

# MINUTES

Minutes of the Mission Council, held at St Joseph's, Upholland from 15-17 March 1996. The meeting was constituted by the Moderator, the Revd John Reardon, who presided. Worship throughout the Council was led by the Revd Elizabeth Welch. Bible studies on the First Letter to the Corinthians were led by the Moderator.

## 96/18 WELCOME

The Moderator welcomed members to the meeting, particularly, Dr. Preman Niles from the Council for World Mission, as Theological Reflector, Mr Peter Devaney from Wales attending for the first time and the Revd Fleur Houston, Moderator's Chaplain to Dr David Thompson, as an observer.

## 96/19 ATTENDANCE

There were 69 members present with 16 staff members in attendance, the Revd Elizabeth Welch, Chaplain and Mrs Christine Hardwick, Minute Secretary.

Apologies for absence were received from the Revds Michael Cruchley, Nanette Head, Donald Hilton, Miss Marion Crack, Mr Dennis Earp and Mr James Horton.

## 96/20 AGENDA

The Deputy General Secretary gave notice of changes to the Agenda. He indicated that some papers were for transmission to General Assembly and should only be commented on, others were for discussion and decision before going to Assembly and others were papers for Mission Council itself.

## 96/21 MINUTES OF MISSION COUNCIL 20th January 1996

The Minutes of the Mission Council held on 20 January 1996, which had been circulated, were approved and signed with the following correction:

'96/9 Pension Fund Subvention - It was agreed that in working out the five year plan, the Resource Planning Advisory Committee should assume that the subvention will be re-based at £1.13M, rising thereafter at the rate of increase in ministers' stipends for the duration of the period.'

## 96/22 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

## 96/23 MINUTES OF APPRECIATION OF MISSIONARY SERVICE SUBMITTED BY THE ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE

The Revd. Murdoch Mackenzie presented the paper, which summarised the service of the Revd David and Mrs Jenny Fraser, Mr John and Mrs Janny Harris, the Revd Geoffrey and Mrs Ann Marsden, and Mr Ivor and Mrs Joan Shepherd. The Moderator gave thanks in prayer for the service they had rendered.

## 96/24 REIMBURSEMENT TO MINISTERS FOR THE COST OF USING PRIVATELY- OWNED CARS

Mr Graham Stacy, the Treasurer, explained that the URC minimum recommended mileage allowances were higher than the maximum allowed by the National Insurance Rules before incurring extra National Insurance contributions, the size of which would not be known to those administering the pay roll. In order to allow reasonable reimbursements to ministers the following amended resolution was passed.

**Mission Council, acting for General Assembly, resolves that:**

- (i) All churches be required to restrict the amount of their direct reimbursement to ministers for the use of privately-owned cars to mileage rates which do not exceed the limits for Class 1 National Insurance contributions.**
- (ii) Churches should determine the additional sum necessary to cover the shortfall, if any, between the reimbursement under (i) and the real cost incurred (the 'fixed car allowance'), to be paid by the URC Finance Office through the stipend payroll system. This sum, plus the attributable employer's National Insurance contribution (currently 10.2%), will be collected from the local church with its Ministry and Mission contribution.**

The Treasurer said that the amount of the additional sum would vary with the minister's private mileage. He agreed to issue guidelines to local churches and additional details to District Treasurers.

## 96/25 THE REMIT OF THE ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE

The revised remit was presented by the Revd. Murdoch Mackenzie and was agreed by Mission Council in the following amended form.

**AIM**

The role of the Ecumenical Committee is to foster ecumenical development in the life of the URC:

a. in response to the Basis of Union (para.8)

"The United Reformed Church has been formed in obedience to the call to repent of what has been amiss in the past and to be reconciled. It sees its formation and growth as a part of what God is doing to make his people one, and as a united church will take, wherever possible and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people."

b. in relation to other churches and the wider community - in these islands, across Europe and throughout the world.

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

**TASKS**

Among the tasks of this committee is listening to those with experience of the World Church, including other Christian traditions in Britain and Ireland, and those with experience of current affairs and experience of other faiths.

The Committee will maintain official URC links with overseas churches and world and regional ecumenical organisations, in particular the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Disciples' Ecumenical Consultative Council and the Conference of European Churches. It will guide the URC's participation in the Council for World Mission. Through it, official contact will be made with British and Irish ecumenical bodies.

It is responsible for the URC's involvement in St Andrew's Hall. The work of selecting, training and caring for missionaries and overseeing exchange of personnel will be undertaken by the Overseas Exchange Sub-Committee.

In answer to a question, Tony Coates said that the money for St Andrew's Hall was treated separately from that for the other URC-related colleges for historic reasons.

## 96/26 RESPONSE TO A FAX FROM TAIWAN

The Moderator read a fax from the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan asking for our support in the current situation in the Taiwan straits. It was agreed that the Moderator and General Secretary should compose a reply to be sent to the Revd. C S Yang assuring him of our prayers for peace. The text was agreed later in the meeting.

## 96/27 WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Dr. David Thompson presented additional sections and notes thereon to be linked with the rules agreed for the new Board of Governors (minute 95/101 of September 1995). After discussion at this and a later session amendments and additions were agreed as follows.

- 3.1 b) the effective and efficient use of resources, the financial management of the College within policies set by the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, acting through its committees and Mission Council, and for safeguarding the College's assets;
- 4.1 The Board of Governors shall establish a Board of Studies, consisting of the members of the teaching staff (the Senatus) and other members nominated by the Board of Governors, to oversee the admission, teaching and examination of candidates for the ministry studying at the College, and other educational activities of the College.
- 4.2 The Board of Governors shall establish an Appointments Committee, which shall include a member nominated by the Training Committee, representatives from the Cambridge Theological Federation and such specialist members outside their own number as they consider necessary to make recommendations to them for appointments to the teaching staff of the College. These recommendations, if approved by the Board, shall be submitted to the General Assembly for approval.
- 5. The Principal shall be appointed by the General Assembly and shall be responsible to the Board of Governors. The Principal's main responsibilities are:
  - a)(i) to ensure that the policies established and the practices agreed through the Board of Governors and its committees are put into operation;
  - (ii) to hold the overall responsibility, in consultation with the Senatus, for the teaching, management, financial administration, and pastoral relationships with staff, students and residents of the College;
  - (iii) to contribute to worship within the College;

- b) to play an active role in ensuring that the work and life of the College is integrated into that of the Cambridge Theological Federation;
- c) to establish and maintain, as appropriate, relationships within the wider community in Cambridge (such as the Faculty of Divinity, the University of Cambridge, Anglia Polytechnic University, city public authorities and the voluntary sector) and with other colleges in the Cambridge Theological Federation;
- d) to establish and maintain relationships with the Church, its District Councils, Provincial Synods, General Assembly, and with related Churches overseas; and with other Colleges and Courses for the training of students from the United Reformed Church;
- e) to contribute to the teaching of the Cambridge Theological Federation and on occasion, as required, to teach more widely within the United Reformed Church (for example on lay/part-time, weekend or short courses);
- f) to represent the College through the written and spoken word, and to be a focus for public relations and advocacy for the College in order to achieve the integrity of the College's life and witness;
- g) to ensure, through the Bursar, that the College and its staff comply with health and safety at work provisions;
- h) to be open to new styles of work and new responsibilities as required by the decisions of the Board of Governors or the General Assembly and its Mission Council.

6.2 The annual budget for Westminster College (including the stipends of the teaching staff) based on estimates approved by the Board of Governors, shall be submitted to the Resource Planning Advisory Group for inclusion in the church budget presented to the General Assembly. The finances shall be managed by the College officers within a framework approved by the Board; and arrangements for the maintenance of accounting records and the preparation of regular financial reports will be developed in consultation with the Honorary Treasurer and the Chief Accountant of the Church.

**NOTE** The Board of Governors will prepare additional material on the Senatus (including the Principal's relationship to it) and the relationship between Westminster College and the Cambridge Theological Federation with the hope that this might be ready in time to be added to the existing material at General Assembly.

The Clerk agreed to prepare a revised paragraph 6.1 indicating the transfer of powers to the Board of Governors from the Ministerial Training committee. The full text as amended would be printed for the General Assembly.

#### 96/28 CELEBRATING THE MILLENIUM

The Revd. Elizabeth Caswell introduced this paper which was a summary of a draft discussion paper at the CTE Millennium Co-ordinating Group. She highlighted the need to be ready to finance any national initiative. The following resolution was passed.

**Mission Council endorses the setting up of a Millenium Task Group representative of the programme committees. It will engage with other denominations in the Churches Together in England Co-ordinating Group on the Millenium, to focus Christian participation in the celebrations of the Millenium. It will be convened and serviced by the Discipleship and Witness Committee. Travel costs of members will be met by the committees they represent. Mission Council notes that the Task Group will have discussions with the Treasurer about how the URC will make financial contributions alongside other Churches to ecumenically agreed literature, events and participation in the Christian presence at the National Exhibition in Greenwich.**

#### 96/29 CONFESSION OF FAITH

A document was presented as an alternative version, in inclusive language, of the Confession of Faith in paragraph 17 of the Basis of Union. This text had been redrafted by the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee, following its withdrawal from Assembly vote in 1995. Mission Council broke into groups to discuss it and textual comments were passed to the Convener, Dr. David Thompson. It was generally agreed that **the accompanying notes were very helpful and should be published with the text.** Questions were raised about the status of the document and it was suggested that it could form part of an anthology of confessions of faith. The Committee would present a revised text with commentary to the General Assembly

#### 96/30 HEALTH AND HEALING TASK GROUP

Agreement had been reached with the Methodist Church to form a joint Health and Healing Development Group. This would allow the budget to be reduced from £1,200 to £800. The membership of the group would be determined by the Nominations Committee and the group would be linked to the Church and Society Committee. **Mission Council agreed to recommend the proposal for a joint Health and Healing Development Group to Assembly, to enable the Group to begin work from 1st September 1996, with a review after five years.**

## 96/31 MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS

A motion for the General Assembly was agreed as follows:

**That the Mission and Other Faiths Task Group be replaced by a Committee for Inter-Faith Relations. The work of the committee will be reviewed after five years. The membership will consist of a Convener, a Secretary and four members, with the power to co-opt consultants for specialist areas of work. The committee will be required to work within the existing budget for the Mission and Other Faiths Task Group. It will relate to a designated staff member.**

## 96/32 ADVICE TO CONVENERS ON ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

Mission Council divided into groups and discussed resolutions to be brought to General Assembly by Committees. Their comments were relayed to the meeting for the benefit of the Conveners.

The session closed with worship at 21.15

SATURDAY

Mission Council started its work on Saturday with worship and bible study. The Moderator continued his study of 1 Corinthians by talking about the conduct of members of that church.

## 96/33 TRAINING REVIEW REPORT

**Paragraphs 1-11**

The report was presented by John Sutcliffe as Convener of the group. The initial discussion covered all aspects except the YLTO/YCWT programme. The Convener said the report was a distillation of the views that had been expressed during discussions with interested groups. They had concluded that there should be a shift of resources from ministerial to lay training. The fall in the number of ordinands may mean that effective year groups cannot be formed in all the colleges but as our training is ecumenical we cannot make unilateral decisions. It was felt that too much money is being spent on maintenance, while keeping student families in poverty, so training might be better undertaken on a part-time basis. After a full discussion John Sutcliffe agreed to re-write the introduction giving greater prominence to the main themes before presenting the Review to Assembly.

**Paragraphs 12 and 13 YLTO/YCWT programme**

The Clerk reminded Mission Council of the remit of the Mission Council Advisory Group, particularly in advising the General Secretary. A supplementary paper prepared by MCAG was received for discussion as being such advice: in distinction from the Training Review it suggested that the

YLTO/YCWT programme should be radically changed. As the Provinces are developing Training teams, each one should have a YCWT answerable to the Province and this would mean that there would no longer be a role for the National Youth and Children's Work Trainer. After much discussion, the following resolution, proposed by the Revd. Pat Nimmo and seconded by the Revd. Elizabeth Casswell was carried by 39 votes to 12.

**Mission Council agrees to leave the Training Review report and the resolutions as they are set out but will advise General Assembly to defer a decision on that part of the report dealing with YCWTs and the related resolution 2 of the Training Committee, for a further period of consultation, the post of National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer to be extended until 31 December 1998 to permit this consultation.**

John Sutcliffe offered to see whether the other members of the Review Group would agree to change the report to reflect this resolution.

Geoff Lunt asked what advice will be given to Assembly about how the Review, if agreed, will be carried forward. Tony Burnham suggested that it might be referred to the next Mission Council.

#### 96/34 MINISTERIAL DISCIPLINE

A paper further to that sent to General Assembly by January Mission Council was introduced by the Revd. Keith Forecast. It consists of two parts, both of which, when approved, will go into the Manual. The following points were clarified.

For the purposes of the disciplinary processes any Minister living in an area not otherwise a member of any District Council would be regarded as an associate member of the District Council of that area

#### **Part I Substantive Provisions**

The legal Adviser suggested an amendment to 16.1.

**Delete the words at the end of 16.1 'and which shall be of persuasive force only' and add 'and in particular it is requested to include appropriate guidance to assist District Councils, local churches and others within the church concerning any restrictions which might be placed upon any church-related activities involving the Minister after his/her deletion.'**

Paragraph 5 of Schedule E (Resolution 1) should be amended as follows:

**Line 4 after 'and Sacraments' continue '...and should refrain from all activity which may lead others to believe that he/she is acting as a minister of religion. However, should the person...**

#### **Part II Rules of procedure.**

It was emphasised that any time limits were meant to be the maximum permissible.



It was agreed that paragraphs **D.12 and D.13, only accidentally included in this draft, should be deleted.**

**It was agreed to forward Part 1 to General Assembly,** and if it is passed, it will be referred to Synods. Part 2 would not be voted on this year but would be available to the General Assembly to indicate how Part 1 would in detail be implemented.

#### 96/35 THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

The paper presented a budget for 1997 and outlined the factors affecting the outcome. It is expected that there will be balanced budgets over the following four years, partly due to a declining number of stipendiary ministers. The projections have assumed that rises in income will only be in line with RPI.

It was **agreed that the paper should go to General Assembly.** It was noted that there are now two qualified accountants on the finance staff which would lessen the load on Mr Frank.

#### 96/36 COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

The paper was introduced by Professor Malcolm Johnson. A review of the programme had taken place which felt that, although there have been problems regarding the uptake of this programme, it should be re-launched. It will have more focused advocacy. **It was agreed that the paper should go to General Assembly with the support of Mission Council.**

#### 96/37 URC 25th ANNIVERSARY

The Revd. David Jenkins introduced a leaflet called 'A leaflet to help local churches celebrate 25 years....' which it is hoped will stimulate ideas for celebrations locally. The leaflet was welcomed.

#### 96/38 REPORT OF THE MISSION COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP

This report was introduced by the Revd. John Waller. The following resolutions were agreed;

**Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly agrees to release the Revd Michael Diffey, Secretary for Ministries, from 15 June 1996 to accept a call to St John's, New Barnet.**

Thanks were expressed to Michael for his work in Ministries and best wishes for his new ministry.

As there have been inconsistencies in recent practice with regard to the induction of Assembly appointed staff MCAG proposed the following;

1. **Assembly-appointed staff should be inducted at the General Assembly or the relevant Mission Council, except:**
  - 1.1 **Provincial Moderators should be inducted in the relevant Province following present practice.**
  - 1.2 **Westminster College staff should be inducted (at the request of the Assembly) by the Cambridge District Council at the College.**
2. **In the case of ministers it is appropriate that Schedule D should be read in one of the approved forms and the minister should make the affirmations in Schedule C.**
3. **Affirmations made by lay staff ought also to be in the forms approved by the General Assembly.**

Dr. David Thompson suggested that the affirmations could be looked at by the Doctrine, Prayer & Worship Committee. It was agreed that with YLTO/YCWT's the matter needs to be considered further in relation to the decisions called for by para. 23 of the URC Basis of Union. This too would be looked at by Doctrine, Prayer & Worship. In the meantime YLTO/YCWTs would be welcomed at Synod and General Assembly.

#### 96/39 STAFFING ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Geoff Lunt presented the following resolution which was passed.

**Mission Council agrees that the post of chaplain to the National Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings should be continued for a further period of 5 years as from 1 September 1996. The chaplain would spend 30% of his time on leadership of the Yardley Hastings congregation. This arrangement would be subject to the agreement of the District Council. The Youth and Children's Committee is urged to prepare, as a matter of urgency, a revision to the April 1991 detailed Job Description, to reflect the emphasis and thrust of the Chaplain's work.**

#### 96/40 FUTURE OF THE STAFFING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Revd. Tony Burnham summarised the work of the committee and it was resolved that:

- a. **The Staffing Advisory Committee shall continue.**
- b. **The Committee be asked to consult the Resources Planning Advisory Committee to identify matters of mutual interest.**

MC MARCH 1996

## 96/41 SENIOR POSTS AND CHURCH AFFILIATION

The Revd. Jessie Clare introduced the paper and the following resolution was agreed

**'Mission Council confirms the decision of the Nominations Committee that;**

1. the following posts be restricted to ministers of the URC:  
     General Secretary  
     Deputy General Secretary
2. the following posts be restricted to members of the URC:  
     Secretary for Ecumenical Relations  
     Secretary for Ministries
3. the following posts be restricted to members of the URC and to members of those churches which are within the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and/or the Council for World Mission:  
     Secretary for International Church Relations  
     Principal of Westminster College  
     Director, Windermere  
     Chaplain, Yardley Hastings
4. all other central staff appointments are open to persons of any church affiliation.

## 96/42 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

The Revd. Jessie Clare reported:

- a. Review of the Chaplain at Yardley Hastings.

Mr Simon Rowntree has agreed to convene the group.

- b. Westminster College Board of Governors

Convener - Dr David Thompson (also representing the Cambridge University Faculty of Divinity)

Clerk - Revd Margaret McKay

Mr Don Taylor (Mr D Thacker)

Revd. Dr Lesley Husselbee (Revd. Murdoch Mackenzie)

Mrs Valerie Burnham Revd Sandra Lloydlangston

(Rev Tim Key)

A student representative

A Representative of Anglia Polytechnic University

A Representative of Cambridge Theological Federation

Staff representative - Dr Janet Tollington

Cheshunt Foundation - Mr Desmond Davies

College Principal-Elect - Dr David Cornick  
(a further woman minister)

By a misunderstanding sixteen persons had been listed instead of the fourteen authorised by Mission Council, so two of those in brackets will probably be asked to stand down, if all four accept. The twelve firmly nominated were appointed by Mission Council to begin their work.

c. Clerk to General Assembly

Mission Council nominated to the General Assembly Mrs Margaret Carrick Smith to serve from the end of General Assembly 1997 to the General Assembly 2002 and asked Assembly to invite her informally to share the work with the Revd Martin Cressey for the 1996-7 Mission Council meetings and the 1997 Assembly.

d. Appointment Group - Provincial Moderator for Yorkshire

Convener - Revd Jack McKelvey

e. Task Group on the Role of Moderators

Convener - Revd John Slow

It was agreed that the correct title was "Task Group on Oversight Ministry"

**Representatives to other Church Assemblies**

Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Revd John Reardon
	Revd Jim Brown
General Synod of the Church of England	Revd Christine Craven
Methodist Conference	Revd Sheila Maxey
Baptist Union of Scotland	Revd Peter Arthur
Church of Scotland	Revd John Reardon
	Revd Elizabeth Welch
Scottish Congregational Church	Revd Tony Burnham
Presbyterian Church of Wales	Revd John Reardon
Union of Welsh Independents	Mr John Rhys
Congregational Federation	Revd John Waller

**Ecumenical Assemblies**

**Second European Ecumenical Assembly**

Revd Michael Hubbard                      Revd John Waller  
Mrs Sheila Brain

**Eleventh Assembly of the Conference of European Churches**

Revd Michael Hubbard                      Revd John Waller  
FURY Chair or a senior woman FURY member

**Churches Together in England Forum**

The following have been invited to attend

The General Secretary	Revd Elizabeth Caswell
Convener of the Ecumenical Committee	Miss Betty Vickerton
Secretary for Ecumenical Relations	Revd Mark Fisher
A Provincial Moderator	Mr Graham Ghaleb
Revd Rudi Dixon	Revd Donald Norwood
Mr John Bradbury	Miss Charlotte Atkinson

**W.A.R.C.General Council**

Revd Elizabeth Nash	Revd John Humphreys	Revd Pat Nimmo
FURY Chair or other FURY representative		
Mr Dylan Morgans or Mr Paul Watson		

**W.C.C.Eighth Assembly**

The General Secretary	Mrs Wilma Frew
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**Scottish Union Talks**

Revd Peter Arthur, Revd Sheila Maxey, Revd James Breslin

**Assembly Representatives at the Induction of Revd Elizabeth Welch**

Revd Philip Morgan	Revd Geoffrey Bending
Revd Margaret Taylor	Mrs Christine Robertson

The following appointments were confirmed

Churches Council for Health & Healing	Revd Jim Hollyman
Northern College Governor	Ms Janine Lawley
Homerton College	Re-appoint Mr J Chaplin, Mrs E Jupp
Joint Liturgical Group	Revd M McKay, Dr D Thompson
Wentworth Milton Mount Governor	Revd Nigel Uden
Congregational Fund Board	Re-appoint Revd D Havergal-Shaw Re-appoint Revd Cyril Grant, Revd John Taylor
Memorial Hall Trust	Appoint Revd Eric Allen
Milton Mount Foundation	Mr Clive Willis Re-appoint Miss M Canning Revd E Beglin
United Army, Navy & Air Force Board	Appoint Revd George Thomas Revd Hamish MacLagan

Mrs Wilma Frew as Chair of the Nominating Group for Moderator of Eastern Province nominated Revd Elizabeth Caswell. This was accepted for presentation to the General Assembly. At a later session the Moderator greeted Elizabeth, and also Elizabeth Welch, shortly to be inducted as West Midlands Moderator.

#### 96/43 MULTIRACIAL DEVELOPMENT POST

Mrs Susan Rand introduced the paper on behalf of the Equal Opportunities Committee. Mission Council divided into groups to discuss it. In the plenary session following, Dr. Preman Niles suggested that CWM could appoint someone for 3-6 years 'to act as a mosquito' at Church House and so raise awareness of the issues. After discussion of this and other solutions the Moderator took a straw vote on the principle of such an appointment. This indicated support; he then took another vote which showed the CWM option to be favoured: at a later session **a draft proposal was presented and agreed for presentation to the General Assembly.**

#### 96/44 ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

Mrs Wilma Frew. Convener, announced that Professor John O'Neill, of New College, Edinburgh, would lead the Bible Study. It had been decided that there would be no special programme for Assembly in the year 2000, but that it would be residential and held in London.

The evening closed with worship at 21.20.

#### SUNDAY

Mission Council started by celebrating the Lord's Supper in the chapel. It was decided that Synod Groups would not meet; the Revd. Bill Gathercole said that Mission Council must not crowd out time for any items that Synods might want to bring to Mission Council in future.

At 9.30 Mission Council observed a period of silence in solidarity with the people of Dunblane.

#### 96/45 COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

Dr. Preman Niles spoke about the concept of CWM. Member churches are CWM in their own situations, not Livingstone House. It has been difficult for some to recognise that, as a community, CWM can 'interfere' in the life of member churches. It is an 'open community' which supports other partners in mission but does not export methods of church government. Its staff are facilitators. Over the years it is the non-European churches that have increased their giving.

#### 96/46 HUMAN SEXUALITY

David Thompson responded to a question on how Synod responses should be recorded. He said that the response should indicate the range of opinions expressed and their relative strengths. Synod Clerks and Moderators should order business so that what is recorded can be agreed as an accurate record of the debate by those present.

## 96/47 ELECTIONS TO ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

The following were elected

MCAG

Resource Planning Advisory Group

AGOGAL Convener

Secretary

Staffing Advisory Group

~~MATTER RAISED~~

Revd Julian Macro

Revd Derek Wales

Mr Simon Rowntree

Revd. Roger Whitehead

Revd Graham Maskery

96/48 ~~APPEAL~~ BY A MINISTER

A statement was circulated from a minister who had asked that a case be heard further by Mission Council.

**Mission Council agreed to ask the General Secretary to write to the minister saying that the issues in the statement have been considered fully by the Council and its officers, that the matter is now closed as an issue before Mission Council, and that no further correspondence or communication will be undertaken upon it.**

## 96/49 APPRAISAL OF MINISTERS

The Revd. Keith Forecast introduced the paper, based on the pilot scheme that has been operating in the West Midlands for two years. It was agreed to investigate other schemes, with a view to bringing firm proposals to the General Assembly in 1997. There will be consultations with all the Provinces. The need for urgency was noted.

## 96/50 LAY PREACHING

The Revd. Keith Forecast introduced the paper and emphasised the need to affirm this ministry, as had been done in 'Patterns of Ministry'. Many members thought that the title 'Lay Preacher' should be changed, possibly to 'Worship Leader'. It was decided that more work needed to be done and that none of the options given would be taken to General Assembly this year.

## 96/51 DIVORCED AND SEPARATED SPOUSES

The Revd. John Waller introduced the paper. The 1982 resolution of General Assembly concerning short-term housing aid and guidelines for pastoral care should be reaffirmed. It was **agreed that the paper would be passed to Assembly.**

## 96/51 ONE-DAY MISSION COUNCIL MEETINGS

This paper was deferred to the next meeting and members were invited to send comments to the Revd. John Waller.

## 96/52 FUTURE MEETINGS

The following have been arranged:

1-3 October 1996	High Leigh, Hoddesdon
18 January 1997	Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh, Warwicks
14-16 March 1997	Ushaw College, Durham

## 96/53 THANKS

The Moderator thanked those who were finishing their time on Mission Council, most of whom had served for four years; he also thanked Mr David Butler for all his work on the Resource Planning Advisory Committee. He thanked the Revd. Elizabeth Welch for her leadership of worship during this year, Mrs Sheila Andrews and other members of staff, the Revd. John Waller and the Revd. Tony Burnham, the Clerk and Minutes Secretary for their work. The Revd. Tony Burnham then thanked the Revd. John Reardon for the able way he had chaired Mission Council and General Assembly during his year as Moderator.

The meeting closed with worship at 12.55.



.....  
Moderator

1 October 1996

.....  
Date



**MINUTES OF APPRECIATION OF MISSIONARY SERVICE**  
**SUBMITTED BY ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE**

**The Revd David and Mrs Jenny Fraser** were accepted as missionaries in December 1991, during David's final year at Westminster College. They spent one term at St Andrew's Hall, and in December 1992 David was ordained and both were commissioned for missionary service at a service in St Andrew's Hall Chapel. In January 1993 they went to Jamaica, where David was appointed to the Four Paths pastoral charge, caring for four congregations centred on Denbigh, in the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. David got to know his congregations, despite the initial lack of a car and poor public transport, and at one stage added to his responsibilities by being convener of a further group of three churches during a vacancy. The United Church declares that it, and in particular the Four Paths charge, has been blessed by their contribution to ministry. All shared their joy at the birth of their first child, Stuart, in December 1993.

David and Jenny returned to the UK in September 1995 and in November he was called to the UR pastorate of Lea Road and Penn, Wolverhampton, where he was inducted on 13 January 1986.

The United Reformed Church thanks Revd David and Mrs Jenny Fraser for their service to the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands and asks for God's blessing on their future ministry.

**Mr John and Mrs Janny Harris** were accepted as missionaries of the United Reformed Church in April 1993. After a period of uncertainty waiting for a suitable vacancy, they spent the Spring and Summer Terms 1994 at St Andrew's Hall, were commissioned at Wallsend URC in May 1994 and left, with John James and Julia, in July for Kiribati, where John took up his appointment as Project Officer of the Kiribati Protestant Church.

John and Janny showed great patience and resilience in adapting to changed living conditions in Kiribati and John settled well into his work of presenting projects to donor agencies, voluntary and governmental, and of supervising them. His work was much appreciated by the church and its donor agencies.

Sadly, John fell ill and, when his illness was diagnosed as asthma caused by wind-borne coral dust, had to be immediately repatriated. He and his family returned to the UK in April 1995. After an unsettled period living first in Eltham and then in Golders Green, they have finally settled in Crawley. John has recovered from his asthma.

The United Reformed Church shares with the Harris family their disappointment that such a promising piece of missionary service was cut short by illness, and notes with gratitude their continuing availability to serve with CWM, if an appropriate vacancy occurs.

The United Reformed Church expresses its appreciation of their service to the Kiribati Protestant Church and wishes Mr John and Mrs Janny Harris, John James and Julia every blessing in their future Christian service, whether in this country or abroad.

**The Revd Geoffrey and Mrs Ann Marsden:** Geoffrey Marsden was appointed a missionary in September 1956, and after training sailed for India in July 1957, where he was ordained presbyter in the Church of South India at Jammalamadugu in January 1958. He served in Jammalamadugu until 1963.

In 1963 Geoffrey married Ann and they began their joint service as missionaries in the Church of South India, in Gooty, Rayalaseema Diocese, service which was to last 32 years.

During this period Geoffrey has been involved in the work of the diocese in many ways. He has been treasurer of the diocese, has been in charge of the Church Training Centre running courses for lay leaders and others in Gooty and elsewhere, has been Principal of the Degree College in Gooty, and has assisted the diocese in its legal disputes with dissident groups. He also served on the CSI Liturgical Commission and the Senate of Serampore College.

Ann has been active in SPHERE (Society for the Promotion of Health, Education and Rural Economy), a community development organisation promoting primary health care and the empowerment of the poor. Its efforts have resulted in improved health in the population and more productive agriculture. She was also the author and illustrator of two publications on Health Monitoring Systems published by Osmania University for UNICEF and two booklets on AIDS published by the Rayalaseema Development Trust.

Their work has involved much sacrifice, of material comfort and personal convenience, and of the company of their children, Christopher and Elizabeth, while they were being educated in England. In later years, Geoffrey has had to struggle with ill health while continuing with his normal duties. Many in India have cause to be grateful to them for their Christian service.

Geoffrey and Ann returned to the United Kingdom on their retirement in July 1995 and have settled in Witney.

The United Reformed Church expresses its appreciation to the Revd Geoffrey and Mrs Ann Marsden for the long and faithful service they have given in the Church of South India and gives thanks to God for their effective Christian witness. It wishes them a long and happy retirement in their new surroundings in Witney.

Mr Ivor and Mrs Joan Shepherd became missionaries of the Presbyterian Church of England in September 1958, when Ivor was appointed to serve in the English Department in the newly-founded Tunghai Christian University of the Presbyterian Church of Formosa. They have served there for 37 years.

Those years have seen great expansion of the University as a whole and of the Department of Western Language and Literature. Ivor has been in charge of a faculty of over forty full-time and part-time lecturers, with over five hundred students taking English as a major and over three thousand taking required elective courses, all this with a rapid turnover of staff and its attendant difficulties. He has also served on the Board of Tainan Theological College. The Presbyterian Church of Taiwan has paid tribute to the commitment and energy he has brought to his work. Joan, in addition to being a housewife and mother, has been active in counselling and advising teachers and students in the Department. She has also served as Secretary of the Tunghai Women's Association.

Ivor and Joan retired in October 1995 and have settled in Bridlington, North Humberside.

The United Reformed Church expresses its appreciation to Mr Ivor and Mrs Joan Shepherd for the long and faithful service they have given in the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and gives thanks to God for their effective Christian witness. It wishes them a long and happy retirement in their new surroundings in Bridlington.



MISSION COUNCIL

15-17 March 1996

A

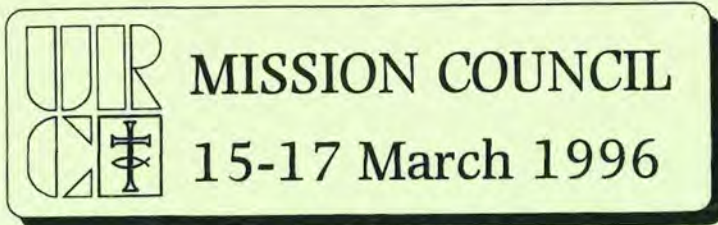
FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

### A MULTI-RACIAL DEVELOPMENT POST

1. The Mission Council needs to return to this proposal, which has occupied time at both the last two meetings.
2. Reports from the groups at the January meeting indicated a division of opinion as to whether there should be a national post or not, whether there should be fresh funding or not, but a fairly general agreement that this matter should be taken forward. Only a small minority expressed the view that it should not.
3. Following a suggestion made in one or two places, informal enquiries as to possible outside sources of funding have been made.
4. MCAG believes that the January discussion needs to be continued and members of the Council should read and bring with them the papers that were circulated before that meeting. (Paper B, B1, B2).
5. Discussion may begin from the two objectives of the post. One has to do with racism in general and one with the particular issue of the greater involvement of black people in the life of the church. Part of our difficulty in finding a way forward may be due to the fact that each objective would be better handled in a different way from the other. Is that the case? If so, what method is appropriate to each objective?
6. The arguments for and against a national post, and for and against new funding need further examination. Whatever our opinion, why do we hold it? What are the reasons for the opposite opinion? Is there a possibility of valid compromise?
7. MCAG wished another way to approach the second objective to be tested at Mission Council. This is a variant on the "special ministry" approach.
8. Mission Council could decide that two Provinces be encouraged to make application for ½ time special ministries, probably in association with ½ time pastorates. The special ministry would be to encourage and develop the involvement of black people in the life and leadership of local churches, District Councils and the Synod of the Province. This could be a manageable task for one individual and the link to a pastorate could ensure that the ministry was locally rooted. The ministers could be asked to report regularly to the Equal Opportunities Committee, so that insights gained and methods used could be shared more widely.

9. The Provinces would be responsible for the local costs of such a ministry. Insofar as they felt unable to bear them, an approach for grant aid through AGOGAL might be made on the basis that the spur for the application came from Mission Council./General Assembly! However, since the initial benefit from such a post would be felt in the applying Province, it would be right for the Province to bear a significant part of the cost.
  
10. Since much of the initiative for the multi-racial development post has come from Thames North Province, it could be one of the Provinces approached. The other could be West Midlands Province, where the postholder might be able to collaborate with the Black Studies Tutor at the Queens College. Or another Province might seek to take this on. Provincial representatives may wish to make some informal soundings in their Provinces before the Mission Council meeting.

John Waller  
February 1996



**B**

**FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION**

**Mission Council Staffing Advisory Committee  
A Review of the Committee and its work  
September 1992 - December 1995**

Introduction

1. In 1991 The General Assembly gave approval to the outline scheme to change the central church organisation. In 1992 the Executive presented a detailed scheme and the Assembly approved the proposals for the operation and supervision of the central programmes of the church.

2. One concern in the report related to the process of the appointment of senior staff. It stated:

"The gap in current procedures is that the church as a whole does not discuss whether a post should be continued but only approves a nominee. We therefore recommend that when an Assembly appointee is retiring, resigning or coming to the end of a fixed term, the first discussion should be about the post and this can be done well in advance of the vacancy. Should the post continue; if so, should there be any variation in the job description? When the Mission Council has come to a mind about that, the question of the person should be considered. This procedure should be followed with all new appointments but is not to vary existing terms of appointment. It is proposed that the first part of this process, the consideration of the post, be undertaken by three persons not currently officers of standing committees, appointed by the Mission Council, reporting to the Mission Council, serviced by the General Secretary. Once the post is approved the Appointment Group would be set up as now and reporting as at present.

3. When the Assembly Committee structure was revised in 1994, the report stated "in the light of the creation of a Resource Planning Committee, the need for the (MC Staffing Advisory) Committee ought to be reviewed by Mission Council (MC) after one year. This paper is to assist MC in undertaking this task.
4. Two days after the end of the 1992 Assembly the first meeting of the Staffing Group was held. It had been constituted by the Assembly Moderator's Advisory Committee in preparation for the meeting of the Mission Council in October 1992.
5. Membership. Revd. Angus Duncan, Revd. Betty Scopes and Mr William McVey with the General Secretary in attendance to carry out secretarial duties. At the October 1993 MC, at the Group's request a fourth member, the Revd. John Maitland was added. At the November 1993 meeting Angus Duncan was elected as Convener. At MC October 1994 Denis Earp was elected to replace William McVey. At the MC October

1995 Geoff Lunt was elected as convener in place of Angus Duncan. The ending of the period of service of the members is now:

Betty Scopes	1996
John Maitland	1997
Denis Earp	1998
Geoff Lunt	1999

6. Meetings are normally held as necessary:

1992-93	July, September, December & February	4
1993-94	September, November, December & February	4
1994-95	November and February	2
1995-96	November and February	2

7. Procedure. At the first meeting five major influences that affected future staffing were identified and reported to MC October 1992:

- ♦ mission priorities
- ♦ economy
- ♦ ecumenical priorities
- ♦ decentralisation
- ♦ readiness to change

A fuller statement is attached as part of the Guidelines for Applicants

8. Early in the life of the committee it was recognised that those asking for support for a new post or the continuance of an existing one ought to have the right to send representatives (normally two) to meet the committee.

Posts considered 1992-95

9. New Posts. Four were commended to MC. However in no case was it simply an agreement to create an additional post.

Children's Advocate - but it was also recommended that there should be an overall review of all our training posts. This was agreed by MC

Secretary for Ecumenical Relations - This took the place of the post for Personnel Secretary.

Deputy General Secretary - This took the place of the post for Secretary for Doctrine, Prayer & Worship (formerly the Departmental Secretary for Faith & Life).

Multi-Racial Development - It is recommended that this takes the place of an existing post.

10. Existing Posts Twelve were considered. In almost every case there is some evidence that the process brought about serious thinking either about the post, leading to some changes, or about its context leading to further reviews.

- Secretary Faith & Life
- Secretary Advocacy & Stewardship
- Director NT Studies} leading to recognition of need to determine future
- Director OT Studies} policy for the College
- Director Windermere Centre
- Editor REFORM
- Rural Consultant
- National Youth Secretary
- National Youth & Children's Work Training Officer
- Secretary for Ministries
- Secretary for International Church Relations
- Director Pastoral Studies (and/or Systematic Theology)

11. It was decided that the individual posts of Provincial Moderators could not be reviewed.

12. After the committee re-structuring the committee reviewed all the changed job descriptions.

#### Summary of Experience

13. The existence of the committee has meant that

- questions have been asked about the necessity for the post, its context and the job description.
- a signal has been given that the church cannot easily increase the number of Assembly posts.
- some posts have been changed quite significantly.
- three out of four new posts have replaced other posts.

14. On the other hand

- there has not been any reduction in the total number of Assembly posts
- applications have caused committee conveners and secretaries additional work

- committee members have been frustrated when it appeared as if their decision was pre-empted by an Assembly recommendation
- the existence of an institution means that the committee has little scope for manoeuvre e.g. as long as there is a Windermere, there will be the need for a director
- decisions about some posts e.g. Westminster College, have been difficult to deal with in isolation.
- the need for a decision on the post has added to the stress of members of staff at a time when their ministry has also been under review.

### The Future

15. The committee intends to bring forward the date when posts are considered in order that the nominations process need not be delayed. It will not be possible to do this in cases where a post falls vacant before the end of the agreed term.

### MC Advisory Group

16. At its meeting on 9 February this report was considered and it was unanimously agreed to recommend to Mission Council that the Staffing Advisory Committee, having carried out a useful function ought to continue. There was some debate over whether the work ought to be lodged with the Resources Planning Advisory Committee. It was finally agreed that there ought to be a conversation between the two committees to identify matters requiring collaboration but that the two committees ought to remain independent.

### **Resolution**

**Mission Council, having considered the work of the Staffing Advisory Committee from 1992-1995, resolves that:**

- i) **the Committee shall continue;**
- ii) **the Committee be asked to consult the Resources Planning Advisory Committee to identify matters of mutual interest.**



MISSION COUNCIL  
STAFFING  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Guidelines  
for  
Applicants

1. The task of the STAFFING ADVISORY COMMITTEE was set out in the report on the MISSION COUNCIL to GA (p. 62, para 6.1.D).
2. The members of the Committee are chosen by the MC and presently are: Geoff Lunt (Convener), Denis Earp, John Maitland and Betty Scopes. The General Secretary services the committee.
3. In a report to MC October 1992 the following influences affecting future staffing were identified:

Mission priorities	the staff need to be appointed in line with the priorities adopted by the Mission Council and the Assembly, so that they further the mission of the Church and not just the maintenance of present structures.
Economy	there is no sign that the Assembly is ready to spend more money on central posts, so any new posts adopted will probably mean cutting down existing ones.
Ecumenical possibilities	in every post there will be ecumenical dimensions and these are likely to affect the nature of the job. This factor should be written in to every job description.
Decentralisation	some work on behalf of the whole Church can be undertaken through the help of Provincial Synods and may be located outside the central office.
Readiness to change	in every post there should be explicit reference to readiness to change the focus of the job in the next few years, for the existing Departmental Structures are likely to be considerably affected by the new Mission Council approach.

4. The usual procedure is that a paper making the case for the post is prepared and submitted. As the role of the committee is advisory, it should be assumed that the paper will be forwarded to MC and therefore it should be in an appropriate form for that purpose. (See 5). Those making the application should normally appoint, say, two people to discuss their case with the committee.
5. Where the application is for a new post, the paper should include:
  - the objectives for the next period
  - an explanation of why a post is needed to achieve these
  - a job description
  - a budget
  - a consideration of the criteria listed above (para 3)
6. Where the application is for the continuation of a post then, in addition to the information in para 5, there should also be given briefly:
  - the previous job description
  - the original objectives and an account of what has been achieved.
7. The General Secretary may be consulted about particular applications at any stage before or during the process.

## *COMMITMENT FOR LIFE*

In 1995 the Church and Society committee commissioned a review of the *Commitment for Life* programme and received the report of the review group in January this year.

This summary report from the committee to Mission Council is based on that review which was welcomed and in the main accepted by the committee.

The full text of the review group report and recommendations, including the report of the survey referred to and some financial details, is available separately.

### **A** *Summary of review*

#### **A1** **The aim in 1992**

In 1992 the *Commitment for Life* programme (CforL) was offered to, and endorsed by the General Assembly as a challenge and invitation to the church, as one way of expressing our obedience to the words of Jesus. (*Book of Reports to Assembly 1992, pp201-205*)

The programme was the result of a re-examination of the World Development Appeal which had been in existence for 25 years as the '1% appeal' (see B2 below). This would no longer be the sole emphasis; there would be a widening of the programme to feature other aspects: education, political action, lifestyle, worship and so on.

#### **A2** **1992-1995**

The launch in 1992 caused confusion and misunderstanding. The impression given was that the 1% Appeal had come to an end, with no clear picture as to what had replaced it. The combined leaflet / envelope was regarded as a disaster. The introduction of the three elements of the programme and the three core partners made the whole thing appear too complex.

The programme floundered badly during the early months but lessons were learnt and the financial side began to pick up. There is evidence that in a few places the other aspects of the programme have made a real impact on the life of the churches. The advocacy network proposed and assumed in the original launch has not, however, happened. It is disappointing to note that the number of churches supporting CforL is roughly the same as the number which supported the 1% Appeal and that they are largely the same ones.

#### **A3** **The review**

It was promised at the launch of CforL that the programme would be reviewed for the 1996 General Assembly. This review was conducted during the latter part of 1995 by the review team of Wilma Frew (Convener, Assembly Arrangements committee and former Synod Clerk) convener, David Batchelor (minister in Greater Manchester) and Anne Martin (freelance development specialist); the Church and Society committee wish to express their great appreciation of the group's efforts.

Questionnaires were sent out to 120 churches - 60 participating in the programme (46 replies) and 60 not participating (40 replies). Chief reasons adduced by non-participating churches for their stance were "other support for Christian Aid" (in a majority of responses), "existing involvement with other charities or projects", "the growing demands of M&M assessments on churches" and "the complexity of CforL materials". World Development Movement with its political campaigning role was not a cause of non-involvement - mainly because few knew of WDM at all!

In addition, the reviewers consulted with four Provincial Moderators, the present and past Denominational Appeals Secretaries at Christian Aid, the Head of Development for the World

Development Movement and a wide range of others from within the church. No direct contact was made with other denominations though informal comments have made clear that there is little chance of any inter-denominational programme emerging to replace the URC's own CforL.

#### **A4 Aims and objectives**

The committee invites the United Reformed Church, declaring itself to be in Christian solidarity with the poor and with those who are working for justice, to accept the following **objectives** for the *Commitment for Life* programme prepared by the review group:

- 1 *To promote as a central part of the life of the church an understanding of world poverty and our responsibility.*
- 2 *To present to the United Reformed Church a planned programme for promoting these issues throughout the church.*
- 3 *To strengthen the partnership between Christian Aid, the World Development Movement and the United Reformed Church.*
- 4 *To seek to reach and enthuse local churches and all their members and adherents with appropriate and effective advocacy; and to that end to produce new and attractive materials about the various aspects of the programme in a form relevant to people of different ages and levels of involvement.*
- 5 *To aim to increase the income of CforL to £500,000 per annum as a sign of and contribution to the advancement of God's Kingdom.*

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#### **B Re-launching the programme**

The Church and Society committee agreed with the main thrust of the review, based on the questionnaire findings and related comments, that the *Commitment for Life* programme should continue - with some significant changes. The committee, being determined "to get it right this time", therefore offer their amended version of the review group's **RECOMMENDATIONS** (see the main resolution below):

##### **B1 Title**

The ambiguity in the title has caused confusion and argument but it is a good peg on which to hang the scriptural authority. Christianity is committed to "life in all its fullness" (John 10,10). The theological truth encapsulated in this title needs to be more clearly explained. In any case, the review group found little enthusiasm for another title and were conscious of the many churches which have embroidered beautiful CforL banners and pulpit falls.

##### **Recommendation 1:**

That the programme be continued within the United Reformed Church for a further four years, 1997 - 2001, with the title '*Commitment for Life*'.

##### **B2 The 1% concept**

Though other denominations have moved away from the 1% concept, the reviewers were impressed by the strength of support for the concept and felt that the simplicity of the 1% target was something to be retained and strengthened. This appeal invites people to contribute 1% - 'a penny in the pound of disposable income' - to the struggle for world development. The 1% principle remains the guideline for giving, though in a non-prescriptive way.

It invites giving in proportion to ability to give (the basis of Christian stewardship); it implies a degree of self-discipline and sacrifice in doing this; it provides a regular contribution over years and not a one-off response on impulse; it allows the giver to settle with their own conscience what constitutes 'disposable income' rather than imposing a formula like a tax-code. The materials produced for the re-launch of CforL should give examples of what 1% represents in different circumstances.

It is in this spirit that a 1% appeal provides grounds for protesting that the Government is not moving towards fulfilling the UN target of 0.7% of Gross National Product in overseas aid.

##### **Recommendation 2:**

That *Commitment for Life* should retain the 1% principle in seeking contributions.

### **B3 Prongs or pillars?**

Most participating churches concentrate on fund-raising and have not taken up Giving Time and Speaking Out to anything like the same degree. The three-pronged nature of the programme is seen as being too complex and the Speaking Out challenge as perhaps too threatening. The reviewers suggested a division into **two** - financial and non-financial; the committee concurred and felt that the programme should concentrate on helping churches understand and to involve themselves in both.

#### **Recommendation 3:**

That the programme should emphasise the two pillars of the programme, viz. the fund-raising element (i.e. the 1% Appeal) and the complementary action for justice element.

### **B4 Advocacy**

The network of enthusiasts, trained and active in local areas envisaged in 1992 did not materialise and the advocacy has been reactive rather than proactive as a result. We must not underestimate the difficulty of generating a good response in local churches; appropriate advocacy must be a major feature of the relaunch.

#### **Recommendation 4:**

That a network of committed people be identified and trained.

### **B5 Management of the Programme**

A programme already raising somewhere in excess of £250,000 a year and aiming to grow needs a tighter management structure, rather than depending on already over committed people in the URC. There is no formal structure for exchange of ideas, planning and design or for mutual support as between Church and Society staff, the present Advocacy Co-ordinator and the agencies involved. It was noted with appreciation that substantial time is put into the administration by Wendy Cooper at Church House in addition to her other full-time duties; this work will continue to be done by her.

#### **Recommendation 5:**

That a management committee be set up to oversee the CforL programme, to be a subcommittee of Church and Society. (*The full report outlines the tasks for such a committee.*)

### **B6 Staffing**

The reviewers identified two areas of work for which extra human resources will be needed if the programme is to make progress. These are the co-ordination and support of the advocacy, i.e. identifying, training, deploying and supporting at least one representative of the Programme per Province (working for expenses only) plus two or three additional more specialist advocates (to whom an honorarium would be paid). In addition, there will be a number of executive, administrative tasks involved with the development and expansion of the programme. These could be two separate people but on balance it is proposed that there is only one.

#### **Recommendation 6:**

That a programme co-ordinator (part-time) be appointed on a flexible basis initially for two years.

### **B7 Apportionment**

Advocacy and education cost money, as does extra administration; the committee feels that this should not result in less money for campaigning.

The committee therefore propose a revision of the apportionment of the CforL income to allow 75% to go directly overseas to the core partner organisations, 10% to go for campaigning and the remaining 15% to be split between education (which includes £8,500 for One World Week and around £7,000 of other grants), advocacy and administration, bearing in mind that administration and advocacy will cost more in 1996/7 than in 1998/9 because of the relaunch; however these management costs will be kept constant and not rise proportionately to any increase in the total income of CforL.

#### **Recommendation 7:**

That the income of CforL be apportioned in this way.

## **B8 Core Partners**

The concept of 'core partners' has not taken off except in a few churches. These are development organisations in different countries (currently the Deccan Development Society in India, Zimbabwe Christian Care and the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee), links which enable us better to understand their situations, learn from them and support them more knowledgeably and carefully. The reviewers felt that one partner at a time is as much as people can cope with. There is no suggestion that the programme itself would support only one partner, but that one local church should not focus on more than one. Churches which have taken up the concept of core partners held it to be a good one.

### **Recommendation 8:**

- a That a 'menu' of 4 partners be offered, to include at least one with a CWM connection.
- b That a revised list of partners be prepared.
- c That participating churches would be invited to focus on one partner at one time.

## **B9 Christian Aid**

Some churches which support CforL are unaware that Christian Aid is itself the link with the partners. It is important to stress the reciprocal benefits to CA and the URC in this programme and how much Christian Aid appreciates CforL. The committee is glad that Michael Taylor, Director of Christian Aid, is willing to visit General Assembly to speak in support of CforL.

### **Recommendation 9:**

That the relaunch stresses the link with Christian Aid as our partner agency in CforL.

## **B10 World Development Movement (WDM)**

Perhaps the least understood part of the programme is the link with WDM, even though they receive 10% of the income (around £27,000pa), almost enough for the salaries of two of their fifteen full-time staff. The link with WDM needs to be clarified and its campaigning role better understood; participating churches should be given an opportunity to become more closely involved.

### **Recommendation 10:**

That the relaunch stresses the importance of the campaigning role of WDM.

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## **C Ownership of the Programme**

The Church and Society committee endorses the strong feeling of the review group that the programme, though unanimously endorsed by General Assembly in 1992, has not really been owned by the whole church and has been viewed as very much an optional extra.

*Commitment for Life* needs to be owned by the URC as a whole, with the intention that all the churches are involved and all members challenged. For this to happen the programme needs to be welcomed by the Mission Council and sent forward to the General Assembly with its endorsement as a vital part of the mission of the church.

**Hence we are bringing our report to Mission Council for a decision in principle.**

Timing is also critical and urgent. Since one of the flaws of the 1992 launch was to delay production and distribution of materials until after the General Assembly decision, it will be vital to proceed with preparation of appropriate materials, the identification and training of suitable advocates, identification of the partners for the next period, etc. To this end, Church and Society committee has a working group ready to set about these tasks if Mission Council decides to endorse the proposal.

The Church and Society committee therefore brings this RESOLUTION:

**Mission Council welcomes the report of the Church and Society committee following the review of the *Commitment for Life* programme and instructs the committee to proceed to a re-launch of the programme at General Assembly in July 1996 for a further four years on the basis of the recommendations in this report.**

**THE REMIT OF THE ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE**

The Ecumenical Committee at its meeting 31 January - 1 February discussed its remit, and presents the following revised remit for approval by Mission Council and inclusion in the Ecumenical Committee's Assembly Report.

**AIM**

The role of the Ecumenical Committee is to foster ecumenical development in the life of the URC:

- a. in response to the Basis of Union (para.8)

*The United Reformed Church has been formed in obedience to the call to repent of what has been amiss in the past and to be reconciled. It sees its formation and growth as a part of what God is doing to make his people one, and as a united church will take, wherever possible and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people.*

- b. in relation to other churches and the wider community - in these islands, across Europe, and throughout the world.

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

**TASKS**

Among the tasks of this committee is listening to those with experience of the World Church, including other Christian traditions in Britain and Ireland, and to those with experience of current affairs and of other faiths.

The Committee will maintain official URC links with overseas churches and world and regional ecumenical organisations, in particular the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Conference of European Churches. It will guide the URC's participation in the Council for World Mission. *Includes Ecumenical Committee Guide.*

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

It is responsible for the URC's involvement in St Andrew's Hall.

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



# J

FOR DISCUSSION & DECISION

## MISSION COUNCIL STAFFING ADVISORY GROUP

### REPORT TO MISSION COUNCIL - 15-17 MARCH 1996

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Mission Council Staffing Advisory Group met in February 96 to consider proposals relating to the following posts:
  - a. The existing post of Chaplain of the National Youth Resource Centre, Yardley Hastings.
  - b. The existing post of CRCW Development Officer.
  - c. The existing post of Master Pilot.
2. After careful discussion and the benefit of presentations from, respectively, Revd Vaughan Jones (Convener, CRCW Central Management Committee) and Mr Paul Franklin (Secretary for Youth Work) the Group decided to request further written submissions and so deferred consideration of the posts of CRCW Development Officer and Master Pilot to its next Meeting.

#### CHAPLAIN OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE, YARDLEY HASTINGS

2. The Group was able to study a well-presented case arguing for the continuance of the post beyond its present expiry date of 31 August 1996 and had the benefit of an in-depth conversation with Mr Paul Franklin, Secretary for Youth Work. The case spoke of a very substantial success-story, both with regard to the work carried out at and through the Centre and in the life, worship and witness of Yardley Hastings URC. The Group rejoices and gives thanks, with the whole Church, for this.
3. In studying the Job Description of the Chaplain's post, it was very clear to the Group that the burdens placed on the present incumbent were onerous and excessive. The action taken by the Centre Management Committee in seeking to appoint a Resource and Development Officer for the Centre (funded by the Centre) will enable, once an appointment is made, the emphasis and direction of the work of the Chaplain to be changed. Responsibility for the Centre's property and its maintenance, the marketing of its resources and a gamut of administrative duties connected with the running of the Centre will disappear.
4. It is proposed that the post of Chaplain should, henceforth, be regarded as:
  - a. 70% time: Chaplain of the Centre, responsible for:
    - Pastoral care of the Centre staff, the Community team, FURY Council and visitors to the Centre,
    - Worship and Spiritual Development within the Centre and at FURY Council,
    - Ensuring that the Centre delivers agreed programmes and events,
    - providing, in partnership with the Staff Team, personal and spiritual development and training of the Community Team; developing a network of people from outside the Centre as volunteer hosts and to provide appropriate input for programmes,
    - creating, producing and delivering National Resource Materials in partnership with URC Youth Networks,



- the professional, spiritual and commercial running of the Centre with the support of the Centre Management Committee and the Youth & Children's Work Committee and in consultation with FURY Council.
- attending meetings of FURY Council, Youth & Children's Work Committee (as able), Centre Management Committee and Team Meetings of URC Staff.

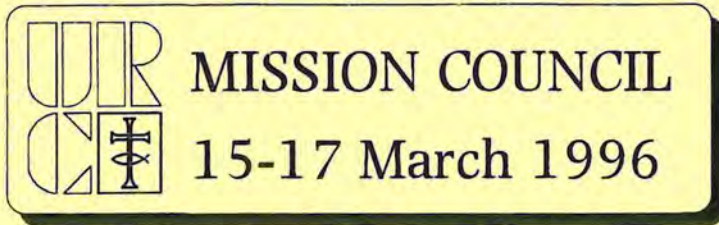
b. 30% time: Minister to Yardley Hastings URC,

- to give leadership to, and to encourage and develop the congregation in its worship, and in its witness and service to the Yardley Hastings community.

5. The Group considered that this proposal is sound and should enable the Chaplain to build on the excellent foundation established in the life of the Centre and Yardley Hastings URC over the last 5 years.

6. RECOMMENDATION: *Mission Council Staffing Advisory Group recommends to Mission Council that the post of Chaplain to the National Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings should be continued for a further period of 5 years as from 1 September 1996 on the new 70:30 time split basis, and urges the Youth & Children's Work Committee to prepare, as a matter of urgency, a revision to the April 1991 detailed Job Description to reflect the new emphasis and thrust in the Chaplain's work.*

Geoffrey Lunt (Convener)  
February 1996



**L**

## **TRAINING**

### **AN EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Paper L1 is the Training Review report which was instigated by the Mission Council and which the Council is invited to forward to the General Assembly for discussion and decision.

Paper L2 contains the resolutions which the Training Committee proposes to put to the General Assembly.

Paper L3 comes from the Mission Council Advisory Group and it raises the possibility of a different way forward in relation to the YCWT/YLTO team from that contained in the Training Review and in resolution 2 of the Training Committee.

The purpose of MCAG is to promote a debate which has been anticipated for some time. The Mission Council needs to decide whether, and if so how, that debate should be encouraged. Here are some of the options:

- (a) Leave the review report and resolutions as they are and allow any debate to emerge on the floor of the Assembly. The MCAG paper would not be published further.
- (b) Leave the report and resolution as they are but present the MCAG paper to Assembly as an alternative to be considered.
- (c) Leave the report and resolution as they are but indicate that Mission Council wishes to recommend the Assembly to adopt the "MCAG alternative".
- (d) Leave the report and resolution as they are but advise the Assembly to defer decision on that part of the report dealing with YCWTs and on resolution 2 for a further consultative period. Reasons would need to be given.

These are not the only options but they are offered to indicate that there are a number of ways in which the Mission Council can deal with a very important yet sensitive and controversial issue.

John Waller  
March 1996

## Training Review

**RESOLUTION**

**TRAINING**

1. Assembly adopts the proposals outlined in the Training Review Report.

### **The Background**

#### **1. The Remit of the Training Review**

Mission Council in September 1993 requested that a review of Training take place. A small group was set up to outline the remit of such a review including the Revd Julian Macro, the Revd Eric McDonald and the Revd Peter Poulter. Concerns had been raised about Assembly's scheme for Youth and Children's work training and it had also become clear that the four colleges used by the URC for training ordinands were finding it increasingly difficult to gather viable numbers for courses. There was concern that while money was available for training ordinands, there was very little money specifically set aside for lay training. It was also clear that many Provinces were beginning to appoint Training Officers, but this had been done in an ad hoc way, which gave little national cohesion. Resourcing for training varied widely depending on the financial abilities and priorities of each Province. Finally, in Spring 1995, the newly formed Training Committee volunteered to conduct this review and to report, if possible, to the 1996 General Assembly.

#### **2. Method of Working**

2.1 The Training Committee have met three times as a Committee to conduct the Review of Training. These meetings included two intensive residential meetings. In addition, the following research has been carried out:

- (i) a postal survey of Provinces to discover who is engaged in training;
- (ii) a detailed study of the Youth and Children's Work Training Programme;
- (iii) visits by the Convener to Mansfield College, Oxford; Northern College, Manchester, The Queen's College Birmingham and Westminster College, Cambridge;
- (iv) visit by the Convener to the URC Staff Training Meeting, July 1995;
- (v) an enquiry into the training commitments of all Assembly Committees;
- (vi) a review of the work of the National Youth and Children's Work Trainer.

2.2 The Training Committee met in September 1995 to draw up a draft National Policy which suggested four possible options for future training. The following Options were suggested:

1. Retaining the present pattern
2. Provincially led within a national training policy, retaining the present colleges.
3. Provincially led, resourced by two colleges
4. Collaboration between Provinces and Courses resourced by one college.

2.3 These proposals were then circulated to members of Mission Council, members of the Ecumenical Committee, Principals of colleges and Courses, Provincial Training Officers, Youth and Children's Work Trainers and Ministerial Training representatives from other denominations asking for responses. Members of the Review visited various colleges and groups to talk about the proposals.

2.4 Responses were received from 77 sources, several of which represented groups of people. These were summarised in a paper which was then considered by the Training Review at a meeting in December, 1995. Only two respondents opted to keep the present pattern. 24 respondents opted for Option 2, 23 opted for Option 3, 3 respondents opted for Option 4. Others suggested a combination of options: 4 opted for Options 2/3, and one for Option 3/4. 17 respondents suggested no particular option.

2.5 Other denominations responded with interest, but recommended that issues of the future structure of ordination training should be looked at ecumenically, especially as others are experiencing many of the same problems.

### **3. The Aim of Training:**

**3.1 To share with people in the continuous discovery of what it means to be a People of God in the world and 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.**

#### **3.2 Commentary on these aims:**

3.2.1 *To Share:* This 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.

3.2.2 *With People:* The mode 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 the mind of the Holy Spirit.

3.2.3 *Continuous*: Christians should always be ready to learn and grow. Our training is never complete. It must be **continuous**. Yesterday's discovery may not be adequate to meet tomorrow's need and opportunity.

3.2.4 *Discovery*: To a 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.

3.2.5 *A 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 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.

3.2.6 *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.

3.2.7 *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.

3.2.8 *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.

3.2.9 *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.

3.2.10 *The 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 story, 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.

*(Training Network, 1994)*

3.3 We believe that we learn best by sharing education with others. We therefore recommend that training and education should, wherever possible, be carried out in **collaboration** and not in isolation. This means that, wherever possible, people should learn in groups.

## **TRAINING PROPOSALS**

### **4.1 National Policy**

A national policy is needed to maximise the creative use of all resources and to provide a framework for provincial initiative and delivery. In order to achieve this we are suggesting a strategy for partnership and a programme for education in ministry for Lay People, Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers.

### *4.2 Provincial Teams:*

4.2.1 The Review warmly welcomes the development of Provincial Education and Training Teams. This process has gone on apace during the past year. These teams vary from Province to Province. A Provincial team may include the Moderator, Youth and Children's Trainer, the Training Officer (by whatever name), Missioner (again, by whatever name) and other voluntary officers concerned with ministry, adult education, stewardship and work with children and young people. In some Provinces, for example, the Provincial Director of Training is responsible for all aspects of training within the Province; in others, various tasks such as Director of Non-Stipendiary Ministry studies, In-Service Training, Post-Ordination training are dealt with by different people. It would help if Provinces could decide on the common use and meaning of titles.

4.2.2 The Review welcomes the fact that national networks appear to be developing for specific areas of work eg: lay training, Non-Stipendiary ministry training, Stipendiary Student training, Continuing Education (Post Ordination training and In-service Training) Lay Preachers training, Mission Enablers, Youth and Children's Workers etc.

### **4.3 We recommend that:**

**4.3.1 The work of a Provincial Team should be co-ordinated by a Strategy Group. (The National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer should be a member of this group if this group is also concerned with strategy for the Youth and Children's Work Training team.)**

**4.3.2. The creation of Education and Training Partnerships should be explored.**

**4.3.3. Within the framework of the national policy for education and training the Provinces should have an essential role to play in productively organising and delivering training within each Province.**

**4.3.4 Provinces, including members of College and Course staffs, should be encouraged to develop links with one another and consultations between trainers and educators from the Provinces should be encouraged, to enable effective cross-fertilization to take place.**

**4.3.5. The national trainers' network should be strengthened.** At present, this network is an ad hoc group of various people involved in the encouragement of training. This group meets for three days once a year. Most who meet in this way are self choosing. More attempt needs to be made to include or invite all those involved in training.

**4.3.6. Colleges currently used to train URC ordinands should continue to be used for the time being. In order to become financially and educationally viable, colleges will need to diversify their activities to engage in much more lay education and training and in-service education and training for ministers.** Diversification continues to be important: in the use of buildings where possible and also in the use of staff (both on and off campuses). We should move towards closer partnership between provincial, college and Course staff.

**4.3.7. The United Reformed Church should join the Ecumenical Strategy Group for Theological Training.** The informal meeting of ministerial training representatives from differing denominations (especially the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, who already conduct much of their ordination training jointly) has proposed that an Ecumenical Strategy group for Theological Training be set up. This group would ensure continuity of theological education, especially where denominations are dependent upon each other for training, but this group would not ignore hard questions such as the viability of Colleges and Courses. The Training Committee recommends that the URC become part of this group. The consequence of this would be that the training Committee does not think that now is the right time to recommend pulling out of current agreements. This does not mean, however, that the URC should necessarily send ordinands to every ecumenical Course - especially in the light of the Guidelines agreed at the URC General Assembly 1995 that ordinands should work in viable groups with other URC ordinands. In becoming a member of the Ecumenical Strategy Group, we shall make it clear that we hope the Training Committee will be able to present a report and comprehensive recommendations from the Group to the 1998 meeting of General Assembly with a view to their implementation in the year 2000 or 2001 and that if the Group cannot work to this timetable we shall be obliged to work independently.

**4.3.8. Continuing use should be made of the resources of St Andrews Hall, The Windermere Centre, Yardley Hastings and the Provinces.**

## 5. Lay People

**5.1 We welcome the growth in Elders' training and we encourage the continuation of this process. The committee encourages Provinces to share their methods and resources with each other.**

5.2 There should be opportunity for study at all levels and for advanced study [Eg Members Together, Developing Discipleship, Courses for Youth and Children's Workers (Kaleidoscope and Spectrum), Ecumenical - (Open Learning Centre and Training for Learning and Serving, Manchester Christian Institute)]

5.3. Individuals carrying out particular ministries within the church and the world should be encouraged to take up training.

5.4. There should be opportunity to study alongside others eg access to ordination training through Courses such as the Manchester Christian Institute.

5.5 Provincially led courses would, where appropriate, draw on the staff and library resources of the Colleges.

5.6 Lay people should continue to be encouraged to develop their skills through tutor training and courses such as the Trainer's Diploma.

5.7 The budget for Lay Training should be increased. We believe that this is possible through a redeployment of funds (see 14.1 below)

## 6 Lay Preachers

6.1. We affirm the work of lay preachers, Lay Preaching Commissioners, organisers of *Training for Learning and Serving*, and *Exploring the Faith* and the tutors who help with this work..

6.2 Currently there are over 600 Lay Preachers in the URC. We observe, however that many of these are approaching retirement, and that there are relatively few recruits, especially young lay preachers. We therefore recommend that every effort should be made to encourage young participants to train as lay preachers.

6.3. We encourage Ministries' Committee to actively support the recruitment of Lay Preaching at such events as Enquirers' Conferences.

6.4. District Councils are encouraged to carry out pre-training assessment of Lay Preachers.

6.5. We recommend the adoption of a system like the Methodist "On Note" system. (This provides for a trainee lay preacher to work alongside a senior lay preacher as a team).

6.6. We affirm and encourage the development of teams of Lay Preachers and ministerial teams.

6.7 The '*Exploring the Faith*' Course is being phased out . The "*Training for Learning and Serving*" course, the first year of a part-time ordination training or an



equivalent course validated by the Training Committee should be used to prepare lay preachers and others.

6.8. Lay Preachers should be nationally accredited through the Training Committee Studies' Panel and the Ministries' Accreditation Committee.

6.9. Lay Preachers should be encouraged to continue their education. We recommend that every District Lay Preaching Commissioner should keep a record of in-service training undertaken by lay preachers in the District, and that this be reviewed every five years in consultation with an officer of the Province.

6.10. The names of all accredited Lay Preachers should be listed, (with the date of accreditation and their current District Council) in the URC Year Book.

## **7. Foundation Training for Ministers and Church Related Community Workers**

7.1. Currently, many candidates whose pastoral gifts have been recognised have not been able to benefit as much as they ought from college training because they have not been ready to begin serious academic work. We therefore recommend that foundation training should be required for both ministers and CRCWs, such as at least one year of the Training for Learning and Serving Course or an equivalent course approved by an appointed officer of the Training Committee. Admission to further training will depend on performance in pre-foundation training.

7.2. Pre-course training should include some work on the history and tradition of the URC.

## **8. Training for Church Related Community Workers:**

8.1. Church Related Community Workers should continue to be trained by the Salford Urban Mission and Northern Federation for Training in Ministry partnership.

8.2. The committee has heard that some recruits are interested in studying and working as Church Related Community Workers part time. We therefore ask the CRCW Development Officer to explore ways in which part-time training (possibly making use of the Manchester *Faith in Living* Course ) might be available.

## **9. Ministers:**

9.1 Currently, ordination training for URC ministers is carried out on full time courses at: Mansfield College, Oxford; Northern College, Manchester; the Queen's College, Birmingham; and Westminster College, Cambridge. All of these institutions work ecumenically with other theological colleges, and there would be major implications if we withdrew from any of these. The following Part-time Courses will continue to be used for the time being: East Anglian Ministerial Training Course; East Midlands Ministry Training Course; the Manchester Christian Institute; the North East

Ordination Course; St Albans and Oxford Ministerial Training Course; Southern Training Scheme for Christian Ministry; South West Ministerial Training Course; West Midlands Ministerial Training Course, .

9.2. In view of the need to make ecumenical decisions about the future structure of ordination training, we recommend that Colleges presently used for the education and training of stipendiary ministers should continue to be used for the time being by the URC for the full-time education and training of ordinands.

9.3. Decisions about which colleges and Courses will be used in the longer term will be addressed by the Ecumenical Strategy Group.

9.4 In this interim period it may be necessary for the Colleges to receive grant aid in lieu of vacant student places. this is a matter which will need to be discussed by the Ministerial Training Fund Committee and the Colleges.

9.5. Those Ecumenical Courses which meet the "Criteria for Courses" established by General Assembly 1995 should continue to be used for the education and training of ministers on a part-time basis. We recognise that there are some Courses which do not meet the criteria. We propose that these be inspected gradually through the ecumenical quinquennial inspection programme, and that these factors will be taken seriously in mind in deciding whether to continue validating such Courses.

9.6.1 The minimum theological qualification for ministers to be ordained will be the Undergraduate Diploma in Theology or equivalent.

9.6.2 All those training for ministry should complete a pre-foundation part-time course, followed by:

*Route One*

A four year full time course, with placements throughout or a one-year internship, including or plus a course on the ethos and history of the URC. Students on this course will be subject to a major review after two years.

*Route Two*

- (i) A four year part time course, or
- (ii) a three year part time course, plus a pre-ordination year in a placement.

During this year a course of study worked out between the Province and the ordinand will be followed under the oversight of one of the church's colleges. There will be a major review of the ordinand's progress after two years.

*Route Three*

We note with interest the trialling of mixed mode training programmes (a mixture of part-time, distance learning and full time training) in the Church of England.

9.7. No-one may candidate after the age of 45: all candidates must complete their training by 50.

9.8. People on full-time courses who have not received a LEA grant will be encouraged to apply for one. (See paragraph 14 on Funding of Training).

9.10. Wherever possible, ordinands training for both stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministry should be trained together, together with lay people.

## **10. Continuing Education in Ministry**

10.1. **We expect ministers to engage in continuing ministerial education in order that they may be enabled to develop their knowledge, skills and spirituality in their early years and to continue this throughout life.**

10.2. We hope to see effective partnerships between Provinces and Colleges in developing and delivering programmes. Eg Ministers training alongside lay people.

10.3. Before ordination agreement should be reached between the ordinand, the Course staff and the receiving/sending Province about an appropriate pattern of 3 years' post-ordination training. This will form part of the first and subsequent settlement agreements. Provincial In-Service Training Officers will be expected to keep a record of training undertaken by ministers and to review this every five years in consultation with an officer of the Training Committee and possibly the Ministerial appraisal team.

10.4. Ministerial appraisal will play an important part in assessing continuing education needs and setting goals at all stages of ministry. If ministerial appraisal is not introduced it will be important for another structure to be created to deal with setting goals.

10.5. The Training Committee, in consultation with the Provinces and Colleges, should produce proposals for post-ordination training structure and schemes.

10.6 We note that the take-up of Post Ordination training is very patchy; in some areas it is very good, in others it is virtually non-existent.

## **11. Integrated Training (Lay and Ordained)**

11.1. **We encourage the integration and sharing of resources in order to develop more collaboration . Current examples of good practice include: Westminster College staff helping to teach the Training for Learning and Serving Course, and leading Ministers' Summer Schools; Westminster College making library resources available**

to the wider church; the YLTO team being used to help train ordination students, run courses for the wider church on racism, Good Practice, Elders' training; Yorkshire Province's "Worship" pack being used by the wider church; Yardley Hastings members going back to share their growth in understanding with local churches. There are many others; these are only examples to stimulate thought and further good practice.

## **12. National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer**

12.1 The National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer provides a good model for management, in-service development and support of national teams of workers and **that this post be continued.**

## **13. The YLTO/YCWT Programme**

13.1 A review of the work of the team was conducted, seeking a detailed diary analysis of one month in the work of each member. This showed the range and depth of work undertaken and its close relationship with the development of Youth and Children's Work within the Provinces. Co-operation with other trainers in Provinces, with ecumenical partners and with a variety of national projects and events was also highlighted.

13.2 The value to the Provinces of the team was identified in the Consultation in September 1994 where an agreement was made to develop the Assembly/Province partnership and give greater ownership and accountability within Provinces. Full consideration of long term issues were raised and the training review felt that, in the light of recent developments of Province ownership, the partnership should continue as at present. There is an awareness that over the last year the team has grown to include 11 officers with each Province except one having their own officer. This new structure now needs time to develop before any further radical review can be recommended.

## **14. Finances from 1997**

14.1. We are aware of the urgent need to rebalance financial resources for training. At present considerable resources are available for ordination and Church Related Community Worker training and continuing education. In contrast, very few resources are available for lay training, except in the provision of some Provincial Training Officers and the Youth and Children's Work Training Team. We therefore propose that finances be redistributed to provide more resources for Lay training.

14.2. We propose that for new ordinands, the maximum amount of maintenance grant offered per full-time ordinand will be limited from Autumn 1997 to £5000 at December 1995 prices adjusted to inflation. The Ministerial Training Fund Committee will agree the level of this grant. This will need to be monitored in the light of the discussions of the Ecumenical Strategy Group on Ministerial Education.

14.3. Where people can pay for their training from their income, they will be expected to do so.

14.4. The decision about grant levels would mean fewer full-time ordinands for colleges. One way of addressing the problems this will create for colleges would be to pay colleges for lay training and continuing education which we are asking them to do. The money for this would come from money saved on maintenance grants.

#### 15. Further Work

15.1 The Committee is aware that there are several issues that it has not addressed through lack of time. These include:

- a. A review of the methodology and philosophy of training.
- b. A detailed inspection of Colleges and Courses
- c. Consideration about viability of Colleges and Courses with the possible option of withdrawing validation from some.
- d. The use of distance learning courses for ordination and lay training.

15.2 We should to continue to address these issues. as part of the continuing work of the committee.

Training Committee, February, 1996

**RESOLUTIONS**

**Training**

- 1 Assembly agrees that:
  - i. the URC should become a member of the Ecumenical Strategy Group and:
  - ii. the URC should be represented on the Group by the Secretary for Training and a member of the Training Committee.

**1.1 Ecumenical Strategy Group**

Over the past few years it has become clear that until the churches could plan in partnership, no satisfactory solution would be found to some of the problems raised by the part-time courses, colleges and changing patterns of ministerial education. In last year's Report we mentioned these issues and the need for the ecumenical validation of Courses. Further, it became clear during the Review of Training that there was no common view within the Church about how the URC should deal with the over-provision of places in Colleges belonging to or historically associated with the Church. All our Colleges teach ecumenically, two are integral parts of active Federations and also are strongly related to part-time Courses. It would be vastly unreasonable to make proposals which affected the URC Colleges which did not take into account their ecumenical partners. The issues which concern us are also alive in other churches. The Ecumenical Strategy Group will bring together representatives of the Churches precisely to study and make recommendations about some of the issues which we have felt most needed to be tackled ecumenically. This new Group will provide a forum for much needed partnership and the Committee welcomes it warmly.

2. Assembly agrees that:
  - i. the post of National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer should be maintained or the time being and:
  - ii. a major review of the post should be undertaken in the year 2003.

**2.1 Provincial Review - National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer**

As is made clear in the Review of Training, we welcome the development of Provincial teams. These differ in size but variously include: the Moderator, Youth and Children's Work Officer, Missioners, Evangelists, Training Officers and other full-time, part-time and voluntary officers. We believe that the closer such teams can work in partnership and to an agreed strategy, the greater will be their efficiency and impact in the Province.

As part of the Review of Training an informal but thorough review has been conducted of the work of the National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer. It is recognised that the demands of this post will change as patterns of working within Provinces change. But there will remain the central task of managing the team of Provincial Children and Youth Work Trainers some of whom are not members of the URC and many of whom will want, after a relatively short time, to move on to other professional employment. It is important that these workers are not disadvantaged because of being employed by the church and that they remain at the forefront of professional development. We conclude that no one else in the church is able to provide for the professional development of these workers other than the National Officer. The post is currently secure until December 1996.

3. Assembly adopts the maintenance grant structure for ordinands as set out below:

### 3.1 Proposed New Ways of Financing Ordinands

New ways of financing URC ordinands is necessary because:

- a) Local Education Authority grants are becoming less and less appropriate to the needs of URC ordinands.
- b) There is a need to cost possible future patterns of training which are proposed by the Training Review.
- c) There is need to reduce the costs of funding ministerial training to enable more money to be available for lay training.

The committee, in conjunction with the Ministerial Training Fund sub-Committee therefore proposes that:

- a) In the light of the Training guidelines agreed at the July 1995 General Assembly, as from September, 1997, ordinands training full time in college will be paid one maximum grant:

Such ordinands to be paid one maximum grant:-

Such as (i) £5,000 per annum plus fees

or (ii) £20,000 for the entire course plus fees.

(ordinands to decide whether to train full-time or part-time).

We recommend that the Training Committee be asked to develop proposals for maintenance grants for ordinands based on these plans.

11. It may help to assess the financial aspects of this proposal if we set out some figures relating to 1995.

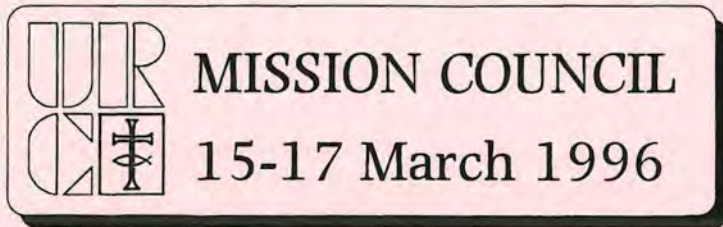
Total cost of YCWT/YLTO programme	£294,058
DFE grant	£ 20,100
Contributions by Provinces	£ 94,800

The actual net cost to Assembly funds in 1995 was therefore £179,158. The calculations in paragraphs 9 and 10 have been based on 1995 figures as far as they are available. More up-to-date figures would need to be used if the proposal was to be implemented.

12. The question of our DFE grants is an important one. We have received such grants for many years in recognition of the quality of our work with children and young people. It would be important to be able to demonstrate that a change would not lead to a decline in quality.
13. Even to propose a change like this is to disturb those at present in post and to introduce a considerable measure of uncertainty in those working in the whole field. We therefore suggest that the proposal needs to be accepted or rejected in principle fairly quickly, say by the 1996 General Assembly. If it was accepted, it could be implemented over a period but again we suspect that morale could be affected if this period lasted for more than 12 months. Our contractual responsibilities to those at present in post would allow such a timetable. Our assumption is that most of them would continue to serve under the new arrangements.
14. Mission Council has been encouraged in its identification of eight mission priorities. Youth, children and training all find a place among them. The topic of this paper is therefore very much in a priority area. Is this a time to make a change?

8 February 1996





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**FOR DECISION**

## **REPORT TO MISSION COUNCIL FROM DISCIPLESHIP & WITNESS COMMITTEE**

### **CELEBRATING THE MILLENNIUM**

#### **Resolution**

Mission Council endorses the setting up of a Millennium Task Group representative of the programme committees. It will be convened and serviced by the Discipleship & Witness Committee. Travel costs of members will be met by the committees they represent. Mission Council notes that the Task Group will have discussions with the Treasurer about how the URC will make financial contributions alongside other Churches to ecumenically agreed literature, events and participation in the Christian presence at the national exhibition in Greenwich.

#### **SUMMARY OF CTE CO-ORDINATING GROUP'S PROPOSALS ON THEMES AND EVENTS**

This is a summary of a draft discussion document which has been presented to the CTE Millennium Co-ordinating Group. It will be amended before publication around Easter 1996. *This draft has no status and it is hoped that it will NOT be reproduced.* It is provided by Discipleship & Witness Committee for the information of members of Mission Council.

#### **MOOD**

It is recognized that the millennium presents Christians with an opportunity and a challenge. It is anticipated that around the turn of the millennium there will be much evaluation of the past, and in particular the role of Christianity in 2,000 years of human history; there will also be discussion about the sort of society we are hoping for in the next millennium. Christians will have an opportunity to join in the discussions; to confess the Churches' past failures and to draw attention to its past achievements; and appropriately to celebrate 2,000 years of Christianity.

#### **National debate**

In the run up to the millennium (say from autumn 1998) the Churches might seek to launch or make a focused contribution to a nationwide discussion on the sort of future society we want. A possible title might be "AD2000 - a chance to start again!" It is important to note that this sort of idea has been identified in preliminary CTE discussions as the only thing that could possibly unite all the various Christian groupings because it does not presume one packaged answer but opens the door to those who feel they have a gospel to share. Such a discussion would need to be carefully launched and resourced. There might be a special CTE Lent Course in 1999 helping Christians become involved (there will not be a CCBI course that year).

#### **THEMES**

It is believed that almost all Christians in England could unite round one or two themes appropriate to the millennium; but concentrating on them, Christians should be able to make a significant contribution to marking the millennium. Two have gained considerable support:

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

In British society the Lord's Prayer is probably the most widely known component of Jesus' teaching. It sums up and expresses most fully the longing of our age for spiritual renewal and its expression in the Kingdom, or rule, of God. It can, therefore, be a focus which resonates with people outside the Churches as well as witnessing to the purposes of Christ. It provides content and shape to the Christian contribution about our society. Several of the ideas set out below involve using the Lord's Prayer. It is hoped that alongside the traditional text, there might be an ecumenically agreed modern text.

#### **Jubilee**

There is widespread support for the Pope's call that 2000 be a year of Jubilee with a particular focus on the reduction of international debt. A coalition of aid agencies, economists, academics and diplomats have formed "Jubilee 2000" which is spelling out the practical details of debt cancellation and will seek to mobilise public opinion in support of the proposal. It is recommended that Churches support this fully, *but it is recognized that the Churches' call must also be costly to the Churches themselves or it will be seen (rightly) as posturing.*

Another idea is to create a fund from trust giving which will provide grants to local churches to enable them to carry out projects in and with their communities which express aspects of 'jubilee' (release from debt, burden and slavery; restoration of rights and individual dignity; a new or renewed allegiance to God). The core ideas in the applications would be published to stimulate and encourage other local churches to wrestle with what Jubilee means in their own setting, and so enhance their understanding of jubilee in its world wide dimension.

## **EVENTS TO MARK THE MILLENNIUM**

Most of the Church's response to the millennium will be set in the regions and localities. There are, however, a small number of occasions where a national and therefore united contribution makes most sense. A limited and carefully spaced-out series of national event should help to keep the overall focus on the Church's agenda for the millennium. Already plans are in hand for 1998 to be focused upon "The Open Book" and this fits well with the Pope's call for a 1998 focus on the Bible. Other projects that would require initiative at the national level might include:

### **The turn of the millennium**

It is hoped that Christians will participate in their local community events, and so there will be no national campaign to hold watchnight services etc.

However, it is suggested that

worship material be available for services at (say) 8pm on 31st December

a symbolic event throughout the nation at midnight might be encouraged, such as holding hands, lighting candles and saying the Lord's prayer (this would seek to be a media-friendly event and relate to whatever international dimensions emerge)

at noon on 1st January churches might be encouraged to open for a 15 minute service of confession, thanksgiving and dedication, beginning with a five minute peal of bells, suitable worship material might be made available with agreed symbolism

local churches might be encouraged to use the Methodist Covenant Service on the first Sunday of the new millennium (2nd January)

### **Penitence**

It is recognized that past statements and acts have dishonoured the way of Christ and brought suffering to others. Acts of Christian penitence could take place, particularly in the context of a year of nationwide discussion on the future of our society. One possibility might be for a national service of penitence either at Easter or in the autumn 1999 with a liturgy prepared for the service also available for local use.

### **A national Christian Event**

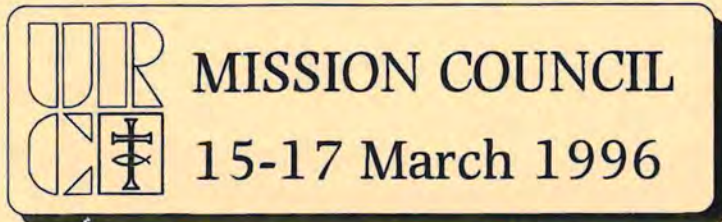
It is suggested that on Pentecost weekend (10/11 June) 2000 a mega Christian event be planned; thought would be given to the fact that a mega rally in one location can take away the possible impact of similar events in many locations. In the age of the TV link-up there are possibilities for a truly national and even international dimension to this. Details would be worked out later: churches would be urged to keep this weekend free to link in with whatever is planned.

### **National Service**

It is hoped that discussions with Buckingham Palace would take place in the near future to confirm a date for a national service involving the royal family, and government and church leaders so that it can be fitted into an overall-over strategy for national events.

### **National Exhibition**

The Churches - in liaison with the appropriate regional church leaders in Greenwich - should plan for an official exhibition area sponsored by the Christian Churches. This would be compatible with the tone of the overall exhibition and with the millennium themes of the Church at national and local level, eg heritage, hope, jubilee, the Lord's prayer etc. If there are also up to half a dozen regional 'exhibitions' (as the government recently proposed) there should be similar Church involvement.



**O**

**FOR INFORMATION**

**ADVISORY GROUP ON GRANTS AND LOANS**

**GRANTS MADE BY AGOGAL AUGUST - DECEMBER 1995**

There are two headings under the grants for Ministry in Ecumenical Situations (MES). AGOGAL has renamed the heading from which grants are made to County Ecumenical Officers as "MES (EO)". A review of grants under this heading for 1996 is being made.

**NEW ENTERPRISES IN MISSION**

1. **Bridgwater**  
The Grapevine Christian Project which is a youth part of Bridgwater URC was given £3,000 towards the cost of a mobile multi-media meeting area for use in schools, churches etc.
2. **Hackney Churches Immigration Bureau**  
A grant of £1,000 has been made and an application to CWM for further funding has been commended.
3. **Trinity Bristol**  
A grant of £3,000 over two years was agreed towards the cost of a mature Time for God worker, skilled in computer technology to develop further the local church's "Trinity Zone", a new form of Christian Education on Sunday mornings using computers.
4. **Hastings Group: Village Ministry**  
AGOGAL agreed to extend its grant to assist in the development of the village ministry on a running-down basis for a further two years provided Southern Province helped to cushion the effect. This was agreed; £2,100 will be given in 1996 and £1,800 in 1997.
5. **Developing Missionary Congregations**  
CCBI's Churches Commission On Mission is developing an ecumenical learning process to discover why and how churches grow. Grants were sought to indicate denominational support and encourage trusts to give. The URC is fully involved in the process. A grant of £2,000 was agreed.

**SOCIAL ACTION**

6. **Community of Grace, Leicester**  
£1,000 pa for three years was granted to this church community to help towards the cost of new workshop space. Its plans had to be modified, and it subsequently withdrew its application.
7. **Rotherham Culture Shock Youth Project**  
£1,200 will be given in 1996 towards a youth worker with the church's youth programme. The grant may be renewed.
8. **Whitby: youth worker**  
A grant of £3,000 pa for three years was made towards the salary of the fulltime youth and family worker.
9. **South London Industrial Mission: Black-White Economy Project**  
AGOGAL agreed to an urgent request from Southern Province for an immediate grant of £1,000 to sustain the half-time work of a black Pentecostal pastor in a project exploring the relevance of faith to work, particularly in black-initiated churches. This grant was to allow Southern Province time to put its own funding in place, and to encourage other denominations to contribute.

## **MEUK (Ministry Expenses in the UK)**

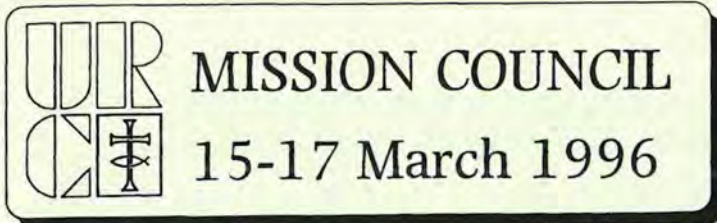
10. **Beeston (Nottingham)**  
The annual grant of £2,500 pa due to expire in July 1995 was extended for a year to allow the district and province time to consider how to support the future of the ministry to the local church, community and university.
11. **Cardiff, Ely: CRCW**  
When the CRCW was appointed, AGOGAL agreed to a grant towards expenses of £3,000 and promised a further underwriting of £1,000 pa from 1996 if local fund raising was not successful. This has not been as fruitful as hoped, and AGOGAL agreed to pay the underwriting in 1996.

## **MES (Ministry in Ecumenical Situations)**

12. **Coulby Newham**  
This joint Anglican-Methodist-URC pastorate asked for an increased grant when a Methodist minister arrived because of the level of Methodist stipends. This has raised significant issues about the use of MES grants in long-established LEPs. While this is being discussed, AGOGAL has empowered its officers to make a grant to see that the local church does not suffer.
13. **Heathrow Airport Chaplaincy**  
After a lot of difficulty, AGOGALL was able to agree to grant to the Heathrow Airport Chaplaincy.

## **CENTRAL CHURCH GRANTS**

14. **Christian Enquiry Agency**  
Because of the good work of the Agency and as an example of URC support in the light of the decision of the General Synod of the Church of England to reduce its grant, AGOGAL agreed to increase the URC grant from £1,100 to £1,500 pa from 1995. (Subsequently the Church of England agreed to consider renewing its grant.)
15. **Churches Community Work Alliance**  
AGOGAL carefully reviewed the work of the Alliance in the light of advice from the CRCW development worker and agreed to reduce the grant in 1995 to £2,800 but to retain the full figure in the 1996 budget.
16. **Open Learning Centre**  
URC members use the Open Learning Centre which the URC has been involved in since its inception. AGOGAL agreed to an annual grant of £1,500 pa from 1996.



# R

FOR DISCUSSION, & IF AGREED,  
FORWARDING TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## APPENDIX

Draft 7

### Process for dealing with cases of Ministerial Discipline

#### to be introduced as Section O of the Manual

#### PART I - Substantive Provisions

(governed by General Assembly Function 2(5)(xi)  
of the Structure of the United Reformed Church)

- 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 question as to whether the name of a Minister shall for reasons of discipline be deleted from the Roll of Ministers.
- 2 The Assembly Commission, the Commission Panel, the Appeals Commission and all aspects of the Process set out in this Section O shall at all times remain under the jurisdiction and control of the General Assembly which has the authority through the exercise of its functions as contained in Paragraph 2(5) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church to amend, enlarge or revoke the whole or any part of this Section O, save only that, so long as they remain in force, the decision reached in any particular case in accordance with these provisions shall be made in the name of the General Assembly and shall be final and binding.
- 3 For the purpose of this Section O, the following words and expressions carry the following meanings :-
  - 3.1 "The Section O Process" shall mean the Process set out in this Section O (subject to such variations as shall from time to time be made)
  - 3.2 "The Rules of Procedure" shall mean the Rules of Procedure governing the system of ministerial discipline commencing with the exercise by the District Council, Provincial Synod or General Assembly of its function as set out in Paragraph 2(3)(xviii), Paragraph 2(4)(xv) or Paragraph 2(5)(xxii) of the Structure as the case may be and continuing and concluding with the Section O Process such Rules being contained in Part II of Section O.
  - 3.3 "The Roll of Ministers" shall have the meaning given to it in Paragraph 25 of the Basis of Union (Section A of the Manual).
  - 3.4 "Minister" shall mean a person whose name is on the Roll of Ministers at the time when the Section O Process is invoked in relation to that person.
  - 3.5 "The Commission Panel" shall mean a Panel consisting of twentyfive (25) 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 "The Assembly Commission" shall mean a Commission consisting of five (5) persons selected from the Commission Panel for the purpose of hearing and deciding each such case.
- 3.7 "The Secretary to 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 matters relating to the conduct of the Section O Process, and the period and terms of office of that person shall be such as the General Assembly shall decide.
- 3.8 "The Appeals Commission" shall mean the Commission constituted for the hearing of each Appeal in accordance with Paragraph 12
- 3.9 "Referral Notice" shall mean a Notice specified in the Rules of Procedure whereby a District Council, Provincial Synod or General Assembly (or Mission Council acting on its behalf) as the case may be refers a case concerning ministerial discipline to be dealt with according to the Section O Process and shall include any statement of reasons for such referral which may be appended to it.
- 3.10 "Notice of Appeal" shall mean a Notice specified in the Rules of Procedure whereby a Minister who has been the subject of any case under the Section O Process or the Council issuing the Referral Notice in any case indicates his/her/its intention to appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission.
- 3.11 "To appoint" and "Appointment" shall have the meanings assigned to them in Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union.
- 3.12 "To delete" and "Deletion" shall mean to remove/the removal of 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.
4. 4.1 Appointment to the Commission Panel shall be by Resolution of the General Assembly on the advice of the Nominations Committee, who shall in considering persons for appointment take into account the need for balance and for a variety of skills and specialisations, particularly in the following areas – experience in ministerial oversight, theology and doctrine, law, counselling, psychology, mental health, experience in conduct of meetings and tribunals.
- 4.2 Members of the Commission Panel shall be appointed for such term not exceeding five (5) years as the General Assembly shall in each case think fit with power for the General Assembly to determine any such appointment during its term or to renew any such appointment for successive terms of five (5) years each. Any temporary reduction of the number on the Commission Panel below twentyfive (25) shall not invalidate the operation of the Section O Process.

- 4.3 The General Assembly shall appoint from the Commission Panel one member to be the Convener of the Commission Panel and one member to be the Deputy Convener of the Commission Panel, each (subject to the provisions of Paragraph 4.2) to serve for such period as General Assembly shall decide.
- 5 5.1 The Section O Process shall be initiated in every case by the service upon the Secretary of the Assembly Commission of a Referral Notice by the District Council, the Provincial Synod or the General Assembly (or by Mission Council acting on its behalf) in pursuance of their respective functions as contained in the Structure of the United Reformed Church.
- 5.2 Once the case of any Minister has been properly referred into the Section O Process, it shall be dealt with and concluded entirely in accordance with that Process and not through any other procedure of the Church.
- 6 6.1 The Convener of the Commission Panel and the Deputy Convener of the Commission Panel (or the person or persons deputising for them or either of them as provided in Paragraph 6.2 and 6.3) shall jointly appoint five (5) persons from the Commission Panel to constitute the Assembly Commission for the hearing of that case and in making such appointments shall have regard to the provisions of Paragraphs 6.4 and 7.1.
- 6.2 In the absence of either the Convener of the Commission Panel or the Deputy Convener of the Commission Panel, the General Secretary shall act jointly with the other one in the appointment of the Assembly Commission under Paragraph 6.1
- 6.3 In the absence of both the Convener of the Commission Panel, and the Deputy Convener of the Commission Panel, the General Secretary and the Moderator of the General Assembly shall together appoint the Assembly Commission under Paragraph 6.1.
- 6.4 Those charged under this Paragraph 6 with the appointment of the Assembly Commission shall (so far as possible) have regard to the nature of the case and the skills and specialisations of the members of the Commission Panel.
- 7 7.1 No person shall be appointed to sit as a member of the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission in the hearing of any case in which he/she has any involvement, whether as a member of any local church, District Council or Provincial Synod connected with the case or (in the event of a re-hearing under Paragraph 14.7) a member of the previous Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission, or whether on account of some personal or pastoral involvement as a result of which it is considered by those responsible for selecting the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission for that case or by the proposed appointee him/herself that it would not be appropriate for him/her to hear the case.

- 7.2 Under the Rules of Procedure, a Minister or the council lodging the Referral Notice may object on any of the grounds set out in Paragraph 7.1 to the proposed appointment of any person to either the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission for the hearing of his/her case and, in the event of any such objection, the decision of those charged under the Section O Process with making the appointment shall be final and binding.
- 8 All procedural matters from the date of receipt of the Referral Notice by the Secretary of the Assembly Commission to the conclusion of the Section O Process shall in every case be dealt with in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.
- 9 In considering the evidence and reaching its decision, the Assembly Commission or (in the case of an appeal) the Appeals Commission shall in every case have full regard to the Basis of Union and in particular Paragraph 1 of Schedule E thereto which states the responsibilities undertaken by those who become Ministers of the United Reformed Church and the criteria which they must apply in the exercise of their ministry.
- 10 10.1 The decision of the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission shall be either to delete the name of the Minister from the Roll of Ministers or to allow his/her name to remain on the Roll of Ministers.
- 10.2 If the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission considers that there has been some conduct, statement, act or omission on the part of the Minister which, although not sufficiently serious to justify deletion, is nevertheless of sufficient concern to justify lesser disciplinary action against the Minister, it shall issue a written warning to him/her that any repetition thereof might be considered a cause for Deletion by a future Assembly Commission.
- 11 11.1 A Minister may appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission to delete his/her name from the Roll of Ministers under Paragraph 10.1 or to issue a written warning under Paragraph 10.2, by lodging a Notice of Appeal in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, stating the ground/s of such appeal.
- 11.2 The council of the Church which lodged the Referral Notice in any case may appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission not to delete the name of the Minister concerned from the Roll of Ministers by lodging a Notice of Appeal in accordance with the Rules of Procedure stating the ground/s of such appeal.
- 12 The Appeals Commission for the hearing of each such appeal shall consist of five (5) persons and shall include the Clerk to the General Assembly and the Moderator of the General Assembly (subject in both cases to the provisions of Paragraph 7.1). The remaining persons to be appointed to the Appeals Commission, who must all be members of the General Assembly at the date of receipt by the Secretary of the Assembly Commission of the Notice of Appeal, shall be selected by the officers of the General Assembly, taking into account the need for balance.



- 13 At the appeal, there shall be no further investigation or re-hearing of the evidence nor any further evidence introduced, except for the purpose of considering whether there are sufficient grounds for referring the case for re-hearing in accordance with Paragraph 14.7.
- 14 The Appeals Commission may reach any of the following decisions on the Appeal :-
- 14.1 It may uphold the decision of the Assembly Commission to delete or
- 14.2 It may uphold in its entirety the decision of the Assembly Commission not to delete (whether or not this also includes a decision to issue a written warning to the Minister under Paragraph 10.2) or
- 14.3 It may uphold the decision of the Assembly Commission not to delete, but in addition may issue a written warning to the Minister under Paragraph 10.2 if the Assembly Commission has not itself already done so or
- 14.4 If the Assembly Commission has decided not to delete but has issued a written warning to the Minister under Paragraph 10.2, the Appeals Commission may uphold the decision not to delete but may direct that the written warning be withdrawn or
- 14.5 It may reverse the decision of the Assembly Commission not to delete or
- 14.6 It may reverse the decision of the Assembly Commission to delete, but may if it considers it appropriate issue a written warning to the Minister under Paragraph 10.2 or
- 14.7 It may refer the case for re-hearing by another duly constituted Assembly Commission (but only if it considers that there has been some procedural irregularity or serious misunderstanding by the Assembly Commission of the information before it or if material new information becomes available which could not reasonably have been produced before the Assembly Commission).
- 15 There shall be no appeal from the decision of the Appeals Commission.
- 16 16.1 In recording its decision, the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission as the case may be shall state whether the decision was unanimous or by a majority and shall append a written statement of its reasons for reaching that decision, but shall not be obliged (unless it wishes to do so) to comment in detail on all or any of the matters of evidence laid before it. It may, however, in its statement append any suggestions or recommendations which it considers to be helpful, and which shall be of persuasive force only.
- 16.2 If it issues a written warning to the Minister under Paragraph 10.2 that shall also be noted in the record of the decision.

- 17 17.1 In the event of the Assembly Commission deciding to delete and there being no appeal against that decision under Paragraph 11.1 within the period allowed under the Rules of Procedure, the suspension shall continue up to the first day after the expiration of such period, on which day the deletion shall automatically take effect.
- 17.2 In the event of the Assembly Commission deciding not to delete and there being no appeal against that decision under Paragraph 11.2 within the period allowed under the Rules of Procedure, the suspension shall automatically cease on the first day after the expiration of such period.
- 17.3 In the event of an appeal from the decision of the Assembly Commission, the suspension of the Minister shall continue up to the date upon which the Appeals Commission formally notifies its decision under the Rules of Procedure. If the Appeals Commission decides not to delete, the suspension shall automatically cease on such date. If the Appeals Commission decides to delete, the deletion shall have immediate effect on such date.
- 18 The legal adviser to The United Reformed Church shall be available for the purpose of advising the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission as the case may be on matters relating to procedure, evidence and interpretation at any point in the Section O Process, and shall, if requested to do so, attend any hearing conducted under the Section O Process for such purpose.
- 19 Every decision reached under the Section O Process (whether or not on appeal under that Process) is made in the name of the General Assembly and is final and binding in the Ministry according to the Word and Sacraments of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 20 Deletion as a result of the Section O Process shall have the effect of terminating any contract, written or oral, between the Minister concerned and the United Reformed Church or any constituent part thereof in relation to his/her ministry.
- 21 Those so deleted from the Roll of Ministers wishing to apply for re-instatement shall in the first place consult the Provincial Moderator. All enquiries shall be referred to the Accreditation Sub-Committee (or such other Committee as may in the future perform the functions of the existing Accreditation Sub-Committee), which will call for at least two references and a report from the Provincial Moderator before determining whether or not it is appropriate for an application for re-instatement to be submitted. If it is considered to be appropriate, then formal application shall be made to the Province and the normal assessment procedure shall apply as for those applying for training (local church, district, national assessment, province) except that attendance before a National Assessment Panel shall take the place of the National Assessment Conference.
- 22 This Part I of the Section O Process is subject to Paragraph 3(1) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church.

**PART II – Rules of Procedure**  
**(governed by General Assembly Function 2(5)(ii)**  
**of the Structure of the United Reformed Church)**

**Draft 3**

**A. INTRODUCTION**

- A.1 These are the Rules of Procedure referred to in Paragraph 3.2 of Part I.
- A.2 In addition to words and expressions defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I, the following words and expressions used in these Rules shall have the following meanings :-
- A.2.1 "Council" shall mean the council of the church which issued the Referral Notice.
- A.2.2 "Mandated Group" shall mean the group mandated to act on behalf of a District Council under Section B of these Rules.
- A.2.3 "The Appointers" shall mean the persons responsible under Paragraph 6 of Part I for the appointment of the Assembly Commission.
- A.2.4 "The Investigatory Process" shall mean the process of investigation by the Assembly Commission as set out in Section D of these Rules.
- A.2.5 "The Hearing" shall mean any formal hearing conducted by the Assembly Commission under Section E of these Rules.
- A.3 These Rules provide the framework for the operation of the system of ministerial discipline commencing with the exercise by any one of the following councils of the Church, that is to say the District Council, the Provincial Synod or the General Assembly of its Function as set out in Paragraph 2(3)(xviii), Paragraph 2(4)(xv) or Paragraph 2(5)(xxii) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church as the case may be and continuing and concluding with the due operation of the Section O Process.
- A.4 The role of the Assembly Commission is to investigate the matter before it and to decide the questions whether the Minister has committed a breach of discipline and whether on that account his/her name should be removed from the Roll of Ministers. The Minister may elect either that the Assembly Commission shall follow the Investigatory Process or that it shall carry out a formal hearing as in Section E of these Rules. Once the election has been made, it can not be changed since the two methods are in some degree incompatible in their approach to the gathering of information.
- A.5 In the interests both of the Minister and of the whole church, the Section O Process once begun should be conducted and concluded as expeditiously as possible, consistent with a proper investigation of the matter in hand. To this end, these Rules impose time limits for the various steps which have to be taken. However it is

equally in the interests of all that the Assembly Commission should conduct its investigation with flexibility and that the Section O Process once begun should not be aborted, delayed or hindered by an unduly narrow or restrictive application of these Rules.

A.6 Accordingly if any of the time limits specified in these Rules of Procedure are not complied with, the Assembly Commission may in its discretion allow a reasonable further period for such compliance, except as regards the strict time limits imposed upon the right to elect for a formal hearing (Paragraph D.2) and the right of appeal (Paragraph G.1). In other cases, if the Assembly Commission considers that sufficient time has been allowed and the action required has still not been carried out or that there has been an unreasonable delay in the carrying out of the action (whether or not these Rules imposed a time limit in such case), it may proceed with its investigation and attach whatever weight it believes appropriate in the circumstances to such failure to comply, or to any delay in compliance.

A.7 The sole object of the Ministerial Disciplinary Process is to enable a decision to be reached in accordance with Paragraph 10 of Part I. All statements, whether written or oral, made during and in the context of this process shall be regarded as being made in pursuance of that object and for no other reason. All such statements shall be treated as confidential within the framework of the Disciplinary Process.

## **B. ROLE of DISTRICT COUNCIL**

B.1 In order to ensure the efficacy of the Disciplinary Process of the United Reformed Church, every District Council shall appoint a Standing Group ("the Mandated Group") to act with mandated authority on behalf of the District Council in every matter requiring consideration under that Function. If any member of the Mandated Group is the subject of the Disciplinary Process, the Mandate falls to the remainder of the Mandated Group.

B.2 The District Council may appoint a Mandated Group consisting of either (i) the Provincial Moderator and such other persons (not exceeding three) as it shall decide who shall normally be appointed for a period of one year (renewable) or (ii) the Provincial Moderator, the President and Secretary of the District Council and the Convener of the Committee of the District Council which deals with pastoral matters.

B.3 Should the District Council fail to appoint a Mandated Group or should it allow appointments to a Mandated Group under Paragraph B.2(i) of these Rules to lapse, the District Council will be deemed to have appointed a Mandated Group consisting of the persons identified under Paragraph B.2(ii) of these Rules

B.4 It is not the task of the Mandated Group or of any other party concerned with a possible reference into the Section O Process to conduct a thorough investigation into all the circumstances of the case. That is the role of the Assembly Commission.

- B.5 As soon as the Mandated Group becomes aware of any information concerning a Minister under the oversight of the District Council which might require investigation and concludes that this is indeed so, it shall in the name of the District Council suspend the Minister and initiate the Section O Process by serving a Referral Notice in accordance with Paragraph 5 of Part I
- B.6 In certain circumstances, the Provincial Synod and the General Assembly are entitled under their respective Functions to issue a Referral Notice and, although their procedures will differ from those of the District Council, they too must have regard to the substance of Paragraphs B.4 and B.5 of these Rules and must act in accordance with Paragraph B.5.
- B.7 B.7.1 In order to initiate the Section O Process, the District Council (or the other council of the Church as the case may be) ("the Council") shall within seven days of the suspension of the minister under Paragraph B.5 take the following steps :-
- B.7.1.1 Serve on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission a duly completed Referral Notice containing a statement of the reasons for the action taken (Notice 1) and
- B.7.1.2 Serve on the Minister notice of his/her suspension and of the issue of the Referral Notice (Notice 2)
- B.7.2 The actions specified in Paragraphs B.7.1.1 and B.7.1.2 shall have the effect of initiating the Section O Process.

**C. REFERENCE to and CONSTITUTION of THE ASSEMBLY COMMISSION**

- C.1 Within two weeks of the receipt of the Referral Notice, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall take the following steps :-
- C.1.1 Acknowledge receipt of the Referral Notice (Notice 3)
- C.1.2 Serve on the Minister a copy of the Referral Notice and a Notice inviting the Minister's preliminary response (Notice 4)
- C.1.3 Inform the Convener and the Deputy Convener of the Commission Panel (or in their absence or the absence of either of them the person or persons specified in Paragraph 6.2 or Paragraph 6.3 of Part I) ("the Appointers") of the receipt of the Referral Notice and pass to such person or persons copies of the Referral Notice and any other papers received in connection with the case.
- C.2 The Appointers shall, within one month of service upon the Secretary of the Assembly Commission of either (i) the Referral Notice or (ii) Notice from the Appeals Commission of any reference back for re-hearing under Paragraph 14.7 of Part I (or within such further time as they shall reasonably require), appoint the Assembly Commission in accordance with Paragraphs 6 and 7 of Part I.

- C.3 C.3.1 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall send to each member of the Commission Panel whom the Appointers propose to appoint to the Assembly Commission notice of his/her proposed appointment (Notice 5), together with a copy of the Referral Notice and of any response from the Minister. Notice 5 shall draw the invitee's attention to Paragraph 7.1 of Part I shall request confirmation that the Invitee is willing to accept appointment and that he/she is unaware of any circumstances which in the present case might prevent him/her from serving on the Assembly Commission.
- C.3.2 The Invitee shall within two weeks of receipt of Notice 5 serve on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission a Notice (Notice 6) indicating whether he/she is able and willing to accept appointment and, if so, confirming compliance with Paragraph 7.1 of Part I.
- C.4 C.4.1 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall serve notice on the Minister and the Council (Notice 7) setting out the name and office or credentials of each proposed appointee, drawing attention to Paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of Part I and requiring notice of objection to any of the proposed appointees under Paragraph 7.1 of Part I to be served upon the Secretary of the Assembly Commission within two weeks of the service of the Notice given under this Paragraph.
- C.4.2 Any such Notice of Objection (Notice 8) must state the grounds for such objection.
- C.4.3 To ensure that the Section O Process is moved along in a timely manner, any objection not delivered to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission within the time period specified in this Paragraph shall be considered unless very good reason can be shown for its late delivery.
- C.4.4 The Appointers shall consider any objection properly delivered and shall decide whether to uphold or reject the objection.
- C.4.5 If they reject the objection the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall serve notice thereof on the objector (Notice 9).
- C.4.6 If they uphold the objection, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall serve notice thereof upon the objector, the person to whom the objection was taken and the other party upon whom Notice 7 was served (Notice 10).
- C.4.7 In the event of any objection being upheld, the procedure outlined in the Paragraphs C.3 and C.4 of these Rules shall be repeated to complete the appointment of the Assembly Commission and to give notice to those concerned of the person appointed.
- C.5 The Appointers shall appoint one member of the Assembly Commission to be its Convener, but he/she shall not have a casting vote, unless the Assembly Commission shall in circumstances arising under Paragraph C.6.1 of these Rules consist of an even number of members.

- C.6 C.6.1 In the event that during the Section O Process any member of the Assembly Commission shall, by reason of death, illness, absence or any other cause, be unable to continue to serve on the Assembly Commission, the remaining members shall continue to act as the Assembly Commission, subject to there being a minimum of three members.
- C.6.2 In the event that for the reasons stated in Paragraph C.6.1 of these Rules the Assembly Commission shall be reduced to less than three members, the Appointers shall be authorised to take whatever action they consider appropriate in the circumstances.
- C.6.3 If the Convener of the Assembly Commission is unable to continue to serve for the reasons stated in Paragraph C.6.1 of the Rules, the remaining members shall, following consultation with the Appointers, appoint one of their number to be the Convener in his/her place.
- C.7 C.7.1 As soon as possible after the Assembly Commission has been appointed, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall serve a Notice (Notice 11) on the Minister, informing the Minister of his/her right under Paragraph C.7.2 to elect to have the matter dealt with by formal hearing under Section E of these Rules.
- C.7.2 If the Minister wishes to avail himself/herself of such right, he/she must serve Notice of Election (Notice 12) on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission within three weeks of service of Notice 11 on him/her (time being of the essence for this purpose).
- C.7.3 If the Minister shall validly exercise such right to elect, the matter shall proceed under Section E of these Rules and, except as mentioned in Paragraph E.1.2, the provisions of Section D of these Rules have no part to play.
- C.7.4 Unless the minister has elected under this Paragraph C.7 to call for a formal hearing under Section E, the matter shall be dealt with in accordance with the Investigatory Process under Section D of these Rules, in which case the provisions of Section E have no part to play.

**D. THE ASSEMBLY COMMISSION - INVESTIGATORY PROCESS**

- D.1 D.1.1. The Assembly Commission's sole purpose in carrying out its investigation under this Section D is to establish whether or not there has been a breach of ministerial discipline, having regard to Paragraph 9 of Part I.
- D.1.2 In the conduct of its investigation under this Section D, the Assembly Commission shall not be obliged to follow strict rules of evidence, but may proceed in the manner which seems to it to be the most appropriate, bearing in mind the need on the one hand to reach its decision as efficiently and expeditiously as possible and on the other hand to treat the Minister and all other persons involved with the Investigatory Process with all due consideration.

- D.2 As soon as possible after their appointment, the members of the Assembly Commission shall consider together the statement of reasons in the Referral Notice and any response received from the Minister and shall decide upon their *modus operandi*.
- D.3 D.3.1 In pursuance of the investigatory role of the Assembly Commission, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall serve notice on the Minister and the members of the Mandated Group (Notice 13), inviting them each to meet separately with the Assembly Commission.
- D.3.2 In further pursuance of its investigatory role, the Assembly Commission may take all or any of the following steps as shall be required by the circumstances of each case:-
- D.3.2.1 Hold further meetings with the Minister and members of the Mandated Group and hold meetings with the Provincial Moderator and with any other person or persons who, in the opinion of the Assembly Commission, might be able to assist in its investigation.
- D.3.2.2 Call for and consider written statements from all or any of the persons specified in Paragraph D.3.2.1
- D.3.2.3 Meet with and/or obtain written reports and/or statements from any person or persons known by the Assembly Commission to have special qualifications or expertise (professional or otherwise) on any relevant aspect of its investigation.
- D.3.2.4 Refer information received from time to time during the Investigatory Process to the Minister and/or the Council for comment and generally to communicate progress of its investigation to them as it deems appropriate.
- D.3.2.5 Consult and maintain contact with the Police if the Minister is the subject of a criminal charge for an alleged offence relevant to the subject matter of the Section O Process or if information has been laid before the Police which may result in such relevant criminal charge being brought against him/her.
- D.3.2.6 Take such other steps and make such other enquiries as appear to it to be appropriate in the circumstances.
- D.3.3 The various processes of investigation referred to in Paragraphs D.3.1 and D.3.2 may all be continued simultaneously.
- D.3.4 It is envisaged that, as the investigation proceeds and more information is made available, the Assembly Commission may wish to hold further meetings or obtain further written statements from persons whom they have already met and from whom they have already received statements.



- D.3.5 It shall be the responsibility of the Minister, the Provincial Moderator and the Council to report to the Assembly Commission any new information relevant to the investigation which may come into his/her/its possession at any time during the Section O Process.
- D.4 D.4.1 It is not essential for all members of the Assembly Commission to be present at all meetings held during the Investigatory Process although at least two of its members should normally be present at each such meeting.
- D.4.2 On considering how many of its number should be present at each meeting it should have regard to the complexity of the issues involved, whether there appears to be a significant disagreement as to the facts of the matter or as to the conclusions to be drawn from them or both and the extent of the involvement of the person to be interviewed.
- D.5 D.5.1 When requesting statements or calling meetings in the course of the Investigatory Process, the Assembly Commission should explain to those who are participating the purpose of the Investigatory Process as stated in Paragraph D.1 of these Rules and inform them that, in pursuance of that purpose, any information which is provided may be referred for comment or corroboration to the Minister and to others involved in the Investigatory Process (if the Assembly Commission considers it appropriate).
- D.5.2 In the event that any such person (other than the Minister) supplying information to the Assembly Commission indicates that he/she does not wish the Assembly Commission to disclose to the Minister either the information itself or that he/she is the source of the information, the Assembly Commission shall normally disregard the information, save only in the most exceptional cases where the following factors are present :-
- D.5.2.1 The Assembly Commission has the reasonable belief that the disclosure to the Minister of the information or of the identity of the informant might place the latter in some physical danger or cause him/her personal hardship or distress and
- D.5.2.2 The Assembly Commission has the reasonable belief that information given by the informant is accurate and considers it to be material to its investigation.
- D.6 The Assembly Commission may at any time adjourn its investigation for so long as it considers it appropriate, but always having regard to the need to conclude the Section O Process as expeditiously as possible.
- D.7 D.7.1 In the course of conducting its investigations, the Assembly Commission may come into the possession of information damaging to the reputation of other named or identifiable persons. Such information, if untrue, could be defamatory and caution must be exercised by the Assembly Commission.

- D.7.2 In such circumstances, the informant should be advised by the Assembly Commission as to the potentially defamatory nature of the information and warned not to repeat it either orally or in writing to any other party outside the context of the Section O Process.
- D.7.3 If in its opinion the information is not material to the investigation, the Assembly Commission should disregard it.
- D.7.4 If the Assembly Commission considers that the information is material, it should nevertheless not regard it as proven even if admitted by the Minister without giving the other person(s) concerned the opportunity of either corroborating or refuting it.
- D.7.5 The Church's legal adviser should be consulted before the Assembly Commission takes the action referred to in Paragraph D.7.4.
- D.8 D.8.1 Where (i) the Minister is the subject of criminal charge for an alleged offence falling into any of the categories set out in Paragraph D.8.2 below relevant to the subject matter of the Section O Process or (ii) information has been laid before the Police which may result in such relevant criminal charge being brought against him/her, in either such event the Assembly Commission shall (unless the circumstances of Paragraph D.9 apply) adjourn its own investigation pending the decision of the criminal court or the withdrawal of the charge (in relation to alternative (i) above) or the notification that no charge is to be brought (in relation to alternative (ii) above).
- D.8.2 The categories of criminal offence relevant to Paragraph D.8.1 are :-
- D.8.2.1 Deliberate or reckless, actual or threatened, infliction of physical injury to the person or damage to the property of another.
- D.8.2.2 Rape, sexual abuse or any other offence of a sexual nature or
- D.8.2.3 Fraud, blackmail or theft.
- D.8.2.4 Any other offence in relation to which the Assembly Commission shall (on advice from the Church's legal adviser) apply the provisions of Paragraph D.8.1.
- D.8.3 In the event of the Minister being found guilty of any of such offences by a criminal court, the Assembly Commission shall for the purposes of its own investigation regard the verdict as conclusive evidence of the facts proved to the satisfaction of the court.

D.9 Any of the following, that is to say :-

D.9.1 Failure on the part of the Minister without reasonable and proper explanation to supply statements and/or to attend meetings with the Assembly Commission as part of its Investigatory Process or

D.9.2 Any unreasonable delay on the part of the Minister in the supply of statements or the attendance at meetings or

D.9.3 Any obstruction caused by the Minister to the Assembly Commission in the conduct of its investigation may of itself be deemed by the Assembly Commission to constitute a breach of ministerial discipline which the Assembly Commission shall be entitled to take into consideration in reaching its decision under Paragraph 10 of Part I.

D.10 D.10.1 When the Assembly Commission considers that it has concluded the Investigatory Process, it shall assess the position. There may be a basis of agreed information. There may be other information which has been alleged but not agreed, but which, as a result of its investigation, the Assembly Commission may feel have been established to its satisfaction. There may be other information which it feels that it can disregard as not central to the issues under consideration.

D.10.2 The Assembly Commission should consider whether in the light of Paragraph D.10.1 it is led to the conclusion that there has been a breach of ministerial discipline.

D.10.3 The Assembly Commission has no power to accept the voluntary resignation of a Minister. A Minister may however at any time during the Section O Process and of his/her own free will make a written statement to the Assembly Commission admitting the truth of some or all of the facts or circumstances alleged, on the basis of which the Assembly Commission would consider it correct to make a decision to delete or to issue a warning under Paragraph 10 of Part I. In such circumstances the Assembly Commission can, if it considers it appropriate so to do and having warned the Minister of the consequences of such an admission, conclude its investigation and on the basis of that admission reach its decision under Paragraph 10 of Part I.

D.11. Having deliberated on the information in its possession and on the conclusions to be drawn from it, the Assembly Commission (always having Paragraph 9 of Part I in mind) must make its decision under Paragraph 10 of Part I) and, in so doing, shall comply with Section F of these Rules.

D.12 D.12.1 If the Assembly Commission does so consider, it shall serve Notice on the Minister and the Council (Notice 11) to the effect that it does not propose to constitute a formal Hearing and that, subject to Paragraph D.12.2 of these Rules it will notify its decision under Paragraph 10 of Part I within the time specified in Notice 11.

- D.12.2 The Minister may [at any time during the Investigatory Process] or within two weeks of service of Notice 11 upon him/her under Paragraph D.12.1 of these Rules serve on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission a Notice requesting a formal Hearing to be constituted under Section E of these Rules (Notice 12)
- D.12.3 The Assembly Commission shall have the right in its absolute discretion to decide whether or not to accede to such request and if it decides to reject the request, it shall serve notice on the Minister accordingly (Notice 13).
- D.12.4 If the Assembly Commission decides to accede to the Minister's request for a formal Hearing, it will invoke the procedure contained in Paragraph D.13.1 of these Rules.
- D.12.5 At the expiration of the time specified in Notice 11 served under Paragraph D.12.1 of these Rules and in the absence of any request for a formal Hearing to which it has decided to accede, the Assembly Commission shall proceed directly to its decision under Paragraph 10 of Part I, in which case Section E of these Rules has no part to play and Section F will apply from this point.
- D.13 D.13.1 If the Assembly Commission decides to constitute the process for a formal Hearing under Section E of these Rules, either of its own motion or by acceding to a request from the Minister under Paragraph D.12.4 of these Rules, it shall serve Notice thereof upon the Minister and the Council (Notice 14).
- D.13.2 If the Process for a Formal Hearing is invoked, the Investigatory Process under this Section D shall be terminated forthwith and the Section O Process will continue with the provisions set out in Section O of the Rules.

## E FORMAL HEARING

- E.1 E.1.1 This section of the Section O Process shall apply only if it is invoked by the Minister under Paragraph C.7 of these Rules.
- E.1.2 Paragraphs D.8, D.9 and D.10.3 shall apply to the Section E process (with the necessary changes)
- E.1.3 The Minister and the Council are, for ease of reference in this Section E only, called "the parties".
- E.2 The object of Paragraphs E.3, E.4 and E.5 is to ensure that the parties are aware beforehand of the evidence which will be presented at the Hearing and that they have time to consider the same.
- E.3 The notice to undertake the formal process set out in this Section E (Notice 14) shall:-
- E.3.1 Set the date of the Hearing.

E.3.2 Notify the parties that the Referral Notice and any statement from the Minister lodged in response to Notice 4 will be part of the documentary evidence at the Hearing.

E.3.3 Invite the parties to lodge copies of any documents or of any further statements relating to matters to which they may wish to refer at the Hearing (the Notice should indicate to the parties that copies of any such documents or statements may be made available to the other party).

E.3.4 Invite the Council to state whether it wishes to take an active part in the Hearing and in the questioning of witnesses and if so inviting the Council to nominate a spokesperson for the purpose.

E.3.5 Invite the parties to state :-

E.3.5.1 The names of persons whom they propose to invite to attend the Hearing and, briefly, the purpose of their attendance and

E.3.5.2 The approximate length of time which each of the parties will require at the Hearing.

This Paragraph E.3.5. will always apply to the Minister but will only apply to Councils who have responded in the affirmative to the invitation contained in Paragraph E.3.4

E.3.6 Inform the parties of the names of persons whom the Assembly Commission itself proposes to invite to attend the Hearing and the purpose of their attendance.

E.3.7 Invite the Minister to state whether he/she wishes to have a friend present with him/her at the Hearing pursuant to Paragraph E.7.3 of these Rules and if so the name and status of such person.

E.3.8 (If it considers it appropriate so to do) attempt to establish a basis of agreed fact in order to simplify the Hearing, and invite the parties to indicate whether this is accepted (either in whole or in part).

E.4 E.4.1 Within two weeks of the service of the Notice under Paragraph E.3 of these Rules, the parties shall comply with Paragraphs E.3.3, E.3.4 and E.3.5 by serving on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission the documents, statements and information requested, and shall respond to the invitation contained in Paragraphs E.3.7 and E.3.8 (Notice 15 of these Rules).

E.4.2 As soon as possible after the expiration of such period of two weeks referred to in Paragraph E.4.1, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall provide each party with a copy of the information delivered by the other party under Paragraph E.4.1

- E.5 E.5.1 After the completion of the Process set out in Paragraphs E.3 and E.4, if either party wishes :-
- E.5.1.1 To introduce new evidence to which the attention of the Assembly Commission and the other party has not been drawn beforehand or
- E.5.1.2 To invite persons to attend the Hearing who have not been previously notified under Paragraph E.3 or E.4, the Assembly Commission may refuse any request for the admission of any such new evidence or the attendance of such persons
- E.5.2 In considering any such request set out in Paragraph E.5.1, the Assembly Commission may at its discretion take all or any of the following steps :-
- E.5.2.1 It may seek the agreement of the other party to the request.
- E.5.2.2 It may conclude that, even in the absence of such agreement, it would be just and expedient for the request to be allowed.
- E.5.2.3 It may refuse the request.
- E.5.2.4 It may postpone or adjourn the Hearing to enable further consideration to be given to the request.
- E.6 The Assembly Commission shall be at liberty to postpone or adjourn the Hearing at any time if it considers that for any reason it would be right and appropriate so to do.
- E.7 E.7.1 The Assembly Commission shall if it considers it appropriate so to do issue directions to the parties with regard to the arrangements for the Hearing (Notice 16).
- E.7.2 No legal representative is allowed to appear in his/her professional capacity at the Hearing.
- E.7.3 The Minister may have a friend present with him/her at the Hearing to provide him/her with support and guidance, but such person shall not take part in the Hearing either by questioning witnesses or by addressing the Assembly Commission. Such person may not appear as a witness for the Minister at the Hearing.
- E.8 All members of the Assembly Commission should (unless there are very good reasons to the contrary) take part in the Hearing itself.
- E.9 E.9.1 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall normally attend the Hearing for the purpose of taking such notes and giving such procedural advice to the Assembly Commission as may be appropriate and of keeping a formal record of the Hearing.

- E.9.2 In the event that the Secretary of the Assembly Commission cannot be present at the Hearing, the Assembly Commission may itself appoint such person as it considers appropriate to deputise for the Secretary for that purpose.
- E.10 E.10.1 The conduct of the Hearing is in the hands of the Assembly Commission and at the outset of the Hearing the Convener of the Assembly Commission shall explain to the parties how the Hearing is to proceed.
- E.10.2 The Minister shall be given the opportunity to present his/her evidence, question his/her witnesses and state his/her case. The Minister and any persons called to give evidence on behalf of the Minister are then open to questioning by the spokesperson for the Council (provided that the Council shall have responded in the affirmative to the invitation contained in Paragraph E.3.4 of these Rules).
- E.10.3 Subject to the last mentioned proviso, the Council through its spokesperson shall be given the opportunity to present its evidence, question its witnesses and state its case. The spokesperson and any persons called to give evidence on behalf of the Council are then open to questioning by the Minister.
- E.10.4 The Assembly Commission may wish to call other persons of its own motion and when such persons have presented their evidence, they shall be open to questions from the Minister and the spokesperson for the Council.
- E.11 E.11.1 The members of the Assembly Commission (and the church's legal adviser if he/she is in attendance at the Hearing) shall be entitled to ask questions and interject during the examination of witnesses if they consider the questioning to be oppressive or immaterial to the matter in hand and if for any other reason they consider it appropriate so to do.
- E.11.2 Persons who have already been questioned may be asked to answer further questions later in the Hearing if it appears to the Assembly Commission that this would be helpful and appropriate in the circumstances.
- E.12 So long as the parties have been given the opportunity to present their cases and address the Assembly Commission, the Assembly Commission shall have authority to conduct the Hearing and the Section E Process generally in the manner which in their view shall be most appropriate and suitable in accordance with the general principles set out in Section A of these Rules.
- E.13 When the process of examining the evidence has been concluded, the Minister and the spokesperson for the Council shall be given the opportunity to address the Assembly Commission, following which the Assembly Commission shall conclude the Hearing and this will bring the procedure under this Section E to a close.

**F. THE DECISION of the ASSEMBLY COMMISSION**

- F.1 F.1.1 When the Assembly Commission has completed the Investigatory Process under Section D or when the Hearing under Section E has been concluded, whichever course of action has been taken, the Assembly Commission shall as soon as possible consider and arrive at its decision (which may be taken unanimously or by a majority vote) in accordance with Paragraph 10 of Part I.
- F.1.2 In recording that decision, it shall comply with Paragraph 16 of Part I.
- F.2 F.2.1 The Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall thereupon serve on the Minister and the Council and the General Secretary Notice of the decision and of the written statement of reasons given under Paragraph 16.1 of Part I (Notice 17). Such Notice shall draw the attention of the Minister and the Council to the strict time limit for serving Notice of Appeal under Paragraph G.1 of these Rules.
- F.2.2 If Paragraph 10.2 of Part I applies, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall also serve on the Minister the written warning referred to in that Paragraph, and shall serve on the Council a copy of such warning.
- F.3 The decision so taken shall conclude the involvement of the Assembly Commission in the Section D Process and shall have the effect provided for in Paragraph 17 of Part I.
- F.4 The Council shall, within 10 days of the receipt of the decision of the Assembly Commission and state whether this is subject to Appeal.

**G. APPEALS PROCEDURE**

- G.1 Any Notice of Appeal against the decision of the Assembly Commission given under Paragraph 11 of Part I (Notice 18) must be served on the General Secretary no later than 21 days from the date of service of the decision of the Assembly Commission on the appellant and for this purpose time shall be of the essence, and such Notice shall state the grounds of the appeal (which may be in detail or in summary form as the appellant chooses).
- G.2 On receipt of the Notice of Appeal served under Paragraph G.1, the General Secretary shall as soon as possible take the following steps :-
- G.2.1 Serve notice of receipt of the Notice of Appeal (Notice 19).
- G.2.2 (If the Appeal is brought by the Minister under Paragraph 11.1 of Part I), serve Notice of the receipt of the Appeal on the Council, (Notice 20), attaching to such Notice a copy of the Notice of Appeal served under Paragraph G.1 and of any accompanying statement of reasons and invite the Council to submit



within 21 days from the date of service of the Notice under this Paragraph a counter-statement (Notice 21) containing any comments which the Council wishes to make in connection with the Appeal.

- G.2.3 (If the Appeal is brought by the Council under Paragraph 11.2 of Part I) serve Notice of the receipt of the Appeal on the Minister (Notice 20), attaching to such Notice a copy of the Notice to Appeal served under Paragraph G.1 and of any accompanying statement of reasons and invite the Minister to submit within 21 days from the date of service of the Notice under this Paragraph a counter-statement (Notice 21) containing any comments which the Minister wishes to make in connection with the Appeal.
- G.2.4 Request and obtain from the Secretary of the Assembly Commission all papers in the hands of the Assembly Commission relating to the Section O Process.
- G.3 The Officers of the General Assembly shall within one month of receipt by the General Secretary of the Notice of Appeal under Paragraph G.1 of these Rules (or within such further time as they shall reasonably require) appoint the Appeals Commission in accordance with Paragraph 12 of Part I.
- G.4 G.4.1 The General Secretary shall send to each of the proposed appointees to the Appeals Commission an invitation to serve (Notice 22) together with copies of the following :-
- G.4.1.1 Notice of the Assembly Commission's decision, indicating whether this followed an Investigation or a Hearing
  - G.4.1.2 Any statement of reasons given by the Assembly Commission.
  - G.4.1.3 Any written warning issued.
  - G.4.1.4 The Notice of Appeal, containing the grounds for the appeal.
  - G.4.1.5 Any counter-statement (Notice 21) received under Paragraph G.2.2. or Paragraph G.2.3.
- G.4.2 Notice 22 shall draw the attention of each proposed appointee to Paragraph 7.1 of Part I and shall request confirmation that he/she is willing to accept appointment and that he/she is unaware of any circumstances which in the present case might prevent him/her from serving on the Appeals Commission.
- G.4.3 The invitee shall within two weeks of receipt of Notice 22 serve on the General Secretary a Notice (Notice 23) indicating whether he/she is able and willing to accept appointment and, if so, confirming compliance with Paragraph 7.1 of Part I.
- G.5 G.5.1 The General Secretary shall serve notice on the Minister and the Council (Notice 24), setting out the name and office or credentials of each proposed

appointee, drawing attention to Paragraphs 7.1. and 7.2 of Part I and requiring notice of objection to any of the proposed appointees under Paragraph 7.1 to be served upon the General Secretary within two weeks of the service of the notice given under this Paragraph.

- G.5.2 Any such Notice of Objection (Notice 25) must state the grounds of such objection.
  - G.5.3 To ensure that the appeals process is moved along in a timely manner, any notice of objection received outside the period allowed will not normally be considered unless very good reason can be shown for its late delivery.
  - G.5.4 The Officers of the General Assembly shall consider every objection properly notified and shall decide whether to uphold or to reject the objection.
  - G.5.5 If they reject the objection, the Clerk to the General Assembly shall serve notice thereof on the objector (Notice 26)
  - G.5.6 If they uphold the objection, the Clerk to the General Assembly shall serve notice (Notice 27) thereof on the objector, the person to whom the objection was taken and the other party on whom Notice 24 was served.
  - G.5.7 In the event of any objection being upheld, the procedure outlined in Paragraphs G.4 and G.5 of these Rules shall be repeated to complete the appointment of the Appeals Commission and to give notice to those concerned
- G.6 The Moderator of the General Assembly shall be the Convener of the Appeals Commission but he/she shall not have a casting vote, unless the Appeals Commission shall, in circumstances arising under Paragraph G.7.1 consist of an even number of members.
- G.7
- G.7.1 In the event that any member of the Appeals Commission shall, be virtue of death, illness, absence or any other cause, be unable to continue to serve on the Appeals Commission, the remaining members shall continue to act as the Appeals Commission, subject to there being a minimum of three members.
  - G.7.2 In the event that for the reasons stated in Paragraph G.7.1 the Appeals Commission shall consist of less than three members, the Officers of the General Assembly shall be authorised to take whatever action they consider appropriate in the circumstances.
  - G.7.3 If the Moderator of the General Assembly is unable to continue to serve for the reasons set out in Paragraph G.7.1, the remaining members shall, following consultation with the Officers of the General Assembly, appoint a former Moderator of the General Assembly to be the Convener of the Appeals Commission in his/her place.

- G.7.4 Notwithstanding that, during the conduct of the appeal, a new person may assume the office of either the Moderator of the General Assembly or the Clerk to the General Assembly, the person previously holding such office shall continue to serve as a member of the Appeals Commission to the exclusion of his/her successor in that office.
- G.8 G.8.1 The Appeals Commission when constituted shall first consider the following matters:-
- G.8.1.1 Whether there is or may be new information which has come to light and which could not reasonably have been available to the Assembly Commission before its decision was taken under Paragraph 10 of Part I.
- G.8.1.2 Whether any such new information would in its opinion have been material in that, had it been tested and proved to the satisfaction of the Assembly Commission, it might have caused it to reach a different decision.
- G.8.1.3 Whether there may have been some procedural irregularity or serious misunderstanding of the information before it by the Assembly Commission.
- G.8.2 If it considers that all or any of the considerations raised in Paragraph G.8.1 may be present, it may itself investigate the matter by seeking such further information as it considers relevant in such manner as it sees fit to enable it to reach a decision as to whether to refer the case for re-hearing under Paragraph 14.7 of Part I.
- G.8.3 If, after due consideration, the Appeals Commission decides on any of the grounds set out in Paragraph G.8.1 to refer the case back for re-hearing under Paragraph 14.7 of Part I, the General Secretary shall serve notice thereof on the Minister, the Council and the Secretary of the Assembly Commission (Notice 28).
- G.9 In the absence of a direction under Paragraph G.8.3, the Appeals Commission shall (always having in mind Paragraph 9 of Part I) consider the information laid before it (but disregarding any information which it may itself have obtained under Paragraph G.8.2) and shall reach its decision on the appeal as provided in Paragraph 14 of Part I.
- G.10 The General Secretary shall thereupon serve on the Minister, and the Council notice of the decision of the Appeals Commission and of the accompanying statement of reasons (Notice 29).
- G.11 G.11.1 If the decision is taken either in accordance with either Paragraphs 14.3 or 14.6 of Part I, the General Secretary shall also serve on the Minister the written warning referred to in those Paragraphs and shall serve a copy thereof on the

Council and lodge a copy of the Notice with the Secretary of the Assembly Commission.

G.11.2 If the decision is taken in accordance with Paragraph 14.4 of Part I, the General Secretary shall serve notice on the Minister that the written warning issued following the decision of the Assembly Commission is withdrawn (Notice 30) and shall also serve a copy thereof on the Council and lodge a copy of the Notice with the Secretary of the Assembly Commission.

G.11.3 If the decision is taken in accordance with Paragraph 14.7 of Part I, the Section O Process shall be repeated commencing with Paragraph C.2 of these Rules.

## **H DEFINITIONS, FORMS, SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS and MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS**

H.1 The Appendix to these Rules contains a list of the forms of Notice for use at various stages of the Ministerial Disciplinary Process, all of which are referred to by number in these Rules. Copies of the forms can be obtained from the Secretary of the Assembly Commission. The forms of Notice may be amended from time to time and new forms introduced. Also minor variations in the wording will not invalidate the Notice being given, but it is strongly recommended that the model forms be used and followed as closely as possible to avoid confusion and to ensure that all relevant information is supplied at the proper time.

H.2 H.2.1 Service of any document required to be served on an individual shall be deemed to have been properly effected in any of the following ways :-

H.2.1.1 By delivering the document personally to the individual to be served.

H.2.1.2 By delivering the document or sending it by first class pre-paid post or by Recorded Delivery post addressed to the last known address of the individual to be served in a sealed envelope addressed to that individual.

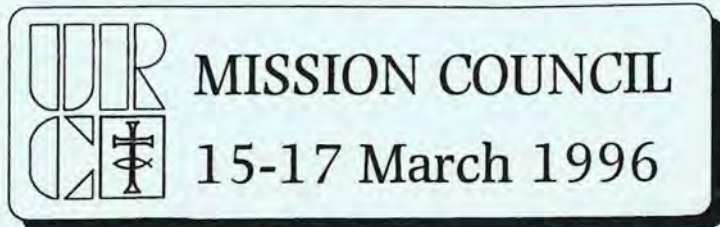
H.2.1.3 In such other manner as the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission (if service relates to the Appeals Procedure) may direct having regard to the circumstances.

H.2.2 Service of any document required to be served on any Council shall be deemed to have been properly effected in any of the following ways :-

H.2.2.1 By delivering the document personally to any person nominated by that Council to accept service.

H.2.2.2 By delivering the document or sending it by first class pre-paid post or by Recorded Delivery post addressed to such nominated person at the address specified in such nomination.

- H.2.2.3 If no such person has been nominated to accept service, by delivering the document or by sending it by first class pre-paid post or by Recorded Delivery Post addressed to the Secretary of that council at his/her address as given in the current issue of the Year Book or as subsequently notified to the General Secretary.
- H.2.2.4 In such other manner as the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission (if service relates to the Appeals Procedure) may direct having regard to the circumstances.
- H.2.3 Service of any document required to be served on the Secretary of the Assembly Commission or on the General Secretary shall be deemed to have been properly served if delivered or sent by first class pre-paid post or by Recorded Delivery post addressed to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission or the General Secretary as the case may be at the address given in the current issue of the Year Book or subsequently notified or (in the absence of any such address in the Year Book) in an envelope addressed to that person at Church House, 86 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9RT and marked "Section O Process".
- H.2.4 All documents required to be served shall be placed in a sealed envelope clearly addressed to the addressee and marked "Private and Confidential".
- H.2.5. In the case of service of documents by pre-paid first class post, service shall be deemed to have been effected on the third day after the posting of the Notice (both days inclusive).
- H.3 Where any issue or question of procedure arises whilst the matter is under the jurisdiction of the Assembly Commission or the Appeals Commission that Commission shall resolve each such issue or question or give such directions as shall appear to it to be just and appropriate in the circumstances.
- H.4 The cost of operating the Section O Process and the reasonable and proper expenses of persons attending any meeting or hearing under such process and the costs of any reports obtained by or on the authority of the Assembly Commission or any other costs and expenses which the Assembly Commission deem to have been reasonably and properly incurred in the course of such process 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.
- H.5 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. The importance of retaining all written records is emphasised.



# S

**FOR DISCUSSION & DECISION**

## **Report of the Working Party on Appraisal of Ministers**

### **1. Progress so Far:**

In September 1993, the then Ministries Committee presented a paper on the Appraisal of Ministers to Mission Council. A considerable amount of time had been taken to research the subject with other denominations and secular sources, and to develop a theology of appraisal. The outlined proposals were broadly accepted by Mission Council, and, at the Committee's suggestion that the Scheme be piloted for two years, it was suggested that West Midlands Province pilot this work, since they, too, had been working on Appraisal. During the last two years, the original group has monitored the work being done by the West Midlands Province. The Province is to be congratulated for the work that they have carried out. We request Mission Council to accept the setting up of a national URC Appraisal programme, based on the West Midlands programme, with the addition of one or two suggestions to make this fit a variety of Provinces and ministries.

### **2. The Purpose of Appraisal**

The purpose of Appraisal is:

- (i) to provide a regular opportunity for every minister to review the whole of his/her work and development with a view to strengthening those areas that require it, and affirming those areas that deserve it.
- (ii) To provide an opportunity for Provinces to plan in-service training, and to encourage greater use of the resources of the Province, of other churches and of secular agencies in the fulfilling of (i) above.

### **3. A Theology of Appraisal**

- (i) Any system of appraisal of Christian ministry should be undergirded by theological principles.
- (ii) Appraisal is to do with fulfilment, being valued and responsibility and is a way of making real our love and concern for those whose vocation it is to minister with us, to us, and (on occasion) for us.
  - (a) Our Lord said his yoke was light, his burden easy. Too often the church makes the yoke chafe and the burden intolerable. We make unreasonable demands of individuals, measured against unreal and damaging expectations. Those demands are made of many members of the body of Christ, but most particularly of those whom we employ, ordained and lay. Appraisal is about balancing demand and expectation realistically.
  - (b) Ministry is about fulfilment. There is no greater joy than the service of God and the people of God, yet ministry should also be about growth in Christ and in the knowledge and love of God. "Busyness" often stunts growth. Appraisal is about offering opportunities for growth and development.
  - (c) The calling of all Christ's people is to responsible and shrewd stewardship. Talents are not given to be buried until the master returns. Servants need to know when they have done faithfully and well. They also need to be aware of how they might do better. Appraisal is about responsible stewardship of those gifts of persons and abilities which have been placed in our hands.

For these reasons we believe appraisal to be an important part of the spiritual discipline of the church and its ministers.

#### 4. **The Aims of Appraisal**

The appraisal process aims to:-

- (i) Offer opportunity for ministers to take stock of their work thus far and identify areas of strength on which to build and areas of need which should be addressed. To be realistic about strengths and weakness'.
- (ii) Ensure the continuing personal and professional development of ministers in ways which are of benefit to them and to the church which they serve.
- (iii) Identify training and personal growth needs and ways of achieving them.
- (iv) Encourage the development of appropriate and effective strategies for establishing, reviewing and re-forming mission objectives.
- (v) Help the setting of goals for work in the next two years.
- (vi) Affirm ministers in their work and encourage them to seek challenges with a renewed sense of vision.
- (vii) Make ministers aware of sources of support (eg Continuing Partner support, Spiritual Director)

#### 5. **Style of Appraisal**

It is our intention that this scheme be supportive and non-threatening, but for it to be effective it is important that work and performance are looked at realistically, and this will require weakness' to be recognised as well as strengths celebrated. To obtain objectivity it is important that the task of appraisal is carried out with a person who has received appropriate training and has recognised skills for working alongside ministers in appraisal.

Upon ordination ministers affirm their calling to the ministry, and the questions asked on that occasion form a basis for our detailed scheme.

To ensure that there are sufficient appraisers, it is proposed that the scheme be introduced gradually in the following way:-

- (i) The suggested method for this is that a date be selected for the scheme to begin - for example September 1997. Appraisal Partners or Companions would be selected by each Province and trained using a cascade system from September 1996 onwards. (Two trainers from each Province, skilled in appraisal techniques, would be invited to a national training programme, and then they would be responsible for setting up training for Appraisal Partners in their Province.)
- (ii) Those invited to take part in the scheme in the first instance would be:
  - 1) Provincial In-Service Training Officers;
  - 2) Volunteers, including some senior ministers;
  - 3) all those who have been ordained as stipendiary or non-stipendiary ministers that year; (Initially this will be part of the Post Ordination Supervision and Training process.)
- (iii) Others will become part of the scheme when they begin new pastorates. It is expected that District Council will co-operate in the scheme by writing a requirement to undertake regular appraisal into the "Terms of Settlement".
- (iv) Other groups of ministers would be given opportunity to become part of the scheme as sufficient appraisal companions become available. It is hoped that five years after the scheme has begun all ministers will be part of the scheme. It will be the responsibility of the District Councils through the "Quinquennial" Districts Visits to churches and the Moderators in their continuing pastoral care, to encourage participation.

For maximum benefit the scheme envisages appraisals to be undertaken on a regular but not frequent basis. Every 18 months is suggested. Alternate appraisals may be in depth with intervening appraisal checking on progress made, making necessary adjustments.

## **6. Proposed Method**

- 6.1 This is based largely on the process successfully piloted in West Midlands Province. In preparation for the Appraisal, the Appraisal Companion will contact the minister, agree a date for the Appraisal meeting, send a background paper setting out the purpose of the Appraisal together with a Self Appraisal booklet (based on the West Midlands booklet), which will contain a request to describe the appraisee's job description. (NB. Both the West Midlands appraisal group and this group, were concerned by the fact that many of the questions in the West Midlands booklet were addressed only to those in local church pastorates. Questions were not so relevant to those in specialist ministries such as chaplaincies or provincial or Assembly posts.) Questions will therefore be asked based on the appraisee's job description and the promises made at Ordination (Schedule C). The booklet contains multiple choice questions asking for a self appraisal of performance at certain activities. The booklet is completed and returned to the Appraisal Partner by an agreed date prior to the meeting. This is a very important part of the process, and it was felt that at least two hours be set aside to complete the booklet.
- 6.2 The meeting of the appraisee and the Appraisal Companion should take place over at least half a day, probably at the appraisee's home, and in as relaxed atmosphere as possible - perhaps including a meal. Questions need not cover all the questions in the booklet. It might be helpful for the appraisee to suggest priorities, although this might be open to the companion to challenge. (Companions who took part in the pilot scheme said that they were very tired after the process and recommended that Partners should not fix major meetings during the evening after appraisal.)
- 6.3 Following the meeting the Appraisal Companion writes a report which is sent to the Appraisee for comment, and then is signed by both Appraisal Companion and Appraisee. (NB West Midlands Province suggested that certificated records of the fact that the meeting took place, should not be signed; we disagree with this. This is an important task, and it helps if this should be fully owned by both partners.) A record of dates of Appraisal will be kept by the person in the Province responsible for overseeing the scheme for administrative purposes. A copy of the Appraisal report is kept,  
(i) by the Appraisee, and  
(ii) the Appraisal Companion so that it can be referred to at the next Appraisal.
- 6.4 The importance of utmost confidentiality cannot be over-stressed, and this is to be maintained throughout the whole process of Appraisal if it is to encourage frank and open discussions of ambitions, hopes and personal failings.

## **7. Who will carry out the Appraisal?**

- 7.1 It is envisaged that each Province will form an appraisal team, initially of about six people, (but rising to ten or twelve,) to carry out this programme. Those being appraised will be able to choose their Appraisal Companion from those who comprise the Province's team, or at the very least, those being appraised will be shown a list of possible Appraisal Companion, and they could then suggest any Companions that they would not be happy to work with. We strongly suggest that the Companion should not come from the same District Council as the Appraisee. It is felt that no team member should be expected to appraise more than three to four people each year, and that Appraisal Companions only serve for about four to six years.
- 7.2 The team will be made up of both lay and ordained people selected by the Province, possibly from names forwarded by the Districts. In order to ensure national consistency, selection will be based on a Person Specification provided by the Ministries' Committee.

## **8. Skills of Appraisal Companions should include:**

- 8.1 some understanding of the role of a minister  
being a good listener and reflector  
ability to ask challenging questions  
ability to let go personal agenda  
a non-judgemental (unshockable) personality  
ability to handle confidentiality



a depth of personal experience  
ability to give proper time to the task

- 8.2 Companion support is vital, and we ask Provinces to set up support systems for Appraisal Companions.
- 8.3 The Ministries and Training Committees will undertake to provide both training and financial support for the scheme, both of which will need to be substantial in the early years of the scheme's operation.

**9. Proposed Timetable**

- (i) March 1996 Mission Council for approval.
- (ii) General Assembly July 1996. Resolution submitted to Assembly for general approval.
- (iii) July 1996 - July 1997 Training of Appraisal Companions and setting up of scheme. Two representatives invited from each Province to a thinking/briefing session, who will in turn go back to Province to set up training/briefing sessions.
- (iv) General Assembly July 1997. Launch Appraisal Scheme.

**10. Budget for setting up Appraisal process**

1996-7 Training of Appraisers - centrally	£	800
Provincial Training	£	1200
Literature	£	500
	Total	<u>£2600</u>

11. The working group is grateful to those who have shared their experiences and work in setting up Appraisal Schemes, including the West Midlands Province, individual ministers and churches, the Liverpool Diocese Assessment Scheme, and the Methodist Church Accompanied Self Appraisal Scheme

Appraisal Working Group Members

Revd Dr David Cornick  
Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee  
Revd John Oldershaw  
Mrs Eileen Sanderson



T

**FOR DISCUSSION AND ADVICE**

**Confession of Faith**

The alternative version in inclusive language of the Confession of Faith in paragraph 17 of the Basis of Union proposed by the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee in 1995 was withdrawn because of a previously unnoticed problem of syntax. However, there were several adverse comments even though no formal amendments had been submitted by the time requested at Assembly. The Committee has given further consideration to the alternative version of the Confession of Faith, in the light of those comments and subsequent correspondence. It proposes a revised version for submission to the General Assembly in 1996, with a Commentary to explain the text.

Mission Council is asked for its judgement on the substance of the revised Confession and resolution; and whether a Commentary should be published with it.

**RESOLUTION:**

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

- (1) We believe in the one and only God,  
Eternal Trinity,  
from whom, in whom and for whom  
all created things exist;  
whom alone we worship;  
in whom we put our trust.
- (2) We worship God,  
Source and Sustainer of creation,  
whom Jesus called our Father.
- (3) We worship God  
revealed in Jesus Christ,  
the eternal Word of God made flesh;  
who lived our life,  
died for sinners on the cross,  
who was raised from the dead,  
and proclaimed by the apostles, Son of God,  
who eternally lives,  
as Saviour and sovereign,  
coming in judgement and mercy,  
to bring us to eternal life.
- (4) We worship God,  
for ever present in the Holy Spirit,  
bringing this Gospel to fruition,  
forgiving our sins,  
strengthening us to do God's will,  
and making us sisters and brothers of Jesus,  
daughters and sons of God.
- (5) We believe in the one  
holy catholic and apostolic Church,  
united in heaven and earth:  
on earth, the Body of Christ,  
empowered by the Spirit  
to glorify God and to serve humanity;  
in heaven, eternally one  
with the power, the wisdom and the love of God in Trinity.

- (6) We believe,  
that in the fulness of time,  
God will reconcile  
all things in heaven and earth through Christ,  
and be perfectly honoured and adored.
- (7) We rejoice in God who has given us being;  
in God for ever human and for ever glorious with us;  
in God, our source of prayer and power of praise;  
to whom be glory, praise and adoration,  
now and evermore.

#### COMMENTARY

##### Introduction

1 Paragraph 17 of the Basis of Union states the Confession of Faith of the United Reformed Church at the date of its formation in 1972. It was not therefore appropriate to amend it in 1990 when the wording of the rest of the Basis of Union was changed to inclusive language, and it is not intended to amend it in future. The Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee has, however, been pressed to provide a Confession of Faith in inclusive language and the alternative version presented here is an attempt to meet that request.

2 The version follows the pattern of paragraph 17 and the sections correspond to those in the original, except that the first and last have been divided into two. The change in style is intended to make it more readily usable in worship, since that was the wish of several of those who requested such a version. The original paragraph 17 was not drafted with that intention, though it was so used in the inaugural service in Westminster Abbey in 1972.

3 The Committee does not believe that its proposals represent any change in the substance of the faith confessed in paragraph 17.

##### "Father-Son" imagery in the naming of God

4 The anxiety felt by those who call for an inclusive language version of the Confession of Faith is that the use of "Father-Son" imagery in the naming of God conveys the impression that God is male. This is not the teaching of Christian theology; nevertheless it is right to take steps to avoid unnecessary stumbling blocks in the approach to Christian faith.

5 All human language about God is metaphorical, even if we believe that certain particular ways of naming God are divinely revealed. The name for God used in the Old Testament, *Yahweh*, is not a name, which is part of its point. Indeed devout Jews never utter the name, thereby symbolising the fact that it is impossible to utter God's name. God is not male, nor indeed can any human name express the fulness of God. To imagine that we have encompassed the meaning of God in any name is a form of idolatry.

6 Nevertheless the fact that Jesus called God "Father" is a matter of supreme significance. This is not simply the insight of a great prophet or poet. The one who called God "Father" was "the eternal Word of God made flesh". What Jesus meant by calling God "Father", and even "abba" (the more intimate word), is an indispensable element of Christian faith in God. Yet Jesus's language remains the language of metaphor. He used a human word with a human meaning, which cannot be literally applied if it is to refer to everyone - if God is to be "our Father", as well as Jesus's Father.

7 In fact, Jesus's usage of the term "Father" for God has transformed the

human understanding of fatherhood, rather than the human usage of father limiting our understanding of God. Ephesians 3.14, "I bow my knees to the Father, from whom every family on earth is named", contains a pun in Greek which is lost in English, since the Greek word for family might be better translated "patrimony" or "fatherhood". Although the pun does not work in English, the use of the word "family" points to a more inclusive conception of God, in which the significance both of motherhood and childhood may be similarly transformed. We need to note that the metaphorical nature of the language used even by the historical Jesus of Nazareth about God neither relativizes that language nor impugns the theological reality which the language conveys.

8 Similarly the term "Son", when applied to Jesus, involves the same sort of metaphor as "Father". The word "Son" emphasises the family relationship between parent and child. To speak of Jesus Christ as God's Son is to express the notion of a family intimacy like that of human beings within Eternal God.

9 Yet the maleness of the metaphor of "Son of God" reflects the human character of Jesus not the divine. As a human being Jesus had to be either male or female. Thus the proclamation of Jesus as "Son of God" is balanced by the more inclusive declaration that he is "the eternal Word of God made flesh". For women, as also for men, it is the human-ness of Jesus, not his male-ness, that is of ultimate salvific significance.

#### Section 1

10 Section 1 uses the phrase "Eternal Trinity" instead of "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" in the original, to meet the anxieties of those who fear that the masculine terminology may give a misleading impression of God's nature.

11 The next three sections are introduced by the words "We worship", in order to emphasise the connection between belief and worship, indicated at the end of section 1.

#### Section 2

12 Section 2 concerns the distinctive attributes of the first person of the Trinity, which are sometime attributed indiscriminately to God as such. It balances the emphasis upon God as Source and Sustainer of creation with Jesus's naming of God as "Father". Thus the profoundly important historical fact that Jesus called God "Father" is affirmed, and at the same time it is clear that "Father" is not the exclusive name of God, nor is God male.

#### Section 3

13 Section 3 states that Jesus was "proclaimed by the apostles, Son of God". Once again the historical statement earths the insight of revelation in its historical context, providing the reference point which alone gives meaning to the statement. To state the historical context does not relativize the statement; or, to put the point another way, the statement does not become more objective by being detached from its historical context. The apostles' proclamation comes to us with divine authority. We proclaim the Gospel in succession to the apostles; that is the characteristic Reformed understanding of apostolic succession; our Gospel is the Apostolic Gospel.

14 Section 3 also refers to Christ as the one "who is coming in judgement and mercy", as distinct from the simple description "judge" in the existing paragraph. There are several understandings among Christians about the meaning of "the coming of Christ". Some refer to a future, final event in history; others affirm a continual coming of Christ, for example, in the sharing of the broken bread and poured out wine in the celebration of the

Lord's Supper, or in the transformation of individual lives and the corporate experience of the Church. Similarly some Christians see God's judgement as a future event still to come at the end of time, whilst others see the cross of Christ as the point when human sin was ultimately condemned and God's holiness ultimately honoured. These views are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and may indeed better be seen as mutually supportive and corrective. The use of the phrase "who is coming" deliberately takes into account these different understandings and may be interpreted as including both "continual coming" and "final coming" as realities of Christian faith. Finally, the reference to mercy is a reminder that eternal life depends on the grace of God rather than our own actions.

15 Like the existing paragraph 17 the new version makes no judgement on the extent of salvation. As elsewhere in the confession the affirmations are in the first person plural. The confession therefore is one which is made by those who believe that their own sins, and those of the Christians with whom they are in fellowship, will be forgiven and that they will be brought to eternal life. It is therefore intended to refer to all those whom God wills to be saved. In keeping with the earliest strands of the Reformed tradition it is agnostic about those who do not profess this faith.

#### Section 4

16 The emphasis of Section 4 has been shifted so that the Holy Spirit is not portrayed as the one who is active in forgiving and strengthening us, and bringing us into a new relationship with God, rather than an instrument to make the Gospel effective.

#### Section 5

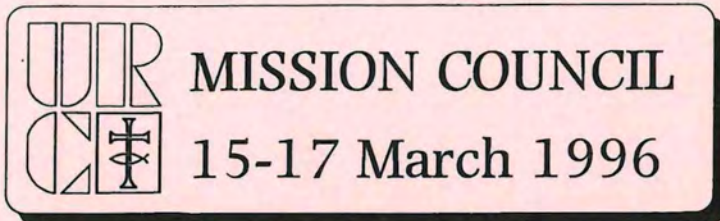
17 This section has been slightly amplified so as to distinguish between the characteristics of the Church on earth and the Church in heaven.

#### Section 6

18 The reference in this section is shifted from Ephesians 1:10 (cf John 11:52) to Colossians 1:20 so as to emphasise the theme of reconciliation in Christ. The parallelism between Ephesians 1 and Colossians 1 is well-known, so no substantive shift is involved; but Colossians is more explicit than Ephesians in making the perfect honouring and adoring of God dependent on the reconciliation of all things in heaven and on earth through the blood of the cross. The biblical reference makes it unnecessary to choose between later theological differences over universalist and non-universalist schemes of salvation.

#### Section 7

19 The final doxology takes into account the fact that what is said of any one person of the Trinity is also true of the others. God who has given us being is not only God the Father, but also the Son and the Holy Spirit. God for ever human and for ever glorious with us is the crucified and risen Christ, but through the initiative of the Father and continuing presence of the Holy Spirit. God, our source of prayer and power of praise, is the Holy Spirit bringing us into communion with God before all time, now and for evermore; but perfect praise of God fulfils our prayers, and all that we have been created by the Father to be through the intercession of Jesus Christ. Thus the whole meaning of creation and redemption is captured in these words. That praise embodies the point of confessing our faith and directs it aright.



**V**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**To be issued at the March 1996 Mission Council Meeting**

**The Revd. Moira Kerr**

At the end of the morning session of the January Mission Council Moira Kerr presented the following statement and leaflet (attached overleaf) to the Moderator.

After a long discussion, the Moderator declined to allow Moira Kerr either to speak to the Council or to circulate her paper. However he gave an undertaking that the statement would be considered by the Mission Council Advisory Group at its next meeting. Arrangements were also made to give Moira pastoral support at the church following this discussion.

The Advisory Group did consider Moira Kerr's statement at its meeting on 8 February.

It decided:

- (a) to make a copy available to all members of the Mission Council at the March meeting, and
- (b) to advise the Council to ask the General Secretary to write to Moira Kerr saying that the issues in her statement have been considered fully by the Council and its officers and it sees no reason for re-opening the matter now.

# Breaking the Sacred Secret

Many groups are working to stop sexual abuse by the clergy (see story, page 40). Below is a guide to establishing church guidelines and finding help in your area.

The Reverend Marie Fortune in her book, *Is Nothing Sacred? When Sex Invades the Pastoral Relationship*, identifies seven ways that churches can "do justice and mercy" in the face of charges of clergy sexual abuse:

- Truth-telling—The silence surrounding the secret of abuse must be broken.

- Acknowledging the violation—The church must hear, name, and condemn the wrong done.

- Compassion—There must be a willingness to suffer with the victim and a commitment to alleviate the suffering.

- Protecting the vulnerable

must be protected from future harm.

- Accountability—The offender must be confronted and consequences imposed.

- Restitution—Payment should be made for damages, financially or less tangibly, by restoring the victim's reputation in the community.

- Vindication—The word is meant not to denote "vengeance," but to "set free" so that physical, emotional, and spiritual healing can take place.

## RESOURCES

Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 1914 North 34 St., Suite 105, Seattle, Wash. 98103. Phone: (206) 634-1903. The country's largest educational and consultation service on sexual abuse and domestic violence within the

religious community; publications are available.

**CORPUS**, National Association for a Married Priesthood, P. O. Box 2247, Mill Valley, Calif. 94941. Phone: (415) 383-7277. Coordinated by a former priest, CORPUS is one of the country's largest advocacy groups for a married Catholic priesthood.

**Forbidden Zone Recovery**, P. O. Box 590343, San Francisco, Calif. 94159. Phone: (510) 654-7199. Support groups for survivors abused by men in power, including therapists, bosses, and clergy.

**Fundamentalists Anonymous**, P. O. Box 20324, Greeley Square Station, New York, N.Y. 10001. Self-help recovery group for former members of fundamentalist churches. Available.

**Good Tidings**, P. O. Box 283, Canadensis, Pa. 18325. Phone: (717) 595-2705. Support group for women involved with priests; headed by a former Catholic priest and his wife.

**HOPE Network**, 2736 Edgerton St., St. Paul, Minn. 55117. Phone: (612) 484-5822. Referrals, support group, educational services. Consultation on clergy sexual abuse of women; an educational videotape is available.

**Network of Survivors of Abuse of Power (NOSOAP)**, P. O. Box 80266, Portland, Ore. 97280. Phone: (503) 244-6857. Peer support group for those sexually abused by men in power—including clergy and therapists.

**Therapy and Renewal Associates (TARA)**, 1037 S. 102 St., Seattle, Wash. 98168. Phone: (206) 763-8721. Special counseling service for ministers and sexual abuse victims. Offers help to the general public.

**Walk-In Counseling Center**, 2421 Chicago Ave. South, Minneapolis, Minn. 55404. Phone: (612) 870-0565. Training program and counseling service for churches and individuals on clergy sexual abuse.

## PUBLICATIONS

*Crossing the Boundary: Professional Sexual Abuse*. Packet describes professional abuse and discusses ways to prevent and address it. Produced by

the Mennonite Conciliation Service and its affiliated women's groups. Send \$5 to: P. O. Box 500, Akron, Pa. 17501; or call: (717) 859-1511.

*If You Have Been Sexually Abused or Harassed: A Guide to Getting Effective Help in the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America)*. Booklet published by the ELCA; \$1 plus shipping and handling. To order, call: (800) 323-4648.

*Recovery Voices*. Soon-to-be published national newsletter about confronting abuse by men in authority; 1101 S.W. Washington, Suite 173, Portland, Ore. 97205.

—Angela Hanavogler

ANNOUNCEMENT WITH 1995

You are cordially invited to join us in Washington, D.C.

WHEN: April 5, 1992

WHY: Vote with your feet for reproductive rights. The Supreme Court could overturn *Roe v. Wade* this July. Pro-choice groups are sponsoring a march to remind the justices, the White House, and Capitol Hill that we shall not be moved.

If you're not part of an official delegation, come protest with members of the Ms. staff—just ask your friendly rally organizer on the day of the march how to find us and our banner.

R.S.V.P.: For more information, call the National Organization for Women (202-331-0066) or the National Abortion Rights Action League (202-403-4600). For discounts on accommodations, call (800) 554-2220; for airline discounts, call (800) 741-4384.

statement to the meeting of the Mission Council by 11:00 AM.

1. I appreciate the time that was given over to discussing my case at your last meeting.
2. You say you cannot deal with the question of a just settlement of the allegation of rape and that I should go to the police. I have circulated widely a declaration of seven points of action that you can take. I enclose a copy with this statement. I would like some explanation of why I was told originally not to go to the police and why now you see this as the only action.
3. You say that "Mission Council decided that it had no evidence before it which gave it reason to review the process of the Synod." This is because I have been given no opportunity to present the evidence which I have. I am unable to understand how Mission Council could decide it had no evidence when I had not been asked to substantiate my position with the hard evidence I have. Natural justice alone, regardless of Christian charity, demands that I have this opportunity. I would like to suggest that someone is asked to get together with me for a couple of days to help me sort this evidence. I have written evidence to show that correct procedures were not followed either by Central or the District Council.
4. You left many issues of my previous statement unanswered. e.g. I asked directly for the U.R.C. to pay for me to have independent legal advice. I am still asking for this and for answers to the other points I raised.
5. I am disturbed that no member of Mission Council made any contact with me to show either compassion or concern. A card is easy to buy and write.
6. I would like a slot slot in your agenda today so that you can hear directly from me about my situation.
7. I can be available at lunch time or after the meeting for a less formal encounter. This could be in one of the many rooms at Central Church.
8. I had a substantial group prepared to demonstrate at your meeting today with the national press in attendance. After discussion with others I made the decision not to take this action. I would like you to repay my consideration for you by giving me a time for a personal meeting.



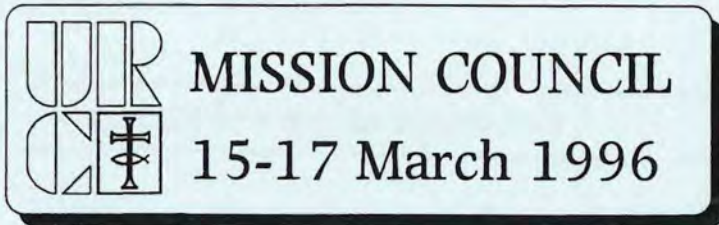
**WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE**

**Amendments to Paper W**

- 3.1 b) the effective and efficient use of resources, the financial management of the college within policies set by the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church acting through its committees and Mission Council, and for safeguarding the College's assets;
- 4.1 Insert after 'teaching staff' '(the Senatus)'.  
4.2 The Board of Governors shall establish an Appointments Committee, which shall include a member nominated by the Training Committee, representatives from the Cambridge Theological Federation and such specialist members outside their own number as they consider necessary, to make recommendations to them for appointments to the teaching staff of the College. These recommendations, if approved by the Board, shall be submitted to the General Assembly for approval.
- 6.2 The annual budget for Westminster College (including the stipends of the teaching staff), based on estimates approved by the Board of Governors, shall be submitted to the Resource Planning Advisory Committee for inclusion in the church budget presented to the General Assembly. The finances shall be managed by the College officers within a framework approved by the Board; and arrangements for the maintenance of accounting records and the preparation of regular financial reports will be developed in consultation with the Honorary Treasurer and the Chief Accountant of the Church.
- 6.3 Delete.

**NOTE**

The Board of Governors will prepare additional material on the Senatus (including the Principal's relationship to it) and the relationship between Westminster College and the Cambridge Theological Federation with the hope that this might be ready in time to be added to the existing material at General Assembly.



# ASS

## Mission Council and General Assembly Resolutions

There has been some uncertainty and frustration in the past because it was not clear what the Council was doing with these resolutions. The following is intended to make things clearer!

The committees of the Assembly make their reports and bring resolutions to the Assembly. The Mission Council has no right of veto.

Sometimes a committee will wish to test an idea or a course of action on the Council in order to get a wider opinion, and it must be free to do so.

However, since the Council has a co-ordinating and prioritising role in relation to Assembly, as far as possible all Committee resolutions will be brought to the March meeting. The Council's role is not to debate the resolutions nor to change them. It is, with a view to the Assembly's programme and priorities, to run an eye over all the resolutions and, if appropriate, to suggest any redrafting, prioritising, delaying, combining that it believes would help the General Assembly. Unless a resolution, by agreement, then becomes a resolution of the Mission Council, it is up to the relevant Committee Convener to decide what notice to take of any Council comments.

With this in mind we shall try this time looking at those Assembly resolutions on which we are not taking decisions in one fairly concentrated session.

**RESOLUTION****Communications and Editorial**

- 1 Assembly resolves to negotiate with Christian Copyright Licensing to take out a group copyright licence to cover the reproduction in service sheets, on display boards and through overhead projector slides and similar mechanical means, of the words of hymns, songs and other worship material, which fall within the scope of the licence, and the mechanical recording of acts of worship on audio and video tape, in all local churches of the United Reformed Church which agree to opt into the scheme and to meet their share of the cost of the annual licence fee. It instructs the Secretary for Communications to operate the scheme on behalf of the Church, under the oversight of the Communications and Editorial Committee, and furthermore it instructs the Secretary no longer to arrange copyright cover for individual local churches which do not opt to take part in the scheme, but merely to provide information about where such cover may be obtained. Assembly urges all local churches to take advantage of this scheme and thus to ensure that they are covered, and it deplores the action of any local church which attempts to avoid its commitment to honest dealing in this regard. If such negotiations prove unsuccessful, Assembly urges all local congregations to ensure that the laws concerning copyright are upheld.

**COPYRIGHT**

Over many years the Communications and Editorial Committee have advised and encouraged local churches to ensure that the regulations regarding copyright are being adhered to. From January 1996 the period of copyright was extended to 70 years.

A resolution carried by General Assembly in 1990 "urges all provinces, districts and local congregations to ensure that they are keeping within the law as covered by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, giving special regard to Hymn Book Supplements, Service and Hymn Sheets, together with items reproduced in church magazines."

The Communications and Editorial Committee is aware that at present a proportion of UR Churches (less than 20%) participate in the Christian Copyright Licence scheme. Discussions took place in 1994 with the CCL exploring the possibility of a "blanket licence" which would cover all local congregations for the reproduction of **words only** of the majority of hymns still in copyright and also the recording and videoing of church services. The sum then suggested was £79,000 per year - a saving of approximately 25% if every church were to pay their correct fee. This amount was thought to be too large to be met centrally. A further discussion with CCL has been arranged with suggestions for an alternative scheme by which local churches would register with the Communications and Editorial office at a discounted rate. If this scheme is agreed then the Communications and Editorial office would administer it in conjunction with CCL.

At present individual permissions are sought on behalf of local churches by the Communications and Editorial office. Any fees levied are paid by the office and invoices then issued. Churches often send in lists of 20 or more items to be cleared. The time taken in answering and dealing with such queries including the resulting correspondence averages 2 days each week.

After noting which churches request assistance and which churches already are participating in the CCL scheme it is obvious that something over 40% of local congregations are risking prosecution and substantial fines (some have been over £8000) by not observing the regulations concerning the reproduction of words (including OHP transparencies), and any recording, both audio and visual, of services.

The Communications and Editorial Committee have strongly expressed the view that churches bring no honour to God by continuing to defy the law.

## RESOLUTION ??

- (a) The General Assembly accepts the Report of the Europe Task Group, as a policy statement on the URC's involvement with Europe built around the following principles:
- (i) provinces should be the **primary** vehicle for developing and maintaining bilateral and local church partnerships within Europe on behalf of the United Reformed Church;
  - (ii) the Conference of European Churches, the Leuenberg Fellowship and the European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society should be the focus and primary means of assistance for our engagement with European ecumenical questions and programmes and the institutions of the European Union and the Council of Europe; and
- (b) calls upon the appropriate committees of the Church, nationally and in the provinces, to consider and to act on its recommendations (section 3), in particular concerning European visitors to Assembly, the provision of adequate funding for the URC to develop meaningful European church partnerships at every level, and the provision of support for Provincial European Link Co-ordinators

**THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH AND EUROPE  
(The Report of the Europe Task Group)**

The Resolution is supported by a four-page document, which is substantially that placed before and discussed by the Mission Council on 20 January 1996.

## RESOLUTION ??

The General Assembly gives first approval to an addition to the composition of the membership of Assembly in Section 2 of the Structure of the United Reformed Church as follows:

2(5)(j) A representative of the Council for World Mission

**ROLL OF ASSEMBLY - COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION**

For some years now, the Roll of Assembly has included a representative of the Council for World Mission. There is no constitutional provision for this, and the irregularity has arisen through the continuation of the personal membership of Assembly of the Revd Bernard Thorogood, when he was General Secretary of CWM.

It can be assumed that Assembly would wish CWM to continue to appoint a representative to attend Assembly as a full voting member. In order to regularise the representation, the above resolution is proposed.

## RESOLUTION ??

(Jointly submitted by Ecumenical and Church and Society Committees)

The General Assembly, in the spirit of resolutions adopted in 1989, which were reaffirmed in 1992 by Assembly Executive Committee, regarding the welfare of the peoples of Hong Kong in the period leading up to June 30, 1997, resolves:

- (i) to remind the British Government of its political and moral responsibility for the people of Hong Kong, with a request that the United Nations monitor the implementation of the 1984 Agreement;
- (ii) to express its solidarity with the churches of Hong Kong, and especially the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (our partner in CWM) in praying for a peaceful transfer of power which respects the dignity of all peoples;

(iii) to press for full British citizenship for some or all of those denied by the 1981 and 1985 actions of the British Government; and to extend a welcome to those Hong Kong residents who move to these islands;

(iv) to promote the use of the pack of educational materials produced by the China Forum of the CCBI Churches Commission on Mission.

### HONG KONG 1997

At midnight on June 30, 1997, sovereignty over Hong Kong and the New Territories will revert to the Peoples' Republic of China in accordance with the 1984 Agreement between the British and Chinese Governments. Until that date the British Government exercises responsibility for Hong Kong and the preparation for its future.

During the last decade many churches in Britain, including our own General Assembly, made statements on aspects of the current process in a spirit of solidarity with the people (especially the Christians) of Hong Kong. (see 1989 Assembly Record pp17-19)

All these touched on:

- the political and civil rights of the people of Hong Kong;
- their claim to British citizenship and nationality;
- the rights of non-Chinese residents of Hong Kong;
- the pastoral care of migrants to Britain.

Since 1992 a number of significant developments have taken place:

- democratic elections to a Legislative Assembly (LegCo) in which contested seats were mainly won by pro-democracy candidates; the Chinese Government says it will dissolve LegCo after June 1997;
- discussions about a Bill of Rights, which is still inadequate and under threat of further dilution;
- questioning of the independence of the judiciary and the final court of appeal;
- continuing controversy over citizenship rights and right of abode in the UK for various categories of passport holders; the Governor of Hong Kong has repeated the demand for full right of abode which is not the British Government's policy.

The United Reformed Church has a special relationship through CWM with the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC) which we hope can be preserved beyond 1997. The nature of links between Hong Kong churches and those in mainland China has yet to be determined.

(Thanks are expressed to the CCOM China Forum and the CCBI HK Steering Group for the substance of this report)

### RESOLUTION ??

- 1 The General Assembly reaffirms the commitment of the URC to 'take, wherever possible and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people',
  - (a) through resource sharing of theological insights, people, buildings and money,
  - (b) through offering the rich insights of our tradition to others and being open to receive theirs,
  - (c) through active involvement in ecumenical bodies locally, nationally and internationally, and
  - (d) through the development of LEPs and United Areas.
2. Assembly urges local churches in England to join with Christians of other traditions to study and respond to the book *Called to be One* by the March Synods, 1997.

### THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH AND VISIBLE CHRISTIAN UNITY

This Resolution is supported by an eight-page document to be presented to Assembly, as promised in last year's Assembly Report.

## CHURCH HYMNARY TRUST

1 Mission Council in September 1995 received a paper concerning the Church Hymnary Trust (Paper C), and agreed to accept the proposal of the Church Hymnary Trustees that the United Reformed Church should withdraw from the Church Hymnary Trust and receive 7% of the Trust Fund at the point of withdrawal (Mission Council minute 95/88). The estimated value of the receipts was £27,000, though the precise sum would depend on the state of the stock market at the point of sale.

2 At the time that paper was prepared it had not proved possible to obtain a copy of the Trust Deed in order to decide on the use to be made of the resulting assets. The Trust Deed, which is made under Scottish law, has now been examined. Clause 8 of the deed provides that "the profits from the sale of the publications belonging to the Trustees shall be paid to each of the said three Churches or their respective Psalmody Hymnody and Praise Committees and to such other Church or Churches as may from time to time be associated with them as aforesaid in such proportions as shall either be agreed upon by the Trustees or as shall be fixed and determined by the President for the time being of the Society of Chartered Accountants in Edinburgh whom failing the Solicitor General for Scotland..." The three Churches referred to are the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. The Presbyterian Church of England joined the Trust in 1927. The primary use of the funds was clearly intended to be the publication of future Hymn and Psalm Books.

3 Since the United Reformed Church is withdrawing from the Trust, it may be argued that any obligation to use the funds so realised for purposes akin to the original is moral rather than legal. When the matter was raised with the former Treasurer and the Chief Accountant in the spring of 1995, both expressed the view that the funds should be added to the general funds of the Church, one reason for this being the fact that this is the way in which the profits from Rejoice and Sing have been treated.

4 The Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee considered this matter again in January. The Committee is clear that it would not wish this sum to be treated as a separate trust fund, of which only the income could be used. But it would wish the sum to be so designated that it could be drawn on from time to time as necessary to fund the publication of worship materials. It considers that this would be a responsible use of the money given the nature of its source, and it could be an indirect (rather than a direct) subsidy for the general work of the Church, in that it would not be necessary to make such a large provision for the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee from the general budget. The Committee would therefore wish to present the following resolution to Assembly:

### Assembly

- a) gives thanks for the past collaboration with partner churches in the Church Hymnary Trust;
- b) endorses Mission Council's decision to accept the proposal of the Trustees that the United Reformed Church should withdraw from the Trust and receive 7% of the Trust Fund at the point of withdrawal;
- c) agrees that the monies so realised should be added to the general funds of the Church with the intention that they might be used from time to time to fund the publication by the Church of material for use in worship.

D.M.T.  
3 March 1996

# Church and Society

## **Memo to Mission Council: committee business at General Assembly**

1 We shall expect to devote most of 'our' time to the relaunch of **Commitment for Life**. Mission Council is being asked for a decision about this on Paper E.

2 We shall bring a resolution commending the **General Election** all-party constituency meetings; final text of this to be confirmed but similar to last time (the resolution not the Election).

3 We are supporting the resolution on **Hong Kong** which has been drafted by Peter Brain but is coming through Ecumenical Committee.

4 We shall bring either a resolution or presentation on **Values** on which we have been engaged and reported to Assembly in recent years; the text of any resolution would be to welcome the production of materials not a substantive one about values themselves.

5 We shall bring a resolution about the **Asylum and Immigration** Bill (which will be an Act by July) and related matters, including the invitation to Assembly to endorse the statement on Sanctuary prepared by the Churches Commission for Racial Justice.

6 Political crises often emerge between writing our report and presenting it at Assembly. It is possible that a resolution on Ireland and / or Israel/Palestine - or some other matter - would be appropriate in July but we cannot draft that now and must reserve our right to work on it in June.

## MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

### Resolutions for Assembly 1996

#### 1. Recruitment

The Ministries Committee advise that in view of the reducing number of ministers available for full-time stipendiary ministry and church-related community work it would be timely to remind churches, districts and synods of the need to maintain the momentum of recruitment to the ministry of Word and Sacraments (stipendiary and non-stipendiary) and Church-Related Community Work. The Committee would therefore like to bring the following resolution to Assembly accompanied by a statement indicating the trend relating to the number of ministers available for service.

#### RESOLUTION 1

**Assembly, recognising the need for more vocations to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments and Church-Related Community Work, urges church members, local Churches, District Councils, to take every opportunity of presenting its claims to those who are perceived to have the gifts required.**

#### 2. Criteria for Assessment

The National Assessment Board has been engaged in a major piece of work since 1993 to agree the criteria for assessment of those offering for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments. This process began with thorough consultations with a cross section of the United Reformed Church in order to identify the perceived competencies and qualities deemed necessary for a minister. The information obtained was collated, clustered and refined to become the basis of a paper explaining the assessment process and the criteria to be used in assessment. This paper was referred to provincial moderators, provincial ministries committees, trainers, the Equal Opportunities Committee, other churches and a sample of districts, ministers who have recently been through the existing assessment process and students in training. The paper has been revised in the light of the comments received. The Board has maintained close contact with the Working Party set up to review the final assessment of ordinands.

A paper explaining the process and setting out the Stages of Assessment, the Criteria for Assessment and the Assessment Process is accompanied with the following resolution:-

#### RESOLUTION 2

**Assembly approves the Criteria for Assessment as set out in paragraphs.....to.....**

#### 3. Age of Entry

See separate paper

#### 4. Disciplinary Procedures

See separate paper

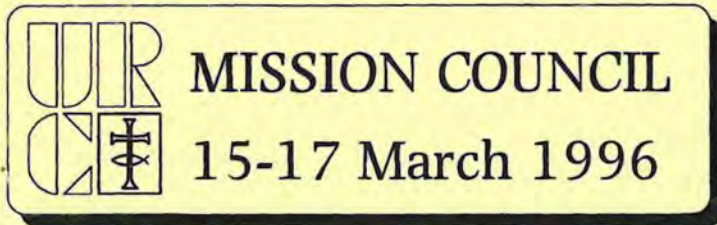


- 1 Assembly agrees that:-
- a) no one shall commence training for the ministry of the Word and Sacraments before the date of their 21st birthday;
  - b) formal application for training for the ministry of the Word and Sacraments must be received by the Province before the date of the applicant's 51st birthday.
  - c) this shall apply to any applications received by the province after this Assembly.

**Proposals regarding the minimum and maximum ages of entry to the non-stipendiary and stipendiary ministries.**

1. In response to a question from the floor of Assembly in 1995, the Convener of the Ministries Committee gave assurances that the minimum and maximum ages of entry to the stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministries would be reviewed. This matter has been considered by the Accreditation Sub-Committee.
2. Reasons for review -
  - (i) to clarify the present requirements which are unclear.
  - (ii) because of concern expressed about the increase in the average age of those entering the ministry;
  - (iii) because of the escalating costs of training coupled with the much shorter periods of potential service especially for full-time stipendiary ministers;
  - (iv) because of growing perceptions of the ministry as a second career for older men and women.
3. The present requirements.
- 3.1 The present regulations are unclear. They state, for the stipendiary ministry, 'Normally...not younger than 21 and not older than 55....', and for the non-stipendiary, 'Normally...not less than 30 and not more than 55....' (see Manual, Fourth Edition, 1995, page J7). It is unclear if these apply to the point at which application is made or to the commencement of training. There is also some discrepancy between the documentation. Therefore it would be wise to clarify the requirements.
4. Age of those entering the ministry
  - 4.1. Concern has been expressed about the increase in the average age of those entering ministry with the growing perception that ministry is a second career for older people.
  - 4.2 The Patterns of Ministry Statistical Supplement indicates that the average age of those ordained to the stipendiary ministry has risen steadily since the fifties from 27 years between 1954-58 to 40 years between 1989-93.
  - 4.3 In 1994 the average age of those in college, training for the stipendiary ministry, was 41 years.
  - 4.4 According to the information available for the last five years there is no indication that the trend is being reversed. During this period, 1990 - 1994, the average age of those ordained to the stipendiary ministry was 41 years. Taking one year, 1994, it was 44 years.
  - 4.5 The average age of ordination to the non-stipendiary ministry has remained fairly static between 1982 and 93 at between 43 years and 57 years. (For more details see A Statistical Supplement to the Patterns of Ministry, 1994)

- 4.6 The statistics indicate that the trend is still upwards.
- 4.7 A snapshot of the current age profile of active ministers indicates that 59.3% of stipendiary ministers, and 73.3% of non-stipendiary ministers, are over the age of fifty. Taking all active ministers, stipendiary and non-stipendiary together, then 62.3% are over the age of fifty.
- 5 The costs of training
- 5.1 Concern has also been expressed about the cost of training for the ministry. The escalating costs inevitably raise the question of cost-effectiveness.
- 5.2 The average cost of training someone for the stipendiary ministry ranges between £7,000 and £8,000 pa. With the average length of training running at 3-4 years, this means that the cost of training a stipendiary minister is between £21,000 and £32,000.. Given the very high cost it would be irresponsible not to consider what is a reasonable period of service the church might expect for this investment.
6. Minimum age
- 6.1 There can be no doubt that the ordained ministry is enriched by people of a more advanced age who bring with them considerable experience of life and of living out the faith. However, there are also advantages in younger people, who are not so far advanced in their pilgrimage, developing through training and ministry. For this reason it is suggested that there now needs to be a concerted effort to reverse the trend of the increasingly higher average age of those ordained by reducing the age at which people can apply for training.
- 6.2 With the agreement that there should be no distinction made between stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministries, it is suggested that the minimum age should be the same for both. At present it is, for the stipendiary, 'normally' 21 years and, for the non-stipendiary, 'normally' 30 years. Although it is suggested that the minimum age should apply to the point at which training commences it would be in order for applications to be received prior to an applicant's 21st birthday.
7. Maximum age
- 7.1 The Sub-Committee is aware of the shortage of candidates entering training, especially for the full-time stipendiary ministry. To reduce the maximum age of entry to the ministry too drastically, without the compensation of an increase in the number of younger candidates, could have the knock-on effect of putting in jeopardy the courses on which ministers are trained.
- 7.2 The Sub-Committee suggests that it would be reasonable to expect a minimum of ten years ministry from those ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacraments. Consequently, with the length of training running at between three and four years, and a compulsory retirement age of 65 from the full-time stipendiary ministry, it would be wise to agree a cut-off point at the age of 50. This is interpreted to mean that formal applications for training must be submitted to the Province on the official Application Form prior to the date of the applicant's 50th birthday.
- 7.3 Any variation to these requirements will need the agreement of the Accreditation Sub-Committee.



# REFLECTIONS

## REFLECTIONS ON THE URC MISSION COUNCIL 15-17 March 1996

Having listened to the debates and following the decision making processes, I read the purpose of the Mission Council as set out in the Minutes of the 1992 Assembly (pp.57f.) to understand better my remit as a 'theological snoop'. It says,

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 the policy of the Church, to decide more carefully about priorities and to encourage the outreach of the Church to the Community... It is a Mission Council and so the aim it will have in mind is to ensure that all we undertake centrally and all we are as a denomination is directed towards the mission of God in the world, towards that Kingdom of justice, peace, forgiveness and hope which is true life and which Christ brings in his person.

The role of the theological reflector is 'to stand aside from the debate and then reflect on the process in the light of the word of God, so providing a more objective theological critique of the discussion'.

At the end of the first day of meetings, several persons commented, 'There wasn't much there for you to reflect on, was there?' And one said to me, 'For a small denomination we try to do too much.' Since members of the Mission Council themselves felt that Mission Council may have gone adrift of its real purpose, I will not labour the point. Instead, I will do two things. First, suggest alternative ways for selecting and organising business which may help Mission Council to fulfil better its purpose. Second, make some comments on a particular theological concern, namely, relating to people of other faiths and cultures, which surfaced at several points in the proceedings and is challenging the URC to move forward in its mission thinking and action.

### **I. Business for Mission Council - Some suggestions**

1. All the papers were well written and the process for dealing with them carefully identified at the top right hand corner of the first page. I noted four categories of papers: (i) those with matters for Mission Council decision and adoption, (ii) those from Mission Council going to the Assembly for decision and adoption, (iii) those going to the Assembly on which Mission Council is invited to make comments, (iv) those whose time has not yet come but on which Mission Council is asked to give

advice. This is not an exhaustive list. Mission Council had still other business to do. The problem is not that some of these are not necessary, but that one short meeting is expected to do too much.

Suggestion: That Mission Council deal with the first two categories of papers only. And that it appoint a small group consisting of one or two persons from each province to deal with the third and fourth categories at a separate meeting, or meet for a day before the meeting of the Mission Council.

2. More thought needs to be given to the way in which Mission Council can lead the General Assembly in taking a more comprehensive view of the activity and policy of the Church and to decide on priorities and outreach. For this to happen, Mission Council has to provide a theological framework - a theme - for an Assembly, and decide on mission priorities. Given the importance of this task, it is not sufficient for a reflector to gather up the theological crumbs from under the tables of debate and try to compose a meal out of them. In fact, the work has to start before the meeting.

Suggestion: That a theological reflector (could be the Moderator or General Secretary) be asked to look at the papers in categories (i) & (ii) above, and present at the beginning of Mission Council a theological appraisal that could be discussed. This could lead to identifying a theme for Assembly, topics for Bible Study and sub-themes for Worship.

3. According to its aims, as given in the 1992 Minutes of Assembly, Mission Council also has to ask two questions. (a) How does the business to be decided relate to and empower the life and mission of local congregations? (b) What makes for mission and what simply maintains church institutions?

Suggestion: That a second theological reflector be invited to provide a critique of Mission Council debates and decisions with questions (a) and (b) particularly in mind. This task must not be seen as one of 'fault finding', but as one providing Mission Council with theological insights and practical advice.

## II. Mission of the Church in a plural religio-cultural situation

Not all the papers and sessions were of equal theological worth. Neither were they intended to be. But some, though still inchoate, were pressing the Church to reflect more seriously on its mission. It is on a few of these that I intend to reflect. The Bible studies of the Moderator, John Reardon, started the process for me. His questions, arising out of a study of the Corinthian letters, especially the first letter, had to do with the ways in which we are to understand the Gospel, how it influences and shapes our lives, especially as we relate to others in church and in society, and finally what makes the church indeed the church. Listening to his Bible studies, I recalled a very helpful proposal of J. Christiaan Beker in his book, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Fortress Press,

Philadelphia, 1980) which implies that, as for Paul, there is for us the ever present task to distinguish between the coherent theme of the Gospel and its contingent expressions as it relates to every day life. In other words, what makes the Gospel what it is intended to be, namely, good news? And what are the interpretations of the Gospel as it relates to the life and work of the church at any one time?

As I listened to John Reardon, I sensed that he was alluding to a very real issue for us. We often confuse contextual perceptions of the Gospel, however valid in a particular time and place, with the essence of the Gospel, and protect our perceptions by arguing that these perceptions are part of the coherence of the Gospel. We then take the next step of turning Gospel, as we understand it, into Law so that the Gospel ceases to be the Gospel, i.e. good news, and becomes bad news. Symptomatic of this mode is the oft asked question, 'What are the non-negotiables of the faith?' instead of the positive question, 'How does the Gospel speak as good news in a particular situation?' My non-negotiables may not be some one else's non-negotiables.

In practical terms, as John Reardon pointed out, Paul's argument over eating meat offered to idols is pressed both in terms of the stronger one not causing the weaker one to stumble - a pastoral concern - and the weaker one not terrorising the stronger one to succumb to the weaker one's position - a theological concern (1 Cor.10:23-30).

This distinction is important for us who have been brought up on a diet of 'let's go get the heathen', which many feel is the real purpose of mission and the thrust of the Gospel message. This is the position of the weaker one who tends to terrorise the stronger one who has a more mature understanding of the reality of religious plurality and the task of Christian mission. Many in the URC are still as the weaker one on this matter. This is why I argued in one of the small groups that in continuing the task force on Mission and Other Faiths as a full committee of Assembly, the name should be changed to the Committee on Inter-Faith Relations. This suggestion was accepted. I advocated this change because I felt that it is important for us to appreciate plurality, both religious and ethnic, as God-given. Only when we have done this can we speak in a more mature way of mission and other faiths. In fact, 'mission and other faiths' is the correct theological formulation. How do we relate witnessing to the Gospel to the reality of many faiths? This is an important question that goes beyond either 'the other faith people are there for us to convert to Christianity' or a 'live and let live relativism'. Not only do we need the committee to explore this question, but we also need it to help local churches understand, both theologically and pastorally, the relationship between, what a WCC study called, 'my neighbour's faith and mine'.

The need to distinguish between the coherence and the contingency of the Gospel also came up in the debate on revising the basis of faith. While we are willing to look at inclusive language from a gender perspective without denying or subverting several biblical metaphors for God and God's work, we were not yet able to be sensitive to the reality of other partners. I will illustrate. To say, 'We

believe in the one and only God, Eternal Trinity,' is to say that only a so-called Christian metaphor 'Eternal Trinity' can be used to describe the One God. Try this: 'We believe in the One God, Eternal Trinity, from whom, in whom and for whom all created things exist.' Commentary: There is One God. We Christians call the One God, 'Eternal Trinity'. Such a formulation does not exclude sharing the faith with persons of other faiths be they Jews or Muslims, Hindus or Sikhs. In this context, to use 'only' is to restrict the metaphor. It is a defensive posture of the weaker one.

A third point at which this matter came up was in the debate on 'A Multi-Cultural Development Post'. Is the problem one of racism or is it an issue of cultural intolerance? Perhaps I am arguing for too fine a distinction. My point is that URC churches, with a few exceptions, are not racist. But the URC is very mono-cultural. If the United Reformed Church is to be a blessing to the nations, it must have a representative group of the nations in it. Why is it that with one exception, all those representing the URC in ecumenical and other denominational committees and assemblies are European ethnically? Why is it that there was only one non-European at the Mission Council? Tokenism does not mean that the one or two non-Europeans who represent URC are not good. Tokenism is the self-satisfaction of the majority group that enough has been done for representation. Tokenism is a way of side-tracking the issue. The issue is that the URC is mono-cultural and therefore is, consciously or unconsciously, intolerant of other religious and cultural understandings of the Christian faith and practice. It is unable to receive the religious and cultural riches of the nations. When it is able to do this, it can indeed be a blessing to the nations. Those who argued that this is our problem and we need to deal with it using our resources were right. And so too were those who said we have failed and we need to receive help. Once this work develops, with the help of a missionary from outside, those who insist that God is European and can only be understood and worshipped as such (the weaker one?) will be in conflict with those who say the God we worship is the God of all nations.

The concerns of confessing our faith today, URC becoming truly representative of the nations, and proclaiming the Gospel in a situation of many faiths, are inter-related. This complex calls for intensive theological work. There is also an enormous pastoral task. Nothing is solved by the stronger one terrorising the weaker one. There is also the task of communication, if we are not to send confused and confusing signals to local congregations.

I have been selective in my theological reflection picking up on what I feel is a frontier for the URC. Perhaps next time someone else will take on the tantalising vision John Sutcliffe put before us, 'Equipping all God's People for Mission and Ministry'.

D. Preman Niles  
25 March 1996

TASK	Minute	ACTION	Minute	B/U
1 Election of Mission Council representatives - referred to MCAG	MC 92/21	Referred to group looking at "Authority in the URC"	AG 93/27(ii)	94/12
2 Areas of overlap - MCAG to identify and make recommendations to MC March 1993	MC 92/23/b	Gen. Sec. to consult with Dept. officers and prepare discussion paper Paper to include section on ecumenical co-operation and an organisation chart Task revised to provide summary of ecumenical co-operation - Action GS	AG 92/10 AG 93/8 AG 94/2	94/12
3 Authority in the URC - Mersey Province question referred to MCAG	MC 92/24/3	Mersey Province asked to elaborate and consult with Doctrine & Worship Report presented to MC - Doctrine Prayer & Worship to consider and report back	AG 92/13 MC 94/58	
4 Review of all appointments - referred to MCAG	MC 92/24/6	MCAG to consider in light of proposals for Assembly committee structure review Postponed until clarity over future committee structure	AG 92/11 AG 93/22	94/12
5 MCAG asked to maintain overview of difficulties of management for change	MC 92/31			
6 Preparation for General Assembly	MC 92/32	Gen. Sec. to prepare timetable, consult Dept. off. and circulate Synods/Cttees	AG 92/14	
7 Assembly Appointments and Church Affiliation - take up 'Nominations' paper	MC 92/34	Comment received from Westminster College	MC 93/5 (5)	
8 Provision for children at General Assembly - review	AG 92/6	Consult Faith & Life and Assembly Arrangements Committee AAC will deal with creche. Await F & L re wider issues Decided not to involve children in GA itself	AG 92/6 AG 93/4 AG 94/36	
9 Standing Orders - Clerk to consider for MC	AG 92/3 iv)	Clerk to consider after a few meetings	AG 93/7	
10 West Midlands Province - questions re CRGW cover and other matters	AG 92/18	Ministries asked to report to MCAG	AG 92/18	
11 Termed Appointments - recent difficulties	AG 92/19	Gen. Sec. to consider and report to MCAG	AG 92/19	
12 General Assembly Committee Structure - need for revision	AG 92/20	Gen. Sec. to prepare a paper for MCAG Paper, with minor amendment, to MC. Small group to do further work and report CLOSED - Report and Resolution to General Assembly agreed	AG 92/20 AG 93/19 MC 94/26	
13 Training Work Review - proposal to MC	AG 93/21	Group appointed by MC Group report. Terms of reference group established to report to MC in Mar. 94 Terms of Reference paper adopted by MC	MC 93/53 MC 93/85 MC 94/29	
14 Cost to Synods of central church meetings - a complaint	AG 93/23	Policy proposal agreed for approval by MC CLOSED - policy agreed by MC	AG 93/51 MC 93/74	
15 Monitors and our records	AG 93/50	CLOSED - resolved to decline access	AG 93/50	
16 Resource Sharing - referred to MCAG with power to establish consultative group	MC 93/31	GS authorised to establish group from suggested names. Remit to next MCAG Terms of reference agreed. Roger Whitehead appointed. GS to find another Mrs Fiona Smith appointed Support given for Provincial Consultations	AG 93/48 AG 93/86 MC 94/5(d) MC 94/65	
17 Reconsider earlier discussion on biennial Assembly meetings	MC 93/52	GS to prepare paper supporting recommendation not to consider further paper to MC agreed recommending no action CLOSED - MC agreed with AG recommendation for report to GA	AG 93/49 AG 94/28 MC 94/6	
18 Synod Reports to GA - MCAG to make proposals	AG 93/13(i)	GS to prepare draft paper for MC to be discussed at MCAG in September Paper adopted for discussion by MC	AG 93/37 AG 93/xx	
19 Women Ministers - consider some specific difficulties raised by the Moderator	AG 93/42	GS to alert Ministries to concern and to seek help from Convener NAB Meeting arranged between GS, Michael Diffey and Convener NAB CLOSED - appropriate assurances received	AG 93/42 AG 93/69 AG 94/3	

TASK	Minute	ACTION	Minute	B/U
20 National Assessment Board - the Convener is not a member of GA or Vocations C.	AG 93/43	GS to consult Ministries	AG 93/43	
21 YLTOs' period of service - consider in the light of proposed training review	AG 93/53			
22 URC Logo - ensure proper consultation before beginning any serious work	AG 93/75	referred to Communications and Supplies Committee	MC 94/50	
23 Assembly Hotline - look at editorial control	AG 93/76	CLOSED - agreed to ask Norman Hart to act as Editor, responsible to GS	AG 94/7	
24 Appeals procedure - possibility of allowing an appellant's friend to speak?	AG 93/78	being considered by Clerk	AG 94/9	
25 Deputy General Secretary - method of appointment	GA 93	review before change of job holder or at time of committee restructuring	AG 93/80	94/12
		MCAG advice adopted	MC 93/72	
		Options paper to be prepared for MCAG	AG 94/72	
26 Use of Westminster College - request for review	GA 93	recommendation to MC	AG 93/81	
		agreement to appoint consultant and reference group. Report to Jan 94 MC	MC 93/72	
		CAFcert Consultancy agreed and reference group appointed	MC 94/28	
		CAFcert report presented - views to be invited	MC 94/73	
27 Closure of Churches - Consider action to be taken at GA	GA 93	GS to write to Synod Clerks for information	AG 93/82	
		CLOSED - 9 churches closed in 1993. Synod Clerks to provide sentence for GA	AG 94/12	
28 Continental European Churches - need for policy	GA 93	refer to MEW Abroad	AG 93/83 i)	
29 Continental European Churches - oversee URC involvement	GA 93	include concern in work on Assembly Committee Structure	AG 93/83 ii)	
30 Candidates for Moderator of GA - provision of more information	GA 93	refer to MC	AG 93/84	
		MCAG asked to do further work and to produce a paper for discussion at MC	MC 93/90	
		suggestion formulated for MC	AG 94/14	
		CLOSED - revised procedure adopted by MC for report to GA	MC 94/7	
31 Urban/Rural Mission Concerns - response to final report of URMC	GA 93	GS to prepare a paper. Also take account in work on Ass. Committee Structure	AG 93/85	
		David Butler and Mary Marsden to make proposals	AG 94/15	
		Action agreed on basis of paper from Mary Marsden	AG 94/41	
		CLOSED - Concerns passed on to relevant groups/committees	AG 94/60	
32 Provincial Moderators - Examination of review and nomination process	MC 94/6 (i)	GS had begun consultation. Preliminary report to October 1994 MC	AG 94/26	94/12
33 Equal Opportunities Policy - need for revision	MC 94/9	MC agreed text of resolutions to GA	MC 94/17	
		CLOSED - Standing Committee appointed	MC 94/51	
34 Rural Consultant - appointment review	MC 94/11	CLOSED - full-time appointment of Revd Michael Cruchley	MC 94/10	
35 Mission Council Meetings at Weekends?	AG 94/20	MC unclear	MC 94/33	
		October 1996 meeting to be held mid-week	AG 94/91	
36 Synod Financial Resources - review	AG 94/27	refer to Resource Sharing Task Group and AGOGL and send to Synod Treasurers	AG 94/27	
		carried forward in RSTG proposals	MC 94/65	
		authority to seek suitable nominations	MC 94/8	
37 Commission on Unemployment and the Future of Work - URC contribution	MC 94/8			
38 Cathy, Get Lost - response	MC 94/9			
39 Maintenance of Ministry - the need for better planning and control of numbers	MC 94/21	MC agreed resolution to GA	MC 94/21	
		IT Task Group to assist; moratorium to continue	MC 94/75	
40 Loyal Address - principles and practice	AG 94/46	Arthur Macarthur to be invited to prepare a background paper	AG 94/61	94/12



TASK	Minute	ACTION	Minute	B/U
41 Model Local Constitution - Peter Poulter to be asked to draw up guidelines	AG 94/49			
42 Staff development - funding	AG 94/50	Negotiations opened with Coward Trust and Ministerial Training Fund Committee	AG 94/63	94/12
43 Information Technology - Davids Lawrence and Butler to prepare paper for MC	AG 94/53	CLOSED - Paper discussed in groups at MC - Task Group established	MC 94/59	
44 Committee Structures - Staffing issues	AG 94/70	Additional meeting to be held for consultation	AG 94/70	94/12
45 Committee Structures - Provincial Consultation		Recommend MC to consider in March 1995	AG 94/71	95/02
46 Human Sexuality - broad issues plus declared homosexual ministry candidates	AG 94/73	Task Group established to prepared for debate	MC 94/55	94/12
47 Retired Ministers, divorce and housing issues	AG 94/88			94/12
48 Payment for General Assembly		Refer General Assembly resolution to RPAC	MC 94/49	94/12
49 National Lottery - Discussion of issues	MC 94/60	Agreed to circulate discussion paper in Information Service for reaction	MC 94/60	
50 Scottish Multi-lateral Conversations	MC 94/68			
51 Counselling service	MC 94/70			

copy as requested, name in the

copy John



# The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9RT

Telephone 071-916 2020

Fax number 071-916 2021

General Secretary The Revd Anthony G Burnham BA

**From the Clerk of the General Assembly  
The Revd M H Cressey MA**

The Principal's Lodge  
Westminster College  
Maddingley Road  
Cambridge CB3 0AB

Telephone: 0223-354720 Fax: 0223-300765

## FAX TO THE GENERAL SECRETARY

13th February 1996

Dear Tony,

Following our brief telephone conversation on the induction of YCWT/YLTOS I have quickly surveyed the General Assembly reports. From the beginning of the URC there are regular references to YLTOS, always in appreciation of their work but often combined with anxieties about finances; the team has gradually grown and in 1988 Assembly (Record p.12) passed a key resolution:

"The Assembly, recognising the value of the work of the Youth Leadership Training Officers, and acknowledging that their services are spread too thinly through the Church to be fully effective, therefore affirms the ideal of the appointment of one full time YLTO in each Province who may also be involved in other training work; and resolves to move forward and make full time appointments as General Assembly financial resources, and the situation as it affects all other Provinces, will permit".

The only language used is that of making appointments. Neither in 1988 nor elsewhere have I found any indication that the General Assembly has considered the position of YLTOS under Basis para.23 or decided how they "shall be set apart". The fact that on occasion ordained ministers have served as YLTOS may have introduced uncertainty. Unless someone has other evidence to produce (as may well be the case - I have only taken a quick survey), I judge that Assembly or Mission Council ought to consider the matter under Basis para. 23, (i.e. is induction appropriate?) before deciding what body should induct. An official welcome by the appointing Synod is another matter.

Yours as ever,