserve support from the wider church. For YCWTs to engage with local churches in developing new pieces of work is a good use of their skills, and should be encouraged. It is in itself a valid method of training. It is also important that YCWTs are able to offer their knowledge and advice as local churches proceed to employ paid workers. If they were not available some other Synod officer would have to assume this responsibility, and it is a growing area of work.

We recognise that it is not always easy to find suitably qualified volunteers to act as managers. There should be a proper induction programme for them, guidelines and the back up of the Church House office. The Synods have assumed the work formerly undertaken by a full time staff member and deserve good quality support.

The YCWT programme is an expensive but valuable resource; in recommending that it continues we are keen that Synods place this programme within a clear overall strategy, enhance the developmental aspects of the work, which is a stated part of the existing YCWT job description, and find effective ways of advocating its use by the churches.



# Appendix 11

## PROPOSAL FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ECUMENICAL BISHOP FOR CARDIFF EAST

(REFERRED TO AS “THE COMMON DOCUMENT”, FORMING THE BASIS FOR  
DISCUSSION BY ALL PARTNER CHURCHES INVOLVED IN THE SCHEME)

### 1 Area

#### 1.1 Geographical

The geographical area involved is situated in Cardiff East, including Cyncoed, Llanedeyrn, Pentwyn, Pontprennau and St Mellon's.

#### 1.2 Congregations

##### 1.2.1

The ecclesial units within the oversight of the Ecumenical Bishop shall include:

Christ Church United Free Church, Llanedeyrn

Cyncoed Methodist Church

Pontprennau Community Church

The Rectorial Benefice of Cyncoed (All Saints, Cyncoed, All Saints, Llanedeyrn, St David's, Pentwyn, St Edeyrn and the Anglican ministry in Pontprennau Community Church) [together forming the Cyncoed, Pentwyn, Llanedeyrn and Pontprennau Local Ecumenical Partnership]

and

The St Mellon's Local Ecumenical Partnership, centred on The Church of the Resurrection, St Mellon's.

##### 1.2.2

Other congregations belonging to any of the partners within the Covenanted Churches in Wales within the geographical area may elect to come within the oversight of the Ecumenical Bishop in the future.

#### 1.3

The area delineated at paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 above shall hereafter be referred to as “the Mission Area”.

### 2 Responsibility

The Ecumenical Bishop shall fulfil the following positions within each of the church / denominational structures presently involved in the scheme:

#### 2.1

Within Churches of the Baptist faith and order, the Ecumenical Bishop shall exercise a ministry of oversight, working in full consultation with the General Superintendent with regard to pastoral need and ministerial appointments.

#### 2.2

For the Church in Wales, the Ecumenical Bishop shall be a Bishop in full communion with the Church in Wales, given authority by the Church in Wales Diocesan Bishop to perform the functions which the Diocesan is enabled to discharge under the Local Ecumenical Projects Canon 1991.

#### 2.3

The Methodist Church will initially enable the delegation of authority from the Cardiff Circuit to the Ecumenical Mission Council (constituted as in paragraphs 4.1-4.6 below), in the longer term creating a new circuit covering the Mission Area, of which the Ecumenical Bishop shall be superintendent. The Ecumenical Bishop shall work in consultation with the Chair of the South Wales District in respect of such matters as the stationing of ministers.

#### 2.4

The United Reformed Church will constitute the Mission Area as an Area of Ecumenical Cooperation, the Ecumenical Bishop acting as chair thereof.

### 3 The Role of the Ecumenical Bishop

The Ecumenical Bishop, acting in Council as noted in paragraph 4.4 below, shall:

- be a pioneer in mission and evangelism;
- preside and preach at worship;
- exercise a sacramental ministry in accordance with the requirements of the denominations / churches involved;
- exercise pastoral oversight and care of the churches and the ministers within the Mission Area;
- conduct joint confirmations on behalf of all the churches in the partnership;
- preside at ecumenical ordinations on request from the denominations / churches involved in the scheme;
- speak on behalf of, and represent, the Mission Area in other forums, as required;
- undertake such other duties as may be required, in consultation with the Ecumenical Mission Council;
- encourage and enable further theological exploration in the fields of ecumenism and mission.

**4 The Ecumenical Mission Council**

4.1

An Ecumenical Mission Council will be established, having the status of a local ecumenical synod, before the appointment of the Ecumenical Bishop, a temporary Chair for which shall be appointed by the leaders of the Covenanted Churches involved in the scheme.

4.2

The Ecumenical Mission Council shall consist of:  
representation from each of the national church / denominational structures involved in the scheme;  
lay and ordained representation from the congregations involved in the scheme.

4.3

On appointment, the Ecumenical Bishop shall become the Chair of the Ecumenical Mission Council.

4.4

The Ecumenical Bishop shall act 'in Council' with the Ecumenical Mission Council in all matters properly delegated to the Council, including:  
extension of ecumenical involvement;  
local fund-raising;  
management of human and material resources within the area;  
mission strategy within the area;  
theological reflection pertinent to the roles of the Bishop and the Council.

4.5

The Ecumenical Mission Council shall have no authority to bind the national churches and denominations involved in any matter of policy save those which those churches and denominations shall have expressly delegated to it.

4.6

The Ecumenical Mission Council shall be responsible in all pertinent matters to the Cardiff and the Vale Regional CYTŪN as Sponsoring Authority.

**5 Finance**

5.1

The Ecumenical Bishop and the Ecumenical Mission Council will be financed by a combination of:

- contributions from the Covenanted Churches involved in the scheme, according to an agreed formula;
- contributions from the churches within the Mission Area towards the day to day expenses of the scheme.

5.2

Housing will be offered to the Ecumenical Bishop as part of the salary package.

5.3

The denomination from which the Ecumenical Bishop is chosen shall act as paymaster in terms of salary, expenses, pension arrangements and all other matters concerned with the financing of the person in post.

**6 Appointment**

6.1

The initial appointment of an Ecumenical Bishop shall be for a period of seven years. After four years the ENFYS Commission shall review the initiative and its contribution to their shared mission and bring proposals to the Covenanted Churches regarding action beyond that initial period. Those proposals may include a recommendation that the scheme be discontinued.

6.2

The position of the Ecumenical Bishop shall in principle be open to any ordained minister of one of the Covenanted Church traditions involved in the scheme.

6.3

A nominee for appointment as Ecumenical Bishop shall be proposed by an Electing Committee, to be set up by the ENFYS Commission, in consultation with the Ecumenical Mission Council.

6.4

The Electing Committee shall include representatives nominated by the Covenanted Churches and the Ecumenical Mission Council, in equal proportion.

6.5

Each Covenanted Church involved in the scheme must agree, by means appropriate to its structure, to the appointment of the person nominated before that person can be consecrated as Ecumenical Bishop.

**7 Consecration and Induction**

7.1

The Ecumenical Bishop shall be consecrated and inducted at a Service of Consecration and Induction the form of which shall have been agreed by the Covenanted Churches involved in the scheme and which is consonant with the rites and ceremonies of those Churches. The Consecration and induction shall take place within the context of the celebration of Holy Communion according to the Covenanted rite.

7.2

The consecration shall involve the laying-on of hands by representatives of all the Covenanted Churches involved in the scheme, including at least three bishops.

7.3

The consecration shall not involve the re-ordination, or anything suggesting the re-ordination, of the person involved.

**8 Definitions**

8.1 Covenanted Churches

Those Churches which are signatories to the Welsh Covenant and are therefore represented on the ENFYS Commission. These are:

- The Church in Wales
- The Covenanted Baptist Churches
- The Methodist Church (in Wales)
- The Presbyterian Church of Wales
- The United Reformed Church (National Synod of Wales)

8.2 'The Covenanted Churches involved in the scheme' This does not, at present, include the Presbyterian Church of Wales.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

## Schedule A

## Ecumenical Bishop: financing arrangements

Set out below is a list of the cost headings and provisional estimates, for the year 2002, with the underlying assumptions.

<b>Employment</b>	<b>£s a year</b>
Stipend (see Note 1 below)	21,000
Employer's National Insurance contributions, say 10 per cent of stipend	2,100
Pension contributions, say 14 per cent of stipend (see Note 2)	<u>2,940</u>
	<u>5,040</u>
Employment sub total	26,040
	say, 27,000
<b>Housing</b>	
Relocation cost	1,500
Dwelling (see Note 3), annual charge	18,000
Other annual costs:	
council charge	1,000
water services	500
insurance on buildings	750
maintenance	<u>3,000</u>
Housing sub total	24,750
	say, 25,000
<b>'Operations' (see Note 4)</b>	
Travel: car (see Note 5)	2,700
	other <u>1,000</u>
Travel sub total	3,700
telephone, fax, etc	1,500
Information technology equipment	1,500
Office: secretarial assistance, say, (see Note 6)	8,000
postage and stationery	1,500
Expenses (see Note 7) say,	<u>1,500</u>
'Operations' sub total	17,700
	say, 18,000
Estimated total cost for a year, say,	70,000

## Assumptions underlying the estimates

## Notes:

1. A stipend of £19,000 was suggested at the consultation of 14 February 2000.
2. It is assumed that the person appointed would continue in the pension scheme in which they were participating prior to appointment
3. The following assumptions have been made in respect of accommodation:
  - a. the dwelling would be a house; probably situated in the North-east of Cardiff, comprising: 4-5 bedrooms, 2-3 reception, study, kitchen, utility, garage, at an estimated cost in year 2002 of £200,000;
  - b. the capital cost of the house may be financed by funds borrowed from denominational or market source(s) and recovered through an annual charge based on the equivalent of a repayment mortgage, i e, monthly repayments on £200,000 over 25 years, say, £18,000 a year.
4. These costs result from the nature of the post.
5. Car travel:

## Appendix 11

- a. the postholder provides own car;
  - b. and travels, say, 6,000 miles a year at 45p a mile, i.e., £2,700.
6. The postholder might 'buy in' secretarial assistance of, say, 20 hours a week for 50 weeks year at a cost of £8 an hour, i.e., say, £8,000.
7. These would include all reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out the duties of the post.

### Schedule B

#### Ecumenical Bishop: financing arrangements

Suggested sharings of the estimated annual cost of the post of Ecumenical Bishop are set out below (with the current sharing of Enfys costs).

%	£		
	Estimated annual cost		70,000
	Enfys partner denominations (as below)	95	66,500
	Cardiff East Ecumenical Missionary Council	5	3,500
Suggested shares of the partner Covenanted Churches (the Presbyterian Church of Wales not participating)			
	The Church in Wales (51)	49	34,300
	The Presbyterian Church of Wales (33)	-	-
	The Methodist Church (12)	36	25,200
	The United Reformed Church (3)	9	6,300
	The Committee of the Covenanted Baptist Churches in Wales (1)	1	700

## APPENDIX 2

### Gender of the Ecumenical Bishop

1 The report 'Towards the Making of an Ecumenical Bishop in Wales' stated, (4.7), The Ecumenical Bishop will belong to each of our traditions in different ways. We endorse the view expressed in 'Ministry in a Uniting Church' that 'all ministries should be open equally to men and women', yet we recognise that as all our churches have not yet put this into practice, it will be necessary, in order to achieve that full communion with all our traditions which we desire, that the Ecumenical Bishop referred to in the current proposal shall be a man.

2 In responding positively to the proposal in 1998 all the churches recognised the need for further work and clarification on this matter before the final proposal was re-presented to each church for final decision.

3 Enfys has undertaken further consideration firstly within the panel which held conversations between the Church in Wales and the Methodist Church and which had participant observers from all traditions. In an exchange of letters in March 1999 the then Archbishop of Wales wrote to Eluned Williams:

*In the conversations between the Methodist Church and the Church in Wales both our churches have expressed support for the Enfys proposal for an Ecumenical Bishop. We appreciate and understand your concern that, at the earliest opportunity, the position of Ecumenical Bishop should be open to women and men.*

*In 1996 the Church in Wales agreed to ordain women to the priesthood, but did not open the episcopate to them. It is inevitable, however, that this issue will eventually be raised, particularly when the value of the ministry of women will have come to be appreciated by the whole church. Normally it is only priests who have been in orders for seven years who are considered for posts of senior responsibility. We would not expect to consider this issue until at least seven years from January 1997 when the first women were ordained priests.*

*Allowing for the fact that the Bench of Bishops at that time will have greatly changed from the present personnel, it is still highly likely that the question of women bishops will have been raised before a successor will have to be appointed to the first ecumenical bishop. Indeed it is possible that the necessary legislative process will have been initiated.*

4 Mutual understanding has continued to develop between the churches and Enfys Leaders met with the Bench of Bishops in January 2001. Following a further meeting of the Bench of Bishops Archbishop Rowan wrote:

*Nothing formally has altered since Archbishop Alwyn's letter was written to Eluned Williams in 1999 - i.e. we are still constitutionally unable to admit women to the episcopate in this province, and we have no firm timetable for introducing the matter.*

*However, it seems reasonable to us to say again that we should expect the question to begin constitutional consideration during the seven year period envisaged for the Ecumenical Bishop's (first?) term, and that we accept that, if this does not*

*happen, our own commitment to the idea could properly be called into question. The recent decision of the Church of England to set up a working party in the synodical structure to look at the matter makes it clear that the Anglican Church in Britain is moving ahead, and it is likely that we shall let ourselves be guided to some extent by developments in England.*

*This is, I realise, some way short of the commitment which some would wish for, but it is all I can properly say at present.*

5 Within Enfys we are also aware that discussion as to the presence of women in senior positions in the life of the church should not be confined to the Church in Wales. While the other covenant partners may not place formal structural barriers there is still a marked proportionate lack of women in senior positions and our practice needs continual scrutiny.

6 Enfys thus brings the Ecumenical Bishop Proposal for final ratification by the covenant partners on the understanding that the first appointment will be of a man and that a subsequent appointment will be considered in the light of the then prevailing situation regarding the position being open to women. Further, while not wishing to predetermine discussion at the time of a second appointment, it is our understanding within Enfys that it is unlikely that we could proceed to a second appointment without the appointment being open to women and men.

## **SERVICE FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE ECUMENICAL BISHOP**

*As drafted by the ENFYS-BEM Panel and amended and accepted by the ENFYS Commission on 20 April 1999 together with corrections approved on 15 October 1999*

### **PREFACE**

*The act of worship which we are about to share is the fruit of 25 years of being together in the Covenant and growing together in unity. We have shared with each other the riches of our respective traditions. We have been built up in mutual trust. Now we feel called to do a new thing together which, while affirming our separate pasts, affirms all the more the common future into which God is leading us.*

*The ministers who will preside throughout the service are representative of our several traditions. In their work and actions each represents all. In the same way, each part of the service, including the consecration and commissioning, should be seen not in isolation but in dynamic relationship to the whole.*

*Like our ecumenical journey itself, the service is a creative process, a dramatic movement in the witness to the God 'who is able through the power which is at work among us to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus from generation to generation for evermore ! Amen.' (Ephesians 3.20f)*

### **THE PRESIDING MINISTERS**

*The Covenanted Baptist Churches  
The Church in Wales  
The Methodist Church  
The United Reformed Church*

*The Chair of the Covenanted Baptist Churches  
The Archbishop of Wales  
Llywydd y Gymanfa  
The Moderator of the National Synod of Wales  
by invitation of the District Council*

### **THE PREPARATION**

- 1 **STAND**            *Processional Hymn*
- 2            *The Chair of the Covenanted Baptist Churches*  
We greet each other in faith:  
**let our trust in one another mirror God's trust in us.**
- We greet each other in hope:  
**let us face the future together with anticipation.**
- We greet each other in love:  
**let our hearts be open to all God's people.**

## Appendix II

- 3            **Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known  
and from whom no secrets are hidden;  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**
- 4 SIT        Brothers and sisters in Christ, we are gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church for the consecration and commissioning of our brother N. as a Bishop in the Church of God, to work in this area of ecumenical co-operation and shared mission.
- 5            The governing bodies of the Covenanting Churches have assented to the designation of this area of ecumenical co-operation and the appointment of an ecumenical bishop. I therefore call upon their representatives to present their resolutions at the Lord's Table.  
*The representatives present their written resolutions*
- 6 KNEEL    *The Archbishop of Wales*  
or SIT      Let us pray.  
Eternal God, we thank you for the life, fellowship and rich inheritance of the Covenanted Churches in Wales, and for your grace in calling us to be your people.
- Llywydd y Gymanfa*  
Forgive us for our apathy, mistrust and impoverished vision, and our obstinacy in denying our oneness in Christ.
- The Archbishop of Wales*  
We thank you that you have drawn us together as one people to praise your holy name, and that your Spirit has led us to accept one another as co-workers in Christ.
- Llywydd y Gymanfa*  
Forgive us for our histories of mutual hostility and indifference which dishonour your name, for perpetuating our divisions and for refusing to accept one another as Christ accepted us.
- Break the barriers that still divide us,  
heal the memories that burden us,  
strengthen the commitment that inspires us  
and release the gifts that equip us for witness and service.**
- Llywydd y Gymanfa*  
May what we are doing here today enable us to receive and embody more fully the unity which you give. May we and all your people grow in justice and love, and be a sign of your reconciling presence in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
- 7 STAND    **Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
Almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

## THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

- 8 *The Moderator of the National Synod of Wales*  
 Almighty and everlasting God,  
 increase in us your gift of faith;  
 that, forsaking what lies behind  
 and reaching out to that which is before,  
 we may run the way of your commandments  
 and win the crown of everlasting joy;  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The Scriptures are read by representatives of the Local Ecumenical Area*

- 9 *SIT The Old Testament Reading - Numbers 27: 15-20, 22-23*  
 Moses said to the LORD, "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over the community to go out and come in at their head, to lead them out and bring them home, so that the community of the LORD may not be like sheep without a shepherd." The LORD answered, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man powerful in spirit; lay your hand on him and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the community. Give him his commission in their presence, and delegate some of your authority to him, so that the entire Israelite community will obey him." Moses did as the LORD had commanded him. He took Joshua, presented him to Eleazar the priest and the whole community, and laid his hands on him, and gave him his commission, as instructed by the LORD.

- 10 *The New Testament Reading - 2 Corinthians 5: 14-20*  
 For the love of Christ controls us once we have reached the conclusion that one man died for all and therefore all mankind has died. He died for all so that those who live should cease to live for themselves, and should live for him who for their sake died and was raised to life. With us therefore worldly standards have ceased to count in our estimate of anyone; even if once they counted in our understanding of Christ, they do so no longer. For anyone united to Christ, there is a new creation: the old order has gone; a new order has already begun. All this has been the work of God. He has reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has enlisted us in this ministry of reconciliation; God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, no longer holding people's misdeeds against them, and has entrusted us with the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors. It is as if God were appealing to you through us: we implore you in Christ's name, be reconciled to God!

- 11 *STAND Hymn or Psalm*

- 12 *REMAIN The Gospel Reading - John 21: 15-17*

*STANDING* After breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others?" "Yes, Lord," he answered, "you know that I love you." "Then feed my lambs," he said. A second time he asked, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" "Yes, Lord, you know I love you." "Then tend my sheep." A third time he said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt that he asked him a third time, "Do you love me?" "Lord," he said, "you know everything; you know I love you." Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep."

- 13 **Diolch i ti, yr Hollalluog Dduw,  
 Am yr Efengyl, Am yr Efengyl,  
 Am yr Efengyl sanctaidd.  
 Hallelwia, Hallelwia, Hallelwia, Amen.**

**Pan oeddem ni mewn carchar tywyll du,  
 Rhoist in oleuni, Rhoist in oleuni,  
 Rhoist in oleuni nefol.  
 Hallelwia, Hallelwia, Hallelwia, Amen.**

**O! aed, O! aed yr hyfryd wawr ar led,  
 Goleued ddaear, Goleued ddaear,  
 Goleued ddaear lydan.  
 Hallelwia, Hallelwia, Hallelwia, Amen.**

- 14 *SIT The Sermon - The preacher to be invited by the Commission*

- 15 *STAND The Nicene Creed - led by the preacher*

**We believe in one God,  
 the Father, the almighty,  
 maker of heaven and earth,  
 of all that is, seen and unseen.**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven;  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## **THE CONSECRATION OF THE ECUMENICAL BISHOP**

### **The Presentation**

16 *SIT* *Those appointed by the Local Ecumenical Area present the bishop-elect to the Presiding Ministers*

We present to you N. to be consecrated as a bishop within the Church of God. We believe that he is called by God. He has been elected in accordance with the resolutions laid before us in this service.

*The bishop-elect is presented to the people by the Chair of the Covenanted Baptist Churches*

This is the person we propose to consecrate as a bishop. I therefore ask you to declare your assent to his consecration.

Do you trust that, by God's grace, he is worthy to be consecrated?

**We trust that he is worthy.**

Will you uphold him in his ministry?

**We will uphold him.**

### **The Charge**

17 *Llywydd y Gymanfa*

The Church is the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. All who are baptized are called to be living stones built into a holy temple of God in the Spirit, and to be his instruments in renewing the world. Within the ministry of all God's people you are now being set apart for the office and work of a bishop in the Church of God.

You will be a bishop in council, exercising leadership and working in partnership with representatives of the churches. You are called to be a focus of unity and continuity in the church, a teacher of the faith and a pioneer in mission, a pastor to the people in your care and a leader to the ministers in your charge. Your office and ministry will contain within itself the fullness of the ordained ministry of the Church. You are to preach the Gospel, preside at the sacraments, and share in the confirmation of the baptized and in the ordination of new ministers. You will speak for the churches as an advocate of ecumenism and a prophet of peace and justice.



**The Examination**

- 18        *The Moderator of the National Synod of Wales*  
 In order that we may know your willingness to receive this ministry of Christ through the gift of the Holy Spirit, and so that you may be strengthened in your resolve to undertake it, we ask you these questions:
- Do you trust that you are truly called by God to the office and work of a bishop in his Church?  
*Answer:*    I do so trust.
- Do you accept the Holy Scriptures as containing all things necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?  
*Answer:*    I do so accept them.
- Do you believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ found in Holy Scripture to which the creeds of the ancient church and other historic confessions bear witness?  
*Answer:*    I do so believe.
- Will you be a diligent minister of the Word of God, proclaiming the Gospel and teaching the Christian Faith  
*Answer:*    By the help of God, I will.
- Will you faithfully administer the sacraments to the glory of God and the sanctification of his people?  
*Answer:*    By the help of God, I will.
- As bishop in council, will you care for God's people, and nourish them from the riches of his grace?  
*Answer:*    By the help of God, I will.
- Will you devote yourself to prayer and study, that you may grow in the knowledge and love of God in Jesus Christ?  
*Answer:*    By the help of God, I will.
- Will you order your life in accordance with the teachings of Christ, so that you may be an example to your people?  
*Answer:*    By the help of God, I will.
- Will you be gentle and merciful to all for Christ's sake, show compassion to the poor, confront the oppressor, and defend those who have no helper?  
*Answer:*    By the help of God, I will.

**May the Lord who has given you the will to undertake this work, give you also the strength and power to perform it.**

**The Prayers**

- 19    *KNEEL*    *The Chair of the Covenanted Baptist Churches offers prayers for the world, the or SIT Church, the bishop-elect and the sphere of work in which he will be engaged*
- 20        **Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
 and lighten with celestial fire;  
 thou the anointing Spirit art  
 who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.**
- Thy blessed unction from above  
 is comfort, life, and fire of love;  
 enable with perpetual light  
 the dullness of our blinded sight.**
- Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
 with the abundance of thy grace:  
 keep far our foes, give peace at home;  
 where thou art guide no ill can come.**
- Teach us to know the Father, Son,  
 and thee, of both, to be but one;  
 that through the ages all along  
 this may be our endless song,**
- 'Praise to thy eternal merit,  
 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.'**

**The Consecration and Commissioning**

21 *The bishop-elect kneels. Then follows the laying on of hands in prayerful silence by four groups representing the Covenanted Churches involved in the scheme and including at least three bishops.*

*The Archbishop of Wales prays with hands extended*

We praise and glorify you, almighty Father, because you have formed throughout the world a holy people for your own possession a royal priesthood, a universal Church.

We praise and glorify you, because you have given us your only Son Jesus Christ to be the Apostle and High Priest of our faith, and the Shepherd of our souls. We thank you that by his death he has overcome death; and that, having ascended into heaven he has given his gifts abundantly to your people, making some, apostles; some, prophets; some, evangelists; some, pastors and teachers; to equip them for the work of ministry and to build up his body, the Church.

And now we give you thanks that you have called N. to share in the ministry entrusted to your Church. Send down your Holy Spirit upon your servant N. for the office and work of a bishop in your Church. May he glorify you in the midst of your people and offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to you through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

22 *SIT Representatives of the Covenanted Churches come forward to give the hand of fellowship.*

*The Bishop of Monmouth*

In the name of Jesus Christ, we welcome you to this ministry of oversight to which you have been called. May the Lord watch over you and bless your service among his people here, that together we may proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father.

*The Team Leader of the Baptist Union of Great Britain in Wales*

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, in the name of these churches and in the name of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, I declare N. duly inducted to this ministry.

*The President of the Methodist Conference*

On behalf of the Methodist Church I welcome you to this ministry of oversight. We will work with you and pray for you.

*The URC Moderator of the National Synod of Wales*

Representing the South Wales District Council, acting on behalf of the United Reformed Church (in the United Kingdom), in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I declare N. to be inducted to the ministry of ecumenical bishop for the Cardiff East ecumenical area.

23 *Representatives of the Local Ecumenical Area present to the Bishop a cross, a stole, a ring, a staff and a Bible with appropriate words. (The stole as a symbol of ecumenical ministry; the ring as a symbol of fidelity; the staff as a symbol of the pastoral office.)*

24 *The Convener of the Ecumenical Council welcomes the Ecumenical Bishop*

On behalf of the Ecumenical Council for Cardiff East I welcome you. We look forward to your presidency of the Council, your exercise of leadership in this, and your oversight of the life, ministry and mission of the churches. We will pray regularly for you that the Lord may watch over you, protect and guide you, and bless you richly among us.

*The Convener of the Ecumenical Council addresses the congregation*

I invite you to greet your Bishop.

*Applause*

**MINISTRY OF THE SACRAMENT**

*The Ecumenical Bishop presides over the Ministry of the Sacrament*

25 *STAND* We are the Body of Christ.  
In the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body.  
Let us then pursue all that makes for peace  
and builds up our common life.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

26 *Hymn*

27 The Lord is here.  
**His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

Therefore with all your creation in heaven and on earth we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you, and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise you, Almighty Father, for creating all things and for making us in your own image. We thank you that while we were yet sinners you gave your only Son, Jesus Christ, to live as one of us, to suffer death on the Cross and to rise again for our salvation. On the night he was betrayed he took bread and, after giving thanks to you, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat; this is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, he took the cup after supper, saying, 'Drink from this, all of you; this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.'

**Christ has died;  
Christ is risen;  
Christ will come again.**

Therefore, heavenly Father, as we now proclaim his death, resurrection and ascension we offer to you these your gifts of bread and wine and ask you to accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

We pray that your Holy Spirit may come upon us and upon these gifts that we, receiving them, may share the body and blood of our Lord and be united in peace and love with all your faithful people, through the same Jesus Christ, by whom, in whom and with whom in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

28 *KNEEL* As our Saviour taught us, so we pray,  
*or SIT*

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

29 *The Bishop breaks the bread and says*  
The bread which we break  
is it not a communion in the body of Christ?  
**Because there is one bread,  
we who are many are one body  
for we all partake of the one bread.**

*The Bishop lifts the cup and says*  
The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion in the blood of Christ?

## Appendix II

30        *The Bishop and other communicants share and receive the sacramental bread and wine, with these words*  
The body of Christ, the Bread of Life.  
The blood of Christ, the True Vine.

*Each communicant responds*  
**Amen.**

31        Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory . May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to others. Keep us in this hope that we have grasped; so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out  
in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work  
to your praise and glory. Amen.**

32    *STAND Hymn*

33        The blessing of God Almighty, the Father , the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

34        Go in peace and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

## Judgement by the Moderator elect of the General Assembly

I have been asked to judge whether the resolution from the Synod of Wales regarding the United Reformed Church's involvement in the appointment of an Ecumenical Bishop for Cardiff East is in order. Assembly standing orders state that it shall not be in order to move a motion or amendment which "contravenes any part of the Basis of Union". They also state that the decision of the Moderator on this Standing Order shall be final. Paragraph 25 of the Basis says, inter alia, "in the United Reformed Church all ministries shall be open to both men and women". It is clearly written in paragraph 1 of Appendix 2 to the proposal that "the Ecumenical Bishop referred to in the current proposal shall be a man". It is on that ground that the legitimacy of the resolution from the Synod of Wales has been challenged.

The Assembly, as all the councils of the Church, must respect the Basis of Union because, with the Structure, it defines the identity of the United Reformed Church. An important part of our identity, and the identity of the traditions that came together to form the United Reformed Church in 1972, 1981 and 2000, is that all ministries shall be open to both men and women. Our practice may not follow our principle in all cases, but that is all the more reason for holding on to the principle.

Paragraph 6.2 of the proposals clearly states, "The position of the Ecumenical Bishop shall in principle be open to any ordained minister of one of the Covenanted Church traditions involved in the scheme". That unambiguous statement of principle certainly accords with the Basis of Union. I take that as the significant fact in judging this question.

However, whilst our principle is that any pastorate or ministerial post is open to all ministers, there are sometimes good pastoral, theological, or ecumenical reasons why in a particular instance restrictions of various kinds should be applied. These are judged by those responsible for the call or the appointment. I believe it to be good practice that any restrictions, and the reasons for them, are openly discussed and made known.

It seems to me that paragraph 1 of Appendix 2 can be seen as the judgement of those who have to deal with the particularities of the first appointment. As such it parallels a practice common in the United Reformed Church. It is important to me that, in open debate, the Synod of Wales has been unanimous in accepting the reasons for a particular restriction on the first appointment.

It is also important in my assessment of the case that paragraph 6.1 provides for a review of the initiative after four years and says of any proposals resulting from the review, "those proposals may include a recommendation that the scheme be discontinued". It seems to me that a future Moderator might well judge a resolution to continue the initiative with a second appointment limited to men as out of order, because there would be a prima facie case that Appendix 2 rather than paragraph 6.2 had become the guiding principle.

The length of these comments should indicate that I have not found this an easy judgement to make. However, my conclusion is that the resolution from the Synod of Wales is in order.

John Waller  
Moderator elect of the General Assembly  
21 March 2002

# Appendix 12

## Conversations on the way to unity 1999-2001

### The report of the informal conversations between the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church

#### Participants

##### Church of England

The Rt Revd Colin Buchanan (Co-Chair)  
The Revd William S. Croft  
Mrs Elizabeth Fisher  
The Revd Prebendary Dr Paul Avis (Co-Secretary)

##### United Reformed Church

The Revd Robert Andrews (Co-Chair)  
The Revd John Waller  
The Revd Elizabeth Welch  
The Revd Sheila Maxey (Co-Secretary)

##### Methodist Church

The Revd Peter Whittaker (Co-Chair)  
The Revd Hilary Cooke  
Mrs Mary Wetherall  
The Revd Keith A Reed (Co-Secretary)

##### Ecumenical participant, appointed by Churches Together in England

Mrs Faith Bowers

Bill Croft, Hilary Cooke, Paul Avis, Keith Reed and Sheila Maxey were also part of the Formal Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church as members, co-secretaries and ecumenical participant respectively.

#### Foreword

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has often been called the ecumenical century of the Christian Church. During it, and with gathering momentum, churches long separated, often with bitterness and violence, began to approach one another, talk together, work together and even re-unite. In 1961, at the World Council of Churches Assembly in New Delhi, a vision of unity was set down in terms which have sustained and challenged the ecumenical movement to this day.

'We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.'

These conversations have been one way in which the participating churches, who already share so much common life, have sought to continue to be obedient to God's call to full, visible unity.

#### The immediate context of these Trilateral Informal Conversations

1 In 1994 the Methodist Church invited the Church of England to explore, through informal conversations, the possibility of formal conversations which had organic unity in view. The Church of England accepted the invitation and Informal Conversations began in March 1995.

2 In 1995 the United Reformed Church invited the Church of England to enter into Informal Conversations on three particular matters:

- developing ecumenical relations in the European context
- the implications of the 1984 International Anglican - Reformed text, *God's Reign and our Unity*, for current ecumenical relations

- the reconciliation of memories of 1662, the date of both the Act of Uniformity and the Book of Common Prayer

During five meetings held between 1995 and 1997 those conversations also discussed the responses of the two churches to the Churches Together in England process, *Called to be One*, the exercise of oversight in the two churches and Church and State relations. Once *Commitment to Mission and Unity*, the report of the Informal Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, had been published in July 1996 it too was discussed.

3 The recommendation of those Informal Conversations to the Ecumenical Committee of the United Reformed Church and the Council for Christian Unity of the Church of England was that Informal Conversations should be continued in order to explore the possibility of formulating

"a common statement of our understanding of the nature and purpose of the Church, our existing agreements in faith and what sort of diversity would belong to a visibly united church"(final report, para.52).

Neither church took up the recommendation because, by 1997, the proposals for Formal Conversations between the Methodist Church and the Church of England had taken centre stage.

4 In July 1996 *Commitment to Mission and Unity*, the report of the Informal Conversations between the Methodist Church and the Church of England, was published. It proposed that, given that the two churches believed they shared a common understanding of the goal of visible unity, they should enter into Formal Conversations while taking into account the wider ecumenical relationships of the two churches. The report listed ten issues, of varying degrees of difficulty, to be resolved between the two churches and proposed that Formal Conversations should address those issues and then proceed to prepare a Common Statement similar to the *Meissen* and *Fetter Lane Common Statements*. (see appendix)

5 In September 1996 the Chairman of the Council for Christian Unity, the Rt Revd David Tustin, Bishop of Grimsby, and the Secretary of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Brian Beck, wrote to every member church of Churches Together in England asking for comments on the report and stating that the responses would help to inform the debates and the decision-making processes which lay ahead.

6 Several partner churches responded. The Baptist Union Faith and Unity Executive Committee, after some debate about the appropriateness of bi-lateral conversations within the overall context of the multi-lateral *Called to be One* process, felt the time was right for these bi-lateral talks. However, it expressed concern for the position of the United Reformed Church in view of the

number of Local Ecumenical Partnerships in which it was a partner with one or both of the churches involved. The Roman Catholic Church emphasised the need for consistency with the work of the Anglican & Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) and pressed hard questions about ordination in relation to paragraph 27 in the section on the reconciliation of ordained ministries.

7 In July 1997, the United Reformed Church at its General Assembly endorsed the following response made on its behalf by the Ecumenical Committee.

"As a church committed to the search for the organic unity of the Church, the United Reformed Church welcomes the recommendation of the report of the Informal Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church that they now enter Formal Conversations.

Encouraged by the extent of local sharing in mission, worship and service which the United Reformed Church already enjoys with both the Church of England and the Methodist Church, and bearing in mind the Scottish Church Initiative for Union and the Welsh Covenant (Enfyfys) in which the United Reformed Church shares with the Methodist and Episcopal churches in Scotland and Wales, we hereby express our interest in becoming a full participant in the process of Commitment to Mission and Unity.

Our particular contribution to Formal Conversations would be insights from the Reformed tradition, notably the conciliar expression of the apostolicity of the Church and the shared ministry of the Elders.

We await with interest the responses of the Church of England Synod and the Methodist Conference to the recommendations of the report, assure them of our prayers, and look forward to the contribution the United Reformed Church may be able to make to this process from our united traditions." (resolution 28)

8 Some of the effects of consultation with ecumenical partners, and of extensive consultation within the two churches, can be seen in the proposals which were presented to the November 1997 General Synod of the Church of England by the Council for Christian Unity. The task of the Formal Conversations, as set out in its report to the General Synod (GS1266:30), would now be to prepare a Common Statement which would include a description of visible unity, an exploration of outstanding issues of difference, and a declaration of acknowledgements and commitments. Out of the ten issues listed in *Commitment*

to *Mission and Unity*, these particular conversations would concentrate on the nature and style of the office of the bishop, and the ways of exercising authority, oversight and governance in the Church. It was acknowledged that difficult issues, such as the integration of existing ordained ministries, would not be resolved during a first series of Formal Conversations. Neither church was committing itself at this stage to a scheme for organic union. The General Synod supported the proposal for Formal Conversations, as set out in GS 1266, by a comfortable majority.

9 The proposals for Formal Conversations, set out in GS 1266, included (in paragraph 31) the hope that there might be an informal trilateral conversation which included the United Reformed Church

"in order to consider the two subjects which the United Reformed Church has indicated as needing exploration, namely the conciliar expression of the apostolicity of the Church and the shared ministry of the Elders."

Paragraph 31 continues:

"It would be important to keep Formal Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church in close contact with the work of any informal trilateral conversations."

10 Another development during the consultation period was that the 'ecumenical observers' (Roman Catholic, Baptist, Moravian and United Reformed) became 'ecumenical participants' and the United Reformed Church request that it should have two ecumenical participants in the Formal Conversations was granted.

11 The proposal that the Church of England and the Methodist Church enter into Formal Conversations, including the hope of Trilateral Informal Conversations involving the United Reformed Church, was presented to the 1998 Methodist Conference in precisely the same terms as to the 1997 General Synod. The Secretary to the Conference, the Revd Brian Beck, in his presentation made special reference to the United Reformed Church when he spoke of the role of the ecumenical participants in the proposed talks. He said:

"But the URC especially must be at the table because they and the Methodist Church are particularly close in some areas, though not in all. But in some respects there is a separate agenda with the URC, and a distinct, though linked, set of talks is proposed."

The proposal that the Methodist Church should enter into Formal Conversations with the Church of England received overwhelming support from the Conference.

12 The Trilateral Informal Conversations first met in April 1999, following the first meeting of the Formal Conversations in February 1999. The agreed terms of reference were that their consideration of the two issues raised by the United Reformed Church in response to *Commitment to Mission and Unity* would be set within a developing understanding of the sort of visible unity required for effective mission and the experience of shared living already enjoyed, particularly in Local Ecumenical Partnerships. It was also agreed that the Trilateral Informal Conversations would meet between the meetings of the Formal Conversations. This would enable a constructive relationship to be established and regular reports exchanged so that each group could reflect on the progress of the other and contribute to it as appropriate.

13 By the second meeting the Trilateral Informal Conversations, recognising they had their own integrity and dynamic, felt free to move beyond the two topics raised by the United Reformed Church in order to deepen understanding of each other's churches and to examine more closely both what united and what divided the three churches. The meeting also considered it had a responsibility to try to ensure that bi-lateral progress in the Formal Conversations did not damage Local Ecumenical Partnerships involving the United Reformed Church and one or both of the other churches, or the wide range of shared life and work at regional and national level. As churches in three nations, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church had also to bear in mind their ecumenical relations in Scotland and Wales. A further consideration was that the work of the Trilateral Informal Conversations might enable the United Reformed Church to enter into three-way Formal Conversations at a later stage.

14 The group met four times residentially between April 1999 and December 2000 and twice for one-day meetings in January and March 2001. The size of the meeting - twelve members and one ecumenical participant - meant it was possible to build relationships and establish a dynamic quite quickly.

### **The broader ecumenical and historical context of the Trilateral Informal Conversations**

15 The foundation documents of all three churches make it clear they regard themselves as part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The Preface to the Church of England's Declaration of Assent states:

"The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim



afresh in each generation. Led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, The Book of Common Prayer and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons." (Canon C15 1(1) The Canons of the Church of England)

The Doctrinal Standards of the Methodist Church state:

"The Methodist Church claims and cherishes its place in the Holy Catholic Church which is the Body of Christ. It rejoices in the inheritance of the apostolic faith and loyally accepts the fundamental principles of the historic creeds and of the Protestant Reformation. It ever remembers that in the providence of God Methodism was raised up to spread scriptural holiness through the land by the proclamation of the evangelical faith and declares its unfaltering resolve to be true to its divinely appointed mission."

The Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church states:

"The United Reformed Church confesses the faith of the Church catholic in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It acknowledges that the life of faith to which it is called is a gift of the Holy Spirit continually received in Word and Sacrament and in the common life of God's people. It acknowledges the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people." (Basis of Union para 12)

16 All three believe themselves to be firmly committed to the goal of the full visible unity of that Church. In recent years all have restated that commitment.

In 1996 the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church reaffirmed the commitment made in its Basis of Union of 1972 to take

"wherever possible, and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people." (Basis of Union para.8).

At that Assembly it resolved, virtually unanimously, to continue to express that commitment through resource sharing, active involvement in ecumenical bodies, the development and support of Local Ecumenical Partnerships and United Areas and, most significantly, in

"active participation in initiatives leading towards organic union."  
(GA1996 resolution 31)

17 *Commitment to Mission and Unity* (1996), the report of the Informal Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, set out the two churches' common understanding of the goal of visible unity. The report states, in a chapter entitled *Our Common Goal of Visible Unity*, their shared conviction that

"the Church is called to make visible God's gift of unity in both space and time."

It also maintains that

"the visible unity we seek to live out together is a stage on the way to the full visible unity which we hope to realize with the whole Christian family."

18 The search for full visible unity has led the three churches along various paths, sometimes in company with each other and sometimes in company with others. Over the past 30 years, important international ecumenical work in which some or all of the three churches have been involved has assisted and encouraged that search. Of particular importance have been the 1982 World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission paper, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, the 1984 report of the Anglican-Reformed dialogue, *God's Reign and our Unity*, and the 1993 Interim Report of the Anglican - Methodist International Commission, *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*.

19 Between 1978 and 1982 the three churches, together with the Moravian Church, tried and failed to covenant for unity in England. For many in all three churches this was a bitter blow to ecumenical hopes. But out of that failure a complex and rich ecumenical life has developed in which all three churches are inextricably involved. One of the grass-roots responses to the failure of the covenant for unity at national level was the establishment of many new Local Ecumenical Partnerships, involving all three churches. All three were centrally involved in the birth of the new ecumenical instruments and in the *Called to be One* process of Churches Together in England. Joint theological education became increasingly the norm, especially between these three churches. As ecumenical life in England has developed, all three churches have come to exercise, along with other partner churches, some degree of shared oversight at the level of the county sponsoring body, especially in relation to Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

20 The United Reformed Church (created through the 1972 union of the Congregational Church in England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England) continued, during this period, to seek further organic unions. In 1981 it united with the Re-formed Association of the Churches of Christ and in 2000 with the Congregational Union of Scotland. Since 1973, both the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church have committed themselves to work for full visible unity in Wales

through the Commission of Covenanting Churches, known as Enfy's. The 1998 Methodist Conference and the 2000 General Assembly gave preliminary support to the Commission's proposal for an ecumenical bishop in East Cardliff. The United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church are also both committed to search for a basis for union in Scotland with the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church. There too, bishops are part of the proposed basis for union.

21 The relationship between the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church is particularly close at the local level where there are nearly 200 joint churches and three united areas. (United Areas function as both United Reformed Church District Councils and Methodist Circuits.) A national liaison committee has existed since the 1970s. It seeks to make the life of the joint churches more bearable while the parent churches remain disunited. However, when in 1990, by means of a questionnaire, the two churches were canvassed for support for exploring the path to closer union, there was not a sufficient majority of responses in favour in either church to warrant proceeding further. One of the reasons for both United Reformed Church and Methodist Church lack of support for bilateral talks was a preference for the multi-lateral approach through the new ecumenical bodies. Another factor in both churches was that the supporters of the Covenant which had failed in 1982 still looked for a way forward which would include the Church of England.

22 In 1975 the United Reformed Church, because of its close relationships (from both its congregational and presbyterian traditions) with many Reformed churches in mainland Europe, became a member of the Leuenberg Fellowship. The 1973 Leuenberg Agreement between European Lutheran, Reformed and United churches defined church fellowship in terms of a common understanding of the Gospel, a setting aside of past doctrinal condemnations, and a granting of fellowship in word and eucharist including mutual recognition of ordination. In 1995 the Methodist Church also became a member. Ninety-nine churches, mostly European but including a few in Latin America, are now members of the Leuenberg Fellowship. Some of the Baltic and Nordic Lutheran churches, including some signatories to the Porvoo Declaration have signed the Agreement. (These various agreements are described in the appendix)

23 During this period, the Church of England was seeking full visible unity through a 'steps and stages' approach to particular partners, or groups of partners. It turned, at first, to the Evangelische Kirche, Deutschland (EKD) - an umbrella body which holds together the Lutheran, Reformed and United churches of Germany. There was a long-standing relationship on which to build, and as large, national churches they had much common ground. The resulting Meissen Common Statement of 1989 set the pattern for future agreements in which the Church of England was involved. The agreed Common Statement claimed that full, visible unity must include the

following characteristics:

- a common confession of the apostolic faith in word and life
- the sharing of one baptism, the celebrating of one eucharist and the service of a reconciled, common ministry
- bonds of communion which enable the Church at every level to guard and interpret the apostolic faith, to take decisions, to teach authoritatively, to share goods and to bear effective witness. These bonds will possess personal, collegial and communal aspects.

The signatories committed themselves

"to share a common life and mission. We will take all possible steps to closer fellowship in as many areas of Christian life and witness as possible, so that all our members together may advance on the way to full, visible unity."

24 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement* (1996) between the Church of England and the Moravian Church and *The Reuilly Common Statement* (1999) between the British and Irish Anglican churches and the French Lutheran and Reformed churches followed much the same pattern, the former being the first to involve an English partner. Each agreement led to a formal mutual recognition of one another as churches, and a commitment to continue to seek full visible unity together. These agreements did not lead to interchangeability of ordained ministry.

25 In the case of both the Meissen Agreement with the EKD and the Reuilly Agreement with the French Lutheran and Reformed Churches the United Reformed Church already had long-standing partnerships with those churches, and was in pulpit and table fellowship with them through the Leuenberg Agreement. The United Reformed Church was, as a result, invited to send an observer to both the German and the French conversations.

26 *The Porvoo Agreement* (1993) between the British and Irish Anglican churches and some of the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches was, however, able to offer interchangeability of ordained ministry because the signatories were able to declare:

"we acknowledge that the episcopal office is valued and maintained in all our churches as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry."

This, in turn, led to the signatories being able to commit themselves:

"to welcome persons episcopally ordained in any of our churches to the office of bishop,

priest or deacon to serve, by invitation and in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force, in that ministry in the receiving church without re-ordination;" (Together in Mission and Ministry, p30)

The mandated topics: conciliarity

27 The first meeting considered a United Reformed Church paper on *The Conciliar Expression of the Apostolicity of the Church in the United Reformed Church*. It concluded its descriptive section with a quotation from the 1997 unpublished report of the United Reformed Church - Church of England Informal Conversations:

"In the United Reformed Church continuity is carried in the totality of our common life expressed in the councils of the Church."

This 'whole body ecclesiology' of conciliarity involving representation, constitutionality and consent was readily recognisable in the other two churches.

28 For the United Reformed Church the primary expression of 'whole body ecclesiology' is the Church Meeting, a monthly or quarterly meeting of all the members of a local congregation. There members exercise mutual oversight, as well as oversight of the whole life of the local church as they...

"have opportunity through discussion, responsible decision and care for one another, to strengthen each other's faith and to foster the life, work and mission of the Church" (The Structure of the United Reformed Church 2.(1))

However the essential connectedness in both time and space between the local and the universal is also made clear:

"Participating in the common life of the Church within the local church, they (i.e. members) enter into the life of the Church throughout the world. With that whole Church they also share in the life of the Church in all ages and in the Communion of Saints have fellowship with the Church Triumphant." (Basis of Union para.16)

29 The District Councils, Synods and General Assembly also express 'whole body ecclesiology' as they each exercise their appropriate conciliar oversight through representatives, both ministers and elders. However, it is the General Assembly which embodies the unity of the United Reformed Church, acts as the central organ of its life and is the final authority, under the Word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, in all matters of doctrine and order. (see The Structure of the United Reformed Church 2.(5))

30 For the Church of England

"Conciliarity refers to the involvement of the whole body of the faithful - bishops, clergy and laity - in consultation, normally through representative and constitutional structures, for the sake of the well-being of the Church and God's mission in the world. Conciliar life sustains all the baptized in a web of belonging, of mutual accountability and support." (Bishops in Communion p 21)

Within this conciliar structure, the bishop has a particular role as the (1980) Ordinal states:

"A bishop is called to lead in serving and caring for the people of God and to work with them in the oversight of the Church."

This describes the relational way in which oversight is to be exercised by the bishop in synod, and the House of Bishops in relation to the General Synod. The importance of the personal role of the bishop as a focus of unity in both time and space has no clear equivalent in the other two churches.

31 Methodist ecclesiology lays particular emphasis on "relatedness" as essential to the concept of 'Church' (see *Called to Love and Praise* 4.7.1) and this finds expression in the 'connexional principle'. This means that all the structures of fellowship, consultation, government and oversight express the interdependence of all churches. Alongside this, as the natural corollary of connexionalism, local churches, Circuits and Districts exercise the greatest possible degree of conciliar autonomy in order to be able to respond to local calls to mission and service. However, their dependence on the larger whole is also necessary for their own continuing vitality and well - being (see *Called to Love and Praise* 4.6.2) and it is the Conference which is the final arbiter on matters of policy and doctrine. It is also through the Conference that faithful continuity is kept with the apostolic faith.

32 Within its practice of 'whole body ecclesiology' the Methodist Church gives a special place to those who are ordained representative persons (see *Called to Love and Praise* 4.6.6) while recognising that it is ultimately the whole people of God, through their representatives on the relevant decision - making bodies, who must decide on the strategies placed before them (see *Called to Love and Praise* 4.6.6) The Methodist Church's connexional understanding of the Church recognizes the need for ministries of unity and oversight within the universal fellowship of believers, whether exercised personally, collegially or communally. (see *Called to Love and Praise* 4.6.9)

*It seemed that all three churches were conciliar, all were connexional, but in different ways. Conciliarity involving representation, constitutionality and consent could be seen in all three churches. All exercised oversight through councils as well as through personal leadership and all saw their life as in faithful continuity with the apostolic church.*

33 Careful listening to one another led to a new recognition of common ground. However, differences began to emerge when it came to considering the place of personal episkope in the various ways in which the three churches understood apostolic continuity.

**More work is needed to examine together how far the different ways in which personal episkope relates to apostolicity are contingent and how far they are a matter of theological principle.**

### **The mandated topics: eldership**

34 The shared ministry of ministers and elders in every council is of particular value to the United Reformed Church. It demonstrates a collaborative understanding of leadership, exercised corporately in an atmosphere of mutual accountability. The ministry of minister and elders is distinct but complementary - each is incomplete without the other. This is faithful to the spirit of the Geneva Reformation but the practice has evolved over the years with different emphases in different Reformed churches throughout the world.

35 Calvin's concern was to ensure the good ordering of the Church on a scriptural basis. In the Institutes, 4.3.8, he advocates that each church have 'a senate' of ministers and elders, whose classic role was 'in pronouncing censures and exercising discipline'. This disciplinary system was taken up in the Westminster Confession and Form of Church Government, 1646, which became the standard for the Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian churches throughout the English-speaking world.

36 For Calvin, pastoral care, in the narrower sense of care for the needy, was the responsibility of deacons. But towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, elders were tending to assume the functions of deacons in relation to the poor - a model of eldership that was revived by Thomas Chalmers in Scotland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which is integral to the United Reformed Church practice today. The Elders' Meeting also sees that public worship is regularly offered and that the sacraments are duly administered. This emphasis is also found in Calvin, but it has been enhanced by insights inherited from the Churches of Christ tradition in this country, where elders played an important role in leading worship and preaching as well as in pastoral care.

37 Every local United Reformed Church has an Elders' Meeting consisting of men and women over the age of eighteen, who have been chosen by the whole membership for their Christian maturity to share with the minister in the oversight and pastoral care of the church. At the heart of both the ministry of Word and Sacrament and the ministry of the Elder today is the equipping of every member for his or her calling. Elders are ordained by the local congregation to their ministry of shared leadership, pastoral care, and the equipping of the people of God. That ordination is for life and is recognised throughout the

United Reformed Church. The wider councils of the church normally consist of ministers and elders.

38 The gift of eldership came to the United Reformed Church from the Presbyterian Church of England. The Congregational Church had a similar ministry exercised by deacons but they were not ordained, although many served for long years and a few were honoured with the title 'life-deacon'. Today, elders rarely serve for an unlimited, continuous period. In most churches, elders serve for a limited term and are then expected to take a sabbatical period as non-serving elders. When, after a period as a non-serving elder, an elder is called again to serve a particular church at a particular time, he or she is inducted to that new period of service, not re-ordained. The elders are the faithful core of the church's life.

39 Certain ecclesiological and pastoral principles seemed to emerge from this presentation of the principles and practice of eldership in the United Reformed Church.

- the ministry of the elder emerges from the ministry of the whole people of God as elders are chosen by the members.
- their representative ministry is exercised in all the councils of the church. Such representative ministry is valued in all the churches.
- the Elders Meeting is a good example of shared authority and collegiality of oversight and it embodies a formal commitment to corporate responsibility.
- the ministry of the elder is specifically intended to be an enabling ministry, to equip all the people of God in their particular ministries
- elders are chosen for their Christian maturity rather than for any specific gifts or skills. Their term of office as serving elders may be of several years' duration and they may serve several terms. The church often receives from its elders a maturity and continuity of leadership.

The Church of England and Methodist members were able to identify various lay ministries and forms of church government in the life of their churches which also expressed these principles.

*All three churches were able to affirm these as sound and desirable ecclesiological and pastoral principles for local church leadership.*

40 The United Reformed Church practice of ordaining elders presented difficulties. The Church of England, in particular, sees ordination as necessarily including the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The United Reformed Church, in common with most of the Reformed family, sees ordination as also being appropriate for other ministries. In *Eldership in the Reformed Churches Today* (Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, no. 22, 1990) the ordination of elders is described as follows:

"Ordination is an act of consecration to service through a particular office or ministry. It is an acknowledgement by the Church that the person ordained has been empowered and equipped for that ministry by the Holy Spirit and has been recognized and called to that ministry by the Church."(8a)

41 It was noted that, although elders are ordained into a ministry of the whole United Reformed Church, the local congregation has full authority to choose and ordain them and they are accountable to the local congregation alone. No training is required before ordination and, although most synods and district councils offer in-service training, it is neither accredited nor obligatory. The comments made by the Church of England and Methodist members about the lack of authorisation of elders by the wider church showed that more work was needed on the three churches' understanding of 'local' and 'Church'. The questions pressed on the voluntary nature of the training and the lack of formal accreditation (which would probably not have been asked in relation to Methodist Stewards or Church of England Church Wardens because they are not ordained) indicated the need for further work on the different understandings of ordination. The fact that the wider councils of the United Reformed Church normally consist solely of ministers and elders seemed to the Methodist and Anglicans members to limit the ministry of the whole people of God.

42 A paper on *Representative Ministry*, which had been presented by Paul Avis to the Formal Conversations, proved very relevant to this discussion. The paper sought to find a way of valuing the great variety of ministries within the ministry of all the baptized, yet without equating ministry with every aspect of Christian discipleship. Two of the concerns expressed by the Methodist Church and the Church of England about elders in the United Reformed Church - that their ordination opened the door to a whole range of possible ordained ministries, and that councils of ministers and elders limited the ministry of all the baptized - had clear connections with this paper's attempt to wrestle with how to recognise and value the full range of particular ministries within the whole ministry of the people of God.

43 The issue of eldership, although potentially divisive, in fact led to considerable convergence. It was recognised that each tradition located oversight and authorised ministries at what it believed to be an ecclesologically appropriate place. However, in response to the need for a contemporary missionary strategy, all three churches were developing new forms of lay leadership alongside the traditional ones, and expanding the role of locally ordained ministers or ministers in local appointment. As the group talked of the traditional roles of Local and Lay Preachers, Elders, Stewards, Pastoral Visitors, Church Wardens, Sidesmen, Readers, Licensed Lay Workers, Lay Pastoral Assistants, Church Army Officers and Church Related Community Workers, and the

new emerging roles of Local Church Leaders, Mission Enablers, Worship Leaders and Evangelists, it was clear that there was considerable convergence in both ecclesiology and practice.

44 The pattern of shared leadership between such lay ministers and those ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament also seemed to be changing. In both the Methodist Church and the Church of England the growing number of ministers ordained only to a local appointment raises new questions. Deacons in the Methodist Diaconal Order, who play a significant role in the leadership team of some local churches, are ordained to the ministry of Christ's Church, but not to a ministry of Word and Sacrament. Ordained ministry in the Church of England is developing in several ways, for example in the work being done on issues related to a distinctive diaconate.

**More work is needed on the place of ordination and authorisation in this range of ministries.**

### **The goal of visible unity**

45 *Commitment to Mission and Unity*, the report of the Informal Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, begins with the words:

"We believe that our churches share a common understanding of the goal of visible unity."

It goes on to describe the four characteristics of a visibly united church as:

- a common profession of the one apostolic faith grounded in Holy Scripture and set forth in the historic creeds;
- the sharing of one Baptism and the celebrating of one Eucharist;
- a common ministry of word and sacraments;
- a common ministry of oversight.

This portrait of unity is similar to that in the *Meissen Common Statement* and, with some variation of wording, is found in all the ecumenical agreements which the Church of England or the British and Irish Anglican Churches have signed in the last few years. Its origins lie both in the Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888 and in World Council of Churches Faith and Order statements.

46 The Church of England members explained their 'steps and stages' approach to the goal of full visible unity. Methodist and United Reformed Church members found it difficult, from their church perspective, to understand the distinction between the stage of formally acknowledging the other churches, with whom these agreements had been made, as true churches, and the further stage of interchangeability of ordained ministry.

47 It became clear at the first meeting that the other two churches had some questions about the willingness of the United Reformed Church to express its commitment to the full visible unity of the Church in the terms agreed between the Methodists and Anglicans in *Commitment to Mission and Unity*. (see 45 above) The United Reformed Church representatives had taken for granted that their church's commitment to the goal of an organically united Church, as re-stated most recently at the 1996 General Assembly when it resolved to express that commitment through

"active participation in initiatives leading towards organic union"

was recognised as equivalent.

48 In order to make it clear that the United Reformed Church shared

"a common profession of the one apostolic faith grounded in Holy Scripture and set forth in the historic creeds" (see 45 above)

its representatives drew attention to the *Statement Concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church*, which is read at the ordinations and inductions of ministers and elders, and which states:

- I. "The United Reformed Church confesses the faith of the Church catholic in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- II. The United Reformed Church acknowledges that the life of faith to which it is called is a gift of the Holy Spirit continually received in Word and Sacrament and in the common life of God's people
- III. The United Reformed Church acknowledges the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people
- IV. The United Reformed Church accepts with thanksgiving the witness borne to the catholic faith by the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and recognises as its own particular heritage the formulations and declarations of faith which have been valued by Congregationalists, Presbyterians and members of the Churches of Christ as stating the Gospel and seeking to make its implications clear."

It is not common for formal credal statements to be said by the congregation during Sunday worship. However, whenever new members are received or elders or ministers ordained, all these are required to publicly affirm or re-affirm their trinitarian faith in a form of words laid down by the General Assembly.

49 The United Reformed Church representatives maintained, firstly, that the common understanding of visible unity, set forth by the Church of England and the Methodist Church in chapter 2 of *Commitment to Mission and Unity*, fell clearly within the intention of the 1996 General Assembly resolution. There the United Reformed Church resolved to express its commitment to the unity of all God's people through

"active participation in initiatives leading towards organic union"

Secondly, they suggested that there might be other, equally faithful, approaches to the unity of all God's people than the one set out in *Commitment to Mission and Unity*. They pointed to the Leuenberg Agreement as one example of an alternative approach.

50 The original purpose of the Leuenberg Agreement, made in 1973, was to reconcile the European Reformation churches which derived from Luther and from the Genevan reformers, and also the churches of the 'first Reformation' - the Church of the Czech Brethren and the Waldensian Church. The Agreement is based on the Reformation understanding that there is a difference between the essential nature of the Church and its shape.

51 For the churches of the Leuenberg Fellowship, pulpit and table fellowship follows agreement in faith, and does not depend on a common ministry of oversight. The pulpit and table fellowship found in the Leuenberg Fellowship is seen as a visible expression of the invisible unity already given by God. The Agreement begins:

"The Church is founded upon Jesus Christ alone. It is he who gathers the Church and sends it forth, by the bestowal of his salvation in preaching and the sacraments."  
(Leuenberg Agreement 2)

The 1995 Leuenberg text on *Sacraments, Ministry, Ordination* adds:

"Differences in structure do not impede a "church fellowship" in the sense of pulpit and table fellowship. The reciprocal acknowledgement of ministry and ordination is not impeded so long as the question of church leadership remains subordinate to the sovereignty of the word."  
(Sacraments, Ministry, Ordination p 114)

52 The 1973 Agreement also states that the question of organic union between particular churches must depend on their situation. The Agreement goes on to express anxiety that such organic unions might either suppress diversity or oppress minority churches. However, the 1996 document, *The Church of Jesus Christ*, shows a willingness to promote dialogue on episcopal ministry and the historic apostolic succession if that serves the extension of church fellowship. Nevertheless, it continues to hold

"that no single historically arisen form of church leadership and ministerial structure can or may be laid down as a prior condition for fellowship and for mutual recognition." (Church of Jesus Christ pp98ff)

53 In contrast to Leuenberg, the United Reformed Church's commitment to the full visible unity of the Church, believing that unity to be an expression of the *koinonia* to be found in the Godhead, does not depend on the situation. Commitment to the full visible unity of the Church is part of its very being. Nevertheless, it shares the conviction of the Leuenberg Fellowship that where churches mutually recognise one another - where there is the right teaching of the Gospel and the right celebration of the sacraments - that should be expressed in 'fellowship in word and sacrament'. (Leuenberg Agreement 29). This includes

"the mutual recognition of ordination and the freedom to provide for inter-celebration," (Leuenberg Agreement 33)

Although the documents produced by the Leuenberg Fellowship are cautious about the road to organic union which lies beyond that fellowship in word and sacrament, the United Reformed Church has made it abundantly clear through its successive unions that it is committed to the visible, organic unity which lies beyond such fellowship.

### Recent documents considered by these conversations

54 Following on the initial focus on the United Reformed Church, its two particular insights from the Reformed tradition, and on the nature of its commitment to the full visible unity of the Church, the group decided to consider recent documents from the other two churches which bore on these matters. The three chosen were the Methodist Conference Statement on the Nature of the Church, *Called to Love and Praise* (1999), the Church of England House of Bishops paper, *Bishops in Communion: collegiality in the service of the Koinonia of the Church* (2000) and the report of the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church to the Conference in 2000, *Episkope and Episcopacy*, with its attendant guidelines.

### Called to Love and Praise

55 After a Methodist presentation of the report, *Called to Love and Praise*, which emphasised that it was the first authoritative statement on the nature of the Church by the Methodist Church since 1935, the other two partner churches responded. Having welcomed the considerable extent to which they could endorse the statement, discussion focussed on areas of difference or disagreement.

56 Some of the challenges posed by the Church of England response could equally well have been addressed to the United Reformed Church. It commented on the

inclusive understanding of the unity already given by God (3.1.2) - a unity which apparently included those churches where the sacraments of Eucharist and Baptism were not celebrated. The Methodist use of the phrase "the priesthood of all believers" was noted (4.5) and the question asked as to whether there was in Methodism, as in Anglicanism, an intrinsic link between the ordained ministry and the ministry of Word and Sacrament. *Called to Love and Praise* speaks of the ordained ministers as "representative persons" (4.5.10), meaning that they represent the people before God.

57 Both the Church of England and the United Reformed Church members sought further explanation of what it meant to say that the connexional principle enshrined a vital truth about the nature of the Church. (4.6)

More work is needed on a shared understanding of the nature of the Church. More work is also needed on the different understandings of the way to full visible unity.

### Bishops in Communion

58 Although *Bishops in Communion* takes *koinonia* in its very broadest sense as its starting point, relating the *koinonia* of the Church to the communion of the Trinity and to God's mission to the whole of creation, the document's primary purpose is to describe how the collegiality of the episcopate can serve the *koinonia* of the Church.

59 A United Reformed Church response to *Bishops in Communion* led the group into important areas of difference and convergence, mainly but not only, between the Church of England and the United Reformed Church. The heart of the difference lay in the understanding of the nature of representative ministry within the context of the ministry of the whole people of God. This pointed to a discussion which went beyond episcopacy. There appeared to be considerable convergence in practice in the work of a Church of England bishop, a United Reformed Church synod moderator and a Methodist District chair. However, the bishop's role as chief minister of Word and Sacrament in the area of his jurisdiction, together with his ministry of personal *episkope*, seemed to differentiate him from the synod moderator and the district chair. Because of the different histories and different ecclesiologies which lie behind the three synods and the personal ministries related to them in the three churches, there are considerable differences as to when and how authority is exercised personally and when and how synodically.

### Episkope and Episcopacy

60 A Methodist member introduced the report, *Episkope and Episcopacy* which had been presented to the Methodist Conference in 2000. Of particular importance was the fourth of the guidelines which were adopted as a summary statement of the Methodist Church's position on *episkope* and episcopacy. It states:

"In the furtherance of the search for the visible unity of Christ's Church, the Methodist Church would willingly receive the sign of episcopal succession on the understanding that ecumenical partners sharing this sign with the Methodist Church (a) acknowledge that the latter has been and is part of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church and (b) accept that different interpretations of the precise significance of the sign exist."

61 At present, it is the President of Conference who most clearly exercises a role of personal *episkope* comparable to that of a bishop in the Church of England. The President (and Past-Presidents) ordain new ministers and act as a focus for the unity of the Methodist Church. However, Presidents serve for only one year. The model of episcopacy being explored by the covenanting churches in Wales, and by the Scottish Church Initiative for Union, where the emphasis is on leadership in mission and the exercise of pastoral care for ministers and people, points more obviously to the role of Methodist District Chair or United Reformed Church Synod Moderator. The third of the guidelines adopted at the Methodist Conference in 2000 states that the Methodist Church believes a key function of *episkope* is to encourage the Church's participation in God's mission.

62 In the context of this report, the United Reformed Church members were asked how willing the United Reformed Church would be to accept these guidelines. They replied that the world-wide Reformed tradition already had bishops, and valued personal leadership, but it looked for apostolic continuity through the whole Christian community rather than through the bishop. In the context of the Scottish Church Initiative for Union, episcopacy and eldership were being offered as gifts from particular traditions to the united church and as such were being studied and developed. The United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church were fully committed to that process.

**Further work is needed on the ways in which personal *episkope* is officially understood and actually practised in the three churches. Because the Methodist and United Reformed Churches are in three nations, it would be useful to include the episcopal churches in Scotland and Wales in this work.**

## **Some membership issues**

63 The three churches' traditional understandings of membership and how these were evolving were discussed in relation to several documents: the Churches Together in England 1997 booklet, *Baptism and Church Membership*; the section on *Belonging* in the report from the Church of England Statistics Review Group, entitled *Statistics: a tool for mission*; a Methodist discussion paper *What should membership mean?*; and a United Reformed Church discussion paper for local churches entitled *Celebrating Church Membership*.

64 The Methodist and United Reformed churches' understanding of church membership had much in common. Both understood membership in terms of mutual responsibility within the local fellowship and the wider church. Only members could exercise communal oversight. Nevertheless both churches also regarded baptism as the sacrament of entry into the Church. The Church of England's approach to "membership" was based on baptism and on its history of being the church for the whole community. However, in order to participate in the general government at parish, deanery, diocesan and national levels, it was necessary to be confirmed and to be on the electoral roll.

65 Some convergence between the churches had taken place under pressure from local ecumenical life. Members in good standing with the Methodist or the United Reformed Church who habitually worship in a Church of England parish church can now declare themselves also members of the Church of England. The Methodist Conference 2000 began the process by which membership of the Methodist Church can be granted to members in good standing in the other churches who are partners with them in a Local Ecumenical Partnership. The United Reformed Church has recently recognised that the Church Meeting (or equivalent) of a Local Ecumenical Partnership which is a local church of the United Reformed Church has the authority to receive into membership those who are members of the other partner churches in the Local Ecumenical Partnership.

66 In these changing times all churches were re-examining the various ways of belonging to the Church. Although for the Church of England baptism remained the basis of belonging to the Body, participation and commitment were receiving a new emphasis. For both the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, traditionally gathered churches, a renewed mission emphasis in the face of numerical decline meant that any kind of participation or link with the community was being valued and the importance of the old, clear line between being a member and being an adherent was being questioned.

**More work is needed on the question of the relationship of baptism to membership, and membership to the ministry of the whole people of God.**



## Relations with the Formal Conversations

67 The Trilateral Informal Conversations were set up to respond to the fact that the United Reformed Church had expressed an interest in being part of the *Commitment to Mission and Unity* process. It had offered to that process two particular insights from the Reformed tradition, namely the conciliar expression of the apostolicity of the Church and the shared ministry of the Elders. (see 7 above) At the first meeting it was agreed that consideration of these two issues

"would be set within a developing understanding of the sort of visible unity required for effective mission and the experience of shared living already enjoyed."  
(see 12 above)

It was expected that the Informal Conversations would interact with the Formal Conversations. Both conversations were within the one circle of confidentiality and *aide memoires* were exchanged. Papers from the Formal Conversations came to the Informal once they had reached a certain level of maturity. The Informal Conversations played a privileged role in the reception of those papers and note was taken of their comments on them. The overlap in membership meant that those who were members of both could bring a sense of the nature of the Formal Conversations and could represent the views of the Informal Conversations to the Formal. However, it had not been anticipated how far the whole process would have had to be prolonged for the exchange of documents between the two sets of conversations to be really effective.

68 The members of the Informal Conversations had the opportunity to comment on a draft of the report from the Formal Conversations. They welcomed the particular place which the United Reformed Church was given in the report's recommendations. They also hoped that the consistently trilateral note of the recommendations at the end of this report would be heard as both reports are widely discussed and further steps proposed.

69 This pattern of two sets of conversations, proceeding in parallel in terms of meetings, overlapping membership and some exchange of papers, but being asymmetrical in terms of goal, partners and status, was untried. Whereas the Formal Conversations had the clear goal of producing an agreed Common Statement between the two churches, the Informal Conversations had, by their very nature, no such goal. They existed in relation to the Formal Conversations but there was a lack of clarity as to the nature of that relationship. As a result, there was a variety of interpretations within the group especially as to how far the Informal Conversations could expect to affect the outcome of the Formal Conversations. If such a pattern is proposed on another occasion, the mutual expectations of the two sets of conversations should be more rigorously explored before the meetings begin.

## Areas of convergence

70 A common commitment to the full visible unity of the Church and a common recognition that all three churches faced the same urgent missionary situation were the basis of and the motive for the conversations.

71 However, through these conversations a significant degree of common ground was also found in two particular areas. Firstly, as stated following paragraph 32 above:

"It seemed that all three churches were conciliar, all were connexional, but in different ways. Conciliarity involving representation, constitutionality and consent could be seen in all three churches. All exercised oversight through councils as well as through personal leadership and all saw their life as in faithful continuity with the apostolic church."

72 Secondly, all three churches were able to identify with the various pastoral and ecclesiological principles for local church leadership which had emerged from the discussion on eldership. They were, in summary:-

1. that such ministries should emerge from the local congregation and exercise a representative ministry in all the councils of the Church;
2. that such ministries should demonstrate shared authority and collegiality of oversight and a commitment to corporate responsibility;
3. that such ministries should be exercised with maturity and, if possible, with continuity;
4. that such ministries should seek to enable and equip the whole people of God. (see 39 above)

## Areas requiring further work

73 A number of ecclesiological issues emerged as needing further work as the three churches journey towards the goal of visible unity. These have been noted in heavy type as they arose in the account of the conversations and are re-stated below:

1. **More work is needed to examine together how far the different ways in which personal *episkope* relates to apostolicity are contingent and how far they are a matter of theological principle.**
2. **More work is needed on the place of ordination and authorisation in this range of ministries, (this refers both to the eldership and to the many forms of lay leadership in the three churches)**
3. **More work is needed on a shared understanding of the nature of the Church. More work is also needed on the differing understandings of the path to full visible unity.**
4. **Further work is needed on the ways in which personal *episkope* is officially understood and**

actually practised in the three churches. Because the Methodist and United Reformed Churches are committed to Christian unity in three nations, it would be useful to include the episcopal churches in Scotland and Wales in this work.

5. More work is needed on the question of the relationship of baptism to membership, and membership to the ministry of the whole people of God.

## **Recommendations**

74 All three churches believe that the calling of the Church to be one is a Gospel imperative. Christian obedience demands that the Church continues to strive for that unity of the followers of Christ for which he prayed so earnestly on the day before he was crucified. The urgent missionary situation in which the churches find themselves today also calls for a united witness.

Many of God's gracious gifts of unity have already been received in shared local congregational life, in joint training of ordinands, in the sharing of resources, in the convergences discovered in these conversations and, not least, in the oneness in Christ we have experienced in worship together.

In gratitude for the gifts of unity already received and in obedience to the continuing call to seek the unity for which Christ prayed we bring the following recommendations.

- I. We give thanks for
- the bi-lateral initiatives which have flowed at every level and in many places from the Formal Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, some of which are described in the publication *Releasing Energy*.
  - the long-standing and wide-ranging bi-lateral ecumenical life which exists between the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church and which manifests itself, for example, in nearly 200 joint churches, three United Areas and a national Liaison Committee.

and recommend that appropriate tri-lateral structures be set up to enable these bi-lateral relations to become, where appropriate, fully tri-lateral

- II. We recommend that the three churches, together, carry forward study of the ecclesiological issues identified as needing further work in order that progress may be made in the search for the full visible unity of the Church.
- III. We recommend that, given the commitment of all three churches to the full visible unity of the Church of Christ, our three churches explore together (but with an openness to other partners) what further steps would be necessary to make an English covenantal relationship between them.

## **Ecumenical participation**

The valued presence of an ecumenical participant was a reminder that, through Churches Together in England, all three churches were 'Pilgrims together' with many others, including those with whom one or more of the conversation partners had a particular bi-lateral relationship - the Baptist Union, the Roman Catholic Church, the Moravian Church.

## **Concluding remarks**

These deep and fruitful conversations were fully three-way. In other words they were not a matter of the United Reformed Church on one side and the other two on the other. Rather, as in a country dance, there was a forward and backward movement of agreement and disagreement between the churches and among the representatives of each church. Partners changed according to the issue and as fresh light was shed on the matter under discussion. From time to time a harmonious circle was formed, foretaste of things to come.

## A further personal proposal by Bishop Colin Buchanan

While as a co-chairman I take my own share of responsibility for the agreed report above, I dissent from the recommendations in paragraph 74. I have believed throughout that it was our task to shadow the Formal Conversations, to relate our work to their final report, and to look for ways to engage the United Reformed Church in the next steps on from the Formal Conversations. However, the recommendations in paragraph 74 ignore the Formal Conversations. Instead they suggest a sequence of trilateral initiatives without any context in the implementation of the Formal Conversations report. I therefore propose, in place of the recommendations above, the following:

1. that the Church of England and the Methodist Church, in receiving the report of the Formal Conversations, should at the same time formally request a response from the United Reformed Church, such as to bring that church also into any resulting agreement or relationship between them.
2. that the United Reformed Church should then match the timetables of the Church of England and the Methodist Church, and should mirror the processes of those two churches, so that all three churches, in or through their central bodies
  - a. should remit the report of the Formal Conversations to their membership for study and response;
  - b. within the context of such a study and response, should address together the theological and ecclesiological issues identified in this present report; and
  - c. should, if they accept the Formal Conversations report, join together to pursue the next practical steps in the implementation of those proposals.

## References

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The Structure of the United Reformed Church 1972.  
*Called to Love and Praise*: a Methodist 1999 Conference Statement on the Church.  
*Episkope and Episcopacy*: a report to Methodist Conference 2000.  
*Bishops in Communion*: collegiality in the service of the Koinonia of the Church: a House of Bishops occasional paper, 2000.  
*Commitment to Mission and Unity*: 1996 report of the informal conversations between the Methodist Church and the Church of England.  
*Baptism and Church Membership*: a 1997 report of a working party of Churches Together in England. The United Reformed Church service for the ordination and induction of elders (1985).  
*Releasing Energy*: how Methodists and Anglicans can grow together: Flora Winfield (2000).

### Papers prepared for these conversations

- The Conciliar Expression of the Apostolicity of the Church in the United Reformed Church.*  
*The Ministry of Elders in the United Reformed Church*, with Church of England and Methodist responses.  
*A United Reformed Church view on Visible Unity.*  
*Lay Ministry in the Church of England.*  
*Lay Ministries in the United Reformed Church.*  
Church of England and United Reformed Church comment on *Called to Love and Praise*.  
A United Reformed Church reflection on *Bishops in Communion*.

## Appendix

### The Leuenberg Agreement

In 1973, the **Leuenberg Agreement** gave rise to a fellowship of churches of the Reformation. The greater number of these are minority churches which often carry out their mission in difficult conditions. Among the 99 member churches, otherwise European, are five Protestant churches in South America, deriving from early immigrant communities.

There is consensus among the signatories on two main points. The Gospel is seen as a message of justification of the godless through God's free grace. Each local church is understood to be a congregation based on Word and Sacrament, engaged in common witness and service. This consensus makes it possible for signatories to recognise one another as Church while accepting as legitimate the diversity of ways in which that Church manifests itself locally.

The Leuenberg Declaration of Church Fellowship was the start of a continuing process by which that fellowship is realised. A General Assembly is held at least every six years to give momentum to the continuing work. The most obvious advances are in the field of theological work. The

document *The Church of Jesus Christ* is of particular ecumenical significance, but important work has also been undertaken on social issues since the Vienna Assembly in 1994.

Above all, the Leuenberg Church Fellowship sees itself not as a Protestant enclave but as a loosely structured ecumenical fellowship of Christian churches – a step on the way to visible Church unity. Additional urgency comes from the knowledge that if the churches are to have their say in the process of European integration, they must agree on the message they wish to convey.

***Meissen, Fetter Lane, Reilly and Porvoo***

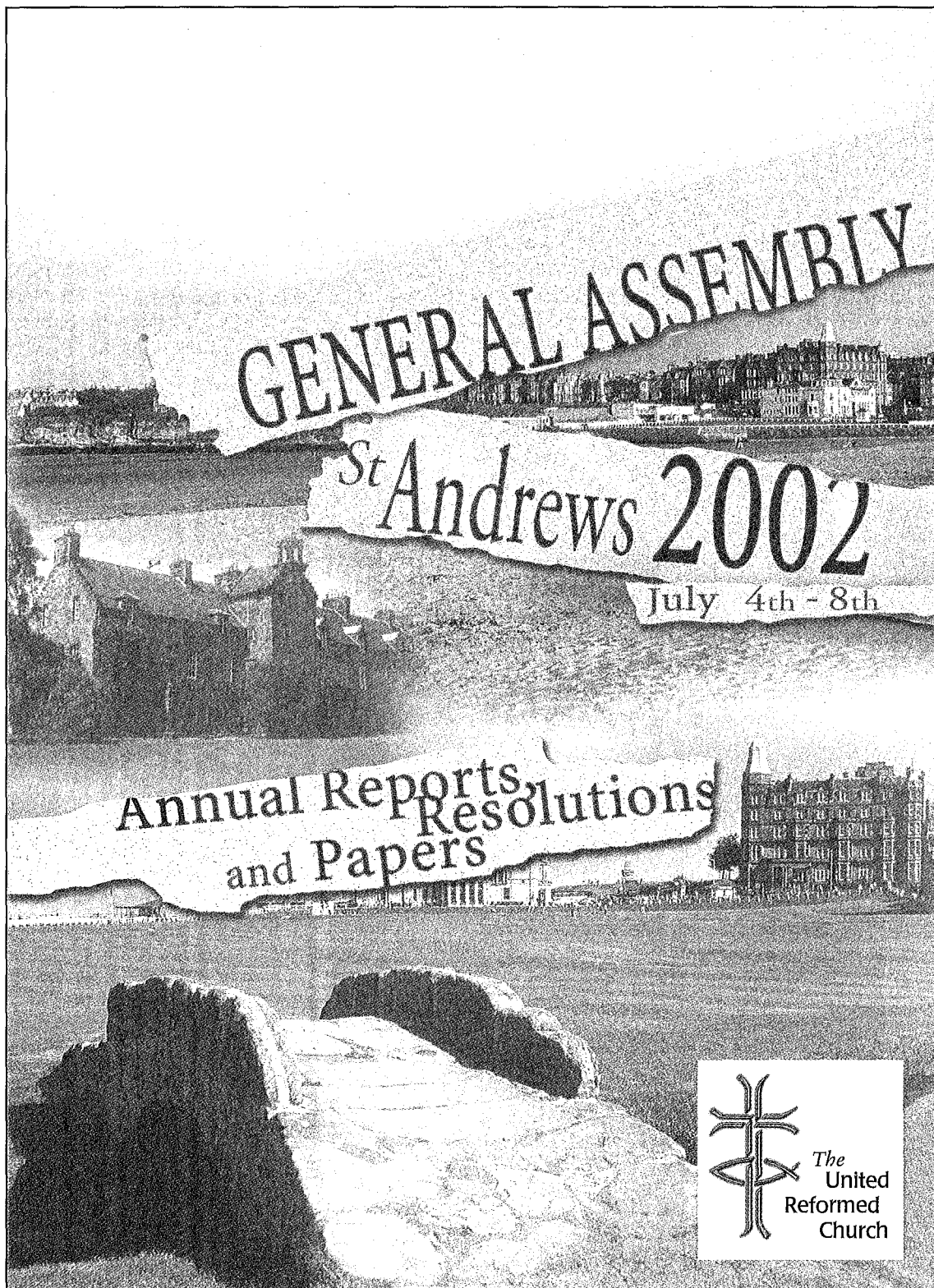
In recent years, the Church of England has entered into several theological agreements with other Christian churches throughout Europe.

In the **Meissen Agreement** (1988) the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany acknowledge one another as churches belonging to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, with authentic ministries of word, sacrament and pastoral oversight. They also commit themselves to share a common life and witness and to strive together towards full visible unity.

Similar acknowledgements and commitments were made in the **Fetter Lane Agreement** (1996) between the Church of England and the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland and in the **Reilly Common Statement** (1999) between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the French Lutheran and Reformed Churches.

However, a major step forward was taken in the **Porvoo Agreement** (1992) when the British and Irish Anglican churches entered into communion with a number of Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches. This Agreement goes beyond Meissen, Fetter Lane and Reilly as it allows the signatory churches to regard the baptised members of all the other churches as members of their own church and allows for interchangeability of ministers within the churches. It also allows shared forms of oversight.

# Information



# URC History Society

1 The Society's Study Day was held in the very hospitable surroundings of St Columba's with New Lendal, York on 8 September 2001. The Annual Lecture was given by Professor Edward Royle from the University of York. His topic was "J P Pritchett, Congregational Deacon and Architect". Not only had Professor Royle brought excellent slides to illustrate his lecture, but he also led an afternoon walk round the city so that members could visit some of the buildings he had mentioned.

2 The Library welcomed visitors from as far afield as Taiwan and the USA, besides those from the UK engaged on family history. A query from France about a Free Church of Scotland minister based in Naples proved to be the beginning of a trail that led to a family reunion. Our collection is unique and valuable and deserves to be better known. Information can be found on the internet – details are via "Links" on the URC Home Page ([www.urb.org.uk](http://www.urb.org.uk)). The Administrator, Mrs Margaret Thompson, can be contacted at Westminster College, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0AA / [mt212@cam.ac.uk](mailto:mt212@cam.ac.uk) every day except Wednesdays. Correspondence for the Honorary Secretary, The Revd Elizabeth Brown, should also be sent to the College.

3 The distribution of the archives continued with the help of Mr and Mrs Richard Potts. London, Derby, Leicester and Nottingham received presbytery records and architectural plans from a variety of

congregations were also sent to the localities of origin. The Chairman of the Council, Professor Stephen Orchard, undertook the cataloguing of the Communion tokens as a vacation task. Communion plate was offered to successor congregations and what was not claimed was auctioned with the agreement of the General Secretary. The sum realised will contribute towards the costs of conserving the Society's holdings.

4 The Editor of the Journal, Professor Clyde Binfield, was able to make use of articles linking ministry, personality, politics and varieties of churchmanship to provide varied and stimulating reading. A former Society President, Dr Geoffrey Nuttall, who celebrated his ninetieth birthday in 2001, contributed an article on the Speldhurst Church Book.

5 During the General Assembly meeting in York a number of members met over lunch to hear Dr David Thompson talk about Campbell Morgan and Congregationalism.

6 Membership of the Society remains good value at £12.00 a year, which includes two issues of the Journal. The Administrator is always glad to hear from local congregations who have questions about the most appropriate way to deal with their own records, and welcomes copies of church histories as additions to the Society's collection.

# URC Musicians' Guild

1.1 The URC Musicians' Guild has 380 individual and 50 corporate members (where churches pay a higher subscription than for an individual, but on behalf of all their people concerned with music in worship.) Facts: having a regular organist and/or a choir is now generally uncommon; most UR churches rely, with varying degrees of success, on people willing to take turns at playing organ/piano/other keyboard to accompany worship and a few opt for recorded music even for singing. An increasing (yet relatively small) proportion have instrumental groups – either instead of or in addition to a 'regular' musician at a main instrument. Some have singing groups. All of these and any members of congregations who feel the importance of music in worship – and after all nearly everyone expects it – the Guild seeks to support, help train and encourage. Revd Colin Biggs writes:-

(to be sung to "Shine Jesus shine")

Do we sing to God's praise and glory?  
At the Guild, do we tell His story?  
Do we listen to all sorts of music  
Used to share what the Lord does among us?  
Strings and flutes: sax and bass?

Let music swell  
to express all our praise and worship:  
Let music grow,  
let our voices ring!  
Let music live,  
both the old and the very modern!  
That's what we want  
for the Musicians' Guild!

There's a welcome for all musicians  
serving God in our congregations:  
music group or choir or organ,  
orchestras are wanted among us –  
let God's praise fill our days!

Let music swell  
to express all our praise and worship:  
Let music grow,  
let our voices ring!  
Let music live,  
both the old and the very modern!  
That's what we want  
for the Musicians' Guild!

1.2 To gain an insight into what the Guild already does, the Guild Review offers a regular up-date on activities, and is published 3 times a year.

1.3 The annual Celebration Day this year will take place at Windermere (19th October). Arrangements are well in hand, including within the programme a talk by Fred Kaan. The day is open to all, members and non-members of the Guild alike.

1.4 Within our aim of addressing the widest variety of music possible in worship, the Guild does accept a particular responsibility for church organs. We have a wealth of knowledge, experience and contacts that can be made available to any church on request.

1.5 One year's membership of the Guild still costs a mere £4 (£10 for corporate members) and, for the time being, requests for membership forms and other information should be addressed to Revd A Jack Beeson, 135 Upper Elmers End Road, Beckenham BR3 3QU. Requests concerning the Organ Advisory Service should still contact John L Harding, 'Rainbow's End', 105 Humber Doucy Lane, Ipswich, IP4 3NU.

# Schools related to the URC

1 The six schools related to the United Reformed Church, and a seventh school, the Collegio Valdese, Torre Pellice, Italy, continue to maintain useful contact. Their representatives met in London on 11 June 2001; a further London meeting was planned for June 2002 and representatives of the Governing Bodies, Staff, and Sixth Formers are to meet in Torre Pellice in October 2002. This will be the first time that a Schools' Residential Meeting has been held outside England.

2 In constantly changing and challenging circumstances the Schools remain conscious of their particular foundation and the obligations which flow from it. They take these seriously and they are grateful for the contributions which can be made towards the education of the children of ordinands, ministers and related workers, and others in the United Reformed Church. In this connexion, representatives met representatives of the Milton Mount Foundation, and in this connexion too the Schools acknowledge the renewal, for a further three years, of a grant towards sixth form scholarships at any of the schools, to the children of Grocers, Chemists or Commercial Travellers, under the auspices of the Leverhulme Trade Charities Trust.

3 The Schools present the following reports for the Session 2000-2002.

## 4 Caterham School

Caterham has had another successful year, and we are pleased to see significant developments in our boarding facilities; the refurbishment is just being completed.

We are delighted by the number of pupils who are URC Ministers' children, as clearly this is part of our foundation, which we wish to maintain.

Within the ethos of a rounded education academic progress has been maintained with the second best ever results at A level and best ever GCSE results. It is the balance of the academic with the opportunity for music, drama, sport, and a sense of values, which are at the core of the Caterham experience.

Our international links continue to develop and we now have pupils from over thirty countries. This adds a rich international element to our community. It has been particularly important that many of our own

pupils are having the opportunity to travel overseas, more recently to Malaysia and to Central Europe. A small group of pupils and staff from Caterham and the other URC related schools will be travelling to the Waldensian Valleys and the Collegio Valdese at Torre Pellice looking at a common theme with our Italian hosts.

*Rob Davey*  
Headmaster

## 5 Eltham College

After eighteen months at Eltham College, I am happy to report that the Christian commitment to serve others, which led to the foundation of our school, remains strong. Although there are fewer missionaries who seek education for their children in England, nevertheless there are many children who are prepared to give of their time and effort to help others in less fortunate circumstances.

Community Service, both as a curricular activity, and as an element of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, remains popular with many pupils who, for example, provide enthusiasm and guidance to disabled swimmers, or lively conversation and distraction to the residents of St Cecilia's Hospice. The Charities Committee also successfully involved pupils in fund-raising activities for Children in Need and for research at the Royal Marsden Hospital, where two former pupils are pioneering techniques in the treatment of cancer.

I have been pleased to maintain the provision of the Boarding House at Eltham. Some overseas students welcome the intimate nature of the small boarding facility, while I am happy to be able to offer a homely atmosphere to more local pupils particularly when it can provide a pastoral net for boys whose family circumstances are disrupted. The Independent Schools Inspection identified this as a strong feature of our boarding facility.

Finally, as a bolt from the blue, I have been approached by three missionary families to accommodate their sons from the academic year 2001/02. I am delighted to be able to help these families, and I hope that their sons will have a positive experience at the School for the Sons of Missionaries.

*P J Henderson*  
Headmaster



## 6 Silcoates School

A measure of the good health of the Silcoates School Foundation is its ambitious set of projects for the further development of the three schools. At Silcoates itself we are soon to launch an Appeal. So many students now play an instrument that we have grown out of the music school and intend to build a new one. A major refurbishment of the Junior School is planned. So is the expansion and redevelopment of the Sixth Form Centre. And we hope that our hockey players will soon be enjoying the pace and quality of an all-weather surface. As for our pre-preparatory schools, an extension is being built at Sunny Hill House and St Hilda's is to open a nursery unit.

A few highlights: the Investors in People award; a sparkling production of Grease; a remarkable choral concert; and our successes in the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's national schools' quiz. On 1 November Martin Johnson and Tim Stimpson (OS) visited the School to collect on behalf of SPARKS a cheque for over £5000, raised by eight redoubtable members of the Common Room who took part in the Great North Run.

The mock election was won by a seditious party called Child Labour. The Conservatives came third, to the distress of Ann Widdecombe, our memorable Guest of Honour on Speech Day.

*Paul Spillane*  
Headmaster

## 7 Taunton School

Given the national trend, many schools were trumpeting at the end of the academic year that they had achieved their "best ever" academic results. Taunton School was no exception: 62% of the A levels taken were graded either A or B and a record number of seventeen pupils achieved three A grades or more. Amongst this group were six Oxbridge candidates and seven destined for medical schools. It was also the first year of the new AS level examination. As always with a new system it is difficult to assess exactly how well our pupils have done but early indications are that the Lower Sixth is a strong year group. Coincidentally, at all three levels (A AS, and GCSE) the overall pass rate was 94%.

Despite the incessant rain in October and November, the Foot and Mouth crisis and a particularly virulent "bug" in February, the industry and success within the classroom was reflected across a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The 1<sup>st</sup> XV, on the back of a successful tour to Canada, lost just one match scoring over 500 points in the season and the 1<sup>st</sup> VII reached the quarter finals at Rosslyn Park. The 1<sup>st</sup> XI Hockey lost only two matches, as did the 1<sup>st</sup> XI Cricket who enjoyed a most extraordinary 8 wicket victory over a good Sherborne side who were all out for 24. The

girls were not to be outdone. The 1<sup>st</sup> XI Hockey won 14/18 matches – the year was rounded off with a tour to Malaysia and China – and the U14s, the strongest group we have had in the School for many years, were unbeaten.

The Christmas, Easter and May Concerts have now become an established part of the School calendar. More and more pupils seem to be playing instruments and now that Music has become part of the core curriculum in the Third Form a significant number are opting to study it as an academic subject. Drama too is healthy. The A level Theatre Arts reached heights previously unseen at Taunton School and the end of year production of *My Fair Lady* was hugely entertaining.

One of the collective highlights of the year was the "mock election" held in March in anticipation of a May General Election. The School was a hive of activity and the walls plastered with posters as the seven candidates and their teams vied for votes. The election culminated in a debate in the chapel which was attended by local politicians and received extensive television coverage. The result? A victory for Jodie Adams, Green Party.

Notable individual achievements during the year included Fiona Davidson being chosen to represent Great Britain in the International Biology Olympiad in which she was awarded a Silver Medal (top 30%); Natasha Murray coming second at the International Water Fair in Stockholm with her project on "Coral Regeneration"; Ian Brewer's selection to play Hockey for the Welsh U21 team v Austria, Matt Robertson's successful audition for the National Youth Music Theatre; Sam Winter reaching the final trial for the England U18 Rugby team; the award of a Dip. ABRSM to Melissa Morris (a rare distinction for a school pianist) and Katie Hardiman's selection for the National Youth Orchestra.

Recruitment to the Senior School is healthy. Despite a relatively small group moving up from our own Preparatory School pupil numbers in the Senior School remained steady. This was achieved by recruiting twenty-three pupils into the Third Form – twice the number who joined last year and the largest intake for over ten years – and forty-two new pupils into the Lower Sixth making it the largest year group we have had in the School since 1991.

July 2001 marked the end of an era with the retirement of our Deputy Headmaster, John Carrington, and Director of Recreation, Richard Jowett, who between them worked at Taunton School for a total of seventy years, serving the school with immense loyalty, commitment and dedication.

*Julian P Whiteley*  
Headmaster

## 8 Walthamstow Hall

The year 2001 was a momentous one for Walthamstow Hall. After much research and discussion, the Governing Body decided that from September 2002, the school should offer only day places. The closure of boarding will mark the end of a tradition going back 164 years, so the decision was not taken lightly, nor without some sadness. However, the number of missionaries' daughters, to serve whom we were founded, and others wanting our kind of boarding has diminished to a point where the boarding side is no longer a practical option.

Linked with that decision, in order to be able to advertise for a day-school head, the present headmistress, Mrs Jacqueline Lang, announced her retirement, after nearly nineteen years. The Governing Body has appointed Mrs Jill Milner MA to succeed her in September 2002. Mrs Milner, an Oxford English graduate, has taught in both independent and maintained schools, and is currently Assistant Head in a Kent girls' grammar school.

Momentous, too, was the first school inspection in many years, conducted in September by the Independent Schools Inspectorate, on the Ofsted model. The report was extremely favourable, summing us up a "principled, harmonious and caring", of high academic achievement and with excellent pastoral support and extra-curricular activities.

Certainly the year's public examination results were a "high achievement". We celebrated our best-ever Advanced Levels, with the Upper Sixth reaching the magic 100% pass-rate that we had been hovering very close to for years. The greatest satisfaction came from the quality of those passes, which gave an average points-score of 26, equivalent to AAC or ABB for everyone.

The GCSE results, too, were splendid, giving the girls an average of more than ten A-C passes each and making us the top independent school in Kent. The Lower Fifth, all entered for Religious Studies a year early, were awarded 86% A\* and A grades.

The new computer network has undoubtedly helped to support teaching and learning of high quality, as have all the extra activities that broaden horizons. In drama, there have been productions and workshops ranging from *Daisy Pulls It Off* to Tom Stoppard's *Night and Day*. The choir have performed Haydn's *Paukenmesse* with Tonbridge School and visited Germany to provide the music at the ceremonies and church services that marked the official twinning of the towns of Rheinbach and Sevenoaks.

Walthamstow Hall teams were successful in winning the regional finals of both Young Enterprise and the

Schools General Knowledge competition. Two girls gained their Gold Awards in the Duke of Edinburgh's Scheme. The school raised several thousand pounds for causes such as Shelter, the Afghanistan Appeal, the Peckham Settlement, Children in Need, Jeans for Genes, the World Wildlife Fund, the Salvation Army, "our" school in Mozambique and "our" hospice in South India.

In a season in which they provided nineteen County players and reached the Finals Day of the National Schools Lacrosse Championship (putting us in the top twenty teams nationally), the squad was well prepared for their lacrosse tour to the United States at Easter. Fund-raising for the tour had included a Fathers v Daughters match, where the inexperience of the fathers was compensated for by their numbers: forty of them, often all on the pitch at once, against our XII. We won.

The friends and Parents' Association celebrated their Silver Jubilee with a James Bond Ball, a magnificent Fireworks Evening and a series of parties for parents and children. Their regular supportive and fundraising work continued, as it has for the last twenty-five years, providing an exciting playground pavilion for the Junior School and technology equipment for the Senior School.

The school educates three daughters of missionaries (one Baptist and two Overseas Missionary Fellowship) and three daughters of ministers (all Anglican).

J S Lang  
Headmistress

## 9 Wentworth College

In May 2001 Wentworth College Old Girls' Association held a successful reunion at the school. It was wonderful to see so many of our former pupils together, many of whom have achieved a great deal since they left us. Old Girls who had known Miss Nora Hibbert, Headmistress 1961-1982 and Elder at Richmond Hill URC, presented the school with a conductor's stand in her memory.

It has been a busy year and I can only give a few highlights here. The main academic challenge to both staff and senior girls was the introduction of the new post-16 AS qualifications, for the first time last summer. Each of the students in our lower sixth was entered for between eight and fifteen modules and we were pleased with their results, which should lead to excellent A level results in summer 2002. Also last summer the twenty-two members of the upper sixth were entered for sixty-six Advanced levels. Some of these students have dealt with the challenge of a specific learning difficulty – such as dyslexia – or are less physically robust than their contemporaries, and

their results did them credit. In addition to their A-level studies this group had the chance - and encouragement - to develop a number of skills, interests and talents, the value of which is well recognised by university admissions tutors and employers. Girls in the upper sixth and those entering the lower sixth last September were impressed by our new sixth form centre, comprising the converted top floor of the main school building.

As always the girls have been busy and productive, and community service is especially important. Task Force, our whole school project linking us to the Victoria School for the Physically Disabled, is flourishing and celebrated its sixth anniversary last year; canoeing and sailing expeditions with their pupils take place regularly. Girls are also involved with afternoon tea parties to entertain guests from "Contact the Elderly", and the Christmas party for the Multiple Sclerosis Society took place as usual in December. Charity Week in November raised funds for HoneyPot, a retreat for disadvantaged children in the New Forest, as well as the BBC Children in Need appeal.

Many girls have enjoyed Outdoor Education activities. They have been rock climbing, caving and canoeing, enjoying sub aqua sessions, as well as sailing in the school boat, *Challenger*. Several members of the sixth form are now working towards their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, and a big proportion of the fourth form joined the scheme this year.

The music department have been busy with many events throughout the year, most recently the *Songs from the Shows* supper event and the musical *Shake, Ripple and Roll*, which involved both drama and music departments. In the summer term the junior drama group had outstanding success with their performance of the musical, *My Fair Lady*.

Our regular visits by girls from Collegio Valdese in Torre Pellice took place in January 2001 and February 2002.

In spring 2001 German and History students combined for a visit to Berlin, and in October thirty girls departed on the French trip to Paris. On both trips girls relished the opportunity to practice their language skills and enjoy the culture of these cities.

The Advent Service was held at Richmond Hill URC, led by our Chaplain, the Reverend Frank Cochrane and the Minister, the Reverend Dr Donald Norwood. It was well supported by Governors, parents, and the congregation.

Sandra Coe  
Headmistress

# Silence and Retreats Network

## **Core Group Members**

**Convener:** *Revd David Bunney*

*Mr Mark Argent, Revd Nelson Bainbridge, Revd Meriel Chippindale, Mrs Glenys Cockerell,  
Mr Alan Fox, Revd Gill Jackson*

1 The Silence & Retreats Network exists to promote wider appreciation of the use of silence in worship and individual prayer-life, and to encourage participation in retreats. In this we share membership of the Retreat Association with all the main denominations. Our activities are acknowledged by being part of the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee and the Convener sits on the executive committee of the Retreat Association. Others represent us on the CTE Spirituality Co-ordinating Group and in preparation for the forthcoming conference of the Retreat Association. Membership of the Network continues to draw interest from all parts of the Church, from ministers and members alike who want to deepen their spiritual life.

2 The Core Group is a co-ordinating body which publishes the journal "Windows" which, under the editorship of Alan Fox, is widely appreciated for its standards. The Core Group also oversees the work of the Synod links who are responsible for organising retreats and quiet days in their respective synods; an annual consultation is held with them. It is pleasing to note that recognition of the place of silence is becoming part of the ongoing programme of ministers' meetings and, in some cases, of continuing ministerial education. Increasingly this is being shared ecumenically. We have within our membership a number of people who have specific training for leading quiet days and retreats, and some who as trained spiritual directors can guide groups and individuals towards a deeper understanding of the place of silence in their spiritual life.

3 The changes that have occurred in the Core Group have borne fruit in enabling a better and more up-to-date record of membership to be maintained, building on the invaluable work done by Jack Thompson, and which is being continued by our new Treasurer and Membership Secretary Gill Jackson. Again there have been a number of changes among the synod links, most obviously due to ministerial movements. The current list is:

### **North Western:**

Gillian Heald, 32 Redbridge, Bolton, Lancs BL2 5PB

### **Mersey:**

Revd Ken Jones, 3 Wyncroft Close, Whitby, Ellesmere Port CH65 6TT

### **West Midlands:**

Revds Ken & Meriel Chippindale, 45 Beacon Road, Sutton Coldfield B73 5ST

### **Eastern:**

Revd Alison Chart-Key, 13 Nuns Gate, Thetford IP24 3EL

### **South Western:**

Revd Brenda Stephenson, 33 Cranhill Road, Street, Somerset BA16 0BZ

### **Wessex:**

Revd Jane Weedon, 8 Field Walk, Lymington, Hants SO41 9LG

### **Thames North:**

Revd Bridget Powell, Fairways, 2 Kiln Lane, Ley Hill, Chesham HP5 3QS

### **Southern:**

Mrs Pamela Pavitt, 30 Wakefield Gardens, Upper Norwood, London SE19 2NR

### **Wales:**

Revd Dr Julie Hopkins, The Manse, Wolfsdale, Nr Camrose, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA62 6JJ

### **Scotland:**

Revd John Dyce, 340 Cathedral Street, Glasgow G1 2BX

Northern, Yorkshire, East Midlands: to be notified.

4 In the rush of events which form the background to life today, both internationally and individually, it is all the more necessary to find space for the creative meaning of silence, to experience the quietness to wait upon God and make room for "the still, small voice of calm". We are here to help, and to share with all those who want to find "the peace which passes all understanding".

# Women's World Day of Prayer

*United Reformed Church representative on the National Committee: Mrs Josie Owens*

1 'Challenged to Reconcile' was the theme of this year's service and could not have been more appropriate for the country of Romania. Bordered by Moldavia to the east, Ukraine to the north, Hungary to the west and Serbia to the south west, Romania has faced not only its own problems but those suffered by its neighbours.

2 Since the end of the Ceausescu dictatorship in 1989 the country has seen many changes and the people struggle even now to bring stability and harmony to their lives. It is a long and often painful journey to reconciliation with the past when the present future is still uncertain.

3 We were privileged to have with us at our planning meeting a member of the committee responsible for the writing of the service. She shared with us the difficulties facing the Romanian people. We heard from her about the beauty of the country from the Carpathian Mountains to the resorts of the Black Sea which the country is trying hard to promote to the tourist industry to help with struggling economy. But we were also told of the hard-ships still facing the people. Gabriella expressed deep gratitude to the people from this country that send aid to Romania helping the orphanages and hospitals, without this many more people would indeed suffer.

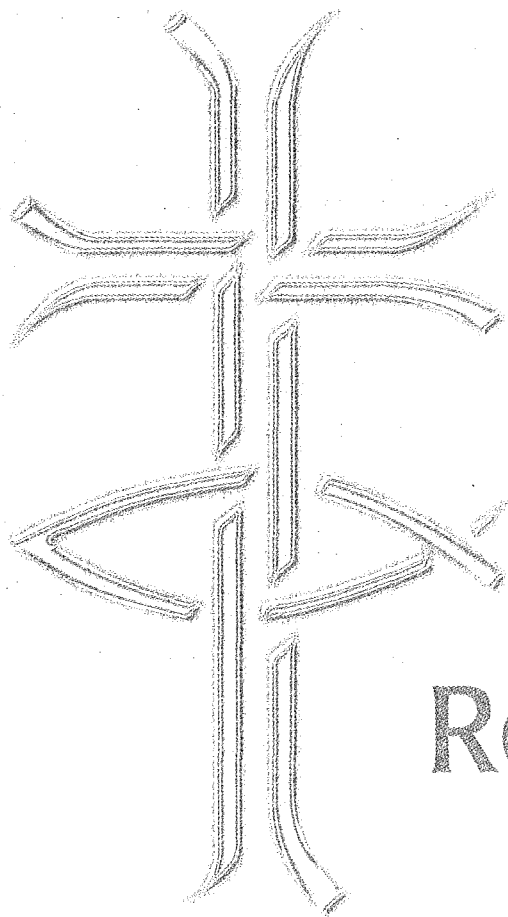
4 Romania can be considered a Christian country, for 99% of the inhabitants are members of one of the Christian denominations. Two religious worlds overlap, the Eastern Orthodox and the Western Catholic and Protestant Christianity. Church attendance is high.

5 Over 2,500 services were held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in churches, cathedrals, hospitals, nursing homes and schools, where many teachers use the children's service material for assemblies. Day conferences and preparation days still grow in number with over 40 booked already for 2003.

6 Next year 2003 the National Committee of England, Northern Ireland and Wales are host to the International meeting of the Women's World Day of Prayer, where delegates from 180 countries will take part. One of the important items will be to choose the themes and countries that will prepare the services for future years.

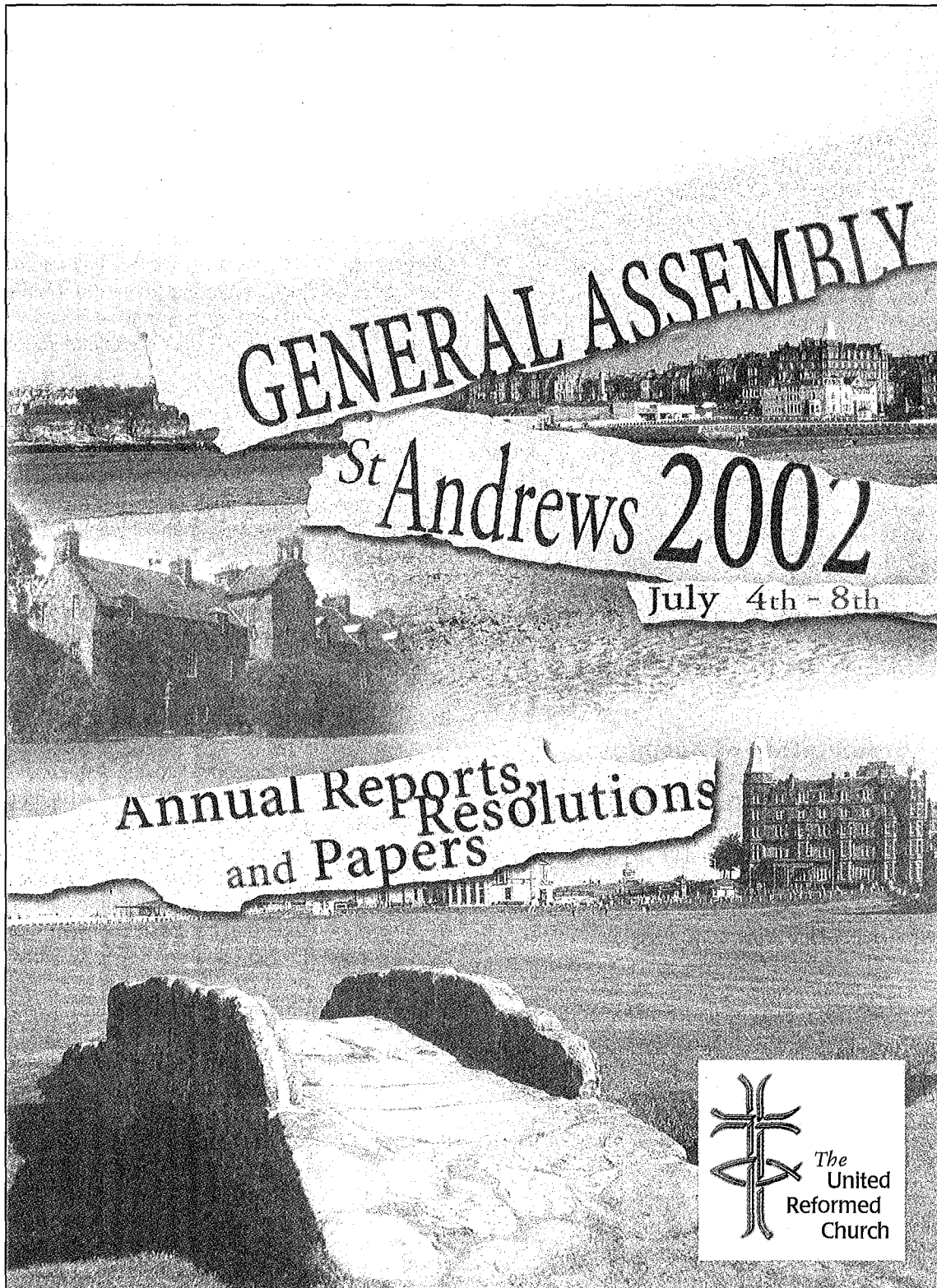
7 The service for 2003 has been prepared by the women of the Lebanon with the theme 'Holy Spirit, Fill Us'.

8 More information about the services and conferences along with service material can be obtained from the office, Women's World Day of Prayer, Commercial Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2RR, Telephone/Fax 01892 541411, email address [office@wwdp\\_natcomm.org](mailto:office@wwdp_natcomm.org)



*The*  
United  
Reformed  
Church

# Standing Orders



# Standing Orders of the Assembly

## 1. 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 duly given under rule 2d of a motion to refer back to that Committee or synod the whole or part of the report and its attached motion(s). Such a motion for reference back shall be debated and voted upon before the relevant report is itself debated. To carry such a motion two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. When a report has been received for debate, and before any motions consequent upon it are proposed, any member may speak to a matter arising from the report which is not the subject of a motion.

3b. During the meeting of the Assembly and on the report of a Committee, notice (including the names of proposer and seconder) shall be given to the Clerk of any new motions which arise from the material of the report, and of any amendments which affect the substance of motions already presented. The Moderator shall decide whether such motion or



amendment requires to be circulated in writing to members before it is discussed by the Assembly. During the course of the debate a new motion or amendment may be stated orally without supporting speech in order to ascertain whether a member is willing to second it.

3c. No motion or amendment shall be spoken to by its proposer, debated, or put to the Assembly unless it is known that there is a seconder, except that motions presented on behalf of a Committee, of which printed notice has been given, do not need to be seconded.

3d. A seconder may second without speaking and, by declaring the intention of doing so, reserve the right of speaking until a later period in the debate.

3e. It shall not be in order to move a motion or amendment which:

- (i) contravenes any part of the Basis of Union, or
- (ii) involves the church in expenditure without prior consideration by the appropriate committee, or
- (iii) pre-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.

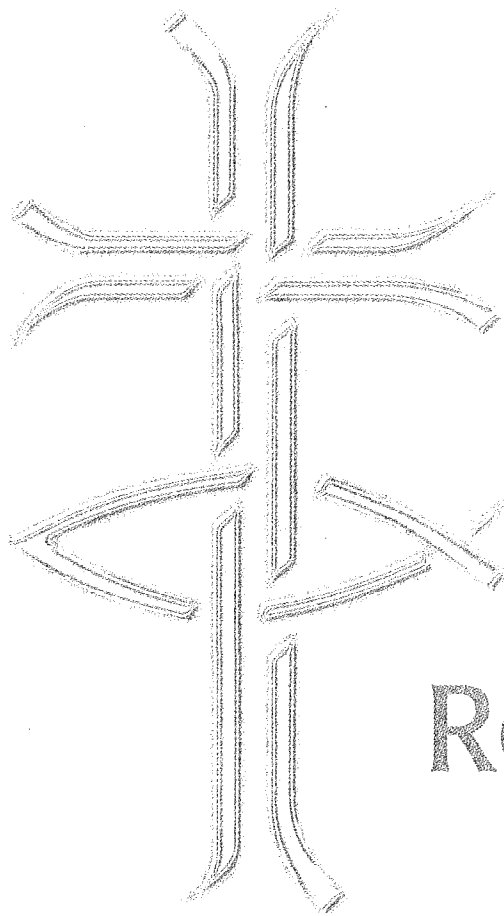
11c. A signed copy of the minutes shall be preserved in the custody of the General Secretary as the official record of the Assembly's proceedings.

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.



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