

Training Committee Review

The Assembly 2005 principles: Stage One.

The goal – a church committed to life-long learning where there is integrated education and training offered to the whole people of God.

The next steps

- make fuller use of the church's current concentration of valuable training resources for the good of the whole church.
- develop partnerships between all the many disparate sources of education and training in the church in order to serve the whole church better.
- Engage whole-heartedly, but realistically, in the changing ecumenical training scene in order to serve the whole church better.

1 Introduction

1.1 There has been a major shift in the approach of all the historic churches in England, Scotland and Wales to education and training. Although the challenge of numerical decline is forcing the pace, at the heart of this shift is a conviction that life-long learning for the whole people of God is essential to the mission of the Church and that the training of ministers of Word and Sacraments, vital though that is, must take its place within this new integrated approach.

1.2 The Training Committee's aim is to enable all the variety of education and training within the United Reformed Church to take its proper place in this new ecumenical landscape. The committee believes that a move from the present fragmented patterns of training to an integrated pattern will best serve the present and future needs of all the people of God as they engage in mission. An integrated pattern will also assist a more coherent ecumenical engagement. The committee is clear that, as a minority player in the ecumenical scene, the United Reformed Church needs to prioritise carefully the use of its resources in order to be able to contribute to and benefit from the new situation.

2 The 2005 principles

2.1 The 2005 General Assembly agreed the education and training principles set out below. They were formulated by the Training Committee but presented as part of the Catch the Vision report. Assembly determined that:-

In United Reformed Church educational provision there shall be:

- integrated education and training to equip the whole people of God for mission – promoted with coherence and in tune with the policies flowing from the Equipping the Saints and Catch the Vision reports.*
- ecumenical engagement at every stage*
- the presentation of a distinctive Reformed ethos and history in that ecumenical engagement*
- the delivery of this policy in a manner appropriate to the circumstances of the three nations in which the United Reformed Church is situated.*

2.2 The pattern of training and education in the United Reformed Church for the coming decade which the committee seeks to set before this 2006 Assembly and the proposed ways of bringing this about are rooted in these principles.

3 The background

3.1 Since January 2003 the committee's main task has been to review the whole range of training in the United Reformed Church in order to bring proposals to General Assembly for ways forward in these changing times. There has been wide consultation and careful listening. In 2004 the committee sponsored two consultations with representatives from synods, theological colleges and courses, and ecumenical partners. When an earlier version of this report was brought to Mission Council in March 2005, the committee paid careful attention to that council's comments. The Secretary for Training has discussed the committee's emerging proposals with close partner churches such as the Church of England and the Methodist Church and also more widely through the Churches Together in England Ecumenical Strategy Group for Ministerial Training. Since the autumn of 2005 the committee has been in communication about its proposals with the synods, colleges and courses which would be most affected by them.

3.2 The membership of the committee has changed during the three year period but it has throughout been well served by people with expertise in lay training and adult education, as well as personal knowledge of the synod training scene and the theological colleges and courses. It has also had the benefit of a representative of the Methodist Church who has kept the committee's discussions in touch with similar developments in that church.

4 The present context

4.1 The United Reformed Church, along with most of the historic churches in these islands is in a period of decline in membership. This has led to a significant reduction in financial contribution to central funds and therefore in the ability to pay ministers of Word

and Sacraments. There has also been a decline in the number of suitable candidates for such a ministry. This situation has challenged all the historic churches to review the role of their ordained ministry and to re-discover and re-value the ministry of the whole people of God. The Ministries Committee's report, "Equipping the Saints", and the Training Committee's principles are part of the United Reformed Church's response to this situation. Both committees are urging the church to see the situation as a God-given opportunity to renew the life of the United Reformed Church. But both recognise that means some radical changes.

4.2 In response to the same issues, the Church of England is setting up eleven Regional Training Partnerships in which the training for all the different kinds of ministry to which the people of God are called and the different bodies providing the training (training colleges, courses, diocesan training programmes, and the training resources of other churches) are brought into partnership with each other. The review which led to this development was called "Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church." The Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church were invited to participate both in the review process and in the regional partnerships themselves. In some regions they are already fully involved in their development. These regional partnerships open up new ecumenical opportunities, and a wider range of training opportunities, but also challenge the two smaller churches as to how to contribute coherently from their particular ethos and tradition.

4.3 For both the Church of England and the Methodist Church these changes in approaches to training provision mean they are re-configuring their relationships with existing training institutions and part-time training courses.

4.4 In Wales and Scotland the United Reformed Church's ecumenical training partnerships are differently expressed. There are also significant differences of history, culture, language and, in the case of Scotland, legal system as well as the relatively new situation created by the existence of the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly. All these factors have to be taken into account in providing training which is both appropriate to the national context and yet allows ease of movement throughout the three nations in the exercise of any of the various ministries.

5 The proposal

5.1 The principles adopted by the 2005 Assembly commit the Training Committee to bringing proposals to subsequent Assemblies which will, step by step, put those principles into practice. Therefore at this Assembly, as the first step in implementing the 2005 principles, the committee proposes:

5.1.1 that Northern College, Westminster College and the Scottish College should, in future, become resource centres for learning in the United Reformed Church. These resource centres will be expected to offer their Reformed, theological, biblical, historical and educational expertise to the whole training scene.

5.1.2 that the Training Committee will work to support and develop partnerships between all the various sources of education and training for lay and ordained throughout the United Reformed Church. These partnerships will include Training for Learning and Serving and – beyond the Training Committee's present remit – the variety of training in the synods, the courses offered by certain central committees and the programme of the Windermere Centre. This 'joined-up-working' will not only benefit the United Reformed Church as it seeks to become a learning church, but will also help the synods to play their full part in their ecumenical Regional Training Partnerships.

5.2 The proposal involves more than a change of description for Northern and Westminster Colleges. The pace of change already taking place there will increase as initial training for ministry (Education for Ministry 1) becomes only part of their core business and as they contribute more significantly to the life-long learning of the whole people of God. The Training Committee has confidence in the capacity of the resource centres for learning to develop further their resourcing of lay training and their expertise in distance and dispersed learning. They will be supporting groups and individual ordinands in all parts of England and Wales, providing and designing programmes, sometimes delivering them in the local context and, at other times, negotiating and arranging for local provision through the appropriate ecumenical Regional Training Partnership.

5.3 All initial training of ministers (Education for Ministry 1) will be provided by or arranged through those three centres. Northern College, which already provides this pattern of education for all Church Related Community Workers, will continue to do so. The Scottish College already practises an integrated, individually tailored approach to the training of lay and ordained over a wide geographical area, currently enabling the education of four EM1 students within a community of learning of more than 500, most of them from the United Reformed Church.

5.4 The main immediate consequence of this proposal is that the United Reformed Church would cease to use Mansfield College, Oxford, the Queen's Foundation, Birmingham and the eight part-time courses currently recognised for the initial training of ministers (Education for Ministry 1). Continuing conversations will be held with Mansfield College and the Queen's Foundation about other ways in which they might continue to be a training resource for the whole church. For example, the Queen's Foundation

has notable expertise in Mission Studies and in Black and Asian Theology. The Committee also notes that the Ecumenical Committee intends normally to use the Queen's Foundation for induction courses for the mission partners we receive and those we send overseas.

5.5 New relationships with a variety of learning providers will develop. The new resource centres for learning in England (Northern and Westminster Colleges) might, for example, require local components for the dispersed learning needs of some of the ordinands in their care. In Wales, St Michael's Llandaff – now incorporating the South Wales Ordination Course – will continue to be a resource for training and education (other than EM1). Currently this will be in their development of EM3 resources, chaplaincy specialisms and other provisions.

6 The reasons for the proposal

6.1 The United Reformed Church currently recognises five colleges and 8 part-time courses for the initial training of ministers (Education for Ministry 1). All Church Related Community Workers are trained at Northern College by a combination of six five-day residential teaching gatherings per year and local placements. In October 2005 only 17 new students began ordination/commissioning training. One part-time course, the Southern Theological Training Scheme (STETS), enrolled two of those students: the rest of the part-time courses enrolled one or none. Training Committee policy has been to maintain a minimum of 30 students over all years in both Northern and Westminster Colleges. In October 2005 there were 26 and 18 respectively. A declining number of students are being spread across a fixed number of colleges and courses.

6.2 Ministers who are going to serve in United Reformed local churches, or represent the United Reformed Church in ecumenical churches or in the ecumenical life of our cities, towns and villages, need confidence in their own tradition and a peer group of United Reformed Church students to develop a fuller understanding of the church into which they are to be ordained. Where there are only a small number of United Reformed Church ordinands among a much larger number of Anglicans and Methodists, the curriculum and learning experience is less likely to give adequate emphasis to Reformed history, ecclesiology or liturgy. There are very few United Reformed Church tutors on the courses, no full-time United Reformed Church tutor at the Queen's Foundation, and one full-time and one part-time United Reformed Church tutor at Mansfield College. In both Northern and Westminster Colleges United Reformed Church ordinands train in an ecumenical setting with a wide range of denominational partners, but are in sufficient numbers and have the support of sufficient United Reformed Church staff (four at Northern and five at Westminster) to enable them to enter into the give and take of ecumenical learning with confidence. In Scotland, its distinctive

education system means that ordinands from various traditions, but largely from the Church of Scotland, work for their academic qualification together in a Scottish university. This means that the small number of students training through the Scottish College have both ecumenical and additional Reformed exposure. In addition, mutually enriching United Reformed Church links are being developed between the Scottish and Northern Colleges.

6.3 The three colleges, in their different ways, are already a resource for the whole church. The Principal of the Scottish College is responsible for the whole range of training within the synod and currently serves the wider church through the Training Committee and its various sub-committees. Many of the present teaching staff in Northern and Westminster Colleges already, for example, lead study days and conferences both at the colleges and around the country. They offer their expertise to various Assembly and synod committees, represent the United Reformed Church in ecumenical and international dialogues, and lead Assembly Bible studies. They have, between them, a wealth of scholarship and experience in educational methods, including dispersed learning, on which the whole church could call in a more planned and integrated way than at present.

6.4 An important part of the Reformed tradition for centuries has been its emphasis on an educated ministry. If that is to continue, and if the United Reformed Church is to be able to grow and employ another generation of biblical scholars, theologians, liturgists and church historians it needs to keep one or two centres of learning where their expertise can be drawn on by the whole church. The committee proposes two centres in England rather than one so that the variety and breadth of the United Reformed Church, which is one of its strengths, can be the better maintained. This will also mean that, if increased capacity is needed for training the ministries of the United Reformed Church that capacity will be available.

7 Financial considerations

7.1 The driving force behind the Training Committee's proposal is not financial, but educational and ecumenical. Nowhere is the fragmented, uncoordinated nature of education and training in the United Reformed Church more obvious than in the financial sphere. The Training Committee has been working closely with the Finance Office to try, for the first time, to produce a clear picture of the real costs of the whole range of training currently taking place. Some of it is funded centrally, some of it by the synods. It is not yet possible to compare like with like, but Appendix 2 (p 115) is a significant first attempt at a comprehensive picture. An example of the difficulties is that the financial agreements with the present five colleges are all different and so comparison of costs is not easy. However, the committee's long term aim, as far as the English resource centres for learning is

concerned, is to remove all subsidies and replace them with financial support for the services provided. A broader, long-term concern is to ensure and make explicit an appropriate balance between the resources spent on ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers and those spent on training for other ministries and on the life-long learning of the whole people of God.

8 Is this proposal true to the 2005 principles?

8.1 *In United Reformed Church educational provision there shall be: integrated education and training to equip the whole people of God for mission?*

This is a major thrust of both the move to resource centres for learning and involvement in the Regional Training Partnerships in England. Scotland has embodied this principle for some time.

8.2 *ecumenical engagement at every stage*

The effect of the proposals is to develop and co-ordinate the United Reformed Church's existing ecumenical engagement, firstly through continuing to urge the synods to play as full a part in the ecumenical Regional Training Partnerships as possible, and, secondly, through concentrating resources in the new resource centres for learning at Northern and Westminster Colleges where there is already substantial ecumenical engagement. The resource centres are giftings to RTP's as indeed is Training for Learning and Serving, and more besides. The Scottish College is also a gifting to the ecumenical scene in Scotland.

8.3 *the presentation of a distinctive Reformed Ethos and History in that ecumenical engagement.*

The proposal to develop the two English resource centres for learning where there is both the greatest concentration of United Reformed Church staff and students and a very significant, established and developing ecumenical partnership will enable just such a presentation.

8.4 *the delivery of this policy in a manner appropriate to the circumstances of the three nations in which the United Reformed Church is situated.*

The clear but realistic commitment to the ecumenical Regional Training Partnerships in England is in keeping with this principle as is the proposal to include the Scottish College with its distinctive ecumenical links as one of the resource centres for learning. Conversations with the National Synod of Wales in order to meet its particular training needs are ongoing.

9 For all that has been – thanks! To all that is to come – yes! (from Markings by Dag Hamerskjold)

9.1 The Training Committee gives thanks to God for all the dedicated and formative teaching offered over many years to students, lay and ordained, by United Reformed Church tutors and by those from other churches. It also gives thanks for the nurturing of their faith and the pastoral care. It gives thanks for the ecumenical friendships formed among tutors and among students which are a foretaste of that time when 'all may be one'.

9.2 The Training Committee is not proposing a return to denominational colleges: rather it is proposing an educationally and ecumenically sound way for the United Reformed Church to take its place in today's fast-flowing ecumenical stream. It will not wait for us.

TRAINING APPENDIX ONE

‘EXPLANATORY NOTES AND KEY IDEAS’

- 1 Cohorts of students.** This term describing a group of students training together is usually used in relation to discussions about the numbers needed for effective training for ministry in the URC. The Methodist Church’s draft report printed in February 2006, ‘Future use and Configuration of Training Institutions 2006’ indicates that concern for denominational student cohort size is an issue for them too. In the section 3.4.3 they say that ‘The nurturing of Methodist identity calls for all Methodist students to have the opportunity to reflect on all aspects of their training from a Methodist perspective, both with their peers and with tutors and supervisors. This does not have to take place in the traditional setting of the full-time formational community...’yet’... there is something stubbornly formational and incarnational about the group in which actual human bodies encounter one another from time to time.’
- 2 Dispersed learning.** This is perhaps best explained by using an example. A person studying for the ministry but living some way from Manchester could have their course determined and supervised by the Northern College, which they would visit on a number of occasions each year. In addition they could go to particular courses/tutor groups nearer to their home and have a United Reformed Church tutor locally. Church Related Community Workers are already trained at Northern College in such a way, as indeed are some ministers. One advantage of this model of learning is that dispersed learning encourages the wider and the more local perspective to be held together. Dispersed learning is about using the person’s home context as a learning resource rather than suggesting that the ‘localness’ of the training institution’s base is in some way to be the dominant perspective.
- 3 Distance Learning.** Similar to dispersed learning, this means that you live some way from the base educational institution. There is usually some opportunity for a form of face-to-face meeting, either by tutorial (not always local) or by an IT based medium. However distance learning, sometimes called flexible or open learning, is a programme of study that consists of video, workbook or online materials that allow students to study at home. It does not imply no meeting with fellow students but that this is not the main mode of learning.
- 4 Education for Ministry 1, 2, and 3.** These terms have already been adopted by Assembly as a way of distinguishing, yet holding together, training before ordination/commissioning (EM1), post-ordination/commissioning training over the first three years (EM2), and continuing training and sabbaticals thereafter (EM3).
- 5 Five colleges.** *Mansfield College, Oxford*, is an independent college of the University which runs a ministerial training programme for United Reformed Church and Congregational Federation students in conjunction with Regents Park College (Baptist). *Northern College, Manchester* is an independent college mainly for United Reformed Church students but also Congregational Federation students, which works in partnership with Baptists, Methodists and Unitarians. Some Moravians also train there. Rapid developments in the establishment of the Southern North West Training Partnership mean that Northern will now be working more fully with the Church of England. *Queens Foundation, Birmingham*, is an independent but organically ecumenical foundation which prepares people for ministry in the Church of England, Methodist and United Reformed Churches. The *Scottish College, Glasgow* is an independent college which is the educational deliverer, broker and resource for ministers and lay people in Scotland as well as being available to Congregational Federation students. The United Reformed Church owns *Westminster College, Cambridge* (though it would not benefit financially from ceasing to use it), and the Assembly appoints its staff. It is part of the Cambridge Federation, which prepares people for ministry in the Church of England, Methodist and United Reformed Churches, and is also in association with the Orthodox and Roman Catholics.
- 6 Integrated provision.** For historical reasons, at the moment the educational and training provision of the United Reformed Church is offered in a fragmented way. There are boundaries between what is offered to one group of people and what is offered to another. This is more an accident of history than the expression of educational philosophy. The Training Committee has in recent years received the consent of the Assembly to move towards an integrated provision for all the people of God (Resolution 51; Assembly 2005). Integrated learning is where a diverse range of learners:

- follow a common curriculum, or at least a common core of learning
- belong to a cohort that is mixed in terms of role/function/ status
- learn together rather than separately so that the different perspectives of their different proposed forms of discipleship and service are an enrichment.

6.1 *In simple terms this means that when we speak of people serving together they need to learn together (e.g. elders and ministers). This ties in with the work done by the Ministries Committee on Equipping the Saints. Their policy for example to end the NSM/SM distinction encourages the integration of NSM and SM education. Previously the United Reformed Church has trained them separately, NSM's part time (normally on courses) and SM's full time (normally through a college).*

7 Part time courses. There are eight of these (seven in England, one in Wales) which are recognised for EM1, mainly for non-stipendiary candidates who require local training. The programmes use residential weekends together with an annual week long school and tutor groups. They are Anglican founded and sponsored courses but are used by the Methodist church as well as ourselves. Their organisation has changed over the years and some are now ecumenical in governance.

8 Ethos and History. Whilst this means the wide picture of being aware of and challenged by the particularities of the reformed expression of the faith it also refers to two short courses with this subtitle which have been established for a number of years. One of them meets a felt need for those starting to train for ministry. Students all train in an ecumenical environment. For many they are in a (small) minority of United Reformed Church students. In preparation for that training the course gives an understanding of the particular ethos and history of the United Reformed Church. The other course with the same essential content is for people coming into the United Reformed Church's service from other traditions (ministers in ecumenical appointments, synod and church house staff).

9 Regional Training Partnerships (RTPs).

9.1 In March 2000 the Church of England embarked on a review of the structure and funding of its ordination training under the leadership of Bishop John Hind. The resulting report, 'Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church', proposed a radical restructuring which would encompass the whole range of educational needs of the Church – for example, Sunday School teachers, youth workers, lay readers, as well as post-ordination (EM2) and

continuing ministerial (EM3) training. It was finally adopted by the General Synod of the Church of England in July 2003 and, as a result, eleven Regional Training Partnerships are being established throughout England. The principle of integrated training for the whole people of God, which underpins these RTPs, also underpins the Training Committee's work and was adopted at the 2005 General Assembly.

9.2 The Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church were invited to be partners in the review and subsequently to participate in the Regional Training Partnerships as they felt able. In 2005 the Assembly agreed that the Training Committee should continue its involvement with 'Hind' and its subsequent implementation. It also asked the Committee to be sure to safeguard the aims and parameters of its own programmes and the financial commitments and resources needed to sustain them.

9.3 A key element in the Church of England proposals is the mending of fractures between training for different ministries, between different stages of training and between different training providers. A key tool in this mending process is the establishment of these Regional Training Partnerships between dioceses, colleges, courses, other providers and their ecumenical equivalents in each English region. This is intended to facilitate a church-based education programme directly related to the mission policies and strategies of the church.

9.4 The development of RTPs is far from complete. They are developing in different ways and at different speeds. The Training Committee is committed to supporting the synods as they seek to play their part in and benefit from their particular Regional Training Partnership.

10 Synod training. Each synod has a Training Committee or equivalent and most employ one or more people in the role of Training Officer (though there is a variety of titles). At the present time the Synods make the final decisions about where ministers and Church Related Community Workers will train, in consultation with the Training Committee. Training Officers are involved in Education for Ministry 2, 3 and lay training in their regions and some are involved in part time courses there.

11 Training for Learning and Serving. This well-established course for all in the United Reformed Church wanting to learn more about their faith is also the main route for training lay preachers. It is administered by a management group and staff appointed by and responsible to the Training Committee.

TRAINING APPENDIX TWO

BECOMING A LEARNING CHURCH – FINANCING THE OPERATION

1.1 The Training Committee, encouraged by the Catch the Vision group, is advocating the best culture and arrangements for education that the United Reformed Church needs. Although aware of the need to be careful of the church’s resources it is not aiming to save money in the first instance but to operate good stewardship once it has discerned what will best equip the church for today’s mission.

1.2 This appendix outlines current expenditure and the financial implications of what is contained in the body of the report. These figures do not appear to have been brought together like this before and whilst we have confidence in them and know that they are well researched, exploration of the scene is still continuing.

1.3 Our conclusion is that we are a church whose financial and educational systems are not transparent in that they do not reflect the value of different forms of training. For example you can read the figures as saying that the training budget spends £87,000 on lay training and £1,386,000 (2005 figures) on training ministers (including Church Related Community Workers). This is clearly a massive disproportion of spending – over 15:1 in preference to ministers overall. This is without referring to the relative proportion of the numbers of ministers and lay people in the church (including elders) which makes the differential even greater. Similarly the apparent balance of resources towards pre ordination (Education for Ministry 1) rather than post ordination training (Education for Ministry 2/3) looks massive: £1,210,000 against £176,000 (2005 figures)

1.4 However a range of things illustrate that this is neither the whole picture nor a very clear picture:

- Ministers are trained partly in order themselves to be educators of others
- Other appointments in which the church invests (e.g. Synod Training Officers) give time and skills to lay training and Education for Ministry 2/3 – and the Training Committee supports these appointments by servicing their networking and in other ways
- Subvention money given to theological colleges subsidises lay training and Education for Ministry 2/3 training as well as providing for ordination training. The staffs of theological colleges contribute as tutors on Training for Learning and Serving, in doing local lay training, in contributing to Synod Schools and in all sorts of other ways. There is considerable anecdotal evidence to suggest that this is greatly appreciated in the life of the church.

- The proportion of money spent on Ministerial training reduces dramatically when set against the estimated £2.5 million that the whole church spends on training (including synod training costs, Windermere Centre, Youth and Children’s Work Training and Development Officers etc). (See 2.1 below)
- It is also the case that Westminster’s and Northern’s resources and specialisms (the Reformed Studies centre at Westminster, its increasing role as the repository of the church’s archives and records, Northern College’s specialism in community work, other faiths and dispersed learning) remain resources for the church above and beyond their importance for EM1 pre ordination training.

2 TRAINING FINANCE

2.1 How much has the United Reformed Church been spending on training?

Training Committee expenditure	2004	2005
<i>Training for stipendiary ministry of Word and Sacraments</i>		
Student Maintenance	£402,548	£408,588
Fees & subsidies	£623,109	£622,931
	£1,025,657	£1,031,519
<i>CRCW Training</i>		
Student Maintenance	£31,944	£51,740
Fees	£30,306	£35,706
	£62,250	£87,446
Total College Training Costs	£1,087,907	£1,118,965
<i>NSM student training costs</i>		
	£118,866	£90,915
<i>NSM Church Related Community Workers costs</i>		
	0	0
<i>EM3 costs</i>	£198,083	£176,003
Other Training Costs	£316,949	£266,918
Training for Learning & Serving	£75,415	£87,626
Training Office & Committee	£127,470	£152,369
Grand Total	£1,607,741	£1,625,878

2.2 **Synods** also spend on training (between £5,000 and £49,000 each). Synod Training and Education spending estimates for 2006 are:-

Ministerial	£228,577
Lay	£ 75,517
Synod training staff	£310,000
Total	£614,094

(These figures have been supplied from original research on church costs undertaken in 2003 by the Church's Treasurer as part of the Catch the Vision process and more recently updated)

2.3 Other

As indicated above, significant elements of training expenditure (in synods, YCWTDs, the Windermere Centre) are not under the auspices of the Training Committee. However there is further spending on training that cannot currently be quantified. This includes the service of many ministers (and many are paid from M&M) as Training for Learning and Serving tutors.

The total United Reformed Church expenditure on training is probably therefore in the order of £2.5 million.

3 How much does Education for Ministry 1 (pre ordination/commissioning) Training cost?

3.1 This depends on the number of students, but the amount spent is not proportional to the number of students. There are 3 elements to the cost: (a) student maintenance for full-time students (depends on numbers and family circumstances), (b) fees (depends on numbers) & (c) subsidies paid to colleges.

3.2 Subsidies

Each college has a certain level of fixed costs (plant and staff) that has to be covered if it is to continue offering the courses the United Reformed Church needs. For colleges which are wholly or largely dependent on United Reformed Church students it has been accepted that the United Reformed Church has to cover these costs. As student numbers at a college fall, the average cost per student rises (though the marginal cost of an additional student is low). Subsidies were introduced in addition to per capita fees in the aftermath of the decision of the 1999 Assembly of the United Reformed Church in the UK to continue with four English colleges. This was in order to give the colleges an assurance of the United Reformed Church's commitment to them. Subsidies are the result of reduced student numbers spread over an unchanged number of colleges and courses.

3.3 Course length

The part-time courses undertaken by students, who in the main are preparing for part-time ministry, are typically no longer than the full-time courses in terms of the number of years for which fees have to be paid. This being so, no distinction need be made between part-time and full-time students when analysing the fees paid.

3.4 Maintenance support

Part-time students are largely self-supporting and receive modest expenses. Substantial maintenance grants are paid to full-time students.

3.5 *An analysis of fees paid to Westminster College*
Westminster College has estimated an allocation of its income by area of training activity for 2006: -

EM1	£230,000	
EM2	£46,000	
EM3	£15,000	
Lay	<u>£15,000</u>	
	£306,000	(2005: £298,000)

3.6 Assuming a fixed cost of £230,000 for EM1 training, cost per student depends on numbers, and may be reviewed on the basis of alternative assumptions: -

Number of Students	Cost per student	Explanation
14	£16,429	No change in student numbers
29	£7,931	Number currently at Northern
33	£6,970	Half of 2005/6 English students
45	£5,111	Half of 2003/4 English students

If 32 students were sent to Westminster for EM1 the fee per student (with no subsidy paid) would drop below the present fee charged by Queens.

3.7 Fees at present

The analysis of Westminster College's fees above illustrates how much better the scene could look than the current situation. The United Reformed Church pays the fees of both part-time and full-time students. Though the fees over the first three years of training are broadly similar, the fees for the fourth and final placement year of a part-time student can be significantly lower.

3.8 The fees the United Reformed Church has paid can be analysed for academic years.

The table below shows the number of students at each training institution together with the fees and subsidies paid:-

	2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	No.	Fee	No.	Fee	No.	Fee
<i>Colleges</i>						
NORTHERN						
Number & Fees	35	£185,700	25	£148,950	29	£168,795
Block grant		£71,811		£103,857		£105,876
		£257,511		£252,807		£274,671
<i>Fees per student</i>		£7,357		£10,112		£9,471
WESTMINSTER						
Number & Fees	22	£144,909	18	£121,767	14	£97,591
Block grant		£108,263		£171,619		£202,409
		£253,172		£293,386		£300,000
<i>Fees per student</i>		£11,508		£16,299		£21,429
MANSFIELD						
Number & Fees	8	£44,790	6	£35,451	6	£31,523
Additional grant		£17,613		£18,225		£18,814
		£62,403		£53,676		£50,337
<i>Fees per student</i>		£7,800		£8,946		£8,390
QUEENS						
Number & Fees	5	£32,649	6	£43,056	6	£43,920
<i>Fees per student</i>		£6,530		£7,176		£7,320
SCOTTISH						
Number & Fees	5	£13,800	5	£18,700	4	£13,730
<i>Fees per student</i>		£2,760		£3,740		£3,433
COLLEGE totals	75	£619,535	60	£661,625	59	£682,658
<i>Fees per student</i>		£8,260		£11,027		£11,570

COURSES	2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	No.	Fee	No.	Fee	No.	Fee
<i>Regional Courses</i>						
NEOC	2	£7,272	2	£7,272	2	Information not available
<i>Fees per student</i>		£3,636		£3,636		
STETS	9	£29,790	7	£21,480	6	£20,700
<i>Fees per student</i>		£3,310		£3,069		£3,450
SWMTC	3	£16,190	3	£16,839	1	£5,427
<i>Fees per student</i>		£5,397		£5,613		£5,427
EMMTC	3	£12,762	1	£4,645	0	
<i>Fees per student</i>		£4,254		£4,645		
SEITE	2	£6,660	3	£12,753	3	£12,771
<i>Fees per student</i>		£3,330		£4,251		£4,257
St Michael's	1	£3,465	0		0	
<i>Fees per student</i>		£3,465				

EAMTC/ERMC	0		2	£8,590	2	£8,910
<i>Fees per student</i>				£4,295		£4,455
COURSES totals	20	£76,139	18	£71,579	12	£47,808
<i>Fees per student</i>		£3,807		£3,977		£3,984
GRAND TOTALS all students	95	£695,674	78	£733,204	71	£730,466
		£7,323		£9,400		£10,288

3.9 Observations:

3.9.1 The cost of fees per student increases as student numbers fall, because of the commitment to cover the fixed costs of some colleges with subsidies. Student numbers in recent years have been:

	Feb-99	Feb-00	Feb-01	Feb-02	Feb-03	Feb-04	Feb-05
SM of Word and Sacraments	72	74	76	68	66	63	54
NSM of Word and Sacraments	36	42	41	38	32	31	19
CRCWs	7	6	5	6	6	5	5
	115	122	122	112	104	99	78

Please note that these figures are taken from the Student statistics in the Assembly Year Book. They do not entirely agree with the figures above of student fees paid which were supplied by the finance office. There is a range of reasons for this. Finance figures do not include students on 800 hour placements managed by synods and are for a whole academic year. Assembly statistics are a February snapshot. Taken together, they illustrate costs of fees paid and trends in student numbers.

3.9.2 College fees (for mostly full-time students) are markedly higher than course fees (for mostly part-time students). It is likely that there are hidden subsidies to the courses in the form of tutor time given.

3.9.3 Fees per student at Westminster and Northern are high in this analysis. This is not only the result of the commitment to cover fixed costs when student numbers are down. It is clear that our payments to these colleges (and the Scottish College) buy us much more than just Education for Ministry 1 training. College staff contribute extensively to Education for Ministry 2, (post ordination training) Education for Ministry 3 (formerly Continuing Ministerial Education) and Lay training as well, but the way in which the numbers have been presented in the Training Committee accounts make it appear that the United Reformed Church pays a high price for Education for Ministry 1 and gets other training for nothing.

4 What are the consequences of implementing the proposals?

4.1 For a range of reasons other than finance and spelt out in the main report, the Training Committee suggests concentrating Education for Ministry 1 students through three colleges designated as Resource Centres for Learning. An immediate effect of this would be to reduce the subvention to Northern and Westminster. Effectively on the 2004/5 figures over £168,000 in student fees and Mansfield subvention would be available to offset Northern and Westminster costs. The extra costs to cope with additional students at those institutions would be minimal. There is likely to be some expenditure needed to purchase local components for the dispersed learning needs of some of the ordinands. However the major part of that figure above would be available to lower the Training budget or reinvest in the provisions being encouraged for a learning church.

5 **The alternative** would be using only the part time courses for part time training and would on the face of it save a good deal in terms of fees and would do away with any subsidies entirely. The Training Committee's argument is that the Church needs to distinguish between what are costs to the church and what the Church values. Its ability to be ecumenically engaged and yet distinctive in its understanding of church and ministry is of high value and would be diminished by this route. Such a route would also have other costs or consequences. These include:

- Westminster (the only institution the United Reformed Church 'owns') cannot have its financial value released for the church due to its trust deeds.
- Westminster, Northern and the Scottish Colleges generate income or contribute Trust income to the work of the church that would be lost if the colleges were not used.
- If the colleges were not available then the United Reformed Church would still need to provide staff in the 11 English synods, Wales and Scotland to be a significant resource for ordination students who would be training in the regions. There would also need to be staffing resources for the training of Church Related Community Worker students. This would be in addition to current synod staff and would need to be financially supported. Even one member of staff to cover two synods would be six staff members and a possible cost of £180,000 for salaries and on costs alone without calculating office and other necessary resources.
- There would also be a need to hold somewhere else some library resources and the reformed study centre resources currently based at Westminster. Whilst not a major factor for the report it is significant as a financial consideration. Additionally the use of Westminster especially as a place of repository for significant denominational archives would mean that that problem will have to be tackled by other routes
- The church's wider programmes of education such as Training for Learning and Serving, Lay preachers in service training, Education for

Ministry 3 would still require contribution from those qualified and able to tutor. This would mean employing United Reformed Church staff in other places for these purposes.

6 Implications for Training Committee's recommendations

6.1 Our General Assembly policy is to develop and value learning for the whole church, to encourage collaborative and flexible forms of ministry, to value the education and contribution of all and mend the fractures that exist between lay and ministerial training and pre and post ordination training. The Training Committee believes that this needs to be undergirded and reinforced by the way training is organised and paid for.

6.2 In working through the implications of the 2005 principles, the committee is committed to seeking further developments that will better express the church's need for good stewardship and be a better expression of the importance of training for the whole church. It will thus work to reduce the sense in which Lay and Education for Ministry 2/3 provisions are only offered as a spin off from what seems to be the main work of training Ministers for ordination. Noting that the present proposal will reduce subventions paid to Northern and Westminster Colleges by up to £168,000 the committee will still explore as a matter of urgency reducing and removing such subsidies as remain. As resource centre for learning it will encourage them to work in partnerships with other providers to arrange and charge the Church for the range of education which the church needs.